

Presuppositions of Biblical Counseling

Dr. Stuart Scott

A 'presupposition' is a preceding condition that's necessary if you're going to understand what follows.

So what are some of the Presuppositions of Biblical Counseling? Or what are some of the conditions that you need to have in place in order to really understand biblical counseling?

Dr. Stuart Scott – professor of biblical counseling at Southern Seminary – lists the following presuppositions:

- I. The God of the Bible is the Sovereign **Creator** and **Sustainer** of the universe.
 - A. God will not allow anything to come into our lives which is beyond our control that will permanently damage or hinder His best for our lives. I Cor.10:13; Phil.1:6; Rom.8:28-29; I Thess.5:18; Lam.3:37; Jas.1:2; Eph.1:11
 - B. There is a **redemptive** value in every problem. God can use it for our **good**. God is far more concerned about our **character** than He is in removing the problem. Our character has value in this life and for eternity. Phil.2:13; Jude 24; Eph.3:20; I Tim.4:7-9
- II. Man was created in God's image as a **responsible** being. One cannot make **excuses** before his Creator. Gen.1:26-27; II Cor.5:10; Rev.20:11-15; Ezk.18:2ff. * If one does not act responsibly, there will be emotional consequences.
- III. Sin is thinking or acting **independently** of God and results in both temporal and eternal misery. God's laws are not optional for Christian and non-Christian alike. Prov.14:14; Ps.14:1; II Cor.10:4-6; Prov.23:7; Prov.13:15.
- IV. The Bible is the only **complete** and **authoritative** source which was written specifically to provide both the answers to man's behavioral problems and the means for man's behavioral changes. It is totally **sufficient** in these areas. A. Man can only change in two ways; external, and internal B. Only God can change the internal as well as the external Rom.10:14-17; II Tim.3:16-17; I Thess.5:23-24.
- V. Apart from **organically** caused factors, all of man's voluntary thought and behavior is moral, for which man is responsible before God and his neighbor. II Cor.5:10; Matt.12:33-37; Mark 7:18-23.
- VI. Every functional behavioral problem which man experiences is a result of **failure** to love God or man or both as the Bible says he should. Matt.22:37-40

VII. Regeneration by the Holy Spirit is a **prerequisite** for Biblical change and obedience on the part of the counselee. I Cor.1:18-2:16; II Cor.5:17

VIII. The only behavioral changes in man which are **pleasing** to God and are ultimately beneficial to men are those which are effected by means of the Holy Spirit applying the Word of God in sanctifying power to the will and mind of the counselee in accordance with Biblical methods and directives. Jn.17:17; I Pt.2:2; Col.3:1-17; Rom.12:2; Eph.4:23

* The proper motivation will be one of love and gratitude.

IX. All **methodology** must grow out of Biblical principles and practices (thus, non-Christian content or methods have no necessary place in Biblical counseling). II Cor.6:14-18; II Tim.3:16-17; Col.2:6-10; I Pt.1:13-21

X. The Biblical counselor should **expect** and see results from Biblical counseling. I Cor.10:13; II Tim.3:16-17; Rom.15:13; Rom.8:28-29; Phil.4:13; II Pt.1:3-4; Eph.3:20

XI. Biblical counseling requires and includes church **accountability** and discipline where that is Biblically necessary. Thus Biblical counseling should ultimately be done under the authority of some church. Church discipline is corrective in design and only for professing Christians. Matt.18:15-17; Gal.6:1; I Cor.5:1-13; Matt.7:1-5

XII. God requires and equips **all believers** to counsel to one degree or another. Additionally, God holds the officers of the Churches responsible to counsel as a part of their life calling. Matt.18:15-17; I Tim.3:4-5; Rom.15:14; Titus 2:9ff; II Tim.4:1-2; Heb.13:17; Gal.6:1

XIII. Man's basic needs are to **know** God (be forgiven and know His person) and **glorify** God. By man's meeting these needs, his other secondary needs are met as a by-product (safety, acceptance, belonging, properly evaluating himself). I Cor.10:31; II Cor.5:9; Phil.1:6; Matt.6:33; Jer.9:23-24

XIV. The ultimate **goals** of the counselor (encourager) for the counselee (needy one) is:

A. To allow him to acquire the biblical perspective and practical theology relative to his presenting problem(s)

B. To facilitate a meaningful walk with God in Christ-like behavior. Isa.55:8-9; Jer.9:23-24; Rom.8:28-29; Phil.2:1-11; 3:10