

Gospel-Centered Discipling
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What is Gospel-Centered Discipling

...assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

Ephesians 4:21-24

1. Gospel-Centered Counseling (GCC) Defined: *The process of one Christian coming alongside another with words of truth to encourage, admonish, comfort and help, drawn from Scripture, grounded in the gracious saving work of Jesus Christ, and presented in the context of relationship. The goal of this counseling is that the brother or sister in need of counseling would grow in his understanding of the gospel and how it applies to every area of his life and that he would then respond in grateful obedience in every circumstance, all to the building up of the church and for the glory of God.*
2. GCC is derived from the Bible.
 - a. What is the problem?
 - b. Where is help found?
 - c. Hebrews 4:12; Psalm 36:9; John 8:12; 1 John 1:7.
3. GCC seeks to apply Scripture in a balanced way.
 - a. Gospel declarations.
 - b. Gospel obligations
4. Scripture contains both Law and Gospel (Ephesians 4:21-24).
5. Gospel declarations in Ephesians 4:21-24.
 - a. Our old identity.
 - b. Our new identity.
 - c. Be renewed in the spirit of your mind by believing these truths.
6. Gospel obligations in Ephesians 4:21-24.
 - a. Put off the old sinful patterns that marked our lives before Christ.
 - b. Put on the new godly ways of living.

7. Combining both declarations and obligations.

Example of the differences in counseling approaches:

1. Psychological
2. Biblical
3. Gospel Centered
 - Incarnation
 - Sinless Life
 - Substitutionary Death
 - Bodily Resurrection
 - Ascension and Reign
 - Now...Gospel Obligations
 1. His commandments are not burdensome – 1 John 5:3.
 2. Jacob and Rachel – Genesis 31:40
 3. Disgruntled laborers – Matthew 20:12
 4. The elder brother – Luke 15:29
 5. Our Savior – Psalm 40:8

The Gospel and Our Sanctification

“And do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”

Nehemiah 8:10

1. Sanctification defined: *the work of God’s free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die to sin, and live unto righteousness.* (WCF Shorter #35)
 - a. Definitive sanctification: we *have* died to sin.
 - b. Progressive sanctification: The already and the not yet.
 - c. “Sanctification is the work of God’s grace in us that allows us to receive the benefits and power of Jesus, which in turn enables us to overcome the evil that can so burden our hearts.” (Brian Chapell).
2. Our union with Christ is the “key to overcoming sin in our lives...When any of us lose sight of our privileged position as a result of our union with Christ, we lose our ability to resist sin.” (BC, *ibid.*)
 - a. 1 Corinthians 1:4-6, 8-9.

- b. Colossians 2:11-14.
 - c. The truths of the gospel are as necessary to our sanctification as they were to our initial justification.
 - d. Only the “expulsive power of a new affection” can empower and motivate grateful, loving obedience.
3. The appropriate response to the Law: Nehemiah 8. This is the distinction that we must draw for our counselees.
- a. Do not grieve.
 - b. This is a holy day.
 - c. Let the joy of what the Lord has done infect you. “...the feeling of communion with the Lord, on the consciousness that we have in the Lord a God long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth...This joy is to be to them a strong citadel or refuges, because the Almighty is their God...” (Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on the OT)
 - d. Be strong in the light of God’s disposition toward you.
 - e. One Day of Atonement
 - f. One Week of Feasting
 - g. Take refuge from God in God. We’ve got the righteousness of God! (2 Corinthians 5:21)
4. Our enemy wants us to accuse ourselves. He will accuse us (Revelation 12:10).
5. The righteous shall live (and continue to live) by faith.
6. Only two ways to seek to progress:
- a. We can seek to perfect ourselves by our own efforts.
 - b. We can seek to grow in godliness by faith in what Christ has already done.
 - i. Strive to enter that rest! Hebrews 4:9-11
7. The role of the law in our sanctification.
- a. Because of the gospel, we are free to delight in the law because we are freed from the power of the law to curse us.

- b. The law cannot touch our conscience or our standing before God.
- c. It is a sweet guide: Psalm 19:7-11.