

DEFINING CHANGE

Biblical Counseling ...

... is the Christ-centered, Bible-based, Holy Spirit empowered, practical and therapeutic [restorative] application of properly interpreted Biblical truths to a person's life through nurture, instruction, correction, and prayer, with the goal of personal maturity and fruitfulness.

Biblical change is the goal of Biblical counseling.

Definitive Scriptures

The Spirit of Truth

John 16:13-15

The Spirit Who Reveals

The Spirit Who Transforms

2 Corinthians 3:17-18

DISCUSSION

What is change and how does it happen in a person's life?

What, if any, difference is there between "change" and "transformation"?

Current Ideas on Change

Stages of Change:

1. Pre-contemplation
2. Contemplation
3. Preparation/Determination
4. Action
5. Maintenance
6. Reversion

Biblical Change

Key Passages:

- Matthew 18:3
- Romans 12:2
- **1 Corinthians 6:9-11**
- **Ephesians 4:22, 24, 28**
- Colossians 3:9-10

BASIC BIBLICAL MODEL

Change: The Goal

Biblical change is the goal of counseling. (2 Timothy 3:17)

Change is hard

We may take it as a rule that any quality of life, attitude of mind, or activity that God requires of man may be acquired through the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a synergistic enterprise entered into by us and God.

- Romans 12:2
- 2 Corinthians 3:17-18
- 1 Corinthians 10:13
- Romans 8:28-29
- Romans 8:37-39 (31-39)
- Galatians 2:20

Change takes place not merely when certain adjustments in attitude and/or behavior occur, but when there has been a major long-term revision.

PARTNERED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

Spiritual blindness is *deceptive*.

Spiritual blindness is *universal*.

- **Spiritual blindness** means that the spirit of the individual is unable to perceive spiritual truth clearly and accurately.
- **Biblical Change** is a matter of removing the blinders that prevent the counselee from seeing and living in the truth.

Our human nature requires a redemptive agenda for every one of our relationships. (See Hebrews 3:12-13) As long as sin remains, spiritual blindness will exist and require us to be committed to relationships that promote honest, loving, mutual ministry.

As instruments in His hands, we bring:

1. Objectivity
2. Discernment
3. Wisdom
4. Clarity
5. Purpose

Bringing Objectivity

Many counselees are blinded by their *subjectivity*—how they see the world is how the world *is*. This is shaped by desires, needs, emotions, lies believed, and idolatrous devotions. As a Biblical counselor, you help them sort through the

details of their story and their circumstances to see the objective reality. This is where Biblical counseling has to begin—with the truth.

Bringing Discernment

For most counselees, their starting point is their own experience. What they need is someone whose vantage point is different, someone who starts with Scripture and moves toward life. Scripture must become the basis for interpreting life, and not vice versa.

To do so, the counselor brings discernment by asking Scripture-oriented questions: “What has God said about ...”; “What are God’s goals for you about ...”; “What is it that God wants you to crave in your heart?”, and helps the counselee lay those truths down beside the trouble in their life and do an accurate comparison.

Bringing Wisdom

A spiritually blind person is a fool, according to the Scriptures (Proverbs 12:6; 12:15; 14:6; 15:5; 17:16; 18:2; 20:3; 23:9; 26:5; 28:6; 29:9; 29:11). A fool needs the intervention of properly interpreted Scripture because his choices, responses, perspectives, actions, and attitudes announce to all that he is blind. He needs the lens of Biblical wisdom to help him see and understand as God does.

The Biblical counselor can offer God’s wise perspective through Scripture. He brings more than just opinion or research or experience or training. He brings a confidence in (and a submission to) the Word of God that will expose and penetrate the blindness of the counselee.

The Biblical wisdom he offers will be pure, peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy, full of good fruit, impartial, and sincere (James 3:17). In short, he is, by God’s grace, the fool’s exact opposite.

Bringing Clarity

People are interpreters by nature, always seeking to make sense of life and interpreting life through the interpretive matrix of their own experiences.

One of the most significant areas of spiritual blindness in counseling is a blindness to the realities of the gospel—and its lack—in the counselee's life.

There are three essential perspectives on the human struggle that the gospel gives us. The gospel gives us a true sense of self, sense of God, and sense of process.

Bringing Purpose

Everyone who comes for counseling comes for a reason. They have an agenda, something they would like to see accomplished. But as a counselor you must again remember that spiritual blindness will prevent counsees from seeing when their agenda is narrow, selfish, or too temporary (“this-worldly”) in nature. They will need your help to see when their purpose for counseling reveals that they have “exchanged the worship and service of the Creator for worship and service of the created thing” (Romans 1:25).

It is in the bringing of these five things to the counseling relationship that we are instruments through which God brings transformation to the lives of those He has brought to us for counseling.

2 Corinthians 5:17

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; what is old has passed away—behold, what is new has come!”

This is a description of a total transformation of the inner being. With that comes an entirely new way of life: new priorities, new agenda, new purpose, new loyalties, new motivations, new beliefs, new behaviors.

This is not a superficial change that lasts only a short time, “for you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God” (1 Peter 1:23).

According to Ephesians 4:24, this is a “new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.” Paul repeats this concept in Colossians 3:10, where he says the new self “is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.”

This is a difficult concept for many to understand and accept. Just as Nicodemus wondered how a grown man could be born again (John 3:3), the modern scientized mind asks, “How can accepting Christ as Savior really transform a troubled mind? Surely it takes more than the Bible and the Holy Spirit to permanently heal the dysfunctional.”

While some insist that years of therapy are required to cleanse the troubled soul of painful memories, Paul recommends “the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit” (Titus 3:5).

As one renews one’s mind by saturating on the Word of God, and as one surrenders more and more to the indwelling Christ, the Holy Spirit brings about true transformation and bears His fruit in that person’s life.

BIBLICAL CASE HISTORIES OF CHANGE

- A.** Woman at the well
- B.** Zaccheaus
- C.** Peter
- D.** Saul

