

# A Practical Guide for Effective Biblical Counseling- Mack, Wayne

## Introduction to the 8 I's

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### Who Can Benefit?

- Anyone involved in counseling people.
  - *This will include: using the Scriptures to help ourselves and others with various problems and situations*
- Anyone who strives to disciple others for Christ.
  - *This will hopefully enlarge compassion and ability to help others make biblical changes AND help us all become more mature disciples of Jesus*
- Every parent who wants to promote effective communication and faith-building conversations with their children.
  - *This may challenge us spiritually- but the investment is worth it!*
- Any Christian committed to serving others through the Word of God.
  - *This will hopefully help us with a procedure to deal with counseling or life situations*
- Anyone who wants to live a life pleasing to the Lord, utilizing the principles set forth in Scripture.

“This book is meant to be a guide for biblical counselors on how to effectively help counselees overcome their struggles, practical and spiritual, and become true, faithful disciples of Jesus. My approach to biblical counseling can be broken down into eight essential steps, each rooted in biblical disciple-making principles. I will clearly describe each step, how and where it is taught in Scripture, and why it is vital to strengthening discipleship.” Mack, Wayne. A Practical Guide for Effective Biblical Counseling (pp. 26-27)

### The Goal of Counseling

“The goal of biblical counseling is to help people become a consistently positive influence in the church, giving rather than merely receiving..... **What is biblical counseling?** Simply stated, it's helping people solve their problems. It's about discovering the cause, then applying biblical principles to help them overcome their problems, and

giving them the necessary tools for them to move forward in their spiritual maturity.” (p. 27)

“Ultimately, all counselors are theologians, aren’t they? Some are sound and some are not. If your foundational presuppositions are based upon anything other than the holy Word of God, then you will fall into the latter group”. (p. 30)

**Important to note:**

“**Biblical counseling is based upon a biblical understanding of the doctrine of God: Theology.** These doctrinal truths about God have tremendous implications for us as we seek to counsel people. **a. God is Triune** (three Persons). 2 Corinthians 13:14; John 1:1–3; Romans 9:5; **and is one God.** Deuteronomy 6:4–5; 1 Timothy 2:5. **b. God is Creator**—Jeremiah 32:17; Genesis 1:1 **c. God is Holy**—Isaiah 6:3; 1 Peter 1:16. **d. God is loving, gracious and merciful** —1 John 4:8; Ephesians 2:4; Galatians 2:20. **e. God is unchangeable or immutable**—Hebrews 13:8; James 1:17. **f. God is all-knowing and all-wise; omniscient** —Romans 11:33; Psalm 139; 1 John 3:20; Hebrews 4:13. **g. God is omnipresent**—Psalm 139; Matthew 28:20. **h. God is truthful. He cannot lie**—Hebrews 6:18; Titus 1:2; Isaiah 65:16; 1 John 5:20. **i. God is faithful, trustworthy**—1 Corinthians 10:13; 1:9; 2 Corinthians 1:18; 1 John 1:9.”(pp. 30-31)

“Biblical counseling is inherently practical. If it’s not practical, what possible good is it? The goal of biblical counseling is to help people, after all. It does this by putting the principles of Scripture into practice in their lives. **Biblical change is possible in every area of life—in thoughts, desires, words, and actions.**” (p. 41)

Mack says that it is impossible to counsel someone biblically if they do not believe in Christ.

**1 Corinthians 2:14 tells us the natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.**

So we must find out the spiritual standing of the person who comes for help. Are they a believer? Are they prepared to come under Christ’s authority? (the authority of Scripture) If they are a believer then we can take a step, **if not, evangelism is priority.** Without the Holy Spirit biblical change is impossible (behavior modification is dangerous and not lasting)

## Ways to use the 8 I's

Mack argues that the 8 I's model of counseling can be used in two ways- a guideline and a checklist.

- Used as a guideline we have direction to help in the process of change.
- Used as a checklist we can evaluate the success of our attempts to help people change.

“Many passages tell us what we are to do in counseling others—like Matthew 28:19–20, Colossians 1:28, Colossians 3:16, 1 Thessalonians 5:11, 14, Galatians 6:1, to name a few. Some even give general directions about how to do it—by teaching, preaching and counseling. However, they don't really give specific directions in helping people change. As a result, many people want to help but don't know how. They sometimes feel inadequate and don't know where to start. The desire is there, but the know-how is not. Because of this, counselors need guidelines if they are to increase in effectiveness. That's what this book provides—a model for how to do this important work in the lives of others. Checklist: A checklist evaluates the success of our attempts to help people overcome their struggles with biblical change. Without a checklist, how can we determine if we're doing the right thing? What criteria do we use to determine the worth of our efforts in discipling?” (pp. 42-43)

**We often determine success if it is immediate and visible. This can be misleading. Mack points out that the best way to measure effectiveness is:**

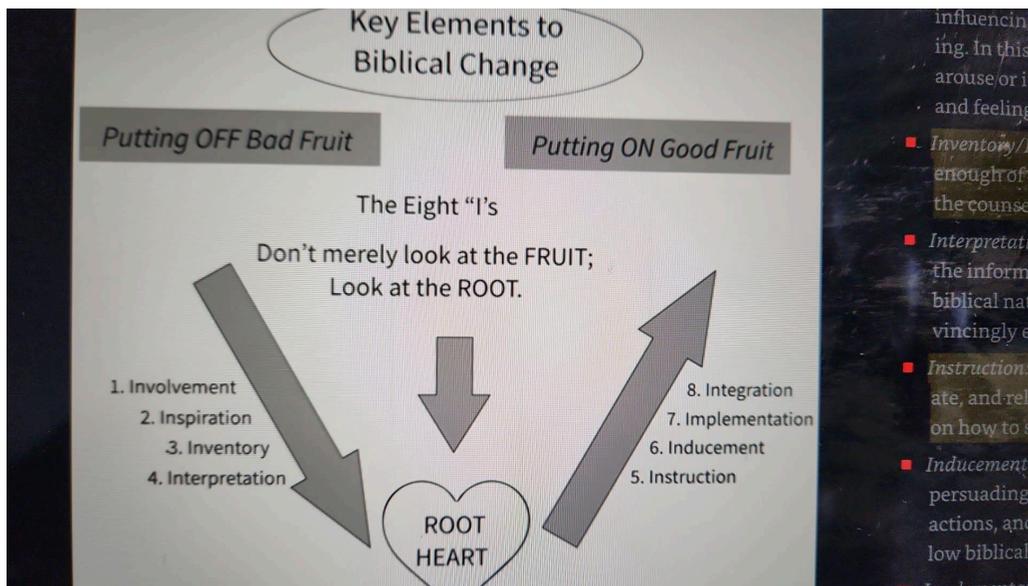
**Have I been true to the Word of God?** (2 Tim. 2:24–25, 1 Cor. 4:1–2, Luke 12:42-43, Matt. 25:14–23, 2 Cor. 5:9)

“We face two real dangers in our attempts to help people change. One is the danger of taking our responsibility too lightly—being flippant, sloppy, and/or unprepared. The other is being excessively concerned with our own responsibility and beginning to perceive that the result of our counseling depends on us! If the one we're counseling doesn't have a good result, we feel the weight of guilt, that we must not have said enough or done enough. We feel that it must be our fault. We end up discouraged and afraid to try again.”

If we are faithful, we don't have to be discouraged- because we have attempted to do what is pleasing and honoring to Him. (One of the best prayers we can all pray is that we would be a faithful people)

“The biblical process of making disciples and accomplishing biblical change involves two primary aspects—putting off bad fruit and putting on good fruit.”

Ephesians 4:20–24 [20] But that is not the way you learned Christ!—[21] assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, [22] to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, [23] and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, [24] and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.



**Note** The first four “I”s focus primarily on the “putting off” aspect of biblical change. The last four focus mainly on the “putting on” aspect of biblical change. (pp. 45-46). Shepherd Press. Kindle Edition.

## The 8 I's - Promoting Biblical Change

1. **Involvement:** Promotes biblical change by establishing a change-facilitating relationship.

2. Inspiration: In promoting biblical change, we want to inspire, or influence the counselee to develop and sustain an attitude and feeling of hope that will promote biblical change.
3. **Inventory/Investigation:** Promotes biblical change by securing enough of the right kinds of information to accurately understand the counselee and any problems.
4. **Interpretation:** Promotes biblical change by analyzing and organizing the information we have gathered so we can accurately identify the biblical nature and cause(s) of the counselee's problems, then convincingly explain them.
5. **Instruction:** Promotes biblical change by giving accurate, appropriate, and relevant biblical instruction that provides God's perspective on how to solve the problem(s).
6. **Inducement:** Promotes biblical change by encouraging the counselee to repent of sinful attitudes, words, and actions, and make a decisive commitment to obey the Lord and follow biblical directives.
7. **Implementation:** Promotes biblical change by helping the counselee to plan how to make the biblical directives a reality in their life.
8. **Integration:** Promotes biblical change by coaching and mentoring the counselee until the necessary changes are integrated into his or her life, encouraging integration into the life of the church.

Mack, Wayne. A Practical Guide for Effective Biblical Counseling (p. 47). Shepherd Press. Kindle Edition.

## Involvement

**Involvement:** Promotes biblical change by establishing a change-facilitating relationship.

**Counseling requires much thought, insight, and prayer.**

“Some people develop a problem-centered approach to counseling. Once they discover the problem, they want to quickly deal with it, expecting the counselee to take their sage advice and run with it. Problem solved. It's not as simple as that. **Effective biblical counselors take a people-centered approach.** It's more about the person than about the problem.(p. 52)

Mack points out that while some problems seem to have an obvious solution, sometimes people aren't ready to hear (or handle) what is required. There are a number of reasons for this: hurt, angry, sin, sinned against etc.

**A great starting point(s) with anyone we are counseling/discipling is:**

The need for a deeper relationship with Christ. And the need to develop that closer relationship through the counsel of a godly person they view as a friend, not a foe—an ally and not an adversary.

“This is true of any good, effective counseling relationship. We must keep in mind the truths of Proverbs 27:6, 9. “Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse are the kisses of an enemy.... Oil and perfume make the heart glad, and the sweetness of a friend comes from his earnest counsel.” (p. 53). Shepherd Press. Kindle Edition.

Mack suggests that we build involvement through compassion and respect. Reminds me of *Titus 2:7–8 Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned...*

## Compassion

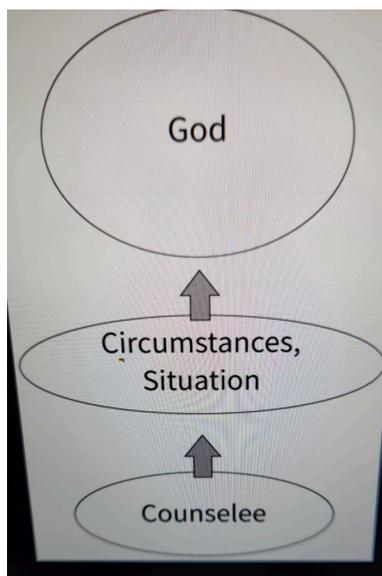
“When someone is sinned against, he commonly feels pain, hurt, fear, and hardship. As effective counselors, we must try to promote biblical actions rather than sinful reactions. And we do that through involvement in their lives and their thinking. Too many times, offering advice without first developing a caring relationship means that advice will fall upon deaf ears. Hurting people may not care what you have to say if they do not see genuine compassion and involvement.(p. 54).



Offering advice without establishing a caring relationship can oftentimes fall on deaf ears. Can you think of a situation where it seemed like the person who told you something meant well, but you didn't receive it as well as you could have? Or how about times when you doubted someone's intentions, or were left frustrated at how it was handled?

“True compassion desires to see a closer relationship to the Lord as a result of counseling. Only then will the counselee have the tools available to sustain him through all the trials and tribulations of life. Such a counselee leaves the counseling setting prepared for any situation. It rarely starts out that way, though. When a hurting person first comes to a counselor, all he can see is his painful circumstance or situation. God's involvement in that is far outside his thinking, in most cases.” (p. 55)

The hope is to enter stage 2 of counseling where the hurting person begins to see through the situation or circumstance to the promises and lovingkindness of God. Seeing the situation through the lens of scripture rather than emotion.



“What is involved in building this deep involvement that facilitates biblical change? What disposes people to listen to us and receive the counsel we bring? As I search the Scriptures, I see several factors in building this change-facilitating relationship with people. The first one is compassion. It plays a vital role in the effectiveness of discipleship. “Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy

and beloved, compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience” (Col. 3:12). (Also see Eph. 4:32, Phil. 2:1–2, and 1 Peter 3:8.)” (pp. 57-58). Shepherd Press. Kindle Edition.

The author gives us two great counselors from Scripture: **Jesus and Paul**. Let’s observe these truths.

“Jesus, called by Isaiah “Wonderful Counselor” (Isa. 9:6), is the greatest example. We can’t read the Bible without being impressed with the fact that His life was characterized by compassion. I’ll mention a few passages here, but there are many, many more I could have chosen.

- Matthew 9:36—“When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them ...”
- Matthew 14:14—“When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick.”
- Matthew 15:32—“Then Jesus called his disciples to him and said, ‘I have compassion on the crowd ...’”
- Luke 7:13—“And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her and said to her, ‘Do not weep.’”
- Hebrews 4:15—“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.”

#### **Paul was full of compassion as well:**

- Acts 20:31—“Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish everyone with tears.”
- Acts 20:19—“...serving the Lord with all humility and with tears ...”
- Philippians 1:7— “It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace ...”
- Galatians 4:19— “...my little children, for whom I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you!”
- Romans 9:1–3— “I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit—that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers ...”(p. 59). Shepherd Press. Kindle Edition.

**Mack adds some ways we can acquire a deeper compassion.**

1. **Reminds ourselves of our own need.** Why are we in the family of God? (Christ's mercy) Who loved us when we were unlovable? Who gave His life for us? Who had ultimate compassion for us?
2. Putting ourselves in their shoes. Try and figure out what this person is going through. How must they feel, what must they be thinking. What would it be like to feel helpless, and hopeless? **Consider their perspective, and above all, listen to them!**
3. It's helpful to **spend time with compassionate people.** Who might you be able to learn from? What questions might you ask about how they approach relationships etc?
4. This one is very important when considering compassion: view them as brethren, **as part of your family.**

How is compassion manifested in the life of a Christian? Let's consider these examples.

- "Through words ([1 Thess. 2:12–13](#))
- Through prayer ([Phil. 1:9](#), [Eph. 1:15–16](#))
- Through genuine grief in connection with their pain ([Mark 3:1–5](#), [John 11:32–35](#))
- Through gentleness and tenderness ([Matt. 12:20](#), [1 Thess. 5:14](#))
- Through concern for physical and spiritual needs and doing what you can to meet those needs ([Mark 8:1–3](#))

Compassion is shown in so many other ways, like offering encouragement, by not pushing people too fast, by speaking in a gracious manner, by maintaining self-control in the face of insults, by defending people who are being mistreated or falsely accused, and by sacrificing time and money to help others. One thing is certain—a hurting person.” (p. 61). Shepherd Press. Kindle Edition.

## What Not To Do

Verbal and non verbal communication are both important in involvement

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1. Don't smirk at them or what they have to say
  2. Don't interrupt them (be a good listener! Listen for information, not to replay)
  3. Don't yawn or seem distracted or disinterested
  4. Don't use Bible verses as a hammer
  5. Don't accuse of impure motives (unless proof)
  6. Don't speak to them in a belittling or disrespectful way
  7. Don't Make a joke out of their concerns
  8. Don't Be late for a meeting or spend time looking at your phone

Mack has a helpful acronym to communicate interest that he labels **SOLVER**

S—Squared shoulders

O—Open stance

L—Leaning slightly forward

V—Vocal quality

E—Eye contact

R—Relaxed posture

**Involvement is established through genuineness and honesty** “These two traits, genuineness and honesty, should characterize the whole of our lives. However, in a counseling setting, they are imperative. A primary verse that exemplifies this statement is 2 Corinthians 4:2. “But we have renounced disgraceful, under-handed ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God’s word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone’s conscience in the sight of God.” As a counselor, be honest about your credentials and qualifications, who and what you are. Don’t pretend to be something you’re not. Be honest about the kind of counseling you offer, and about what you expect of your counselee. Let him know what he can expect of you. (See 1 Corinthians 4:1.) If in the course of counseling you misunderstand, make a mistake, are confused, or make a misstatement, be honest about those things as well. Admit them. Ask the counselee to forgive you. That goes for your children, too. Admitting your mistakes will cause them to think more highly of you, not less.” (p. 63). Shepherd Press. Kindle Edition.

**Involvement is promoted through the presence of the fruit of the spirit in the life of the counselor**

Remember Galatians 5:22–23. “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.” Effective

counselors must demonstrate these traits in life. No, they won't be able to lay claim on all of them to the same degree, and some they may still struggle with. Such is the work of the Holy Spirit in each of us. So, I'm not saying we show each of these traits perfectly. But I do think a counselor should be a mature believer, steadfast in faith, and sure-footed in theology. These are qualities that may be absent in those who seek our counsel. We can't encourage them in other people if we don't have them ourselves."(pp. 63-64). Shepherd Press. Kindle Edition.

### **More Practical Ways to Show Compassion and Respect.**

"1. Remain alert and attentive. 2. Practice active listening. Don't allow your mind to wander. 3. Express interest with your face, eyes, and body posture. 4. Smile appropriately. 5. Weep appropriately. 6. Be on time. Don't make your counselee wait. 7. Be sensitive to your counselee's time frame. 8. Cancel appointments only when absolutely necessary. 9. Display gentleness when opposed. 10. Let your counselee talk before you share.. 11. Don't give up on your counselee quickly. 12. Express appropriate optimism and a positive attitude about God's ability to help your counselee. 13. Speak in a warm, gentle tone of voice. 14. Express appreciation for your counselee's strengths, insights, efforts, changes, and any evidence of God's working in his life. 15. Take your counselee's problems seriously—never make light of his concerns. 16. Be available to your counselee. Send an encouraging note. Give your counselee a call when you think he is experiencing difficult times. 17. Offer your support in a non-judgmental manner. 18. Pray for your counselee within your sessions and assure him of your prayers during the week. 19. Encourage your counselee to call you if he is having an especially difficult time."Mack, Wayne. A Practical Guide for Effective Biblical Counseling (pp. 67-69). Shepherd Press. Kindle Edition.

### **Involvement is closely related to all the other I's we will explore. Here is a brief summary.**

"involvement is developed through inspiration. It happens as you encourage a biblically based attitude of hope in the mind of your counselee. It is developed as you take a thorough inventory and secure enough information to accurately understand the counselee and his problems. Involvement is developed as you make an accurate interpretation of what your counselee is saying. It promotes biblical change by allowing you to analyze and organize that information so you can accurately and biblically identify the biblical nature and causes of the problem(s). Involvement is encouraged as you promote biblical change by giving accurate, appropriate, and relevant biblical instruction that provides God's perspective on what to do to solve your counselee's problems. It is developed as you induce (motivate, persuade) your counselee to repent of sinful attitudes, words, and actions, and to make a decisive commitment to obey the



Lord and follow biblical directives. Involvement is developed as you help your counselee to actually integrate the biblical directives and perspectives into the whole of his life. So you see, involvement is “involved” in every aspect of counseling.” (pp. 69-70). Shepherd Press. Kindle Edition.

## Inspiration

**In promoting biblical change, we want to inspire, or influence the counselee to develop and sustain an attitude and feeling of hope that will promote biblical change.**

If a counselor is going to be able to effectively help her, he must not only establish involvement, but must also inspire her to have biblical hope. The truth is that Clara (and others like her) will not change—they will not respond to the difficult trials of life in a biblical way—unless they can be inspired to have an attitude of hopefulness. Hope motivates change. This chapter will help you learn how to inspire that kind of hope—the kind that motivates change—into the lives of those you wish to help. The reason we’ll focus so intently on this is not because this is the most important “I,” but because they are all so intertwined, and inspiration is vital to the success of all the rest.

Mack, Wayne. A Practical Guide for Effective Biblical Counseling (pp. 72-73). Shepherd Press. Kindle Edition.