GRACE THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

The knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness

BC7501 Introduction to Biblical Counselling

2027

When: Tuesdays 7-9pm. **Starts:** 2 March 2027

Online Classroom: Via Microsoft Teams

Tutor: Sean Fleming BA (Biblical Studies), CertBibCouns

1. **BIBLICAL CASE**
   - **1.1. 2 Peter 1:2-11** ***Our knowledge of Christ and his gospel power has given us all we need to help each other grow in personal holiness as we are remined to return again and again to the gospel of sins forgiven.***
   - ***1.2.*** **Colossians 3:1-17** ***Here is what we have while we await a greater glory. So, we step into each other's lives that we might be increasingly clothed with Christ and worship him together in peace and truth.***
   - **1.3. 1 Thessalonians 2:1-16 with 5:11** ***With father-like intent and mother-like compassion we move towards others enduring suffering for their sakes, encouraging, comforting and urging one another to live lives worthy of our calling***
   - **1.4. John 21:15-17** ***Out of love for Jesus we make ourselves available to feed the flock of Christ as he gives us opportunity.***

2. **GRADUATE IDEALS.** *At GTC we believe that the ideal graduate is someone who, because of Christlikeness and kingdom focus, by hard work, a commitment to a lifetime of learning, becomes mighty in the Scriptures, and commits themselves to serving the church and evangelising the world.*

3. **COURSE DESCRIPTION & PURPOSE**
   - **3.1. Description.** In this course we will study the principles, approaches and issues required for developing the skill and discernment needed for effective pastoral care in the Body of Christ. We will apply this modality first to ourselves and then to some of the issues with which people commonly struggle. We will also spend class time practising what we are learning about counselling skills with our fellow learners, leaning into their lives with compassion, confidentiality, and intent.

3.2. Purpose. Why a course in pastoral/biblical counselling? The New Testament instructions for Christians include the expectation that as believers we will actively seek to invest ourselves in the lives of others, especially those who are struggling to live out their Christian faith in a fallen world. Hence the counselling programme is designed to equip Christian people to effectively encourage and build-up one another in the faith by using compassionate words and actions to effect long-lasting life change. We teach students to develop a biblical modality or approach to understanding people and how they function in order to generate change from the inside out. If changes are made at a heart level, then change will follow in the area of their thoughts, behaviours and feelings/desires (Mark 7:21-22).

'The study of theology is necessary and relevant because it helps us to be more deliberate and careful in our thought and speech about God. It helps us to be transformed by the renewing of our minds.'
(Keith Mathison, *TableTalk Magazine*, April 2018)

3.3. Technical Terms and Definitions (as understood in the context of this course)

Biblical Counselling/Pastoral Counselling/Christian Counselling/Therapy: *Person-to-person heart talk within the Body of Christ that is grace orientated, Gospel focused, Christ centred; either formal or informal, planned or spontaneous. This counselling modality can be used by any wise, reflective and sensitive Christian who has the goal of seeing others changing into the image of Christ.*

Biblical Counsellor/ Helper/Listener/Therapist: *One who is willing to grow and develop in her/his ability to assist others in the process of moving towards personal growth and change in the areas of behaviour, thoughts, and feelings. This process will be within a Biblical framework and in the context of the Body of Christ but can also be used with sensitivity when listening to unbelievers.*

Seeker/Speaker/Counsellee/Client: *One who desires personal growth and change and who actively pursues your help and engagement towards this end.*

Secular Theories and Therapies: *Ways of understanding and helping people that do not have their presuppositions, methodology or outcomes determined by the Scriptures. In GTC's counselling programme we will teach you the secular theories and therapies, but we will not train you to use them. Rather, we will help and train you to develop a biblical modality and approach to help people grow and change, as per our first definition.*

Psychology: *a branch of science that studies behaviour, thoughts and, feelings in an attempt to establish a theory of personality as defined and developed originally by Sigmund Freud.*

Psychotherapy: *"any systematic methodology based on some theory of personality intended to achieve desirable changes in thinking, feeling and behaviour. More than 400 different systems of psychotherapy have been identified". (The Dictionary of Psychology, Appendix E, by Ray Corsini, Brunner/Routledge Pub., 2002).*

Psychotherapist: *one who seeks, through the art of healing conversations, to interact with the behaviour, thoughts, and feelings of another in order to achieve desirable change in personality.*

Psychiatrist: *"A physician who specializes in the diagnosis, treatment, prevention and study of mental and emotional disorders." (Corsini, 2002). Using a medical model, they rely mainly on the prescribing of psychiatric drugs in order to achieve desirable change.*

Redemptive-History: *an understanding of biblical revelation as the unfolding over time of God's redemptive purposes for his people.*

Two-Age Tension: *the reality of living simultaneously as Christians in a fallen world while participating in the age to come.*

Presenting Problem: *the initial issue that brings a seeker to counselling.*

Common Grace: the grace of God by which he gives every person innumerable blessings to sustain life in God's world.

Saving Grace: The grace of God by which a Christian's salvation is accomplished by Christ.

Enabling Grace: The grace of God that keeps our hearts gratefully obedient to him.

4. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

4.1. General Objectives. This course is designed to train you in the theory of biblical counselling while giving you hands-on experience of counselling others. You will gain not only the knowledge of how to help others, but also the confidence that you have already begun to do so.

4.2. Learning Outcomes. By the end of the course, you should be able to:

4.2.1. **Describe and explain** how the truths taught in this unit become transformational for yourself and for those you minister to as we live within the tension of the two ages.

4.2.2. **Identify and define** how mutual encouragement/counsel in the Body of Christ can be brought to bear on the hearts of those who struggle with living life in a fallen world.

4.2.3. **Recognise and critique** the secular theories of counselling with biblical authority.

4.2.4. **Explain** how this ministry of personal encouragement interacts with the pastoral care of local church leadership.

4.2.5. **Seeing** how all that you are learning in this course enables you to counsel with non-Christians.

My learning goal is:_____

Participation. All students are required to have an active webcam on unless you have permission to turn it off.

5. ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES

Credit students should read through this outline and ask any questions about things that you are unclear on. If any of the tasks are not suitable for your optimal learning, you are welcome to discuss any concerns with the tutor.

5.1. Classes: Attend and participate in the classes. We learn when we are present and engaged with the material. We learn better when we think through what is being presented and discuss it with others. Come to class with questions and ideas. Online students to arrange with the tutor the best way for them to participate in the class and get the most from their experience.

Activity	**% grade**
Class attendance	5%
Reading reflections	25%
Assignment	45%
Examination	25%
Total	**100%**

5.2. Reading: Credit students are required to read **1000 pages** of text.

Four Required Books with Reading Reflections:

Blame it on the Brain? by Edward T. Welch, Pres. & Ref. Pub. Co., 1998, 2026.
Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands by Paul D. Tripp, Pres. & Ref. Pub. Co., 2002.
A Biblical Counseling Process by Lauren Whitman, New Growth Press, 2021
Holiness by Grace by Bryan Chapell, Crossway, 2001

Credit students are required to write a 500 word response paper for each of these four required books. This written response should be both an appreciative and critical reflection of what you have read. Begin with a paragraph summary of the reading, then spend the rest your response demonstrating that you have interacted with the contents as to the impact on your *heart* as you have learnt new ideas or been reminded of old ones.

Guidelines for your written work can be found at the end of this syllabus.

Reading reflection are due when you sit your exam

5.3. Self-Counselling Project:

Credit students are required to complete a 3000 word minimum self-counselling project. This is God counselling you, a personal ministry from his heart to yours. Choose a personal problem that you anticipate being an obstacle for you in the task of encouraging and caring for others. Describe the difficulty and/or discomfort this problem presents to you. Attempt to determine the source of this difficulty. This is your effort to be aware of how your personal history could impact on your care of others. This project will be confidential to your tutor and is due when you sit your exam.

Please refer to Appendix A at the end of the syllabus for help with this self-counselling project.

Guidelines for your written work can be found at the end of this syllabus

5.4. Examination (November 17)

This will be a two-hour exam requiring short written answers to questions on subjects covered in class. An examination is an opportunity for you to review your lecture notes in order to formulate answers to the exam questions. If you are concerned about reading and writing in a limited time, or English is your second language, please talk to your tutor about how we can assist you.

The exam is to be typed and submitted via email to your tutor.

6. LEARNING RESOURCES (Recommended Reading)

Allender Dan	*The Healing Path*	Waterbrook Press, 1999
Benner David B.	*Strategic Pastoral Counselling*	Baker Academic, 2003
Chapell Bryan	*Holiness by Grace*	Crossway Books, 2001
Corsini Ray	*The Dictionary of Psychology*	Brunner-Routledge, 2002
Crabb L.	*Encouragement: The Unexpected Power of Building Others Up*.	Zondervan, 2013
Crabb L.	*Understanding People*	Navpress, 1987, 2013
Crabb L.	*Inside Out*	Navpress, 1988, 2007
Groves, Alasdair Smith, Winston	*Untangling Emotions*	Crossway, 2019
Ellwood Robert S.	*Islands of the Dawn: The Story of Alternative Spirituality in New Zealand*	University of Hawaii Press, 1993
Emlet Michael R.	*Descriptions and Prescriptions: A Biblical Perspective on Psychiatric Diagnoses and Medications*	New Growth Press, 2017
Greggo and Sisemore editors	*Christianity and Counseling – Five Views. (esp. pp 110-131)*	IVP, 2012
Grudem, Wayne	*Introduction to Systematic Theology*	Zondervan, 2000, 2nd ed 2020

Hermanson Gary	*Pieces of Silver: Twenty-Five Years of the New Zealand Counselling and Guidance Association, 1974-1999.*	Auckland Colleges Printery, 1999
Kellemen B.	*Biblical Counseling and the Church*	Zondervan, 2015
Lambert H.	*The Biblical Counseling Movement*	Crossway, 2011
Lambert H.	*A Theology of Biblical Counseling*	Zondervan, 2016
Lane Timothy Tripp Paul	*How People Change*	Punch Press, 2006
MacDonald J, Kellemen B, Viars S.	*Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling*	Harvest House, 2013, 2021
Miller John C.	*Repentance and the 20th Century Man*	Christian Literature Crusade, 1980
Powlison David	*The Biblical Counseling Movement*	New Growth Press, 2010
----------	*The Pastor as Counselor*	Crossway, 2021
----------	*"A Biblical Counselling View"* in *Psychology and Christianity: Four Views*	Eds S. Jones and E. Johnson, IVP, 2000
Reynolds Peter D	*A Counselling Philosophy for Grace Theological College*	www.gtc.ac.nz/resources/print 2010
Sande Ken	*The Peacemaker*	Baker Books 3rd ed 2004
Scazzero Peter and Bird Warren	*The Emotionally Healthy Church*	Zondervan, 2003
Strickland Darby A.	*Is It Abuse? A Biblical Guide to Identifying Domestic Abuse and Helping Victims*	Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing., 2020
Vitz Paul C.	*Psychology as Religion*	Eerdmans 2nd Ed., 1994
Welch, Edward	*When People are Big and God is Small: Overcoming Peer Pressure, Codependency, and the Fear of Man.*	Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing. Co., 1997
Winter, Richard	*Perfecting Ourselves to Death: The Pursuit of Excellence and the Perils of Perfectionism.*	IVP, 2005

8. RESEARCH RESOURCES

a. Accessing required readings.

i. **GTC library 75 Rogers Road, Manurewa.** If you are a student, then you automatically receive library membership and can borrow books from our library for 1-month. Priority is given to credit students. You are welcome to come and use the library at any time between 9am and 4:30pm, Monday to Friday.

We are willing to post out books to students. There will be a postage charge.

ii. **Christ College Library:** Our friends at Christ College are happy to allow GTC students to be members of their library. While you cannot access their books without a trip to Sydney, for AU$55 per year, you can purchase access to their online database of journal and e-books. This is highly recommended for any credit student. Their librarians have also curated a large list of free online research resources.

To join the Christ College electronic library, email: library@christcollege.edu.au

iii. **Purchasing books.** Books purchasing in NZ is often expensive and books can take a long time to arrive. Try your local bookstore, Christian bookstore, or online. We also recommend:

Reformers Bookshop (reformers.com.au) in Australia offers students a discount on books. Please use the discount code: **BCD26N**

Grace Books (gracebooks.co.nz) are a NZ Christian bookshop which carries a good stock of books.

iv. **Logos Software Library. Logos Bible Software** is more than simply a Bible search tool. It has many books for purchase, including the required texts for this course. Once you purchase books you own them, even if you choose to use the free software version. You can now subscribe to a library package at a monthly rate and receive a number of resources. It is worth noting Logos also has a student discount scheme and GTC is registered with them.