

SHEPHERDS THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

BC 501: Foundations of Biblical Counseling

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I. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The church is experiencing a dramatic increase in the world's influence. This especially seems to be true in the area of counseling. Many books have been written in the last few years on the subject of Christian counseling which have prompted several questions: Is the Bible sufficient as a source of answers for Christians who are struggling with problems in life? Should secular psychology play a role in how the church helps people? How does a Christian change and grow? What role should Scripture play in the counseling process?

This course helps answer these and other questions as students are challenged with a better understanding of the basic concepts and distinctives of biblical counseling. In particular, topics are discussed such as non-biblical methods of counseling, the theological foundation of biblical counseling, the biblical process of change, and essential elements of counseling. In all discussions, the Bible is presented as completely inspired, inerrant, authoritative, and sufficient.

The lectures, case studies, reading assignments, and projects required are designed to both enrich the student's personal life and relationship with the Lord, and help make him more effective in ministry to others.

II. COURSE GOAL

To help students better understand the basic concepts and distinctive features of biblical counseling, increase their confidence in the sufficiency and superiority of Scripture for handling all personal and interpersonal issues of life, and enrich their relationship with Jesus Christ.

III. COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students will learn to:

- A. Recognize and understand how and why biblical counseling differs from all other kinds of counseling.
- B. Articulate a distinctly biblical way of looking at people and their problems.
- C. Think through and apply theology and biblical counseling principles to specific case studies.
- D. Understand the place and role of counseling in the local church.
- E. Undertake a self-evaluation relating to the character qualities necessary for a Christ-honoring lifestyle.

IV. COURSE TEXTS

- A. Required Texts
 - Counseling: How to Counsel Biblically* [CB], MacArthur and TMC Faculty
 - Psychobabble* [PSYCHO], Richard Ganz
 - How People Change* [HPC], by Tripp and Lane
 - Seeing with New Eyes* [NE], by David Powlison
- B. Recommended Texts
 - Speaking Truth in Love*, by David Powlison
 - A Theology of Christian Counseling*, Jay Adams
 - Lord, Change My Attitude*, by James MacDonald
 - Competent to Counsel*, Jay Adams
 - Blame It on the Brain*, by Ed Welch
 - Instruments in the Redeemer's Hand*, by Paul Tripp
 - Addictions: A Banquet in the Grave*, by Ed Welch
 - Idols of the Heart*, by Elyse Fitzpatrick
 - The Christian Counselor's Medical Desk Reference*, by Robert Smith
 - Deceptive Diagnosis*, by David Tyler & Kurt Grady
 - The Case of the "Hopeless" Marriage*, by Jay Adams
 - Out of the Blues*, by Wayne Mack
 - The Vanishing Conscience*, John MacArthur
 - The Sufficiency Of Christ*, John MacArthur
 - Christian Psychology's War On God's Word*, James Owen
 - How to Help People Change*, Jay Adams
 - Is God Really in Control?* by Jerry Bridges
 - The Enemy Within*, by Kris Lundgaard
 - When People Are Big and God Is Small*, by Ed Welch
- C. Optional Texts
 - Textbook for self-improvement project and homework examples - *A Homework Manual For Biblical Living, Volume 1*, Wayne Mack

V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. **Reading Assignments**

From CB, PSYCHO, HPC, NE

Read the portions of the required texts which are assigned in the Assignment Schedule. Complete a reading report as noted in the *Assignment Due* column of the Assignment Schedule. Your reports should follow the organization of the Reading Report Form that is provided.

You should not only read these chapters, but also think carefully about what they say. Reflect on how what you are reading intersects with the realities of human existence and ministry.

- B. **One Response Paper** - See the Assignment Schedule for the date that this paper is due. This paper is a four to five page typed paper (double-spaced) containing your reflections on and response to the material presented in class. Pick out and discuss one or a few central points that strike you. Briefly summarize the most important points of classroom information to which you have chosen to respond and then move on to interact with the material on a personal level. You may want to simply apply what you choose to your own life. Or you may want to connect something that was discussed to ministry to others, wrestling with how to apply truth to people's lives. I want to see personal or pastoral applications in your papers. I get excited when I see students interacting meaningfully with what they are studying. Remember, for this course the most important part of your response paper assignment is sharing how the information being studied impacts you, what it means to you in your own life and ministry. Be specific about the ways in which this (those) truths impact you, about insights you've gained, about applications you've made, about ways you should change, about what you will do to change, etc. Specificity is extremely important. Don't merely generalize, be concrete and detailed!

Paragraphs need to be numbered and labeled. Example:

1. The Theological Basis. It became apparent to me as I contemplated the importance of having a proper
2. Biblical View of Self. My heart was convicted as I studied
3. Gathering Data. It seems to me that the course did not . . .

C. **Class Attendance and Participation** - If you must be absent from a class period for some justifiable reason you have the responsibility to:

1. Notify the professor of your upcoming absence at least one week in advance
2. If an absence is necessary, you must turn in all the required work that is due by the day of the missed class. A classmate may turn it in for you on the day it is due. You may also submit required work via fax or email.

Your class participation includes paying attention, attitude toward other class members and questions, etc. For the most part, within the classroom, I intend this class to be a lecture and discussion course. Freely raise your hand to question, comment and discuss. I want this to be a corporate activity where we stimulate and learn from each other - an opportunity to sharpen one other, to encourage one another unto love and good works (Proverbs 17:17; Hebrews 3:13; Hebrews 10:24, 25). Making this class a great learning and growing experience will require a cooperative, prayerful effort on the part of the teacher and students alike. Your quality contributions will be welcomed. Let's look on what each of us does in this course as a stewardship opportunity given to us by our great and gracious God for personal growth and mutual ministry to each other.

Quality of classroom contribution is very difficult to measure. There are many variables related to how talkative and reticent a person is: familiarity with the English language; length of silence which a person allows before comfortably jumping in to speak; the confidence a person has in his own opinions, insights and questions; and so forth. I will make every effort to allow different people to speak.

In your comments, insights and questions I am looking for quality and honesty, not quantity. In short, though, quality contributions involve bringing biblical truth and human experience together. So you talkative types, stop and think before you speak. And you reticent types, speak up. And don't be afraid to ask "stupid" questions. If you don't understand something, it's likely that others don't either. Everyone will benefit from coming at it again from another angle, more slowly, with more illustrations. Similarly, don't hesitate to make "obvious" observations or to draw "obvious" connections. What is obvious to you may be a connection others in the room have never made.

D. **Quizzes** - Throughout the semester there will be **3 Bible verse quizzes**. I will give you the content of the verses and you will give me the biblical reference of the verses. Verses will be quoted from the New American Standard

Version of the Bible. Quizzes will be given in accordance with the Assignment Schedule located at the end of this prologue. A list of the required Bible verses is located later in this prologue.

E. **Personal Improvement Project** - See the Assignment Schedule for the date that this paper is due. Here's the project:

- 1) Select one problem or issue in your own life on which you want to work on improving during this course. (Begin to work on this after the first class.) Perhaps it will be an issue in your life with which you have the greatest trouble, one in which you sense a real deficiency; or maybe it will be a problem that is of most interest to you; or maybe it represents an issue that has challenged you most.

To identify the issues, use the data gathering assignment on pages 41-45 and 48-50 of *The Homework Manual for Biblical Counseling, Volume 1*, go through the list of sins in Mark 7:21-23, Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 4:25-5:5, Colossians 3:5-9, 2 Timothy 3:1-9, or study the qualities in 1 Timothy 3:1-8 and select the area in which you have the most difficulty.

You may pick what appears to be a relatively minor habit: e.g., biting your fingernails or forgetfulness of some kind. Or you may choose a more major pattern of wrong thinking, behavior, speech, emotions - a tendency to be withdrawn, uptight, evasive, aggressive, controlling, competitive, pushy, demanding, judgmental, negative, critical, a tendency to want to be the center of attention, a tendency to show off or try to impress people, a tendency to be works righteous or performance oriented in your school work, in your evaluation of people, in your evaluation of worth and value. If you choose to work on what many would consider a small bad habit it may lead you to more substantial issues. Working on biting your fingernails may lead you to how to handle tension in general. Investigation of and progress in a rather insignificant area of life may have ripple effects in other areas of life.

On the other hand, more general problems have the advantage of bringing more of your whole life into the light of God. If you choose a larger issue you will need to break it down into particular actions, attitudes, thoughts and feelings that manifest the problem.

Here are some samples of issues you might want to deal with:

- Driving habits: your driving may provide a microcosm of your life style.
- The way you play sports or approach almost any endeavor. Sports or school or work habits can be a wonderful window into our pride, fears,

competitiveness, anger, performance orientation, fantasy, laziness, lack of self control, concern to outdo or impress others, unbiblical standards, etc.

- Anxiety: how do you handle pressure, stress, disappointment, rejection, demands, etc.?
- Sex and romance: daydreaming, lust, immoral thoughts and actions, etc.
- Fears of people: desire to be applauded, approved, accepted, fear of criticism, rejection, failure, etc.
- Do you lie, flatter, manipulate, brag, cower, avoid, become silent, compliant, etc.? Are you pushy, suspicious, confident or cowardly around people?
- Are you self-absorbed: focusing on your own opinions, agenda, desires, fears, concerns, interests? Do you talk too much? Do you frequently take things personally? Do you regard disagreement as a rejection of you? Do you consider your ideas to be better than the ideas of others? Etc.?
- How do you relate to authority? Parents, teachers, church leaders, bosses, police, etc.? Are you rebellious and self-willed? How do you respond when their ideas and decisions differ with yours? How do you respond emotionally, behaviorally, verbally, cognitively, for example, when a teacher doesn't give you the grade you think you deserve? Etc.?
- How do you respond to being sinned against, when you are wronged, betrayed, maligned, criticized unjustly, hurt by other people? Etc.?
- These are just a few examples of possible counseling issues; there could be many others. You choose.

- 2) Describe the problem in some detail. Be specific. How does the problem show up in your behavior, words, thoughts, attitudes, and emotions? When, where and with whom does it appear? How often is it a problem? How intense? How long-standing? What was the starting point? What has helped in the past? What has hindered change?
- 3) Identify your goals for working on this problem - what do you hope to accomplish through this project? What is desirable fruit? What will meaningful headway look like. Seek to spell out your goals as concretely as possible. Be specific. For example, don't simply say, "be less performance oriented." Be specific about what "being less performance oriented" will look like in actual situations. How will you be able to judge that you are becoming less "performance oriented"? Give examples, specific ways in which changes will occur. Be specific in describing the changes that will occur.
- 4) Lay out specific plans about what you will do to make changes in this area. Be specific and detailed in your planning. How will you actually

promote the change(s) that you want to make? Don't allow yourself to generalize, be vague or abstract. Go beyond this to the nitty-gritty of the steps, activities, or methods you will implement to make change a reality.

- 5) Enlist specific encouragers and prayer supporters. Tell 1 or 2 people what you are trying to do and ask for their help. These could be friends from this course, roommates, family members, members of a small group at your church, etc. Describe in detail what you ask these people to do in stimulating you unto the love and good works in which you want to improve (Hebrews 10:24,25; 3:13). Define what you actually want them to do to help you.
- 6) Optional: Keep a log of what happens in your life in this area throughout the course. Log specific occasions when the problem surfaces or when you are tempted. Use a journal or diary. Keep this log or journal at least three or four days a week. (Not to be turned in.)
- 7) In this (optional) journal/diary record the salient features in your situation. What did you say, do, feel, think? What were your controlling motives, desires? What are relevant biblical passages that illuminate the situation, expose motives, point to solutions?
- 8) Apply information from this course, and your reading to the particular problem you have chosen. Let honest prayer and honest thinking work in tandem. Use class discussions and reading to spur your understanding of and solution to this problem.
- 9) Type a four to five page (minimum) summary report (double-spaced) of this Personal Improvement Project to be turned in on the date indicated on the Assignment Schedule. Give salient details from items 1 through 8 of this project. Then evaluate and assess where you think you've come, what change has taken place, what changes yet remain, where you have and haven't made progress, the reasons for your failure to make more progress, what the obstacles have been, what obstacles still remain, how your tackling this issue has affected your ministry, what your plans are in reference to this issue for the future and anything else you think relevant.

Fill this report with good, tight, insightful, specific, fact filled descriptive paragraphs on parts 1 - 8 of these instructions. Make sure you tell me in specifics what you planned to do, what you actually did, how what you did worked, what happened and what you plan to do once the course is over.

Comment on what has happened in your life or ministry through focusing on this personal improvement project, how far have you come, what obstacles have you faced, what changes have taken place, how it has affected your ministry to others, and anything else that seems relevant.

In this paper, I want you to be very specific in terms of the insights you have gained, challenges you have received, applications you have made and plans for improving.

VI. GRADING

The sole purpose of grading is to challenge you to put in the time and concentrated effort needed to do your very best quality thinking and work. Your life and ministry depend upon your growing wisdom. Surely one goal of the course is to help you become more "bibline" in your thinking and living. We want to handle truth well; we also want to walk it well.

The grading is not meant to awaken that fear of competition or failure that often lurks within us! Put off the fear of failure and put on striving for greater wisdom from God. The grading is merely a tool by which I may help hold you accountable to those desires and goals which led you to come to Shepherds Theological Seminary and enroll in this course in the first place.

Generally speaking, your semester grade will be computed according to the following formula (however, if what you do in any of the areas listed as course requirements is exceptionally good, I reserve the right to give more weight to the particular requirement(s) in which you excel):

Reading Reports -	40%
Response Paper -	15%
3 Bible Quizzes -	20%
Class Attendance and Involvement -	10%
Personal Improvement Project -	15%

VII. MEMORY VERSES (please note the progression from left to right)

<p>For Quiz #1</p> <p>Psalm 1:1-3 Proverbs 15:1 Proverbs 18:13 Proverbs 18:17 Matthew 18:15-17 Acts 20:31 Romans 15:14 Galatians 6:1-3 Colossians 1:28-29 Colossians 2:8 1 Thessalonians 5:14 2 Peter 1:3</p>	<p>For Quiz #2</p> <p>All previous verses Genesis 50:20 Proverbs 28:13 Matthew 7:3-5 Romans 8:28-29 Romans 15:4 2 Corinthians 5:9 2 Corinthians 7:10 2 Corinthians 12:10 Philippians 4:11 1 Timothy 3:1-7 1 Timothy 4:7-8 2 Timothy 2:24-26</p>
<p>For Quiz #3</p> <p>All previous verses Deuteronomy 29:29 Job 42:2 Proverbs 14:26 Romans 12:3 Romans 13:14 2 Corinthians 10:5 Galatians 1:10 Ephesians 4:22-24 Ephesians 4:29 Ephesians 4:31-32 Philippians 2:3-4 James 1:2</p>	

READING REPORT FORM

INSTRUCTION: After reading the chapter(s) assigned for the correct date on your Assignment Schedule, type out (double-spaced) your answers to the following questions for each report. Give concise, insightful, and relevant answers to the following questions. As you type your answers to the following questions, identify by number which question you are answering. Please do your report in outline form, and make sure that you complete each section sufficiently. These reading report assignments for all the assigned chapters are worth a large part of your total grade, so make what you write count.

1. Title of the book, chapter number, and chapter title (*Introduction to Biblical Counseling*, Chapter 1, "Rediscovering Biblical Counseling")
2. Did you read the entire chapter? If no, then identify the percentage of the chapter that you read.
3. Biblical principles, ideas or concepts:

Pick out biblical principles, ideas, or concepts that challenged your thinking the most. For each one of these, record the page number that this concept is found on and then write out either the quotation from the book or state it in your own words.

- a. Applying this to my personal life: Why is this concept important to you personally?
 - b. Applying this to my ministry: Why is this concept important to your ministry? What relevance does this concept have to your current ministry to your friends here at The Master's College and/or your ministry at your local church and/or your future ministries? As a result of understanding this concept, how specifically are you planning on changing your ministry?
4. Agreement/Disagreement: Was there anything presented in this chapter that you thought was unbiblical? Anything that you questioned? Anything with which you disagreed? If so, what was it and why did you think it was unbiblical or why did you question its truthfulness or why did you disagree? Anything you found hard to understand? (If you don't find anything with which you disagreed, you don't need to invent anything. Just indicate you agreed and then pick out one thing with which you strongly agreed and tell why.)

Your reading assignment should be a total of 2 pages.

READING REPORT (Sample)

Your Name

1. Introduction to Biblical Counseling
Chapt. 1, "Rediscovering Biblical Counseling"
2. 100% completed
3. Biblical principles, ideas, or concepts
p. 10: Psychological techniques are equally effective for believers and unbelievers.
 - a. Applying this to my personal life. I have long been bothered that the church seems to have lost its understanding that sanctification involves change in the soul of man, and that unbelievers cannot experience it. This confusion shows up in a profound way when it comes to counseling.

There are many issues for which people seek counseling. If these individuals meet with a Christian, shouldn't they be receiving answers which are different from the world? It is true that there is "practical" help which is not necessarily biblical or unbiblical. For example, when it comes to some issues in parenting, an individual may be helped by a practical suggestion, such as how to teach children to say "thank you." Both Christians and non-Christians can apply this practical help equally as well.

But this is not to be equated with sanctification. Sanctification has to do with changing and growing to become more like Christ. Only Christians can experience this, and only the Holy Spirit using the Word of God can bring it about. That is why the world's psychology cannot ultimately help anyone to change. True and lasting change must take place in the heart, and only Scripture can produce heart-change (Heb. 4:12). Anything else is just behavior modification.

I have seen this to be so true in my own life. Any true change that I have ever experienced has taken place only when I have had my mind renewed by Scripture, been convicted of any sin, and when the Holy Spirit has strengthened me to trust and obey the Lord.

b. Applying this to my ministry. I want to be so careful not to confuse truth with human wisdom. This means that, when I am counseling someone, I must be diligent to keep the Bible as my only source of authority. They must know what God says about their problem. I must also be in constant prayer for the individual. In order for them to understand and obey Scripture, the Holy Spirit must illumine their minds and give them the desire and strength to put what they learn into action. Psychology leaves God out of the picture.

It also is necessary that I make very clear to someone the difference between what God says and what is some practical suggestion that is merely my own opinion. I don't want people to think that they are really changing just because they have applied some "quick fix" suggestion to a particular situation. I desire any person I ever counsel to experience true and lasting change in the inner man, not just behavioral change.

4. Agreement/Disagreement. Though there is nothing I really disagree with in the chapter, I do wish the first paragraph on page ten had been worded differently. I think it could cause some confusion in the mind of some who are beginning to understand the dangers of psychology. I am in strong agreement with the last paragraph of the chapter. If the church doesn't recommit itself to the sufficiency of Scripture, it has lost its distinction in the world and has just become another organization.

ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE FOR *Foundations of Biblical Counseling*

<u>Date</u>	<u>Class #</u>	<u>Reading Due</u>	<u>Assignment Due</u>	<u>Tests</u>
1/23/12	1	CB Preface, Introduction, 1-4	Any one chapter	
1/30/12	2	CB 5-7, 15	Any one chapter	
2/06/12	3	CB 16-19	Any one chapter	
2/13/12	4	PSYCHO 1-6	Any one chapter	Quiz #1
2/20/12		READING WEEK	READING WEEK	
2/27/12	5	PSYCHO 7-12	Any one chapter	
3/05/11 NO CLASS	6	PSYCHO 13-15, Appendix	Any one chapter	
3/12/12	7	HPC 1-8	Any one chapter	
3/19/12	8	HPC 9-12	Any one chapter	Quiz #2
3/26/12	9	HPC 13-16	Any one chapter	
4/02/12	10	NE Preface, Intro, 1-4	Any one chapter	
4/09/12		SPRING BREAK	SPRING BREAK	
4/16/12	11	NE 5-9	Any one chapter	
4/23/12	12	NE 10-12	Any one chapter	Quiz #3
4/30/12	13	NE 13-15, Conclusion	Personal Improvement Project	
5/07/12	14		Response Paper	