

PeaceWorks University

Toolbox Item: Evaluate Problems Biblically – Victim Care

Throughout 2022, PWU members will receive access to one video each month (twelve total) from Chris Moles in which he will introduce one of the six key elements of biblical counseling (*Gather Data, Build Involvement, Evaluate Problems Biblically, Minister the Word, Instill Hope, and Implement Homework*) and apply that key element to the specific practice of either victim care or perpetrator confrontation. After completing the *Key Elements of Biblical Counseling Success Path*, PWU members will be able to articulate each of the six key elements of biblical counseling and apply those elements to the particular needs of counselees, both victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse.

PWU members will also receive access to one new Toolbox item each month corresponding to the key element of biblical counseling being taught and applied in that month's Success Path video (see above). Our hope is that these Toolbox items will give you practical tools to use as you incorporate these key elements into your own counseling ministry.

Principles of Evaluating Problems Biblically in Victim Care

1. Biblical counselors must take the data they have gathered, using the passport of involvement, and invite the counselee to evaluate their problems biblically. Two primary categories that will be helpful in organizing and evaluating the problems presented are the categories of *sinner* and *sufferer*. Be aware, just as with perpetrators, these two categories are not mutually exclusive. All human beings are, at different times and to differing degrees, both sinners and sufferers. But when engaging in domestic abuse intervention, it is important that biblical counselors wisely determine whether the counselee (in this case the victim) is primarily a sinner to be confronted or a sufferer to be comforted. If, after gathering data, it has been determined that the perpetrator is the one with the primary (not only) sin to be addressed, then the biblical counselor must be careful not to mutualize the abuse¹ by viewing any of the victim's sin (whatever that may be) as causing or correlating to the sin of her perpetrator's abuse. This is not to say that victims cannot or do not sin (there may be any number of occasions for her sin - possibly by engaging in unbiblical resistance² or utilizing unbiblical methods of coping). When addressing the power dynamics of domestic abuse, it is critical that the sin of each party not be leveled to create a mutualizing effect but that instead the party causing harm (the perpetrator) be held accountable and his sin be confronted first and with the most urgency while the party being harmed (the victim) is provided primarily with comfort, care, and safety.
2. Biblical counselors can serve the victim well by weaving her suffering story (and the themes of her story such a grief, shame, fear, need for protection, etc.) into God's greater story.

¹ To better understand why abuse is not a mutual marriage problem, please see the following resources.

- [BCTC 2018 Video - Helping the Church Respond to Abusive Spouses – Chris Moles](#)
- [PeaceWorks Blog - Not a Marriage Problem – Chris Moles](#)
- [Facebook Live Video - Focus on Men's Violence/Separate Tracks of Care Recommendation – Chris Moles](#)
- [Episode #186 of The PeaceWorks Podcast – Separate Tracks of Care in Cases of Domestic Abuse](#)

² For more information on the topic of resistance, please see the following resources.

- [Episode #95 of The PeaceWorks Podcast – Thinking About Resistance](#)
- [PeaceWorks Blog – Resisting Abuse and Matthew Chapter 5 – Chris Moles](#)
- [Leslie Vernick Blog – Is Resisting Abuse Sinful? \(Part One\)](#)
- [Leslie Vernick Blog – Is Resisting Abuse Sinful? \(Part Two\)](#)

3. Biblical counselors can serve the victim well by making space to hear and honor her broad range of emotions. As they do this, the biblical counselor can help the victim understand what those emotions might reveal about how she feels and what she is experiencing in her marriage.
4. Biblical counselors can serve the victim well by helping her explore and evaluate her thinking (about abuse/oppression, suffering, marriage, separation/divorce, etc.) according to biblical principles. Be aware, if the victim has experienced trauma, this may create challenges to this piece of the evaluation process.³

³ To learn more about trauma-informed victim care, please see the following resources housed within the PeaceWorks University membership site.

- Master Class - *Complex Post-Traumatic Stress* with Rachael Rosser
- Master Class - *Stages of Change for Victims/Survivors* with Summer Vinson-Berger
- Master Class - *The Lived Experience of Abuse* with Brad Hambrick
- Master Class - *Understanding Trauma* with Eliza Huie