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## Biblical Counseling and the Sufficiency of Scripture

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### Introduction

- Simply stated, *the Bible is about what life is about.*
- *The Bible is about what counseling is about.*
- The Bible provides the *framework* from which to offer winsome, robust, conversational ministry that gets past the nomenclature of the secular psychotherapies to real dynamic, true, and significant issues of life in Christ.

### I. What does God say about His Word?

a. **2 Timothy 3:16-17 – Scripture changes the inner man and outer man making the believer mature and equipped.**

1. The Adequacy of Scripture (3:14-17)

- “Doctrine” or Teaching (*didaskalia*) is the most general. The Bible teaches us what we need to know or believe.
- “Rebuking” or reproof or for reproof (*elegwos*, only here in the NT) is used for “conviction” of a sinner in LXX (Num 5:18ff). “Reproof” – is rebuke for wrong actions or wrong beliefs. It directs us back to the straight course.
- “Correcting” (*epanorthosin* only here) literally means “restoration to an upright position or a right state.” The Bible corrects us so that we get back on the right track.
- “Training” *Paideia* (“training”) comes from *pais*, (“child”). So it originally meant “the rearing of a child.” Then it came to mean “training, learning, instruction, education. Christians need to be trained in “righteousness”—both inward and outward.

2. The Purpose: The purpose of all this is that “the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

- “Perfect” This relates to maturity of character.
- “Thoroughly Furnished” The idea is that he is competent, adequate, capable.



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- b. **Psalm 19:7-11 – Scripture reveals aspects of God’s character that are not revealed in nature.**
  - 1. Scripture restores the soul (v. 7).
  - 2. Scripture makes simple-minded people wise (v. 7).
  - 3. Scripture brings joy to the heart (v. 8).
  - 4. Scripture enlightens the eyes of the heart (v. 8).
  - 5. Scripture endures forever (vv. 8-9).
  - 6. Scripture sanctifies the life (v. 9).
  - 7. Scripture defines what is truly desirable (v. 10).
  - 8. Scripture warns us of the consequences of disobeying God (v. 11).
  - 9. Scripture promises reward to those who obey (v. 11).
  
- c. **Hebrews 4:12-13 – Scripture provides for true heart change.**
  
  
- d. **Psalm 119:97-104 – Scripture provides the comprehensive and complete body of divine truth necessary for life and godliness.**

## **II. So then, what is sufficiency?**

It means that the Bible is adequate or comprehensive to accomplish its purposes. It is adequate to equip the believer for every good work. God considers what He has written in the Bible to be adequate for us and that we should be content with what He has said.

- a. It is from God and has His authority in our lives (2 Tim 3:16).
- b. These words are able to make us wise for salvation (2 Tim 3:15).
- c. The Bible is equips us for living the life God desires (2 Tim 3:16-17).



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- d. Notice how the Bible's sufficiency helps us in our perspective:
- 1) The Bible is the basis for Biblical counseling because of what counseling is all about. It is about changing lives by changing values, beliefs, relationships, attitudes, behaviors, inner man as well as outer man issues.
  - 2) What other source can provide such a standard? What other sources speak to how we can make changes that please and honor the God of heaven?
  - 3) There can be no other foundation for counseling than God's Word. The Bible is adequate! It is sufficient.
  - 4) All that God requires of us is recorded in his written word: simply to do all that the Bible commands us is to be blameless in God's sight.

### **III. The Bible is sufficient, so what?**

- a. Since the Bible is sufficient, we should seek God's mind on all matters of life.
- 1) What and how does God desire us to think about some doctrinal issue?
  - 2) What and how does God desire us to act in a particular situation?
  - 3) Everything God wants to give us about those questions is found in the Bible.
    - a. Does not mean that the Bible answers all the questions that we can imagine?  
Or think up?
    - b. We do not know everything (Deut 29:29).
    - c. It does mean that in the issues that are significant to godliness, God speaks.
    - d. God's word will address these issues of godliness directly through precepts and principles or perhaps indirectly through examples, illustrations and applications of principles.
    - e. The Bible does not tell us whether or not to purchase a Mercedes or a Ford, and decisions similar to these; although it provides us the wisdom to make these kinds of decisions in a God-honoring way.
    - f. But God speaks clearly to equip the believer for every good work.



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- g. As you search Scripture for God's mind on matters, you will develop an increasing skill and ability to find answers to life's issues.
- b. Since the Bible is sufficient, we are to add nothing to it. There are no other writings or sources of authority equal with it.
  - a. This principle is violated by every cult as they claim a source of authority alongside Scripture.
  - b. No additional words from God can be found other than the Bible.
  - c. This even happens among Christians when some say or assert with confidence some new idea about God or heaven, basing their teachings not on careful exegesis/interpretation of Scripture but on their own speculation or even on claimed experiences of dying and coming back to life.
- c. Since the Bible is sufficient, there can be no ongoing revelations today that would in any manner be considered equal in authority to Scripture (dealt with in another session).
- d. Since the Bible is sufficient, we are to consider nothing as sinful that is not directly forbidden by it or by implication.
  - 1) Psalm 119:1 "To walk in the law of the Lord is to be blameless."
  - 2) We should not prohibit what God does not prohibit.
    - a. Yes, there are restrictions to Christian liberty ... in regard to the weaker brother.  
(I Cor 8-10 ... meats offered to idols)
    - b. Yes, families, churches, governments, etc. can make rule of conduct for their constituents that should be followed as appropriate. This relates to wisdom.
- e. Since the Bible is sufficient, all of our teaching and counsel for self and others on issues of ethics or doctrine should emphasize what the Scriptures emphasize.
- f. Since the Bible is sufficient it contains all that we need to know for godliness!



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#### **IV. Implications**

- a. Where should I spend the bulk of my energy when researching answers to how to relate to God, others, self, or creation?
- b. What voices do I give weight to as being authoritative when it comes to counseling issues?
- c. If God's Word is sufficient, how is that evidenced in our practical everyday living?  
What position does the Bible have among your priorities?
- d. Where do I get my authority to counsel? Counsel drawn from the sufficient Word speaks with the greatest authority. When faced with plain proposals of sin (Can I divorce my wife for another woman?), questions of behavior (Must I pay taxes when government is unfair?), etc., the biblical counselor can give an authoritative answer because it is not based upon his own opinion, upon the probabilities of the consequences, expediency or any other such relative standard, but upon the commandment of the living God, who has spoken.
- e. What limits my authority to counsel? The Biblical counselor's authority at every point is limited by the Bible itself. No other system of counseling has authority because no other system has an authoritative base.
- f. Where do I get the necessary lens through which to view life? The Bible is comprehensive (not exhaustive) and provides everything the Christian needs to live a life that honors God. The Bible provides the framework through which we can rightly interpret life around us.
- g. Do I love God's law?

#### **RESOURCES**

*Scripture and Counseling: God's Word for Life in a Broken World* by Bob Kellemen and Jeff Forrey  
*Counseling: How to Counsel Biblically* by John MacArthur and Wayne Mack  
*A Theology of Christian Counseling: More Than Redemption* by Jay E. Adams