

Biblical Counseling and the Glory of God – Week 3

Purpose of the Lesson - This lesson explores how biblical counseling is fundamentally God-centered (theocentric). Students will examine Scripture to understand humanity's purpose, the root of human problems, and how counseling seeks to realign life toward the glory of God.

I. Biblical Counseling is _____ in its Purpose.

A. A fundamental difference in Biblical Counseling versus secular psychology is its foundational premise of man's purpose.

1. Secular psychology fundamentally rejects the biblical doctrine that God is the creator and definer of human purpose. Instead of grounding meaning in God's revealed will, it locates the purpose of human existence in autonomous human reason, emotional well-being, social functioning, or biological survival. Humanity is viewed not as creatures made to glorify God and be conformed to His character, but as self-determining individuals whose highest goal is personal fulfillment and self-actualization as the keys to health and happiness. Consequently, secular psychology reorients the meaning of life away from worship, obedience, and sanctification and toward the primacy of the _____, thereby reflecting a worldview in which human identity and purpose are defined apart from God.
2. Secular psychology operates under the assumption that there are no _____ standards of right or value, with morality and value becoming arbitrary in a naturalistic universe.¹
3. Secular psychology operates from a foundation that human well-being depends on satisfying inherent _____ needs. Most secular approaches emphasize fulfilling desires for self-esteem, love, acceptance, and significance.²
4. The fundamental difference between secular and biblical counseling lies in how each framework understands human _____.
5. **Key Question:** Why does man exist?
 - a. Who determines the purpose of existence?
 - b. Whoever the _____ is determines the purpose of the creation.
 - **Revelation 4:11** - *"You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created."*
6. God created humanity; therefore, He determines the purpose of human existence.
 - a. **Underline the purpose of man in the following passage.**
 - **Isaiah 43:6-7** - *I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' And to the south, 'Do not keep them back!' Bring My sons from afar, And My daughters from the ends of the earth— Everyone who is called by My name, Whom I have created for My glory; I have formed him, yes, I have made him."*

¹ M. P. Cosgrove, "Psychology, Presuppositions of," in *Baker Encyclopedia of Psychology & Counseling*, ed. David G. Benner and Peter C. Hill (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 960-961.

² John F. MacArthur Jr., *MacArthur Pastor's Library on Counseling* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2005), 245-246.

- b. This truth was captured in the Westminster Confession when, in 1647, at the conclusion of the Westminster Assembly, the question was asked, "What is the chief end of man? Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever."³
- c. G.F. Comfort – *It is one of God's great gifts to man that the creature finds his highest happiness, both for this world and the next, in working for the "glory" of his Maker.*⁴
- d. Biblical counseling says, "You exist to glorify God and become like Christ," not "You exist to find yourself and maximize your personal satisfaction."

B. The Glory of God is the _____ theme of the Scriptures

1. The word "Glory" in the Bible comes from the Greek word " _____ " where we get **Doxology**. In reference to God it refers to the splendor, majesty, and excellency that only belongs to God. God is the very essence of what glory is. There is no glory apart from God.
2. **God alone is worthy of the glory**
 - a. **Psalm 29:2** - *Give unto the LORD the glory due to His name; Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.*
 - b. **1 Corinthians 1:31** - *that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the LORD."*
3. **God created everything for His glory (Rev. 4:11; Ps. 19:1).**
4. The disciples of the Lord understood that the glory of God was the purpose for their work and very existence; it was their driving motivation, it was their goal and aim in life – to glorify God – and they called people to give God all the glory
 - a. **Isaiah 42:12** - *Let them give glory to the LORD, And declare His praise in the coastlands.*
 - b. **Romans 16:27** - *to God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.*
 - c. **Ephesians 3:21** - *to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.*
 - d. **Philippians 4:20, Heb. 13:21, Jude 1:25, 1 Pet. 5:11, Rev. 1:6, 4:11**
5. If the glory of God is the central theme of the Bible, the purpose for my existence, the purpose for all things, then the question is, "Am I living FOR the glory of God?"
6. Is the Lord okay to have others share His glory
 - a. **Isaiah 42:8** - *I am the LORD, that is My name; And My glory I will not give to another, Nor My praise to carved images.*
 - b. **1 Corinthians 10:31** - *Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*
 - c. (Love God supremely: Matthew 22:35–38)

C. Discussion Questions

1. Why is it important that God and not man, defines the purpose of life?
2. If man was created to glorify God, what will happen when man's life is not lived for that purpose?

II. Man's Problems are a Result of Misplaced _____

A. Man is created to _____. Mankind idolizes greatness. How is this distinctly human?

³ George Thomas Kurian, *Nelson's New Christian Dictionary: The Authoritative Resource on the Christian World* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2001).

⁴ G. F. Comfort, "Glory," in *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature* (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1891), 887.

1. **“Worship” comes from** two words: “Worth: and “ship” – *giving reverence to something that has glory, dignity, distinction, honor, and renown.* Worship is the reverence you pay to something that is glorious and worthy.
2. To “worship” and “glorify” God then means we are declaring the glory, majesty, honor, and renown of the Lord.

B. Every problem _____ that comes into this world is a result of misplaced worship. Instead of people living for God’s glory, the exchange God’s glory for something else.

1. Romans 1:19–23

- a. What do men do if they do not worship God according to verse 21-22? _____
- b. When man does not give glory to God, that glory gets redirected to God’s _____.
- c. Man exchanges the worship of the true God for created things (v.23).

2. If man does not worship God, if they choose not to reverence Him as glorious and worthy, then they will always make the alternative of worshipping something in the creation. Misplaced worship is the downfall of humanity.

➤ What do you think of when you hear the word “idol” or “idolatry”?

C. Where does God say men can set up idols according to Ezekiel 14:2–3? _____

1. _____ — **2;** *And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 3; “Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their _____, and put before them that which causes them to stumble into iniquity. Should I let Myself be inquired of at all by them?*
2. Idolatry isn’t a primitive form of paganism that is done by carving out a piece of wood into an idol and worshiping it; rather, the Bible speaks of idolatry as the love of other things more than God and placing more “worth” upon them than God.
3. Idols that come into a man's heart are not always some vile sin, but can be non-sinful things that begin to be the driving passion of our lives. When God is neglected for something in this world, it becomes sinful and becomes idolatry.

D. What are the idols people can have in their hearts?

1. _____ - Romans 1:22-23

- a. How can someone make themselves number one instead of God?
- b. What did Jesus say a person had to do to follow Him in Luke 9:23? _____
 - i. **Luke 9:23** — *Then He said to them all, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.*
 - ii. **Psalms 115:1** — *Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, But to Your name give glory, Because of Your mercy, Because of Your truth.*

2. _____

- How can someone make a family member an idol?
- **Matthew 10:37** — *He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.*

3. Things of this world – _____

- a. **1 John 2:15–16 — 15;** *Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16; For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.*

4. Addictions - _____

- a. What are things that people can be addicted to?
- b. Should anything in our life have control over us besides God?

- i. **1 Corinthians 6:12** — *All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.*
- c. The Bible teaches it is a sin for something or someone to have control over a believer's life, as his life should only be controlled by the Lord and the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18) and not by some fleshly desire.
5. _____ **of man or the desire for approval – John 12:42-43, Acts 5:28-29**
- a. These are opposite sides of the same coin. This is succumbing to peer pressure and allowing peers to determine one's behavior. To dress, act, talk, and behave in ways to gain the approval of those around you.
- b. Is it wrong to want to be accepted by those your around?
- c. Why can this be wrong and be an idol?
- i. **John 12:42–43** — *Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; 43; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.*
- ii. **Galatians 1:10** — *For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.*
- E. Idols will never _____ - **Ecclesiastes 2:9-11, 5:10**
1. **What do you learn from King Solomon in Ecclesiastes 2:9-11, 5:10?**
- a. **Ecclesiastes 2:9–11** — *So I became great and excelled more than all who were before me in Jerusalem. Also my wisdom remained with me. 10; Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure, For my heart rejoiced in all my labor; And this was my reward from all my labor. 11; Then I looked on all the works that my hands had done And on the labor in which I had toiled; And indeed all was vanity and grasping for the wind. There was no profit under the sun.*
- b. **Ecclesiastes 5:10** — *10; He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver; Nor he who loves abundance, with increase. This also is vanity.*
2. Only God can satisfy the longing of man's heart. He created it, and He alone can satisfy it. Either people will love, worship, and serve God, or they will exchange the truth of God for a lie and worship and serve the "creature" more than the "Creator".
- F. **Reflection Questions:**
1. What false idols in your life have you found to be unable to satisfy the deep longings of your heart?
 2. What caused you to realize those idols do not satisfy?
 3. What was the remedy to break you away from false idols to the true God who alone is worthy of worship and esteem?
- G. **What do you think of the following statement? "At their root, all human problems are the result of humanity's rebellion against God and failure to live for His glory."**
1. **Sin is that which distorts and mars the glory of God. When did that begin? Genesis 1**
- a. In Genesis 1, God's perfect, glorious creation was marred by sin, like a great ink stain on a perfectly white sheet. Since then, sin has stained and marred and messed up all that is in the world. The world is now a very distorted view of the glory of God.
- b. Family turmoil, worldwide violence, heartache, pain, suffering, depression, guilt, anxiety, etc., all resulted from sin, which was an attack on the glory of God.
- c. In Revelation 21 God will restore all things to glory and what will be the result?
Revelation 21:4–5 — *And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former*

things have passed away.” 5; Then He who sat on the throne said, “Behold, I make all things new.” And He said to me, “Write, for these words are true and faithful.”

2. Every problem that you will deal with in counseling is a result of someone not giving glory to God with their lives; either that person or someone who wronged them.
3. Most Christians live defeated, empty, joyless, and anxious lives, struggling with sin, because they are not living for the glory of God. When life is not oriented toward honoring Him, the heart becomes enslaved to fear, worry, and selfish desire. True victory, joy, and peace come only as the believer submits every thought, word, and action to God’s glory (1 Cor. 10:31; Col. 3:17).

H. Salvation is restoring the glory of God in the life of a person.

1. To be saved is to give glory to God – you confess that He is Lord and you are not; you place your faith in His Son.... (Romans 10:13)
2. People stay lost because they will not glorify God with their lives
 - a. **Revelation 16:9 — 9**; *And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory.*

I. In both salvation and sanctification, we are being changed into the image of God that causes us to reflect His glory

1. **2 Corinthians 3:18** — *But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.*
2. **Romans 8:30** — *Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.*
3. **One day, the believer will be glorified in God as their bodies will reflect His “glorious” body (Phil. 3:21; Rom. 8:17; Col. 3:4; Heb. 2:10).**

III. Biblical Counseling seeks to _____ the Counselee’s life for the purpose it was created for.

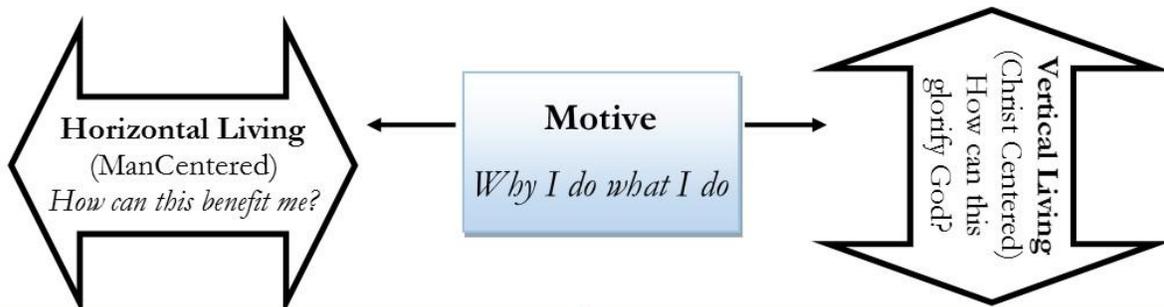
- A. When someone’s life shifts from a vertical, God-centered (theocentric) focus to a horizontal, self-centered (egocentric) focus, or others-focused, spiritual and moral disorder are the inevitable result.
- B. God has called us to live vertical lives—lives oriented toward Him. The problem is that most people live horizontally, focused on themselves rather than God (Phil. 2:21).
 - **Philippians 2:21** — *For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus.*
- C. Horizontal living is man-centered and driven by selfish desires, pride, and the passions of the flesh (Phil. 1:21; James 4:1–3), whereas vertical living is God-centered, focused on glorifying Him in every thought, word, and action (Col. 3:17; 1 Cor. 10:31).
- D. The human condition, shaped by an Adamic nature that compels man to usurp the honor belonging exclusively to God, making this constant reorientation essential.
- E. Rather than presenting Christ as a means to boost self-esteem, biblical counseling proclaims Christ as the Lamb of God whose sacrifice takes away sin, and in turn demolishes self-centered desires and produces grateful esteem for Him alone.
- F. Reflection Question:
 1. How has theocentric living affected your life versus egocentric living?
 2. What idols did you once have that once you got right with God, those idols were exposed?
- G. **The key difference between theocentric and egocentric living is primarily an issue of _____.**

1. Motive-exposing questions reveal whether a person is living for God’s glory or self by uncovering what they want, trust, fear, demand, and hope in.
2. The following are diagnostic questions to expose one’s motive (**Theocentric vs. Egocentric**)
 - a. **Questions That Expose What a Person is Living For**
 - i. What are you hoping this will give you?
 - ii. What would make this situation “right” in your eyes?
 - iii. What would success look like for you here?
 - b. **Questions That Expose Glory-Direction**
 - i. Whose approval matters most to you right now?
 - ii. What are you trying to protect—God’s honor or your own?
 - iii. What do you want others to think about you in this situation?
 - c. **Questions That Expose Ruling Desires**
 - i. What do you feel you *must* have in order to be okay?
 - ii. What do you believe you deserve here?
 - iii. What are you demanding rather than requesting from God?
 - d. **Questions That Expose Trust and Dependence**
 - i. What are you relying on to give you peace right now?
 - ii. What are you trusting to keep life from falling apart?
 - iii. Where do you turn first when things go wrong?
 - iv. What do you believe God is doing in this situation?
 - v. What would trusting God actually look like here?
 - e. **Questions That Expose Fear and Control**
 - i. What are you afraid will happen if things don’t go your way?
 - ii. What are you trying to control that God has not given you to control?
 - iii. What does your fear reveal about what you value most?
 - f. **Questions That Expose Hope and Satisfaction**
 - i. What do you believe will finally satisfy you?
 - ii. What do you think would make life feel meaningful again?
 - iii. What do you look to when you need comfort?
 - g. **Questions That Expose Obedience vs. Self-Interest**
 - i. What has God clearly commanded you to do here?
 - ii. Are you willing to obey God even if the outcome doesn’t change?
 - iii. What does denying yourself look like here (Luke 9:23)?
- H. Motives that are man-driven for man’s gain and man’s benefit are man empowered, man-blessed, and man honoring. Motives that are driven by the glory of God – receive the blessings of God and glorify God.
- I. **What in our life should we not be motivated to do for the glory of God?**
 1. What should wives be motivated to submit to and honor their husbands (Ephesians 5:22)?
 2. What should be the husband’s motive to love their wives (Ephesians 5:25)?
 3. Why should children obey their parents (Eph.6:1)?
 4. Who should be center in why parents raise their children correctly (Eph.6:4)?
 5. What should be the employees motive for how they work? (Eph. 6:5-7)?
 - a. Does your work ethic reflect a motive that is vertical or horizontal?
 - b. Why is this important to do?
 - c. How can having the right motive help when frustrations arise at work?
- J. Man’s great problems in life are a result of not living for the glory of God.

K. Nothing will bless man’s life more than living for God’s glory (Luke 17:12-18; Luke 2:14).

Horizontal living – Man is the motive; I get man’s best; Man is honored

Vertical living – God is my motive; I get God’s best; God is glorified



Horizontal living <i>“How can this benefit me?”</i>	Vertical living <i>“How can this glorify God.”</i>
I want my spouse to get saved...go to Church...live for Jesus so we have a better marriage. (These are good things, but who is the motive?)	I want my spouse to get saved...go to Church...live for Jesus so God is glorified in their life.
I want my kids to get good grades, succeed on the ball team, behave well, and grow up to be successful in the workforce. (these are good things, but what is your motive?)	I want my kids to be good students who study and do their best, who honor Christ on the ball field, who grow up and become all that God wants them to become.
I want to quit smoking, drinking, eating unhealthy, etc. because it is bad for my health and will save me money. (These are great benefits of changing your lifestyle, but who is the motive?)	I want to quit smoking, drinking, eating unhealthy, because I don’t want anything to have control and power over me except Christ; I want God to be glorified and nothing else to have control over me.
Horizontal living is man-centered living, it makes man the motive; it gets the best man can produce, and man gets the glory.	Vertical living is Christ-centered living, it makes glorifying God the motive, it gets God’s best in life, and God gets the glory.
When we live so that we get what we want (even if they are good things) we make ourselves and our desires the motives. Then people are trying to get God on board with their desires and if God doesn’t answer their prayers and produces the blessings they expect they get angry with God. This is the result of horizontal living. These are all good things we can want in life, but if we make them our motive, we are making them an idol in our hearts. These are all blessings that God can give the believer but they cannot be our motive or else we are living for ourselves.	When we submit all we have, whether our relationships, families, children, future, money, time, jobs, struggles with sin, etc; when we seek to glorify God in all areas of our lives we will see the blessings of God in our lives. We get God’s best in our lives (James 1:17) and God will be glorified in all we do because His glory is our motive. When you live for the glory of God the “motives” of horizontal living will often become the “blessings” of Vertical living. But we cannot make those blessings our motive (I Cor. 10:31).

What in your life do you need to transfer from horizontal living to vertical living?



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