



Foundations for Biblical Discipleship Course Syllabus

Course Title: Foundations for Biblical Discipleship

Credit: 1 credit hour

Course Objectives

We believe that God has “granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence” (2 Peter 1:3). This course is designed to equip students to “rightly [handle] the word of truth” (2 Tim 2:15), and to see how that Truth pertains to all of “life and godliness.”

In this course, your student will:

- Learn and be able to explain how Scripture speaks to anthropology, psychology, and various life issues
- Grow in note-taking skills & reading comprehension, and be able to explain and apply the main points of a lecture or assigned reading when presented with practical and analytical questions
- When presented with a case study, analyze, evaluate, and respond to complex life situations through a biblical worldview
- Memorize and be able to practically apply a given passage of Scripture to specific, daily life issues

Course Outline

For Semester 1, students engage in 30 hours of provided video & audio lecture, supplemented with reading assignments from *A Theology of Biblical Counseling* by Heath Lambert and *Psychobabble* by Richard Ganz. Guided written responses are provided for each weekly reading assignment.

In the Semester 2, students respond to weekly, topical case studies in essay-question format. Five to ten question prompts are provided for each case study, to promote student interaction and implementation of principles learned in Semester 1. During Semester 2, students will also read assigned portions of both *Counseling the Hard Cases*, by Heath Lambert & Stuart Scott and *When People are Big & God is Small*, by Edward Welch. At the end of the second semester, students will write a Scripture Application paper as their final project. Further explanation of assignments is found under “Assignment Descriptions.”

Required Texts

A Theology of Biblical Counseling, by Heath Lambert

Psychobabble, by Richard Ganz

Counseling the Hard Cases, by Heath Lambert & Stuart Scott

When People are Big & God is Small, by Edward Welch

Method of Evaluation

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| Reading Responses | 30% |
| Completed Lecture Notes | 20% |
| Case Studies | 30% |
| Scripture Application Paper | 20% |

Grading Scale: 100-90% (A), 89-80% (B), 79-70% (C), 69-60% (D), 59 and below (F)



Foundations for Biblical Discipleship
Course Syllabus

Assignment Descriptions & Instructions

Reading Responses (30%)

- *Purpose* - Weekly writing prompts are provided for each week's reading assignment. The purpose of these assignments is to help the student engage with new concepts in the writing, to see how the concepts relate to the lecture material, and to connect how the reading is applicable to daily life.
- *Requirements* – Student should respond to the prompt in full, answering all parts of the question. Required length of response varies from one to three paragraphs per week and is specified in the question. For example, below is a question for chapter 8 of *A Theology of Biblical Counseling* (Lambert), “Biblical Counseling and a Theology of Sin”:
 - “In this chapter, we see how sin effects our standing before God, our motivations, our thinking, our emotions, our bodies, our relationships, and our world. Choose three of the areas of life mentioned, and respond with three sentences per question, explaining how you have seen this reality played out around you - or in you! - this week.”
- *Grading* – Grading can be based on (1) completion of answer (did they answer each part of the question?); (2) evidence of retained concepts from the reading (can you tell that they are drawing from the reading to formulate their answer, or does it sound like they are making it up?); and (3) applicability of observations (does their answer fit the question? are they translating these truths into the real world?).

Lecture Notes (20%)

- *Purpose* – Students learn how to listen well to lecture-style classes when they are able to actively engage in note-taking. Following along with the provided notes helps the student to pay attention and follow the main focus of the lesson. Well-completed notes also provide material to return to for review.
- *Requirements* – For fill-in-the-blank notes, all spaces should be filled in during the video lecture.
- *Grading* – Lecture notes comprise 20% of the final grade. Some notes have blanks, but others do not! For lectures that do not have notes, you could instead assign your student to take one (1) page of notes.
- Notes may be graded after each lecture, or as frequently as the course facilitator deems necessary. Five (5) points should be deducted for each blank left unfilled. For example, if two (2) blanks are left unfilled in the notes for one lecture, the grade for those lecture notes would be a 90. Students could receive full credit back for correcting notes, even after the notes have been graded.

Case Studies (30%)

- *Purpose* – The nature of life issues and personal discipleship (counseling) is dynamic and alive. The purpose of these case studies is to introduce the student to a realistic scenario in which they can put into practice the principles learned in the previous semester's lectures, as well as past and current reading. Case studies introduce the variables of life and keep counseling and theological principles from becoming stale and purely academic. These case studies are designed to push students to be “doers of the word, and not hearers only” (James 1:22), as they learn to handle situations relevant to their own lives. All of the case studies are written by experienced, certified ACBC counselors and instructors. The answers provided for grading help students to see how to better handle the situation and provide further instruction.
- *Requirements* – Students must read the entire case study and then answer each of the provided questions. Case studies are not timed, but must be submitted at an agreed-upon time at the end of each week. Ideally, Wednesday is a good deadline, as that leaves time for grading on Thursday, and corrections on Friday. Case studies simulate real-life situations, and in those situations, students will not have the luxury of putting off their response until they are completely ready. Sticking to a deadline pushes the student to learn how to give biblical answers under realistic time constraints.



Foundations for Biblical Discipleship
Course Syllabus

- *Grading* – Detailed answers for each case study are provided starting on page 9 of this guide. Compare the student's answer with the examples provided by the case study authors. You can use the following criteria to grade: (1) completion of answer (did they answer each part of the question?); (2) evidence of retained concepts from the reading and lectures (can you tell that they are drawing from information they have learned in the course to formulate their answer, or does it sound like they are making it up?); (3) applicability of observations (does their answer fit the question? are they translating these truths into everyday life?); and (4) Scriptural basis (do they use Bible verses and principles to ground and guide their answers?).

Scripture Application Paper (20%)

- *Purpose* – The goal of this course is to open the eyes of students to the relevancy and sufficiency of Scripture to life issues, and to equip those same students with the basic tools to grow in Christlikeness, and help others to do the same. These two-fold goals go hand-in-hand, as Scripture is the primary instrument of the Spirit of God in the believer's growth towards godliness. The final project is designed to help students interact with Scripture in a way that pushes them towards its practical use in everyday life.
- *Requirements* –The Scripture Application paper presents students with several passages of Scripture, from which they may choose one for their paper. Students should write the chosen passage from memory on the day of the exam, and then describe how they would use this passage in two different discipleship/"counseling" scenarios.
- *Grading* – The final project comprises 20% of the course grade. You can base your grading on the following criteria: (1) comprehensive memorization (did they accurately write the passage from memory?); (2) evidence of retained concepts from the reading and lectures (can you tell that they are drawing from information they have learned in the course to formulate their answer, or does it sound like they are making it up?); (3) applicability of scenarios (are they demonstrating the applicability of the verses to everyday life?); and (4) Scriptural basis (do they use Bible verses and principles to ground and guide their answers?).

When all assignments are completed, you can use the chart below to calculate the final grade for the course:

| <i>Assignment</i> | <i>Averaged point grade</i> | <i>Assignment's worth</i> | <i>Total</i> |
|---|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------|
| Reading Responses | | x .30 | |
| Completed Lecture Notes | | x .20 | |
| Case Studies | | x .30 | |
| Scripture Application Paper | | x .20 | |
| Final Grade: | | | |
| <i>Grading Scale: 100-90% (A), 89-80% (B), 79-70% (C), 69-60% (D), 59 and below (F)</i> | | | |

Lecture and Reading Log

At the beginning of the semester, sit down with your course facilitator and fill in the “Dates” column, so that you know when each week of work should be completed.

Semester 1

| Week | Dates | Lecture Topic | ✓ | Reading | ✓ |
|------|-------|--|---|-------------|---|
| 1 | | The Doctrine of Scripture | | Lambert, 1* | |
| | | The Doctrine of God | | | |
| 2 | | Biblical View of the Person | | Lambert, 2 | |
| | | Biblical View of Sin | | | |
| 3 | | The Gospel – Justification | | Lambert, 3 | |
| | | The Church | | | |
| 4 | | What Makes Biblical Counseling Unique? | | Lambert, 4 | |
| | | Counseling Lay of the Land | | | |
| 5 | | A Comparison of Counseling Philosophies | | Lambert, 5 | |
| | | How to Grow and Change | | | |
| 6 | | The Gospel – Sanctification | | Lambert, 6 | |
| | | Build Involvement & Give Hope | | | |
| 7 | | Gather Data & Discern Problems | | Lambert, 7 | |
| | | Give Instruction & Assign Homework | | | |
| 8 | | Idols of the Heart | | Lambert, 8 | |
| | | The Purpose of Marriage | | | |
| 9 | | Biblical Sexuality | | Lambert, 9 | |
| | | How to Improve Your Communication | | | |
| 10 | | Guilt and Repentance | | Lambert, 10 | |
| | | Forgiveness | | | |
| 11 | | Counseling People with a Medical Illness | | Lambert, 11 | |
| | | Counseling People with Depression | | | |
| 12 | | Worry & Fear | | Lambert, 12 | |
| | | Counseling People with a Psychological Diagnosis | | | |
| 13 | | Trials & Suffering | | Ganz, 1** | |
| | | A Biblical View of Emotions | | Ganz, 2-3 | |
| 14 | | A Biblical View of Anger | | Ganz, 4-5 | |
| | | Counseling Those Committing Life-Dominating Sin | | Ganz, 6-7 | |
| 15 | | Counseling & Suicide | | Ganz, 8-9 | |
| | | Counseling & Eating Disorders | | Ganz, 10-11 | |
| 16 | | Catch up | | Ganz, 12-13 | |
| | | | | Ganz, 14-15 | |

*Chapters from required reading, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, by Heath Lambert

**Chapters from required reading, *Psychobabble*, by Richard Ganz

Case Study and Reading Log

As with the log provided for Semester 1, use this table to keep track of where you are and where you need to be in your coursework. At the beginning of Semester 2, sit down with your course facilitator to fill in the dates.

Semester 2

| Week | Dates | Case Study | Completed? | Corrected? | Reading | ✓ |
|------|-------|---|------------|------------|---------------------|---|
| 1 | | Feelings | | | Lambert & Scott, 1* | |
| 2 | | Loving Your Neighbor | | | Lambert & Scott, 3 | |
| 3 | | Suicide | | | Lambert & Scott, 4 | |
| 4 | | Anger | | | Lambert & Scott, 5 | |
| 5 | | Eating Problems | | | Lambert & Scott, 6 | |
| 6 | | Self-Harm | | | Lambert & Scott, 7 | |
| 7 | | Conflict Resolution | | | Lambert & Scott, 8 | |
| 8 | | Same-Sex Attraction | | | Lambert & Scott, 9 | |
| 9 | | Divorce | | | Welch, 1** | |
| | | | | | Welch, 2 | |
| 10 | | <i>No case study – catch up week!</i> | | | Welch, 3 | |
| | | | | | Welch, 4 | |
| 11 | | Romantic Relationships | | | Welch, 5 | |
| 12 | | Decision-Making | | | Welch, 6 | |
| | | | | | Welch, 7 | |
| 13 | | Sin & Suffering (Family Crisis) | | | Welch, 8 | |
| | | | | | Welch, 9 | |
| 14 | | Sin & Suffering (Dealing with Bullying) | | | Welch, 10 | |
| | | | | | Welch, 11 | |
| 15 | | How to Counsel a Bully | | | Welch, 12 | |
| | | | | | Welch, 13 | |
| 16 | | Catch up/Final Project Due | | | Catch Up | |

*Chapters from required reading, *Counseling the Hard Cases*, by Heath Lambert & Stuart Scott

**Chapters from required reading, *When People are Big & God is Small*, by Ed Welch



Lecture 1 – The Doctrine of Scripture Notes

By Dr. Keith Palmer

1. Defining “Inspiration”

- a. Inspiration refers to “the fact that the words of Scripture are spoken by God” - Grudem, 75.
- b. “Inspiration may be defined as the Holy Spirit's superintending over the writers so that while writing according to their own styles and personalities, the result was God’s Word written – authoritative, trustworthy, and free from error in the original autographs.” - Enns, 161.

2. 2 Timothy 3:16-17

- i. All Scripture is “breathed out by God” (theopneustos)
- ii. Note that it is the text itself that is “God- breathed”
- iii. By context, “all Scripture” refers properly to the 39 books of the Old Testament. However, the New Testament writings are elsewhere included with the Old Testament as Scripture (2 Pet. 3:16, 1 Tim. 5:18, quoting Luke 10:7). Therefore, both Old and New Testament writings are viewed as Scripture and thus both are considered “God-breathed.”

3. Qualities of Inspiration

- a. The very words of Scripture are God’s very words (2 Tim. 3:16)
- b. The Bible is the word of God down to the smallest letter or even part of a letter (Matt. 5:17-18)

- c. Though God used men as His instruments to write Scripture, God is ultimately its author and source (1 Thes. 2:13)
- d. The Bible teaches “verbal plenary” inspiration
 - i. Verbal:
 - ii. Plenary:

4. Examples of Inspiration

- a. In the Old Testament:

- b. Jesus’ use of the Old Testament (Matt. 1:22, citing Is 7:14; Matt. 4:4)

5. The Mechanics of Inspiration – 2 Peter 1:20-21

6. Definition of Inerrancy

- a. Inerrancy means the Bible is without error in the original manuscripts. “Inerrant signifies the quality of being free from all falsehood or mistake and so safeguards the truth that Holy Scripture is entirely true and trustworthy in all its assertions.” - *Chicago Statement on Biblical inerrancy*
- b. Infallibility means that the Bible is “true and reliable in all the matters it addresses... Infallible signifies the quality of neither misleading nor being misled

and so safeguards in categorical terms the truth that Holy Scripture is a sure, safe, and reliable rule and guide in all matters.” - *Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy*

- c. Infallibility logically follows inerrancy. Since the Bible is without error (inerrancy), it is reliable (infallible) in all that it teaches. It cannot “fail” or be inaccurate.
- d. In common practice, the terms “inerrancy” and “infallibility” are often used synonymously.
- e. Since the Bible is God’s Word, literally “God-breathed” revelation (inspiration), and God cannot lie (Titus 1:2), it follows that the Bible is without error.
- f. “God is true (Rom. 3:4); the Scriptures were breathed out by God (2 Tim. 3:16); therefore, the Scriptures are true)” - Charles Ryrie
- g. The Bible declares itself to be inerrant (Ps. 12:6, 19:7, 119:89, Prov. 30:5, John 10:35)
- h. Jesus noted that the whole of Scripture (called “law” in this text), down to even a portion of one letter, would not pass away until “all was accomplished” (Matt. 5:18)

7. Definition of authority

- a. Authority simply means the right to command behavior
- b. The Bible teaches that God has ultimate, comprehensive, final authority (Matt. 28:18, Jude 1:25)
- c. Therefore, God has the right to command our thoughts, desires, beliefs, words, actions, and overall behavior (Lev. 19:2, 1 Pet. 1:15-16)

8. The Authority of Scripture

- a. Jesus viewed the Scriptures as authoritative and without error (matt. 5:18; Luke 4:1-13), including His own teaching (matt. 5:22, 28, 32, 34, 39, 44).
- b. Other biblical writers considered the Scriptures authoritative (2 Pet. 3:14-16; Mark 15:28; Rom. 10:11; James 2:23).
- c. “It is important to realize that the final form in which Scripture remains authoritative is its written form... Truth is what God says, and we have what God says...in the Bible. ... Therefore, to disbelieve or disobey any word of Scripture is to disbelieve or disobey God himself.” - Wayne Grudem, 84, 83, 81

9. The relationship between the Scriptures and authority

10. Definition and Doctrine of sufficiency

- a. The sufficiency of Scripture means that the Bible is a comprehensive source of biblical truth such that a believe has all that he needs to glorify God in every situation

11. Caricatures and caution about sufficiency

- a. Sufficiency does not mean the Bible is exhaustive. It does not teach everything about everything (Deut. 29:29). Sufficiency means the Bible is comprehensive, not exhaustive
- b. Sufficiency does not mean the Bible reveals truth in modern day terminology or scientific categories. God uses His own words and creates His own categories
- c. Sufficiency does not mean that the Bible tells us everything we might *want* to know. If a desired answer is not found in Scripture, we conclude that it is ultimately unnecessary, not that Scripture is insufficient.
- d. Sufficiency does not mean that application of Scripture requires no additional knowledge (1 Pet. 3:7, Rom 13:1ff).
- e. Sufficiency does not mean that extrabiblical knowledge is never helpful. In God's common grace, He allows people to learn many things that can be helpful for life and counseling.
- f. Sufficiency does not mean that the Bible is a textbook of facts. Instead, Scripture reveals a robust, comprehensive, sufficient *biblical worldview*. This worldview comes in the form of God-breathed narrative, law codes, poetry, letters, songs, and didactic literature. The Bible's worldview is a lens through which to understand and interpret life, people, problems, and solutions as each intersects with the God who made all things for Himself and His own glory.

Week 1 Case Study: Feelings

[For males, substitute “Jack” for “Andrea.”]

Introduction

After Sunday School, Andrea asks if you have time to talk. She has always been timid and quiet, but some teasing at summer camp has made things worse. However, her home life seems perfect to outside observers, and you have never had a great cause for concern before today.

Presenting Problem

As you look at Andrea, she begins to tremble and cry. As you wait quietly, you pray for wisdom to hear and understand what she is about to say.

“I’m miserable,” she whispers through her tears. “I am constantly afraid and sometimes I don’t know why. I don’t feel like I can do anything right. Is this what it is like to lose your mind? Am I going crazy?”

“I have always been fearful but ever since my friends bullied me at camp this past summer, my fear has gotten worse. I thought they were real friends! Even though they’ve stopped, I will never trust them again.”

Conclusion

As you ask questions and listen to Andrea, you discover that she is battling severe anxiety. It is expressing itself through sleeplessness, nausea, lack of appetite, and a desire to completely avoid her other friends at school and at church.

You learn that her parents, who are strong believers, have always been a source of comfort and encouragement to Andrea and that in fact, in her childhood she relied on them so fully that if they traveled without her, she was afraid they would die and she would be alone and unprotected. As an older teen, she has worked very diligently to be self-sufficient and prides herself on her newfound independence.

As Andrea talks, you notice the way she constantly shifts her body and fidgets with her hands, picking at and scratching her arms while she speaks. As you reach across the table and take her hands in yours, you began to pray for her.

Questions

1. As you give Andrea hope through Romans 8:28-29, how can you explain this text so that it begins to inform her thinking about her camp experience?

2. In this situation where Andrea has been sinned against by bullies and has sinned through her fearful response, how can you use James 1:2-5 to help her understand how God wants to use her hurt for her good? How should she respond in the midst of her hurt?

What text would you use to help her deal with the guilt of personal sin?

3. Since Andrea struggles with fear, how can you use Jeremiah 17:5-8 to redirect her trust?

4. In your next meeting you address the issue of independence as you explain that neither dependence on other people nor independence are part of God's design for her life. What is a text could you use to direct her towards God-dependence?

5. What text or texts would you assign to Andrea as a practical response to anxiety?

6. What resources of the church would you draw upon to help Andrea during this season of anxiety? What aspects of the church and its ministry would you point her towards to help address the underlying heart issues that lead her to withdraw?