

# Counseling Homework

## The Bible



By Wendy Wood

In Biblical counseling, homework is one of the foundations for bringing hope and help to sinners and sufferers. Whether the counselee is suffering due to their own sin, or because of someone else's sin, or the sin-cursed world we live in, Scripture renews the mind and focuses the soul on God. Spending time in Scripture will help our counselees view their situation through the lens of who God is and His purpose in us and our world. We assign homework, or "projects for growth", as a means to give the counselee time to spend with God and allow the Holy Spirit to be at work in his/her heart. The Bible must be the key component of our homework because of its unique and powerful author and purpose.

One of the dangers we face is using a variety of books, pamphlets, articles and other types of homework as our primary sources. There are so many really great resources available for us to use and assign to our counselees. There are books and articles that clearly state and summarize what scripture says, that speak truth and address sin and suffering in biblical ways. However, nothing, absolutely nothing, is as powerful as God's very own Word. We must never forget that Scripture is uniquely powerful and life changing because of the Author. We don't need an updated or condensed version of the Bible. God's Word is the method that God has ordained for all His children to be sanctified and transformed into His likeness.

***All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.***

***- 2 Timothy 3:16-17***

Scripture is breathed out by God. Are your counselees aware of this? Do they read Scripture as though God is speaking to them? Are they amazed at the fact that the Creator and Lord of the universe choose to speak words to us? In the United States it is so easy to take the Bible for granted. Most of us have a dozen Bibles laying around our house and get a new one when the cover gets dingy or bent. We fight against the urge to become complacent about the fact that God Himself spoke the words of the Bible.

Are you using the Bible to teach, reprove, correct, train your counselee in righteousness? Are you giving them Scripture to study to teach them about God and His will. Are you providing specific teaching in marriage, parenting, loving others, selflessness, gentleness, and humility to address their specific needs? Are you leading your counselee to Scripture that will give reproof? When you have a counselee who has anger or anxiety issues, are you leading them to the Scriptures that warn them of the consequences of these sins and to Scripture that encourages them to trust God at these times? Are you showing your counselees from the Bible the correction or the

right way to respond to their circumstances? Are you giving them Scripture homework to study who God is so that they are aware that their responses demonstrate a lack of trust? Are you giving homework in Scripture that trains your counselee in righteousness. Are they learning the one-another verses and how to love biblically? Are they rooted in the gospel of Christ and enjoy Bible passages that point them to the hope of righteousness?

***For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.***

**- Hebrews 4:12**

Scripture is the mirror that reflects the true condition of our hearts. Our counselees will be convicted and have their true heart motive revealed as they spend time in the Bible. As our counselees read the Bible daily, God will use His very own words to expose and change their hearts. No other writing is powerful in this way.

There are several types of counselees that I come across regularly. One type of counselee reads their Bible very consistently, but they read it as a rule book. Every passage that is read with the intent of finding sin in their life and fixing it through obeying the passage. The Bible is a list of commandments to be followed for them and they are missing out on relationship with God because of it. Another type of counselee doesn't read the Bible. They come to church on Sunday and "feast" on God's Word and then starve themselves of God's Word throughout the week. They may never have formed the habit of reading the Bible daily, they may not know how to start and study the Word, or they may have excuses about being busy, not having a quiet place, or they find it boring. A third type of counselee may read the Bible daily but they are reading 6 chapters a day to complete their reading calendar and not understand, think about, or

apply what they are reading. If you think about your counselees, you probably have had at least one in each of these categories.

So, how do we help counselees read God's Word for fellowship with Him, getting to know Him and giving the Holy Spirit the means with which to transform their hearts. Here are some different ways to encourage our counselees to not only form the habit of daily Scripture intake, but also enjoy a relationship with God and read Scripture for the life giving sustenance that it is.

Reading the Bible is more than homework! Help you counselees see that reading the Bible is about fellowship and relationship with God. God commands us to study and meditate on His word night and day because it is the best way to live! God is FOR us and His commands are given out of love and protection. Psalm 1:3 tells us the benefits of saturating ourselves with scripture. ***"He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers."*** Paint your counselee the picture of how beautiful and joyful life is when it is rooted in the life-giving water of God.

**Assignment #1** - Read the assigned passage of scripture (adapted from Glenna Marshall)

- ▲ Make a summary statement about the text.
- ↑ What does this teach me about God? His character?
- ↓ What does this teach me about man?
- † What does this text teach me about Christ? How does this text point me to Christ?
- ✓ How can I apply this to my life? How is my believing, thinking, or response to my situation changed because of who God is or what Christ has done?
- ▲ Make a second general summary statement about the text.

**Assignment #2 - Meditation** - Read the assigned passage or verse. For example, Isaiah 40, Psalm 103, Job 38-40, Romans 8, Psalm 139, Isaiah 6.

♥ - Affection: What does God reveal about Himself that I love, appreciate, or enjoy?

💭 - Consideration: Where do I demonstrate a lack of trust in God or a disobedience to Him?

✓ - Resolution: What change will I make in my life because of this truth?

**Assignment #3 - Meditation** - Read the assigned passage or verse about God's attributes or a passage that displays Christ's character. For example Matthew 11:28-30, Romans 8:31-32, Hebrews 7:25, 1 John 2:1, 2 Corinthians 1:3, Hebrews 4:14-16, Isaiah 31:20, Isaiah 41:10.

🙌 - Praise God for who He is. Admire this attribute that God is completely in Himself.

🙏 - Thank God for this part of Him. How are you thankful for how this attribute gives hope and help to you.

👉 - Ask God to grow your trust in this attribute of Him. Ask Him to help you live differently because you truly believe this is true and better than doing life your own way.

**Assignment #4** - Read the assigned passage.

1. What does this chapter tell me about God?
2. What does this chapter tell me about myself and my relationship to God?
3. What does this chapter tell me about Christ and the gospel?
4. How does this passage offer hope and encouragement?
5. What steps of actions do I need to take to obey God's word?
6. Pray this scripture back to God asking Him to help you grow in this way.
7. What does this chapter say about being satisfied in God? Delighting in Him?
8. Does this text teach a doctrine to believe or a principle to apply?
9. What am I thankful for in this passage?
10. Do I have questions about this text that I need to research or ask for help on?

Make Bible reading and meditating the foundation of your homework. Help your counselees build a strong relationship with God with a daily intake of His character, wisdom and love.