



THE LIFEGIVING WOMAN

December 2020

Merry Christmas!

It's hard to believe that it's mid-December already. Unlike most people, I was very slow to decorate this year because December came barreling in after Thanksgiving. Just like I spend my nooks and crannies of time writing, working, and reading...so it has gone with Christmas decorating. Maybe I'll just enjoy it until my birthday in February. 😊

Last month, I spent time sharing with you a few key distinctives of Biblical Counseling, and I plan to finish it up this month. I look forward to start 2021 by diving into some relevant topics that I hope will bring you help and hope.

We're living in very difficult times, and I want people to know that true, lasting, deep help is available. I hope that this overview of Biblical counseling has been helpful, and that it has begun to reduce the stigma that often lingers around the idea of counseling.

To recap last month, I discussed how Biblical counseling is short-term intensive discipleship with the goal of transformation. It's theologically-sound; it's Scripture-based. Biblical counselors hold to the dual nature of man (inner man and outer man), and we believe that change comes through the person of Jesus Christ.

There are just a few more points I'll make this month, with recommendations at the end for further reading, should you be interested.

Biblical Counseling is Rooted in the Local Church

The Bible teaches that the Lord brings about our growth in the life of community (1 Cor. 12:12-27, Ephesians 4). He is not oblivious to the messiness that life brings, and He actually intends that we help one another in the mess (1 Peter 4:7-11).

The Lord in His kindness and wisdom has blessed His people with all manner of gifts and abilities, which are to be exercised for the benefit of others. In Romans 15, Paul lays out instructions as to how the Roman Church is to relate to one another, and he exhorts them by saying, "I am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and *able to instruct one another* (Rom. 15:14)."

It is clear throughout the New Testament that Paul intends for us to be committed to a particular, local group of people (the local church). Not only that, but we are to live out the many "one another's" found in his epistles within the relationships that

we establish and cultivate in our local body of Christ. We should not be strangers to one another at church, unaware of what our personal lives look like.

“By example and exhortation the New Testament commends the personal, face-to-face, one-another ministry of the Word—whether in one-to-one or small group relationships (Hebrews 3:12-19; 10:19-25).”^[1]

One of the most exciting facets to me of Biblical counseling happening within the local church is the opportunity for outreach. When a church develops a culture of one-another care, where members are intentionally cultivating their own relationship with the Lord and with each other, their capacity to extend this sort of care to the surrounding community expands.

All of this said, I don't believe that this means a Biblical counselor can *only* counsel within the local church. While it is ideal, there are certainly churches that don't have a Biblical counseling ministry, or a culture of one-another care. If this is the case, it's appropriate for someone to seek the help of a Biblical counselor outside of their church.

I believe that technology has opened the door to make counseling even more accessible than ever. A mom of many may not be able to schedule an in-person appointment in the middle of the day, when she needs to make arrangements for her children. But she may be able to take advantage of nap-time on Zoom.

Some of the sweetest counseling relationships that I've experienced have been over Zoom. I'm thankful that the Lord has given us the ability to help people in ways we could not have in the past! It means people who otherwise would not be able to receive help, now can.

But, the Lord clearly designed us to experience face to face *relationships*, and avenues like Zoom aren't ideal. The beauty of counseling a woman in my local church is that I likely already have some measure of relational capital with her. I also see her within the context of her real life. I see how she interacts with her husband and children; I know what ministries she's involved in, what she enjoys. All of these things inform my counseling. I'm also able to hand her a tissue or give her a hug if we meet in person.

In addition, I can utilize the means that we have within our local church body to help my counselee grow. I can point her to specific women to seek out. I can remind her of sermon points that we *both* heard on a particular Sunday.

There is so much beauty within the relationships of the body of Christ that the Lord intends! The care of one another's souls is one of the most precious stewardships that He entrusts to you and to me.

Biblical Counseling is Directive

In 2 Timothy 2:2, Paul tells Timothy, “what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” Paul instructed Timothy to teach others.

A good Biblical counselor is a good listener. He or she will ask good questions to draw out the heart of another in order to wisely help her counselee (Pr. 15:14; 18:13, 15; Pr. 20:5). She will do this to know how to best help her counselee. Good question asking is a *skill*, and so is knowing where to go with the answers you receive.

But merely listening to someone talk about her problems is not enough. Imagine needing to change your clothes for bed, and all you do is take off your clothes from

the day. I suppose some of us may sleep in our birthday suits, but for most of us, the process is not yet complete! You need to put new clothes on (pajamas) to actually be ready for bed.

"But that is not the way you learned Christ!--assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness" (Eph 4:20-23).

Teaching is a key element in Biblical counseling because it is intentional discipleship. Our aim is to partner with the Lord to produce disciples who increasingly love the Lord with all of their being. A Biblical counselor seeks to rightly handle the Word of God and to help the counselee to apply it to her life.

Homework is a key element. Anyone who has received counsel from me may smile (or roll her eyes) right about now because *I love homework*. While it is the Lord who changes us, we have a responsibility to grow in our obedience to Him.

*"Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, **work out your own salvation with fear and trembling**, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (Php 3:12-13).*

*"**Keep your heart** with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life. **Put away** from you crooked speech, and **put devious talk far from you**. **Let your eyes look directly forward**, and your gaze be straight before you. **Ponder the path of your feet...do not swerve** to the right or the left; **turn your foot away** from evil." (Pr. 4:23,*

*"**Hear** my son, and **direct your heart** in the way" (Pr. 23:19).*

"The fruit of wise counseling is spiritually mature people who increasingly reflect Christ (relationally, rationally, volitionally, and emotionally) by enjoying and exalting God and by loving others well and wisely (Galatians 5:22-6:10)."[\[2\]](#)

Our aim is to not merely be hearers of the word, but doers also (Ja. 1:22). I want to help my counselees to be doers by not only assigning homework, but following up on it. Oftentimes, new thought patterns or new habits in daily living need to take place, and with accountability it's possible!

Biblical Counseling is Short-Term

We *all* need help at times, and *that* is what Biblical counseling for. Counseling is a *sub-set* of discipleship. It is meant to be a short-term, intensive season of discipleship when someone is stuck in sin or suffering.

I'm indebted to my counseling supervisor for the following word picture.

Imagine a swift flowing river as the deep stream of normal discipleship. We want as many people as possible in the center of the river where the water is swiftest, and people are growing at the rate God wants them to grow. These are means and methods such as Sunday mornings, small groups, discipleship relationships, etc.

But sometimes, we get stuck in sin, we have deep heart questions, or we're suffering, and we are not growing at the pace God would have us to grow. We need a place that we can pull off, where the water isn't as swift or deep so that we can receive compassionate, intensive care.

It is intensive, concentrated, focused discipleship.

Biblical counseling is temporary because it's meant to get someone to the point where she can move back into the deep, swift-flowing river of discipleship. Fully participating in the local body of Christ, ministering to others.

There may be struggles that we endure over a lifetime, but as we are equipped through the Word of God during an intensive period of discipleship, we will have tools with which to fight the spiritual battles we encounter as we depend upon the Lord to keep us and transform us.

Not only that, but we will be able to offer what we have gained in Christ to others who may get stuck, be suffering, or have questions. This is the ministry of reconciliation that Paul refers to,

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too. If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer" (2 Cor. 1:3-6).

"From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor. 5:17-21)

All of us are in need of Gospel grace every day of our lives. *Not one of us* is exempt from temptation and sin. Until we shed these earthly tents for our glorified bodies, we need God's rescuing grace daily.

Every one of us who have received this ministry from the Lord can offer it to others. In fact, we are **all** called to minister the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ to one another.

"But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb 3:13).

You do not need counseling certification or a degree, and I would argue that most will not be called to pursue it. You don't even need to spend hours and hours reading books about it. But you *do* need to be walking faithfully with Jesus. Daily seeking Him in His Word and through prayer, and actively participating in a local church and receiving the various means of discipleship available are primary ways through which we can cultivate faithfulness in our heart and life.

As we do these things, we *will* grow to be better equipped in caring for the souls of those around us.

Now that you have a brief introduction to Biblical Counseling, I want to encourage you to learn more about it if you're interested, or to seek out a counselor if you feel in need of help.

First, one word regarding seeking out help. Biblical counselors are some of the most down-to-earth, understanding, unassuming people I know. Your mess will not

shock them, and they certainly wouldn't want you to hesitate reaching out for help out of fear of what they'll think of you. The reality is that many, if not most, Biblical counselors were first recipients of counseling (and I am no exception). Their desire is to be like Paul, "So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us" (1 Thess. 2:8).

Now, on to the learning part--

- A great starter book if you're considering the pursuit of education regarding Biblical counseling is Heath Lambert's, [A Theology of Biblical Counseling](#)
- For ministry leaders, Scott Mehl's book, [Loving Messy People](#) is an excellent, practical resource (he has a small group leader's course as well). It may be my favorite practical counseling book.
- A helpful podcast to learn more is [The Biblical Counseling Podcast](#) by Jeff Christianson or
- To find a Biblical Counselor near you, you can search at either the [Association of Certified Biblical Counselors](#) or the [Biblical Counseling Coalition](#)

You're still here! Here are a few things to anticipate in 2021.

We're currently working on updating my blog and switching it over to a website so that it will be a clean landing page for anyone interested in Biblical counseling, resources, and social media updates.

I will be offering a very limited number of counseling opportunities to people outside of my local church, and you don't have to be local! As a mom to many, I've benefitted from the opportunity to receive counseling online, and I want to make it accessible to others who may not be able to pursue counseling any other way.

While it is not the same as being in the same room, I am thankful for the gift of technology that simply makes it possible!

Because of the full season of life that I'm in, and because my family and local church are my primary places of ministry, I can only take on a few counselees at a time. But, Lord willing, as my children grow and as I grow in experience and education, I will be able to serve more people.

I want you to be the first to know about it, so as soon as my site is up and running, I will send you an email. If you're interested in receiving counseling, you'll be able to schedule a time and fill out paperwork online. I will keep a waiting list, but I do want to encourage you to consider seeking out a Biblical counselor near you.

Lastly, a few favorites...

1. If you're not familiar with [Lamplighter Ministries](#), they masterfully "make a people prepared for the Lord, by building Christ-like character, one story at a time." They publish rare Christian classics for all ages. We have a monthly book subscription, and their dramatic audios are done with excellence (as in, they are not cheesy!). I can't recommend them highly enough. After hearing Mark Hamby teach in-person eight years ago, I began building our library. The book I finished most recently is [The Wrestler of Philippi](#). My 13-year old read it before me and as she passed it off, she exclaimed, "Fannie Newberry sure knows how to write a good plot!"
2. [Extra Dark Chocolate with Sea Salt](#). I don't think I need to use any more words. Except to say, I am NOT a milk chocolate person.

3. I can't get enough of Jeremy & Adrienne Camp's new song, [Whatever May Come](#). I first saw Jeremy in concert in California just a few months before getting married. His testimony of steadfastness in the Lord after losing his first wife just four months after getting married deeply moved me. He is a brother in Christ who has certainly spurred me on through the years.

I hope you have a wonderful Christmas and a wonderful start to 2021.

Love,

Kelly

[1] <https://www.biblicalcounselingcoalition.org/confessional-statement/>

[2] [ibid](#)



kellytarr.com

kelly@kellytarr.com

Tennessee, United States

You received this email because you signed up on our website or made a purchase from us.

[Unsubscribe](#)

mailer lite