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EQUIPPING MEMBERS OF KINGSBORO BAPTIST CHURCH
IN KINGSBORO, PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND,
TO COUNSEL ONE ANOTHER BIBLICALLY
THROUGH FEAR AND ANXIETY

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Alexander Raymond Scott
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Alexander Raymond Scott

Read and Approved by:

Faculty Supervisor: Robert D. Jones

Second Reader: Jeremy P. Pierre

Date: September 13, 2023

For the glory of God

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PREFACE

Many individuals have been instrumental in the pursuit of my study in the Doctor of Ministry program at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and the writing of this project. First, I am thankful for and to my wife, MaryEllen. It was with her encouragement that I began pursuing doctoral studies, and it is with her continued love and support that I completed this program.

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Third, I am grateful to The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, the professors who have taught the seminars I have learned from, the students I have had the joy of learning with, and my faculty advisor, Dr. Robert D. Jones, who have all played a part in the completion of this project and degree.

Finally, I am grateful to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who raised me to new life, saving me by his grace through faith, making me a new creation. May this project honor him and serve his body.

Alexander Scott

Kingsboro, Prince Edward Island

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Kingsboro Baptist Church exists to “love God above all, to love each other as ourselves, and to share the good news of salvation.”¹ We demonstrate our love for God and for others by how we conduct our daily lives, acting and responding to situations and people with godly wisdom that comes from a heart transformed by Jesus Christ. Biblical counseling plays an important role in helping people grow in Christlikeness and maturity in faith, practically applying Scripture to their lives for their comfort and correction to this end. This ministry project sought to promote biblical counseling at Kingsboro Baptist Church and help its members counsel one another through their struggles with fear and anxiety.

Context

Kingsboro Baptist Church (KBC) is well established in the rural community of Eastern Kings County, Prince Edward Island. Founded in 1833, it has partnered with South Lake Christian Church (SLCC), three miles away, as a pastoral field for over a century. The two serve as the only evangelical churches in an area where most people identify as Roman Catholic, though a growing percentage of our population are, in practice, religious “nones,” not regularly attending any church, whether affiliated or not.

KBC is mostly an elderly congregation, with senior citizens comprising the largest percentage of regular attenders, though some younger and middle-aged families also attend. Average weekly attendance is 60-70 at KBC. Most members have lived in the

¹ Kingsboro Baptist Church, “Who We Are,” accessed August 8, 2023, <https://kingsborochurch.com/who-we-are/>.

area for their entire lives, their families rooted there for generations.

In Prince Edward Island, people are connected to and care for one another. Islanders do very well at supporting their friends and neighbors in need in various ways, such as cooking meals for one another and holding benefit concerts to fundraise for their expenses. The church members of KBC are no different, with the majority being deeply rooted and connected to the local community. Their first line of support most often tends to come from family members and lifelong friends. These relationships occur both within and outside the churches. This strong community means, however, that few relationships are intentionally formed around gospel relationships. Because they are not rooted in or organized by the local church, gospel conversations may seem foreign or forced in these relationships. However, leveraged well, these relationships provide natural opportunities for people to counsel one another biblically, since they have already laid the foundation for speaking with authority and grace into one another's lives. As is the case across Atlantic Canada, the prevailing attitude toward religion and spirituality is that people should keep their faith private and compartmentalized.

KBC has a strong commitment to sound biblical preaching and teaching, with a rich history of lay Bible teachers and strong preachers. However, lacking from its culture is a commitment to biblical counseling. Many members of the churches, though possessing a knowledge of Scripture, often root decisions, react to their circumstances, and seek comfort and hope in their own intuition and popular opinions and beliefs from the world around them along with or in place of Scripture. In pastoral care, when efforts are made to share Scripture and hope found in Christ and the gospel, many respond with more general feelings of God's presence.

As believers help one another with biblical counsel, of particular concern is helping one another with fear and anxiety. As the members of KBC age, many face changes in their daily routines, health decline, and loss of loved ones. In the local community, potato farming, lobster fishing, and tourism are the dominant industries;

thus, church life tends to revolve around the seasons during which these industries are most active. With many livelihoods dependent on seasonal industries, which can and has changed from year to year, income can be unstable for many; for example, the tourism industry has been significantly hindered by the restrictions in place to fight COVID-19. As well, KBC has experienced some significant conflict and division over the past couple of decades. As a result, many people worry about others' opinions and feelings. These stand out as a few of many reasons that people may struggle with fear, anxiety, and worry.

Compounding this is a concern that Prince Edward Island's mental health system has been falling short in meeting the needs of Islanders. Therefore, there is a great need and opportunity for the church to care for those struggling with mental health issues. Further, there are few Christian counselors in Prince Edward Island, and biblical counseling is relatively unknown in the province and the denomination to which KBC belongs, the Canadian Baptists of Atlantic Canada.

This ministry project sought to encourage and equip members of KBC to biblically counsel one another—those in their circle of family and friends, and those in the community, amid their fear and anxiety. This was done to address the need for individuals to grow in their ability to discern and apply biblical truth to their lives, seeing God work through the gospel and Scripture in the lives of our church members and those in the community around us, with change in them that is not merely outward, but transformation of their hearts.

Rationale

Scripture never envisions the Christian life as a solitary endeavor. Those God saves, he brings into the body of Christ, the Church; believers are meant to be in community with one another. Scripture calls us to love one another; not halfheartedly, but as Christ has loved us (John 13:34). Because of his love for us, wretched and rebellious

sinner, he died for us (Rom 8:34). Therefore, we are called to nothing less than giving our lives for one another. We are called to bear one another's burdens (Gal 6:2) and to encourage and build one another up, particularly with the words of Scripture (1 Thess 4:18; 5:11). Jesus tells us to expect trouble in this life, but in the face of trouble, we do not first look to and trust in our own wisdom or the resources of the world, but Christ himself, who has overcome the world (John 16:33). Therefore, as we love one another, bear one another's burdens, and build one another up, we do so with Christ's supply, since he has given us all things necessary for life and godliness (2 Pet 1:3). We are called to grow in maturity of Christlikeness, and to do so together; we do this by speaking the truth, but doing so winsomely and wisely, in love (Eph 4:15). Indeed, with one another, "we proclaim [Christ], warning and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ" (Col 1:28).²

Islanders are very good at sharing their lives together, spending their lives with family members and long-time friends, among others. In this way, they have natural support systems. The members of KBC are indeed well connected with one another and others outside the church. Yet, as we spend our lives together, we do not merely need to support one another with folk wisdom, feel-good platitudes, secular psychologies, or behavior modification, but transformation of the heart that comes only through the gospel and remaining connected to Jesus Christ (John 15:5), producing the good fruit of Christlikeness (Gal 5:22-23). We need relationships that are not merely friendly, but that make room for believers and unbelievers alike to bring their circumstances to one another, trust that they can do so safely, and receive biblical truth lovingly and graciously spoken.

Many members of KBC are not receiving the biblical wisdom and hope they need beyond the preached word they hear in worship services. For many, faith is private

² All quotations are taken from the Christian Standard Bible unless otherwise indicated.

and compartmentalized. Discussing and applying Scripture with one another in informal settings such as friendships and family groups feels awkward to many who are not used to doing so. Many may not first seek out formal counseling or help from a church in difficult circumstances, if at all. We need to pursue one another lovingly to speak the truth of Scripture to one another in the circumstances we face. Equipping as many believers as possible to have informal conversations that apply Scripture and the gospel to one another's lives makes biblical help more accessible.

Fear and anxiety seem like natural responses to the many varied struggles and unsettling situations people face, such as changes and conflicts within the church, uncertainty about health struggles, financial insecurity, and the influence of opinions and judgments of one another. These feelings can be strong, debilitating, and can affect what we think, say, and do. Personally, I have struggled with fear and anxiety, as I tend to consider ways something could go wrong or feel a sense of general dread about a situation. As I grow to understand and work through my own fear and anxiety biblically, I will be able to better help others as they struggle.

Scripture is clear that our circumstances do not determine our actions, but that we respond to them from our hearts (Luke 6:45). As we see God rightly as Sovereign King and faithfully loving Father, and see the gospel rightly, that we are saved by his grace through faith, not our own efforts or merit (Eph 2:8-9), we rest confidently in him. Thus, as we fear God and trust his presence to be with us, we need not fear of anything else (Isa 41:10). We are called to trust that the Sovereign King and Gracious Savior cares for us, bringing every anxiety to him (1 Pet 5:7). Thus, we are called not to be anxious about anything, but to bring everything to him in prayer (Phil 4:6). As people face circumstances that they may naturally respond to with fear and anxiety, they need to be counseled to respond differently: from a heart transformed by the gospel, to respond in a healthy and Christlike way, confident, not in their own strength and ability, but in God's faithfulness and help.

The church offers an incredible source of hope: the person of Jesus Christ himself and his grace to comfort and supply our needs. Equipping the members of Kingsboro Baptist Church to counsel one another biblically through their fears, worries, and anxieties will help them grow in responding in biblical and Christlike ways to these hardships.

As we grow in our ability to speak God's truth in wisdom and love, showing that we apply his Word in our own lives, we give reason for the hope that is in us (1 Pet 3:15), bearing witness to our Lord, inviting those we meet to come to the one who satisfies, brings life, and gives rest to all who are weary and burdened (Isa 55:1-2; Matt 11:28).

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to equip members of Kingsboro Baptist Church in Kingsboro, Prince Edward Island, to provide biblically-based care to one another through their struggles with fear and anxiety.

Goals

The following goals were met for the successful implementation and completion of this project:

1. The first goal was to assess participants' knowledge of core biblical doctrines related to biblical counseling as it applies to fear and anxiety.
2. The second goal was to develop a ten-week curriculum to train participants in biblical doctrines, methods, and skills for biblical counseling, applying biblical counseling methods to understand and handle fear and anxiety.
3. The third goal was to teach the curriculum to equip participants in biblical counseling, applying biblical counseling methods to fear and anxiety.
4. The fourth goal was to assess the participants' growth in biblical counseling as it applies to fear and anxiety.

A specific research methodology was created that measured the successful

completion of these four goals.³ This methodology is described in the following section.

Research Methodology

Successful completion of this project depended upon the completion of these four goals. The first goal was to assess participants' knowledge of core biblical doctrines related to biblical counseling as it applies to fear and anxiety. This goal was measured by administering a survey to at least ten participants who are members of KBC or SLCC, examining their knowledge of the relevant Scriptures and doctrines related to biblical counseling and godly ways of understanding and handling fear, anxiety, and worry.⁴ This goal was considered successfully met when ten people completed this survey and the results were analyzed, showing a clearer picture of the current knowledge of Scripture as it relates to biblical counsel and fear and anxiety.

The second goal was to develop a curriculum of ten 75-90 minute sessions to train participants in biblical doctrines, methods, and skills for biblically-based care, applying biblical counseling methods to understanding and handling fear, anxiety, and worry. This goal was measured by the expert panel who utilized a rubric to evaluate the biblical faithfulness, teaching methodology, scope, and applicability of the curriculum.⁵ This goal was considered successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of the evaluation criterion met or exceeded the sufficient level. If the 90 percent benchmark was not initially met, the material was revised until it met the standard.

The third goal was to teach the curriculum to equip participants in biblical counseling, applying biblical counseling methods to fear and anxiety, and learning to counsel one another. This goal was successfully completed when all ten sessions were

³ All of the research instruments used in this project were performed in compliance with and approved by The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Research Ethics Committee prior to use in the ministry project.

⁴ See appendix 1.

⁵ See appendix 2.

taught to each participant.

The fourth goal was to assess the participants' growth in biblical counseling as it applies to fear and anxiety. This goal was measured by administering a post-survey that measured the participants' knowledge, confidence, and motivation to counsel one another biblically, especially through fear and anxiety.⁶ This goal was considered successfully met when the *t*-test for dependent samples demonstrated a positive statistically significant difference in the pre- and-post survey scores.

Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations

The following definitions of key terms were used in the ministry project:

Biblical counseling. The Association of Certified Biblical Counselors defines biblical counseling in this way: "Biblical counseling is the personal ministry of God's people to others under the oversight of God's church, dependent upon the authority and sufficiency of God's Word through the work of the Holy Spirit."⁷ At Kingsboro Baptist Church, this personal ministry will primarily take the form of members providing biblical truth to encourage one another.

Sufficiency of Scripture. Scripture is the primary source of instruction for the counseling process. Wayne Grudem defines the sufficiency of Scripture this way: "The sufficiency of Scripture means that Scripture contained all the words of God he intended his people to have at each stage of redemptive history, and that it now contains all the words of God we need for salvation, for trusting him perfectly, and for obeying him perfectly."⁸

The heart. Timothy S. Lane and Paul David Tripp define the heart in this way:

⁶ The post-survey was the same as the pre-survey.

⁷ Association of Certified Biblical Counselors, "Our Mission," accessed January 5, 2020, <https://biblicalcounseling.com/about/our-mission/>

⁸ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 127.

“The heart is the real or essential you. All the ways in which the Bible refers to the inner person (mind, emotions, spirit, soul, will, etc.) are summed up with this one term: heart. The heart is the steering wheel of every human being. Everything we do is shaped and controlled by what our hearts desire.”⁹

Two delimitations were applied to this project. First, the equipping component of this project was designed to strengthen skills in the *informal* ministry of biblical care and counsel at KBC, rather than train formal biblical counselors.¹⁰ Because the purpose of this project was to equip members of KBC to counsel one another biblically, especially through their fears and anxieties, pursuit of certification was not in view.

Second, this project was limited to ten weeks in length. This allowed for training in the basic principles and methods of biblical counseling and how they apply to fear, and anxiety. Further training in biblical counseling may be required, but that will fall outside the scope of this project.

Conclusion

God calls his people to counsel one another. In Scripture, he has supplied all that is necessary to do so. Chapter 2 of this project examines the sufficiency of Scripture to counsel one another through fear and anxiety. Engaging with other approaches, chapter 3 examines the biblical diagnosis and method for counseling those struggling with fear and anxiety.

⁹ Timothy S. Lane and Paul David Tripp, *How People Change* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2008), 14.

¹⁰ Dustin Brady Goodwin, “Equipping Leaders for Care and Counseling at The Village Church in Dallas, Texas” (DMin proj., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2017), 17.

CHAPTER 2

THE BIBLICAL CASE FOR COUNSELING ONE ANOTHER WITH SCRIPTURE THROUGH FEAR AND ANXIETY

There is no better help for fear and anxiety than God himself, for he is all powerful, ever present, and faithfully caring in every need. People are called to depend on him for help in fear and anxiety through prayer. God reveals himself and communicates his presence and care in Scripture. Therefore, believers are called to counsel one another from Scripture through fear and anxiety.

In this chapter, we will begin to understand the authority and sufficiency of Scripture in counseling ministry, doing so by examining 2 Timothy 3:16-17. From there, we will consider God's promised, powerful presence that gives courage in Deuteronomy 31:1-6. Then, we will see how Jesus brought forth God's provisions to those who depend on him in faith and prioritize him in their lives as we examine Matthew 6:19-34. With this renewal of confidence in God's presence and provision, we will see the call for believers to fix their attention on him in prayer in Philippians 4:5-7. Finally, we will understand the responsibility of believers to be a comforting presence for one another through fear and anxiety, drawing from firsthand experience of God's help in their own struggles; we will see this in 2 Corinthians 1:3-11.

The Authority and Sufficiency of Scripture in 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Scripture is the special, written revelation of God and his communication to human beings. Being God's explicitly communicated Word to us, Scripture is the authoritative and sufficient foundation for counseling in fear and anxiety.

Scripture's Authority

Scripture is a collection of books written by different human authors in different contexts to different audiences. However, Scripture is not merely a religious text produced by human hands. The apostle Paul, writing to his protégé, Timothy, says “All Scripture is inspired by God” (2 Tim 3:16a). The human authors of Scripture wrote under the direction and inspiration of God. He is the source of Scripture; through it he reveals himself concretely to human beings, using human language.¹

The term Paul uses for inspiration is *theopneustos*, “God-breathed.” The source of Scripture is God’s breath, the result of God breathing; the implication of this is that Scripture is God’s Word, taught to authors like Paul by God’s Spirit.² God is the source of Scripture and uses it to give wisdom for salvation (1 Tim 3:15), which gives new and eternal life in a person (John 3:3, 16). Scripture is written by human authors under the inspiration and direction of God. Therefore, it is authoritative.³ *All* Scripture is inspired by God and authoritative. In the New Testament, when it refers to the Scriptures, *graphē* is in the plural tense;⁴ here, however, it is in the singular. According to William Mounce, this “emphasizes the completeness of Scripture.”⁵ Therefore, because God is the source of Scripture, it is authoritative. It is complete, lacking in nothing. Therefore, it is the sufficient authority for faith and practice.

¹ Robert W. Yarbrough, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018), 429.

² George W. Knight III, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 446-47.

³ I. Howard Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, International Critical Commentary (London: T&T Clark, 1999), 794.

⁴ Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 586-88.

⁵ William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 46 (Dallas: Thomas Nelson, 2000), 567-68.

Scripture Is Profitable

Because Scripture is the special revelation of God, his written communication to us, it is profitable for the work of ministry and wisdom for, as Ben Witherington says, “how to live a life pleasing to God.”⁶ Indeed, because God is the authority about what is pleasing to him, it naturally follows that Scripture, being his authoritative Word to us, reveals to us what is pleasing to him and equips us to carry that out. Like Timothy, biblical counselors are to use Scripture as the foundation for their ministry, because it fully equips them for their counsel.⁷

Paul emphasizes four different ways that Scripture equips a person for ministry. First, Scripture’s content forms the basis for the doctrine that is to be taught.⁸ Second, it is profitable for rebuking, that is, making a person aware of their sin and disciplining them for it.⁹ Third, Scripture is profitable for correcting a person’s behavior or conduct, setting it right.¹⁰ Finally, it is profitable for training or education in righteousness, that is, visible upright behavior, giving them an ethical framework out of which to live.¹¹

All of this is framed by and therefore an outworking of the salvation through faith in Jesus Christ that Scripture gives wisdom for (2 Tim 3:15). Scripture points to and centers on Jesus Christ and his redemptive work (John 5:39). As a person comes to faith in Jesus Christ, he is made alive (Eph 4:5-6), made new by God, and given a recreated heart that is directed toward God (Ezek 36:26-27; 2 Cor 5:17). A person’s salvation and regeneration is a work of God by his grace. He continues to work in a person’s life for

⁶ Ben Witherington III, *Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on Titus, 1-2 Timothy, and 1-3 John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 361.

⁷ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 566.

⁸ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 570.

⁹ Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 590-91

¹⁰ Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 449.

¹¹ Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 591-92.

godly change and growth (Phil 1:6; 2:13), speaking to a person through Scripture to that end.

Scripture points a person to faith in Jesus Christ, who suffered greatly and was crucified for them, who defeated death itself in his resurrection, and who would speak to them through its words. Therefore, it addresses fear and anxiety because it not only reminds a person God's sovereign power over their circumstances and his compassionate presence with them, but it also brings them into dialogue with God, with whom Jesus reconciled them. Through Scripture, he speaks to the fearful and anxious person, and invites them to do so with him.

Scripture's Goal: Maturity in Christ

There is a purpose to the profitable nature of Scripture. Verse 17 opens with *hina*, translated "so that," indicating that the teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness are not merely ends in themselves, but have a specific purpose: making the man of God complete, "equipped for every good work" (2 Tim 3:17). The goal of Scripture, profitable for these various kinds of ministry, is Christian maturity and readiness for ministry.

Scripture, the Word of God, equips the "man of God." This term, "man of God," refers to Christian teachers in the tradition of the Old Testament prophets,¹² proclaiming the Word of God, applying it to their hearers' lives. This is expansive in scope. Scripture is God's special revelation to all. Every believer is a priest before God (1 Pet 2:9), a role which, in the tradition of Israel's priesthood, like their prophets, involved speaking on God's behalf, teaching his commandments, decisions, and rules for life (Deut 33:10).¹³ With the illumination of the Holy Spirit (John 15:25; 1 Cor 2:12), they

¹² Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles*, Tyndale New Testament Commentary, vol. 14 (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), 142.

¹³ John Goldingay, *Old Testament Theology*, vol. 3: *Israel's Life* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 754.

can understand and use Scripture to minister to one another, using it to teach, rebuke, correct and train others in righteousness, doing so while humbly submitting to God and seeking to speak accurately on his behalf.

Scripture equips the man of God to be complete, to make a person, Donald Guthrie notes, “perfectly adapted for his task.”¹⁴ Scripture is sufficient for this. In Scripture, a person lacks nothing needed to faithfully follow, obey, and serve the Lord in this life, both in knowledge and direction.¹⁵ Scripture is sufficient and authoritative for counseling, providing the foundation, wisdom, and gospel hope for counselors to teach, rebuke, correct, and train in righteousness the people they counsel. With Scripture, counselors do not merely offer methods for change, healthy habits, or opportunity for self-reflection, all of which may be limited to or primarily focused on the counselee. Rather, from Scripture, biblical counselors present the sovereign, redeeming God who can work change for good in a person’s life, a work far greater than they could achieve themselves. According to Mounce, “Scripture comes from God and is true; therefore it provides the content and direction necessary for Timothy, Christian leaders, and by implication all Christians to be fully equipped, enabled to do every good work.”¹⁶ Counselors, are equipped to help others with the words of Scripture, and Scripture equips every person, to grow in godliness, prepared for every good work of obedience that God has laid out for them (Eph 2:10).

The Presence of God and the Confidence of People in Deuteronomy 31:1-6

This world is fraught with dangers and threatening situations. Fear is the response of apprehension toward an object that may do a person harm. Healthy fear can

¹⁴ Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 142.

¹⁵ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 571.

¹⁶ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 570-71.

help a person cautiously stay away from danger. However, a person may be ruled and paralyzed by their fears, feeling unable to meet the perceived threats on various parts of their lives. As illustrated by the experience of the Israelites in Deuteronomy 31:1-6, God's revealed presence brings strength and courage in fear and anxiety.

The Promised Land

God had promised to bring his people, the Israelites, from slavery in Egypt “to a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey” (Exod 3:8). As part of that process, he demonstrated his mighty power to rescue them from slavery by performing miraculous wonders, the ten plagues (Exod 7-11) and parting the Red Sea to make a way for their escape (Exod 14), demonstrating that there is no one on earth like him (Exod 9:14). The incomparable God rescued them because he had set his love on them, though they were small and humble (Deut 7:7-8).

Following their exodus from Egypt, the Israelites witnessed God's mighty power on their behalf. They tasted his provision in the wilderness, eating the manna and quail that he sent them (Exod 16:12). They were led by his presence in the pillars of cloud and fire through unknown and uncertain territory (Exod 13:21-22). At Mount Sinai, he revealed his nature, that he is compassionate, gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in faithful love and truth (Exod 34:6). They could trust him to provide for what they needed and to bring them safely to their new home.

When the scouts returned from their tour of Canaan, they confirmed what the Lord had promised, that it was a land “flowing with milk and honey” (Num 13:27), a good land indeed. However, they were intimidated by the people living in the land, who were “strong, and the cities [were] large and fortified” (Num 13:28). All the scouts but Joshua and Caleb recommended against going into the Promised Land and attacking its inhabitants, because, as they said, “they are stronger than we are!” (Num 13:31).

The Canaanites may have been stronger than the Israelites, but Joshua and

Caleb reminded them that the Lord would bring them into the land he promised them. They could be confident and unafraid because he promised to be with them as they went (14:8-9). However, the Israelites listened to the other ten scouts. Despite their experience of the Lord's power displayed on their behalf, they felt that the Canaanites were too dangerous; fear of them outweighed trust in the Lord. Except for Joshua and Caleb, there was no mention of confidence in God's help for them to face the Canaanites. Forgetting the Lord and his strength, focusing only on their weakness and thus the danger to them, they were unwilling to enter the land he promised them.

Confidence in the Lord

Nearly forty years later, the generation of the Israelites that refused to enter Canaan because of their fear of its inhabitants and distrust of the Lord had passed away. The second generation of free Israelites were ready to enter their new, God-given home, and Moses set out to give his final instructions to them before doing so (Deut 1:1-3). From a merely human perspective, they still had every reason to be afraid entering Canaan. The land was still occupied by the "nations" (Deut 31:3) the previous generation had feared. Additionally, Moses announced that he would not be leading them into the Promised Land (Deut 31:1-2). This was not merely because of his advanced age, but because he disobeyed God (Num 20:11-12), so the Lord would "not permit him to go."¹⁷ Being the only human leader they had known, and the mouthpiece for God when they were afraid to hear from him directly (Exod 20:19), it is little wonder that with a change in leadership, the Israelite people would have been apprehensive about moving forward.

They would not be left without leadership, however. Moses's protégé, Joshua, would take his place (Deut 31:3) as the Lord's "designated agent."¹⁸ More emphatically,

¹⁷ Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 369.

¹⁸ Daniel I. Block, *Deuteronomy*, The New International Version Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 722.

however, the Lord would lead them into the Promised Land and take care of them there—the very fact the Israelites neglected to remember a generation earlier. Thus, the Israelites would not be responsible to face and defeat their enemies in the land by themselves. If that was true, there may have been some uncertainty of the outcome, with the very real possibility of defeat, and their fears would be justified.

Moses reminded the Israelites of their responsibility: by entering the Promised Land and “driving out” the nations (Deut 31:3) and doing exactly as the Lord had commanded them (Deut 31:5), they would actively demonstrate faith in the Lord. It is against this backdrop of the Israelites’ call to action in trusting the Lord to provide what he promised that Moses commanded them to “be strong and courageous; don’t be terrified or afraid” (Deut 31:6).

Be Strong and Courageous

Fear and terror of the Canaanite nations led the first generation of free Israelites to rebel against the Lord and not enter the Promised Land, failing to trust God to provide what he promised. Juxtaposed against the dual command against terror or fear of the nations, Moses positively commands the Israelites to be “strong,” namely, to be strengthened for an “intended action,” or to be repaired, encouraged, or fortified.¹⁹ For a person to “be strong,” then, comes with the concept of being built up or supplied with the ability to face challenging circumstances. The Israelites were not to find this strength in their own resources, for their enemies appeared much stronger. Yet, they were still to be strong-hearted, unwavering, and confident as they entered the Promised Land, trusting that their strength would come from another.

Moses also commands the Israelites to be “courageous.” *Amas*, translated here as courage, is another word for strength, with a range of meaning that includes being

¹⁹ Ingrid Spellnes Faro, “Strength,” in *Lexham Theological Wordbook*, ed. Douglas Mangum et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014), Logos Bible Software.

courageous, resolute, and firm in conviction.²⁰ Challenges and threats from enemy armies may come; indeed, they were inevitable. Yet Moses commanded them to be strong in spirit, firm in their resolve. They were to be confidently obedient to the Lord, moving toward the threat with courage, dangerous as it may seem, firm in the conviction that they must act in obedience to the Lord regardless of the threat. They were to be physically engaged in battle against the Canaanites, not focusing on their enemies, as Peter Craigie says, “whose threatening presence could easily undermine their confidence.”²¹

Along with these positive commands to be strong and courageous, the Israelites were commanded not to be terrified or afraid of their enemies, though their enemies seemed dauntingly dangerous to them. Once again, Moses used two words for fear to emphasize his point: that despite their opponents’ strength, they were not to be overwhelmed by apprehension and dread or feel panic from the threat of loss that coming up against them might have entailed.

The Lord’s Promised Presence

For Israelites to be unafraid, “strong and courageous,” they must have an object for their confidence that is greater than the perceived danger; otherwise, Moses’s command is a mere platitude that is baseless, of little use to calm their fears. Thus, Moses gave them this reason to enter Canaan confidently, despite the apparent dangers they would face: “For the Lord your God is the one who will go with you” (Deut 31:6b). Their confidence and courage would not come from themselves and their own abilities, for they must have perceived that they were significantly weaker than the nations they would drive out. Rather, it would come from the Lord, who promised to go with them.²²

²⁰ Faro, “Strength.”

²¹ Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, 370.

²² Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, 370.

The Lord is “the divine warrior” who would fight for them.²³ This is the same God who, by simply speaking, created the vast expanse of the universe (Gen 1), and who used the forces of his created nature to defeat the Egyptian army that pursued them (Exod 14:26-28). He demonstrated his great power on their behalf, showing himself to be their strength and salvation (Exod 15:2-3). Memory of this should have given them confidence of what his powerful presence with them would do for them going forward: namely, to bring them safely to the land that he had promised to them, thwarting the threats that they face as they trust him, fighting for them. Moving forward into Canaan would demonstrate that, though they would face great dangers, they had confidence in a greater God who would fight as a warrior against them and do so with far greater power than their enemies had. It is with this assurance that they would remind themselves time and again to “be brave and strong” and not be afraid or alarmed.²⁴

God’s powerful presence to actively fight for and protect the Israelites is not time limited; he would not leave or abandon them. He would not slacken or relax his protective hold on them.²⁵ He is, by nature, faithfully loving, “maintaining faithful love to a thousand generations” (Exod 34:7). For a generation, they looked to Moses to lead them; now, they must understand that their future success would not merely rest on a human leader, but God’s presence.²⁶ Their strength, courage, and peace from their fear would come, not as they focus on their enemies and their threatening presence, strong as they may be, but as they fix their minds on the Lord, confident that he will not fail or forsake them.²⁷

²³ Duane Christensen, *Deuteronomy 21:10-34:12*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 6B (Dallas: Thomas Nelson, 2002), 760.

²⁴ Richard D. Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, Old Testament Library (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 358.

²⁵ Block, *Deuteronomy*, 723.

²⁶ Block, *Deuteronomy*, 723.

²⁷ Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, 370.

As God's people, reconciled and belonging to him through Jesus Christ (2 Cor 5:18; 1 Pet 2:10) believers have the same confidence as the Israelites. God's powerful presence with the Israelites was far greater than any object of their fear, threatening as it may have been. Believers may feel weak and overwhelmed by the task ahead or the threat that faces them. Merely looking at their own ability will lead to fear if the danger seems too great, as it did for the first generation of Israelites. Instead, as they understood that the infinitely mighty God is with them, they can be confident to persevere through difficult circumstances, trusting that he will help them as they trust him.

The Care of God and the Priorities of People in Matthew 6:19-34

Fears and anxieties arise when a threat, danger, or potential loss is perceived. This may take the form of an explicitly named and explained threat, or it may be a general sense of foreboding about a particular susceptible area. A person will feel fear and anxiety more deeply the more that the object being threatened is important to them. When a person values a temporary object, they are open to fear and anxiety, because that object may be harmed or taken from them. In Matthew 6:19-34, Jesus teaches that hope for anxiety and fear comes as a person loves God and trusts his good care.

Values of the Heart

Life on this earth is temporary, as are the various objects of this world, whether material possessions, circumstances, or human life itself. Yet people tend to ascribe value to these things, whether monetary, sentimental, or in usefulness. These are the "treasures on earth" that Jesus commands against storing up (Matt 6:19). This kind of action goes beyond merely making good provision for the future, or, by extension, loving and caring for people such as family in healthy, godly ways, but instead places too much value on

those things or people for selfish or covetous purposes.²⁸ Though a person may take measures to protect their earthly treasures, nonetheless, those things are not completely safe. By highlighting common natural forces that cause slow or swift destruction and evil forces that unlawfully take what a person has, Jesus’s reminder is that objects on this earth that a person may value are “precarious and may easily be lost.”²⁹ To place too great a value and importance on these things will, by nature, leave a person afraid and anxious about the possibility of their damage or loss, and angry when these things occur.

Jesus’s command is, instead, to “store up for yourselves treasures in heaven” (Matt 6:20), where those things will not be threatened by the very things Jesus calls destructive to earthly treasures. They are safe; they are eternal. Therefore, they are worth valuing. Leon Morris explains, “Jesus is saying that his followers must have a right sense of values and not see earthly success, however that may be understood, as the aim of all their labor Everyone has some ‘treasure,’ the main object in life. Jesus is asking whether that is to be the transient or the eternal, and he warns that earthly riches may disappear.”³⁰ That which is transient and temporary will leave a person open to fear and anxiety, for it can be threatened or lost; that which is eternal—that which is of God—will not, because He is the one thing that a person can trust will not be threatened or lost.

Jesus concludes this teaching by saying, “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matt 6:21). Where we place our highest value—whether on earthly treasures, good or important as they may be, or on the Lord first above all—reveals our hearts. We are focused and attentive to what our hearts value; we love those things, so we move toward and act on behalf of those things. John Nolland observes,

²⁸ D. A. Carson, *Matthew*, in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 8, *Matthew, Mark, Luke*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 177.

²⁹ Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 33A (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1993), 157.

³⁰ Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 152.

“Our heart is inevitably drawn to what we value most.”³¹ The implication is that we must love and value the Lord above all, and trust and submit every earthly thing to his care, the only one who can never be threatened or lost.

Jesus uses two images to shed light on a person’s heart. First, he compares a good and bad eye. In Jewish thought, the eye was a source of light for a person.³² Thus, a good eye would reveal something to a person accurately. In context, a good or healthy eye would help a person see what they have on earth and God himself in perspective, showing the far superior value of God. The “healthy” eye may also be translated as the “single” eye, namely, a person that is single-heartedly focused on the right priority, loving the Lord first and letting him influence and control every other area of life.³³ A bad or “evil” eye is envious and greedy, seeking earthly gain.³⁴ Jesus teaches that it is temporary and vulnerable to danger, leading to anxiety. Throughout this teaching about temporary and eternal treasures, the things a person values, Jesus implies that a person’s love and priority must be first and only for the Lord.

“Do Not Worry”

Jesus then commands, “Therefore I tell you, don’t worry about your life” (Matt 6:25). “Therefore” looks back to the discussion in 19-24. By saying this, Jesus connects a person’s priorities and values with anxiety, implying that if a person values objects of eternal significance, namely, the Lord himself, and keeps temporary earthly objects from becoming too important, freedom from worry will naturally follow. Other objects, many important, will still be part of a person’s life, but they do not control a person; a person’s

³¹ Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 152.

³² John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 300.

³³ R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 260.

³⁴ Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 158.

well-being is ultimately not dependent on them. Therefore, a person can be free from worry when their object of highest value is the Lord. This command is for the present moment, not merely for a future time when a person may hope that their situation is improved. Rather, the command is in the present tense; regardless of the circumstances, though they may be difficult or uncertain, a person can still be at peace.

If a person has the Lord, argues Jesus, they need not worry about even the most essential needs for physical life. As Morris comments, “Food and drink and clothing are the basic necessities, and these things may well have been a cause of anxiety for many of his hearers, who would have come from the poorer classes.”³⁵ If a person’s primary earthly concern is their next meal or adequate clothing, and do not know how or where to obtain them, they will naturally worry about the consequences for their life of lacking them. However, Jesus argues, God knows that we need these things. The “Gentiles,” or those who do not belong to or have faith in him, worry about these things (Matt 6:32).³⁶ Unlike those who do not have the Lord, believers are to trust that he will provide for even their most basic physical needs. Consequently, they have no need to worry about them. Worry is, as R. T. France says, “the antithesis of practical trust in God which is the essential meaning of faith.”³⁷ Worry represents a lack of faith that he will provide and protect.

To demonstrate God’s providential care, inspiring faith to allay worry, Jesus uses two illustrations. God cares for the birds (Matt 6:26) and the wildflowers of the field (Matt 6:28), and provides for them food and clothing, though they do not work for them. Birds and flowers are relatively insignificant parts of God’s creation, and yet God provides for their needs. Indeed, though the flowers’ time on earth is brief, he pays such

³⁵ Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 157.

³⁶ Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 165-66.

³⁷ France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 270-71.

attention to them that he delights to make them more beautiful than the richest king in Israel's history (Matt 6:29). Human beings, created in his image, are far more valuable to him than the birds and flowers (Matt 6:26, 30). The God who made these seemingly insignificant parts of creation sustains them for their existence; how much more will the God who gives life to us supply the means to sustain it?³⁸ If a person has and values first the eternal God, they can trust him to provide and protect what they may otherwise be anxious and afraid for.

The promise of God's provision, gladly given with a Father's heart (Matt 6:32), is the reason that Jesus commands, "Do not worry about your life." Food and clothing are important, but they are well within God's purview and ability to provide. He knows that a person needs them (Matt 6:32). This can be expanded out to whatever a person needs, whether general material needs, needs that are specific or unique to that person, or temporal and time-sensitive needs.

What, then, should a person be concerned for? Jesus says, "But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you" (Matt 6:33). The kingdom of God should be "of first importance" to a person.³⁹ God's kingdom—the scope of his rule—is to be the primary goal of a person's existence; therefore, a person is to continually submit to God's way in their life.⁴⁰ As they do, they are called to obedience to what God calls them to, faithfully doing the "will of God" for them, to seek to see God's kingdom advanced where he calls them to.⁴¹

Finally, Jesus repeats the command, "Don't worry" (Matt 6:34). Where his command in verse 25 was about anxiety in the present moment, here, he looks forward:

³⁸ David L. Turner, *Matthew*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 199.

³⁹ Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 161.

⁴⁰ Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 165-66.

⁴¹ Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 161.

“Don’t worry *about tomorrow*” (emphasis added). Jesus teaches that a God will provide, not only for present needs, but also for those in the future. Indeed, there may be many possible threats to fear in the future, and many unknown needs or difficult situations may arise. Yet, as Hagner observes, “As the present is fully under God’s control, so also is the future.”⁴² He is the eternal sovereign God, and regardless of what happens in the present or future, a person will not lose him and his promise to sustain them and bring them safely home to eternity. He cares for the anxious and afraid.

The Peace of God and the Trust of People in Philippians 4:5-7

Confidence in God’s promised presence, far greater and stronger than anything that threatens a person, helps a person have peace from fear of that object. Seeing the Lord’s provision for even the small, insignificant parts of creation helps a person understand that he cares for their needs. Knowing these things about God, his people are called to depend on him in fear and anxiety. We see this in Philippians 4:5-7.

The Lord Is Near

Paul grounds his exhortation for the believers in Philippi not to worry in an important truth about the Lord: that he is near. This may either refer to God’s immanent presence now or his imminent return. The latter is certainly a possibility, with Paul having looked forward to the hope believers have of an eternity in heaven with transformed bodies (Phil 3:20-21). This is certainly grounds for an absence of fear, because though present circumstances may be difficult, and believers may even suffer greatly, the promised coming eternity will be exceedingly good, far outweighing present trouble (2 Cor 4:17).

⁴² Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 166.

However, contextually, the first option appears to be the best interpretive choice. This reminder of the Lord’s “nearness” is followed by Paul’s exhortation to pray, namely, to talk to God—not merely to store up requests for a coming judgment day, but to talk with a God whom Scripture presents as near. Further, spatial nearness usually refers to a person, while temporal nearness normally refers to an event.⁴³ Therefore, because the Lord is now present with the believer, Paul encourages his readers to pray (Phil 4:6). With an understanding that God is omnipotent, far greater than any threat a person may face (Deut 31:1-6), compassionate, providing for every need (Matt 6:19-34), understanding that he is near, they can trust him for safety.

That Paul speaks of the Lord being “near” reflects the language of several Psalms. In Psalm 73, though the Psalmist feels envy at the wealth and well-being of those who are evil, implying that they were more prosperous than he, he remembers that having the Lord is far more important; more than earthly goods, the “nearness of God” is his good (Ps 73:28, NASB). In Psalm 34, having tasted and seen that the Lord is good and experienced his rescuing action, David tells that he is “near to the brokenhearted” (Ps 34:18). Even when a threat has caused a person great loss, the Lord has not left; he is near to that person. Therefore, though a person has suffered and grieves great loss, they may do so with hope, because they can never lose the one whose “nearness” is their good and who trusted to provide for every need (Matt 6:19-34).

The Lord is near, though the worst happens; and his presence is a person’s good. He is near to “all who call out to him” (Ps 145:18). Though a person may face dangers and threats, such as the Philippian church as they faced Roman persecution, the assurance that the Lord is near means that as his people depend on him, calling out to him

⁴³ Ben Witherington III, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 246.

instead of going to another source for help, their pleas do not fall on deaf ears and their trust is not misplaced.

The Alternative to Worry

Because the Lord is near, Paul commands, “Don’t worry about anything” (Phil 4:6). Because the Lord is near, God’s people should not be distressed or obsessed with their concerns or difficulties.⁴⁴ The command, “Don’t worry,” is active. Therefore, even though circumstances may be threatening, they are to make every effort to not worry, not because their troubles are insignificant, but because, as Ralph P. Martin and Gerald F. Hawthorne say, “God is greater than all their troubles.”⁴⁵ Therefore, Paul says, “don’t worry about *anything*” (emphasis added). Because nothing is outside of God’s purview to look after, there is no exception to this prohibition.⁴⁶

Instead of worrying, the Philippian people are to pray, according to Gordon Fee, “in everything . . . in all the details and circumstances of life . . . in situations where others fret and worry.”⁴⁷ God is not unaware of a person’s need; they do not need to inform God of something he does not already know so that he may act on their behalf. Indeed, the assurance that God already knows a person’s need leads that person to prayer, for they can be confident of God’s care in response.⁴⁸ In using three terms for prayer, which are virtually indistinguishable from each other, Paul emphasizes that in all things,

⁴⁴ G. Walter Hansen, *The Letter to the Philippians*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 289.

⁴⁵ Ralph P. Martin and Gerald F. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, rev. ed., Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 43 (Dallas: Word Books, 2004), 245.

⁴⁶ Hansen, *The Letter to the Philippians*, 290.

⁴⁷ Gordon Fee, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 408-9.

⁴⁸ Moises Silva, *Philippians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 195.

a person actively demonstrates full dependence on God.⁴⁹ In prayer, a person tells God that they are trusting him, and they are clinging to him for what they need. Prayer directs a person's focus away from the circumstance that causes them to worry, and orients that person's life to God, who can be trusted with said circumstance.⁵⁰ Because a person is oriented to the Lord instead of the object of worry or fear, they are to pray with thanksgiving. Instead of worrying about what has been or may be lost, thanksgiving reminds them that they yet have the faithful God; they have all they need.⁵¹

The Peace of God

The recommended alternative action to worrying is prayer with thanksgiving, directing a person's attention away from the negative circumstance and toward the sovereign Lord. This is how a person depends on God in fear and anxiety. What, then, is the result? That person will experience God's peace.

What is the "peace of God"? The peace of God is the peace that God has in himself and is characteristic of him.⁵² God is not anxious or afraid, for nothing can damage or destroy him; he is omnipotent, in a constant state of well-being.⁵³ He is calmly serene as a result.⁵⁴ He invites believers to share in his peace, inwardly experiencing it because of his presence with them.⁵⁵ Though circumstances may be tumultuous or potentially dangerous, as a person's attention and trust are fixed on God and his all-powerful presence through prayer, they become confident that he will protect them. This

⁴⁹ Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, 409.

⁵⁰ Hansen, *The Letter to the Philippians*, 291.

⁵¹ Hansen, *The Letter to the Philippians*, 291.

⁵² Martin and Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 246.

⁵³ Jonathon Lookadoo, "Peace," in *Lexham Theological Wordbook*, ed. Douglas Mangum et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014), Logos Bible Software.

⁵⁴ Martin and Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 246.

⁵⁵ Hansen, *The Letter to the Philippians*, 292.

peace supplants their anxiety and brings wholeness through, what Ben Witherington calls, the “calming, healing presence of God.”⁵⁶

This peace “surpasses all understanding.” A person need not know how God will protect and provide for them to have peace. A person need not know all the details of how God will bring them through difficult circumstances. Rather, a person trusts that God cares for them and will provide for what they need. As a result, Gordon Fee says, “Peace comes because prayer is an expression of trust, and God’s people do not need to have it all figured out to trust him.”⁵⁷ This peace will “guard” the believers’ “hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.” It will comprehensively protect a person’s heart—their emotions, thoughts, and decisions—from fear and anxiety.

As a person depends on the Lord, who is all powerful and ever present, expressing their trust in prayer, thanking God for his work in and for them and care for their every need, they experience peace, freedom from anxiety and fear. This peace comes through the salvation that comes through faith in the work of Jesus Christ on the cross. Jesus’s finished work on the cross alone saves, and a person simply looks to him in faith; they continue to trust that he will provide everything else needed for this life (Rom 8:32). Depending on God is the primary remedy for fear and anxiety.

The Comfort of God and the Charge for People in 2 Corinthians 1:3-11

The Christian faith is not merely a mental exercise, an assent to particular beliefs about God. Rather, belief in God involves an experience of wherein a person comes to know and trust Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. God is active in a person’s life, cultivating Christlikeness, showing compassion, providing for a person’s needs. Biblical Counselors, people of faith who have experienced God’s active work in and care for, are

⁵⁶ Witherington, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*, 249.

⁵⁷ Fee, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*, 411.

called to comfort and care for one another in fear and anxiety.

The God of All Comfort

While many of Paul's letters open with thanksgiving and prayer for their recipients, 2 Corinthians instead opens with a hymn of praise to God for his encouragement and comfort, which Paul has experienced firsthand. In verses 8-11, Paul describes his own recent affliction. George H. Guthrie summarizes it well: he had "been deeply challenged emotionally and threatened physically, having come through a terrifying time of intense persecution . . . bringing him to the brink of despair and a certain inability to cope with the situation."⁵⁸ He suffered in a manner that many people would be afraid to. His very life was in danger (2 Cor 1:9). Yet this is the man who determined to know nothing among them but Christ and him crucified (1 Cor 2:2), counting treasures on earth as loss for the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus his Lord and being found in him (Phil 3:8-9). Paul did not find comfort in his circumstances (for they were painful), earthly possessions (or lack thereof), or his very life itself (under threat). If he did, he would have been susceptible to fear and anxiety. Rather, having experienced God's rescue from death in the past, he placed his hope in the God who would again rescue him, indeed, the God who raises the dead (2 Cor 1:9-10). Whether God graciously rescues him from dangerous circumstances or allows his physical death, he is confident that he will live, for, through faith the risen Christ, death itself is a gateway to eternal life with his Lord (Phil 1:21-23).

Paul's experience is framed by his understanding of God. Who is God, according to Paul? First, he is the "Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Cor 1:3). God is the Father of the One that he is giving his life for. Throughout 2 Corinthians, in his suffering, Paul often identifies with Jesus's suffering, but also lifts him up as exalted

⁵⁸ George H. Guthrie, *2 Corinthians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015), 64.

Lord. The effect of this is that those who suffer and those who are fearful and anxious about suffering are called to look to and seek Jesus, who suffered and now reigns.⁵⁹ Jesus reveals the heart of God toward the suffering, the fearful, and the anxious. In his death, we see God’s love for undeserving sinners (Rom 5:8) to bring them to eternal life (Rom 6:23). Yet Paul now sees Jesus reigning victorious. He calls Jesus *our* Lord, placing himself and the Corinthian church under Jesus’s authority.⁶⁰ They belong to Jesus, the sovereign one whom they can never lose.

Expanding on his identity as God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Paul identifies the Lord as the “Father of mercies” and the “God of all comfort.” It is only through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, crucified for us, that we receive the mercies and comfort of God.⁶¹ God shows his heart in giving his own son to be crucified for the redemption of the world, and who is now reigning. His heart toward his people is that of a merciful father eager to comfort them in their affliction.

God is the merciful or “compassionate” father. The plural “mercies” may indicate that God compassionate in general or that he is the father who has been compassionate in specific, concrete instances.⁶² Both are encouraging. The prior reflects God’s disposition in being good and compassionate toward all he has made (Ps 145:9). The latter gives people the opportunity to find hope in the Lord by recalling moments that he has been specifically compassionate to them, and trust him to be so again in the future. As Father of mercies, he has a natural concern for his children.⁶³ He is not merely merciful when it is expedient or beneficial to himself; he dearly loves his people at great

⁵⁹ Guthrie, *2 Corinthians*, 65.

⁶⁰ Guthrie, *2 Corinthians*, 66.

⁶¹ Mark A. Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 18.

⁶² Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 143.

⁶³ Guthrie, *2 Corinthians*, 67.

cost to himself, proven at the cross (Rom 5:8).

With the compassionate heart of a Father, he is the “God of all comfort.” Comfort may be better translated “encouragement.” God does not merely dull a person’s pain; indeed, he may not take away a person’s struggle and make their life easier. Rather, as David Powlison exhorts, “Our Father’s comfort actively strengthens you in the midst of weakness, pain, and need—so you can take heart and take action. We have very good reasons for feeling vulnerable and overwhelmed. But God’s forms of comfort give better reasons to live with courage, humility, and purpose.”⁶⁴ God speaks, not merely to bring relief from the affliction, but that he does indeed love and care for the person, seeing their distress and answering their cry.⁶⁵ When a person is in distress, fearful of threat or loss, anxious about a foreboding, strength comes from the God whose compassion and comfort comes through his own Son, Jesus Christ.

Called to Comfort

A person’s affliction is not meaningless. As they receive comfort from God through Jesus Christ, this divine help is not to end with them. God calls individuals who have experienced his comfort firsthand to comfort others who are suffering. A person who has experienced God’s comfort for their fears and anxieties is called to encourage others who struggle with fear and anxiety. We are comforted by God “so that” we may comfort others who are afflicted (2 Cor 1:4b).

Comfort from one who has had the experience of being comforted in their affliction brings a concrete quality to the encouragement given. A person who has been comforted in their suffering can identify with another person’s struggle. The experience of having been comforted in affliction ought to lead a person to have sympathy for

⁶⁴ David Powlison, “The God of All Comfort,” *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 31, no. 3 (2017): 6.

⁶⁵ Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 21.

another sufferer, stirring up the same kind of compassion for another that they have received from God.⁶⁶ They become more sensitive to another's struggle and more ready to move toward them with compassion. As they enter into another person's life and struggle in this way, they can point to God's activity of comfort, care, and help in their own life as a way of encouraging another. God's help and comfort are shown to be more than merely abstract ideas or disconnected words on a page; they are concrete realities, seen in the present, more accessible to another sufferer; indeed, as Powlison writes, "When you witness hope, wisdom, and courage emerging in someone else, your own faith becomes more firm and more fruitful."⁶⁷ Thus, people who have suffered are uniquely able to help those in similar circumstances with the firsthand experience they share and the hope that is concretely visible in the person God has comforted.⁶⁸

Just as Jesus brought salvation through his suffering, death, and resurrection, having been sustained and resurrected by the power of God, believers also, with the indwelling Holy Spirit, represent God to the broken world they inhabit. They demonstrate in contemporary contexts the God who revealed himself in Scripture as the "Father of mercies" and "God of all comfort." By their physical presence, they show to other sufferers the God who is with them in loneliness that may allow fear and anxiety to grow. By their words and actions, they demonstrate that because another person matters to them, they matter to God. By being an example of trusting God to comfort and help in suffering, they model to others how to respond to God, patiently enduring.⁶⁹

As people who have suffered, particularly with fear and anxiety, and who have

⁶⁶ Paul Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 61.

⁶⁷ Powlison, "The God of All Comfort," 12.

⁶⁸ Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 2nd ed., Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 40 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 143.

⁶⁹ Powlison, "The God of All Comfort," 10-12.

known God's help and comfort, believers are called to counsel one another, caring for and comforting one another. They do so by bringing people to God as the "Father of mercies" who has great compassion for them, and in that compassion, is the "God of all comfort," who encourages them to keep moving forward, even in the suffering and under the threats they face. God reveals himself in Scripture; therefore, God's people are called to use Scripture to encourage one another. He has come to us in his Son, Jesus Christ, the suffering Savior, whose wounds bring healing and salvation (1 Pet 2:24); therefore, God's people are called to take one another to him, to find hope in the one who suffered, died, and was raised to life again for their salvation.

Conclusion

As people face difficult situations and the possibility of harm and loss in the future, with a sense of weakness or inability to overcome these circumstances, they may feel fear and anxiety, distress, tension, and foreboding about the possible negative impacts of these events. Yet God, who is omnipotent and sovereign, promises his compassionate care and presence for each person who belongs to him through Christ Jesus. Valuing him above all else and trusting him for every need brings peace. Believers are called to encourage one another with this truth as they see it throughout Scripture.

CHAPTER 3

HOW BIBLICAL COUNSELING ADDRESSES FEAR AND ANXIETY

Life in the world, broken by the sin at the fall, is fraught with dangers. As people perceive perils, they tend to feel afraid and anxious. Fear, worry, and anxiety are words that “describe an emotional condition based on the belief that an unpleasant situation is occurring or will occur in the immediate future.”¹ While these terms carry some specific nuance, they may be used interchangeably to describe a person’s tense apprehension at the perception of an unpleasant circumstance. Fear and anxiety lead to a person being self-protective and avoid situations requiring them to interact with the object of their fear. Various models, including cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), seek to help people reduce or overcome their struggle with anxiety; however, biblical counseling is the most effective way to address it.

Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy and Anxiety

A popular method of counseling in the secular world, cognitive-behavioral therapy seeks to help a person with their problems by helping them change their behavior as it is influenced by their patterns of thinking. In CBT a person changes their behavior as they apply the principles about how they can think differently about the situations they face.² Indeed, the basic principle of CBT is that a person’s thinking and the ways they

¹ Rob Green, “Worry, Anxiety, and Fear,” in *The Gospel for Disordered Lives: An Introduction to Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling*, ed. Robert D. Jones, Kristen L. Kellen, and Rob Green (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2021), 274.

² Henck Van Bilsen, *Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy in the Real World* (New York: Routledge, 2018), 2.

interpret their situations will influence their emotions, reactions, and behaviors.³ The role of the counselor, or the therapist, is to help a client separate their thoughts from their feelings, reactions, and behavior to help them understand their problems. As they do so, they gain hope and feel more in control of their lives, leading to positive change.⁴

In CBT, therapists help clients identify “distorted thoughts and perceptions,” challenging them and helping clients to identify what needs to change about them.⁵ Therapists help clients identify underlying beliefs behind their thoughts, the core beliefs and underlying assumptions that lead people to think certain ways about their circumstances. Underlying assumptions are a person’s rules, assumptions, and attitudes that they employ to cope with difficult situations; they believe that if they do something, their desired objective will come about (or the opposite, if they are anxious about doing something wrong). The therapist would work with the client to examine whether they are helpful or accurate.⁶

In CBT theory, core beliefs are what people believe to be true about themselves, others, the world around them, and the future.⁷ Fear and anxiety can easily come from wrong thinking about these things. For instance, a person can be fearful if they believe that they are not sufficient or strong enough to face their situations, that others are malevolent or will mistreat them, that the world is full of dangers great and small, and that the future will contain negative circumstances. The foundation of anxiety is that a person believes that danger is present or approaching, bringing awful

³ Nina Josefowitz and David Myran, *CBT Made Simple: A Clinicians Guide to Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy* (Oakland, CA: New Harbinger, 2021), 11.

⁴ Josefowitz and Myran, *CBT Made Simple*, 14.

⁵ Tim Clinton, Archibald D. Hart, and George Ohlschlager, eds., *Caring for People God’s Way: Personal and Emotional Issues, Addictions, Grief, and Trauma* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 175.

⁶ Josefowitz and Myran, *CBT Made Simple*, 21.

⁷ Josefowitz and Myran, *CBT Made Simple*, 18.

consequences, that it is likely to occur, and that they are unable to handle it. According to CBT theory, people struggle with their problems because of distorted thinking. This includes their perception of the situations in which they are anxious. They may focus on negative aspects of their situation while ignoring the positive ones; they may engage in predicting the future and catastrophize; and they may worry about what they should or should not have done, thinking about how their actions may have created a worse than desired outcome. As they magnify the negative aspects of their situation, they will underestimate their ability to cope with or handle it.⁸

CBT addresses anxiety by helping a person think more clearly and objectively about the situations they may find themselves anxious in. Therapists help clients identify thoughts that are negative, irrational, and unhelpful, and help them find ways to correct or adjust that thinking, challenging their distorted or negative ways of thinking, and finding ways to adjust their thinking to react to situations more positively.⁹ This involves helping clients distinguish between their thoughts and the resulting emotions and behaviors; helping them understand what causes their fear; helping them examine the evidence about situations they are anxious in, and helping them use that evidence to challenge their anxious thoughts; and helping them to identify negative thought patterns and replace them with better ways of thinking and responding, so that they may have better control over their thoughts.¹⁰ As well, CBT therapists may teach clients ways to manage their physical symptoms with relaxation techniques. Their theory is that when a person's symptoms are initially managed and brought to a manageable level, they will be better able to treat their underlying thought patterns.¹¹

⁸ Josefowitz and Myran, *CBT Made Simple*, 106-10.

⁹ Clinton, Hart, and Oslchlager, *Caring for God's People God's Way*, 176.

¹⁰ Clinton, Hart, and Oslchlager, *Caring for God's People God's Way*, 176.

¹¹ Josefowitz and Myran, *CBT Made Simple*, 288.

Another common technique CBT therapists use is exposure therapy. Exposure therapy slowly challenges clients who engage in false safety behaviors, that is, behaviors that help them feel safe without decreasing the threat of a situation, and patterns of avoiding anxiety-inducing situations. Therapists will gradually expose clients to these situations, so that as they find that they are not as threatening as initially believed in small doses or smaller exposures, they become more confident to enter these situations to greater degrees.¹²

Lasting change requires more than merely alleviating unpleasant symptoms; it requires addressing their cause. While CBT helps people to change their thought patterns to have a more manageable perception about their reality, it fails to recognize that people need more than coping mechanisms. Biblical counseling addresses the root of fear and anxiety by helping a person understand their whole heart, which includes the mind, but also affections and will, and align their heart, not merely with their fallen desires, which lead to destruction (Prov 14:12), but God's life-giving way. Biblical counseling presents the greatest outside help for people's weaknesses: God, the perfect redeemer.

What CBT fails to recognize is that a person's heart is not merely a set or system of cognitions. A person is more than their thought processes—whether faulty and problematic or healthy and helpful. While CBT attempts to help a person by training them to change their thought patterns, it fails to consider other significant factors that influence a person. It does not adequately inform a person's will and what they are committed to, nor does it adequately address a person's affections and what they value or love most. Filing these things as sub-categories of cognitive activity fails to take them as seriously as they demand.

CBT primarily focuses on cognitive activity, it is not rooted in an objective outside authority, namely, Scripture. Given the presupposition that people do not exist in

¹² Josefowitz and Myran, *CBT Made Simple*, 222-24.

a vacuum, but live as beings created by God in a world created by God, they need help and wisdom for their thought processes informed by this God. After all, if he designed human beings, including their minds, he must know best how they work and how best a person can think through situations where they feel fear and anxiety.

Being a secular counseling method, CBT excludes the work of a Redeemer from being a part of any change in a person. Rather, the client is the agent of their own change, training their internal cognitions to combat the symptoms of their problem. This assumes that these cognitions are sufficient for lasting change and that a person can successfully change their ways of thinking. This places a heavy burden on a person who may already be weighed down with their struggles and frustrated with their ability to handle them. To see lasting change, a person must engage in more than mere thought modification; rather, their heart must change. This is not something done by improving their ability to handle difficult situations; rather, in their weakness, they need the help of God himself, who promises to do so (2 Pet 1:3). Scripture constantly emphasizes that the presence of the infinitely mighty and faithfully loving God is the only source of sure hope and help for the weak and worry-filled person.

The Heart and Biblical Counseling

Cognitive-behavioral therapy proponents rightly observe the importance of the mind and the change that comes about through addressing thoughts. CBT places primacy on the mind, and other aspects of a person, such as their emotions, values, and choices, follows suit. However, as we turn to Scripture, we see a more holistic view of a person and how they change. It recognizes that they consist of both their physical body and their soul, or, to use the language of Scripture, the “outer person” and the “inner person” (2 Cor 4:16). The latter encompasses the consciousness, the mind, the spirit, and the ability

to reason and feel emotions.¹³ The term Scripture uses most often to describe the inner person is the “heart.” The heart is essential to understanding a person. It is the core of a person, and while it includes the mind, it also includes a person’s affections and will. A person’s actions reflect what is in their heart (Matt 15:18), not merely problems in their thinking, as CBT holds. Accordingly, as with any emotion, fear and anxiety reveal the condition of a person’s heart, communicating what a person, from their heart, loves and values, as it responds to potentially threatening situations.¹⁴ Therefore, in counseling, it is essential to, as Paul David Tripp says, “target the heart.”¹⁵

What Is the Heart?

To fully address a problem like fear and anxiety in a person, biblical counselors address a person’s heart. Put simply, as A. Craig Troxel does, “The heart is the governing center of a person.”¹⁶ The heart is not merely the seat of emotions, as it is popularly conceived today. Rather, it is the whole of a person’s inner life, the source of everything a person desires and does.¹⁷ A person’s problems are not merely classified as “spiritual,” “psychological,” “emotional,” or isolated to any other fragmented area of their lives. Rather, as Jeremy Pierre writes, they “conduct themselves from a singular response system for which they are responsible before their Creator. Because this is true, all human problems are spiritual problems.”¹⁸ Because the heart has various functions

¹³ Ed Welch, “The Psychological Does Not Exist,” *Christian Counseling and Education Foundation* (blog), May 27, 2010, <https://www.ccef.org/psychological-does-not-exist/>.

¹⁴ J. Alasdair Groves and Winston T. Smith, *Untangling Emotions* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2019), 35.

¹⁵ Paul David Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands: People in Need of Change Helping People in Need of Change* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2002), 59-60.

¹⁶ A. Craig Troxel, *With All Your Heart: Orienting Your Mind, Desires, and Will Toward Christ* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020), 21.

¹⁷ Friedrich Baumgartel and Johannes Behm, “Καρδιά, Καρδιογνώστης, Σκληροκαρδία,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 606.

¹⁸ Jeremy Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life: Connecting Christ to Human Experience*

and is the root of various problems, biblical counselors target the *whole* heart. It is the unity of its constituent functions or operations. Three interrelated functions of the heart work together. The heart functions cognitively, thinking and reasoning based on beliefs; it functions affectively, desiring, valuing, and loving; and it functions volitionally, making choices that reflect commitments.¹⁹ We can summarize these three functions of the heart as the mind, the affections, and the will.²⁰ To understand and address a problem like fear and anxiety, we must consider it in relation to all three functions of the heart. Compared to CBT's focus on the mind, this provides a more well-rounded assessment of a person's response to the situations they face.

The mind. The mind is an important function of a person's heart. Both biblical counselors and cognitive-behavioral therapists agree that addressing the mind is important, but biblical counselors address it in the larger context of the heart. Scripture constantly portrays the heart as thinking, understanding, and believing. The heart is called "wise and understanding" (1 Kgs 3:12) and understood to be where thoughts arise (Luke 5:22). In Hebrew poetic fashion, the heart and mind are often mentioned together in parallel, reiterating that they are synonyms (Pss 26:2; 139:23).²¹ The mind is constantly at work, processing countless thoughts during daily life. With the mind, a person receives and stores knowledge, and processes that knowledge, reasoning and drawing conclusions about what they know and experience.

The key function of the mind as an aspect of the heart is interpreting events and experiences based on a set of beliefs that a person has developed over time. From an

(Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2016), 15.

¹⁹ Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life*, 16-17.

²⁰ Elyse M. Fitzpatrick, *Idols of the Heart: Learning to Long for God Alone* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2016), 104.

²¹ Troxel, *With All Your Heart*, 32.

early age, people develop beliefs about what they understand to be true, with some more important than others. A person's most important and active beliefs are control beliefs, influencing and organizing their other beliefs.²² Their interpretation of their experience—how they understand and think about what is happening to them—is filtered through the lens of their beliefs, and they will respond accordingly.²³ A person's understanding or interpretation of what happened to them is informed by what they believe to be true. This interpretation, processed in their mind, shapes their actions and reactions to experiences and circumstances.

The affections. Affections encompass a person's desires, longings, and emotions. Troxel notes that people are full of “longings and cravings, continually seeking satisfaction.”²⁴ Human beings are hardwired to desire and to feel emotion. They desire what they perceive to be good, and in the moment, essential to their well-being or happiness. They feel and express emotions in response to how they perceive their circumstances, particularly in relation to their desires. Pierre notes that “emotions are the surface expression of deeper desires and values.”²⁵ Negative emotions convey a person's reaction to the actual or anticipated loss of a good thing or actual or anticipated receipt of an undesirable one, whereas positive emotions show the reverse, that they have received good things or lost what they do not want.²⁶

Emotions are a window into a person's heart, communicating what they value and desire. Ed Welch summarizes, “Our emotions reveal those things that are most

²² Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life*, 38-39.

²³ Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life*, 39.

²⁴ Troxel, *With All Your Heart*, 69.

²⁵ Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life*, 41.

²⁶ Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life*, 40.

important to us.”²⁷ They show whether or not we are satisfied by what is important to us. Indeed, the scale of our emotions often correlates to an object’s value to us. A negative or positive circumstance will not usually lead to a strongly expressed emotion if it is not of great value to a person, whereas something very important to a person will often lead to a more strongly expressed emotion. Pierre aptly observes, “The things people get most actively worked up about emotionally, whether positive or negative, are generally the things they most want.”²⁸

Where do emotions originate? Groves and Smith note that there are two general theories. Some believe that emotions originate from the body as physical impulses, instincts, and reactions. Others, including many Christian thinkers, believe that emotions are rooted in the mind. Both extremes are unsatisfactory, because at different times, one area may seem to exert more influence than another.²⁹ A view that considers a person as a whole, an embodied soul, a conscious inner person in a physical body, better accounts for their feelings. Emotions, then, originate in and reveal a person’s heart. Alasdair Groves and Winston T. Smith note, “What you care about shapes what you feel. Your emotions are always expressing the things you love, value, and treasure, whether you understand them or not.”³⁰ Affections are interrelated with the mind, as they react in real time to a person’s thought processes, and a person’s will, as they respond in accordance with their commitments. Emotions often reveal a person’s heart at a visceral, unvarnished level, honestly showing what is happening in a person’s heart without being spun to look a particular way.

²⁷ Ed Welch, “Strong Emotions, Extreme Confidence,” *Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation* (blog), May 27, 2010, <https://www.ccef.org/strong-emotions-extreme-confidence/>.

²⁸ Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life*, 42.

²⁹ Groves and Smith, *Untangling Emotions*, 29-31.

³⁰ Groves and Smith, *Untangling Emotions*, 35.

The will. The will is the function of a person’s heart that makes decisions, choosing to act in such a way that a person deems best. A person’s choices reflect a person’s affections and mind, revealing what a person values and believes to be true and important, leading them to act accordingly. Fitzpatrick notes that a person chooses according to their “dearest thoughts and desires,”³¹ reflecting what a person is committed to. A person’s will reflects what they are most deeply committed to, even if it contradicts their understanding of what they should do, what is good and right.³² A person’s will, then, has a complex relationship with their mind and emotions, for though a person may understand something to be right or true, they are more deeply committed something other than that. Pierre notes that “commitment is the heart devoting itself to something it deems worthy.”³³ Whatever a person deems to be important enough to protect or cultivate will influence them to make decisions that benefit that object.³⁴

Everything a person does or does not do are a result of their will. The esteemed Puritan, John Owen, observed, “The will either chooses, refuses, or avoids.”³⁵ Choosing to act or not are obvious aspects of the will; a person may choose to do something, choose among options, or choose not to do something. A refusal to act is avoiding an active response, but it is a response nonetheless – a passive one. Even indecision is a function of the will. Troxel exhorts, “Even if we refuse to commit and decide to take no action, our will is still involved. The decision to do nothing is still a decision to do something. The will of the heart is about what we choose, even if we choose not to

³¹ Fitzpatrick, *Idols of the Heart*, 161.

³² Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life*, 44.

³³ Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life*, 45.

³⁴ Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands*, 68.

³⁵ John Owen, *Temptation and Sin*, vol. 6 of *The Works of John Owen*, ed. William H. Goold (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1987), 170.

choose.”³⁶ Where a person may feel paralyzed by their circumstances, their will is still active, for they choose not to decide about how to respond; they merely respond with inaction. The will of the heart is active in everything we do or do not do in our lives – even the moments when a decision feels uncomfortable or seems too difficult to make.

How Fear and Anxiety Reflect a Person’s Heart

Potentially dangerous situations do not cause a person to become afraid or anxious. Rather, these threats reveal the condition of a person’s heart. A person’s affections, beliefs, and commitments inform their responses to potential dangers. Fear and anxiety are rooted in these, not the circumstances themselves. In this section, we will examine how fear and anxiety is informed by and rooted in each of the three aspects of the heart.

Defining Fear and Anxiety

Fear and anxiety are emotions that respond to an external force or object that have the perceived ability to impact a person’s life. Though the terms fear and anxiety can be used interchangeably, the New Testament does use different words for them.

Fear in itself can be neutral. Timothy Lane notes that, at its core, “To fear something (or someone) is to be in awe of it, so that it directs your emotions and behavior.”³⁷ Fear alerts us to potential threats. The Greek word *phobos* “refers to the emotion elicited by a sense of alarm or danger or anticipation of a negative experience.”³⁸ Robert Kellemen writes, “Fear is our response when we feel uncertain about our resources in the face of danger The threat drives us to face the fact that we’re

³⁶ Troxel, *With All Your Heart*, 112.

³⁷ Timothy Lane, *Living without Worry: How to Replace Anxiety with Peace* (Epsom, England: The Good Book Company, 2015), 27.

³⁸ Miles Custis, “Fear,” in *Lexham Theological Wordbook*, ed. Douglas Magnum et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014), Logos Bible Software.

helpless and that ultimately our safety is out of our control. Fear compels us to face our neediness.”³⁹ Fear reminds us that we are finite, limited in strength, resources, wisdom, and ability. Fear becomes sinful when we forget to trust the Lord in the face of danger.

Anxiety is similar to fear. It is an underlying emotion, a tense feeling that may or may not have a specific object of danger in view. It is over-concern, whether about the vulnerability of a particular object, or of something specific happening to that object. Translated as worry, *merimnao* covers the English range of meaning in “to care,” whether care for someone or something, or “careful or anxious ‘concern about something.’”⁴⁰ Anxiety is continual toxic scanning, vigilant over-care about the what-ifs of life, doing in a way that is self-protective and self-sufficient, without faith in God.⁴¹

Fear, Anxiety, and the Mind

Fear and anxiety are informed by the beliefs a person holds about themselves and their ability to protect what they value. When a person feels fear and anxiety, they believe that they are responsible for their own safety and doubt their ability to maintain it in threatening situations. Ed Welch outlines the basic beliefs behind fear and anxiety as these: I am in danger; I am vulnerable; I need, and might not get, this object; I am needy, body and soul; I could die.⁴² Reflected in these beliefs about self is an understanding that human beings are limited, infallible, and vulnerable.

At its essence, fear and anxiety communicate a belief that a person is in some form of danger. Healthy fear reflects an accurate understanding of a person’s safety and

³⁹ Robert W. Kellemen, *Anxiety: Anatomy and Cure* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2012), 10.

⁴⁰ Rudolf Bultmann. “Μεριμνάω, Προμεριμνάω, Μέρμινα, Αμέριμνος,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, and Gerhard Friedrich, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 589.

⁴¹ Kellemen, *Anxiety*, 8-10.

⁴² Edward Welch, *Running Scared: Fear, Worry, and the God of Rest* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2007), 38-45.

leads them to take proper measures to ensure it. For instance, a healthy fear of road conditions during inclement weather should lead a person drive more cautiously. In these kinds of situations, a person believes that there is a threat to their safety, but that they are quite capable of avoiding it and protecting themselves from it. The heightened sense of trepidation comes when they face a danger that is perceived to be far riskier, feeling as though there is a real chance that they may not be able to withstand it and that damage will occur. This world is fraught with dangers, many of which cannot be foreseen. Though we take certain measures to protect ourselves, such as making wise decisions, we are still vulnerable.⁴³

Awareness of vulnerability reminds a person of their limitations. This can be a healthy reminder of a person's need for the all-sufficient Savior. Absent this, however, fear shows that a person believes that they bear the responsibility for keeping themselves from harm were something to go wrong; they fear that they are losing control, and wish to keep it.⁴⁴ The safety of the things that are the most important to us, such as family, home, or lifestyle, are difficult to let go control over and entrust to God.⁴⁵ Fear, then, speaks of unbelief, a distrust of God or anyone else with objects that are precious to us. As Lane observes, "Worry, or over-concern, thinks and acts as though everything is up to you, or completely out of control, and prays desperately, if at all."⁴⁶ We seek control, and are anxious when it seems to be slipping, because we are afraid of what might happen if we trust God with our lives and obey him; we tend to feel more comfortable when we are in some way in control of our circumstances.⁴⁷ We fail to believe that God is better able

⁴³ Welch, *Running Scared*, 38-39.

⁴⁴ Welch, *Running Scared*, 40.

⁴⁵ Elyse Fitzpatrick, *Overcoming Fear, Worry, and Anxiety* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House), 60.

⁴⁶ Lane, *Living Without Worry*, 20.

⁴⁷ Fitzpatrick, *Overcoming Fear, Worry, and Anxiety*, 54, 62.

to handle the danger than we are. Going further, fear not only reveals distrust of God with our lives, but believes that he does not have our good at heart, and will not care for our needs in the way we would like him to, doubting his goodness toward us.⁴⁸

Fear and anxiety communicate that a person believes that they might not get what they believe they need. As we place value on particular temporal objects, which may be withheld or lost, we worry about not having them. When a person believes that a particular temporal object is essential for well-being, to the extent that they may not have that object, they will worry about its absence in their life. Yet, biblically, we understand that our greatest, and arguably only, need is for God himself and the salvation that he provides through Jesus Christ. He promises to provide everything else that is necessary for life in this world (Matt 6:33; 2 Pet 1:3). The anxious person forgets this and believes that providing these things they believe they need is their own responsibility, and that they may fall short in doing so.

Ultimately, fear and anxiety believe that the future is not good and that the present is harmful. Even if a person has a faith in Jesus, in a moment of worry, they are ignorant of the God who is sovereign over their future and present now. Without the lens of God's sovereign and compassionate care through which to see their circumstances, the anxious person sees their future in a distorted manner, not seeing reality clearly; thus, they believe everything to be worse than it is.⁴⁹ As Wayne A. Mack and Joshua Mack say, "We aren't thinking about how God is at work as He promised for our good."⁵⁰

Fear, Anxiety, and the Affections

Fear and anxiety are rooted in a person's affections. When a person desires or

⁴⁸ Robert D. Jones, *Why Worry? Getting to the Heart of Your Anxiety* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2018), 5, 16.

⁴⁹ Wayne A. Mack and Joshua Mack, *Courage: Fighting Fear with Fear* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2002), 96.

⁵⁰ Mack and Mack, *Courage*, 97.

values an object that can be threatened or taken away, or there is some doubt that they will receive it, they may become fearful and anxious over that object. In other words, when the security and well-being of an object of worth is in doubt, even objects that seem very important to a person's own well-being, such as their health or closest relationships, that person may be fearful and anxious over that object. Lane expresses this well: "Worry is over-concern that results from 'over-loving' something—that is, loving it more than God."⁵¹

Loving an object more than God is sinful idolatry. Sin causes a person to exchange affection of God for affection of created things. When this happens, their life becomes controlled by the pursuit of being satisfied by them, worrying about the safety of what have and having envious anxiety about what they desire.⁵² Our fears and anxieties, then, reveal the objects of our affection. As Jones writes, it shows how we value "pleasing our spouses, legalistic perfectionism, our children, money, revenge, success, reputation, convenience, and the like."⁵³ Though many objects of a person's worry may be good things, such as their family, or items that seem essential to daily living, such as food, clothing, or a living income, and are rooted in valid concerns for them,⁵⁴ anxiety over them indicates that a person loves them too much and God too little.

The earthly objects of our fear and anxiety are temporary, susceptible to damage or loss. Lane puts it well: "If you treasure something that is not stable and lasting, you will naturally be anxious because it may be taken away from you."⁵⁵ When a person loves an item that can be threatened, taken, or never receive, instead of the God

⁵¹ Lane, *Living without Worry*, 25.

⁵² Paul David Tripp, *Awe: Why It Matters in All We Think, Say and Do* (Nottingham, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 2015), 112-13.

⁵³ Jones, *Why Worry?*, 10.

⁵⁴ Groves and Smith, *Untangling Emotions*, 160.

⁵⁵ Lane, *Living without Worry*, 94

who is never threatened and who is freely available to all who trust Jesus for salvation, they essentially trust their own judgment for what they believe will satisfy them—and objects that may not do so. Putting our trust in temporary, earthly objects—any object other than God—will lead to fear and anxiety, because, as Jocelyn Wallace asserts, “they are not able to guarantee that those desires will not be fulfilled. So they are stuck—wanting something more than God, but knowing that they lack the power to make sure they get what they want.”⁵⁶ An object that is not God does not have the ability to provide the safety, security, and satisfaction that he can, because they are fallible. Failing to love the only secure and all-satisfying object will lead to fear and anxiety because it fails to trust him who, in his providence, provides everything else we need.⁵⁷

Fear, Anxiety, and the Will

A person may become fearful or anxious without consciously choosing to do so. Worry is unpleasant; people do not willingly choose it. A person is afraid and anxious, as Jones says, “against their will.”⁵⁸ Rather, they reveal a person’s will toward other aspects of their lives, showing their commitments to what they love and believe.

While fear and anxiety feel like unconscious actions, they are rooted in commitments of the will. Groves and Smith observe that fear and anxiety arise from a person’s commitment to safety, control, and certainty.⁵⁹ Psychological systems such as Maslow’s hierarchy of needs would consider these to be very basic human needs. Because our ultimate need is for God, and we are called to trust him to sustain us in this life, it is appropriate to call these objects very good things, but not necessarily needs.

⁵⁶ Jocelyn Wallace, *Anxiety and Panic Attacks: Trusting God When You’re Afraid* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2013), 14.

⁵⁷ Jerry Bridges, *Respectable Sins: Confronting the Sins We Tolerate* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2017), 59.

⁵⁸ Jones, *Why Worry?*, 5.

⁵⁹ Groves and Smith, *Untangling Emotions*, 155.

Though they may be good things, they are by no means assured in a world marred and broken by sin. As people see dangers on the horizon, they are wise to take appropriate measures to mitigate and protect against them, when reasonably possible. However, clinging too tightly to them will lead to fear and anxiety, for as healthy and secure as many parts of a person's life are, they are not completely safe. A commitment to self-protection and safety becomes unhealthy when it leads to an unwillingness to go beyond a person's safety zone to love others and obey God; when that is required, fear may set in. Though a person may have noble intentions, in their finitude, they are unable to fully control a situation or have certainty about its outcome; when a situation feels out of a person's control or uncertain, they may feel anxious, for they may be unable to prevent the worst from happening.⁶⁰ Being limited creatures, we are vulnerable and unable to guarantee preferred outcomes. When danger arises, people may therefore choose to retreat to what they are certain is safe, feeling able to control their environment there, or fight against the danger, seeking to control what they are able to in a situation to bring to pass the best outcome they can be certain of.

Fear and anxiety are future oriented, as a person considers possible negative outcomes. The object a person fears becomes amplified when trauma from past events remains with a person. Pain suffered in such events will be logged into the person's memory, and will resurface as "triggers"—things that will remind a person of that event—occur, often resulting in fear that such events will happen again.⁶¹ When a person's commitment is to safety, control, and certainty, if they have already suffered severe blows in these ways to any number of areas of their life, they will feel particularly anxious and afraid of anything that may appear to threaten them in that way again. The possibility that it will happen seems greater because it has already been a painful reality.

⁶⁰ Groves and Smith, *Untangling Emotions*, 156.

⁶¹ Lane, *Living without Worry*, 48.

Fear and anxiety that is related to past trauma demonstrates that a person's commitment to safety, control, and certainty is not necessarily a conscious decision, appearing to be an instinct, but it is nonetheless a matter of the will, as a person acts in accordance with this commitment.

The physical symptoms of anxiety may appear involuntarily. These symptoms are learned responses, often informed by a past event, circumstance, or person that left a negative, even painful, mark on a person. Present events, circumstances, or people that recall those traumatic memories will trigger anxiety, feeling a sense of dread of danger. Welch lists common physical clues of anxiety: "Palpitations, sweaty palms, perspiration, tension headaches, clenched jaws, impotence, rapid breathing, loss of appetite, increased appetite, problems sleeping, high blood pressure."⁶² Panic attacks are intense periods of fear and anxiety that display at least four of the following symptoms, including those Welch lists as well as a pounding heart, trembling, shortness of breath, feeling of choking, chest pain, nausea, dizziness, numbness or tingling, and chills or hot flashes.⁶³ Rather than consciously choosing to worry about a situation, anxiety quietly sneaks in. Our bodies serve as physical sensors of the fear and worry in our lives, a warning sign for us to listen to. As Welch observes, they "can tell us we are anxious even before we are aware of it."⁶⁴ These physical symptoms communicate the anxiety in uncomfortable ways; they tell the person experiencing it that action to combat the threat must be taken.

The paradox of fear and anxiety is that, though the physical symptoms tell a person that a threat is on the horizon that must be acted upon, anxiety immobilizes us in the present as we consider future possibilities.⁶⁵ Though action seems necessary, in

⁶² Welch, *Running Scared*, 30.

⁶³ Wallace, *Anxiety and Panic Attacks*, 7.

⁶⁴ Welch, *Running Scared*, 31.

⁶⁵ Timothy Z. Witmer, *Mindscape: What to Think about Instead of Worrying* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2014), 16.

anxiety, a person may feel paralyzed, with the anxious feelings seemingly leading to a person being unsure of how handle the threatening situation and the overwhelming emotions a person experiences.⁶⁶ In a threatening situation, a person may not only feel anxious about the damage the external danger may pose, but they may also feel anxious about how they will respond to the situation. Fearful and anxious thoughts, such as “what if” questions that envisions the outcome of the worst-case scenarios, may crowd out thoughts for how to respond, and, being emotionally charged, may cloud a person’s judgment, keeping them from making wise decisions. As a result, a person may be paralyzed in indecision, feeling unable to choose an option, especially when there is no obvious path to safety and every available option feels uncomfortable.

Addressing the Heart of Fear and Anxiety

We rightly address fear and anxiety when we address a person’s heart with the truths of the gospel and the promises of God. Addressing the heart is more effective and hope-giving than addressing the situations or giving a person coping mechanisms to effectively handle them. This is because, first, it acknowledges our limitations. There are indeed situations that are too difficult to handle. Cognitive-behavioral therapy fails to recognize this. Yet, the ability to face such difficulties is not found within the fearful and anxious person, but without—from the omnipotent, faithfully loving God. Scripture consistently warns against trusting self, pointing to the Lord for peace in troubled times. Though great dangers presently abound, the reason we can be unafraid is because “God is our refuge and strength, a helper who is always found in times of trouble” (Ps 46:1). With his presence, we can act courageously in the face of danger (Deut 31:6), trusting him to provide for our every need (Matt 6:33). Though a person’s circumstances may not change, confidence grows and anxiety decreases, not from improving their lot in life, but

⁶⁶ Wallace, *Anxiety and Panic Attacks*, 5.

from trusting the Lord's providential care, even in difficulty. Though a person's valued objects may be harmed or destroyed, what really matters cannot be taken from a person: the Lord and "every spiritual blessing" he promises (Eph 1:3).

Love and Know

Various biblical counselors articulate different steps in a counseling process, and no one process is correct. For the purposes of this project, I will use a process that merges the similar methodological models by Paul David Tripp and Robert D. Jones to guide us. These models organize the key points of counseling people through fear and anxiety clearly and concisely.

In the first step of the process, the counselor enters the counselee's world, cultivating a genuine relationship with them that is warm and welcoming so that a foundation of trust is built wherein the counselee feels safe enough to share about their lives, even the difficult parts, and is willing to receive counsel.⁶⁷ To create this welcoming atmosphere, the counselor must communicate to the fearful and anxious person that he genuinely loves them, imitating and embodying God's love as the foundation of his redemptive action toward humanity. A person's hope is in Jesus's love for them, not mere intellectual answers.⁶⁸ This is particularly true for the fearful and anxious person, because it is the presence of the omnipotent and faithfully loving God with them that brings them peace. Embodying and communicating God's love from the outset, then, is essential. As a counselee approaches a counselor, they ask three implicit questions: "(1) Do you care about me? (2) Can I trust you? (3) Can you help me?" All three of which must be affirmed for the counseling relationship to proceed.⁶⁹ Three

⁶⁷ Robert D. Jones, "The Counseling Process, Step One: Enter Their World," in Jones, Kellen, and Green, *The Gospel for Disordered Lives*, 160.

⁶⁸ Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*, 117.

⁶⁹ Jones, "The Counseling Process, Step One," 163.

relational qualities of Christlikeness in the counselor are important for the counselor to display to this end: compassion, humility, and gentleness. As the counselor enters the counselee's world with these, they will build trust as they demonstrate God's love.

In the second step of the process, the counselor seeks to know the counselee and their situation. In this stage of the process, the counselor seeks to gather data from the counselee about their struggle. Using a variety of wise, incisive questions, the counselor seeks to understand the counselee's heart. As the counselor talks with the counselee, especially in the early stages of the counseling relationship, the counselor grows to understand the counselee's heart—their affections, mind, and will.

As the counselor asks these questions, he not only gathers data about the counselee and his struggle that can help shape specific biblically informed counsel, he helps the counselee see things about their heart that they may not have understood or seen. A person may only see the situation and feel the anxious tension in response; the counselor can help the counselee see what is happening in their heart that leads them to be fearful and anxious. As Tripp says, "Asking good questions *is* doing the work of change. Through them, we give sight to blind eyes and understanding to dull minds, we soften harden hearts, encourage flagging souls, and stir hunger that can only be filled by the truth."⁷⁰ As this work in a person's heart happens, they become more receptive to hearing biblical counsel.

Speak: Bringing Christ and His Answers

As the counselor welcomes the counselee with compassion and spends time knowing them, he can communicate to them the hope of Jesus Christ and his wisdom for handling their problems. This third step, Jones outlines, "involves speaking God's Word to the person, helping them understand and apply it personally, and guiding and coaching

⁷⁰ Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*, 173.

them in walking out that new pattern.”⁷¹ For the fearful and anxious person, the goal is not merely to be free of the fear and anxiety, but to experience that peace and confidence as part of living with the goal of faithfully pleasing God.⁷² Three aspects of God’s nature are helpful for the fearful and anxious person: God’s sovereign power, his providential care, and his redemption.

God’s sovereign, infinite power is an important truth for the fearful and anxious person to understand. Feeling incapable of handling threats and unable to control their circumstances opens the door for a person to hear the truth that God is omnipotent, able to do anything, including handle the threat according to his perfect wisdom, and is in control of the whole universe. If any part of creation is outside God’s direct control, a person will rightly be fearful and anxious, because threats may be credible. However, being in control of everything in the universe, nothing can thwart or damage him, so anything or anyone in his care is safe. In his sovereign will, he would use even difficult circumstances for the person’s good.⁷³ This counters the anxious person’s tendency to feel out of control and desire to have it.

As a person sees God’s sovereign power to control and stand up to negative or threatening circumstances or objects, they must know that he is for and with them. Throughout Scripture, God repeats the loving command to his people, “Do not be afraid,” giving the promise of his very own presence with them, as the reason. The pattern throughout Scripture is that God allows his people to experience difficult circumstances, even with no apparent hope, showing that when their rescue and relief come, they understand that it is God alone who helps them. Hope through fear and anxiety is found

⁷¹ Robert D. Jones, “The Counseling Process: Step Two: Understand Their Needs,” in Jones, Kellen, and Green, *The Gospel for Disordered Lives*, 187.

⁷² Robert D. Jones, *Pursuing Peace: A Christian Guide to Handling our Conflicts* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 44.

⁷³ Fitzpatrick, *Overcoming Fear, Worry, and Anxiety*, 128-29.

as a person sees God's faithfulness to his promise never to forsake his people.⁷⁴ When the sovereign and omnipotent God is with a person, they are called to depend on him for their safety and good, trusting that he will do what is best.

Counselees will only derive peace from God's infinite, immanent power if they trust that he is good and compassionate toward them. Worry comes with doubting some aspect of God's knowledge, goodness, and power toward them. In bringing Christ to the counselees, we begin at the cross. Though Jesus cares for even the most insignificant parts of creation, it is human beings that he incarnated in this world as and willingly sacrificed himself for.⁷⁵ Counselees need to see the depth of his care for them in the cross and his commitment that, if in his compassion for them, he paid such a cost to bring them eternal life, he will provide everything necessary to sustain them until the end of this life (Rom 8:32; 2 Pet 1:3).

Fear and anxiety are symptoms of self-sufficiency and self-protectiveness, with the counselee believing that they are responsible for and desiring control over their own well-being and security. Kellemen notes, "Because of our failure to hold God in awe, we self-protect through flight and fight behavior."⁷⁶ In this way, counselors help show counselees the root sin of failing to trust God. As counselees see God's sufficiency for their lives, counselors must lovingly call them to repentance from depending on self and turn to him for their care. Indeed, the call of Scripture is to for a person to acknowledge and embrace weakness so that God's providential power can be more fully known (2 Cor 12:9-10). When a person trusts that God cares for their good and can fully do so, they can experience peace in fear and anxiety, even if the threatening circumstances do not change, and act confidently in response.

⁷⁴ Welch, *Running Scared*, 249-51.

⁷⁵ Jones, *Why Worry*, 15.

⁷⁶ Kellemen, *Anxiety*, 30.

Acting in Response to Fear and Anxiety

Biblical counselors should help fearful and anxious people gain a new perspective about what is to be most feared or held in awe. Where counselees begin by magnifying threatening circumstances, counselors should help them see these circumstances alongside God's power and compassion. Only when they have a greater awe of God than their circumstances, trusting him to control what they cannot, will they begin to have peace. They can act confidently, not with fight or flight responses, but attending to their responsibility, because they trust that almighty and compassionate God, who is greater than their circumstances, is with them.⁷⁷ Counselees should be encouraged to actively and consistently see and study God's attributes and faithful love and grace in the gospel to keep it in the proper perspective: as the ruling measure by which every circumstance is compared. As they do so, the objects of fear and anxiety seem small and insignificant; they can no longer "chip away" at their hearts.⁷⁸ What does the fear of God that dispels other fears look like? Mack and Mack list various ways: it trusts God, loves God, obeys God, serves God, hopes in God, and is awestruck by God instead of self or any other fallible earthly object.⁷⁹ As they hold God in greater awe than the circumstances that feel threatening, counselees will be led to pray, actively bringing their fears and anxieties to God.

Because fear and anxiety live in the mind, characterizing a person's thoughts, counselees should pay attention to their thought-life. With the Holy Spirit's help, as we reset our thinking from the circumstances and possible negative scenarios that characterize fear and anxiety to thinking about reality through the lens of the assurance of salvation in Jesus Christ, our eternity already secure, we grow in peace.⁸⁰ As we filter our

⁷⁷ Tripp, *Awe*, 103.

⁷⁸ Tripp, *Awe*, 72.

⁷⁹ Mack and Mack, *Courage*, 212.

⁸⁰ Witmer, *Mindscape*, 163.

thoughts through the criteria in Philippians 4:8, seeing Christ and his promises as the foundation for whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy, and we think about him and our circumstances in these ways, we stave off fearful and anxious thoughts.

With a right perspective about God and their thought life, counselees can begin to take some practical steps toward courage through fear and anxiety. People do best when they are focused on the present moment. Therefore, Welch counsels, “Because the Lord is near, *attend to today and leave tomorrow to him.*”⁸¹ Counselees should faithfully attend to the responsibilities at hand, trusting the Lord to help them in the moment and care for what they are unable to – even through fear and anxiety. Taking a moment to slow down and take deep breaths will be helpful to regulate the physical expression of anxiety, helping a person to back away from the threatening circumstance that fills their perspective and think about Christ and his compassionate power. Exercise helps a person regulate the physical manifestations of anxiety. Intentional rest, including a full night’s sleep, helps a person cede control of their circumstances to God.⁸²

Conclusion

Though secular therapy methods such as cognitive-behavioral therapy may only give coping strategies or ways to change thinking, the fearful and anxious person needs a firmer foundation for peace. Fear and anxiety are rooted in the heart, encompassing a person’s affections, mind, and will. As a person sees Christ and his sovereign, infinite, and immanent power, and his faithful compassion for them and care for their good, they can begin to trust him to be sufficient for their every need and strength for every overwhelming situation. With this perspective, even in threatening or

⁸¹ Ed Welch, “Bible Basics for the Fearful and Anxious,” *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 34 no. 3 (2020): 70, 75.

⁸² Groves and Smith, *Untangling Emotions*, 164.

difficult circumstances, they can experience emotional regulation, calm assurance, and confidently move forward in the areas of their responsibility.

CHAPTER 4

DETAILS AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

Having a biblical and theoretical framework in place for biblical counseling through fear and anxiety, I developed and taught an introductory course on biblical counseling for Kingsboro Baptist Church. I prepared the lessons during the winter months of 2023 and taught the class to eleven participants during April and May.

Preparation Period: Winter 2023

During the first three months of 2023, I developed the course material for the biblical counseling class that I would teach in fulfillment of this ministry project. The development of the lessons drew from a variety of sources, including my research, class material from the seminars, and authors connected to such organizations as the Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation and The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. The structure of this class, therefore, has been influenced by several well-respected biblical counselors.

Development of Lessons

Three areas of focus became clear as I outlined the topics for the ten sessions of the basics of biblical counseling class for the lay people at Kingsboro Baptist Church. The first area is a theological basis for biblical counseling and a biblical understanding of God, human beings, and how he works change in their lives. The second area is a methodology of biblical counseling in which to practically apply this theoretical understanding. The third area is applying the biblical counseling method to the area of fear and anxiety, bringing the theological understanding in the first area to bear for people struggling with them. The progression of these three areas is intentional. It

demonstrates that biblical counseling is centered on God as he reveals himself in Scripture, placing ourselves in relation to him and understanding our need for his work in our lives. The methodology serves this important theological framework and concludes by applying it to a specific issue to demonstrate how it works.

Once I identified these three areas of focus, I outlined the topics for each session were identified. Four sessions examined the first area (God and Scripture, biblical anthropology, the human heart, and the change process), four sessions considered the second (entering a person's world, knowing them, and two sessions on speaking truth from Scripture, applying it to their life), and two sessions covered the third (understanding fear and anxiety and counseling a person struggling with it). This provided a balance in understanding biblical truth and applying to a person's life.

In the early stage of the development process, along with outlining the course, I organized the major resources to root the curriculum in. Having written about the theological and practical understanding of counseling a person struggling with fear and anxiety from a biblical perspective in chapters 2 and 3 of my project, the curriculum, in part, reflects the knowledge accumulated for the previous work in it. However, the curriculum needed to reflect the expertise of a broad cross-section of well-respected biblical counselors. To that end, several resources were consulted. Heath Lambert's *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*¹ was foundational for theological concerns. Jeremy Pierre's *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life*² and A. Craig Troxel's *With All Your Heart*³ provided a basis for anthropology. Throughout the course, the material would be rooted in several biblical counseling primers and methodology resources: *The Gospel for*

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

² Jeremy Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life: Connecting Christ to the Human Experience* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2016).

³ A. Craig Troxel, *With All Your Heart: Orienting Your Mind, Desires, and Will toward Christ* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020).

Disordered Lives by Robert D. Jones, Kristen Kellen, and Rob Green,⁴ *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands* by Paul David Tripp,⁵ *Equipped to Counsel* by John Henderson,⁶ *How People Change* by Tim Lane and Paul David Tripp,⁷ and *Untangling Emotions* by Alasdair Groves and Winston T. Smith.⁸ As well, class notes from Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation's introductory *Dynamics of Biblical Change* course, taught by David Powlison were of some help, particularly for the fourth session, in which the "Three Trees Model," presented there and in *How People Change* would be examined. The authors of these resources are well-respected leaders and examples in the biblical counseling world, and incorporating the key resources from them would help ensure that a strong model for biblical counseling would be communicated to the congregants of Kingsboro Baptist Church.

The first few sessions were the most difficult to write, not because the content was challenging, but because ensuring that the theological concepts being reviewed—many of which would have already been familiar to the participants—would be distilled to a succinct discussion but also directly applied to helping people in personal ministry. Once I had these lessons in place, I found the lessons about counseling methodology and fear and anxiety easier to write, organizing the material from the sources into a structure that will, I hope, make sense to the participants as we progress through it.

⁴ Robert D. Jones, Kristen L. Kellen, and Rob Green, *The Gospel for Disordered Lives: An Introduction to Christ-Centred Biblical Counseling* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2021).

⁵ Paul David Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands: People in Need of Change Helping People in Need of Change* (Phillipsburg, NJ, P&R, 2002).

⁶ John Henderson, *Equipped to Counsel: A Training Course in Biblical Counseling*, 2nd ed. (Fort Worth, TX: Association of Biblical Counselors, 2019).

⁷ Timothy Lane and Paul David Tripp, *How People Change* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2008).

⁸ Alasdair Groves and Winston T. Smith, *Untangling Emotions* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2029).

Evaluation of Lessons

Upon their completion, I sent the first draft of the lessons to a panel of biblical counselors for review. Being based in Canada, I looked to Canadians to evaluate my course material. This would help ensure that the material was not only sound theologically and methodologically, but also suited the Canadian, and particularly, Atlantic Canadian context I would teach it in. To that end, one of my evaluators is a pastor who has served in rural church, like myself, in the Canadian Baptists of Atlantic Canada, my denomination, Cory Vail, trained and accredited by the Association of Biblical Counselors. Another evaluator is Curtis Heaton, executive director of the Canadian Biblical Counseling Coalition. With one exception, the material received sufficient or exemplary marks in every category. The area that required further attention was utilizing various teaching methods in the curriculum beyond lecturing. To that end, I have added more ways to communicate the material, including prompts for discussion, charts and visual aids to supplement material, homework assignments, reading material, and case studies.

Recruitment of Participants

With a minimum of ten people to participants needed, I set out to personally invite members of my congregation of about seventy-five to take part in the class. Eleven people agreed to participate. One, a deacon who had been aware of the coming implementation of this project, had asked to take part long before being invited. There were both male and female participants, with a broad range of ages, with those in their thirties to those in their seventies. The participants represented a broad range of life situations: a parent of young children, retirees, men who own and operate potato farms, widows, and government office workers, among others. All are strong believers, and some hold positions of leadership in the church. Upon recruitment, I handed out the survey on using Scripture to help others for them to complete.

Implementation Period: Spring 2023

The class sessions were taught on Monday evenings from April 2 to May 29, 2023. Each session lasted about seventy-five to ninety minutes and was held in the fellowship area of the Kingsboro Baptist Church.

Session 1

After welcoming the participants and thanking them for taking part in the Introduction to Biblical Counseling class and opening the session in prayer, I collected the survey I had previously distributed to them on using Scripture to help others. With these introductory housekeeping matters completed, we first considered what Biblical Counseling is and why it is important. We considered that because, as Christians, we belong to a body of believers, we are called to “bear one another’s burdens” (Gal 6:2) and “encourage one another and build each other up as you are already doing” (1 Thess 5:11). While there are pastors and other professionals who counsel, they are not able to reach everyone; every believer has people within their sphere of influence that they will be able to reach more effectively than others, including pastors, because of their proximity. Therefore, every believer is called to speak with wisdom and grace from God’s Word to one another. We then briefly considered that we need *biblical* counsel, because it brings people to the God who created them with his infinite wisdom, and therefore, knows exactly how we function in all our complexities and can care well for us in them.

We considered two helpful definitions of Biblical Counseling: first, the definition given by the Association of Biblical Counselors,⁹ giving a summary definition of the discipline. This was followed by the five distinctive markers outlined by Robert D. Jones, Kristen Kellen, and Rob Green. This highlighted the importance of centering our counsel on Jesus Christ, rooted in Scripture, filled with love, concern, and compassion,

⁹ Association of Certified Biblical Counselors, “Our Mission,” accessed January 5, 2023, <https://biblicalcounseling.com/about/our-mission/>.

aiming at the heart, and toward the goal of Christlikeness.¹⁰

Two foundational topics filled most of the class time. First, we considered Scripture as the basis for our counsel. Highlighting that Scripture is not merely a collection of proof texts or entries in an encyclopedia of human problems, we discussed what Scripture is and does, taking the form of a Bible study on 2 Timothy 3:16-17. In short, the class discussed that Scripture is God’s revelation and communication to us, and that it is useful for rebuking, correcting, and training with the goal of faithful service, understanding that it is authoritative, clear, necessary, and sufficient for understanding God, the gospel, and his will for the Christian life.

Finally, we discussed the nature of God in relation to people. Following Heath Lambert’s organization of the attributes of God,¹¹ we looked at them in two categories: attributes of strength and attributes of care. Under each of these categories, we discussed each of the classically understood attributes of God, connecting each one to how it may relate to people with their circumstances and problems.

Session 2

Because session 2 was held on Easter Monday, we were missing two of the participants. However, after the session, I ensured that they received and reviewed my lesson notes for the session. After reviewing the previous week's topic, particularly calling to memory the material about God in relation to people, we began our discussion by reflecting that people are the other “party” in that relationship. It is therefore important to understand humanity from a biblical perspective.

We began the discussion by reflecting on Genesis 1:16-31 and Psalm 139:13-14. Two participants read these passages, and the group made a list of what they observed

¹⁰ Robert D. Jones, “What Is Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling?” in Jones, Kellen and Green, *The Gospel for Disordered Lives*, 16-19.

¹¹ Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 107-35.

about human beings as described in them. Between their responses and a list I had previously formulated, we observed many things about how God created people. Along with the detailed look at these two passages, we observed other basics about human beings from Scripture and the book, *The Gospel for Disordered Lives*.¹²

We then considered how human beings are “embodied souls.” Considering the physical and spiritual aspects of people, we discussed the influence that the body has on a person’s heart and responses to situations and the responsibility the heart has for our actions in our circumstances. After the session, one of the participants approached me, telling me that he found this particular discussion helpful to understand his present situation: he had been feeling fatigued and frazzled, and discussion about the role feeling weary and worn out helped bring clarity and encouragement to him. I prayed for him before we left.

Finally, we discussed the effects of sin and suffering on a person. Turning to Scripture once again, we examined and discussed the nature and consequences of sin from Genesis 3:1-13. This topic generated a particularly lively discussion, as participants observed that in the moment, people are convinced that a sinful desire is good. As well, participants were quick to take comfort in the presence of God with sufferers, especially when they do not understand why suffering happens.

Session 3

Picking up where session 2 left off, we continued our discussion about the heart. I opened by asking, “What do you think of when you think of the word ‘heart’?” The participants noted that the “heart” is popularly connected to emotions, total commitment and best effort, and love. Picking up on the broad range of answers, I showed the group that the heart, the “inner person,” is the center of a person. We then

¹² Kristen L. Kellen, “Anthropology: How Should We View People?” in Jones, Kellen and Green, *The Gospel for Disordered Lives*, 59-70.

examined definitions of the heart from A. Craig Troxel, Elyse Fitzpatrick, Paul David Tripp, Jeremy Pierre, and the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, to support this.

We then examined three functions of the heart: the mind, the affections, and the will. Using the diagrams and examples found in Jeremy Pierre's *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life*, we understood how each of these three areas functions, such as with the mind, a person reasons, with the affections a person shows emotions, and the will, a person makes decisions, based on beliefs, values, and commitments. We discussed practical examples of how each of these three areas work. After the session concluded, multiple people expressed their appreciation for the concrete application of these principles.

To conclude the session, we considered the principle that what rules a person's heart rules their life. If a person's sinful nature and self-importance rules their heart, they will desire and act wrongly, but if Jesus Christ and love for him rules instead, they will seek to love him first. The participants took particular interest in discussing the tension that Christians face in fighting remaining sin and obeying God. We concluded by thanking God for the good work he is doing in our lives and church, transforming us more into Christlikeness.

Session 4

To frame the discussion, we began session 4 by reading Jeremiah 17:5-8, from there discussing the characteristics of healthy and unhealthy people. This set up our main discussion, working through the steps of the "Three Trees" Model, as described in *How People Change*. The purpose of working through this model is to provide the participants with a framework for understanding how a person relates and responds to their circumstances from their heart in both healthy and unhealthy ways, demonstrating trust in God or self, and the positive or negative outcomes of their behavior.

We considered that circumstances are influential and inform a person's beliefs, but they are not determinative. Examining a lengthy list of kinds of circumstances we face, the participants recognized that everyone faces many kinds of trials. These situations cloud a person's view, making it hard to have the right perspective when they are overwhelmed. This led to the discussion about negative, unhealthy reactions to our circumstances, understanding that what we say and do reveals our hearts. After considering a list of different unhealthy, sinful responses, the participants astutely recognized that they come from being focused on self instead of focused on God. With self-interest, justifying our actions, we amplify our negative situations. We then considered how sinful actions come from a heart ruled by sin, with desires that are at odds with God; negative consequences ensue.

We then considered the paradigm for growing in a healthy, Christlike manner. Growth is rooted in God's power in Christ revealed in Scripture to change a person's heart. We noted that our circumstances may not change, but our responses to them, rooted in the heart, do. To close, I distributed the "6 box chart," and we used it in our closing discussion. Using the COVID-19 situation as our case study, we organized our experience of the pandemic, listing our difficult circumstances, how we responded to them, what they revealed about our hearts, and how we experienced God's help.

Session 5

To open session 5, we recapped the model we worked through in session 4, offering thoughts about how to follow this model with an unbelieving person. I then introduced the counseling model we would cover over the next four lessons. The subject for the session was entering a person's world and developing a strong, trusting relationship where the counselor can speak well into their life. As we considered the call to "welcome one another, just as Christ has welcomed you" (Rom 15:7), one of the participants observed, "People don't care how much you know until they know how

much you care.”

We spent much time considering the importance of displaying compassion, humility, and gentleness with one another. With this, the participants discussed the importance of showing that you are on the same level as the counselee, both helper and helped needing God’s grace and help. Just as Christ understands our suffering, we can identify with others in their suffering. Even if a counselor has not fully experienced what the counselee is experiencing, they still ought to let the counselee know that they have heard their struggle and are with them in it. We closed by emphasizing the importance of offering hope to a struggling person, especially early in the counseling process.

Session 6

Beginning with a meditation about God’s intimate knowledge of us from Psalm 139, we laid the groundwork by understanding that as people are made in the image of God, they are unique individuals, responding uniquely to their unique specific circumstances. Therefore, we must seek to understand them, not merely with labels that we can offer trite advice to, but to seek to know them as individuals, and faithfully show them compassion as such. We aim to go beyond casual relationships to a depth at which we can understand them well enough to speak wisely into their lives.

We spent most of this session understanding the kinds of questions that are helpful to ask as we seek to understand a person in their situation better. We worked through three sets of guidelines and examples for asking questions: seven tips for asking good questions as outlined in *The Gospel for Disordered Lives*,¹³ five types of questions to ask from *Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands*,¹⁴ and a selection of David Powlison’s

¹³ Robert D. Jones, “The Counseling Process, Step Two: Understand Their Needs,” in Jones, Kellen and Green, *The Gospel for Disordered Lives*, 173-76.

¹⁴ Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands*, 178.

X-Ray Questions.¹⁵ As well, we considered the question, “Where do you see God at work in your life? If you do not, why not?” This question sparked much discussion. In particular, the group was interested in how a person who is not a believer could interact with this question. Two possible solutions were offered: first, to ask the counselee where they see good in their lives and trace it back to God. Second, a participant offered that he will often ask a person if they believe in God in general. For the many that answer affirmatively, he will ask if they believe God can help and has compassion for them.

As we worked through the different kinds of questions we can ask their examples, aiming for the motives and desires behind a person’s heart, the class acknowledged that questions that probe a person’s heart are difficult to ask – much more so than questions about the facts of their circumstances. There was some discussion about questions that seem provocative; I was able to clarify that some questions are necessary to get to a person’s heart, understanding the “issue beneath the issue,” the desire, value, or belief beneath a person’s actions, revealing where change is needed.

We concluded by examining a case study, “I Don’t Know What to Do with My Life,”¹⁶ examining how we could ask the main character the kinds of questions we discussed. Seeing similarities with people from our area in the subject, the group brainstormed a list of questions to ask him, aiming to get to the heart of his struggle. To conclude the session’s lively discussion, we remembered the importance of continuing to grow in strong, trusting relationships with the people we help.

Session 7

After a recap of the previous two sessions to help orient the participants in the stages of the biblical counseling process, we opened the current week with a discussion

¹⁵ David Powlison, *Seeing with New Eyes: Counseling and the Human Condition through the Lens of Scripture* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2003), 129-44.

¹⁶ Rick Thomas, “Case Study: I Don’t Know What to Do with My Life,” accessed May 10, 2023, <https://lifeovercoffee.com/case-study-i-dont-know-what-to-do-with-my-life/>.

of biblical passages that have stood out to them recently. Nearly every participant shared verses that contained promises of God, finding that they offer hope and encouragement. This served as a natural segue into the topic of the evening: speaking biblical truth to a counselee. In this instance, we saw firsthand the importance of God's promises in helping a person through challenging circumstances.

We reviewed the goals for counseling. First, a person may have goals upon entering counseling. This is helpful because they recognize they need help. Second, we seek to help a person move from unhealthy, non-constructive actions and reactions to healthy and constructive actions and reactions. Third, because we believe that growing in a relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ and his atoning death and resurrection is necessary healthy lives, our goal is to help a person grow in dependence on him and in Christlikeness.

Philippians 4:8 framed our discussion on beginning to speak truth wisely in love to people. As we grow to know a person, with their actions and heart in response to their situations, we can begin to ask them questions that help them see their situation, their heart, and their actions more clearly. This led us to see that God, as he has revealed himself in Scripture and come to us in Christ, is the source of truth and wisdom. We then looked at a process for seeing God's promises, nature, and mercy to help a person in counseling. We concluded the session by discussing a case study, organizing the facts of the case study into the six-box model, and considering different ways to help the subject of the case study in light of this lesson's material.

Session 8

To conclude the sessions on the process of biblical counseling, we considered how to encourage counselees toward action steps, both in the short and long term. To frame the discussion on taking biblical action, we began by considering how a counselee may distinguish what is their responsibility and what may concern them, but not their

responsibility, along with how they may mix the two up and so distort their view of what they must do.

We then considered a method for applying Scripture to a person's struggle and how it influences their actions in relation to their responsibilities. This method included asking what Scripture says about the information gathered about a person, what God's goals for change in the person are, and how Scripture says that person must change. With these questions in mind, we considered the method for applying Scripture.¹⁷ Finally, we considered how to develop an action plan for the counselee to follow, informed by the passages of Scripture we would share with the counselee, considering simple, practical steps toward healthy, biblical growth, bathed in prayer.

After talking through a case study in which we applied the biblical counseling process, we looked at two exercises to help people become calm and think more clearly in the moment. The first exercise we looked at is the five-four-three-two-one grounding exercise, and the second was a simple breathing exercise. With both, we considered how they are informed by the gospel and how a person finds hope in the moment with them.

Session 9

Having considered the theology and methodology of biblical counseling, we began applying our understanding to a specific topic to help the class understand how it works out practically. We began by discussing some fears people have. The class considered different areas of fear, namely, fear of the future and unknown and uncertain aspects of it, and the anxiety of wondering whether a person will be able to handle them.

After defining fear and anxiety, we considered the situations in which people face these emotions and how manifest in a person, both in physical symptoms and fight or flight actions and reactions. We then considered the root of fear and anxiety in the

¹⁷ Robert D. Jones, "The Counseling Process, Step Three: Bring Christ and His Answers," in Jones, Kellen and Green, *The Gospel for Disordered Lives*, 194-96.

heart, with the role of the mind, affections, and will. As we considered the role of these different areas, the participants considered personal examples of anxiety, observing the role of their hearts in their experiences. Participants spoke of not knowing what is happening to loved ones, fearing the worst in the unknown, and feeling the lack of control in difficult circumstances. As we concluded the role of the will in fear and anxiety, we considered that fear and anxiety are rooted in a commitment to a person's safety, control, and certainty. Finally, we considered the role of trauma in a person's life, leading them to feel particularly anxious about areas of their life in which they have already been wounded.

Session 10

The final lesson focused on how to help a person through fear and anxiety. We first considered the grounding and breathing exercises to help a person experience clarity of thought before addressing larger heart issues. We then examined some general questions to ask of a person, such as how a person views their responses to threatening situations to be positive or negative, and asking why they feel afraid or anxious in such situations. Understanding that people tend to exaggerate threats in fear and anxiety, we considered how to step back and gain perspective on dangers and difficulties. With this in mind, we considered the goal of a person displaying courage in action, taking another step in what they are responsible for and understanding that, while concerning, circumstances outside their control are outside their responsibility.

Finally, we considered the resources of Scripture as they relate to fear and anxiety. We examined the three texts from chapter 2 of my project that relate to fear and anxiety: Deuteronomy 31:1-6, Matthew 6:19-34, and Philippians 4:4-7, considering God's nature in relation to fearful and anxious people, how he helps them, and steps for people to take in response to that. We examined God's sovereign power, providential care, and redeeming work on behalf of his people, with the call to trust him and his

faithful presence through threatening circumstances. The participants engaged in a lively discussion about continued difficulties leading to anxious feelings, even with God's presence. They concluded that the hope of the promise of eternity with God gives hope through difficult circumstances in the present.

Follow-Up Period

Following the conclusion of the tenth session, I distributed the post-course surveys to the participants. I asked participants to have the surveys completed within two weeks. I received ten surveys back and analyzed them. An eleventh came significantly later so I did not assess that one as part of my project analysis. Over the course of this two-week follow-up period, several participants spoke to me about their experience of taking the class. They shared that the material on fear and anxiety was particularly helpful, bringing the material covered during the first eight sessions together to apply it practically. Many participants shared that they have struggled with fear and anxiety to varying degrees, and they found the material personally helpful and encouraging as they better understood its root and how helps them have peace.

Conclusion

Being the only evangelical churches in a rural, but vibrant farming and fishing community, Kingsboro Baptist Church and its sister church, South Lake Christian Church, are well-positioned to bring biblical hope to those in the area struggling with such issues as fear and anxiety. Being a small community, many people in the church are well-connected with others who live in the area. They are therefore well positioned to provide basic help for those who struggle. The introductory biblical counseling course I developed and taught provided them with the theological and methodological basics to help people with their problems, especially fear and anxiety.

CHAPTER 5

EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

This project sought to expose the members of Kingsboro Baptist Church to biblical counseling and equip them to minister to one another with Scripture and biblical counseling methods, with a focus on helping each other through fear and anxiety. Their training in biblical counseling will not only serve the church well but also Souris and the surrounding communities. This chapter will evaluate purpose and goals of the project, consider its strengths and weaknesses, and offer my theological and personal reflections on the project.

Evaluation of the Project's Purpose

The purpose of this project was to equip members of Kingsboro Baptist Church in Kingsboro, Prince Edward Island, to provide biblically-based care to one another through their struggles with fear and anxiety. Eleven congregants participated in the course developed to teach the basics of biblical counseling theory and practice and its application to a specific issue, fear and anxiety, to demonstrate its practical value in common struggles.

The participants have a broad reach in Kingsboro Baptist Church. They are socially well-connected to nearly everyone who attends and participates in church life and many in the surrounding community. With these relationships in place, they are well-positioned to offer personal ministry. The course equipped them to do so. Following the course, many participants expressed that they now have a better understanding of the biblical process of helping people with their struggles and of fear and anxiety's roots and remedies. This feedback is confirmed by the results of the post-course survey, which

demonstrate a statistically significant increase in their knowledge about biblical counseling through fear and anxiety and their reflections about how they did so.

Evaluation of the Project's Goals

Four goals were set at the beginning of the project: to assess the participants' knowledge of core biblical doctrines related to biblical counseling as it applies to fear and anxiety; to develop a ten-week curriculum to train participants in doctrines, methods, and skills for biblical counseling, applying it to fear and anxiety; to teach the curriculum; and to assess the participants' growth in biblical counseling as it applies to fear and anxiety. Each of the goals will be evaluated below.

Assess Understanding

The first goal was to assess the participants' knowledge of core biblical doctrines related to biblical counseling as it applies to fear and anxiety through a pre-course survey (see appendix 2). This survey included two kinds of responses. The first was short answer questions about participants' faith in Jesus Christ, how they would share the gospel with another person, and their initial understanding of counseling and the cause of fear and anxiety. The second were Likert-scale statements, measuring participants' understanding of the value of faith, prayer, and Scripture in their life and conversations, their confidence in talking with others about faith, Scripture, and problems, and their understanding of fear and anxiety. Each statement was assigned a value of "1" to "6" with "1" being "Strongly Disagree" and "6" being "Strongly Agree." For questions 8, 9, 11-14, 19, and 20, positive growth would have been toward "Strongly Disagree"; they were thus reverse scored.

Given that the group of participants was comprised of people who are strong in their faith, many life-long Christians, most of whom would be very biblically literate, they scored very highly on questions that related to doctrine and applying faith and Scripture to their own lives. I expected the increase in knowledge in these areas to be

minimal compared to the questions about their understanding of speaking to and helping others with their struggles using Scripture. With this in view, I added three essay questions to the post-course survey to better assess the participants' growth from each major section of the course.

This goal was successfully met when ten members of Kingsboro Baptist Church completed the pre-course survey. An eleventh person completed the pre-course survey but did not submit the post-course survey in time. Because of that, I am not counting this survey.

Develop Curriculum

The second goal was to develop a ten-week curriculum to train participants in doctrines, methods, and skills for Biblical Counseling, applying it to fear and anxiety. The curriculum was drawn from several well-known textbooks, training materials, and courses from a broad number of counselors and authors representing organizations such as Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation, Association of Biblical Counselors, and Association of Certified Biblical Counselors. The curriculum was evaluated by a panel of biblical counselors and pastors familiar with biblical counseling and the Atlantic Canadian context, particularly in Prince Edward Island. They measured the course materials with a rubric, evaluating their biblical accuracy, scope, methodology, and applicability. The initial score was 88.5 percent. By incorporating suggestions made by the panel, the curriculum exceeded the required 90 percent threshold to meet this goal.

Teach Curriculum

The third goal was to teach a ten-session curriculum to train participants in doctrines, methods, and skills for Biblical Counseling, applying it to fear and anxiety. The course was taught to all eleven participants in April and May 2023, thus successfully meeting this goal.

Assess Growth

The fourth goal was to assess the participants' growth in biblical counseling as it relates to fear and anxiety. The goal was measured by distributing to the participants the same survey they completed before they took the course and comparing the scores of the pre- and post-course surveys. Ten participants returned post-course surveys within the deadline of two weeks after the conclusion of the course. The goal was successfully met when a two-tailed, paired *t*-test comparing the scores of the pre- and post-course surveys demonstrated a statistically significant change in the participants' scores: ($t(9)=-2.339$, $p=.0441$).¹

Many of the scores in the pre-course survey were higher than expected, leaving little room for improvement. Three questions garnered a score of 5 or higher, and ten more scored between 4 and 5. These high scores were largely in the areas of doctrine and Christian living in general. For example, nearly every participant strongly agreed that the Bible contains all the necessary information for providing wise, godly help, and that they prayed about the struggles that they or others face. High scores in these categories are not surprising, because many of the participants have been Christians and actively involved in Kingsboro Baptist Church for years. However, these initial high scores meant that there would be little room for improvement. Because of this, I tempered my expectation of a great increase in scores. Nonetheless, the *t*-test demonstrated a statistically significant increase in understanding about biblical counseling.

There were a range of increases in the difference between the pre- and post-test scores. Three participants had a very high increase, five had smaller increases, and two had negative increases in their scores. Two reasons may have contributed to this variance in increase in scoring. First, some people in the course have more experience talking about Scripture and having conversations about faith matters with other people. One such

¹ See appendix 3.

person has experience counseling inmates in a nearby prison. These people are more confident in their understanding of theology and ability to talk with others about their faith and connecting it to everyday life and struggles. I would expect these people to have a smaller increase in their understanding of the theory, theology, and practice of care and counseling conversations. Second, in their feedback, a few participants said that they found the project helpful, giving them an understanding of methods for care conversations, specifically for fear and anxiety, but in general, they were not confident in their own knowledge of Scripture, whether to reference specific verses or to weave biblical themes into conversation. While we covered many scriptures in the class, including some that specifically related to fear and anxiety, I encouraged the participants to draw from passages that they have been thinking about in their own devotional and study time. An option to address this concern is to hold a Bible knowledge class. However, this is outside the purview of this project.

Five questions assessed the participants' confidence and comfort levels in caring for others using Scripture. The mean increase in these questions was .48, demonstrating that the content about biblical counseling they received in the course translated to the participants having a greater willingness to help others in one-on-one ministry.

Strengths of the Project

Many strengths of the project are apparent. The project unified the leadership of Kingsboro Baptist Church on a counseling approach. The participants in the course are leaders in the church and/or are very active in its life and are, for many, the connection point with the church itself, responsible for its ongoing direction in ministry. With an understanding of biblical counseling and an awareness of the importance of skillfully caring for people in their circles of influence with God's resources and help, the participants have a clearer focus on the care of souls. This course has created a

community support network among church members. The advantage of being a small church is that nearly everyone in the church is personally connected to the participants, meaning that nearly everyone in the church is personally connected to people who are better equipped to biblically come alongside them in their weaknesses and struggles. With this greater awareness of the call to care for one another and understanding of how to do so, there has been a renewed vision for the health of our church, measured not merely in financial or numerical growth and stability but in members growing in displaying Christlike qualities as they increase in their love for one another.

The project raised awareness among the participants of growing mental health challenges and needs in our local community. In most sessions, the participants asked and considered how to apply the topic at hand in conversations with their non-Christian friends. While considering the importance of inviting people to saving faith in Jesus Christ, understanding the need for God himself to work in a person for their full and lasting change, the participants wanted tools to help those in their sphere of influence, believer or not, with their struggles. This demonstrates that the leadership of the church, of which they are a significant portion, are concerned for the well-being of our local community. This project, then, created dialogue to openly discuss areas people in the community struggle with. Since the project's conclusion the church's leadership team has continued discussing these issues with a heart of compassion and an eye toward meeting these needs.

The course looked, in part, like a Bible study. While ensuring that biblical counseling theory and methodology was taught, I also had the participants turn to Scripture at regular intervals. Each participant quickly understood that I expected them to bring their Bible to each session, and in each lesson, we turned to Scripture for the basis or understanding of the concepts we covered. This helped reinforce to the participants that our personal ministry must be thoroughly biblical.

While the project provided the participants with a framework for applying

Scripture and offering biblical comfort and hope to those they are helping, it has especially shown the participants the importance of demonstrating Christlike character when coming alongside people in need of help. Nearly every participant reflected on this in their course feedback, with such statements as:

We can't always fix the problems and anxieties of others but we can let them know that we care and God loves them. We need to sit back and listen before we react.

It is essential to enter the person's world, for them to know us and be known by us.

Asking the right questions is just as important as having the right answers.

Try to meet them where they are, get to know them and understand their needs, listen and love them.

Be genuine in listening and caring. Ask questions to better understand their struggles. Show compassion, gentleness and humility.

I learned a lot of skills including having love, concern and compassion for people. God calls us to be like him so that's how we are to act.

Sometimes we can't understand the fear and anxiety being experienced but we know Jesus can relate. It is important to be empathetic and supportive while introducing [a] biblical perspective and helping them to rely on God.

As the participants understood the importance of building strong, trusting relationships with the people they are helping, they saw how God relates to their counselees, with such statements as:

God uses us to speak and share but He is the one who brings about change.

God has compassion for us and we need his help in order to help others.

God cares for all of us because he created us. If we want to help people we have to have a relationship with them and lead them to Jesus so they are not floundering around on their own.

God loves people so much that he sent Jesus, his Son, to die in our place so that we could have a relationship with him and eternal life.

One needs to be totally connected to God in order to deal with daily life and the challenges that come with it.

As human beings we think we have it all together, sometimes questioning God's response. We are all struggling with sin and need his mercy and grace.

God's sovereign power and trust in him is really the only way to overcome anxiety and fear.

The participants thus reflected a strong understanding that biblical counseling involves more than merely offering a piece of advice or a prescribed Bible verse to someone they are helping, but to demonstrate God's compassion, power, and wisdom in both their character and words.

Weaknesses of the Project

Some weaknesses of the project are apparent. One weakness was apparent from the surveys. The questions that showed the least increase between the pre- and post-course surveys were those that dealt with the core causes of fear and anxiety. In the post-course surveys, the answers tended to reflect a belief that the primary or root causes of fear and anxiety are uncertainty about the future and threats to self or others. In the course, we examined that external pressures and forces are significant influences but do not determine our actions, but that we respond to them from the heart. In the lessons that dealt specifically with fear and anxiety, I should have made this connection more clearly, showing that uncertainty about the future and threats to self or others are significant but not determinative, and that the root of fear and anxiety lies in the heart.

Another weakness arose from the case studies used to illustrate the concepts from each lesson. While there was much fruitful discussion about the case studies, they seemed too short to lead to deeper discussion about the situation at hand. In the class discussion, the participants would often say that if they know more about the subject's situation, they would be able to better address it, ask a particular question, or offer a passage for the subject to consider.

The time of year that the project was implemented proved to be another weakness. The spring season is often busier for many people in our area and there were a few absences. These were made up with promptly providing materials to those who had missed classes. Holding the seminar earlier in the year would have provided more flexibility in the timing of the class and providing additional resources to work through

outside the class setting.

What I Would Do Differently

I would make some changes based on the weaknesses in the project. These changes would begin with choosing a different time of year to teach a training course. With our community's economy relying on agriculture as a driving force, spring and fall tend to be busy seasons. To allow for more flexibility in the schedule, sometime between November and April would be the ideal time of year to hold the course.

I would increase the ratio of sessions on specific problems to sessions on foundational material. I would teach six sessions on the latter and four sessions on applying it to fear and anxiety. As well, in the future, I may add sessions on topics such as grief, anger, difficult decisions, and shame. However, those topics would be outside the scope of this project, with its research focus being on fear and anxiety.

I would improve the participants' opportunity to engage with the course material in a few ways. I would seek out better case studies, ensuring that they have more details for the participants to work with. I would also give opportunity for participants to practice counseling in role-playing situations during the class time. These situations may not have to be real issues the participants are presently enduring, but even taking on roles in fictional stories would help participants have practice in counseling conversations. As well, though I assigned some reading, I would assign more. Holding the course during a slower time of year would allow for more time to read course materials.

Finally, I would plan the course lessons in conjunction with designing the pre- and post-course survey to allow for the Likert-scale questions to better reflect the content of the course. I would distribute questions evenly to ensure that there are questions that covered each lesson. I would also employ questions that covered the participants' understanding of and comfort level with biblical counseling. I suspect that participants would rate themselves more highly with a question such as "I understand the process of

biblical counseling” than they would on “I am comfortable talking about Scripture with others, relating it to their problems.” While the first question relates to what they learned in the class, the latter would be affected by other factors such as a person’s temperament.

Theological Reflections

This project reinforced the importance of the grace of God and revealed further ways that it is laced through our world and lives. God’s faithful love and compassion for human beings shines as a light in stark contrast to a world wracked with struggle, suffering, and sorrow because of sin’s presence, visible in countless imaginative and familiar ways, for as broken and darkened as it is he has not abandoned it. His care for his creation and those he has made in his own image is all the more evident to me: that we still wake up every morning with the breath he first breathed into Adam’s lungs (Gen 2:7) and every good thing we enjoy (Jas 1:17) serve as reminders that God has been gracious to us. This common grace points us to our need for his grace to bring us hope and transforms us through the gospel.

I am therefore struck anew by his grace to save from sin and bring eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ. All too frequently, I see examples of how sin blossoms in people’s lives. Preparing for the class has reminded me again of the adage, “But for the grace of God, there go I.” I am just as much need of God’s grace as those in whom it may be more obvious, and grateful that his mercies toward me never end, but are “new every morning” (Lam 3:23).

With a significant portion of my project was dedicated to understanding the heart, I have come to more clearly understand that people are complex beings: created in God’s image, and still reflecting much good as a result, but broken and blinded by sin and bound to it, with a web of issues that may be daunting to face. It is a privilege to be used by God as an agent of his redemptive and restorative work of grace in their lives upholding the gospel, faith in Jesus Christ and his grace to save, as their hope. I trust

God, by his grace, to supply what I need to speak well and wisely into their lives.

I am grateful for God's saving grace at work in the lives of those with whom I spent time in the course sessions and those in my church. I have known them for the last eight years since coming to serve at Kingsboro Baptist Church, but I have gained additional appreciation for God's saving and sustaining grace in their lives. Many have been Christians for decades. They are examples of God's faithfulness to sustain them through the days and years and they are examples of faithfulness in seeking and serving him through the days and years. It has been a privilege to spend time in the class sessions hearing their hearts as they wrestled with the material and the many Scriptures we covered, shared about their struggles and faith, and how the Lord has worked in their lives. Through this course, my love for my churches has increased, and I pray that a culture of seeing and celebrating God's grace at work, redeeming and restoring people in their struggles will grow here.

Personal Reflections

I began to take an interest in and study biblical counseling because I sensed a need for further training in pastoral care after beginning full-time ministry. Taking the *Foundations of Biblical Counseling Certificate* through Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation solidified my interest in Biblical Counseling, and this project has sharpened my understanding of and ability in the Biblical Counseling process. I have been challenged to become a better active listener, knowing when to ask good questions and what kinds of questions to ask to compassionately understand a person's heart and mind to point them more clearly and incisively to hope in God and trust in his Word for their lives and struggles therein. Preparation for the lesson on knowing a person has reminded me of the kinds of questions to ask people I am counseling. I tend to be more reserved, and so care, visitation, and other kinds of one-on-one ministry are, at times, outside my comfort zone. Therefore, having extended formal training in biblical

counseling has been helpful to provide me with the tools to care for those in my congregation and community more effectively.

Lately, I have had several conversations with people in my churches about a growing mental health crisis in our local community. It is overwhelming to think about how we may address the various needs related to it. However, with this project, eleven members of Kingsboro Baptist Church are better equipped to have one-on-one conversations that provide hope and help to those who are struggling.

Studying biblical counseling as it relates to fear and anxiety is a personal endeavor. I have known the tension in my chest, the racing heartbeat, and the burning heartburn that accompanies various levels of anxiety. I better understand what is happening in my heart in those moments, and I see my own need for the presence of the all-powerful, infinitely wise, all-sufficient provision of my faithfully loving and compassionate God, and his promise to be with me. With that in view, as I trust his provision, I have grown to take each next step in my areas of responsibility more confidently. As I have experienced comfort from him, so, by his grace, I hope to comfort and encourage others.

Conclusion

This project was beneficial to both me and Kingsboro Baptist Church. Teaching the class has clarified my own understanding of biblical counseling theory and methodology. Discussions with the course participants have forced me to consider new aspects and application of personal ministry. The leaders of the church are now better equipped to care graciously, gently, and wisely for others with a heart of compassion. As the church seeks new opportunities to reach out into the community, serving with practical actions of compassion and care, the foundation we now have in biblical counseling will serve us well as we better understand the people we encounter, engage with them with Christlikeness, welcoming them into our hearts, and bringing them hope

and wisdom from Scripture. The leaders of the church have grown in understanding the importance and practicality of Scripture in daily life and continue to grow in depending on the Lord for their every need, both in their struggles and their service. With this in view, I consider this project a success and look forward to God's continued work in and through us in the future.

APPENDIX 1
BASICS OF BIBLICAL COUNSELING ASSESSMENT
SURVEY

The following survey will be administered to volunteer participants in the “Introduction to Biblical Counseling” seminars that will be taught at Kingsboro Baptist Church as part of this project.¹ The purpose of the instrument is to assess the participants’ familiarity with biblical counseling concepts and methods and measure their willingness and competency to counsel one another biblically. This survey will be administered before and after the seminar to measure the increase in knowledge of and willingness to counsel biblically.

¹ Survey Questions adapted from Joshua David Stephens, “Promoting the Value of Biblical Counseling through Training Members of Palmetto Baptist Church, Easley, South Carolina” (DMin proj., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2019), 91-94 and Dustin Brady Goodwin, “Equipping Leaders for Care and Counseling at The Village Church in Dallas, Texas” (DMin proj., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2017), 114-19.

Section 1: Demographic Information

Name: _____

Age: _____ Gender: _____

Section 2: General Questions

1. How long have you been a Christian?

2. Briefly, write out your testimony.

3. Briefly, explain how you would share the gospel a person and lead him/her to faith in Christ.

4. How would you define counseling?

5. Briefly describe the cause of fear and anxiety.

Directions: Please mark the appropriate answer according to the following scale:

SD = strongly disagree

D = disagree

DS = disagree somewhat

AS = agree somewhat

A = agree

SA = strongly agree

1. The Bible contains all the necessary information for providing wise, godly help.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
2. The Bible teaches that Christians should provide biblical care and counsel for one another.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
3. I am confident in my ability to help another believer grow in their faith.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
4. I am confident in my ability to compassionately care for and counsel another believer.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
5. I am comfortable talking about my faith with others.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
6. I am comfortable talking about Scripture with others.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
7. When dealing with a problem, I use the Bible.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
8. Suffering is never God's plan for believers.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
9. People are basically good.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
10. Sin is the ultimate source of man's suffering.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
11. Circumstances cause me to act the way I do.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
12. My past causes me to act the way I do.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
13. Family history is the primary determiner of how a person will behave in adulthood.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
14. The Bible does not address every problem people experience.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
15. I am confident in my ability to apply Scripture to the problems I face.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
16. My heart is at the center of my decisions and responses.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
17. I am comfortable counseling someone struggling with fear and anxiety.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA

18. I have a good understanding of the heart issues that affect fear and anxiety.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
19. Uncertainty about the future is the primary cause of fear and anxiety.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
20. Threats to myself or others are the root causes for fear and anxiety.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
21. I understand why God's presence with me helps me not to be afraid and anxious (Isa. 41:10)	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
22. I understand how the doctrines of salvation and eternity help me with fear and anxiety.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
23. I am able to encourage someone facing fear and anxiety with Scripture.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
24. I pray about the struggles I or others face.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA

Further comments to expand on any question above:

APPENDIX 2

EVALUATION RUBRIC FOR BIBLICAL COUNSELING CURRICULUM

The following evaluation rubric was sent to an expert panel. The panel evaluated the course curriculum, measuring its biblical faithfulness, scope, teaching methodology, and applicability.¹

¹ Evaluation Rubric adapted from Dustin Brady Goodwin, “Equipping Leaders for Care and Counseling at The Village Church in Dallas, Texas” (DMin proj., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2017), 148.

Name of Evaluator: _____ Date: _____

Curriculum Evaluation Tool					
1 = insufficient 2 = requires attention 3 = sufficient 4 = exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
Biblical Accuracy					
The course curriculum is biblically and theologically sound.					
The course curriculum effectively establishes the scriptural basis for biblical counseling ministry.					
Scope					
The course curriculum adequately covers each topic it addresses.					
The course curriculum is content appropriate for volunteer leaders.					
The course curriculum provides a basic understanding of biblical counseling concepts.					
Methodology					
The course curriculum effectively teaches a basic biblical counseling methodology.					
The course curriculum effectively utilizes various teaching methods (lecture, discussion, homework, reading, role-play).					
Applicability					
The course curriculum is applicable for personal ministry.					
The course curriculum will effectively equip leaders in biblical counseling.					

Other Comments:

APPENDIX 3
T-TEST RESULTS

Table A1. Pre-course survey results

	<i>P1</i>	<i>P2</i>	<i>P3</i>	<i>P4</i>	<i>P5</i>	<i>P6</i>	<i>P7</i>	<i>P8</i>	<i>P9</i>	<i>P10</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
<i>Q1</i>	5	6	1	6	5	6	5	6	6	3	49
<i>Q2</i>	5	5	1	3	5	6	5	6	6	5	47
<i>Q3</i>	3	2	3	4	1	5	4	5	4	4	35
<i>Q4</i>	3	3	4	2	1	5	4	5	4	4	35
<i>Q5</i>	3	5	3	3	1	5	5	6	3	3	37
<i>Q6</i>	3	5	1	5	1	5	4	5	3	2	34
<i>Q7</i>	3	6	6	4	3	5	3	5	5	3	43
<i>Q8</i>	3	5	6	6	3	6	5	1	6	4	45
<i>Q9</i>	2	5	6	5	3	6	2	2	6	6	43
<i>Q10</i>	5	6	6	5	5	5	5	6	6	6	55
<i>Q11</i>	2	3	3	3	2	3	3	2	6	3	30
<i>Q12</i>	3	3	3	5	2	4	2	4	6	3	35
<i>Q13</i>	3	2	1	3	5	3	5	5	6	3	36
<i>Q14</i>	3	5	6	2	4	2	4	5	6	4	41
<i>Q15</i>	3	5	5	4	2	5	4	5	5	4	42
<i>Q16</i>	5	5	4	5	5	5	4	4	2	4	43
<i>Q17</i>	4	2	4	2	4	5	3	4	2	3	33
<i>Q18</i>	4	2	4	2	5	3	2	4	2	3	31
<i>Q19</i>	2	2	1	3	4	2	2	3	3	5	27
<i>Q20</i>	3	5	5	4	4	5	2	3	6	4	41
<i>Q21</i>	5	4	6	5	4	6	6	6	5	4	51
<i>Q22</i>	4	4	6	4	4	5	4	6	5	4	46
<i>Q23</i>	5	5	5	4	2	5	3	5	2	3	39
<i>Q24</i>	6	6	6	6	5	6	5	6	5	6	57
<i>TOTAL</i>	87	101	96	95	80	113	91	109	110	93	

Table A2. Post-course survey results

	<i>P1</i>	<i>P2</i>	<i>P3</i>	<i>P4</i>	<i>P5</i>	<i>P6</i>	<i>P7</i>	<i>P8</i>	<i>P9</i>	<i>P10</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
<i>Q1</i>	6	5	1	6	5	6	6	6	6	6	53
<i>Q2</i>	6	5	1	6	4	6	6	6	6	6	52
<i>Q3</i>	4	4	3	5	3	5	4	4	4	6	42
<i>Q4</i>	4	4	4	4	2	5	4	5	4	6	42
<i>Q5</i>	5	4	3	5	2	5	5	6	4	6	45
<i>Q6</i>	4	4	1	6	3	5	4	5	5	5	42
<i>Q7</i>	4	5	4	6	3	5	4	6	5	6	48
<i>Q8</i>	5	5	5	6	3	6	4	1	6	1	42
<i>Q9</i>	2	5	6	6	3	6	2	3	6	3	42
<i>Q10</i>	5	4	6	6	4	5	5	6	6	5	52
<i>Q11</i>	4	3	3	6	3	3	3	3	6	3	37
<i>Q12</i>	4	2	3	5	2	4	2	4	6	3	35
<i>Q13</i>	5	3	3	6	5	4	4	6	6	5	47
<i>Q14</i>	5	4	5	1	4	3	4	5	3	5	39
<i>Q15</i>	4	5	5	6	4	4	4	4	4	6	46
<i>Q16</i>	5	5	6	6	5	5	4	5	2	4	47
<i>Q17</i>	4	2	4	4	3	5	3	3	4	5	37
<i>Q18</i>	4	4	6	6	4	4	3	5	4	6	46
<i>Q19</i>	3	2	1	2	3	3	2	2	3	3	24
<i>Q20</i>	3	2	3	2	4	5	3	3	4	2	31
<i>Q21</i>	6	5	6	6	3	5	6	6	6	6	55
<i>Q22</i>	6	5	6	6	3	5	5	6	6	6	54
<i>Q23</i>	5	4	4	5	2	5	4	4	5	6	44
<i>Q24</i>	6	6	5	6	5	6	6	6	6	6	58
<i>TOTAL</i>	109	97	94	123	82	115	97	110	117	116	

Table A3. Summary of pre- and post-course survey results

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Pre-Course Score</i>	<i>Post-Course Score</i>	<i>Difference</i>
1	87	109	22
2	101	97	-4
3	96	94	-2
4	95	123	28
5	80	82	2
6	113	115	2
7	91	97	6
8	109	110	1
9	110	117	7
10	93	116	23

Table A4. Results of *t*-test: paired two sample for means

	<i>Pre-Test Total</i>	<i>Post-Test Total</i>
Mean	97.5	106
Variance	114.277778	166.444444
Observations	10	10
Pearson Correlation	0.53897431	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	9	
t Stat	-2.3390558	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.0220442	
t Critical one-tail	1.83311293	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.0440884	

APPENDIX 4
COURSE OUTLINES

Lesson 1: Introduction, Scripture, God

1. What is Biblical Counseling?

-Why Biblical Counseling?

-Defining Biblical Counseling.

2. What is Scripture and why is it important?

-What Scripture does and doesn't do.

-Class discussion: 2 Timothy 3:16-17

3. Who is God and what is he like?

-Attributes of strength.

-Attributes of care.

Lesson 2: Understanding People, Part 1

1. People are created in God's image

-People are created by God (Discussion on Gen 1:26-30; Ps 139:13-14)

2. People are "Embodied Souls"

-People are physical beings

-People are spiritual beings

-People are physical and spiritual beings together.

3. Sin and its effects

-Defining sin (Discussion on Gen 3:1-7)

-Consequences of sin (Discussion on Gen 3:8-13)

-Sin's effects on people.

4. How living in a fallen world affects people

- Suffering because of a broken world
- Suffering at the hands of others
- Response to suffering: circumstances may be difficult and exert pressure, but circumstances do not determine actions and reactions.

Lesson 3: Understanding People, Part 2: The Heart

1. Defining “The Heart”

2. The three functions of the heart

- Mind
- Affections
- Will

3. What rules your heart rules your life

Lesson 4: How People Change

1. The “Three Trees Model” introduction

- Discussion on Jeremiah 17:5-8

2. “The Three Trees Model” step by step

- The heat (circumstances)
- Bad fruit (sinful or unhealthy actions)
- Bad root (unhealthy heart ruled by sin)
- Harmful results
- God’s resources for us in Christ
- Good root: (the heart transformed by Christ)
- Good fruit: (godly actions that come from good root)
- Good results

Lesson 5: Enter the person's world

1. Goal

-Showing a person you care, can be trusted, and are able to help.

2. Christlike relational qualities

-Compassion

-Humility

-Gentleness

3. Steps toward building a trusting relationship

-“Entry gates” into a person's world.

-The counselor is with the person in their struggle.

-Identifying with the person's suffering

-Accepting the person with goal of Christlikeness, including healthier actions, decisions

4. Offer hope

Lesson 6: Understand the person and their needs

1. Knowing your counselee

-Aim: to know a person well enough to speak wisely to them.

2. Asking wise questions

-7 tips for asking good questions.¹

-Examples of good questions to ask.²

-X-Ray Questions.³

¹ Robert D. Jones, “The Counseling Process, Step Two: Understand Their Needs,” in *The Gospel for Disordered Lives: An Introduction to Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling*, ed. Robert D. Jones, Kristen L. Kellen, and Rob Green, *The Gospel for Disordered Lives*, (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2022), 173-76.

² Paul David Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands: People in Need of Change Helping People in Need of Change* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2002), 178.

³ David Powlison, *Seeing with New Eyes: Counseling and the Human Condition through the Lens of Scripture* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2003), 129-44.

3. Active listening

4. What to do with the information

Lesson 7: Speak: Bringing Christ and his answers

1. Goals

-To help people toward positive change

-To move people from unhealthy, non-constructive responses to healthy, constructive responses

-To help people become Christlike in their responses through faith in Jesus Christ.

2. Speaking wisdom

-Helping a person see unhealthy or sinful aspects of their hearts: mind, affections, will.

-Helping a person have perspective about their lives

-Helping a person see and understand what is true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, commendable, and good (Phil. 4:8).

3. Wisdom from and process for sharing Scripture

-Helping a person see passages and themes in Scripture that are relevant to their situation.

-Helping a person see God's attributes, care, and grace for them.

-Helping a person understand the place of faith, humility, and repentance.

-Helping a person understand the gospel more clearly and how it applies to their life and circumstances.

-Helping a person understand what it means to practically live according to the counsel of Scripture.

Lesson 8: The Call to Action

1. Clarifying responsibility⁴

⁴ Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*, 252.

-Inner circle: “Circle of Responsibility” (What am I responsible for)

-Outer circle: “Circle of Concern” (What am I not responsible for)

2. Applying Scripture

-What does the Bible say about the information gathered?

-What are biblical goals of change?

-What are biblical methods for accomplishing change?

-Invite the counselee to respond to the shared Scripture.

3. Establishing and implementing an action plan.

-Organize information in six-box chart.

-Help counselee understand their identity in Christ.

-Work with counselees to determine concrete steps for change.

-Help the counselee understand the need to depend on God for help and resources needed for change.

-Homework.

-Suggest specific action steps.

-Importance of prayer.

4. Short term coping strategies

-5-4-3-2-1 Grounding exercise

-Breathing exercises

Lesson 9: Fear and Anxiety, Part 1

1. Defining fear and anxiety

2. Understanding circumstances surrounding fear and anxiety

3. Signs and symptoms of fear and anxiety

4. The heart behind fear and anxiety

-Mind

-Affections

-Will

Lesson 10: Fear and Anxiety, Part 2

1. Counseling fear and anxiety

-Questions to ask a person about their fear and anxiety

-Applying methods from lessons 7 and 8 to fear and anxiety

2. Class discussion on Scripture passages relating to fear and anxiety:

-Deuteronomy 31:1-6

-Matthew 6:19-34

-Philippians 4:4-7

3. Attributes of God that relate to fear and anxiety

-Sovereign Power

-Providential care

-Redemption

4. Short-term exercises to help with fear and anxiety

-5-4-3-2-1 grounding exercise

-Breathing exercises

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ABSTRACT

EQUIPPING MEMBERS OF KINGSBORO BAPTIST CHURCH IN KINGSBORO, PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND, TO COUNSEL ONE ANOTHER BIBLICALLY THROUGH FEAR AND ANXIETY

Alexander Raymond Scott, DMin
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2023
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Robert D. Jones

This Doctor of Ministry project sought to equip members of Kingsboro Baptist Church in Kingsboro, Prince Edward Island, to have care conversations, particularly through their struggles with fear and anxiety. Chapter 1 outlines the ministry context of Kingsboro Baptist Church and the rationale for the project. Chapter 2 discusses the sufficiency of Scripture for counseling ministry in 2 Timothy 3:16-17, the confidence believers have from God's powerful presence in Deuteronomy 31:1-6, Jesus's promise of provision as the cure for anxiety in Matthew 6:19-34, the call for believers to depend on God in prayer in Philippians 4:5-7, and the commission for believers to care for one another amid fear and anxiety in 2 Corinthians 1:3-11. Chapter 3 demonstrates that biblical counseling uniquely addresses fear and anxiety by targeting the heart, as expressed in the mind, affections, and will as the source of these responses and the focus of change. Chapter 4 outlines the implementation process of the project. Chapter 5 summarizes the strengths, weaknesses, and lessons learned from the implementation of the project. Appendices contain the statistical analysis of the project and the outline of the course lessons taught.

VITA

ALEXANDER RAYMOND SCOTT

EDUCATION

BA, Crandall University, Moncton, New Brunswick, 2012

MDiv, Acadia Divinity College, Wolfville, Nova Scotia, 2015

MINISTERIAL EMPLOYMENT

Pastoral Intern, Falmouth Baptist Church, Falmouth, Nova Scotia, 2013-2015

Co-ordinator, Fundy Youth Program, Hopewell Hill Baptist Church, Hopewell Hill, New Brunswick, 2014

Pastor of Family and Worship Ministries, Kingsboro Baptist and South Lake Christian Churches, Kingsboro, Prince Edward Island, 2015-2017

Senior Pastor, Kingsboro Baptist and South Lake Christian Churches, Kingsboro, Prince Edward Island, 2017-