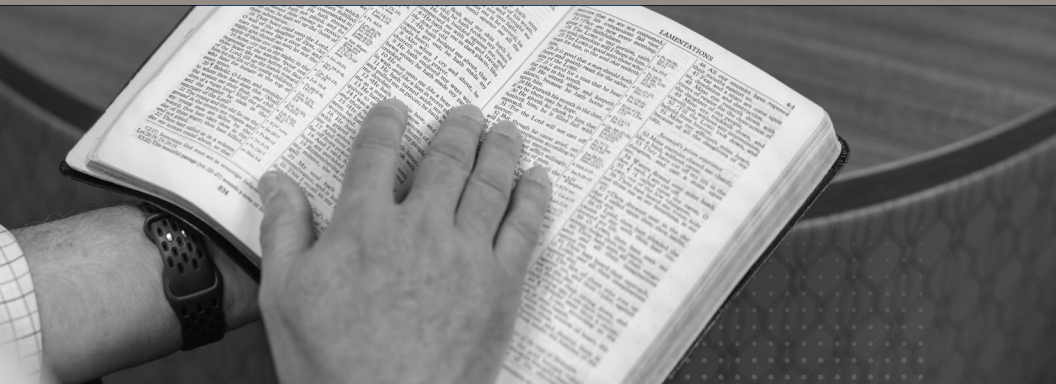




BOB JONES UNIVERSITY
BJU SEMINARY

Philosophy of

BIBLICAL COUNSELING



ENDORSEMENTS

Stuart Scott, DMin; Director of Biblical Counseling, Bob Jones University and BJU Seminary; Director of Member Care, Association of Certified Biblical Counselors; Executive Director, One Eighty Ministries

In a culture marred by sin, churches are receiving clarion calls to care for suffering souls. In part, this great need comes from the riptides of man's wisdom pulling at our society — wisdom that leads to bondage and spiritual demise. To counteract this current, many churches are looking to Gospel-centered institutions like Bob Jones University and Seminary for much-needed biblical training in soul care.

This BJU publication articulates a robust theological philosophy of biblical counseling that plainly points BJU's institutions and the church to care for souls consistently with an unerring compass: the authority of Christ and His Word. This booklet is kind and gracious yet thorough in addressing both sin and suffering. It gives us studied wisdom on ministering to both body and soul.

This valuable booklet should encourage every Gospel-centered church, pastor and future minister to rely on the Scriptures for counseling and have great confidence in the education, care and ministry training that Bob Jones Academy, University and Seminary can offer.

Jim Newheiser, DMin; Director, Christian Counseling Program and Associate Professor of Christian Counseling and Practical Theology, Reformed Theological Seminary, Charlotte; Executive Director, Institute for Biblical Counseling and Discipleship; Fellow and Board Member, Association of Certified Biblical Counselors; Adjunct Professor of Counseling, Masters College; Board Member, Biblical Counseling Coalition

I was very encouraged by what I read in the Bob Jones University biblical counseling white paper.

The paper is well-written and very carefully thought out. My heart was warmed as I read it. I appreciate the strong stand on the sufficiency of Scripture and the centrality of the gospel in helping people with their spiritual problems. I also appreciate the high place given to the local church. BJU also does an excellent job of carefully explaining the interaction between biblical counselors, medical doctors and psychologists. They also demonstrate an awareness of varying approaches among true Christians and deal with our differences in a careful and kind manner.

Mark E. Shaw, DMin; Council Board Member, Biblical Counseling Coalition; Certified Counselor, Association of Certified Biblical Counselors and International Association of Biblical Counselors; Founder, Truth in Love Ministries; Executive Director, Vision of Hope in Lafayette, Ind.; author of numerous publications, including *The Heart of Addiction*

It is with exuberant joy that I endorse Bob Jones University's formal position regarding biblical counseling. BJU's stance is thoughtful, articulate, balanced, unwavering and compassionate, while reflecting a commitment to Christlikeness in the academic pursuit of training competent, upright and grace-filled biblical counselors for the glory of God. Including a comprehensive definition of biblical counseling, BJU acknowledges the key roles of the Word of God, the Holy Spirit and the local church as resources divinely provided by the Lord in order for people to experience genuine heart change. I especially appreciate the sound approach to suffering, the necessary understanding of the physical body and medical issues, the careful view of medicine in the context of biblical counseling and the steadfast belief in the sufficiency of the Scriptures. I commend BJU for their lucid position on biblical counseling.

Tim Allchin, MDiv; Executive Director, Biblical Counseling Center in the Chicago, Ill., area

Bob Jones University has articulated a counseling training model that would help students grow in competence, confidence and compassion as biblical counselors. It was a joy to be part of this process and meet with other biblical counseling leaders from around the country. This paper well represents the growth and development of the biblical counseling movement as a whole and positions Bob Jones University to be a thought leader in helping many conservative churches effectively learn to shepherd their people through many of life's most painful and complex struggles. More than ever, churches need to have competent answers to the difficult hurts, practical answers that anchor people in the Word of God and spiritual answers that help them place their hope in Christ alone. I am thrilled that Bob Jones University desires to help its students be leaders and equippers in churches in order to give this type of life-giving counsel.

Sue Nicewander Delaney, MABC; Executive Director, Counselor for the Biblical Counseling Ministries in Wisconsin Rapids, Wis.; Council Board Member, Biblical Counseling Coalition; author of numerous counseling helps

Bob Jones University is fully committed to the Word of God and its power to transform lives for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. Even in the fires of controversy, the university has remained steadfast in its pursuit of academic excellence and faithfulness to God. Nowhere is fidelity to Scripture more evident than in BJU's courageous, thorough and forward-thinking stand on biblical counseling. The university has brought together some of the best minds in the biblical counseling movement to hammer out a definitive statement of the distinctions and disciplines of biblical

counseling (a valuable resource for any biblical counselor). Upon that foundation BJU concisely lays out a curriculum plan to equip students to counsel wisely and to effectively answer their opponents in a God-honoring way. As a result, I believe local churches will be strengthened and broadened as God uses BJU graduates to teach people the practical biblical outworking of the Gospel: to follow Christ fully and victoriously in whatever circumstances God may allow.

Nicolas Ellen, DMin; Professor of Biblical Counseling, College of Biblical Studies in Houston; Board of Directors, Biblical Counseling Coalition; Founder and Director, Expository Counseling Center in Houston, Texas

BJU has done an excellent job in presenting the foundations for the premise and practice of authentic biblical counseling. For any organization seeking to develop a biblical counseling program or to evaluate its biblical counseling program, these papers are the “Gold Standard” for doing both.

Paul Tautges, DMin; Senior Pastor, Cornerstone Community Church, Mayfield Heights, Ohio; Board Member, Biblical Counseling Coalition; Fellow, Association of Certified Biblical Counselors; Adjunct Professor of Counseling, Calvary Theological Seminary; Adjunct Professor of Counseling, The Master’s University; Blogger, CounselingOneAnother.com

As a pastor who believes that the personal ministry of the Word of God is both a biblical mandate and essential to the work of one-another discipleship, I found BJU’s philosophy of biblical counseling a delight to read. This pleasant document is wisely crafted to maintain a balance that is biblically faithful, Christ-centered, kind in its explanation of differences that exist among believers, and compassionate in its approach to the care of human souls.

Jeremy Lelek, PhD, LPC; President, Association of Biblical Counselors and of Metroplex Counseling in Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas; Council Board Member, Biblical Counseling Coalition

The faculty of Bob Jones University (BJU) has effectively articulated the tenets representative of the current biblical counseling movement in their biblical counseling white paper. As someone who enlisted over two dozen recognized experts within Christian Soul Care as participants in my Ph.D. dissertation (which was designed to guide them in formulating a working definition of biblical counseling on which they could find consensus), I find it striking that during the study’s two-year process, the experts in Christian Soul Care found consensus on a definition of biblical counseling that is strikingly similar to the definition outlined by the faculty of BJU.

As a Licensed Professional Counselor who is also an ardent supporter of biblical counseling, I also find it encouraging that BJU does not limit its program to teaching the presuppositions and theology so important to our work; they have also developed a

robust training program designed to equip their students in the hands-on, experiential realities essential to becoming skilled physicians of the soul.

Daniel Borkert, MD; Co-founder, Rocky Mountain Biblical Counseling Center, Westminster, Colo.; Private practice, Mile High Family Medicine, Lakewood, Colo.

Through the writing of the biblical counseling white paper, Bob Jones University has formulated a balanced and biblical counseling standard. I believe the tenets set forth in this paper embrace the proper spiritual, emotional and physical approach to the counselee while delineating the highest standard of ethics for the counselor. I especially appreciate the carefully thought-out approach taken with respect to the spiritual and the medical issues that often surround an individual undergoing biblical counseling.

I wholeheartedly endorse Bob Jones University's excellent statement on biblical counseling and BJU's ongoing effective efforts to train others to help "one person at a time" in our very desperate world!

Sam Williams, PhD; Professor of Counseling, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary; Council Board Member, Biblical Counseling Coalition

Knowing and loving people well necessarily flows from knowing and loving God even better.

BJU's document/white paper on biblical counseling is on one level just as expected — solidly grounded in God's Word and closely tethered to biblical theology. In addition, it is winsomely written, carefully comprehensive, and compassionately contextualizes the biblical counseling mission for this crazy world to which God has called us.

Bob Jones University's biblical counseling program has its sights focused on glorifying God and bringing Good News to people that need help. If you want to learn how to love people on God's terms, BJU is a great place to develop these skills and grow in wisdom.

Philosophy of
**BIBLICAL
COUNSELING**

Bob Jones University

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PREFACE

For centuries, pastors have pointed people to the words of God in the Bible in order to give them comfort, hope, help and direction as they faced the trials and sufferings that come from living in a world cursed by sin. Whether sufferings result from one's own sins, the sins of others or from the effects of the Fall in general, God's Word has always been foundational in helping hurting, broken sinners find grace from God and peace with Him through the ongoing work of Christ.

For this reason, the biblical counseling movement in the last century sought to wrest soul-care away from psychotherapy and secular counseling and return it to the pastor and his congregation. Fueled by the insights of sound theologians and experienced people-helpers, the movement has never stopped growing. Today it stands upon the shoulders of countless Gospel-committed men and women who have refined, articulated and defended its essential theology and improved its practices and delivery.

Bob Jones University has profited from those efforts and grown along with the movement through the years. We will continue our contribution to the ministry of 21st-century soul-care by equipping biblical counselors through the publication of this philosophy statement on biblical counseling. This statement is BJU's philosophy of biblical counseling and represents the collaborative effort of a cross-disciplinary team of professionals from a wide span of disciplines, including biblical counseling, medicine, education and theology. Recognized experts in the field of biblical counseling joined the team for working sessions on the campus of BJU, and this paper is the product of their diligent effort.

Bob Jones University seeks to do all it can to equip the next generation of biblical counselors to minister to God's people in the difficult days that are facing believers. To that end, BJU prayerfully submits this document with the desire to help men and women in the church minister to the saints and carry the Gospel to a dying world.



Steve Pettit
President

PHILOSOPHY OF BIBLICAL COUNSELING

Bob Jones University

Executive Summary

Bob Jones University has always stood unapologetically for fidelity to and defense of the Bible as the inspired and infallible standard of faith and practice for mankind. Therefore, professors approach every academic discipline from a worldview rooted solidly in the Scriptures. Every philosophy, methodology, theory and practice is examined and evaluated through a biblical lens before it is taught in the classroom as something truly helpful to mankind — whether in the arts, humanities, sciences, business or education.

The battle between the God-centered worldview of the Bible and the man-centered secular worldview of naturalism and humanism rages on many fronts. While the culture grows increasingly hostile to God, His Word and His church, society as a whole is disintegrating morally, socially, educationally, economically and institutionally. Consequently, the human state of affairs continues to degenerate at an alarming rate.

Secularism struggles to find adequate answers because of its alienation from God and its ignorance of the true nature of man, the true nature of human problems and the true nature of the solutions. The Bible asserts that man must be restored to a personal relationship with the Creator-Redeemer-God of heaven in order to thrive on the earth. This clash of worldviews is evident in the contrasting diagnoses and remedies to human problems offered by secular psychology as opposed to biblical counseling.

Part One of this document will offer clarifying definitions and describe key distinctions of BJU's position on biblical counseling — including position statements on biblical counseling and the nature of man, biblical counseling and psychology, biblical counseling and medical issues, and biblical counseling and trauma. The first section continues with an explanation of the practice of biblical counseling at BJU through its Student Care Office and with an expanded explanation of BJU's definition of the biblical counselor. The first part concludes with a list of biblical counseling organizations, institutions and printed resources that offer a similar approach to biblical counseling to that of BJU.

Part Two outlines the components of the biblical counseling training program at BJU. The scope of the skills, duties and knowledge sets of an effective biblical counselor are listed under four main topics: theological framework, methodology, structures for the delivery of counseling and apologetics.

PART ONE

BJU'S POSITION ON BIBLICAL COUNSELING

Introduction

Bob Jones University's formal philosophy statement of Christian education begins with the declaration that "Christian education is distinct from and incompatible with modern secular education."¹ This conviction applies to all of the subject matter taught at Bob Jones University, including psychology and biblical counseling.

Since biblical counseling and Christian education share the same goal of furthering the development of Christlikeness in the believer, the two share the same premises, the same rejection of secular theories of the nature of man, and the same reliance upon the Scriptures to guide and shape ministry to humans made in the image of God. They also share the same cautious and careful critique of secular contributions to a field of study before bringing them into the teaching (or counseling) setting.

The authors conclude the preface of BJU's educational philosophy statement with this explanation of the document's delimitations — delimitations also shared with this position paper on biblical counseling.

The account of Christian education offered in the following chapters does not presume to be a theologically exhaustive discussion, or even from all Christian groups a definitive treatment, of every issue it raises. Its approach is deliberately minimalist. Also, it does not assume that the ideal it sets forth must be fully realized by those who profess it in order for it to have the force of religious conviction. The very nature of spiritual standards precludes their absolute fulfillment in the present world. It does claim to be ... *distinctive*.²

This position paper on biblical counseling, like BJU's position papers on other academic disciplines of Christian higher education, draws heavily from BJU's heritage in defining and defending Christian education as distinctly different from its secular counterparts and even from some other Christian models of educational theory and practice.

Definitions

Biblical Counseling

Biblical counseling describes the person-to-person ministry that takes place when a Spirit-empowered believer seeks to assist a fellow believer in his growth toward Christlikeness by means of the Word of God, the Spirit of God and the ministry of the local church — especially in the midst of a trial or sin struggle.

All believers can and should strive to help other believers who need assistance with their problems. As with any form of vocational ministry, however, formal training is generally advisable for those who expect that biblical counseling will be a regular part of their ministry to others — particularly to those with complex struggles. To this end, Bob Jones University has established such training on the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Biblical Counselor

The biblical counselor strives to be a Word-filled, Spirit-empowered disciple of Jesus Christ who, for the glory of God, humbly and compassionately evangelizes the lost and assists fellow believers in their progressive sanctification in the midst of life's challenges through the Christ-centered ministry of God's sufficient Word and in partnership with the ministry of the local church.

While the Scriptures teach that every believer has the responsibility to admonish others with the Scriptures (Romans 15:14), this position paper is advancing the understanding that those who desire to serve their churches or their communities as biblical counselors should be 1) spiritually qualified, 2) deeply grounded in their understanding of Scripture, 3) adequately and appropriately trained for the type of counseling they are doing, and 4) recognized and affirmed by their church, their spiritual leaders and other recognized practitioners of biblical counseling.

The Sufficiency of the Scriptures

Bob Jones University embraces the Bible's teaching that the Scriptures are inspired by God and therefore are infallible, inerrant and authoritative on every subject they address. BJU believes that the Bible is comprehensively *sufficient* — that is, the Scriptures include all that God deemed *essential* — to understand man's design and purpose; man's inherent nature; man's fundamental estrangement from God; the divine plan for reconciliation with God; the divine standard for human thought, emotion and behavior; the divine remedy for human problems; and divine counsel for how men and women can flourish, even in adversity, through a maturing personal relationship with God.

Psychology

Psychology may be defined as "the scientific study of the behavior of individuals and their mental processes."³

The broad field of psychology contains many specialized categories (e.g., abnormal psychology, behavioral psychology, cognitive psychology, comparative psychology, counseling psychology, developmental psychology, educational psychology, experimental psychology, forensic psychology, neuropsychology, social psychology, clinical psychology).

Psychotherapy

Psychotherapy is “any of a group of therapies used to treat psychological disorders that focus on changing faulty behaviors, thoughts, perceptions and emotions that may be associated with specific disorders.”⁴

These secular therapies are founded upon such theories as psychodynamic psychologies, cognitive and behavioral therapies, humanistic and experiential psychologies, systemic psychologies, etc., and operate apart from a biblical worldview.

The terms *psychotherapy* and *psychological counseling* are often used interchangeably because both engage in talk therapy for counseling-related problems.

Christian Integrationist Counseling

As in the biblical counseling field, Christian integrationists (often called “Christian counselors” as distinguished from those who call themselves “biblical counselors”) represent a continuum of beliefs that vary within their movement. A leading spokesman for Christian integrationist counseling offers the following definition that most in the movement would affirm:

Integration of Christianity and psychology (or any area of ‘secular thought’) is our living out — in this particular area — of the lordship of Christ over all of existence by our giving his special revelation — God’s true Word — its appropriate place of authority in determining our fundamental beliefs about and practices toward all of reality and toward our academic subject matter in particular.⁵

However, many Christian integrationist counselors who genuinely affirm the importance of an authoritative Scripture, as stated in the above definition, grant in practice as much authority (if not more) to scientific research as they do to theology. The blend generally results in counseling sessions that follow slightly edited versions of secular psychotherapeutic practice.

As a result, the Bible becomes a co-authority (in certain areas, even a lesser authority) and may be reduced merely to a source of moral values, hope and comfort rather than the supreme interpreter of human behavior, thought and motive, and the navigational guide for addressing the problems of living through the process of progressive sanctification for the purpose of developing Christlikeness in the believer. When this approach is adopted, the Bible itself, the Gospel with all its implications for holy and wise living, and the local church may not play a major role in counseling conversations.

Key Distinctives of Biblical Counseling

Biblical Counseling and the Nature of Man⁶

Every form of counseling — secular or religious — is based upon a specific theory of man, an anthropology. These foundational beliefs about man — beliefs about what kind of being man is; his ideal state; the norms for behaviors, thoughts, emotions and motives; the nature of his problems and the nature of their remedies — drive every effort to help him.

Biblical counselors affirm the Bible's revelation that man was created as both a physical and a spiritual being by the direct act of God and in the image of God to reflect the glory of God and to require and enjoy a personal relationship with the Creator. Being created in the image of God with a divine mandate to exercise dominion over the rest of creation uniquely distinguishes mankind from all other life forms.

Man's disintegration began in the Garden of Eden as a result of believing Satan's lies about God, about themselves and about the way God's world worked. Mankind exchanged the truth of God for a lie and disobeyed His words. Every sinful response of mankind since then is rooted in believing someone else's words rather than the words of the living God.

Adam and Eve's disobedience plunged all of mankind into a state of estrangement that leads to the righteous judgment of God. The Bible testifies to a subsequent fundamental twist in the nature of man away from God — an innate propensity within man to live independently of God and to rule himself. This evil disposition within man is called the "flesh" or sinful nature. The image of God in man was not obliterated by sin, nor was man's value as an image-bearer before God diminished. The divine image in man was, however, seriously marred by this act of mutiny against God. Mankind no longer reflects God accurately.

Furthermore, the entire physical creation was cursed by God so that it fights the efforts of man to rule it, even as man fights God's rule. All living things, including mankind, were sentenced to experience disintegration and eventual death. God, in His great mercy, paid the penalty for sin and provided for man's restoration to fellowship with Him through the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ, His only Son. Jesus' death on the cross in the place of sinners satisfied the Father's just wrath against sinful man.

God now offers deliverance from judgment to all sinners who admit that they deserve the penalty of death and hell, acknowledge that they can do nothing on their own to merit God's salvation, and trust in Jesus Christ alone as their personal sin-bearer. Upon man's repentance and faith, God imputes the righteousness of Christ to the sinner while the Holy Spirit gives new life and reestablishes a relationship with God through the new birth. This new relationship initiates a gradual process toward Christlikeness. That restoration to the likeness of Christ will be fully complete when the believer stands in the presence of God in heaven.

Until then, the believer — along with the rest of the creation — “groans” under the weight of life on a fallen planet that is under the control of the sovereign, wise and loving Creator. Many hurtful circumstances and crushing hardships are the result of disease, physical weakness and dysfunction, natural disasters, accidents, economic reversals and relational conflict. While suffering is at times the consequence of an individual’s sinful choices or lack of biblical wisdom, often suffering comes from the hand of others who sin against the victim through violence, abuse, neglect, ridicule and so forth. Such suffering brings brokenness, pain, and at times, deep trauma to those who have been victimized by the sinful behavior of others. No matter who caused the suffering, God has compassion on the sufferer and offers relationship with Himself and instruction from His Word as the only satisfying solution to the brokenness.

Because biblical counselors have a scripturally robust view of man’s fallen and spiritually based nature as described above, they offer strategically different remedies to counselees than those advanced by secular and most Christian integrationist counselors.

Though the remedies offered by biblical counselors are substantively different from secular remedies, this distinctiveness does not imply that biblical solutions are simplistic or instantaneously effective. The Bible presents spiritual *growth* in Christ through His Word as the means of change. God’s own metaphor of growth implies time, attention, care and cooperation with God.

Furthermore, suffering and trauma are sometimes accompanied by complex physical, cognitive and emotional effects. While the biblical counselor helps the counselee see suffering through the lens of a biblical worldview that finds ultimate answers in the Scriptures, the counselor should not ignore the counselee’s possible need for treatment from the medical community for physical needs.

Counselees are fallen, complex people being helped by other fallen, complex people. Variables exist at every interaction as heart responds to heart and as both respond to or choose not to respond to God. By God’s grace, the biblical counselor attempts to compassionately and skillfully point the sufferer to the only One Who can heal and restore wholeness as God works His change in the hearts of both the counselee and the counselor.

Biblical Counseling and Psychology⁷

Biblical counselors study, evaluate and seek to remedy disordered thinking, behaviors and emotional states of man differently than do their secular-minded counterparts because they begin with different presuppositions and operate from a different worldview. That worldview and those presuppositions begin in the first chapter of Genesis and establish the legitimacy of human research and development as a part of God’s plan for the human race.

Few other branches of science deal as directly with the complexities of a being that is both spiritually immaterial and eternal and materially physical as does psychology. Stud-

ies of the nonliving creation (e.g., physics, geology and astronomy) or studies of plants (botany) and animals (zoology) concentrate on the parts of creation which display to the spiritually sensitive observer the specific aspects of the *glory of God* — His existence, power, sovereignty and wisdom. Psychology, however, studies the component of creation which reflects the very *image of God* — human beings.

Secular research of human problems does not factor in man's fallen and sinful nature, man's inclination to censor God from his thoughts, man's propensity to worship and serve himself, and the disturbing effects of unredeemed man's disconnection from God and therefore from His enabling grace during trials. Many such studies reveal an ignorance or outright dismissal of the subject's status as an image-bearer of God and the subject's need to know His Creator and His words in order to truly flourish under God's rule in God's world. Consequently, the conclusions reached by such research will be distorted and severely flawed from a biblical perspective.

This is not to say that psychology possesses no value or has no place in the concept of biblical counseling. It is to say that whatever value and place the discipline of psychology possesses must be subject to, governed by and conformed to the theological and biblical teaching of Scripture about man and his Creator. The observations and data used by psychologists and advanced in psychology have value to the degree that they are interpreted in the light of what Scripture teaches about the nature of man, the effects of sin and the solution of the Gospel in Christ.

Biblical counselors acknowledge that the Bible does not claim to speak exhaustively to every issue of history, science, mathematics, the social sciences and so forth, though everything it says about those subjects is without error. The biblical counselor can, therefore, utilize information researched outside the Bible as long as the information derived is accurate and as long as the solutions presented are carefully weighed and interpreted through a grid of biblical theology before being utilized.

For example, child psychology can provide helpful data regarding developmental processes (social, intellectual, emotional, physical, etc.); but believers with a biblical worldview will reject any humanistic emphasis upon the inherent goodness of the child, the necessity for the child to find his solutions within himself or to find his ultimate confidence in himself — because such conclusions directly contradict what the Scriptures teach about every human being, including children.

In a similar fashion, neuropsychology provides useful data regarding the effect of traumatic experiences on the body (including the brain), which is helpful information to the biblical counselor. After careful evaluation and consideration, however, any solution or methodology must be rejected that contradicts a biblical worldview, which teaches that no lasting solutions for suffering are found outside of God's provision of grace through the Gospel, and no lasting peace is possible apart from increased intimacy with the person of Jesus Christ — the Ultimate Sufferer and the only true Rescuer.

Likewise, medical research can provide useful data about how the sympathetic nervous system responds to fear and stress; but the biblical counselor will usually avoid many secular methods of handling stress as permanent solutions because they ignore the core spiritual nature of man. Only God's Word can help a believer rightly interpret his pressures, and only a relationship with God can provide hope, purpose, direction and meaning in life in the face of hardship and pressure.

This is the same biblically filtered approach taken by scientists with a biblical worldview in other fields of study. For example, the Christian scientist must examine the data that secular scientists usually associate with the origin of the earth and mankind through the lens of the creation narrative and must arrive at conclusions that conform to the biblical claim. When consistently conformed to the biblical teaching of creation, the data discovered and scientific observation in this area can be helpful.

In like fashion, psychological research data and observations about human behavior and the conditions derived thereby can be of help and value to the biblical counseling movement when such data is consistently filtered through and governed by the biblical teaching about the nature of man, sin, suffering, salvation and sanctification.

Biblical Counseling and Medical Issues

Biblical counselors acknowledge that the challenges of life often have a physical component. Many emotional and cognitive struggles are the result of disordered bodies affected by genetics, disease, physical and emotional trauma, and lifestyle choices — including sleep, diet, exercise and so forth. Biblical counselors, therefore, should seek to partner with physicians — especially those who are committed to understanding the patient's situation both physically and spiritually.

Many physicians, because of time constraints, struggle to offer the level of counseling they would desire to give their patients. Biblical counselors welcome the opportunity to partner with physicians by helping to meet the spiritual needs of these patients while the physician helps to care for their physical needs.⁸

Biblical counselors also recognize that there is growing neurobiological optimism among the general populace. Many medical and mental health professionals conclude that if an emotional struggle cannot be traced to a specific measurable physical cause (e.g., brain trauma, endocrine malfunction, tumor, disease, infection, nerve damage), the problem is assumed to be a chemical imbalance or a genetic defect. Often a psychiatric label is assigned to the difficulty, and commonly a psychiatric drug is prescribed to alleviate the symptoms by chemically altering the patient's moods.⁹

Differences of opinion exist among biblical counselors with regard to the use of psychiatric medication by a counselee. BJU holds the position that in some situations, medication may be appropriate. In most cases, however, medication is not the only solution — nor is

it usually the final or permanent solution. Generally speaking, many disorders commonly treated by psychiatrists and physicians by means of medication also have spiritual components that can be treated only by appropriate scriptural remedies.

If, after investigating the potential side effects, a counselee opts for a judicious use of a prescribed psychotropic drug, the biblical counselor should not advise terminating or modifying its prescribed use. To do so would be unethical and potentially dangerous for the counselee. It would also be unethical, however, for the biblical counselor to remain silent if it appears that the counselee is not adequately informed about potential risks associated with the medication. In such situations, the counselor should strongly urge the counselee to seek additional medical opinion.¹⁰

Similarly, if a counselee decides to discontinue the use of a medication prescribed by the physician, the biblical counselor should inform the counselee of the danger of discontinuing the medication apart from the care or advice of a physician. In the end, the biblical counselor should fully respect the counselee's decision and should seek to minister to spiritual needs in the power of God's Spirit for the glory of God while the counselee looks to the physician to treat any medical conditions.

Biblical counselors recognize that medical advances and developments in neuroscience occur rapidly. Such advances may result in data that when evaluated and interpreted from the perspective of the biblical worldview advanced in this paper, may provide information that is useful and helpful in addressing the counselee's suffering. The biblical counselor understands that no matter how physically and/or spiritually complex the problem, a truly biblical worldview affirms that God never puts the believer in a position where he or she knows what is right to do without giving him or her the grace and the means to do so. The biblical counselor also understands that in rare or severe situations, long-term medical care may be part of the grace and means provided by God along with the biblical counseling process. The biblical counselor, therefore, compassionately uses God's Word to restore the counselee's hope and to help him or her respond in a way that is pleasing to God and that fosters a relationship with and growth in Christ — even when the etiology for suffering is purely physical or as yet undiscovered.

Biblical Counseling and Trauma

The Scriptures acknowledge that both believers and unbelievers often face extreme, overwhelming and even prolonged suffering because they live in the same world broken by sin. The Bible further acknowledges that not all suffering is equal in intensity, extent, duration or effects. Military experiences, devastating life circumstances, or criminal assault and abuse can leave the sufferer traumatized. In some cases, such trauma may induce long-term effects that make daily life difficult for the sufferer.

God has revealed in His Word that He delights in being a Father to His people, especially in their times of extreme adversity and grief. He grants His children grace for even the most extreme trial or suffering encountered in life. The biblical counselor recognizes that

while some sufferers will find immediate comfort in God's providential, wise and loving provisions in His Word, others may struggle to immediately understand, believe or accept those provisions and will need the counselor to display God's love and grace to them during this extended process.

The biblical counselor recognizes that the effects of trauma can be complex and will vary from person to person depending upon the physical, cognitive, emotional, social and spiritual resources and the state of the sufferer at the time of the incident and in its aftermath. The duration and intensity of the trauma, the age of the sufferer when the trauma took place and other similar factors also impact the responses. While some counselees may have received a psychiatric diagnosis at some point, the biblical counselor strives to view the counselee as a person under severe distress and will recognize that the complexities of each situation will often require a more thorough knowledge of the counselee and the nature of the situation. He also realizes that trauma sufferers must be allowed to disclose the details of their suffering at their own pace and to the extent to which they are comfortable.

Furthermore, the biblical counselor must be aware of the possible distressing responses that sometimes follow traumatic events — especially flashbacks, nightmares and dissociation. Depending upon the nature of the trauma, these responses may not persist. When they do, however, the biblical counselor — if properly trained — can ground the sufferer in the present during times of distress and assist in the development of a biblical perspective for handling those responses when they persist.

The journey for both the suffering counselee and the counselor can be arduous and painstakingly slow, but the end result of seeing hurting believers experience healing grace from God, strength from His Word and greater usefulness in His service brings glory to God.

Biblical Counseling and Sexual Abuse/Assault

Biblical counselors realize that all trauma is disruptive and potentially debilitating to the life and spiritual health of believers. However, the trauma that comes with sexual assault and abuse is especially so and therefore presents unique challenges and opportunities for both the counselor and the victim of such assault or abuse to grow in grace together as they pursue divine healing and wholeness through the Gospel of Christ.

When dealing with sufferers of sexual abuse and assault, the biblical counselor will frequently need to seek to establish stability and safety for the counselee. This process often begins by assuring the victim that the perpetrator bears the entire blame for such crime(s) committed against the victim. The counselor must clearly communicate that the victim is not at fault for this harm done to him or her and must help the victim avoid any self-blame for the abuse/assault. The counselee must be assured that all sins against him or her will be righteously adjudicated by a just God who will not permit unrighteousness to go unjudged.

Furthermore, the counselor should encourage any victim who is 18 or older to use all appropriate legal means to bring the perpetrator to justice for any crimes that have been committed and offer to provide, while maintaining appropriate confidentiality, any assistance the counselee may desire in reporting such crimes to law enforcement and/or social services to ensure that living and work situations are as free from threat as possible. A counselor who learns or suspects that a person under age 18 has been abused should report the abuse directly to law enforcement or social services.

Biblical counselors understand that these matters related to safety and stability must precede other counseling efforts — such as helping to process disturbing memories; establishing proper beliefs about self, God and others; and the way the world works as a result of the Fall. Appropriate time and grace should be given for biblical sorrow that comes with such trauma and loss.

As the counselee engages with God's truth, the biblical counselor can also — when possible and advisable or appropriate — assist in the process of repairing damaged relationships from the past. In addition, the biblical counselor encourages the counselee to consider establishing healthy connections with others who can help navigate the process at a pace and manner comfortable to the counselee. Throughout this entire process, the biblical counselor consistently points the counselee to the grace of God through the work of Jesus Christ — Who Himself suffered physical abuse and assault so that His people might experience healing in the Gospel with help from His Spirit.

Concluding Statements on Trauma

This section on trauma is not intended to be comprehensive but should provide an understanding that the equipped biblical counselor possesses an awareness of the complexities of trauma counseling. If a biblical counselor does not feel equipped to address some of these issues, he or she should refer the counselee to another biblical counselor who is adequately prepared to help. At times, of course, the effects of trauma are so severe that the counselee may need immediate medical attention before counseling can progress.

The Practice of Biblical Counseling at Bob Jones University

An important component of BJU's mission is to provide a biblically based, quality experience for students pursuing Christian higher education. Therefore, BJU's Student Care Office staff and other university personnel strive to provide support and counsel to students who struggle with the life challenges they bring with them into the educational setting.

Some counseling situations require a degree of care that BJU cannot provide. In such situations, BJU will support the student's exploration of treatment options available elsewhere.

Moreover, in addition to making biblical counseling available through its Student Care Office for those who have suffered sexual abuse, BJU requires its faculty, staff and student

body to regularly receive sexual abuse/assault awareness training. Everyone is expected to comply with all legal reporting requirements regarding the sexual abuse of minors.

Equipping Biblical Counselors at Bob Jones University

Because biblical counselors are often called upon to help those whose life challenges are especially difficult or complex, BJU believes that biblical counselors must be as well trained and equipped as their calling and opportunities dictate so that God's people can be as well served as possible. For this reason, BJU strives to equip students in the worldview presuppositions and applications set forth in this paper and in the duties, skills and knowledge sets necessary to become effective biblical counselors as set forth in Part Two of this document.

BJU, for several decades, has trained and has matured in its training of counselors as the broader biblical counseling movement has matured. In the interest of pursuing excellence in its training of biblical counselors, BJU has defined what a biblical counselor is and has mapped the components of a comprehensive biblical counseling training program.

The following definition of a biblical counselor and the training program map (Part Two of this document) were developed by a collaborative effort of the undergraduate and graduate biblical counseling teaching professors at BJU; the respective deans of these two programs; a panel of seminary biblical counseling professors and practitioners from other institutions; biblical counselors maintaining professional counseling practices; representatives of the Student Development and Discipleship staff at BJU; and the Office of Planning, Research and Assessment at Bob Jones University.

Definition

The biblical counselor strives to be a Word-filled, Spirit-empowered disciple of Jesus Christ who for the glory of God, humbly and compassionately evangelizes the lost and assists fellow believers in their progressive sanctification in the midst of life's challenges through the Christ-centered ministry of God's sufficient Word and through the partnership and ministry of the local church.

Explanation

1. *A biblical counselor strives to be "a Word-filled, Spirit-empowered disciple of Jesus Christ who for the glory of God, humbly and compassionately" ministers to others "in the midst of life's challenges" (Romans 15:14; 1 Thessalonians 5:14).*

The biblical counselor understands that he and his counselee exist for the ultimate purpose of glorifying God as they together promote and honor Jesus Christ by changing and growing to become like Him — especially in the midst of trials.

The biblical counselor affirms that the character and works of Jesus Christ are the only acceptable standard for human wholeness and that all change in the way the counselee

handles life must be directed toward that standard. The biblical counselor also affirms that love for Christ is the primary God-pleasing motive for change, that His resurrection power mediated by the Holy Spirit is the only source of enablement for that change and that His Word is the only infallible guide for how that change takes place.

Most important, Jesus Christ is at the heart of the biblical counselor's ministry. The biblical counselor knows that all ministry must guide fellow believers into an increasingly dependent, satisfying and obedient walk with Christ in order to imitate His character and works for the purpose of glorifying God in the midst of their challenges.

God calls all believers to minister to one another with humility and compassion. These attitudes of the heart are even more strategic for those who minister to others during times of great suffering and uncertainty. These virtues are developed as the biblical counselor daily fosters his or her own relationship with Christ and seeks to imitate Him.

2. *A biblical counselor "evangelizes the lost" (Matthew 28:18–20; John 3:16–18, 36; Acts 1:8).*

Biblical counselors realize that a lost person's greatest need is to be reconciled to his Creator-God through the saving work of Jesus Christ. The counselee's responses to life's challenges and to his own sinfulness can then be addressed at their core. Therefore, while biblical counselors can offer wise and practical advice to an unsaved counselee, genuine biblical counseling can be done only after the counselee becomes a child of God. Biblical counselors view their conversations with unbelievers as wonderful opportunities to present the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

3. *A biblical counselor "assists fellow believers in their progressive sanctification in the midst of life's challenges through the Christ-centered ministry of God's sufficient Word" (2 Timothy 3:16–17; Hebrews 4:12; 1 Peter 2:1–10; 2 Peter 1:1–11; 2 Peter 3:17–18; Philippians 3:1–14; 2 Corinthians 1:3–7).*

Biblical counselors acknowledge that believers live in a broken world in simultaneous roles of sufferers, sinners and redeemed children of God. They also affirm that as believing counselees grow to see their primary identity as God's children with all of its provisions and promises, they will increasingly embrace the reality of what they have in Christ and thus be freed from seeing themselves as sufferers without hope or as sinners without forgiveness and deliverance.

Biblical counselors also affirm that in the midst of trials, God's path to lasting joy and peace — and to the love for God and others that constitutes biblical healing and maturity — is found only in the believer's growth in the Gospel in cooperation with God's Spirit to become more like Christ. This process of growth — called "progressive sanctification" — is fueled by a relationship with, commitment to, dependence upon and imitation of the character and works of Jesus Christ. While the goal of psychological counseling is often only symptom relief, God's goal for every spiritual challenge that believers face in life as sufferers and sinners is to advance in Christlikeness.

Biblical counselors, therefore, point counselees to a relationship with a compassionate and wise Savior for comfort and hope in the midst of life's trials. They also encourage counselees to reject any false beliefs and to repent of choices spawned by those beliefs. They help to distinguish between personal sin for which counselees are responsible and the sins of others that cause them to suffer (e.g., trauma from abuse and violence, losses because of someone's hurtful words or self-centered choices, effects of war). They help counselees to develop a biblical view of God, others, themselves, their circumstances, their suffering and their sin. They also aid in developing the spiritual disciplines which foster fellowship with Christ and teach them to trust and obey the Word of God in order to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ for His glory.

4. *A biblical counselor values "the partnership and ministry of the local church" (Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:1–7).*

Biblical counselors do not counsel in isolation. They acknowledge that God ministers to His children by His Spirit through His Word both individually and corporately through the discipleship ministry of the local church. They further recognize that the primary responsibility for the spiritual care of believers is given to the counselee's local church pastor.

Biblical counselors, therefore, intentionally seek to connect counselees with a Bible-believing local church where progressive sanctification is fostered through the application of the Word preached and taught; through personal shepherding by spiritual leadership; and through the encouragement, comfort, accountability and discipline offered by fellow believers.

Connections and Resources

As a point of reference for the readers of this paper, BJU shares the same emphases and worldview presuppositions regarding biblical counseling represented by the following organizations and resources:

Representative National Organizations Promoting a Similar Approach to Biblical Counseling

Association of Biblical Counselors – www.christiancounseling.com
Association of Certified Biblical Counselors — www.biblicalcounseling.com
Biblical Counseling Coalition — www.biblicalcounselingcoalition.org
Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation — www.ccef.org
International Association of Biblical Counselors — www.iabc.net

Representative Seminaries Training Biblical Counselors in a Similar Philosophy, Model and Approach

Faith Bible Seminary — www.faithlafayette.org/seminary
Southern Baptist Theological Seminary — www.sbts.edu

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary — www.swbts.edu
Shepherds Theological Seminary — www.shepherds.edu
The Master’s University — www.masters.edu
Virginia Beach Theological Seminary — www.vbts.edu
Westminster Theological Seminary — www.wts.edu

Representative Printed Resources on Biblical Counseling as Taught and Modeled at BJU

- Jones, Robert, Kristen Kellen, and Rob Green. *The Gospel for Disordered Lives* (Nashville: B&H, 2021).
- Kellemen, Bob, Ed. *Scripture and Counseling* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014).
- Kellemen, Robert W. *Gospel-Centered Counseling* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014).
- Lambert, Heath. *The Biblical Counseling Movement after Adams* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2012).
- Lambert, Heath. *A Theology of Biblical Counseling: The Doctrinal Foundations of Counseling Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016).
- MacArthur, John. *Counseling: How to Counsel Biblically* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005).
- Powlison, David, Ed. *The Journal of Biblical Counseling* (Glenside, Pa.; Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation).
- Scott, Stuart and Heath Lambert, Editors. *Counseling the Hard Cases* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2012).
- Tautges, Paul. *Counseling One Another: A Theology of Interpersonal Discipleship* (Wapwallopen, Pa: Shepherd Press, 2015)
- Tripp, Paul David. *Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2002).
- Welch, Ed. *Counselor’s Guide to the Brain and Its Disorders, Second Edition* (Glenside, Pa.; Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation, 1991, 2015).
- Viars, Stephen. *Putting Your Past in Its Place: Moving Forward in Freedom and Forgiveness* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2011.)

PART TWO

THE TRAINING OF BIBLICAL COUNSELORS

Components of the Biblical Counseling Training Program at BJU

This section sets forth what BJU believes are the essential components that make up a thorough educational experience for students of biblical counseling. Some of these components are covered in the undergraduate degree program in biblical counseling and others are taught at the seminary level.

BJU does not believe that an individual must have training in all of these components to have effective biblical ministry to others. BJU strives, however, to provide an education in biblical counseling that is as comprehensive as possible within the number of classroom hours allotted for the bachelor of arts and master of arts programs.

The scope of the skills, duties, knowledge sets and tasks of biblical counselor training offered at BJU are organized below under four main topics: theological framework, methodology, structures and apologetics.¹¹

1. Theological Framework

Biblical theology provides the conceptual framework that defines the ideal, explains the problems and provides the solutions for ministering to others. Therefore, the biblical counselor ...

1.1. Maintains Personal Spiritual Vitality

- 1.1.1. Has experienced genuine salvation
- 1.1.2. Makes daily personal worship of God a priority
- 1.1.3. Seeks a mastery of God's Word through memorization and meditation
- 1.1.4. Walks in the Spirit in order to develop personal holiness and Christlikeness
- 1.1.5. Solves personal problems biblically
- 1.1.6. Demonstrates a consistent pattern of good works before the church and before the world
- 1.1.7. Maintains active membership and service in his local church
- 1.1.8. Seeks opportunities to evangelize the lost
- 1.1.9. Seeks opportunities to be a disciple maker
- 1.1.10. Strives to love God wholeheartedly and to love his neighbor as himself

1.2. Counsels with the Scriptures

- 1.2.1. Upholds the authority, inerrancy and sufficiency of Scripture
- 1.2.2. Subscribes to the fundamentals of the Christian faith
- 1.2.3. Exegetes Scripture skillfully and applies it wisely
- 1.2.4. Champions the centrality of Christ in ministry efforts
- 1.2.5. Views people as fallen, suffering image-bearers in the Creation-Fall-Redemption/Restoration narrative

- 1.2.6. Advocates progressive sanctification as the goal of ministry efforts
- 1.2.7. Interprets human struggles through a biblical lens of applied theology
- 1.2.8. Values and promotes the local church
- 1.2.9. Studies psychological and medical research and interprets findings through a biblical lens
- 1.2.10. Defends biblical counseling against competing theories

1.3 Understands Biblical Categories and Provisions for Human Problems

Biblical counselors should be familiar with the world of counseling psychology because they must understand the language of the psychiatric world in order to communicate with its patients and its practitioners. They should be able to recognize in those diagnoses the categories and responses already defined and addressed by the divine revelation of the Bible.

The biblical counselor recognizes that though the challenges of life vary in intensity and complexity from individual to individual, they nonetheless have at their core struggles that are “common to man” (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Therefore, BJU strives to teach its biblical counseling students the theological foundations and the biblical strategies as well as the contributions and inadequacies of secular psychological and medical theories and treatments for dealing with issues in the following categories (specific issues listed are representative, not exhaustive):

- 1.3.1 God’s provision for the human problems of *uncertainty* and *vulnerability* (e.g., fear, anxiety, phobias, self-injury, obsessive thoughts, panic attacks)
- 1.3.2 God’s provision for the human problems of *suffering from loss* and *adversity* (e.g., grief/sorrow, depressive and bipolar moods, suicidal thoughts and attempts, brain disease or deterioration)
- 1.3.3 God’s provision for the issues arising from the *injustice* of being wronged by others (e.g., bitterness, anger, vengeance, trauma of sexual abuse and assault)
- 1.3.4 God’s provision for the human problem of *overwhelming situations* and their mental and emotional effects (e.g., schizophrenia, psychosis, PTSD)
- 1.3.5 God’s provision for the human problem of *guilt, lust* and *temptation* (e.g., covetousness; struggles with human sexuality, immorality, shame, conscience)

2. Methodology

Scripture guides how biblical counselors intentionally engage in life-shaping, wise love when helping others face the challenges of life. Therefore, the biblical counselor ...

Opening Sessions

2.1. Establishes Connection

- 2.1.1. Creates an emotional and physical safe haven for the counselee but does not harbor or enable criminals
- 2.1.2. Assures the counselee of confidentiality within biblical limits
- 2.1.3. Discusses mutual expectations and goals for counseling

- 2.1.4. Explains the philosophy and methodology of biblical counseling
- 2.1.5. Pledges commitment to assist in spiritual growth
- 2.1.6. Listens actively and responds empathetically to the counselee
- 2.1.7. Displays appropriate transparency
- 2.1.8. Maintains proper boundaries (avoids dependence, dominance, etc.)
- 2.1.9. Executes any necessary permission and agreement forms
- 2.1.10. Prays with and for the counselee
- 2.2. Conducts Assessment
 - 2.2.1. Seeks to understand the counselee's condition (spiritually, relationally, physically, etc.)
 - 2.2.2. Notes objective signs and subjective symptoms displayed in the interview
 - 2.2.3. Determines the nature of the presenting problems(s) and the level of risk/danger to self or others
 - 2.2.4. Explores predisposing, precipitating and perpetuating factors of the problem(s)
 - 2.2.5. Notes the counselee's responses and response patterns to the problem(s)
 - 2.2.6. Helps the counselee see his or her interpretive grid (beliefs regarding self, God and His ways, and others)
 - 2.2.7. Helps the counselee identify the thoughts and desires of the heart
 - 2.2.8. Seeks input ethically from other involved parties
 - 2.2.9. Refers counselee if necessary for additional assessment outside the counselor's expertise (e.g., medical/neurological examination, educational/developmental testing)

Helping Sessions

- 2.3. Develops a Ministry Plan
 - 2.3.1. Formulates the plan, goals and strategy for counseling sessions
 - 2.3.2. If possible, consults counselee's physician, family, etc., in developing ministry plan
 - 2.3.3. Helps counselee make sense of his or her problems and past responses
 - 2.3.4. Continues to revise plan, goals and strategies as counseling progresses
 - 2.3.5. Considers obtaining advice from or referral to another biblical counselor and/or qualified medical professional if the problem is outside counselor's training and expertise
- 2.4. Administers the Counseling Process
 - 2.4.1. Gives hope and reiterates the sufficiency of Christ
 - 2.4.2. Explains the process of sanctification in the trial
 - 2.4.3. Urges commitment to growth in Christlikeness
 - 2.4.4. Solicits commitment regarding the counseling plan, goals and strategy
 - 2.4.5. Overcomes reluctance and resistance
 - 2.4.6. Teaches scriptural responses for handling life through a biblical grid
 - 2.4.7. Teaches spiritual disciplines for relationship with Christ and encourages local church involvement

- 2.4.8. Enlists support (accountability, comfort, assistance, etc.) for the counselee
- 2.4.9. Assigns and follows up homework
- 2.4.10. Measures growth by biblical standards
- 2.5. Supervises Termination
 - 2.5.1. Responds maturely to counselee-initiated termination
 - 2.5.2. Determines when to release from counseling or when to refer
 - 2.5.3. Prepares the counselee for termination
- 2.6. Plans for Follow-up
 - 2.6.1. Arranges for ongoing accountability and support
 - 2.6.2. Recommends resources for continued growth

Professional Practice and Development

- 2.7. Fulfills Ethical and Legal Responsibilities
 - 2.7.1. Maintains an appropriate relationship with the counselee
 - 2.7.2. Maintains appropriate counseling records
 - 2.7.3. Maintains appropriate confidentiality
 - 2.7.4. Communicates with the counselee before involving others unless a crime against a minor is involved
 - 2.7.5. Refers to medical help when needed
 - 2.7.6. Networks with appropriate professionals
 - 2.7.7. Stays current on and fulfills legal and reporting requirements
 - 2.7.8. Adheres to applicable rules and policies of his or her institution
- 2.8. Cultivates Ministry Opportunities
 - 2.8.1. Serves actively in a local church (youth worker, Sunday school teacher, etc.)
 - 2.8.2. Promotes biblical counseling to church leadership
 - 2.8.3. Seeks internship opportunities to counsel while in training
 - 2.8.4. Explores cross-cultural mission opportunities for ministry, especially while in training
 - 2.8.5. Explores parachurch opportunities (camps, adoption agencies, etc.), especially while in training
 - 2.8.6. Networks with biblical counseling ministries and counselors
 - 2.8.7. Explores community opportunities (shelters, crisis centers, youth programs, etc.)
- 2.9. Pursues Ongoing Counselor Development
 - 2.9.1. Studies the Bible and relevant printed material
 - 2.9.2. Utilizes audio and video training resources
 - 2.9.3. Attends counseling conferences
 - 2.9.4. Networks with counseling peers
 - 2.9.5. Seeks counsel from counseling mentors
 - 2.9.6. Pursues advanced counselor training
 - 2.9.7. Seeks credentialed validation, if appropriate

3. Structures

Biblical counseling is delivered to people in need through several means. Therefore, the biblical counselor ...

3.1. Utilizes Supplemental Resources

- 3.1.1. Involves local church resources whenever possible and appropriate
- 3.1.2. Involves marital, parenting, legal, financial, educational and medical resources as necessary
- 3.1.3. Involves parachurch resources when appropriate
- 3.1.4. Involves civic resources when appropriate

4. Apologetics

Theory, methodology and structures grow from scriptural exegesis which critiques theories and practices that challenge biblical presuppositions and categories. Therefore, the biblical counselor ...

4.1. Promotes and Defends Biblical Presuppositions and Categories

- 4.1.1. Understands competing narratives (biological, psychotherapeutic, etc.)
- 4.1.2. Presents at counseling conferences
- 4.1.3. Writes counseling blogs, books, papers, etc.
- 4.1.4. Engages in apologetic discourse with secular and religious groups, when appropriate

ENDNOTES

¹ Ronald A. Horton, ed., *Christian Education: Its Mandate and Mission* (Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press, 1992), v.

² *Ibid.*, vii.

³ Copied from the American Psychological Association’s glossary of psychology: <http://www.apa.org/research/action/glossary.aspx?tab=16>.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Stanton L. Jones, “An Integration View” in *Psychology and Christianity: Five Views*, edited by Eric L. Johnson (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2010), 102.

⁶ These truths regarding man and his fallen condition are discussed in greater depth in standard systematic theologies. A conservative example is *Christian Theology, Third Edition* by Millard J. Erickson (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2013). For example, in “Part Five—Humanity” (pp. 453–558) Erickson discusses “Introduction to the Doctrine of Humanity” (Ch. 22), “The Origin of Humanity” (Ch. 23), “The Image of God in the Human” (Ch. 24), “The Constitutional Nature of the Human” (Ch. 24), and “the Universality of Humanity” (Ch. 25). “Part Six—Sin” (pp. 559–658) covers “The Nature of Sin” (Ch. 26), “The Source of Sin” (Ch. 27), “The Results of Sin” (Ch. 28), “The Magnitude

of Sin” (Ch. 29), and “The Social Dimension of Sin” (Ch. 30). Biblical counselors must be theologically grounded and works such as Erickson’s are helpful tools for understanding man’s true nature and needs.

⁷ Horton, 139–155. BJU’s view of the relationship between the Bible and science is already expressed in BJU’s published philosophy of education in the chapter, “The Christian Teaching of Science.” The biblical viewpoint of science presented in the document applies to the science of psychology as well.

⁸ Physicians face many challenges. Direct-to-consumer advertising by pharmaceutical companies motivates many patients to self-diagnose their distress and then expect that their physician write the psychiatric prescription the patient believes he needs. In addition, medical doctors are pressured by insurance companies to provide a diagnosis for billing purposes even if the physician has spent mere minutes with the patient. In addition, they are under legal pressure to align patient ailments with diagnostic codes or face fraud charges, indictments, and crippling fines and legal fees for not following standards of care which reflect the prevailing views of man.

⁹ While neurobiological research has hinted at uncovering the pathogenesis for “mental illnesses,” it does not appear that such evidence will be forthcoming any time soon. Furthermore, some well-regarded secular psychiatrists and psychologists appear to be distancing themselves from the present chemical imbalance theory of mental illness marketed by the pharmaceutical companies. See *Psychiatric Drug Withdrawal: A Guide for Prescribers, Therapists, Patients, and Their Families* by Peter Breggin, MD (New York: Springer Publishing Company, 2013), *Saving Normal: An Insider’s Revolt Against Out-of-Control Psychiatric Diagnosis, DSM-5, Big Pharma, and the Medicalization of Ordinary Life* by Allen Frances, MD, the chairman of the DSM-IV Task Force and professor emeritus and former chair of the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Science at Duke University School of Medicine (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2013), and *The Intelligent Clinician’s Guide to the DSM-5, Second Edition, Revised* by Joel Paris, MD, Professor of Psychiatry McGill University, Montreal, Canada (New York: Oxford Press, 2015).

Even Dr. Tom Insel, the former Director of the National Institute of Mental Health (the nation’s chief psychiatrist) from 2002–2015, is concerned about the failure of psychiatry to reduce the nation’s morbidity of “mental disorders.” In his presentation at http://youtu.be/hU_5i2c1SKI, Dr. Insel raises serious concerns about the present means of diagnosing and treating psychiatric disorders and admits that psychotherapy and psychopharmacology have failed to provide significant success in key concerns. His confidence now lies in the prospect that breakthroughs in neuroscience will eventually allow psychiatry to cure disorders by fine-tuning the brain’s circuitry through any number of cognitive therapies and brain treatments. Biblical counselors recognize that this research will provide some helpful information about how the brain itself can be changed by certain thought processes and brain exercises. Some of that information will point to what is already the heart and soul of change in a biblical worldview—the renewing of

the mind. Secular solutions will always be incomplete, however, because they ignore the greatest need of the human heart and mind — the knowledge of and relationship with the Creator-God Himself.

¹⁰ For a person-centered collaborative approach to psychiatric drug withdrawal, see *Psychiatric Drug Withdrawal: A Guide for Prescribers, Therapists, Patients, and Their Families* by Peter Breggin, MD (New York: Springer Publishing Company, 2013). For a biblical counseling perspective on these issues, see also *Will Medicine Stop the Pain?: Finding God's Healing for Depression, Anxiety, and Other Troubling Emotions* by Elyse Fitzpatrick and psychiatrist Laura Hendrickson, MD (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2006), the e-book *The Counselor's Guide to the Brain and Its Disorders, Revised Edition* by Edward T. Welch, PhD (Glenside, PA: Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation, 2015), and *Good Mood Bad Mood: Help and Hope for Depression and Bipolar Disorder* by Charles D. Hodges, MD (Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherd Press, 2012). These four books should be a part of every biblical counselor's library.

¹¹ "A comprehensive model has four components. A conceptual framework defines norms, problems, and solutions. A methodology engages in skillful, intentional conversation to remedy defined ills. A social structure delivers cure and care to people in need of help. An apologetic subjects other systems to criticism and defends one's model against competitors" (From David Powlison, *Seeing with New Eyes*, New Growth Press, Kindle Edition, locations 84-87).



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