

INTRO TO BIBLICAL COUNSELING

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Upon the completion of this course, you will be able to.

- Have a better understanding of biblical counseling and its importance.
- Differences & similarities between Biblical counseling and Christian counseling
- See the relevance of biblical counseling in scripture.

Introduction to Biblical Counseling

Around the world, people face similar life challenges. They try to solve their problems in different ways; some use illegal substances like heroin, alcohol, others seek spiritual guidance and direction. The bottom line is people are hurting and desperately in need of a solution. Unknown to them, what they need is the loving touch of the Almighty God. He is ready to bring hope and healing to the lives of those who genuinely reach out to Him.

Counseling has been going on for several decades around the world. We know in ancient times from biblical history, spiritual and religious leaders conducted counseling. It is not a new phenomenon.

As a general rule, all forms of counseling share the same desire to help people overcome their problems. Find meaning and joy in life and become healthy individuals, both mentally and emotionally, but their approaches, applications, and principles differ. In Christianity, ongoing debates are surrounding how counseling should be best practiced. Some believe other disciplines, particularly psychology, should be integrated into Christian theology. In contrast, others disagree and state that the Bible and the power of the Holy Spirit should be enough to counsel the individual.

Definition of Biblical Counseling

According to the International Association of Biblical Counselors, biblical counseling seeks to carefully discover those areas in which a believer (Christian) may be disobedient to the principles and commands of scripture and to help him, or her learn how to submit to God's will lovingly.

Jay E. Adams is referred to as the "father" of Nouthetic. He wrote a book that laid the foundation for the method titled *Competent to Counsel* in 1970. He has since published other books that go further into his techniques and has established the Institute of Nouthetic Studies, to train his faith-based counselors. For the last five decades, Dr. Jay Adams has been at the forefront of

the biblical counseling movement training pastors and other Christian leaders and works in pastoral counseling that is solely based on God's Word.

Biblical counseling, formerly known as Nouthetic Counseling. Greek work, Noutheteo, meaning "to admonish" is a form of counseling based strictly upon the Bible and focused on Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit. This was the standard method of counseling used before the onset of secular psychology in the early 1900s.' Biblical counseling is an approach to counseling that uses the Bible to address the issues in the lives of individuals, couples, and families. It is founded upon the premise that God, through the power of his Holy Spirit and as the father of all humankind, has solutions to man's brokenness and that His solutions are more effective than those devised by man. (Colossians 2:1-10)

According to Master's International University of Divinity Biblical Counseling Program, biblical counselors are trained to present the eternal truth of God's Word to individuals and families who are seeking to move past the false, shallow, and worthless advice of secular humanism. Countless lives are being ruined by the wages of sin (Romans 6:23), and countless individuals are desperately seeking the truth. See their biblical counseling degree programs if interested <https://the.mddivs.edu/MA-in-Biblical-Counseling>.

There are a few organizations (offering training, credentialing & membership) that are committed to the biblical counseling movement:

1. Association of Certified Biblical Counselors (ACBC)
2. The International Association of Biblical Counselors (IABC)
3. American Association of Christian Counselors (AACC)
4. National Biblical Counseling Association (NBCA)
5. Biblical Counseling Coalition (BCC)

Biblical Counseling vs. Christian Counseling

Is there a difference between biblical counseling and christian counseling?

To the non-believer and new believer in Christ, they will probably see it as the same thing. But to a seasoned believer and those involved in christian ministry, they may notice a couple of differences between the two.

To understand the difference between biblical and Christian counseling, we are also going to find out what secular psychology is and its relation to Christian counseling.

The Beginning of Christian Counseling

During the mid 20th century, many Christians thought they could integrate secular theory into their counseling programs (i.e., combining the Bible or Christian theology with psychology); hence the practice, Christian counseling was birthed.

What is Christian Counseling?

Christian Counseling, also known as Integrated counseling, attempts to combine biblical principles with some aspects of secular psychology. Everett Worthington, a licensed clinical psychologist and Professor of Psychology at Virginia Commonwealth University, provides this definition of what Christian counseling is. He states, "It is an explicit or implicit agreement between a counselor who is a Christian and a client for the provision of help for the client, in which the counselor not only has at heart the client's psychological welfare but also the Christian spiritual welfare.

The type of Christian counseling we see today is amongst Christian professionals, those who are expertly licensed in their states and who have advanced degrees. The following individuals, including Dr. Worthington, mentioned above, fall in this category:

- Clyde Narramore – known to be the pioneer of Christian psychology (Christian counseling). He was the author of bestseller books; *The Psychology of Counseling*, *Encyclopedia of Psychological Problems*.
- Gary Collins – A Licensed Clinical Psychologist and author of popular books, *Christian Counseling, A Comprehensive Guide*, and *The Biblical Basis of Christian Counseling*.
- James Dobson – Christian talk show personality, Psychologist, and author.

In an article on Christian counseling written by Dr. Dale Doty of Christian Family Institute, he goes further to state that these Christian professionals mentioned above, including other individuals such as Frank Minirith, Bruce Narramore, and Paul Meier all have a strong commitment to biblical evangelical theology. He also states. "Each of these counselors has developed a model for integrating their knowledge and skills from the field of psychology with biblical truth."

What is Secular Psychology?

Secular psychology is based on the teachings of psychoanalysts such as Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, and Carl Rogers. Secular psychology is based on the ideas that man is good and that the answer to his problems lies within himself. Biblical counseling, on the other hand, is based strictly on biblical principles. It is based on the inerrant and undiluted word of God. It accepts the premise that the Bible is God's word to man (2 Timothy 3:16-17). This form of counseling seeks to change the heart and not just alter behavior.

Secular Psychology's Relation to Christian Counseling?

While biblical counseling believes that the Bible alone is sufficient to heal the fallen conditions and struggles of people, Christian counseling supports the use of specific psychological theories

to help heal and resolve life issues. However, they reject any theories that deny the existence of a theistic God and biblical truths.

Major difference(s) and similarities between Christian Counseling and Biblical (Nouthetic) Counseling

Differences

1. Biblical counseling rejects secular psychology all together while christian counseling often integrates secular psychology into their counseling.
2. Biblical counseling sees scripture as sufficient to equip the child of God for every good work (2 Timothy 3:17).
3. Biblical counseling teaches that man's underlying problem is spiritual.

Similarities

1. Both christian counseling and biblical counseling depend upon the power of the Holy Spirit to relate God's inspired truth about people, problems, and solutions to human suffering and sin.
2. Both biblical counseling and Christian counseling apply biblical principles in their counseling sessions
3. They both believe in their counselees or clients seeking medical treatment or advice when necessary. In situations like that, the counselor makes a referral to a mental health therapist or licensed Psychologist on behalf of the client.

Biblical Counseling And Scripture

The term "biblical counseling" will not be found anywhere in the Bible, but the concept is not new. The basis of biblical counseling is formulated from scriptural principles and examples of interactions of God with man. For example, if you look at the old testament, one of the earliest moments of counsel, I can recall in Joshua 1:8, when God commanded Joshua, after the death of Moses to meditate day and night on His word. He admonished him also to apply the word of God to his life so that he can be prosperous and successful.

In scripture, you have both Greek and Hebrew words that when translated means "counsel." "When you look at the words "to guide" "purpose," "to instruct" that originated from Latin, these are all components of biblical counseling. Then you also have the following words which originated from the Greek word "Parakeleo" (to exhort, to encourage), similar words in scripture are "beseech," "to admonish." They were used mostly in the New Testament.

A Few Scriptural References in the Old and New Testaments Relating Directly to Biblical Counseling

- Psalm 119:24 - Your testimonies also are my delight; and my counselors.
- Psalm 16:7 - I will bless the Lord who has given me counsel; My [a] heart also instructs me in the night seasons.
- Proverbs 19:21 - There are many plans in a man's heart, Nevertheless the Lord's counsel—that will stand.
- Proverbs 3:5-6 - Trust in the Lord with all your heart And lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall [a] direct your paths.
- Proverbs 11:14 - Where there is no counsel, the people fall; But in the multitude of counselors, there is safety.
- Proverbs 15:22 - Without counsel, plans go awry, But in the multitude of counselors they are established.
- John 16:13 - However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth, for He will not speak on His, own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak, and He will tell you things to come.
- Hebrews 6:17 - Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the [a] immutability of His counsel [b] confirmed it by an oath,
- 1 Thessalonians 5:11-12 - Therefore, [a] comfort each other and [b] edify one another, just as you also are doing. 12 And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and [c] admonish you,
- 1 Corinthians 10:11 - Now [a] all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our [b] admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.
- John 14:24 - He who does not love Me does not keep My words, and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me.
- Hebrews 3:13 - But [a] exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

Examples of Biblical Counselors in Scripture

There are a few people in scriptures that you can identify as counselors in their time, but the ones that genuinely exemplified what biblical counseling was all about were:

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

Jesus was and still is the greatest model of a biblical counselor. The goal and mission of his ministry were to effect change that would result in a victorious life for all those who believed in Him and wanted to impact lives for the kingdom. Luke 19:10, 5:24. Jesus was practical in

Apostle Paul

Brother Paul was another great model of a biblical counselor. He was always encouraging the brethren in Christ to walk and work in a way that was pleasing to God. Paul had a passion for

helping believers (Christians) grow in their faith and apply biblical principles to the daily challenges they faced in the world they lived in and the ones we all face today.

Upon completion of studies, contact the school to send test questions and final essay project.

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