



CARING FOR OTHERS

at Fellowship Bible Church

Caring for Others

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Resource developed by
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Table of Contents

What is Care and Mentoring at Fellowship Bible Church?	- 1 -
How Does the Body of Christ Care for One Another?	- 3 -
Are There Different Levels of Care That Take Place at FBC?	- 4 -
What Is Biblical Mentoring and Care?	- 7 -
How do I care for others?	- 11 -
How do I start a Care Conversation?	- 16 -
FAQ's About Care within the Body of Christ	- 19 -
What is the core focus of mentoring and care?	- 20 -
How do I prepare my heart to mentor and care?	- 22 -
Am I responsible for "results"?	- 23 -
What is at the "heart" of human struggles?	- 24 -
How does the sufficiency of Scripture structure my mentoring and care?	- 26 -
How will my mentoring be shaped by the Holy Spirit?	- 28 -
How do I address suffering in the lives of others or my own?	- 29 -
-	
How can I be sympathetic without encouraging a victim mentality?	- 30 -

What is the role of legitimate medications?- 31 -

Are Psychological or Diagnostic Labels helpful?- 31 -

What should I do if I suspect a situation includes abuse?- 32 -

How should I view references to suicide?- 32 -

What structure and limitations of confidentiality should be
established?.....- 33 -

What do I do if I think I need help?- 33 -

Ready to start?- 34 -

Addendum and Additional Information- 36 -

 Additional Resources.....- 37 -

 Citations and Acknowledgements- 39 -

What is Care and Mentoring at Fellowship Bible Church?

Grace *in* Action is Fellowship Bible Church's (FBC) care ministry. Grace *in* Action aims to help people work through battles in their lives that are getting in the way of their walk with the Lord and their relationships with those around them. We accomplish this by using three main approaches:

We look to minister directly to individuals and couples through gospel-centered care groups and one-on-one meetings. These are open to people that are part of the FBC family and to those in the community that are not members or regular attenders of FBC. We have separate men's and women's Grace *in* Action meetings that address an array of issues, we have our Transformed to Victory men's meeting that focuses on addictions and our Marriage Enrichment ministry that matches couples looking for some help with mentor couples. Note, our Marriage Enrichment ministry is for FBC members and regular attenders only. More information can be found on the [FBC website](#).

We have limited counseling time available to members and regular attenders of FBC; we do not offer any one-on-one counseling to people in the general community. We would recommend that they seek counseling resources at their

church or through faith-based counseling in the community. For more information on this, contact the church office.

We seek to equip all people and ministries at FBC to adopt a mindset, or should we say 'heartset,' for care in the areas that they minister.

At FBC, we believe that caring for one another is a biblical imperative throughout the Word of God. If you are in a role as a Ministry Leader, you are in a role of care and mentorship to the people who participate in your ministry. This is the case whether you lead a bible study, teach children, lead a connection group, work in outreach or missions, work on the finance or benevolence teams, or other service areas at Fellowship. And, if you are a person who sits in the pew, you too are called to care for one another. Care is not just the purview of the Grace *in* Action ministry or the church's leadership; it is God's mandate for the Body of Christ.

How Does the Body of Christ Care for One Another?

The Apostle Paul often describes the Church as the “Body of Christ.” It is a simple but powerful and instructive metaphor. Christ is the Head; believers are the members, parts, cells, all of which are necessary and important (1 Corinthians 12:12-26). One central intent of the metaphor is to emphasize the interdependence of all the parts. Hence, the New Testament authors include many “one-anothers,” the life-level functions that keep the Body healthy and vibrant. Of course, all is ultimately dependent on the Head for direction, growth, and rule.

The metaphor’s implications of needed care and support are obvious. The potential also for weakening of the Body—when its “health habits” are neglected—is also clear. The goal of steady growth is implied and is enabled by the Holy Spirit and nourished through the Word.

The concept of the Body of Christ is unlike anything found on a purely human level. Hence, the one-another care within the Body helps to produce and sustain what Paul calls “new creations” in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17), that is, spiritually healthy, maturing believers.

Are There Different Levels of Care That Take Place at FBC?

As we've already discussed, care and mentoring are expected of a believer; however, it is not always automatic or comfortable for us to place ourselves in these situations. As believers growing in God's grace ourselves, mentoring will hopefully grow beyond a task or something one does now and then, but a 'heartset'; something we think about and look for opportunities to do on an ongoing basis. We hope this is the case at FBC as we do more of this and encourage more people to 'one another' others.

There are three types of biblical mentoring that can occur within the Body of Christ:

Informal – this is one believer coming alongside another believer, and they help each other grow spiritually. At this level, we are helping one another with general, life-level needs of encouragement and personal and spiritual growth. This we call a "Barnabas-type" relationship where peers help peers; at different points in time, one will care for the other and the roles are reversed at other points in time.

Situations that call for this type of care are found in Scripture's one-another's:

- Pray for one another | Ephesians 6:18
- Be kind to one another | Ephesians 4:32
- Serve one another | Galatians 5:13
- Exhort one another | Hebrews 3:13
- Forgive one another | Ephesians 4:32
- Bear with one another | Ephesians 4:2
- Comfort one another | 2 Corinthians 1:4
- Love one another | John 13:34-35
- Rejoice and weep with one another | Romans 12:15
- Bear one another's burdens | Galatians 6:2
- Honor one another | Romans 12:10; Philemon 2:3
- Submit to one another | Eph 5:21

Formal – this is when one believer specifically asks for another believer to mentor him/her in a specific area of their life where he/she is looking for spiritual growth. It is a closer, one-on-one relationship. This we call a “Paul and Timothy-type” relationship where the mentor is the Paul and the mentee is the Timothy.

Entering this level of mentorship takes a bit more consideration than a Type 1 Informal relationship. The mentor must be honest and careful regarding his view of himself and his role; he needs humility and to pursue Scripture and not opinion. He will need to define the relationship with the mentee so that both are clear on confidentiality, moral safeguards, and vigilance so the mentee doesn't become over-

dependent on the mentor. The mentor needs to maintain his spiritual health and dependence on the Lord.

Questions that may be useful for Type 2 and Type 3 situations may be:

- What boundaries, if any, are needed?
- How do I balance patience and urgency?
- How do I recognize real guidance verses my opinion?
- Should we inform a neutral third party of what we are doing?
- What may signal the need/time to end the relationship?
- Remember that my essential resources are prayer and Scripture.

Issue or Crisis – this is when there is a specific issue that has gotten so big it must be addressed and a specific mentoring relationship is set up to address the issue.

The goal in all three types of mentoring is spiritual growth of the individual(s) involved, and that even includes you, the mentor; God trains us up while using us to care for others. We encourage more of Type 1 and 2 mentoring relationships at FBC through our various connection groups, bible studies, discipleship groups and other gatherings, because we believe that this spiritual growth will diminish the need for Type 3 mentoring and care. However, and unfortunately, we know as sinners, our nature is to wait, hide, and delay until the issue is too big and painful to hide and then we must get Type 3 care.

What Is Biblical Mentoring and Care?

Biblical mentoring is vertical in focus and centered on God through the Holy Spirit; He is at the center of all we do. By contrast, secular mentoring is horizontal in focus, and man is at the center of what we do and say. The difference is who you and the person you are caring for and mentoring see as in charge – God or them/you? Do you see yourself as the one in charge of the situation? The one who has, or is supposed to have all the answers? Do you see the person you are caring for as responsible for the process and all the change? If so, you are taking a horizontal focus and secular, or man-centered, view of this mentoring situation. If you look to the Lord for guidance and relinquish control of the situation to the Holy Spirit, then you are taking a God-centered view of your role as a mentor. We have the honor of being a tool in the Holy Spirit's hand that He is using to shape the person we are caring for and ourselves in the process.

Caring and mentoring can be helpful in many situations. As mentioned earlier, there are different types and, therefore, different reasons to care for and help others. In Type 1 and 2 relationships, the reasons are probably more general than in Type 3 care. The Type 1 and 2 reasons might be things such as generally walking better in the Lord, learning how to study scripture better, learning how to interact with others in a more godly way, growing a relationship with a more mature believer,

general loneliness, etc. Type 3 relationship reasons are more acute in nature and more immediate in their need to be addressed. These could be battling a besetting sin; grief due to losing a loved one; anger and bitterness due to hurt such as marital problems, divorce, abuse, etc.; fear due to a medical diagnosis; and other immediate and possibly shorter-term battles.

As you enter into these interpersonal relationships with others, remember that biblical mentoring is coming alongside this person(s). You are walking with them, not there to tell them what to do. You are investing yourself in the life of another for encouragement, growth, and accomplishment of God's purposes.

To do that well, you, and all of us, should continually:

- Orient your heart toward Christ - keep praying.
- Increase your understanding of biblical truths - keep reading the Word.
- Model biblical truths to others - prioritize your growth in Grace.
- Work to strengthen your connection to the Body - stay in fellowship with other believers.
- Remember you are broken in your own ways - stay humble.

In other words, keep working on your walk and dependence on the Holy Spirit as you seek to be a tool in God's hand

helping other people the Lord brings to you, in your ministry or just in your general life, to do the same. As God is helping us to help and one another others, you will see how in the process, He is using this situation to help and teach you.

Please read through and meditate on these additional verses that connect the Body of Christ to care and mentoring:

Romans 12:5 | *So we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.*

Ephesians 2:19-21 | So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

Ephesians 4:12-16 | to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way

into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

How Do I Care for Others?

You may ask yourself, "How do I care for others?" "Do I have the training and background?" "I thought I was just teaching a bible study, not "counseling" others." "I don't have the time to get involved." "That situation seems too messy for me; I don't want to deal with it." These thoughts and other reasons can block our willingness to reach out and care for others in the moment or over the long haul. Satan can stir these thoughts in our minds and so we must ask the Lord to nurture a heartset of care every day.

Most Christians only display their "presentation" self, projecting what they want others to see. In our pride, we want to appear like we have it all together and are "ok" and don't have any issues. However, when we are honest with ourselves and others, we know this isn't always/usually the case. We don't want others to know when we are struggling spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and physically. We can feel shame, guilt, fear, or pride about the fact that we are battling something. Satan and his minions are very good at keeping us in this isolated state. The bible tells us in many places that we are to reach out to others and put our struggles into the light - see Prov 15:22, 18:1, 27:17; 1 John1:7-9 to name a few verses. However, our pride can get in the way, and we won't ask for help.

This is where care comes in. Remember, God has placed you in the Body of Christ and potentially in a ministry position

so you are in a unique place to see people and the subtle changes that may indicate that something bigger is going on inside this person. Maybe a couple at a connection group is physically distant from each other when they normally sat together; maybe a child in class is more aggravated than typical; maybe a person who is normally talkative in a bible study has become quiet and withdrawn; maybe the person who sits near you on Sunday hasn't been attending as regularly. We need to look for these subtle changes and, if they persist, ask the person how they are doing. When we have a heartset of care, this isn't being nosy; it is caring. These interactions need to be ongoing because chances are initially you will get an "I'm ok, just a bad day" type response. If the change in behavior continues, however, then you'll want to pray for wisdom and check in again (and again) and ask the person if they want to talk.

Hopefully, this loving attention and gentle nudging will encourage the other person to start sharing with you what their struggle is that is getting in the way of their relationship with God and others. You might then think, what if something comes up that I don't know how to address? We don't expect you to have all the answers and perfect solutions. Please realize that you already have three of the best resources at your fingertips. The first is your relationship with God the Father, through Jesus Christ, which is empowered by the Holy Spirit. The second is your Bible. The third is your walk with God

through your life's experiences. These resources will give you what you need to come alongside and start walking with them.

Please keep this passage in mind as the foundation of your ability to one another the people that you interact with:

2 Corinthians 1:3-7 | Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ. Now if we are afflicted, it is for your [person you are mentoring] consolation and salvation, which is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer. Or if we are comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation. And our hope for you is steadfast, because we know that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so also you will partake of the consolation.

As more specific issues arise in your discussions, outside resources such as books, blogs, videos on various subjects can be helpful, giving you additional understanding and guidance on how to use your first three resources. You can always reach out to ministry leaders and others in the church for advice and perspective while maintaining appropriate confidentiality. Please, don't discount your own experiences within your own

life and seeing how God has worked. Yes, there will be specific areas you haven't had personal experience with, and outside resources can be helpful for understanding details, but always pointing this individual to examine their hearts in those situations, and how they do or don't align with God's will, is what will help them the most to change, grow and heal. Remember, spiritual growth is always the primary goal of all care ministry.

There are some resources available at FBC that address various topics. These can be found in the Resource Room in the Education Wing. We have *Grace in Action* men's and women's meetings, our Transformed to Victory meeting and our Marriage Enrichment ministry that are meetings that you can refer people to that need more intensive care inside FBC. Also, there are outside resources that we could recommend. Remember, as you're looking at outside resources in print or online, please be very discerning regarding a source's biblical worldview and theology. Please investigate these resources and ask ministry leadership to verify that they are from good sources that align with the Bible and the beliefs we hold to at FBC.

As your care and mentoring continue with individuals, trust the Lord in the process. Take your time with the process and don't feel like you need to come up with the perfect answer to solve this other person's problem. The goal of the meetings is not to quickly fix or resolve the issue. The goal is to restore their worship of the Lord by understanding their situation, thinking,

and motivations, then help them put on Jesus in biblical ways that make sense. This will lead to a God honoring solution. Your role is to ask a lot of questions, point the person to the Lord using the Word, and pray for that person. Yes, it will get raggedy and messy at times, and that's ok because it causes you and the other person to depend on the Holy Spirit and not your own wisdom and understanding, as Proverbs 3:3-9 reminds us. The individual will need to sit with the Lord and look beneath the surface of their issue to see the deeper causes of their battle; this takes time.

How Do I Start a Care Conversation?

As we've just discussed, you have a unique vantage point to see changes in people. These changes may indicate that some things are going on in a person's life that need some "one anothering." When you see that the demeanor of someone has changed, ask him/her some questions like "Are you OK?", "You seem ____ (distracted, angry, upset, etc.), is there something you'd like to talk about?" and then let them know you are there for them if they do. Once a person says they are willing to engage, here are some steps and guiding points that can help you get and keep the mentoring process going.

Remember to pray before every interaction.

You need to be diligent without being obnoxious about getting the first meeting. If the situation happens to involve a couple, we suggest that the wife reach out to the wife and/or the husband reach out to the husband, assuming both are "on the same page" about needing help. Contact isn't always made on the first try so please persevere. Keep in mind that fear, pride, and shame about needing help can creep in, or the stressor may have lessened for a time, and the person may become reticent to follow through on their original request. Be encouraging in your messages. If after 3-5 attempts you are still unable to make contact, let them know you are available and they can call when they are ready, but that you won't be reaching out again.

Your first meeting may be a little awkward. You may not know the individual well and they may not know you well, and now you're going to talk about "their problems." Remember you are there to be a friend. Try and set them at ease, let them know you are there to walk with them and not tell them what to do. At the end of this book there are a few ice-breaking questions that might give you some ideas on how to start the relationship, feel free to use your own. It might take a few meetings to start to get to the root of the issues. Listening and asking questions along the way are the best things you can do, especially in the first few meetings.

Don't be afraid to ask for help from others if the topics or direction of the meetings are going in a direction with which you are not comfortable. And very importantly, don't be afraid to say to the person, I don't really know how to respond to that but let me pray and seek some counsel from others that may have more experience in this area. Assure the person that confidentiality will be respected (*see Additional Questions section on confidentiality and legal matters*).

It is essential to keep the process going, so do your best to schedule your next meeting as you wrap up the current meeting. This ensures that all involved stay engaged in the process. The number and frequency of meetings needed will vary with each situation and you need to be in prayer about how to proceed throughout the process.

Do your best to keep the meetings and conversations face to face. It can be easy to get caught in texting or emailing. This

is not a good way to solve issues between people. It can be a way for people to 'hide' and still appear to be communicating. If you are dealing with a couple or a small group of people, most of your interaction should be all parties sitting and talking together. Certain issues may be volatile and a few break-out meetings could be appropriate to work on the issue. However, minimize the number of these separate meetings. You need to bring everyone back together to finalize solutions.

When to end these meetings and what to do next are common questions. You need to let the Holy Spirit lead you in this. Observe the person and their progress concerning the reasons they initially stated and those that came up in your mentoring time together. Are they sorted? Is the person focused more on God and His will than their own individual wills? Do they agree with your assessments? Then it may be time to end the formal meetings. Are they connected with others within the church to help them continue to walk in the Lord, especially in the areas that you have been discussing? Is that person you but on a more informal basis? What we don't want to happen is that the individual is left alone after making progress and they sink back into old patterns. You also want to make sure you don't "hold on" to the person. Check your own heart and make sure of the reasons you haven't brought the care and mentor relationship to a completion. The relationship may also get to a point where it needs to be handed off to another specific person whose different gifting may be better suited to help this person from this point forward.

FAQ's About Care within the Body of Christ

It is important to note that the approach and heart-set mindset discussed up to this point, must be built on the foundation of proper theology, having a correct understanding of God, humanity, and the gospel. Plus, there are some practical items that must be highlighted to ensure compliance with Church policy and laws.

Below are fourteen questions that can serve as a preparatory check list, highlighting some of the key tenants when caring for the soul of another, whether in the context of marriage, singleness, addiction, sickness, or other afflictions. This information is applicable, to varying degrees, to all three Types of mentoring that we have discussed.

What is the core focus of mentoring and care?

What usually brings people to seek help is disruptive behaviors, but we know behavioral issues always grow out of the heart. Thus, we are dealing with spiritual matters or, you can say, worship disorders. Permanent change only happens with heart change and not with only behavior modification.

Please study and ponder these verses:

Jeremiah 12:9 | The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?

Luke 6:43-45 | For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks,

Believers now have a new potential in Christ and are undergoing the process of progressive sanctification.

Ezekiel 36:26-27 | And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And

I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

Thus, we are all works in progress and experience the tension between the flesh and the Spirit. The produced fruit of our lives is a result of which one, flesh or Spirit, has captured the loyalties of our hearts. Thus, our care for others must go beneath the surface and help them understand the motives of their heart.

Galatians 5:17-23 | For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. The works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Additional Resource:

[Life Over Coffee Podcast | Identifying Ruling Motives of the Heart](#)

How do I prepare my heart to mentor and care?

When coming alongside brothers and sisters in Christ, our self-righteous tendencies can cause us to take a superior posture, especially if we have not experienced their specific struggle. Spiritual pride is a constant threat, and, like Paul, we must remember our past with humility. We will do well if we remember that we are all broken but in individual, unique ways and need to rest in God's grace, mercy, and patience as we struggle with our own brokenness and offer that grace, mercy, and patience to those for whom we are caring.

We may be further down the sanctification path than those on the other side of the table, but we are more alike than different. We are walking alongside, not above.

1 Timothy 1:15 | *The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.*

Luke 18: 11-14 | *The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.' But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but I beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other.*

Matthew 7:1-5 | *“Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when there is the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye.*

Additional Resource:

[Life Over Coffee Podcast | The Problem with Expecting Someone to Change](#)

Am I responsible for “results”?

When someone reaches out for help, it is easy for us to take on too much responsibility, thinking we are responsible for their change. With good intentions, we can unwillingly adopt a mini-messiah complex. We must remember that repentance/change is above our pay grade. We should care, tend, and water; to prepare an environment for growth; God grants repentance (i.e., change).

You must guard your heart, for we do not know God's plans. Change may not occur, and the person’s pain may not be

relieved. Focus on your responsibilities and pray about your concerns.

1 Corinthians 6:9 | For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not being merely human? What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.

2 Timothy 2:25-26 | God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.

Additional Resource:

[Life Over Coffee Podcast | The Most Powerful Way to Help Someone to Change](#)

What is at the "heart" of human struggles?

As we focus on those in our care, we must remember that Scripture gives us insider information about the human condition. Sin separated us from God, left us with self-serving hearts, and shattered shalom (peace) within our souls, introducing shame, fear, guilt, and pride into the human experience.

If the heart is the engine, shame/fear/guilt/pride is the fuel that propels us to choose our wisdom in chasing after god replacements. Many of these replacements are good, like marriage, sex, and career, but when we elevate them above God, we have a worship disorder called idolatry. Hence, our worship structure becomes amiss and sinful, which is why we need to focus on spiritual growth, not just changes in behaviors.

The gospel is just as crucial in our sanctification (i.e., spiritual growth) as in our salvation.

Genesis 3:6-8 | So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself."

Romans 1:21-23 | For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they

became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

Additional Resources:

[Life Over Coffee Podcast | 12 Universal Assumptions You Can Make About People](#)

[Life Over Coffee Podcast | How to Dismantle Self-Reliance and Overcome Unbelief](#)

How does the sufficiency of Scripture structure my mentoring and care?

Secular psychology is part of our culture and has made significant inroads into the church. How to respond to this influence is not a black-and-white issue and can quickly become a controversial topic. A complete discussion is beyond the scope of this book, but it is vital to ensure we are unified in the essentials and extend grace in the non-essentials. Secular psychology has helped many in a common grace type of way. That said, the Bible and the working of the Holy Spirit are sufficient to care for others. While high-end counseling is a matter of gifting, we are all called to be spiritual friends and one anothering. As we have discussed previously, the use of outside, gospel-centered resources can help to address

specific situations, and they must always point back to the Bible.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 | 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 Corinthians 1:4 | who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

Galatians 6:1 | Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Additional Resource:

[Life Over Coffee Podcast | When the Integrationist and Biblical Counselor Are Right](#)

How will my mentoring be shaped by the Holy Spirit?

When it comes to caring for others, it can be challenging to know when to teach, when to encourage, when to extend grace, or when to rebuke. Scripture reminds us that each case is unique, and we must pray and ask the Holy Spirit to guide us. The Holy Spirit is always the actual counselor in the room.

John 14:26 | But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all the I have said to you.

Your care must be compassionate, tender, and patient. People seeking help have noisy souls and are unaware of the working motives of their hearts. Under the surface, fear, shame, guilt, and pride are present, and a wise teacher will initially focus on the soul noise. It would be best if you ministered to their soul to realign their worship and then address gospel gaps in their thinking. As this occurs, the heart can soften and become receptive to teaching and change. Remember, the motivation to change must grow out of love for Christ.

1 Thessalonians 5:14 | And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all.

Romans 2:4 | *Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?*

Additional Resource:

[Life Over Coffee Podcast | Any Christian Can Counsel](#)

How do I address suffering in the lives of others (or my own)?

Most Christians have a weak understanding of the Doctrine of Suffering. God is “a bit more dangerous than we would care for Him to be” regarding our trials. He uses evil in a way that refines us, grows us, and helps us realize He is the prize.

Suffering is a complex topic, but helping people correctly process their suffering is necessary to provide good care. God's ways may be mysterious, but they are always good.

2 Corinthians 1:9 | *For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead.*

Romans 8:28-29 | *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are*

called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

Deuteronomy 28:29 | The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.

Additional Resource:

[Life Over Coffee Podcast | The Purpose of Suffering is to Grow Your Confidence in God](#)

How can I be sympathetic without encouraging a victim mentality?

When caring for hurting people, you must have a proper working definition of sympathy and empathy and, more vitally, a practical application of them. Sympathy is restorative care, but empathy can tempt the individual to assume a victim mindset and may do much harm to those who need your care the most.

Additional Resource:

[Life Over Coffee Podcast | The Destructive Force of Empathy and Why You Need to Know](#)

What is the role of legitimate medications?

Many people use psychotropic drugs to help with anxiety and depression and treat serious conditions, and good Christians can have very different views on this practice. If this subject comes up during care, discussion about any medicine use is wise, and you will want to understand their thoughts about the medications and if there have been some recent changes. But remember, we are not medical professionals, so we cannot give direction in this area. Inquire and ensure they are in touch with their doctor but do not express an opinion.

Are Psychological or Diagnostic Labels helpful?

When interacting with people, they may share their clinical diagnoses. ADHD, PTSD, Depressed, etc. Do not let these labels intimidate you. Please focus on the behaviors and look to understand their thinking. As an example, we may not know where to begin with PTSD, but if we discover that the individual is experiencing fear, we know the Bible has much to say. Remember, don't be afraid to ask for help and guidance from ministry leaders.

What should I do if I suspect a situation includes abuse?

Abuse can take on many forms: manipulation, gas-lighting, verbal abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, etc. Complexity is added with poor application of biblical teaching on suffering and submission. If physical or sexual abuse occurs, authorities must be contacted. The Elders must be involved if any laws appear broken.

How should I view references to suicide?

If the subject of suicide comes up, you must assess the risk. You will want to discern if the individual is serious about killing themselves. If they have determined how to kill themselves and have the means to do so, they would be a high risk, and authorities need to be contacted. If they have thought about how they might do it, but no firm plans are in place, they would be considered lower risk. Then you would proceed accordingly. Remember, don't be afraid to ask for help and guidance from ministry leaders.

What structure and limitations of confidentiality should be established?

Keep the information you discuss with the person you are caring for confidential and between you and them. If you need additional information from a third party, discuss this with the individual you are working with and get their agreement; you can keep the person anonymous as you obtain wisdom from others. However, if any laws appear to have been broken based on what has been shared with you, or you believe the person may self-harm or harm others, you need to bring this to the attention of the ministry leader and ultimately the Elders of FBC. These leaders will determine how to proceed with outside authorities as appropriate.

What do I do if I think I need help?

In any of these situations, if you have any questions, seek counsel from ministry leaders, Elders, authorities, etc. We can also recommend various outside resources in counseling and programs and processes for serious situations that require more critical care.

Ready to start?

Remember, the people who need care are people looking for friends, friends who listen, care, and guide. The main requirements are to love them and point them continuously back to Christ. Keep yourself in the right role and don't try to take on too much responsibility. Seek the Lord through prayer, quiet time and His Word for guidance and be sensitive to the moving of the Holy Spirit. There are others to help you when need additional information and perspective. Don't get trapped into the shame, fear, pride trap of thinking you should know how to deal with any given situation. Caring for others can be messy and put you in a vulnerable place. It is also a blessing because you get a front row seat to see God work in someone else's life. When we give of ourselves, the Lord will bless that bountifully.

2 Corinthians 9:6-7 | The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

We hope and pray that as you care and mentor others here at FBC, and also those in your community outside of church, you will see how the Holy Spirit ministers to them and to you. Thank you for being courageous and putting yourself into

other people's afflictions and caring for them as Jesus cares and loves us.

John 13:34-35 | A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

2 Corinthians 1:3-5 | Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

Feel free to reach out to the Grace in Action ministry leader with additional questions and thoughts. As of September 2023, that is Andy Moore, andymoore586@gmail.com, 609-841-2159 (cell).

Addendum and Additional Information

Suggested Questions to get conversations started. Remember, of first importance is to be willing to get to know the individual(s) and build trust. Feel free to create your own.

- So, tell me what is going on?
- With all of this going on, how is your soul?
- Where do you see God in this?
- Can you tell me about your relationship to Christ and FBC? Be ready to share the same information about yourselves.
- What is your concept or understanding of the biblical view of _____ (fill in issue).
- How did you meet and what made you decide to marry? Be ready to share the same information about yourselves.
- Are there any areas in your marriage that you would like to know more about what God desires for you as a couple?

Additional Resources

FBC Grace *in* Action Ministry:

- Men's meeting
- Women's meeting
- Transformed to Victory addictions meeting
- Marriage Enrichment ministry

Training and Equipping Resources from

Life Over Coffee, www.lifeovercoffee.com

CCEF information on related issues of interest

www.ccef.org

ACBC information on related issues of interest

www.biblicalcounseling.com

BCC information on related issues of interest

www.biblicalcounselingcoalition.org

GotQuestions.org

[Bible Questions Answered | GotQuestions.org](http://www.gotquestions.org)

Books by Phil Moser

Books by Scott Foreman

"What Does A Spirit Filled Marriage Look Like?"
by Susan Heck

"Marriage and the Mystery of the Gospel"
by Ray Ortlund

"Free From Debt" by Paul Tripp.
Video series on forgiveness www.paultripp.com

"Relationships: A Mess Worth Making"
by Timothy Lane and Paul Tripp, 2006.

"Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands: People in Need of
Change Helping People in Need of Change"
by Paul Tripp, 2002.

"How People Change"
by Paul Tripp and Timothy Lane, 2006.

"Side by Side: Walking with Others in Wisdom and Love"
by Ed Welch, 2015.

Resources in FBC Resource Room

Various outside counseling resources including residential
and non-residential programs. Talk to the Grace *in* Action
Ministry leader.

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The Additional Information and Answers to Questions section was developed by Mark Grant who is part of the FBC body and has training through the equipping ministry of Rick Thomas, www.lifeovercoffee.com

" Praise be to the God and Father
of our Lord Jesus Christ, the
Father of compassion and the God
of all comfort, who comforts us in
all our troubles, so that we can
comfort those in any trouble with
the comfort we ourselves receive
from God. "

2 Cor 1:3-4



*Developed by the Grace in Action ministry
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