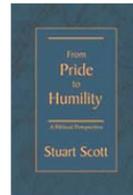


Resources for Life Change

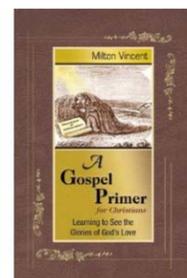
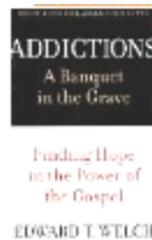
(Resources are available in the Grace Resource Center):

From Pride to Humility, by Stuart Scott---This resource is phenomenal, to say the least. In a short, concise booklet format, Stuart Scott defines pride and then gives a breakdown of all of the various ways pride shows up in our lives in subtle-and not so subtle ways. He then explains humility, and writes about the qualities of humility and challenges the reader to put off pride and put on humility in very specific ways.



Christ and Your Problems, by Jay Adams---Many people who are struggling with various aspects of living life often feel like they are the only one going through the struggle, that they can't overcome the struggle, and that there is no way to conquer the sin. In this short booklet, Adams unpacks I Corinthians 10:13 and brings great hope to the reader about the commonality of temptation, the faithful God who provides a way of escape, and the fact that all believers can indeed have victory over sin.

Addictions: A Banquet in the Grave, by Ed Welch---A very common problem in our world is "addiction." In fact, most people when they are honest would admit to be addicted to something at some point in their life. Some addictions (to alcohol, drugs, gambling, etc.) are horrific because of the damage they create in the person's life and the subsequent damage on others around the addicted person. In this excellent book, Dr. Ed Welch speaks to the heart of the issues surrounding addictions and then provides a practical application of the gospel of Christ to the person who is trying to break free from the addiction. This is an excellent resource to be sure.



A Gospel Primer for Christians, by Milton Vincent---Do you desire hope and encouragement? Of course you do. And others around you do as well. Have you ever wondered if the gospel actually applies to your life on a daily basis? We understand that the gospel helps us come to know Christ in salvation and saves us from the wrath of God and hell, but how might it apply to daily living for believers. In this short booklet, Vincent loads the text with Scripture and great, great encouragement to show how the gospel does matter to our daily lives. This is a favorite tool to be used in counseling.

"If you know these things, happy (blessed) are you if you do them." - John 13:17

COMMUNITY OF GRACE BIBLICAL COUNSELING MINISTRY

Edition #2 - October 2011

If you grew up in the church you are probably familiar with the song, "The Wise Man Built His House upon the Rock." This cute children's song with its boisterous hand motions may elicit smiles from both adults and children, but the actual message is very weighty. The song is based on Matthew 7:24-27, which records the last words of our Lord's inaugural address. Here, in Jesus' first sermon, the Sermon on the Mount, we find these deeply profound and yet simple words, "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock; and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. Now everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand; and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall..."

In this brief passage, Jesus introduces us to two men: One man is wise and one man is foolish. These men are clearly opposite from one other, but notice the similarities. Both men heard the same words. Both men had a foundation. Both men built houses. They each had trials and suffering, as exemplified by the storm and flood waters. Both men had results: and here is where we can see the difference between these two men's lives. The results in their lives were determined by what they did with the words that they heard from Jesus. When the storms of life came, the wise man's house stood firm because of the foundation he had built his house upon. The wise man's life had security and stability because he heard the words of Jesus and obeyed them. The foolish man, on the other hand, heard the words of Jesus but did not obey them. As a result, when the storms of life came upon the foolish man, his life couldn't weather the storms, the trials, and suffering.

Do you want a stable and secure life? Take note: stability and security in the midst of life's storms does not come through sitting in church, hearing a sermon, or simply by hanging out with other Christians.

My friends let us not miss the powerful point of Jesus' teaching. Do you want a stable and secure life? Take note: stability and security in the midst of life's storms does not come through sitting in church, hearing a sermon, or simply by hanging out with other Christians. Nor do stability and security come from soaking in the latest faddish counsel from the world system or ingesting the most recent product from the pharmaceutical company. Jesus makes it clear: life has storms. How you respond to those storms is determined, not by merely hearing His words, but by obedience to His words. Certainly you would agree that one shouldn't wait for the storms before deciding to build a solid foundation. Wisdom says build the solid foundation now.

Can I challenge you today to put into practice the truths from God's Word that you already know? Don't wait for the storms of life to hit. Begin now to take the words of Jesus and, by faith, obey them. In John 13:17, Jesus told His disciples, "If you know these things, happy (blessed) are you if you do them." I have yet to find a person who doesn't want to be blessed, to experience true joy and happiness which God offers. Jesus again is very clear and precise: Happiness is not based upon knowing information, rather happiness, true happiness, being blessed is inextricably tied to doing. Most people end up in formal counseling because the storms have arrived and the house is crumbling. I encourage you to not wait until the storms hit. Start today to walk faithfully with Christ, putting into practice and applying the truth of God's Word in practical and specific ways to your life. Then you will be that wise person who weathers the storms of life.



- Testimonies and Personal Stories -

My Road to Biblical Counseling

By Pastor Blake Shaw

Q&A

Q: *Are the Scriptures sufficient for Biblical counseling?*

A: Here at Grace we hold firmly to the fact that the Scriptures are totally and absolutely sufficient for Biblical Counseling. The first key passage in explaining our position is Psalm 19:7-11. In this passage the Word of God is called various names: 1) the law of the Lord, 2) the testimony of the Lord, 3) the Precepts of the Lord, 4) the Commandments of the Lord, 5) the Fear of the Lord, and 6) the Judgments of the Lord.

The psalmist claims that God's Word is perfect—it lacks nothing; it is sure—it is unwavering and reliable; it is right; it is pure—not confusing or puzzling; it is clean—free from corruption; it is true—in that it reflects reality; and it is righteous altogether. This passage also tells us what the Word of God does. It restores the soul. In other words, it puts the inner man back to doing what it is suppose to do. It brings a person to a point where they can now begin to function like God intends for them to function. In fact, in the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, the Septuagint the Greek Word translated “soul” is psyche. It is interesting that God says that His law can restore the soul/psyche when we have been told for decades that we need psychology to do so. The law of the Lord restores the psyche. It also makes wise the simple. In other words, it takes the naive and gullible and makes that person discerning, able to know and apply truth. God's Word also rejoices the heart in that it brings joy when it is truly received. His Word enlightens the eyes, helping people see the spiritual dimension of life. His Word endures forever. It satisfies, in that, it is profitable and desirable. And it warns and rewards greatly the one who cares to drink deeply from it.

A second key passage for understanding that Scripture is sufficient for counseling is 2 Timothy 3:15-17. This passage teaches that, “*All Scripture is inspired by God*” (2 Timothy 3:16). All Scripture is the very breath, or breathed out by God. This passage helps us understand at least five effects of the Word of God: 1) it is able to lead one to salvation in Christ Jesus, 2) it is useful for teaching or doctrine; it tells us what is right, 3) it is useful for rebuke; it tells us where we are wrong, 3) it is useful for correction; it tells us how to get right, 4) it is for instruction in righteousness; it tells us how to stay right, and 5) it adequately equips the man (or woman) of God for every good work.

In counseling we have to deal with the outer man and inner man. For the outer man, the physiological, we refer to and work with medical doctors. Because mankind fell into sin and a curse was placed upon all of creation, the outer man is decaying (cf. Genesis 3; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18). Thus, sickness and disease ravage the body. In cases where there are testable, provable, organic or physiological problems, the Word of God does address how the person should react and live before God, while dealing with the problem using the medicine and technology available today. A key factor to consider in this is whether the problem is truly testable and provable with the tools available with modern medicinal practice. Biblical counselors deal with the inner man, taking the Word of God and using that all-sufficient Word to counsel and bring true, biblical hope to the counselee and life change to restore the person to the place where our Lord wants them to be.

Another Scripture for understanding that Scripture is absolutely sufficient to counsel is 2 Peter 1:3-4, “*His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust...*”

This passage teaches very clearly that we have everything for life and godliness through Christ Jesus and His Word. Some people may object saying, “But the Bible doesn't tell us everything, like how to do mathematical formulas or geometry.” Such objectors miss the point. Although the Bible is not a text book for subjects such as mathematics, science, etc., where it speaks to these things it is absolutely and totally accurate. The point of 2 Peter 1:3-4 is that everything we need to live for God's glory is provided in His Word. Any struggle that we may have in this sin-cursed, fallen world has answers to be found in the Word of God. Wayne Mack writes, “Scripture should be the sum and substance of our counseling instruction, because it deals with all the issues of life that are necessary for us to understand...” (*Introduction to Biblical Counseling*, page 251) Referring to 2 Peter 1:3, Mack continues,

“The knowledge Peter speaks of is limited to the realities described in Scripture; thus he is saying that everything we need to know to live successfully is found within the pages of God's Word. Some people react incredulously to that statement, but that is what the Bible says. Second Peter 1:3 is either true or it is not—and if it is not true, then the whole Bible could be called into question” (*Introduction to Biblical Counseling*, page 251).

There are other passages that speak to the sufficiency of God's Word for counseling: The Word of God regenerates us (1 Peter 1:23); it brings greater faith (Romans 10:17); it discerns thoughts and intents of the heart (Hebrews 4:12); it cleans us up (John 15:3; Ephesians 5:26); it builds us up (Acts 20:32); it sanctifies us (John 17:17 and Ephesians 5:26); and it brings encouragement and hope (Romans 15:14). There is no doubt that God's word speaks to the issues of life. Therefore, we take our stand that the Word of God is absolutely and totally sufficient for counseling.

It was the early 1990s and I was a few years into my pastoral ministry. One particular day I met with a student whom I will call Ed. Ed was a faithful attendee at our church and involved in our College and Career Ministry. During our lunch meeting, Ed said to me, “Pastor Blake, what I wanted to visit with you about is related to a huge battle I have in my life.” He continued, saying, “I am an angry man. I have struggled with anger for years. I just feel angry all the time and I seem to get angry at the smallest things. For years I've tried to stop but I just don't know how and sometimes I just feel like it is one sin that will grip me the rest of my life. Can you help me?” I confess that my response was laced with canned answers, spiritual platitudes, and the typical approach that Christians have taken for years to try to beat sin. I asked him questions such as, “Do you read your Bible every day?” “Do you pray, and if so how often?” “Do you have accountability with someone?” I knew Ed was in church Sunday morning and Sunday night. He was involved in small group Bible study and College and Career group. Clearly he was sitting under the

teaching of God's Word, fellowshiping with other believers, and had structured accountability. Ed told me that he prayed often and faithfully read his Bible, for one hour every morning. His responses revealed the deficiency of my canned answers. I was unsure how to proceed, and what I did next was a miserable failure. Since I did not know what else to do, I told him about some articles I had that I would have him read. Later that day I delivered to him these articles on anger and encouraged him to read them. The articles are great articles but that was all I had to offer my brother in Christ.

We have a lot of work to do and a whole community to reach through the biblical counseling ministry at Grace. It's time to get to work! Want to join us?

This event was a turning point in my life. I walked away from that meeting with Ed very perturbed. I began to wonder if I had any business being a pastor. I became a pastor because I wanted to make a difference for my Lord; yet when it came down to real impact and life change, I had very little to offer. Looking back, I realize that I was mostly confident in the Word of God for counseling, but I also thought that perhaps psychology could be added to the Bible to strengthen the counsel. I realize that this was a compromise on my part.

Through God's goodness and providence He began to change my views on biblical counseling when I attended a conference in California. At the conference, I attended a seminar about Biblical Counseling hoping it would give me some insight on how to help the 'Ed's' in this life. A man named Wayne Mack taught the seminar, which was an introduction on the topic of Biblical Counseling. As I took notes and listened, my mind raced back to the lunch meeting I had with Ed. I realized that indeed I could have done more to help him. I learned that God's Word does speak to the issue of anger. I learned that God's Word does have all the answers for the “Eds” in this life. I realized that my thoughts of adding psychology to the Bible in order to counsel others were wrong. I was thrilled to learn that I could help my brothers and sisters in Christ through the ministry of the all-sufficient Word of God. When I returned home from the conference, I began to read and study whatever resources I could find on Biblical Counseling. Through my studies, I started to see the staggering contrast between true Biblical Counseling and all the stuff I had read before or heard on the radio about needs, self-esteem, a need for self-love, or this deeper part of the person, the unconscious, and the healing of memories, and how mankind is far too complicated for the simplicity of God's Word.

The most life-changing resource I found was a video series by Jay Adams. At this point several others, including a friend named Constance, and I watched the series. From that point, Constance and I began to pray about and discuss having an Introduction to Biblical Counseling course for people at Grace. Constance and I offered the class in 1997, and were so excited to see the turn-out. To our surprise and joy the class was effective and life-changing for those who took it. Some of the people who took that class are now an integral part of our counseling ministry at Grace.

I continued to study biblical counseling because of a feeling of inadequacy and the fear associated with knowing I was inadequate. In 2000, the Lord allowed me to begin studies toward a Master's Degree in Biblical Counseling at The Master's College. The process of learning, studying, and growing through the Master's program was amazing. Simultaneous to this, I had the privilege of observing a very skilled biblical counselor as he counseled a young man who was “caught (ensnared) in a trespass”. Through these observations, I kept thinking, *I can do this. I have the perfect, All-Sufficient Word of God. I have Jesus Christ. I have the Holy Spirit.* I completed my Master's degree and then continued to study in order to complete the certification process with the National Association of Nouthetic Counselors (NANC). I realize that I have so much more to learn, yet I am thrilled at what God has done to bring me to where I am today. I am thankful for the opportunity He has granted me to serve as the Pastor of Counseling Ministry here at Grace. We have a lot of work to do and a whole community to reach through the biblical counseling ministry at Grace. It's time to get to work! Want to join us?