

Course Syllabus

Course Objective

This course offers a general introduction to basic concepts and distinctive features of biblical counseling. Students will discuss what biblical counseling is and what it involves, the role of the counselor in biblical counseling, the different kinds of counseling that are needed, the place of counseling in the ministry of the church, and how biblical counseling theory and practice relate to and differ from some of the more common secular models and theories. This course also offers a methodology of biblical counseling. Part of the course will involve a personal improvement project in which the student will evaluate his or her own counseling qualifications, design a plan for improving some area of his or her life, put that plan into action, and then evaluate his or her progress as the course draws to a close.

Student Learning Outcomes

As each student studies the materials presented in this course, listens to and participates in the lectures, and completes the assignments, the skills and knowledge outlined below should be developed. At the end of this course, the student will be equipped to:

1. Pursue an enriched and improved personal life and relationship with Christ;
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the basic concepts, presuppositions, and distinctive features of biblical counseling;
3. Identify and develop the personal qualities that are necessary for effective counseling;
4. Recognize and understand how and why biblical counseling differs from all other kinds of counseling;
5. Evaluate people and their problems in a distinctly biblical way;
6. Develop a practical framework for understanding the counseling process from a biblical perspective;
7. Build upon a correct theoretical basis when pursuing future studies in biblical counseling.

Required Textbooks

- Jay Adams, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling* – ISBN-13: 978-0310511014
- John MacArthur (editor), *Counseling: How to Counsel Biblically* – ISBN-13: 978-0310141259
- Bob Kelleman (editor), *Scripture and Counseling: God's Word for Life in a Broken World* – ISBN-13: 978-0310516835.
- Two counseling booklets of your choice, either from CCEF's *Resources for Changing Lives* or *Day One's Help!* series, or Shepherd's Press *Lifeline* series. These should not be purchased until it is clear what themes you will address in your Self-Counseling Project

- David Powlison, *Affirmation & Denials: A Proposed Definition of Biblical Counseling* – The Journal of Biblical Counseling, volume 19, Number 1, Fall 2000 (provided by professor)

ACBC Questions – aligns with SLO 2, 4, and 6

You will be required to answer six questions from the ACBC Theology Exam and five from the ACBC Counseling Exam. Using essay-style writing, please respond thoroughly to each of these assigned statements or questions. Write your answers as though you are explaining them to a counselee, defining all terms clearly and precisely. For this assignment only, **use 1.5 spacing**. Your answers should be 1 page to 1 ½ pages in length. Support all your answers with Scripture. You may use any written or oral sources, but you must cite your sources at the end of each answer. The professor will provide weekly feedback on your answers. You will incorporate the feedback from the professor in your answers and resubmit them the following week alongside any other assignments due on that day.

Reading Response – aligns with SLO 1, 2, 4, and 7

During this course, the student is responsible for completing all the required reading. The student needs to read carefully, thinking about how the material applies to his or her own life, as well as others he or she may be in contact with. One 4-page (one page per assigned reading; do not include booklets) report on all that has been read. Please give concise but relevant answers to the report questions. Carefully answer all the questions below for each of your assigned readings for this report! Include these questions and respond in accordance with WRS's writing standards (no bullet points).

Reading Report Questions

1. Did you read all the assignments? Yes ____, No _____. If no, indicate the percentage read ____.
2. What important principles did you see concerning the Christian life? (Please summarize them.)
3. Was there anything you disagreed with or had questions about? If so, what?
4. What were the most significant challenges or lessons you learned for your own life from the reading assignments?
5. Was there someone you encouraged with what you have learned? If so, please explain.

Case Study – aligns with SLO 3, 5, and 7

In a 5–6-page, double-spaced paper, analyze and develop a plan of help for one of the three case studies, located below in the syllabus (Mary, John, and Lois). Analyze what you see happening in the individual's life. Use the big picture diagram (located in the class notes) to do the analysis and demonstrate your familiarity with the biblical thinking of the rest of the notes. How would biblical counseling help this person? You do not need to reproduce the diagram. Instead, write an analysis describing each picture and how it relates to your counselee. Then develop a plan to help them biblically. What/who is the individual worshipping, and how is God specifically worth his worship? Be detailed and precise with how proper worship is the answer. Give biblical homework and explain how you would utilize biblical resources to help this person.

Self-Counseling Project – aligns with SLO 1, 3, and 7

The major project for this class will be a self-counseling project. In this project, the student will seek genuine biblical change in a problem area in his or her own life, keeping John 15:1, Hebrews 12:5-14, and Psalm 139:23f in mind. The project will be pursued through six parts, spread throughout the term. (You could use this project as a part of your daily devotional exercise during the time of the course.) The following elements constitute the self-counseling project: 1) an ongoing journal which you will write in three times a week for the duration of the term, 2) a diagnostic tool: the Drawing Out the Purposes of the Heart Questionnaire (in the syllabus), 3) an initial plan for change contract, 4) two vignettes (or snapshots) of your progress toward change during the term, 5) a final report, and 6) a personal “case study” and counseling agenda.

- 1) The *Journal* – Keeping a journal will be the glue that binds the aspects of this project together. You will be expected to keep at least three journal entries each week, recording your thoughts about perceived failures and victories in pursuing your plan for genuine change. This element of the project helps to document how your desires and behavior change throughout the course of the project. At this beginning point of the project, please take a minute to record your goals for your walk with Christ this term and how you hope this project will contribute. Perhaps this first journal entry could be in the form of a prayer of devotion to the Lord. Future entries would be more detailed and focused as you progress through the project. Record specific occasions when the problem surfaces or when you are tempted. 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, define the problem, expose motives, and point to solutions? You will not be required to submit your journal in its entirety for this project, so please pursue the journal in a way that best allows you to contribute to it. You will, however, be required to include excerpts from your journal in assignments as support for your assessment of your walk of obedience and what you perceive that God is doing in your life along the way. Your journal is vital to progress in this project and will be considered strictly confidential when excerpts from it are included in your assignments.
- 2) *Drawing Out the Purposes of the Heart Responses* – In order to aid your selection of the issue you will address for change this term, you are to respond to a series of penetrating questions, which were adapted from an article in the *Journal of Biblical Counseling* (Fall 1996) in the Drawing Out the Purposes of the Heart document. For additional questions, you may reference David Powlison’s X-Ray questions from his chapter in *Seeing with New Eyes*, but this is not required. Please seek to answer the Drawing Out questions honestly, recording not only what is true of you on your best days, but also what is revealed on the days you fail the most. Take courage as you contemplate these questions. You need not fear. Please provide brief responses (3-4 sentences per question). Seek to be honest. Consider your responses as though in reference to your worst days, when your heart was really displaying its struggle with sin. You might be tempted to answer what you wish were true, or what was true on a really good day. Remember that the goal of this project is to be conformed more into the likeness of Jesus, so it is to your advantage to confront the difficult matters in your Christian life. You may also want to complete the personal inventory surveys (see the PDI) and ask a couple of trusted friends (including your spouse if applicable) to do so as well. We likely all have the tendency

to become blind to our weaknesses on the one end, and to not respond in thankfulness for the evidence of God's grace in our lives on the other. These surveys may also assist you in selecting the focus of your self-counseling term project (the surveys do not need to be submitted for grading).

- 3) *Contract* – After completing your responses to the questions, review your responses and look for themes. These repeated focal points may point to a good area to target for this self-counseling project. Then select one problem or issue in your own life to work on improving during this course. You may pick what appears to be a relatively minor habit, for example, biting your fingernails or forgetfulness of some kind. Or you may choose a more major pattern of wrong thinking, behaving, 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 schoolwork, 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 learn 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's Word. If you choose a larger issue, you will need to break it down into particular actions, attitudes, thoughts, and feelings that manifest the problem. Fundamental changes in attitude have a ripple effect. Here are some samples of issues you might want to deal with:

- Driving habits: your driving may provide a microcosm of your lifestyle. How do you handle traffic jams?
- The way you play sports or approach almost any endeavor. Sports do not build character, they reveal it (only the Holy Spirit using the Word builds holy character). Sports or school or work habits can be a wonderful window into your 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, fantasizing, voyeurism, 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.? Would people say you are a controlling person? Are you pushy, suspicious, confident or cowardly around people?
- Self-absorption: 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?

- How do you relate to authority? Parents, teachers/professors, church leaders, bosses, police, umpires, referees, 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 does not give you the grade you think you deserve?
- How do you respond to being sinned against, when you are wronged, betrayed, maligned, criticized unjustly, hurt by other people?
- Are you easily irritated, upset, worried over adverse circumstances, financial pressures, unrealized goals, foolish people, etc.?

These are just a few examples of possible counseling issues; there could be many others. Think about it carefully. After it has become clear to you what the themes are for your project, you can now pick out your two counseling booklets that would fit your theme. As you read these booklets, underline at least ten statements from each that are meaningful and mark two ideas from each booklet that you can incorporate into your plan. Unlike most of the papers you will write in seminary, this is not a research paper that requires library searches and original source material. This is a paper about you! You will never understand biblical counseling until you understand the importance of personal change and growth in the Christian life. This is an excellent opportunity for you to work on an area of your life that you know needs to change to be more like Jesus Christ. At this point, you will complete the Project Contract, which describes your understanding of the area in need of change and how you are committing to pursue change in a specific way this term.

- 4) *Vignettes 1 & 2* – Represent a brief slice of life, a description of a key event related to this project that specifically manifested a challenge to working toward your goal. You may have had a great victory, or perhaps you failed again (but this time with more resistance than in the past). Describe what happened, where you were, who else was involved, what did you do/say/think, and how you responded when the event was over. As you consider the vignette, relate it to the teaching from the lectures and the process of changing and growing presented by the professor (put off, renew, put on from Ephesians 4:22-24). What did this event teach you about yourself, and any adjustments to your plan that you may need to make? Also, provide a brief progress report of how you are fulfilling your Self Counseling Contract. Your vignette and progress report should be 1-2 pages, double-spaced.
- 5) *Final Report* – Now that you have been working toward biblical change in a selected area for some time, give a 3–4-page testimony of what God has done in your life. Give salient details from the victories, failures, and tensions faced in the application of your Contract. Then evaluate and assess where you think you have come, what change has taken place, what changes yet remain, where you have and have not 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, anything else you think relevant, and an assessment from 1-5 of how diligent you

were in carrying out your plan (with 1 being once a month, and 5 being nearly every day). Fill this report with good, tight, insightful, specific, fact-filled descriptive paragraphs. Make sure to give specifics (e.g., excerpts from your journal, identification of turning points, and key milestones in the project) about 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. Please also report one of the underlined statements from each booklet and why it was significant or how each helped you with your project. You must use excerpts from your journal to illustrate your analysis of what God did in your life.

- 6) *Case Study and Counseling Agenda* – Now that you have worked on this area throughout the term, please take another look at the project as a whole from the perspective of a counselor and describe your “Case.” Start by presenting a one-page description of who you were at the beginning of the project, and the details of your life that pointed toward a need for change. Present this case study in the third person anonymously as though you were looking on as an observer. Next, in an additional 1-2 pages, describe what was at the heart of the problems in the case and how the Scripture frames them. Last, in the final 1-2 pages, present a counseling agenda (an outline of teaching lessons and topics to address) you would seek to address in the first 6-8 weeks of counseling a person just like you describe in your case study. In your agenda, be sure to list key passages of Scripture needed for counseling your case. Remember that these were passages of Scripture that were crucial and meaningful to your own pursuit of change these past months. If done well, this case study and counseling agenda can be an excellent resource for powerfully training others to understand the heart biblically and to counsel from the Scriptures.

Writing Format

All written assignments must follow *The SBL Handbook of Style*. You will find formatting samples and other invaluable resources on formatting at <https://wrs.edu/student-center/student-handbook-and-resources>.

Grading

- ACBC exam questions – 20%
- Reading and reading responses – 20%
- Case study – 20%
- Self-counseling project – 25%
- Attendance and participation – 15%

Go to https://wrs.edu/assets/docs/WRS_Rubric.pdf for the standard rubric used to grade papers in this course.

Class Schedule

August 31

First day of class

Self-Counseling Project: Begin journaling

September 7

NO CLASS (Labor Day)

September 14

ACBC Theology Exam 1

Self-Counseling Project: Drawing Out the Purposes of the Heart

September 21

ACBC Theology Exam 2

September 28

NO CLASS (Professor out of town)

ACBC Theology Exam 3

October 5

ACBC Theology Exam 4

Self-Counseling Project: Contract

October 12

ACBC Theology Exam 5

Case Study (Part 1): Read all three case studies found in the course syllabus and select which of these you will work on for the Case Study analysis assignment

October 19

ACBC Theology Exam 6

Self-Counseling Project: Vignette 1

October 26

ACBC Counseling Exam 1

November 2

ACBC Counseling Exam 2

November 9

NO CLASS (Professor out of town)

ACBC Counseling Exam 3

November 16

ACBC Counseling Exam 4

Self-Counseling Project: Vignette 2

November 23

ACBC Counseling Exam 5

Case Study (Part 2): Compose an analysis of your chosen case study per the instructions given earlier in the syllabus.

November 30

Self-Counseling Project: Final Report

December 7

Reading Response

December 14

NO CLASS (Professor out of town)

Self-Counseling Project: Case Study & Counseling Agenda

Case Studies

Mary – Case Study #1 by Wayne Mack

Mary is a seventeen-year-old girl who is at sword's point with her mother. She and her mother argue constantly over anything and everything. Both of them claim to be Christians, but they certainly aren't relating the way Christians should. Her mother, Jean, will sometimes buy Mary dresses, but Mary will refuse to wear them. When questioned about the dresses her mother buys, she offers a limp excuse for not wearing them. Instead, she dresses in ways that her mother doesn't approve. She refuses to help with the housework when Jean asks her to, but occasionally when her parents go away for a few days, they return to find Mary has cleaned the house from top to bottom. The neighbors and people at church probably would never believe that Mary refuses Jean's requests for help, that she is disobedient and impertinent, and that she resists talking to her mother about her friends and activities. She chatters endlessly to some of these neighbors and church people. Frequently, she offers to help other people with household chores and other things they may be doing.

Mary thinks that her mother is unreasonable in her demands and expectations. She treats her like a child, telling her what she should do and not do on even the minor details. She resents her mother's desire to know everything she does and thinks, everyone she meets, and what they talk about. She thinks that her mother doesn't trust her, doesn't understand that she's able to think and make choices for herself. Other mothers aren't that way. Why does she have to have a mother who is so bossy, so intrusive, so unwilling to listen or see things from her viewpoint?

Some of the things that cause the most discord between Mary and her mother are the way Mary uses the telephone - her mother says she's constantly on it; the kind of friends she associates with; the music she listens to; her desire to have some input in determining the time she should be home; the sloppy way she does her homework and the resultant poor grades she is getting; the nasty way she talks to her mother and her going off on dates without permission. Mary struggles with resentment toward her mother and tries to avoid her as much as possible. On at least two occasions she has become so frustrated and embittered about the home situation that she has moved out to a friend's house for several days without even telling her parents where she is.

Mary has almost concluded that the situation with her mother is hopeless if she remains at home. She has prayed about it and asked God to change her mother, but He doesn't seem to hear. Now she's even having serious doubts about God's existence and especially about His love and care for her. If God really loved her, why doesn't He do something to make her situation easier? Other young people don't have problems with their mothers like she does. Why did God have to give her a mother like hers? She sometimes finds herself wishing that her mother were dead or that she were dead. When this occurs, she feels so ashamed, but when she has another bout with her mother, she can't seem to help herself. She wants to go to college but worries that her poor grades will prevent her from being accepted.

As previously mentioned, Mary has made a profession of faith, and at times God has seemed so real to her. On numerous occasions she has been convicted about the way she has thought, felt, and reacted to her mother and about other things as well. At these times, she would rededicate

herself, make commitments to change, and for a brief period she would. But then the initial enthusiasm would wane, and she would go back to thinking, feeling and acting in unbiblical ways.

Presently Mary is surrounded by people much of the time, but there are occasions when she feels a horrible sense of loneliness. She has many acquaintances and shallow friendships, but no one to whom she can pour out her soul. She's tried to let others know in subtle ways that she has some unmet needs, but either they haven't gotten the message, or they've jumped to some "quick fix" remedies that have only dealt with surface issues. She wants to feel close to someone but wonders if anyone really cares.

What would others think of her if they knew what was really happening in her life, what she was thinking, what she was feeling? Everyone seems so busy, so wrapped up in their own interests and concerns. At times, people around her seem so superficial, so shallow, so selfish, so unconcerned. Even the Christians she knows seem that way – they say they love Christ, love people, but do they really? Some of them seem so much like "know it all's," giving glib, hasty answers to serious problems. At times, Mary identifies very well with the Psalmist who said, "Look to the right and see; for there is no one who regards me... no one cares for my soul" (Ps 142:4).

In her misery, she has begun to lower some of her standards with the guys she's dating. She finds herself indulging in fantasies and being tempted to do things that she has always been told are wrong. In fact, recently she has allowed herself to become too physically involved with a guy that she was dating. She desperately wants to be approved, accepted, loved, liked by someone, and when this guy told her he loved her and wanted her, she found herself weakening and giving in to heavy petting. Now she is experiencing a sense of guilt and shame. Part of her wishes that she hadn't yielded, but another part of her feels so weak, so vulnerable, so desirous of having someone really want her. If this guy continues to pursue her, she really doesn't know what she will do.

Mary is confused, unhappy, frustrated, despondent, and lonely. Up to this time, she has not openly and fully shared her struggles with anyone – she's been afraid too; she hasn't wanted to be rejected or lectured. Now, however, she is desperate; she doesn't know where to turn. She's got to do something. She can't continue this way. So, she decides to run a risk and comes to you to unload.

John – Case Study #2 by Wayne Mack

John is a 21-year-old college student who is struggling with depression and anger. He's here in school but not very happy about it. In fact, on many occasions, he has wondered whether finishing college is worth all the hassle he's experiencing. Some of the hassle is related to the pressures of getting all of his homework done. He thinks that some of the teachers have unreasonable expectations. They just don't seem to understand that there's more to college than studying. He walks around with the thought that he's never going to get everything that is being required of him finished. He comes to the end of every day with the thought that he really didn't accomplish much. He wants more time to relax and enjoy college life. This isn't the way life should be!

John thinks he studies hard but doesn't get the rewards or recognition he deserves. He's not satisfied with the grades he's receiving. All this studying, and what does he get? Mostly B's, a few C's, and one or two A's. In high school, he got A's in most of his courses with a couple of B's in some of the math courses he took. He was always on the honor roll and all of that with a minimum of effort. Why,

he hardly had to study at all, and he had plenty of time for socializing and being involved in extracurricular activities. But that's not the way he's found it in college. Here, it's work, work, work! Sometimes he wonders if it's worth the effort. In fact, there are times when he's thought about bagging it and going home and going to work for his father in his garage.

In addition to the pressure from the work involved in staying afloat academically at college, John is under the gun in terms of paying for his education. To accomplish this feat, he's dependent on government and college loans and grants. Every semester, he has to wonder whether he's going to make it. He provides for part of what he needs by taking whatever jobs he can get in the summer and securing part-time work during the school year. His parents have helped some, but they certainly haven't paid as much for his college education as other parents have. He vacillates between thinking that his parents ought to do more and thinking that they really can't afford to give what they do. They're not rich, and John knows that what they've done has involved sacrifice. He's prayed and prayed about the matter, but God isn't making it easy. Sometimes he wonders why God is making it so tough for him. After all, John reasoned, if God owns the cattle on a thousand hills, the wealth in every mine, why doesn't he give me some of those cattle or some of that wealth? He sure seems to be doing that for some of the other students. They seem to have it so easy. They don't have to worry about money. Here he was at college to learn how to serve God better, maybe even to prepare for Christian service, and still God allowed him to struggle with making his financial ends meet.

John came to a Christian college expecting that living in a dorm with other fellows would be a constant delight. He had gone to a public high school where very few people were Christians. Being a Christian, he was always in the minority. Frequently, he found himself standing alone in reference to his values, standards, and convictions. What he believed about God and Christ and life was at best tolerated and at worst mocked and ridiculed. As a result, he had many acquaintances, but few really close friends. Most of his relationships were very superficial. But John fully expected that when he came to a Christian college, all of that would change. He came expecting that people would be kind and considerate and unselfish, that everyone would esteem others better than themselves.

Unfortunately, that's not the way it has worked out. Some of his roommates have been insensitive; they've not respected his privacy; they've been too loud when he's been trying to sleep or study; they've misused his computer or his CD player or done a hundred other things which have not been to John's liking. He's attempted to be a servant to them, many times going out of his way to help them or do things for them. But many of them just take it for granted – they seldom show any appreciation for the sacrifices he makes for them. Recently, he finds himself being easily upset, annoyed with some of his dorm mates and he has begun to treat them the way he thinks they are treating him. As already mentioned, John is a Christian; he has been for a long time. He was raised in a Christian home. His mom and dad always took him to church. They often talked to him about his relationship with Jesus Christ. They always prayed at mealtimes and sometimes they had devotions together. And when he was about 10 years of age, John was convicted of his sin and turned to Christ for salvation. Since that time, he's had his "ups and downs" spiritually, but he's always hung in there and kept on going.

Sometimes, he has felt closer to the Lord than he has at other times; sometimes he's been more dedicated than at other times; sometimes he's been more faithful in his devotional life than at

other times, but basically, he's tried to do what God has wanted him to do. Yet there have been periods when John has doubted, when he's questioned whether the Christian life is all that it's cracked up to be. There have been times—more so in recent days than ever before—when he's wondered if God really cares for him and about him. When he prays, God doesn't seem to answer, and He seems so far away. When he reads his Bible, it doesn't seem to mean anything to him. When he goes to chapel or church, it's more out of a sense of duty than delight. He hears other Christians talk about how real God is to them and he wonders if God is playing favorites or if these people are just making it up. John never used to think or feel this way, but more and more he finds himself struggling with doubts, confusion, discouragement, sadness, frustration, and a gnawing sense of emptiness.

John is surrounded by people much of the time, but there are occasions when he feels a horrible sense of loneliness. He has many acquaintances and shallow friendships, but no one with whom he can pour out his soul. He's tried to let others know in subtle ways that he has some unmet needs, but either they haven't gotten the message, or they've jumped in with some "quick fix" remedies that have dealt only with surface issues. He wants to feel close to someone, but he wonders if anyone really cares.

What would others think of him if they knew what was going on inside him, what he was thinking, what he was feeling? Everyone seems so busy, so wrapped up in their own interests and concerns. At times, he thinks the people around him seem so superficial—they say they love Christ, love people, but do they really? Much of their talk is about things that don't really matter—joking around, putting each other down, being sarcastic. Some of them seem so much like "know it all's," giving glib, hasty answers to serious problems. John wonders if there is anyone who will really weep with those who weep, who will really bear someone else's burden. He identifies very well with the psalmist who said, "Look to the right and see; for there is no one who regards me;... no one cares for my soul" (Ps 142:4).

In his unhappiness, John has begun to do some things that have brought a sense of guilt and shame. He's watched some unwholesome television programs and read some unwholesome literature. On occasion when he thought no one would know, he's looked at Playboy magazines or gone to a movie where explicit sex was on display. Sometimes he's found himself daydreaming, even fantasizing in improper ways about some of the girls in his classes. All too often, his lusts have become so inflamed and his sadness so great that he has indulged in self-stimulation. All of this frightens him and makes him feel so ashamed. He knows it's wrong and he has often resolved to stop doing these things, but when the pressure is on his resolve is as easily broken as a thin piece of crepe paper.

Up to this time, John has shared none of these struggles with anyone – he's been afraid to; he hasn't wanted to be rejected or lectured. After all, the idea he's received is that good Christians aren't supposed to have problems like his. But now he's become so unhappy. He doesn't know where to turn. He's got to do something. He can't continue this way. He's too depressed, angry, frustrated, unhappy. So, he decides to run a risk and comes to you to unload.

Lois – Case Study #3 David Powlison

Lois is a 39-year-old woman. She was married at 19 because she was pregnant and was divorced at 22. She subsequently got her bachelor's degree in elementary education and has been teaching for 12 years in a local public school. She has found a lot of meaning and stability in her job – especially during rough times emotionally—and has received consistently good evaluations from supervisors.

Lois had a number of short-term sexual relationships with men over the years, but never remarried. Her daughter, Renee, left home after high school, and is working in a beauty shop and living with her boyfriend. Lois's relationship with Renee was basically positive over the years, and she looks to that, too, as a source of stability and “being forced to be responsible” over the years.

At various times she drank heavily and used marijuana recreationally. She never considered herself an alcoholic, for she could stop at will when she got alarmed at what seemed to be excessive use. She is slightly pudgy and is concerned over a recent ten pound weight gain which she attributes to “snacking to calm my nerves.” She dresses modestly and “middle of the road” and uses makeup only occasionally and sparingly. “I try to keep myself looking reasonably well, but I've never been too obsessed with what I look like, like some women are.” She used to watch TV for a couple of hours every night, but now does that only 2 or 3 nights a week.

She had gotten herself rather deeply in debt during her marriage and schooling. Despite occasional “binge” purchases that set her back, she has been basically free of debt for the last 5 years. She sees herself living “hand-to-mouth,” however, and not able to save. She worries that she has not been able to save in an IRA for a down payment on a house. She views her teacher's pension as an important source of security.

At various times she struggled with depression, even seeking psychiatric help on one occasion. She frequently oscillated between fearful “mousiness” and angry rages with her husband and boyfriends. Feelings of anxiety, failure and self-hatred are “endemic and sometimes become epidemic.” The intensity and frequency of these reactions and feelings lessened somewhat as she “grew up” in her 30s.

Her family upbringing was, in her words, “bizarre.” Her father was “brilliant, and he'd always tell us that he failed to get his PhD only because he insulted his advisor who was a total jerk and deserved it. He was a believer in telling people exactly what he thought of them, which wasn't too pleasant for me because he didn't think too much of me.” Her father was an alcoholic who was constantly losing jobs and alienating people by his aggressive and “paranoid” ways. “I think I inherited some of his intelligence, for I always did well in school. I think I would have felt more hurt by him if I hadn't seen him as a “crazy man” even from when I was in elementary school. I usually tried to keep my distance.” Lois sees herself as a lot like her mother in personality – “only not so extreme” – in being prone to passivity, fear, anxiety, and only occasional anger. “I'm a pleaser and a follower, not an initiator, leader or aggressor. I'm like her, but I was never close to her.” The family lived in 8 different towns during Lois's school years. “I basically got pregnant and married in order to have an excuse to get out of the house. I never really had any friends, and I fell for the first person who was nice to me.” She had no formal religious upbringing.

Her father is living 3000 miles away. “Since I became a Christian I've been able to forgive him, and start up a reasonably cordial relationship—I write or phone every few months, and have

visited for a couple days on two occasions. He's still a bit of a trial, and it would take a miracle for us to ever really be close. He's this same old self, though each of his negative ways is less intense." Lois's mother had divorced him after the children left home, and she died ten years ago. "I grieved. I coped. I think I feel sadder and feel regrets more now that I'm a Christian, because we were never really close. She was too much wrapped up in her own problems."

Lois has a brother 7 years older with whom she has never been close. "We each kind of tried to make the best of it and were too far apart to ever be more than next-door neighbors who feel a kind of arm's-length curiosity about the other. He's had a couple divorces but seems to be doing pretty well running his small business."

Four years ago, she was converted to Christ through the testimony of a neighboring woman who had become a friend. The sexual immorality and substance abuse stopped immediately. The slow curve of improvement in negative feelings and actions – anger, depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, fearfulness – took a rather marked positive jump, though she is still plagued by these things to a certain degree. The model of other Christian women has really helped her to grow both personally and in having some confidence to think about getting involved with a man again, "this time in the right way which I didn't know anything about before." She wants to serve the Lord with her gifts and has gotten active in teaching Sunday school and attending a few courses in the church's weekly Bible school. She has 3 Christian women whom she feels close to, all of whom are married. One of the couples hosts a weekly Bible study and fellowship group which Lois attends regularly and finds to be a place where "people are honest and pray for one another in a way that's not just surfacey."

She has sought counseling from you. Her presenting problem is two-fold: "I'm depressed, afraid and panicky in my own heart. I know that Jesus died for my sins, but sometimes I just don't feel it and feel that God must hate me. And things are angry and tense between me and Willy." She has been dating Willy for about 8 months. He is a Christian man her age and was never married. He has been a Christian since his teens and is both knowledgeable in the Bible and committed to diaconal ministry. He is a high school graduate and works as a foreman in a factory.

They met at the Bible study. They both found it easy to talk with one another – until recently. They have the same basic goals for lifestyle and ministry and have felt a real "click." They would like to marry, and their mutual friends think it is a natural. But their relationship is having problems. "He's the one, I know it, but why am I getting so uptight?" she has become very picky at his shortcomings, and both of them hate that. They have had arguments which they have not been able to solve, so trust has been diminishing. There are "taboo topics" which they can't approach without tensions: setting a date for the marriage; he really hopes to have children, and she is cold to the idea; her depression or pickiness and his grumpiness, etc. Lois has a terror of being abandoned and rejected, "of failing for the umpteenth time, and this time as a Christian." There is no sexual impropriety in their relationship, for both are very careful and circumspect.

They have prayed, read the Bible and Christian books, attended several seminars and retreats, sought the advice and prayers of friends, without being able to lick either the personal or relationship problems. "Maybe this sound contradictory, but my devotional life has actually gotten more regular and more meaningful since we've been having problems. I always had trouble being

consistent, and I actually think I feel closer to the Lord than I did a year ago.” Willy does not want to seek counseling at this time. But Lois says, “That’s OK, because I really think that a lot of the problem is me, not us, and if I can change it will make a big difference. I’ve tried to do the right things, and I think I’ve improved, but I still get angry and negative as a knee-jerk reaction. Then I feel so guilty. I always ask his forgiveness after, because the Lord convicts me instantly. Willy forgives me, but I wallow around being depressed. And then I hurt him again, or he hurts me. I can tell he’s got his guard up and is confused about whether I love him or not and whether he can trust me. Believe it or not, I’m getting better. I don’t get so panicky when he’s angry at me, and I more easily think of loving things to do for him. But I just still feel stuck. Maybe it’s that I’m not moving fast enough. He can be grumpy at me, and I act as if it’s the end of the world. Oh, one other thing you ought to know is that I get extra touchy and negative when I’m overtired or around the time of my period. I’m on a committee at the school involved in redesigning the curriculum, and that has meant a lot of extra meetings and work which, on top of everything else, has had me pretty worn out.”

ACBC Exam Study Guide

Theology Exam

Q1: Describe the inspiration, inerrancy, and authority of Scripture as well as the relationship of each one of these issues to one another.

Definitions:

Inspiration

Inerrancy

Authority

Scripture Texts:

2 Timothy 3:15-17

Matthew 19:4

Matthew 5:17-18

Matthew 22:31

2 Peter 1:20-21

Mark 12:26

Matthew 28:18

Acts 17:11

Jude 1:25

2 Corinthians 10:5

Matthew 7:29

Psalms 19

John 10:35

1 Thessalonians 2:13

Titus 1:2

Proverbs 30:5

Matthew 12:5

Resources:

Inspiration

Jay Adams, *A Theology of Christian Counseling* (Zondervan, 1979), 17.

Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Baker, 1983), 224-245.

Inerrancy

The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy. Available at <http://www.bible-researcher.com/chicago1.html>

Jay Adams, *A Theology of Christian Counseling* (Zondervan, 1979), 17-18.

Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Baker, 1983), 246-285.

Authority

Jay Adams, *A Theology of Christian Counseling* (Zondervan, 1979), 16-37.

Q2: Describe the sufficiency of Scripture. Relate the doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture to the practice of biblical counseling. Research and respond to the arguments of at least one integrationist or Christian Psychologist regarding the insufficiency of Scripture for counseling.

Definitions:

Sufficiency of Scripture

Scripture Texts:

2 Timothy 3:15-17

John 10:35, 16:12-13, 17:17

2 Peter 1:3ff

1 Corinthians 2:13

Matthew 5:18, 24:35

Hebrews 4:12

Resources:

Sufficiency

Jay Adams, *The Christian Counselor's Manual* (Zondervan, 1986), 18-23, 97.

Jay Adams, *Ready to Restore* (P&R, 1981), 11.

John MacArthur & Wayne Mack, *Introduction to Biblical Counseling* (Word, 1994), 63ff.

Stuart Scott & Heath Lambert eds., *Counseling the Hard Cases* (B&H Academic, 2012), 1-24.

Steve Viars & Rob Green, "The Sufficiency of Scripture," in *Christ Centered Biblical Counseling*, edited by James MacDonald, Bob Kelleman, & Steve Viars (Harvest House, 2013), 89-106.

Critique of the "insufficiency" view

Heath Lambert, *The Biblical Counseling Movement After Adams* (Crossway, 2012), chapter 5.

Eric Johnson, ed., *Psychology & Christianity: Five Views*, 2nd ed. (IVP, 2010), 143-147, 194-198, 245-273. In this "multiple views" book, David Powlison writes the article which articulates the biblical counseling view of counseling and its relationships to psychology (245-273). However, he also offers critiques of both integration (143-147) and Christian psychology (194-198) from a biblical counseling viewpoint.

David Powlison, "Critiquing Modern Integrationists," *Journal of Biblical Counseling* XI (1993): 24-34.

Integrationist and Christian Psychology (potential resources for critique)

Eric Johnson, *Foundations for Soul Care* (IVP, 2007)

Stanton Jones & Richard Butman, *Modern Psychotherapies* (IVP, 1991)

Mark McMinn & Clark Campbell, *Integrative Psychotherapy* (IVP, 2007)

Q3: Describe your position on the nature of continuing revelation (i.e., prophecy, tongues, words of knowledge). In particular explain whether you believe prophecy is a present gift in today's church. Explain the relationship between your understanding of the gift of prophecy and the sufficiency of Scripture.

Definitions:

Sufficiency

Inspiration

Continuing revelation

Miracles, prophecy, tongues

Scripture Texts:

2 Peter 1:3

Jude 1:3

2 Timothy 3:15-17

2 Corinthians 12:12

Revelation 22:18

1 Corinthians 14:21-22

Hebrews 1:1-2

Revelation 22:18-19

Hebrews 2:3-4

John 14:26

Resources:

Nathan Busenitz, "Charismatic Counterfeits: Do the Modern Gifts Meet the Biblical Standard?" (Strange Fire Conference presentation, 2013), available at: www.gty.org/resources/sermons/TM13-14/charismatic-counterfeits-do-the-modern-gifts-meet-the-biblical-standard

Thomas Edgar, *Miraculous Gifts: Are They for Today?* (Wipf & Stock, 2001).

John MacArthur, *Charismatic Chaos* (Zondervan, 1992), esp. chs. 2, 5, 9, 10.

John MacArthur, "Does God Still Give Revelation?" (Grace to You Article, July 13, 2009), available at www.gty.org/resources/articles/a366/does-god-still-give-revelation

John MacArthur, *Strange Fire* (Thomas Nelson, 2013).

Q4: Define general revelation and special revelation and describe the nature of their authority as well as their relationship to one another.

Definitions:

General Revelation

Special Revelation

Scripture Texts:

Psalms 19

2 Peter 1:3

Romans 1:18-21

2 Timothy 3:15-17

Resources:

Wayne Mack & John MacArthur, eds., *Introduction to Biblical Counseling* (Word, 1994), 71-78.
(NOTE: this resource is out of print but used copies are available online).

Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Baker, 1983), 177-223.

Q5: Explain the doctrine of common grace relating the doctrine to the ability of secular psychologists to understand true information about the human condition.

Definitions:

Common grace

Scripture Texts:

Matthew 5:45

Acts 14:17

Psalms 145:8-9

Romans 13:1ff

Resources:

Jay Adams, *A Theology of Christian Counseling* (Zondervan, 1979), 8-9.

Jay Adams, *The Christian Counselor's Manual* (Zondervan), 92.

Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, New Com. Ed. (Eerdmans, 1996), 432-446.

Q6: Explain the doctrine of the noetic effects of sin relating the doctrine to the ability of secular psychologists to understand true information about the human condition.

Definitions:

Noetic effect of sin

Scripture Texts:

Jeremiah 17:9

Romans 1:21

Romans 3:10-18

Ephesians 4:17-19

Resources:

Jay Adams, *A Theology of Christian Counseling* (Zondervan, 1979), ch. 11 (165-173).

Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, New Com. Ed. (Eerdmans, 1996), 246-247.

Jeff Forrey, "Where Do We Find Truth?" in *Scripture and Counseling*, eds. Bob Kellemen & Jeff Forrey (Zondervan, 2014), 72-75.

Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Zondervan, 1994), 497.

R. Albert Mohler, Jr., "The Way the World Thinks: Meeting the Natural Mind in the Mirror and in the Marketplace" in *Thinking, Loving, Doing: A Call to Glorify God with Heart and Mind*, eds. John Piper and David Mathis (Crossway, 2011), 56-58.

Martin Murphy, "Total Depravity" in *After Darkness, Light*, ed. R.C. Sproul, Jr. (P&R, 2003), 18-19.

David Powlison, "Critiquing Modern Integrationists" *Journal of Biblical Counseling* Vol. 11/3 (1993): 24-34.

Counseling Exam

Q1: What issues should be covered in an introductory session with a counselee regardless of the counseling issue? Explain the importance of each issue.

Key Resources:

Jay Adams, *The Christian Counselor's Manual* (Zondervan, 1986), 228-231.

Jay Adams, "Getting Started, The First Session" in *Critical Stages of Biblical Counseling* (Timeless, 2002), 5-78.

Jay Adams, *Ready to Restore* (P&R, 1981), 24-31.

Q2: Describe at least six biblical strategies to develop a caring relationship with your counselees. Clearly identify each strategy and ground its use in specific passages of Scripture, explaining its practical utility in building a relationship.

Key Resources:

Jay Adams, *The Christian Counselor's Manual* (Zondervan, 1986), 159, 226-227.

Wayne Mack, "Developing a Helping Relationship with Counselees" in John MacArthur, ed., *Counseling: How to Counsel Biblically* (Thomas Nelson, 2005), 101-113.

Jeremy Pierre & Mark Shaw, "The Nature of the Biblical Counseling Relationship," in James MacDonald, Bob Kelleman, & Steve Viars, eds., *Christ Centered Biblical Counseling*, (Harvest House, 2013), 309-323.

Paul Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands* (P&R, 2002), chs. 7-8.

Q3: Provide a biblical theology of emotions. What role should a counselor allow a counselee's emotions to play in counseling? How can one tell the difference between sinful emotions and righteous emotions? How would you use Scripture to help a counselee change improper emotions?

Key Resources:

Jay Adams, *The Christian Counselor's Manual* (Zondervan, 1986), 109-116, 420-425.

Jay Adams, *A Theology of Christian Counseling* (Zondervan, 1979), 102-105, 165.

David Powlison, "What do You Feel?" in *Seeing with New Eyes* (P&R, 2003), 211-224.

Jeff Forrey, "The Biblical Understanding and Treatment of Emotions" in James MacDonald, Bob Kelleman, & Steve Viars, eds., *Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling*, (Harvest House, 2013), 393-408.

Q4: Provide a biblical definition of anger. Describe manifestations of anger in both the inner and outer man. Explain the biblical factors that drive anger. Detail several biblical strategies to respond to anger.

Key Resources:

Robert Jones, *Uprooting Anger* (P&R, 2005).

Lou Priolo, *The Heart of Anger* (Calvary, 1998).

Stuart Scott, *Anger, Anxiety & Fear* (Focus, 2009).

Q5: Provide a biblical definition of depression. Describe manifestations of depression in both the inner and outer man. Explain the biblical factors that drive depression. Detail several biblical strategies to respond to depression.

Key Resources:

Ed Welch, *Depression: A Stubborn Darkness* (P&R)

Bob Somerville, *If I am a Christian, Why Am I Depressed?* (Xulon, 2014)

Jay Adams, *What to Do When You Become Depressed* (Timeless) – booklet

Jay Adams, *The Christian Counselor's Manual* (Zondervan, 1986), 350, 375-376.

Wayne Mack, *Out of the Blues* (Focus, 2006).

Robert Smith, *The Christian Counselor's Medical Desk Reference* (Timeless, 2000), 195-223.

Drawing Out the Purposes of the Heart

Self-Counseling Project: Part 2

“The purposes of a man’s heart are deep waters, but a man of understanding draws them out” (Prov 20:5).

Instructions: The Scriptures give us many windows into the heart and what functionally rules it. Here are a few examples. These questions are meant to help you examine personal heart themes of thought, motive and desire so that you can begin to understand the true treasures of your heart. They will also help you to begin to see how these desires have shaped the way you have responded to God, others, and the situations of life. Please answer the questions as thoroughly as possible. A paragraph on each question would be ideal. Throw in some illustrations of how this is true in your life. We will be looking for themes and patterns that define your heart tendencies. You will find it to be a liberating experience as the Lord helps you understand your heart and helps you to grow.

1. *When do you tend to experience fear, worry, or anxiety (Matt. 6:19–34)?*
2. *Where have you struggled with disappointment (Prov. 13:12, 19)?*
3. *In what situations do you struggle with anger (James 4:1, 2; Prov. 11:23)?*
4. *Where do you encounter problems in relationships (James 4:1–10)?*
5. *What are the situations of life that you find particularly difficult (1 Cor. 10:13, 14)?*
6. *What things do you find yourself seeking to avoid?*
7. *Where have you experienced regular problems in your relationship to the Lord?*
8. *In what situations do you tend to doubt the truths of Scripture?*
9. *What is a good relationship? What do you expect of others?*
10. *In what type of situations do you struggle with bitterness?*
11. *Where have you struggled with regret, being tempted to say, “If only... ”?*
12. *In what experiences from the past do you have a hard time of letting go?*
13. *Where do you tend to struggle with envy? What do you find yourself wanting that others have and you do not?*
14. *Whose opinion really matters to you?*

Fill in the blanks:

1. *Life would be all right if _____.*
2. *I really wish I had _____.*
3. *I need _____.*

Contract

Self-Counseling Project: Part 3

1. Describe the problem in detail. Be specific.
2. Identify your goals for working on this problem.
3. This behavior or attitude comes from what heart idolatry?
4. Have you asked forgiveness?
5. In what ways do you need to die to this idolatry?
6. In what specific ways is God (who He is) a greater recipient of your *desiring* and *living* than that of your idol?
7. How can you worship God better by creating a practical plan to love God and love your neighbor?
8. Who will you ask to hold you accountable, and how will they do it?
9. What literature do you need to read that addresses this subject?
10. What verses do you need to memorize, meditate on, or study and why?