

6 Biblical Counseling Convictions: Shortened Version

By Bob Kellemen and [RPM Ministries](#), © 2023

A Word from Bob

You're reading a [shortened version](#) of an earlier post. For the more robust version, go here: [6 Biblical Counseling Convictions](#).

A 16-Word Description of My Model of Biblical Counseling

On my Twitter (now known as X) [profile](#), and on my [Facebook Gospel-Centered Biblical Counseling Group](#), I have the following profile-size, 16-word summary of my convictions about biblical counseling. As biblical counselors we seek to be:

- *Gospel-Centered, Theologically-Saturated, Relationship-Focused, Church History-Informed, Research-Aware Soul Physicians of Embodied-Souls*

Conviction #1: *Gospel-Centered* Biblical Counseling

My Conviction: It is my conviction that we must build our model of biblical counseling on the gospel of Christ's grace (John 1:14; John 8:31-32; John 10:10; John 14:6; John 17:17; Romans 1:16-17; Galatians 1:6-9; Colossians 1:3-2:23; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3).

My Conviction (Wording from the [Biblical Counseling Coalition Confessional Statement](#)): It is my conviction that wise counseling centers on Jesus Christ—His sinless life, death on the cross, burial, resurrection, present reign, and promised return. Through the Gospel, God reveals the depths of sin, the scope of suffering, and the breadth, length, height, and depth of grace. We point people to a person, Jesus our Redeemer, and not to a program, theory, or experience.

Conviction #2: *Theologically-Saturated* Biblical Counseling

My Conviction: It is my conviction that before we seek to be research-informed or research-aware, we must first be theologically-saturated and theologically-informed (Colossians 1:15-23; Colossians 2:2-15).

My Conviction: It is my conviction that God's sufficient, authoritative, rich, robust, relevant, inerrant Word provides all we need to build our prescriptive biblical counseling theology of people (Creation) problems (Fall), and solutions (Redemption and Consummation) (Romans 15:14; Philippians 1:9-11; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3).

Conviction #3: Relationship-Focused Biblical Counseling

My Conviction: It is my conviction that truly biblical counseling must embody truth-in-love. Because the greatest commandment (Matthew 22:35-40) is to love God and others, the goal of our counseling is Christlike love (2 Corinthians 1:3-9; 2 Corinthians 6:11-13; Galatians 4:19; Ephesians 4:15; Ephesians 5:1-2; Philippians 1:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 2:7-8; 1 Timothy 1:5).

My Conviction: It is my conviction that at times biblical counseling can become “truth-only counseling” where the counselor “teaches at” the counselee. According to passages such as Matthew 22:35-40; 2 Corinthians 1:3-9; 2 Corinthians 6:11-13; Galatians 4:19; Ephesians 4:15; Ephesians 5:1-2; Philippians 1:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 2:7-8; 1 Timothy 1:5; God calls us as biblical counselors to exhibit and express Christlike shepherding love as we relate soul-to-soul with our counselees.

Conviction #4: Church History-Informed

My Conviction: It is my conviction that comprehensive, compassionate biblical counseling is best developed when we listen to that great cloud of historical Christian witnesses who teach us how the church has always applied gospel truth in Christlike love to sustain, heal, reconcile, and guide saints who face suffering and battle against sin on their sanctification journey (Deuteronomy 32:7; Jeremiah 6:16; Romans 14:19; Romans 15:14; 1 Thessalonians 5:11, 14; 2 Thessalonians 3:15; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 12:1).

My Conviction: It is my conviction that biblical counseling is weakened when it is built predominantly upon one biblical word, any one individual’s views, any one group’s perspective, any one culture, or any one era of church history. Today’s biblical counselors would demonstrate wisdom and humility by learning from historical biblical counseling which began with the Old Testament, continued throughout the New Testament, and has a 2,000-year history from the early church to the church today (Genesis 1-3; Psalms 1; Proverbs 1; Isaiah 9:6; John 14:6; Acts 20:20; Revelation 7:9; see also my word study mini-series on [parakaletic biblical counseling](#)).

Conviction #5: Research-Aware

My Conviction: It is my conviction—based upon theological categories such as common grace, the *imago Dei*, the Creation/Cultural mandate, the noetic effect of sin, natural revelation, special revelation, total depravity, a biblical theology of the role and place of science and research—that awareness of research findings can provide potentially helpful contributions (secondarily to Scripture and assessed under the lens of Scripture) to our understanding of the impact of various physical, cultural, and societal experiences in our fallen world of sin and suffering, tragedy and trauma (Genesis 1:26-28; Psalm 19:1-14; Romans 1:18-25; Romans 2:14-15; Romans 3:1-23; Hebrews 1:1-3; 1 Peter 3:8-22).

My Conviction: It is my conviction, as described in the [Biblical Counseling Coalition Confessional Statement](#), that “when we say that Scripture is comprehensive in wisdom, we mean that the Bible makes sense of all things, not that it contains all the information people could ever know about all topics. God’s common grace brings many good things to human life. However, common grace cannot save us from our struggles with sin or from the troubles that beset us. Common grace cannot sanctify or cure the soul of all that ails the human condition. We affirm that numerous sources (such as scientific research, organized observations about human behavior, those we counsel, reflection on our own life experience, literature, film, and history) can contribute to our knowledge of people, and many sources can contribute some relief for the troubles of life. However, none can constitute a comprehensive system of counseling principles and practices.”

Conviction #6: Soul Physicians of Embodied-Souls

My Conviction: It is my conviction that biblical counselors are soul physicians of embodied-souls, and thus, truly comprehensive and compassionate biblical counseling must understand the Bible’s Creation, Fall, Redemption, Consummation teaching on the complex interrelationship of body and soul (embodied-soul), and can benefit from awareness of neuroscience research assessed under the lens of Scripture (see: [112 Biblical Passages on Being Embodied-Souls](#)).

My Conviction: It is my conviction that biblical counselors—as under-shepherds (Genesis 1:26-28)—will develop and follow a “theological anthropology”—a rich and robust biblical understanding of embodied-souls that leads to relevant and practical counseling that ministers to people comprehensively—as relational (spiritual, social, self-aware), rational, volitional, emotional, and physical beings—embodied-souls.

My Conviction: It is my conviction that biblical counselors—as under-scientists (Genesis 1:26-28)—will use the lens of God’s sufficient Scriptures to carefully assess and evaluate neuroscience research regarding the brain/body connection and then will potentially discerningly implement interventions that specifically address our embodied nature.

Your Thoughts

How would you word and summarize your convictions about biblical counseling?

If you had ten-to-twenty words to describe your model of biblical counseling, what would your description be?

Where do you agree or disagree with any of my biblical counseling convictions from this post?