

ADULT FELLOWSHIP GROUP

BIBLICAL COUNSELING FOUNDATIONS

WEEK 2: THEO FOUNDATION – VIEW OF MAN, SIN, AND SCRIPTURE

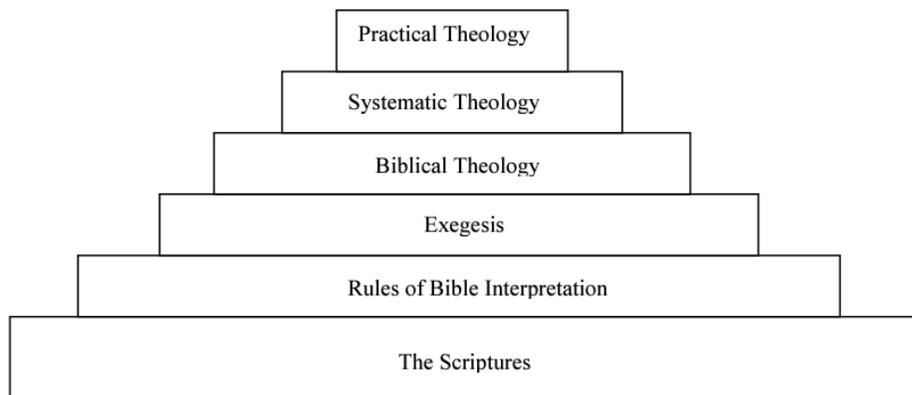
- February 22: Psychology, Christian Psychology/Integration, and Biblical Counseling at a Glance
- **March 1: Theological Foundation – View of Man and Sin**
- March 8: *Missionary Share – Daniel Herceg*
- March 15: Sanctification: How Do People Change?
- March 22: The Goal and Content of Biblical Counseling
- March 29: Preparing Our Hearts to Counsel One Another
- April 5: *No AFG – Resurrection Sunday*
- April 12: The Process of Counseling: Teaching, Conviction, Correction, and Training
- April 19: Navigating Specific Counseling Issues

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

- What do you think of when you hear the term *counseling*? What are the qualifications to counsel someone? What is the ultimate goal/aim? What does the process look like? What tools are needed to counsel someone?
- Counseling is the opportunity to give advice to someone who asks for it. What makes counseling different for Christians is that *our advice is centered on God's wisdom, and not our own*.
- For believers, the common vernacular used today is that of *Biblical Counseling*.
- The concept of biblical counseling is coming alongside one another with a biblical worldview that views God's word as the sufficient means of counseling, believers as competent to (and commanded to) counsel, and heart change as the ultimate goal of counseling.
- This biblical counseling class is a foundational 7-week series geared towards two main goals:
 - That each person would have an understanding of what biblical counseling is, and
 - That each person would understand the practical implications and outworkings within the church as it pertains to practicing biblical counseling.

WHY BEGIN WITH THEOLOGY?

- When we come to the discussion of biblical counseling, it's possible that, for many of us, the questions we have pertain to *how* we do it (the process, methodology, etc.).
- While those are important things to consider (and we will later in this class) it is necessary to lay some theological groundwork that will, inevitably, influence how we think about the counseling process itself.
- So, just as you wouldn't try to frame a house until the foundation for it is laid, I want to take time this week to examine key areas of theology and doctrine that we must develop convictions in to think rightly in the areas of counseling and discipleship.



Our Theology and Doctrine Define Our Methodology

- What we believe is going to come out in how we live.
 - **Prov 4:23** – *Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs of life.*
 - **Matt 15:18** – *But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man.*
 - **Titus 1:16-2:1** – *They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed. But as for you, speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine.*
- The same is true in how we care for one another through counseling/discipleship.
- Take, for instance some passages that speak of practical “one anothers” in the church:
 - **Romans 12:9-10** - *Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;*
 - What does it mean to love one another in this context?
 - What is good? What is evil?

- **Galatians 6:1** - *Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.*
 - What does it look like to restore someone?
 - How do you do it?
 - Why would we need to look to ourselves?
- As we consider sharing spiritual truth (which, in itself, is a theological presupposition), and understanding man’s capacity to comprehend and accept it, there are theological and doctrinal foundations that inform our efforts:
 - **1 Corinthians 2:14** - *But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.*
 - What is the natural man?
 - Why can’t he/she understand these things?
 - Is it an intellectual issue? Rational issue?
- Heath Lambert, in his book *A Theology of Biblical Counseling* traces this idea well:
 - First, he defines the basic nature and essence of a counseling relationship
 - “On the one hand, counseling requires one party in the conversation to have questions, problems, and trouble. One member of the counseling conversation must have a dilemma [...] On the other hand, counseling requires another party in the conversation to have answers, solutions, and help.”¹
 - Second, he articulates, in a general sense, what counseling requires:
 - “To do counseling, the one thing the counselor must do is articulate some vision of reality that understands the dilemma of the counselee and offers a response to that dilemma.”
 - “Everyone has commitments to a certain way of seeing life. Some people call this a worldview. Whatever the label, it is a vision about life, what it is, and how it works.”²
 - This vision, as Lambert puts it, includes answers to the following questions:
 - Who we are?
 - What is wrong with us?
 - What should be right with us?
 - What would it take to fix the problem?
 - Finally, he ties this vision about life to theology:
 - “Such a vision of reality is always theological. God defines what it is to be a human being, and he describes that in his Word. God knows what is wrong with us and diagnoses the problem in the Bible. God prescribes a solution to our problems—faith

¹ Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling: The Doctrinal Foundations of Counseling Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2016), 15.

² Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling: The Doctrinal Foundations of Counseling Ministry*, 16.

in Christ—and reveals him to us in the Scriptures. God authorizes a process of transformation and shows us what it looks like in the pages of the Old and New Testaments.”

- “Every vision of reality about counseling will be theological. The only question is whether a counselor adopts a theological vision of reality that God believes is faithful—or unfaithful. We cannot choose to have a vision of reality that is *not* theological.”³
- Secular counseling is not immune to this idea. Their counsel is informed by their worldview.
 - A secular counselor will be attempting to answer, for their counselee, those same four questions, but through the lens of a secular worldview.
 - “The work of secular counseling practitioners is not neutral and is not scientific. Secular counseling is a conversational intervention where an unbelieving man or woman seeks to provide secular answers, solutions, and help to a person with questions, problems, and trouble. Such counsel bubbles up out of the overflow of a commitment to a secular view of life.”⁴
- Though this class will not exhaust the connection between theology and practice in counseling, we must take time to examine some key areas of doctrine to inform *how* we counsel:
 - Anthropology (the study and makeup of man)
 - Hamartiology (understanding the effect of sin on man)

A BRIEF SURVEY OF ANTHROPOLOGY AND HAMARTIOLOGY

Anthropology – The Makeup of Man

- In the realm of counseling, anthropology is one of the greatest divides in thought, with some of the biggest implications in counseling methodology.
 - When we consider the goal of counseling, the means by which we counsel, and the target of our counsel (physical vs. spiritual), this is all developed through our understanding of man.
 - Primarily, in this discussion, we want to examine what the Bible says about man’s constitution (what he is comprised of).
- There are many words used in Scripture that influence our thinking about man’s constitution (body, soul, spirit, heart, mind, conscience, etc.).
- What, then, is man comprised of?⁵
 - **Monism:**
 - Monism is the view that the human person is one element. Man is a unified self, not a combination of multiple parts.

³ Ibid, 17.

⁴ Ibid, 18.

⁵ Taken, in part, from Biblical Doctrine, p. 421-424.

- Secular materialism asserts that matter is the only substance in the universe.
 - No God or spiritual entities exist. There is no soul/immaterial part to anyone.
 - All mental and spiritual activities are chemical products of the brain. Man is a lump of thinking matter.
 - At physical death, there is no immaterial part to survive.
 - John A. T. Robinson, in his work *The Body: A Study in Pauline Theology* (1952), argued that there is no distinction between soul and body.
 - He claimed that the ancient Hebrews had a unitary view of the human person and that they lacked a word for “body” comparable to the Greek term *sōma*.
 - Allegedly, the distinction between body and soul is a Greek idea foreign to Hebrew and biblical thought. With this perspective, body and soul are not contrasting realities; instead, they are interchangeable synonyms.
 - This is the view, understandably, by secular psychology today. The concept of the inner man is rejected, and, therefore, diagnoses and treatments are pursued through a strictly physical lens. (example: lack of distinction between the mind and the brain)
- **Dichotomism:**
- Dichotomism holds that man is a two-part being consisting of a body and an immaterial element called either “soul” or “spirit.”
 - This differs from materialistic monism, since dichotomism asserts that reality and humanity consist of more than matter; a spiritual element also exists.
 - While a person has a physical body, the soul/spirit animates the body and survives physical death.
 - Support for this comes from the creation of man in Genesis 2:
 - **Genesis 2:7** - *Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.*
 - Along with this, in creation, the existence of an “inner man” is a result of mankind being made in the image of God (God is spirit – John 4:24)
 - Other Scriptural support for this view:
 - **Matt 10:28** - *Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*
 - **Acts 7:59** - *They went on stoning Stephen as he called on the Lord and said, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!”*
 - **2 Cor 4:16** - *Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.*
 - In counseling, then, this would imply that man may face physical issues (outer man) and spiritual issues (inner man)
 - Physical issues would require physical intervention and treatment
 - Spiritual issues would require spiritual intervention and treatment

- **Trichotomism:**
 - Trichotomism also affirms that man consists of multiple parts, but it holds that man is a three-part being comprising body, soul, and spirit.
 - The first element of man is the **body**, which is the material part of a person.
 - The second part is the **soul**, which is the psychological element of man and the part that enables interaction with people and the natural world.
 - The soul is the basis of reason, emotion, personality, and social interaction.
 - The third part is the **spirit**, which is usually identified as the religious element that perceives and responds to spiritual matters and to God.
 - Whereas the soul is said to interact with horizontal areas related to man's experience with people and nature, the spirit interacts with vertical matters such as man's experience with God.
 - Passages used to defend this view:
 - **1 Thess 5:23** - *Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your **spirit and soul and body** be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*
 - **Hebrews 4:12** - *For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of **soul and spirit**, of both joints and marrow, able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.*
 - It is from this view that the mindset of “doctors caring for the body, psychologists caring for the soul, and pastors caring for the spirit” is derived from.
- How do we evaluate these views, and what is a biblical way to think of the makeup of mankind?
 - Since Scripture presents a person as a unified yet complex self, the designation “**complex unity**” is preferred.
 - The material (body) and immaterial (soul/spirit) function together in one person, embracing both unity and diversity.
 - This helps greatly in providing clarity and wisdom in biblical counseling and discipleship.
 - First, it puts up guardrails to prevent “over-spiritualizing” issues (i.e. all issues that someone suffers from are rooted in the spiritual, neglecting the physical)
 - Second, it speaks against a purely physical intervention, diagnosis, and treatment of issues that the Bible would categorize as spiritual
 - Finally, the complex unity helps us to understand that the outer man and inner man can affect one another
 - Example: Lack of sleep, poor diet, no exercise can lead to being more susceptible to giving into sin (anxiety, anger, bitterness, etc.)
 - Conversely, when we are anxious/fearful, it can affect us physically
 - We wouldn't label these as simply physical issues, but we understand that man is **psychosomatic** (there is relationship between the body and soul/spirit).

Hamartiology – The Extent of Sin’s Effect on Man

- There is nothing in our world that sin has not infected.
 - As MacArthur notes, there are only four chapters of the Bible that do not mention sin or sinners...Genesis 1-2 and Revelation 21-22⁶. This goes to show that sin is a major doctrine and study throughout the Bible.
 - We must have a robust understanding of sin and how it has displaced all of mankind and to what extent it has infected mankind.
- Sin entered the world in **Genesis 3** when Adam and Eve partook of the fruit of the tree that God had commanded them not to eat.
 - From here, we can derive a basic, working definition of sin.
 - Sin is any act against the command of God and puts man at the center of his will, not God.
- From that sin in Genesis 3, we know that all of mankind is under the curse of sin.
 - **Romans 5:12** – *Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned.*
 - This is where we need to come to biblical convictions about the doctrine of **original sin**.
- In this passage, Paul asserts that by **one man** sin came into the world, and through that, death, and death spread to **all men** and that **all men** sinned.
 - It is the final *all men sinned* that many have issues with.
 - **Psalm 51:5** – *Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.*
 - **Ephesians 2:3** – *Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.*
- Here is a list of various views in a brief summary:⁷
 - **Bad Example:**
 - Some hold that Adam’s sin is a bad example left for all people. When people sin, they follow Adam’s bad precedent. Humans are not actually guilty for Adam’s sin, nor do they inherit a sinful nature from him. They rather choose to follow Adam’s bad example. No direct transmission of sin exists between people and Adam.
 - This was held by Pelagius (360-418), a heretic that supposed man’s will was sufficient to save him.
 - With this view, if Adam was a bad example, then Christ is just a good example to follow, not a needed Savior for our sins.
 - **Inherited Sinful Nature:**
 - This idea claims that Adam’s sinful nature was passed down, but the guilt was not. Adam’s offspring are conceived with a disposition that is bent toward sin.

⁶ Biblical Doctrine p. 452

⁷ Ibid p. 462

- This means that man must choose to sin, and only then are they held guilty for sinning.
 - **Romans 5:18** – *So then as through one transgression **there resulted condemnation to all men**, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men.*”
 - This word *condemnation* is a legal term used by Paul to establish guilt which was passed down.
 - This view is common among Arminian believers who also believe in “prevenient grace” which actually takes away Adam’s guilt from mankind.
 - **Realism/Seminal View:**
 - This view was held by Augustine and supposes that all men were *in* Adam when he sinned and therefore all men are held guilty.
 - This is commonly defended by **Hebrews 7:9-10** when the author says that Levi paid tithes to Melchizedek through Abraham as he was in Abraham’s loins.
 - Realism does well to establish the fact that man has a sinful nature and are guilty because they participated in Adam’s sin.
 - Where it falls short is that the same is not true for our righteousness. We are not righteous because we *participated* with Christ, we are righteous because His righteousness was *imputed* to us.
 - **Romans 5:19** – *For as through the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.*
 - **Representative Headship/Federal Headship:**
 - This view states that the action of a representative is determinative for all the member who are united with him.
 - When Adam fell into sin, all mankind after him was condemned because of their relationship with him.
 - This means that all who are then associated with Christ then have His righteousness counted towards them.
 - This aligns well with the flow of Romans 5 in the connection of Christ as the true and better Adam.
- The reason that I want you to know the popular/various views is so you will know how to counsel and what the counselee may have in mind.
 - If someone comes to you thinking that Adam was simply a bad example to follow (and, therefore, Jesus is simply a good example to follow vs. a Savior for lost sinners) or that they are really not that bad, you know that you need to start with the gospel and work from there.
- People need to know that they are sinners and that there is nothing which they can do that can put them in good standing before God. There is only one way, through the sacrifice of Christ, that they can be accounted righteous before God.

- **How does this affect our counselling? .**
 - **Sin has a hereditary aspect.**
 - God’s word is consistent that all of mankind are sinners. All of mankind will stand in judgment before God, some going on to eternal life in heaven, others hell.
 - The people you will be counseling are sinners. No matter how their stories play out or how innocent they sound/how it is someone else’s fault, you are talking to a sinner.
 - **Sin has a habitual aspect.**
 - “It is the nature of man, even the nature of a believer, to be easily entangled in sin. It happens so easily. And frankly, there are certain sins which more easily entangle each of us than other ones. Each of us in our own lives have certain propensities for specific kinds of sins. It can be because we have in the past life cultivated habits of sin which now plague us even after our salvation.”⁸
 - Even though you will primarily counsel believers in the church, they can still struggle with habitual sin.
 - **Hebrews 12:1** *Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us...*
 - Never underestimate the seriousness and power of sin.
 - When counselling, we listen and find out if the person has a track record of sin.
 - It usually sounds something like “...I never seem to make the right decisions...” or “...I really thought it would turn out different this time...”
 - These are some key phrases that most likely point to habitual sin.
 - **Sin has consequences.**
 - The moment you think that you will never commit a certain sin, you have just taken a step towards committing it.
 - When someone is not guarding their heart and is caught in a pattern of sin, there are numerous consequences:
 - Sin deprives believers of a life of growing in grace and communion with God.⁹
 - Sin weakens the soul to deny strength needed for the daily Christian life.
 - Sin becomes a delight to the person, rooting identity in their sin.
 - Sin becomes the thing that we think about the most.
 - There will never be a sin that we get away with, whether it is regret for the rest of our life or some other way, sin is not something to take lightly.
 - This is important when counseling. Because sin has consequences, the problems in one’s life *may* be caused because of sin.
 - All of our hardships are because of sin; we live in a fallen world.
 - However, there are consequences which are specifically because of sin.

⁸ <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/80-106/dealing-with-habitual-sins>

⁹ <https://www.challies.com/reading-classics-together/6-evil-effects-of-sin/>

- **Sin has affected man completely.**
 - A question we have to ask is how much of man's makeup has been tainted by sin.
 - In other words, has sin infected man's thoughts, reasoning, knowledge, emotions, motives, actions, etc.?
 - Are there any parts that are still pure?
 - Biblically, we know that everything in man is affected by sin. (***Total Depravity***)
 - This doctrine is helpful on two fronts:
 - We don't take man's wisdom over God's, for man is infected with sin.
 - The person we are counseling is also tainted by sin and will view their circumstances with tainted eyes.
 - Man is polluted and corrupted in all aspects.
 - There is not one part of man that has escaped the effects of sin.
 - **Jeremiah 17:9** - *The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; Who can understand it?*
 - **Romans 1:21** - *For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.*
 - **Ephesians 4:17** - *Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds.*
 - *Futility* means "what is devoid of truth and appropriateness or depravity."
 - This is such an important fact to realize when we consider using works/methods/tools of unbelievers in counseling.
 - Our foundation and truth for counseling must come from the Word of God, not from those who are devoid of truth.
 - With all of this, it is important to understand that before one is born again, they are not spiritually neutral...they are actively enemies of God. Man hates God (Rom. 8:7) and he is unable **AND** unwilling to accept any spiritual truth. (1 Cor 2:14)
 - This is why it is important to ***start with the gospel*** and move from there.
- As I said before, it is primarily people in the church you will be admonishing/counseling as you walk in your Christian life. Though the majority of verses which have been quoted or referenced refer to the old or unsaved man, it is vital to know that Christians still sin.
- Even though a born-again person is a new creation in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17) and has been given new desires (1 John 3:9) the sin infection has not left him.
 - In a sense, the longer a person lived in sin before being born again, the more they bring with them into their new life. (Sometimes referred to as the "hamartiological hangover")
 - This may be through consequences, thoughts, desires, etc.
 - This does not mean that person is forever doomed or will have a subpar Christian life. It does mean they may have to work harder at renewing their mind or other areas.
- Moving forward, over the next couple of weeks, we are going to examine how that change happens. Namely, how the process of sanctification fits into the counseling process.