



Biblical Counseling Class - ACBC Counseling Exam

Week 5 Spring 2026

Counseling Exam Question 2: Describe at least six biblical strategies to develop a caring relationship with your counselees. Clearly identify each strategy and ground its use in specific passages of Scripture, explaining its practical utility in building a relationship.

Build the relationship/ Build involvement –

1 Thess 2:7-8, *But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. Only the gospel of God desires of you, we were ready to die for you because you had become very dear to us.*

Philippians 1:8 – *For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.*

2 Cor. 1:3-7 - *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. 5 For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ. 6 But if we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; or if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which is effective in the patient enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer; 7 and our hope for you is firmly grounded, knowing that as you are sharers of our sufferings, so also you are sharers of our comfort.*

Ephesians 4:15-16 - *but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.*

Do you care about me? Can I trust you? Can you help me find answers? When they know you care about them, they will begin to trust you.



What are some ways we can communicate to our people that we do love and care for them?

1. Listening well– Listen actively and intently before advising (Prov 18:13). Being able to repeat back to the counselee in your own words what you are hearing the person say but letting the counselee correct you if you are getting it wrong. “It seems like I’m hearing you say....”. Keep asking questions specific to your counselees; ask follow-up questions that show you’re listening. By listening intently, you may help them to isolate and define the problem to develop a clear direction. Your nonverbal communication transmits to your counselee your attitude in hearing them and toward them and their problems.

S-O-L-V-E-R –

Squared posture towards them – face them directly, not looking at them from the side or making them turn their heads to look at you.

Open stance/posture – not hunched over or tightened up. You can cross legs, but relaxed.

Lean forward slightly – lean forward a little and then back up and repeat.

Vocal quality - volume and intensity that is neither abrasive nor hard to hear because it reflects tenderness and compassion.

Eye contact - without staring so that they are uncomfortable.

Relational posture - not stiff or robotic, but not so totally relaxed that you appear to be bored.

Proverbs 18: 13, 15.

13 He who gives an answer before he hears, It is folly and shame to him.

15 The mind of the prudent acquires knowledge, And the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.

17 The first to plead his case seems right, until another comes and examines him.

2. Tell me your story – This sends a message to the counselee that you care about who they are as a person and what life has been like for them and how those experiences have shaped life. Scripture is full of life stories—including Jesus’ story! Ask clarifying questions about their story. Ask questions about them that draws the person out. Use your own personal experiences that show them they are not alone or the only



ones who ever struggle. Taking the person's problems seriously communicates respect. Never minimize the problems presented by the person. Maintain confidentiality. Guard the person's reputation as much as possible without disobeying God (Matthew 18:16-17). Jesus gives a model example with Bartimaeus – "*What do you want me to do for you?*" (Mark 10:46-52)

Proverbs 20:5 - A plan in the heart of a person is like deep water, but a person of understanding draws it out.

3. Love deeply by being kind and sacrificially – Love one another is among the most often repeated command of the New Testament. Be a servant in considering the other as more important than yourselves (Phil. 2:1-5). Our Lord has a servant attitude and we are called to imitate Him. Being humble helps us not have a critical attitude toward others. We must put on humility and identify not as someone who has arrived, but as a fellow Pilgrim walking alongside them down the same road. We must possess a caring demeanor. Must be gentle. Apply the Golden Rule – Ask yourself how you would like to be treated if you were the counselee? Grieve with the hurting, rejoice with the victorious. Welcome the person's input. Ask for evaluation of sessions and suggestions regarding improvements.

1 Cor. 13:7 - Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Matt. 7:12; - Rom 12:10, 15; 1 Cor 4:7; 13:7; 2 Cor 1:3; Eph. 4:1-3; Phil 2:1-6; 3:12. Col. 3:12-13.

4. Giving hope – Christ is the Great Counselor (John 14:16), and the Holy Spirit is at work in the counseling room (Philippians 2:20-21). Biblical counseling is not about the counselor or the counselee; it is about the Word and Spirit of God. If your counseling is hope giving, based on Christ, the Spirit, and the Word of God, it will be encouraging, and therefore, your counselee will want to be with you and share their heart with you. Giving hope means you have hope and confidence in God's Word and promises and presence and you share that with them. Give good *hope-giving* homework as well. Scripture has answers for their problem. Show them in Scripture how God addresses them and their problems and how He promises to be with them through it and how to overcome it. Explain to them that their own faith in their Savior enables them to be an Overcomer of their trials (1 John 5:4-5). Psalm 146:5-9; 1 Cor. 13:7; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 1 Thess 5:11.

5. Speak truth in love - Biblical counseling is direct counseling. Our brothers and sisters need to be encouraged and often helped or carried along the way in their



struggle to overcome. They need the truth as God's Word gives it and as we as God's people, illumined by the Holy Spirit, can provide it. The truth must never be withheld in trying to protect feelings of the counselee, but it can be delivered in love and with hope. Loving confrontation is seen in Matthew 18:15 and Galatians 6:1. It is unloving to not tell the truth and allow a counselee to continue down a path of sin or error just because we are afraid to speak the truth. Prov 27:6,9; Matthew 18:15; Galatians 6:1-10; Eph 4:15; 1 Cor 13:1-3; 2 Cor 1:3-7.

6. Pray specifically with them and for them – Open and close your sessions with prayer. Try and pray specifically for the counselee in the closing prayer with some of what you learned in the session. After some time, ask the counselee to open or close in prayer as appropriate. Thank them for praying. Ask them how you can pray for them in between sessions. Matt 6:5-13; Colossians 1:9-10; 4:12-13; James 1:5-8.

7. Be available - Follow-up with them with a text, email, or phone call if necessary, between sessions. 1 Thess 2:8, 9; 5:13b-22..

Key Resources:

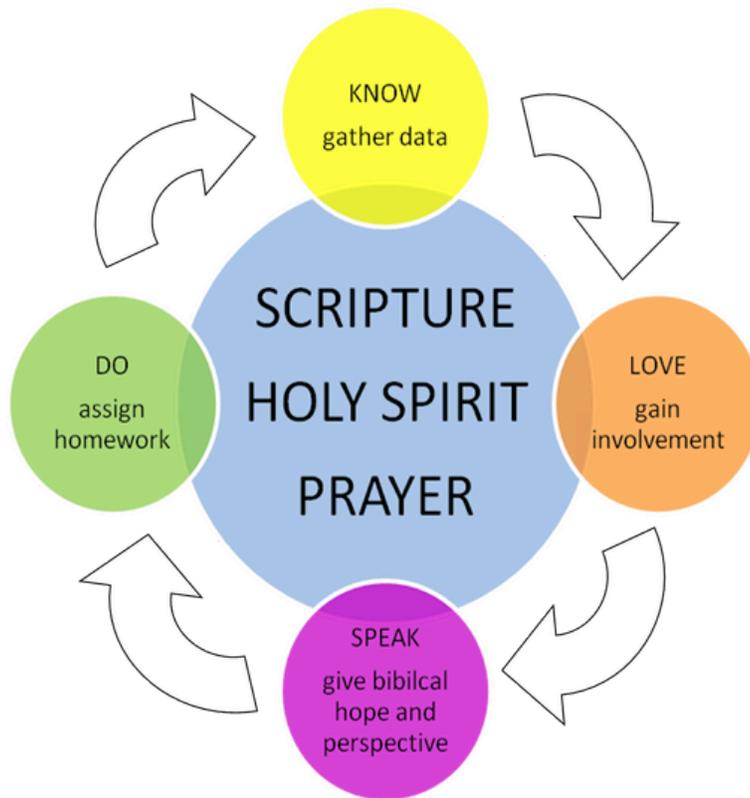
Jay Adams, *The Christian Counselor's Manual* (Zondervan, 1986), 159, 226-227.

Wayne Mack, "Developing a Helping Relationship with Counselees" in John MacArthur, ed., *Counseling: How to Counsel Biblically* (Thomas Nelson, 2005), 101-113.

Jeremy Pierre & Mark Shaw, "The Nature of the Biblical Counseling Relationship," in James MacDonald, Bob Kellemen, & Steve Viars, eds., *Christ Centered Biblical Counseling*, (Harvest House, 2013), 309-323.

Paul Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands* (P&R, 2002), chs. 7-8.

I. This is part of the counseling process in which we may demonstrate the development of a caring relationship. All the above can be demonstrated in the counseling process from building and gaining involvement, gathering data, speaking the truth in love, identifying and discerning problems biblically, loving confrontation, biblical instruction through counseling, assigning homework, and reviewing homework.





II. Building a caring relationship and gaining involvement with our counselees is demonstrated in how we get to know them and ask questions and sincerely show our care and interest in them.

P-R-E-A-C-H - Proverbs 18:15 - *The mind of the discerning acquires knowledge, And the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.*

P - Physical information - Our physical life affects our spiritual life. Sleep, diet, exercise, illness, medication.

R - Resources: What resources are available to the person that can help the process of counseling? Church, education, social/family,

E - Emotions: Expressions of emotions are an indicator of what is going on in the heart.

"but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell. 6 Then the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? 7 If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you

do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it. (Genesis 4:1-8).

A - Actions: Are the actions of the person in line with God's Word. (Ps. 1:1-3, Ps. 34:12-14, Lk. 6:46-49. James. 1:22, 25 - *But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.*

C - Concepts: What are the thoughts and intentions of the heart of the person (Hebrews 4:12)? These are the concepts by which he lives (convictions, attitudes, expectations, desires, values). Without changed concepts (renewing of minds), change in the counselee's life will only be temporary/hypocritical. (Mark 7:18-23, Romans 12:1-2, Galatians 5:16-21, Ephesians 4:22-24).

H - Historical information: Gather information about present and past life context without an obsession about what has happened in the past. Past experiences may shape us and even be a good reason for how we think and respond (fear, intimidation, people-pleasing). BUT, it does not identify the sanctifying Christian and is not an excuse to stay in difficulty. (Proverbs 5:22-23, Colossians 3:21, 1 Peter 1:18).



III. As you work through learning about and getting to know your person and building involvement and a caring relationship, you will begin working through the process to hopefully uncover the following in your sessions:

Trials: Circumstances, situations, problems.

Fruit: You will be considering observable manifestations, evidence, emotional affect, responses, feelings (objective presentation and performance levels).

Root: Don't ignore desires, motivations, beliefs, obsessions, values, inner man heart issues (subjective preconditioning level).

Cross: What does the person know about God, and where does He fit into the person's fruit and root?