

Capstone Essay

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## Capstone Essay

The focus of the coursework in BBLC 101 Introduction to Counseling: Biblical Soul Care has been provisional of the foundational curriculum for Life Coaching and Biblical Counseling by presenting methods, theories, principles, and utilization approaches for practice and ministry. The content found within the body of this paper will serve to demonstrate comprehension of the course materials and content, as well as theoretical application techniques and skills learned to utilize in both coaching and Biblical counseling.

### **Module One**

#### **BBLC101 Introduction to Counseling: Biblical Soul Care**

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In Module One of this course, the concept that most impacted me in regards to thinking, understanding and usability, is that of the Attachment Models. I chose this theory of thought, as I believe it will guide me as I deal with different individuals with various backgrounds and histories, helping me to know where they are coming from, what needs to be accomplished, and the goal that desires to be met. The Attachment Theory is a theory of relationships and is linked to relational beliefs of the individual. In that we were created for relationship with God and others, this theory of thought gives us the ability to articulate how relationships demonstrate themselves in our lives through relationship styles, whether they be for good or bad. According to Dr. Tim Clinton (2015) these relationship styles will more evidently demonstrate themselves “during stress and/or duress” (p.40).

#### **Attachment Style Defined**

There are four (4) classifications of Attachment Styles, as follows:

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Avoidant – Overinflated view of self and poor view of others. This style prevents others from coming in to another’s world, as they are closed off and do not allow others access. It is difficult to have relationship with this individual, as authentic intimacy is a challenge.

Ambivalent – Overinflated view of others (i.e. “Life’s all about you,”) and a very poor view of self. Performer. Pleaser. Seeking affirmation and praise from others.

Disorganized – Poor view of both self and others. Negative perspective. Source of comfort is often source of pain. Insecure (i.e., “Will you be there for me?”).

Secure – Balanced perspective of self and others; resilient. Clinton states (2015), “... when life delivers its blows, there’s this ability to make your way through and continue to love and be loved...they believe they are worthy of love.” (p. 52)

### **Real Life Utilization and Implementation**

Through identification and gaining further understanding of the Attachment Style Theory and understanding the challenges associated with each style, during the counseling journey, I believe greater understanding of personal processing, understanding, reactions and hesitations of the individuals would bring a greater level of effectiveness in guiding them through the process of developing healthy, secure attachments, ultimately affecting their relationships with themselves and others.

In couples counseling, for instance if “Tom” and “Carrie” continually experienced challenges in conflict management, communication and understanding of issues, as well as intimacy, appropriately identifying and bringing a greater understanding of these styles would help both the counselor, as well as the couple, in moving forward in future communications and conflict, as well as help to guide them in personal growth.

### **Module Two**

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During this module, Dr. Clinton presented a “Model for Breaking Free,” and finding a path to restoration, during which he communicated perspective on how people can go from “fresh faith” to “utter addiction and chaos in their life” (2015) using “The ‘A’ Model” (p.60). I have chosen to expound on this model, as I believe it brings understanding and empathy, as well as the ability to be used as a tool in helping others identify and break free of lies and misconceptions which they have mistakenly believed.

In the presentation, Dr. Clinton recalled the story of an individual whom God had used in his life in a very significant way in the past. Upon unexpectedly encountering the man, Clinton was taken aback as to how bitter and changed he had become. This example led to the explanation of different ways people can spiral from a place of great faith to addiction in their lives.

### **The “A” Model Defined**

Assaulted – Individuals can be assaulted with very real and overwhelming issues in life, resulting in a great loss of joy, from challenges involving money, relationship and marriage issues, ministry challenges, problems with children, etc., that begins to confuse and blind the individual in the pain. Anger – Although a “God-given emotion given to respond to a real or perceived wrongdoing or injustice in my life,” (Clinton, 2015, p. 64), anger can arise to levels where sin results. Perspective is skewed.

Anxiety – A fear response. Everything is exaggerated. A clear reality is difficult to perceive.

Aloneness – Clinton makes the declaration that “Hell loves to get you alone.” In that God is social in his orientation, He has created man to be the same. When individuals are experiencing great “aloneness,” they are prey to the enemy.

Alienation – Gives place to paranoia, where the individual begins to “see or attribute things to others that aren’t even there. They start feeling that everyone is against them.” (Clinton, 2015, p.69). Alienation can lead to depression, which can also involve arrogance, as life becomes all about the individual.

Adulteries of the Heart – As the downward spiral continues, and the heart cry for relationship is not realized, the person can begin to abuse a substance or a relationship, reaching for something “instead of that relationship or way of life that has gone awry.” (Clinton, 2015, p. 72). This can involve substances, affairs, pseudo-spirituality, etc. However, the soul continues to be unsatisfied.

### **Real Life Utilization and Implementation**

In the “real world”, I can see myself applying these insights in two different ways: First, in the realm of viewing someone’s condition or unhealthy journey through a filter of empathy and compassion, as it is certainly easy for anyone to journey down this path. None of us are completely immune.

Secondly, I believe these insights could be used as a tool to help someone understand how they “got here,” helping to disable shame and self-hatred, and promote the reception of compassion, forgiveness and grace that only Jesus can give.

If “Susan” presented with very real-life issues, having gone from a woman of security and faith, to disillusionment, isolation and bitterness, helping her understanding how she got there would disarm shame, as well as give her an understanding of the growth and health that are

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available, and the ability through God's strength, power and forgiveness, to move forward in her life to a place of freedom and joy.

### **Module Three**

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The technique that I wish to present for Module Three is the REACH model of forgiveness, as mentioned in the lecture by Everett Worthington, Jr., Ph.D. I have chosen this technique, as I believe it would be both effective and useful in helping couples both understand the different aspects of forgiveness, as well as give them a model to use and implement in the actual extension and practice of forgiveness.

#### **The REACH Model Defined**

The REACH Model of forgiveness is a research-supported, evidenced-based tool to use in couples counseling, specifically in regards to forgiveness. The REACH acrostic is as follows:

R – Recall the hurt in an empathic way;

E – Emotionally replace negative emotions with positive emotions through empathy, sympathy, compassion and/or love;

A – Give Altruistic (undeserved) forgiveness;

C – Commit to the forgiveness you experience;

H – Hold onto forgiveness whenever you doubt that you have forgiven.

In the lecture, it was suggested when first using this model with a couple, to choose an event to work through that occurred before the couple ever met, as this diffuses emotion a bit as the technique is practiced and learned.

#### **Real Life Utilization and Implementation**

I do believe the REACH model would be both doable and relevant in counseling couples, helping them to learn how to both forgive, and continue practicing forgiveness. The authentic, as well as positive affirmation aspects of the model (R and E) should prove to bring both a sense of vulnerability and authenticity, as issues or hurts are identified in a safe and hopeful environment.

The focus on the last three letters (A, C and H) brings with it the aspect of forgiveness, offers structure and direction, as well as a renewed commitment to “do things God’s way.” These truths also bring an element of humility into the situation, as a reminder that we must forgive as Christ has forgiven us.

If I were working with a couple (Tom and Carrie), I would introduce the REACH model, then would attempt to facilitate working with them to understand, embrace and practice each directive, first by bringing understanding; secondly by working through a specific situation; then thirdly by routinely assessing progress during further sessions, as forgiveness will continued to be needed and practiced on most assuredly a regular basis. I would then follow-up in next appointments with how this played out in real life, as they practiced this new model, trouble shooting and bringing clarity to areas needed. Although these steps may seem awkward in the beginning, I believe with repeated practice, they can be effectively and naturally utilized as situations arise.

#### **Module Four**

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During Module Four, as a result of Dr. Tan’s lecture, specifically regarding the role of the Holy Spirit in Counseling, I was both humbly and profoundly confronted and reminded of the need of the Holy Spirit’s presence and power within every aspect of my life, especially when

working with others in the pursuit of spiritual health, wholeness, healing and growth. This overall truth and concept are what impacted me the most. This is why I chose to discuss this concept for week four.

### **Three Major Areas of the Spirit's Ministry Defined**

During the lecture, Dr. Tan described the three major areas of the Spirit's ministry and work in the context of Christian counseling and psychotherapy as including: The Spirit's power and gifts; The Spirit's truth; The Spirit's fruit. Dr. Tan went on to describe different aspects of each in greater detail.

Without the Holy Spirit's presence, power and gifts, we are left to our own devices, which in our humanness, will not take us very far. We are in great need of the Holy Spirit's power for discernment, enabling us to quickly and accurately discern the client's need and challenge, accompanied by the Holy Spirit's deposit of specific and relevant words of both wisdom and knowledge, enabling us to pass on these revelations to the client. Through prayer, discussion of Scripture, and exploration and discovery of spiritual issues, the atmosphere is presented for the Holy Spirit to give direction and guidance to both the counselor as well as the counselee. These "aha" moments cannot be manufactured, but only revealed by the power of the Holy Spirit, through revelation of His truth, which will never contradict Scripture.

True transformation can only occur within counseling by the power, grace and mercy of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the only One who can transform a heart or bring divine revelation. Therefore, without the presence of the Holy Spirit, heart change is impossible, as changes would be solely behavioral. When this transformation occurs, we see evidence of the Spirit's Fruit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and

self-control. Only the Holy Spirit can cause this powerful transformation, resulting in a changed life and heart that produces this glorious fruit.

### **Real Life Utilization and Implementation**

Taking all of the above into consideration, the way this would take place in a “real world” situation would be up to me in each and every counseling encounter. Have I prepared my heart? Have I gone before God, confessed my sins, and asked the Holy Spirit for His personal transformation in my own life? Have I prayed for and with those who I will be counseling? Have I invited the Holy Spirit into the counseling session in prayer with the client when they arrive? Have I asked the Holy Spirit for wisdom, discernment and understanding? Have I allowed the client to participate in this process as well?

### **Module Five**

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In the Fifth Module, I was greatly impressed with the presentation by Dr. Mark Laaser and Debbie Laaser, specifically in regards to the Theory of Couple Development and the Stages of Couple Development, the over-arching concept being that the development of becoming a “couple” is a lengthy process, especially when addictive behavior is an aspect of one or both. I have chosen this concept, as I believe the stages, or journey, that it describes is both helping to the identification of the issues, as well as understanding and implementation of future goals.

#### **Stages of Couple Development Defined**

Becoming a couple doesn't begin with dating, or even engagement or marriage, but rather as a result of time and growth, working through the following five (5) stages:

Stage One – Enmeshment: Commonly known as infatuation. This stage is accompanied by heightened adrenaline. Each individual's histories are mostly hidden at this stage.

Stage Two – Autonomy: Pre-stage to relationship. This is where “reality” can begin to set in. The person with the addiction does well at hiding their struggle. However, the adrenaline of infatuation, which is appealing to every addict, begins to wax and wane, resulting in some of the struggle returning.

Stage Three – Differentiation: Reclaim who we are as an individual with our own differences, while still maintaining a relationship. Stage Four - Practicing: Where each member of the couple practices ways of coping with pain of loneliness, numbness, issues, etc.

Stage Five – Mutual Interdependence: Ability to be alone and content, while choosing to be in the relationship, as it is something the individual desires, not because they cannot function or even thrive without the relationship but because they choose to be in the relationship. This is the final goal.

### **Real Life Utilization and Implementation**

In counseling couples, specifically those with addiction, as well as emotional maturity issues, I believe that these stages present a “journey” opportunity which brings both understanding and the opportunity to set goals, ultimately resulting in greater health and wholeness for the individual, as well as the couple.

Once again, if Tom and Carrie presented with issues that fit into this category, when the time is appropriate, I would first lead and guide them through understanding of the different stages, and where they currently fit in the spectrum. I would then help lead and guide them becoming both healthier individuals and a couple, celebrating along the way when a new stage is

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reached. We could also use the Stages as an opportunity to “check in” for progress, challenges, trouble-shooting and clarification.

References

Clinton, T., (2015). PD171 Biblical Soul Care. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

For more information about all elements of APA formatting, please consult the *APA Style Manual, 6th Edition*.