



**BCF Biblical Discipleship/Counseling
Training Philosophy**

OBJECTIVE OF BIBLICAL DISCIPLESHIP/COUNSELING TRAINING

The Lord has directed those who comprise the core team of writers and trainers in the Biblical Counseling Foundation to develop a biblical discipleship/counseling training program based strictly on the complete authority and sufficiency of the Scriptures.

God has provided everything pertaining to life and godliness (*II Peter 1:3*), and He has made it possible for every believer to be completely adequate to the task of biblical discipleship/counseling (*Romans 15:14*). He has provided the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit as the only resources needed for guidance and support (*John 14:26; II Corinthians 1:3-4; II Timothy 3:16-17*). Therefore, the objective of all BCF training is to teach students to rely wholly on the Holy Spirit and Scriptures, both for personal living and for helping others.



The goal of the training program is not to produce "professional" counselors, but to conduct training within the setting of the local church to prepare all believers to disciple/counsel others in a variety of settings.

WHAT IS MEANT BY THE TERM *DISCIPLESHIP/COUNSELING*?

The training materials use compound terms such as *discipleship/counseling*, *discipler/counselor*, and *disciple/counselee*. This purposeful redundancy is intended to be a continuing reminder to view biblical discipleship/counseling as one ministry — not separate and distinct ministries often referred to as *discipleship* and *counseling*.

The world has borrowed the term "counseling" from the Bible, distorted its meaning, and now claims that the church should not use it. At the same time, the church has distorted the term *discipleship* to exclude counseling. As a result, believers who seek counsel for serious problems often are reluctant to ask for help from someone who has only had training in discipleship. They view counseling as very specialized and complex, so they look for someone who has been certified as a professional counselor.

The Bible describes discipleship as much broader and deeper than the "discipleship" that is often practiced today. Jesus specified in *Matthew 28:19-20* that His disciples were to "...go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded." Jesus made it clear that, in addition to presenting the Gospel, making disciples includes teaching believers to observe *all* that He taught about how to live victoriously.

The command to disciple includes all aspects of personal ministry to others. As described and practiced by the writers of Scripture, biblical discipleship involves evangelizing, baptizing, teaching, admonishing, instructing, comforting, encouraging, restoring, strengthening, reproofing, rebuking, and exhorting others to follow a biblical pattern of life (*based on Matthew 28:19-20; Romans 15:14; II Corinthians 1:4; Galatians 6:1; I Thessalonians 3:2; II Timothy 4:2; Hebrews 10:24*).

Helping someone to face, deal with, and endure even the most serious of problems or circumstances in a manner that pleases God is not a complicated or mysterious process. It is merely a matter of helping him to walk by the Holy Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (*Galatians 5:16-25*). When a person is walking by the Holy Spirit, he has complete victory in dealing with and enduring the tests and trials of life. He does not experience sinful anxiety, fear, anger, depression, or any of the other debilitating problems so common today.

THE BASIC APPROACH TO TRAINING

Believers must be prepared to provide in-depth biblical discipleship to others within the local church, family, work relationships, friendships, and in either organized training ministries or informal settings. At times, ministry may take place in a one-on-one setting such as at lunch in a restaurant when a person asks for help.

On the other hand, it is profitable to involve a team of two or three people to disciple/counsel if possible. A team can sharpen one another's discipleship/counseling skills (*based on Proverbs 27:17*). Team discipleship/counseling protects all involved against false accusations



from disgruntled disciples/couselees. Accusations can be evaluated by others present (*Deuteronomy 19:15*). Perhaps, most significantly, team discipleship/counseling provides training opportunities for less experienced members to observe the example of the more trained members. The disciples learned much about discipleship by observing Jesus

before they ever went out on their own.

In order to provide thorough training as well as to build in flexibility to meet a variety of discipleship/counseling needs, the BCF training program begins with an emphasis on a solid structure. It then exposes the student progressively to a variety of new situations as the student gains confidence. As a result, the training can then be adapted to informal, personal, or church ministry.

THE EMPHASIS OF THE TRAINING IS ON *HOW* TO DISCIPLE/COUNSEL

The emphasis is on *how* to disciple/counsel through a practical application of biblical truths and principles. Training in discipleship/counseling cannot be accomplished effectively in the classroom only. Telling is not enough; discipleship/counseling must be demonstrated and practiced. Jesus provides us the pattern for discipleship/counseling training. His training of the disciples was accomplished in five recognizable phases.

1

First, He told the disciples *what* and *why*. Jesus said, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men (*Mark 1:17*)." He not only told them what he wanted them to do, but he also told them why. In the Scriptures, whenever God gave a commandment, He normally also gave a reason for the commandment. In the same way, you must be careful to explain thoroughly from the Scriptures why those you are discipling should be involved in whatever activity you are introducing.

2

Second, He *showed them how*. He traveled throughout Palestine ministering to people as the disciples followed and watched (*Mark 3:20-6:6*). Jesus set the example. He did not expect them to do something that He didn't do.

3

Third, Jesus *got them started* by commissioning them and sending them out two by two (*Mark 6:7-13*). Disciples might be highly motivated and have carefully observed how to minister, but that does not get them started. This may be a difficult step especially if there is a fear of failure.

4

Fourth, He *encouraged and exhorted them to keep on* ministering. He gave the disciples help with their questions and difficulties (*based on Mark 6:45 and following*). This is often the hardest part of discipleship. Consider how many times Jesus had to correct the disciples and teach them the same things repetitively. So many times he chided them for not learning from previous experiences.

5

Fifth, He commissioned them to *disciple (train) others* (*Matthew 28:19-20*). Passing on to someone else what you have learned is really the proof of your learning. You recognize that you have learned something well when you teach it.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BCF TRAINING PHILOSOPHY

Following the example of Jesus, BCF has developed five levels of training.

Level I *What and why.* The foundational course, Self-Confrontation, provides 105 biblical principles for living a victorious life in facing, dealing with, and enduring the trials and challenges of life.

Level II *Show them how.* The second course introduces biblical discipleship/counseling and includes 31 additional biblical principles on how to disciple/counsel others. The training includes role-plays in which the student practices discipleship/counseling under close supervision.

Level III *Get them started.* The third course continues the training by introducing multiple disciple/counselees and the entire discipleship/counseling process.

Level IV *Keep them going.* The fourth level of training provides the student experience in actual discipleship/counseling meetings.

Level V *Disciple (train) others.* Level V consists primarily of training the student to lead in a local discipleship/counseling training ministry.



For a description of the BCF training courses, see the **BCF BIBLICAL DISCIPLESHIP/COUNSELING TRAINING COURSES**.

It is our fervent hope that this training will help pastors, Christian leaders, and all others in the Body of Christ to meet the pressing needs of this generation and that, in turn, they will bear the fruit of the victorious and overcoming Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Other informational brochures and publications about the ministry of the Biblical Counseling Foundation include:

- “Last Days” - Introduction to BCF Brochure
 - Materials & Resources Brochure
 - Training Courses Brochure
 - *Standing Firm* newsletter

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