

- Thank you: Yesterday’s seminar with Pastor Mark Barrett was helpful and on point (“Counseling People in Sexual Sin”)
- Partnership: This seminar has a different emphasis – not in contradiction to what was presented yesterday – but as a companion. Just as people in our churches have different abilities based on spiritual giftedness, personality, and passion, so do pastors. Some pastors thrive in one-on-one settings, and others are more drawn to group settings. Some pastors love to study and spend dozens of hours in sermon preparation, and others study less and invest more time with people.
- A Probing Question: In Exodus 4, Moses is wrestling with God over his new assignment in Egypt. At one point, God asks a very revealing question: “What is that in your hand?” Of course, it was a shepherd’s staff, very familiar to Moses. Similarly, God uses OUR special abilities & passions to equip & feed His people. In my case, I’ve always been a “book person” – I love to read widely, interact with concepts, and equip leaders & people to think & act biblically.
- ONE Tool: Eleven years ago, we presented our first “Biblical Counseling Seminar” and we have done so each year since. We use a Friday evening/Saturday format and typically welcome about 75 people. One counselor wrote several years ago that about 85% of his counseling could be done by any biblically minded friend, leaving about 15% that involves the more complicated situations. Our seminars are aimed at equipping people to be better people-helpers in that 85% category.
- Our Model: After several years of laying the philosophical & biblical foundation, we now announce a particular emphasis for the annual seminar (like forgiveness or anger or grief or grace-based parenting), choose textbooks (I like the material produced by CCEF – visit their website) and ask people to buy & read the books prior to attending the seminar, and then we present the material. People are seated around tables, encouraging interaction with others. We invite church leaders, small group leaders, teachers, men’s & women’s leaders, AND anyone interested.
- The Impact: As I preach, I regularly refer to the material presented at our seminars and I use the same textbooks in counseling and as sermon illustrations. This approach equips more people to provide better counsel both informally and in ministry settings, *greatly reducing the dependence on the pastoral staff as the main dispensers of biblical wisdom*. People really CAN provide wise counsel for one another!
- Examples: I’ve attached the Power Point slides that we prepared for our 2019 and 2020 seminars. I think they will make sense, though in some cases, you’d have to be in the room! Feel free to send me an email for further explanations. The PP slides are not copyrighted, so feel free to use them.
- My Intent: My intent in presenting this approach is not that everyone else would do the same thing, but that you would ask, “How has God wired me to accomplish the same task?”