

## **The First Step in Implementing Biblical Counseling in Your Church: OVERCOMING FEAR**

### **I. The Common Fears of Implementing Biblical Counseling in Your Church**

#### **A. Fear of F\_\_\_\_\_:**

Some common thoughts:

1. "I am not competent enough to counsel."
2. "What if I 'mess people up'?"
3. "What if biblical counseling never 'takes off' in my church?"

#### **B. Fear of M\_\_\_\_\_:**

Some common thoughts:

1. "But the culture, and even my church culture, thinks I don't have the expertise to handle people's psychological problems."
2. "What if the counselee doesn't think I am doing a great job? What if they don't 'get anything out of this'?"
3. "I am intimidated by having trainees sit in the counseling with me because I doubt they will respect my abilities enough to want to be disciplined by me."
4. "What if the church members and leaders don't think I am doing enough, or that I am 'wasting time', because they don't see 'big stuff' happening through counseling?"

#### **C. Fear of C\_\_\_\_\_:**

Some common thoughts:

1. "How do I manage corporate spiritual growth and culture change in a unified way in my church if some of the people actually begin to 'buy in' to the idea of biblical counseling?"
2. "What if counselees actually *do* start to change and grow? Am I really able to put the time and energy into shepherding them through the messiness of life change?"
3. "What if *I* become aware of deeper problems in my own heart and life? I can manage helping others, but what if *I'm the one who needs help*?"

### **II. The Remedies of Faith**

#### **A. Focus on I\_\_\_\_\_ as your primary motive for ministry (1 John 4:18-19)**

1. If we focus on our performance or rather, our failure to perform (and the resulting judgment we believe will come from God, others, and ourselves

when we fail), then we are self-loving. We have made the motivation for ministry about us and our self-preservation (avoiding judgment).

2. If we focus on God's love for us in the gospel, we know that God does not condemn us for our failures, and therefore, we are unafraid of being condemned by mere humans, including ourselves. We no longer fear failure or people. Instead, we are free to love people and take risks to minister to them even when it may not "succeed" in the way Man thinks of success.
3. *"Anything worth doing is worth doing badly."* - G.K. Chesterton

**B. T\_\_\_\_\_ God and His Word (2 Cor 3:4-6; 12:9-10; Isaiah 55:8-11)**

1. When you lovingly lead hurting people into God's Word, *they will not get "messed up"*.
2. God will overcome *or even use* your incompetence and weakness for the good of others and His glory!

**C. O\_\_\_\_\_ God's commands to disciple regardless of fear (Gal. 1:10; 2 Cor. 5:9)**

1. He didn't say to do the "safe" thing: put on great church services, for example.
2. He called us to do the hard and risky thing: *make disciples*...which is to get very involved in people's messy lives so you can teach them from God's Word how to believe, obey, and grow.
3. In other words, biblical counseling is simply a matter of obedience. Just do it. :-)

**D. Remember God excels at using f\_\_\_\_\_ to confound "wisdom" (1 Cor. 1:26-29)**

1. Yes, the world (and even the world-infected Church) thinks we are fools to try to counsel/disciple.
2. But if God is in this, it *will* succeed and frustrate the "wisdom" of the world (Acts 5:38-39).

**E. Cast and hold fast to God's v\_\_\_\_\_ for church growth (i.e., discipling and shepherding) (Matt. 28:19-20; John 21:15-17; 1 Peter 5:1-4)**

1. God has and will continue to build His Church His way.
2. You will *never* go wrong continually proclaiming and practicing His way of "doing Church"!

**F. Let God change His Church, in His time, through you (Prov. 19:2b; Eph. 4:11-16)**

1. Don't worry about whether your church buys into biblical counseling or not. And if they do, don't worry about the culture change being scary.
2. Just do the work of the ministry and equip others for the work of ministry.
3. Start small. Don't push. Counsel people. Invite others to join you as you disciple them.

**G. Accept that the mess of life change *is* the business of ministry (Mark 10:43-45; John 13:12-15)**

1. Don't fear this because it's hard. Have faith because it's hard. God is at work and can do *the impossible!*
2. It is truly more joyful to do the hard work of ministry than it is to do hard work "for the ministry".

**H. You must lead change by being the first to be changed (1 Peter 5:5-7; 1 Cor. 11:1)**

1. A good theologian is one who has first been captivated by God.
2. A good counselor is one who has first been counseled by God.
3. If you allow the Spirit to do the sweet, but slow and painful, work of change in your own life, you will no longer have the fear of moving your church toward counseling. Instead, you will have the power, love, and self-control to patiently lead God's people into a closer walk with Him (2 Tim. 1:7).

**III. NEXT STEPS** (God-given tools to help you overcome fear as you implement biblical counseling in your church):

- A. Read *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*
- B. Attend EIBCC every month
- C. Attend BCTC at Grace Community in North Liberty in the Fall