

Intensive Discipleship (Biblical Counseling) Overview

"MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD" (Matt 4:4, NASU)

Purpose

At Faith Community Church, the ultimate purpose of INTENSIVE DISCIPLESHIP is for believers to learn to: SEE, INTERPRET AND RESPOND TO THE SOVEREIGNLY ORDAINED CIRCUMSTANCES OF LIFE IN A WAY WHICH GLORIFIES THE LORD JESUS CHRIST AND WHICH MAKES HIM EVIDENT TO THOSE WHO ARE NEAR. As a result, their lives will increasingly become a product of God's Word and God's Spirit within them.

The following are NOT GOALS OF INTENSIVE DISCIPLESHIP: The elimination of negative circumstances, controlling challenging people, or the eradication of emotional pain. However, the FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT (LOVE, JOY, PEACE, PATIENCE, KINDNESS, GOODNESS, FAITHFULNESS GENTLENESS, AND SELF CONTROL) will by necessity intermingle with and over shadow pain and suffering, and bring Christ's influence into the lives of others who are near.

Process

This ministry is intentionally based on the TEACHING AND APPLICATION OF THE BIBLE and understanding of it as explained in the Faith Community Church Statement of Faith, with the INTENTIONAL EXCLUSION OF SECULAR PSYCHOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES, and whatever theories are in fashion at the time. It is recognized that the entire discipleship / counseling process is completely dependant upon the Holy Spirit. For discipleship to be effective the Spirit must give wisdom and insight to the counselor as well as illumination to the counselee, and instill courageous love in all. Therefore prayer is a vital part of this ministry.

INTENSIVE DISCIPLESHIP is not like taking a pill to get "fixed." Discipleship is not one-dimensional; it is multifaceted. At a minimum, it consists of: 1) Being in consistent fellowship as a part of a Bible believing Church. Participation should include worship services, small group fellowship, and a close discipleship relationship. To the extent reasonably possible, participation in Sunday school and corporate prayer times should also be encouraged. 2) Regular study, memorization, meditation and obedience to God's Word. 3) A life increasingly devoted to the spiritual disciplines.

General Health and Well Being

The Bible understands health in a holistic manner and advocates the use of current medical health care, accompanied with repentance, confession and faithful obedience (James 5:14-16). There are several physical maladies that can have negative mental and emotional consequences. YOU ARE ENCOURAGED TO UNDERGO A COMPREHENSIVE PHYSICAL EXAMINATION if you have not had one recently or are experiencing physical or emotional symptoms. You are further encouraged to begin (under the auspices of your physician) a consistent, long-term program of EXERCISE, DIET, APPROPRIATE REST AND RELAXATION; and engage in the other dimensions of well being; see "The Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life" By Donald Whitney.

While the INTENSIVE DISCIPLESHIP Ministry does not actively advocate the use of psychotropic drugs, you are encouraged to always FOLLOW THE MEDICAL AND PHARMACEUTICAL ADVICE OF YOUR DOCTOR. If you already take them, you should consider ASKING YOUR DOCTOR about the advisability of establishing a plan for reducing and eliminating the drugs as your symptoms subside (some of which may actually be caused by the medication). EVEN A MODEST REDUCTION OF CERTAIN PSYCHOTROPIC DRUGS CAN HAVE SERIOUS SIDE AFFECTS AND SHOULD ONLY BE DONE UNDER THE PRUDENT CARE OF YOUR DOCTOR.

Distinctive of Biblical Counseling

A BIBLICAL COUNSELOR IS NOT A DOCTOR, PSYCHIATRIST OR ANY KIND OF A MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL. Secular professionals generally see you as a physical being (having evolved from animals) and therefore a biological machine. These non-biblical presuppositions lead counselees to resources other than the gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16), or so distort the gospel, that responding to it (the distorted gospel) is worthless in terms of salvation or sanctification. A biblical counselor believes that you are both a spiritual and physical being made in the image of God, and are therefore *worship driven* (that is, you do what you do because of what you are worshiping and brain chemistry and functionality autonomically responds, Gen. 4:7, Prov. 3:1-2, 13-18, 13:12). THE FOUNDATION OF THIS MINISTRY IS THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST AND ONE'S RESPONSE TO THAT GOSPEL BEING REPENTANCE AND FAITH. While secularists cannot trace causes back beyond bio-chemical and bio-mechanical processes in the brain, Biblicists acknowledge the seamless link between the spiritual, physical, mental and emotional. Consequently while sanctification is the *objective*, discipleship is the *process* (1 Tim. 4:7-8). The human heart cannot be mapped and analyzed by the human mind (Jer. 17:9-10) but is made manifest with one's interaction with the circumstances of life (Ps. 1, Matt. 12:33-37, Rom. 1:21, 1 Cor. 10:13, Gal. 5:16-26, James 1:22-25, 2:26, 4:1ff), the use of one's resources (Matt. 6:19-21), and one's tongue (James 3:1-12). Discipleship therefore requires establishing a Christ honoring perspective from which to view, interpret and respond to life, in a manner that manifests humble obedience to God's Word and a desire to glorify Christ.

Confidentiality

Generally, counseling sessions are confidential, however the ELDERS OF FCC SHARE A JOINT RESPONSIBILITY TO SHEPHERD THOSE WHO PLACE THEMSELVES UNDER THEIR SPIRITUAL CARE (Acts 20:28, 1 Pet. 5:2). Occasionally, information may need to be communicated within the Elder Board for shepherding purposes. Also, God providentially ministers to man through levels of authorities: Christ (Eph. 5:23-24) the Bible (1 John 5:2-3) civil government (Rom. 13: 1-8), church leadership (Heb. 13: 1-8), husbands (Eph. 5:22-24) parents (Eph. 6:1-3) and others in the church (Matt. 18:15-18, Eph. 5:21). Counselees need to understand that CONFIDENTIALITY BETWEEN COUNSELEE AND COUNSELOR GENERALLY WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO VIOLATE THE SUBMISSION PATTERNS AND RESTORATION PRINCIPLES ESTABLISHED BY THE BIBLE.

For example, children are to submit to their parents (Eph. 6:1-3) but parents are to submit to the Lord, the Bible, church leaders, other church members and civil authority as they carry out their responsibilities as parents (Eph. 6:4). Church leaders (and counselors) are to submit to the Lord, the Bible and civil authority as they carry out their ministry. This chain of submission does not allow for counselors to know of significant disobedience to parents on the part of children to be left unreported to parents. It does not allow for the counselor to know of sinful or criminal acts committed by one family member against another, to go unreported to the one offended, church leadership (and possibly eventually the church at large under Matt. 18) along with civil authorities (Rom. 13:1-8). TO BREAK THIS PRINCIPLE VIOLATES THE VERY PATTERN OF SUBMISSION TO GOD'S WORD THAT BIBLICAL COUNSELING IS PREDICATED UPON.

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