Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity

Thesis Project Approval Sheet

______________________________  
Dr. Eric Scott Maze, Mentor

______________________________  
Dr. Kenneth Warren, Reader

iv
THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT
Neil B. Dodson
Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity, 2021
Mentor: Dr. Scott Maze

The goal of this project is to assess the efficacy of The Henry First Counseling Program by demonstrating the change in life satisfaction and client well-being. The Judson Baptist Association operates two Ministry Centers to serve persons in Henry County, Alabama, who are unserved, underserved, and marginalized. The Centers provide food assistance, moderately priced clothing and household goods, and spiritual resources for clients within the Judson Baptist Association of Henry County.

The Centers’ primary service program is the Food Bank Distribution Program designed for persons who qualify with the Federal Department of Agriculture. To receive food, persons must be at least eighteen years old, meet the income requirements, reside in Henry County, and agree to participate in an interview session conducted by volunteer ministers. It is from the Food Bank that participants will be invited to join the HFC Program. The program will use a pastoral counseling approach consisting of five sessions with each participant. A teaching guide was developed using Holy Scriptures as teaching material. The participants will be evaluated with a reliable pre and post-test assessment instrument. The change in client life satisfaction and well-being will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the project.
Tables

2.1 The Lord’s Prayer .......................................................... 64
2.2 The Old and New Testament Teaching ........................................... 68
2.3 The Lord’s Protection .......................................................... 70
2.4 Park’s Model ................................................................ 75
2.5 Pargament’s Conclusions ......................................................... 79
2.6 Positive/Negative Emotional Effect .............................................. 81
2.7 Cognitive REBT Intervention ..................................................... 87
3.1 Qualifiers .................................................................. 105
3.2 Timetable for Project ......................................................... 111
## Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CT</td>
<td><em>Cognitive Therapy</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EWB</td>
<td><em>Existential Well-being</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HF</td>
<td><em>Hope-Focused Therapy</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HFC</td>
<td><em>Henry First Counseling (Program)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IP</td>
<td><em>Intervention Plan</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JBA</td>
<td><em>Judson Baptist Association</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC</td>
<td><em>Pastoral Counseling</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWB</td>
<td><em>Subjective Well-being or Spiritual Well-being (context)</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 1

Introduction

The Judson Baptist Association (JBA) is an association of twenty-one Southern Baptist Churches in the Southern Baptist Convention. All twenty-one churches are in Henry County located in the southeast corner of Alabama. The county was founded in 1821, one of the oldest in the State. It was created by early pioneer settlers moving westward across Georgia in search of land ownership and productive farmland to sustain their families and enjoy a better life. A small African American population was brought into the state as slaves and laborers to clear the land and farm it. A small Native American population remained after removal of the indigenous tribes during the Cherokee Trail of Tears in 1831 and intermarried whites and their progeny.¹

Henry County consists of some six hundred square miles with slightly over seventeen thousand residents composed of fifty-four percent white and forty-four percent black, and two percent Hispanic and Native American. Two significant towns make up the largest population group representing the county's economic strength. A number of small rural communities and remote crossroads complete the demographic picture of the county.²

The JBA is administered by a Director of Missions who plans and supervises religious county-wide activities. Several years ago, the JBA established outreach ministry centers in the two largest towns of the county with the mission statement of “Proclaiming the Good News of

---

¹ Author’s Note: J.W. Commander was a long-time educator along with his wife Molly who was also an educator. Regarding her lineage, she had a great grandmother who was Cherokee Indian. The great grandmother had married a white settler who fought in the Civil War from 1860-1865. While her husband was fighting in the Civil War, the wife brought in the cotton crop each year which provided for her family’s needs on a large farm near Abbeville, AL.

Jesus Christ to the People of Henry County.” A Ministry Director supervises the operation of the store fronts and manages the volunteers. The ministry stores were named Love in Action and Overflowing Ministries. The stores provide the same services, namely, a thrift clothing store, which relies on local donations, a food bank distribution program supplied by a regional food bank organization and local contributions, and ministerial teams, which provide compassionate care and spiritual resources to clients.

**Ministry Context**

The Judson Baptist Association has observed Southern Baptist Church trends occurring across America, particularly noting the declines in significant indicators of viable statistics. Among the 48,000 Southern Baptist Churches, there has been a plateauing of active memberships, baptisms, attendance in worship services and discipleship programs, and overall financial giving. The figures are discouraging but not surprising since most SBC Churches have aging givers and attendees, report fewer younger married couples and singles, and list church programs primarily inward. Some SBC churches are shutting their doors and selling their properties in the face of declining numbers. Dwindling participation and scarcity of resources contribute to the overall decline leaving many communities without a church presence.

In the Judson Baptist Association of Henry County, Alabama, the twenty-one church’s demographics reflected similar disheartening trends. The annual reports generated by the JBA for the Southern Baptist Convention indicate how active memberships, number of baptisms, and the rate of participating in regular Sunday services and discipleship programs, and the financial giving are in decline, with several churches on the verge of closing.

---

3 Judson Baptist Association 169th Annual Meeting Publication, 2019-2020, Rev. Otis Derrah, Director of Missions, Judson Baptist Association, 526 Ozark Road, Abbeville, AL, pp. 85, 89. Data from the publication indicates that giving by churches has decreased from the 2019-2020 budget year to the 2020-2021 cycle.
The vision of the ministry centers is taken from Holy Scripture, which aligns with foundational scriptural mandates adopted by the JBA (Mark 3:11). The Lord Jesus Christ ministered to the people, where they worked, where they shopped, and where they socialized to give everyone the good news of the gospel. Jesus’ gospel proclaimed the love of the Father’s and the way to secure satisfaction and well-being in this life and the life to come. Christ Jesus is the incarnation of the Father’s love. The JBA wanted to be a witness to Christ’s activity on earth as His ambassadors.

The ministry centers were established to provide God's ongoing and intentional opportunities to serve people living within Henry County's communities. The ministry centers were designed to create opportunities for unserved, unserved, marginalized population groups within the geographical boundaries of the Association and to promote life transformation of its residents.

The JBA was looking to venture outside the usual limitations of institutional church settings to engage people who would not otherwise seek material assistance, physical consolation, or spiritual guidance to help them with everyday needs. The centers serve clients with a friendly, neighborly appeal like any other consumer-oriented group. This consumer-like

---

4 Matt 25:35-36, “For I was hungry and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty and you gave Me something to eat; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you took care of Me; I was in prison and you visited Me.” [Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced employ the New King James Version (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1982)].

5 Due to the over eight hundred families being served by the JBA, there is justification for confining benefits to County residents; however, no one who is need is turned away from services. Every county in Alabama has a local SBC Associational Office to minister to their own in-house residents.
setting provides food, clothing, and support services without stigmatizing clients. A ministerial component is available to help clients with spiritual comfort and promote wellness.  

The centers promote an awareness of God’s love for them through the service activities that model Jesus’ compassion. The counseling program offers services that 1) provide spiritual tools to improve life satisfaction and wellness to clients, 2) promote comfort and encouragement to the challenges and struggles clients experience in life, and 3) counsel clients with spiritual resources and tools to overcome difficult situations. The pastoral approach with clients is interactive so that a more positive and flourishing lifestyle will result.

The JBA wanted to be a change agent for the gospel message presented and portrayed through outreach services. The gospel message and the services provided are designed to help participants to become 1) followers of Jesus Christ, 2) participate in a local church body, and 3) prosperous in life. The expected outcome of the programs is to positively affect life satisfaction and wellness through the love of Jesus Christ.

The founding principle for reaching the underserved communities and population groups in Henry County was saving souls and ministering to people in need. Christ taught this principle in John 10:10a, “I have come that they may have life and have it in abundance.”

The author of this study has worked with the JBA for several years in areas of teaching, counseling, and service-related projects. He has participated in outreach programs to reach the least, the lost, and the last in many associational initiatives.

---

6 Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 13. [Sensing posits the practice of “tangible actions that are socially embedded, meaningful for users, offering strategies for right use while seeking an intended purpose.”]

7 John 10:10 “A thief comes to steal, kill, and destroy. I (Jesus) have come that they may have life and have it abundantly.” [Note: Many individuals have a misconception about evil, the nature of, the source of, as well as the nature and will of God. Jesus posits the contrast of good and evil and the solution to it in a single verse.]
There are many reasons why the underserved and marginalized individuals do not participate or join local churches. The primary reason for not joining a church or becoming a believer is that the Christians they know and see are reportedly hypocritical. There is the perception that the church is judging them. The hypocrisy cited by the unchurched is that Christians are doing the same things they accuse nonchurched of doing; therefore, those outside the church view no difference between them. They see no need for the church in their lives.

The good news of Jesus Christ is that He came to save, deliver, and transform lives. From the transformation of sinners into saints, God wants those who believe to shine His light to those living helpless, hopeless, and hidden lives. This project will measure the Henry First Counseling program (HFC) impact on the participating clients.

The HFC project will present several pertinent questions, namely, “What difference does pastoral counseling make in the life of a person?” and “How can pastoral counseling impact and improve the life satisfaction and well-being of the clients participating in the program?” The findings in this study will answer these questions by demonstrating a change in the lives of clients enrolled in the program.

The JBA decided to establish two ministry centers in the county’s main towns based on population numbers and the location distance to most residents. By placing the centers in the local communities, clients will be able to use the services offered as they would in any other shopping experience.

The storefront model was the approach chosen to remove any barriers, religious stigmas, or negative perceptions that would project counterproductive messages once the clients entered the facilities. The image of community services and the business-friendly atmosphere were the
reasons for purchasing the facilities. By design, the retail-service-benefit model would hopefully attract a divergent consumer group and stimulate repeat consumers who need the services.

The expectation by the association was that the services and programs offered by the ministry centers would positively impact the lives of those previously unserved and underserved by the religious community. The centers have thus far provided much needed services which have benefitted those who were not being served by traditional church outreaches. The HFC program has demonstrated that the financial investment made by the churches of the JBA has made an enormous impact on the communities served, and that the centers can be a model for other religious or secular agencies to replicate.

**Problem Presented**

The problem presented in this project focuses on the efficacy of the ministry centers’ HFC Program. Currently, there is a need for a systematic and biblically unified approach to teaching clients how to live satisfied, flourishing live, and obtain righteousness, joy, and peace in the world. This project will include developing and implementing the HFC Program with a standardized assessment tool for measuring the degree of client change in life satisfaction and well-being. The standardized assessment tool will be given as a fifteen-minute pre and post-test, measuring clients’ mental, emotional, and spiritual responses. A valid and reliable standardized assessment instrument will show how clients were impacted by the teaching and counseling activities and record a change in the assessment data to prove efficacy.

The ministry centers currently utilize anecdotal feedback from clients for evaluation. The proposed project will provide a structured teaching counseling curriculum with a standardized assessment process to help demonstrate: 1) change in clients’ life satisfaction and well-being, 2) a method for improvement to the program to improve and sustain client growth and
development, 3) a justification for the continuance of funding and program support, and 4) a program that could serve as a paradigm for other ministerial entities.

**Purpose Statement**

The HFC program aims to produce a positive impact on client life satisfaction and gains in well-being. The pastoral counseling and assessment approach expects to teach and equip clients to maximize life satisfaction and wellness and help prevent cyclical stress and adverse emotional outcomes due to life challenges. When clients experience ever-increasing life satisfaction and joy from physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being, they are better able to cope with distress, despair, and discouragement when confronted with problems and severe issues.

The ministry centers presently record and monitor total sales receipts for the merchandise sold in the thrift stores, the amount of food distributed, and the number of clients interviewed. There is no current evaluation for the impact that ministry centers have regarding the benefits of spiritual outreach to those being served. The one helpful evaluation tool is the anecdotal feedback from clients. This project expects to generate important evaluation information for measuring the success of the centers’ mission.

**Basic Assumptions**

The author is committed to the vision, goals, and purposes of the Judson Baptist Association to reach and serve communities under its jurisdiction. Volunteers in the centers have share the Christian faith with clients who have participate in the service programs and have witnessed many decisions to follow Jesus Christ. There have been many expressions of gratitude in response to the services received, the compassion shown, and the acts of kindness ministered
in times of need. It is assumed that all the positive ministerial aspects (increased numbers of clients receiving services, professions of faith, expressions of gratitude) will continue.

The basic assumption that guides the centers' activities are that God loves all people and desires that none perish (John 3:16, 2 Pet 3:9). A juxtaposition assumption to this operational theme is a loving God who created all and who will ultimately judge all according to how they regard God’s Son, Jesus (Mark 3:29). The JBA ministers conducting the interview sessions understand that clients coming for services do not necessarily have the same doctrinal beliefs or adhere to any set denominational practices. All who come to the centers are welcomed and are considered valuable and love by God.

It is assumed that many of those coming to participate at the Centers may be marginalized and somewhat disillusioned with formalized religion. They may be disinterested in scripted religious messages and feel intimidated by a sense of obeisance in accepting gifts. Therefore, efforts have been made to remove all symbols of organized church obstacles regarding specific behaviors, conduct, appearance, and expected social norms.

The ministry centers assume a storefront model for the outreach function of the association. That function will not act as a brick-and-mortar church. The centers will use the gospel message to minister to the unreached, the underserved, and the unnoticed, providing them with needed material goods and pointing them to Jesus Christ (Matt 28:18-20). The services provided to clients will allow them to participate in the centers’ mission. The services require no fees or reimbursements and are available to everyone who have needs and are looking for resources to help.

The postmodern church has lifted high the church spire with the presumption that the drowning masses would swim to the ark for safety. The church has assumed, in many cases, to
be the judge of truth, goodness, and the ideal way to God; however, it has focused far too long more on programs and activities for church attenders while neglecting to help those languishing in their communities.

The assumption by church leadership in general is that if churches produce attractive worship offerings, provide exciting children’s programs, and engage in social settings for adults, that others would come seeking that version of Narnia. The modern church has not delivered on the high ideals of Christ to reach the hurting masses with love and compassionate care. As a result, many oppressed have turned away from churches seeking secular sources to meet their needs.

The author assumes that a teaching curriculum with an assessment component will impact clients’ well-being. Furthermore, the change in clients’ lives can be measured, and the outcome of the counseling sessions will positively change clients’ life satisfaction and wellness. It is believed that teaching the power of the gospel from the Word of God will go forth and will not return void or without effect. The gospel message of God’s unconditional love and complete and total forgiveness for all sin purchased by the blood of Jesus on the cross will accomplish the intended outcome that God has for all who hear, believe, and receive the message into their hearts. It is assumed that Christ Jesus's message to earth is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

---

8 Andy Stanley, *Deep & Wide: Creating Churches Unchurched People Love to Attend* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016). Stanley is regarded as an advocate for the attractional worship model proposing significant investments of artistic and technical personnel creating exciting and attractional worship experiences.

9 Jer 55:11.

10 Heb 13:8.
The ministry center workers understand that God's Word transforms minds, renews health and well-being, and prospers those who receive and believe (1 John 3:2). The centers’ aim is to meet the people at the point of contact with the gospel of Jesus with the services they would not otherwise receive in retail outlets. The volunteers who work at the centers work in a spirit of service to provide an inviting atmosphere of compassionate care to those who shop and need assistance.

Volunteers assume that God's grace will positively impact clients' lives by sharing Christ’s message in actions and deeds. As clients continue to patronize the centers for goods and services, it is assumed that nurturing relationships will be created and thrive; that the caring mindset of volunteers will promote a positive atmosphere for clients. The hopeful and expected outcomes of the pastoral counseling assessment will demonstrate a positive impact (change) on clients' lives, thereby proving efficacy.

It is assumed clients will tell family and friends about the ministry centers so that their testimonies will point others to seek help at the centers. From the positive feedback of the ministry centers, it is assumed that local association churches will benefit from increased attendance at worship services. This working partnership of local churches and minister centers is expected to create a mutually beneficial relationship that will promote life satisfaction and wellness in all communities of Henry County.\(^{11}\)

When believers lose sight and understanding of the gospel's premise, it is assumed that stagnation, decline, and loss of rewards are the results (Rev 3:11). The postmodern church is in danger of committing the same fatal errors as the Jewish leadership did in Jesus’ time, namely, putting on a good show with little substance (power) to back it up. It is assumed that the church

\(^{11}\) Matt 5:13-16.
must realize its primary function as an outreach to fulfill the Great Commission given by Jesus. His plan remains to reach the lost, the least, and the last. Assessing the efficacy of the pastoral counseling program will demonstrate the degree of success in achieving the God-intended purpose for which it was designed.

**Definitions**

The counseling, teaching, and healing paradigm for this project will focus on participants who are: experiencing life challenges, in need of coping resources, displaying various emotional or mental stress, fears, worries, and faulty or illogical thinking. The pastoral counseling approach used is an acceptable method of counseling, while the teaching guide created uses Scriptural material taken God’s Word. The evaluation of the project relies on a valid instrument that has been used for many years and in many projects.

The counseling and teaching approach of this study will incorporate scriptural teachings and principles that help participants identify faulty and illogical thinking patterns and reorient the incorrect beliefs to align with God’s word and plan for their life and conduct. Man has an inherent nature intent on creating his world, living by his standards and his modus operandi. The counseling curriculum is designed to turn man to God’s plan for salvation through the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross. This Christ-centric perspective will inform clients of a new and better understanding of the broader picture of a divine plan and the purposes of God working in their lives.

The strategies were chosen due to the theoretical principles that are designed for an array of behavioral and cognitive issues. “Aaron Beck developed the Cognitive Theoretical Approach

---

12 Ministers will assess clients on initial visits to examine mental, emotional, and spiritual responses which may need a referral to first responders or applicable mental or social health agencies.
(CT) with the primary focus on faulty thinking and the effects it has on the emotional well-being of an individual."\textsuperscript{13} CT focuses on changing people’s illogical and faulty thinking to the degree they learn to recognize how thinking patterns affect behavioral outcomes.

In the cases of emotional stress, fear, and worry, Jesus comforts with words of the provision in Matt 6:25-34. For cognitive dysfunction (faulty thinking), Jesus explains the root cause and the remedy in Pss 1, 32, 23, Prov 4:20-27. The CT approach works as a dialogue-creating, problem-solving technique, which is brief and specific to issues faced. The sessions will provide encouragement, support, and relief from the stress that clients face.

The HFC program will incorporate guiding principles from Lester, who posits that “one of the most significant themes and dynamics of vital religious experience is hope, and that one of the most oppressive aspects of cognitive, affective, and spiritual suffering is despair.”\textsuperscript{14} External environmental and familial influencers shape people. The influencing factors shape life stories and when those narratives become problematic to coping and life satisfaction, constructive work between the counselor and counselee is needed re-create new narratives to regain control over their lives.\textsuperscript{15} The HFC program will point clients into a futuristic-looking mindset that builds hope in their lives and is anticipated to provide a solid foundation for handling distress, despair, and discouragement.


\textsuperscript{14} Andrew D. Lester, \textit{Hope in Pastoral Care and Counseling} (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 6.

Limitations

This thesis will focus on the assessment aspects of the pastoral counseling program in the ministry centers. The clients who participate in the HFC Program will be selected from the clients in the food bank program. This group will include clients eighteen and older with diverse population groups found in Henry County, namely, Caucasian (71%), African American (28%), Hispanic (.9%), and others. The clients meet with a counselor for five sessions conducted weekly and administered a pre and post-test to measure the change that occurs during the project time.

A limitation of the project underlines the condition that many residents of Henry County experience daily. Of the 16,593 residents born citizens of the United States, 2,310 or 13.9% had income levels below the poverty line within the year 2017.16 Poverty affects people in many ways and on many levels, such as poor life satisfaction, declining life expectancy, higher stress levels, and declining states of wellness and well-being.

The lack of sufficient financial and spiritual resources alters the reality for those living in survival mode. People’s health and well-being are changed to how life choices are made to cope with the limits lack places on individuals. Poor nutrition interferes with cognitive functioning for daily activities, health and medical services for long-term well-being, and often depressed educational opportunities. Many of those in this situation lack a social awareness of services applicable to them and transportation to seek out benefits. This study focuses on the needs and the concerns of those who are unaware of the opportunities and assistance that are freely available to them.

---

16 www.welfareinfo.org/poverty-rate/alabama/henry-county. [Abbeville’s Ministry Center’s population is 20.7% below poverty line consisting of 2,412 people, while Headland’s Ministry Center’s poverty percentage is 8.8% with a group of 4,540 people.]
Delimitations

There are some inherent limitations to the project. The author will show how pedagogy, counseling, and assessment of the HFC Program impact clients who participate in the ministry center’s foodbank program. Clients in the food bank program are not necessarily seeking counseling when they enroll in the program. Many are not aware of the benefits offered by counseling, nor are they aware that it is possible to correct dysfunctional cognitive patterns to improve well-being.

Clients must appear in person for scheduled food pick-up appointments and participate in regular interview sessions associated with them. Some clients are without transportation while others are responsible of intergenerational and infirmed family members, and others may be responsible for grandchildren’s daycare service. The attendance factor poses a challenge and a limitation in many cases.

All clients in Henry County who qualify for federal income guidelines to food distribution programs can receive food allotments. Often, they lack transportation, as noted above. The low-income levels indicate other delimitations such as low educational levels and limited job opportunities, contributing to high unemployment rates and social security safety nets.

Food bank clients have limited access to media information, lack primary and preventative medical health care services, and often have no direct family medical services. Also, in this population are clients with lower education levels, lower socioeconomic status, and limited institutional networking opportunities. Furthermore, clients are more likely to be transient, live in substandard housing, and receive a small governmental subsistence.
An important delimitation that must be understood in working with the underserved and marginalized is that counseling must be presented with genuine, empathetic effect. The sympathetic concern is the filtering process to determine what and how responses given in the counseling sessions relate to the reality of the client’s life experiences. Many clients want and need the services of various institutions and agencies. There is a tendency by clients to say and agree with the interviewers during counseling. Trustworthiness between counselor and client is essential for optimal effect, but some clients have a compliant enthusiastic factor which can affect project integrity.  

**Thesis Statement**

The assessment of the Henry First Counseling program will show that the clients’ life satisfaction and well-being can be changed by renewing their minds. If the assessment findings of the HFC program show client change in life satisfaction and well-being, then the program has demonstrated its efficacy.

This project will use a proactive pastoral counseling approach incorporating Scriptural teaching material to target wellness. The study will include a reliable assessment instrument to determine the impact of the program on clients’ well-being. The program will deliver helpful resources to those hurting, in dire need, and marginalized in the JBA communities. If successful, the program can be replicated by entities to show efficacy in serving participants.

---

[^17]: Sensing, Ibid., 21.
Chapter 2 - Conceptual Framework

Introduction and Definition of Well-being

The purpose of this literature review is to examine, analyze, and synthesize the research findings which prove the effectiveness of various teaching, counseling, and assessment interventions used to change client well-being. The literature review highlights studies that have used various assessment tools to demonstrate a significant change in client life satisfaction and well-being. The research will compare the findings of studies to determine if replicable models with valid and reliable measurement parameters exist.

Well-being is a broad construct and often includes a multidimensional framework that is subjective. In the literature review, there is diversity among researchers that study wellness and well-being as to the definition, the determinant factors, the measurement standards, and how to apply the research findings. While the following authors address the subject of well-being, the author will present an eclectic array of views and how those views contribute to the conversation of how to define and impact well-being.

Miller and Foster completed a comprehensive examination of hundreds of articles, books, and websites looking for efficacy. The conclusion highlighted a holistic approach citing that well-being is how a person functions optimally with mind, body, spirit, emotions, meaning, behavior, and social relationships in their environment.18 Miller posited that more research was beginning to use a holistic approach.

This optimal functioning establishes a lifestyle of choices made by the individual that results in high levels of well-being. Cognitive functioning plays a significant role in well-being as a person focuses on wellness through the mind, body, and soul continuum to create high life satisfaction and well-being. Miller and Foster contribute to the concept of wellness by ascribing choice and responsibility for one’s actions as the driving force to living a life of optimal functioning. The degree of satisfaction and well-being involves the cognitive ability to adapt and respond to life challenges creatively. The definition is relative to the individual’s lifestyle behaviors, suggesting examining a life pattern based on acquired behaviors, attitudes, and experiences. The authors posit that wellness and life satisfaction are highly subjective and are difficult to define and measure.

Myers and Sweeney viewed wellness (well-being) from a counseling perspective, defining it as a “way of life oriented toward optimal health and well-being, in which body, mind, and spirit are integrated by the individual to live life more fully within the human and natural community.” For counselors, wellness and well-being have negative and positive functions, namely, remediate dysfunctional attributes and optimize growth and development characteristics. The concern this author has with the counseling approach is that the definition is so generalized and ambiguous. It lacks specificity and provides little objective measurability. Moreover, the definition is vague, subjective, and imprecise. The counseling paradigm for well-being focuses on reducing negative (harmful) emotional and mental health issues while promoting positive self-esteem and relationships. Improving well-being in this perspective

——

addresses the problem with a how-to-fix concept using interventions designed to help individuals fit in better with society.

Diener and Oishi present a psychological perspective of well-being in impacting the societal quality of life issues. The psychologists defined subjective well-being as a personally reflective, thoughtful and appraisal of an individual's life. By studying societal members’ subjective and psychological well-being, policymakers could craft policies to affect people’s well-being and influence their quality of life. The psychological model of improving well-being seems geared to the notion that what is better for society is better for the individual. In this manner, the counseling and psychological paradigms have common ground with familiar outcomes. The commonality of both groups involves the guidance process (with intended results) given to individuals. One view uses directed guidance from an external locus of control, while the other perspective views the benefactor as the responsible agent using an internal guidance system to make decisions. Guidance implies motives directed from societal expectations to improve conduct more than optimal functioning from intrinsic motivation for the individual's good.

A parallel paradigm to those previously mentioned is the spiritual domain. While psychological and counseling models conceptualize social indicators (tangible goods, services,

---


21 Ibid., 236. The authors state that the material solicited give needed information to policymakers and business leaders alike. Quoting, “There are many important reasons for monitoring the subjective well-being of societies such as tracking characteristics of the economy, crime, education, and the quality of the environment.”

things) to assess life quality, the spiritual perspective gauges quality of life through life experiences. This view of subjective well-being is rooted in the existential psychiatry of Frank and expanded upon Maslow’s work of hierarchical needs. Maslow’s hierarchy of needs describes when basic needs are satisfied (food, shelter, security, and others), higher-order spiritual values prioritize. Within the spiritual parameters of well-being is the individual’s need for transcendence going beyond themselves to view their world holistically (meaning, purpose, and significance). This cognitive process of making meaning within the events of their environment increases the probability of survival as these skills became more integrated with life experiences. Spiritual well-being is seen as “one kind of healthy psychological manifestation of the tendency to put one’s attention on things that lie outside of oneself.”

In Paloutzian et al., growing research investigates the spiritual attributes related to healthcare interventions to determine the level of impact on an individual’s well-being. The study examines ways and degrees that spirituality may act as a barometer of how a person deals with life challenges. The findings of Paloutzian et al. indicate that spirituality does play a positive role in helping in counseling and makes a difference in improving well-being. While the spiritual perspective helps to make a difference in impacting individual well-being, it does not adequately provide a straightforward definitional process of well-being.

Dodge et al. report the challenge of defining well-being. In Dodge, the study showed that the definition of well-being had not been established, and that fact made measurement even

23 Paloutzian et al., 353-354.
24 Ibid., 354.
harder. The examination of theoretical perspectives yielded a consensus that led the authors to posit the relevancy of the dynamic equilibrium concept of well-being, the homeostasis effect of what an individual experienced, and the lifespan model of development.\textsuperscript{26} The intended quest of the research was to develop a new definitional construct that would use a variety of factors to provide a more understandable meaning and validate it through measurement. The theory of eudaimonism was underscored as the status of an individual is deemed “high in well-being if there is an excess of positive over negative affect and will be low in well-being in the degree to which negative effect predominates over positive.”\textsuperscript{27}

The factors comprising well-being include life satisfaction, pleasant and unpleasant effects. Affect is defined as positive or negative (pleasant or unpleasant) feelings, mental and emotional states, and an individual’s satisfaction with life arising from the cognitive awareness of life satisfaction. From the factors, a definition of well-being emerged.

The new definition crafted by the study consisted of three key areas: the idea of a set point for well-being, the certainty of equilibrium and the fluctuating state between challenges and resources. The concept is built upon balancing resources to meet challenges to bring about the desired state of well-being. The physical, spiritual, and emotional resources of the individual must be adequate to meet the life challenges, which leads to life satisfaction.

Definitions to well-being tended to be descriptive, ambiguous, and problematical for measurement. The fact that researchers are dealing with the mind, body, and soul presents a deep well which has not be fully investigated. More work is required.

\textsuperscript{26} Dodge et al., 222.

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., 223. Note: Aristotle’s postulated that happiness was the overarching goal of all human actions.
**Literature Review**

**Issues of Well-Being**

One theme found in the literature research underscored the relationship between religious and spiritual activities to life satisfaction and well-being (physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual). Several articles focused on assessment, specifically, the measurement of well-being. Most studies defined well-being as an inclusive term describing a person's health, emotional and mental soundness, and wholeness. Very few studies referred to a religious or spiritual source to well-being.  

Florence was a study that dealt primarily with the religious and spiritual assessment of well-being. In the findings, the author posited a direct impact on physical wellness and health using spiritual interventions. In the summary, Florence connected spiritual practices with religious encounters which had a positive effect on clients. From the article, "Therapeutic encounters that have divine love and concern for others may foster environments that encourage others to engage in theological discourse as lives intersect both personally and professionally in the public square."  

As a spiritual intervention, Florence used public theology to assess the client’s situations by listening to and analyzing clients’ stories to determine common junctures between life

---

28 Spiros Zodhiates and Warren Baker, Eds, Hebrew-Greek Key Work Study Bible KJV, (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 1991), p. 57. [Jesus Christ stated, “the thief comes to steal, kill, and destroy, but I have come to bring you life, and life more abundantly” (John 10:10, ESV).] The Greek word for more abundantly is superior in quality, superfluous, beyond measure. God is the author of man’s well-being.


30 Ibid, 2.
experiences and spiritual practices. The next step is to intervene in the client’s narrative inserting the gospel message to promote physical health and well-being. Florence stated that the counselor acts as a representative of Christ with clients. In this role, the minister works to promote healing and the improvement of well-being in clients, resulting in improve life satisfaction and well-being.

There is cognizance of how clients change because of teaching the Holy Scriptures. Florence uses Scriptures to heal and transform clients through the interventions she used.\textsuperscript{31} The assessment she posited indicated an increase in optimistic hope, an increased understanding of life's meaning, and fulfillment of the client’s life purpose. The research presented in this article relied predominately on anecdotal assessment with little or no measurable data; however, the theological constructs embedded in the interventions were compelling.

Floyd explains the theoretical concepts and principles used to assess mental health issues and set forth intervention treatment regimens case studies to validate clients' treatment.\textsuperscript{32} Floyd approaches the client's inability to cope successfully with significant mental health challenges, laying the difficulty of readjusting faulty cognitive thinking that interferes with normal cognitive functioning. Crisis, trauma, and disasters impact the core psychological well-being of the individual. By addressing dysfunctional thought patterns, people can better cope and return to a state of wellness over time.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{31} Florence posits that in her role as counselor to clients, the counselor acts a representative of God (that is this researcher’s interpretation), not unlike Exodus 18:18, which is quoting Jethro’s admonition to Moses in stating that “You must be the people’s representative before God and bring their disputes to him.”
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Floyd sees a person who experiences a crisis often wrestling with faith. The individual could respond by drawing closer to God or turning away from God. Floyd utilizes the same types of cognitive theory on clients like Florence. Floyd uses standardized assessment instruments, surveys, and questionnaires to measure the impact a crisis has on a person. Appropriate counseling interventions can address immediate emotional and mental states using remedial coping skills and promoting well-being.

Like Florence’s intervention strategies, there is support for the concept that the caregiver’s methodology of cognitive therapeutics, empathetic listening and understanding, and the intersectionality of Scriptures in peoples’ lives affects how crisis and trauma are handled. Floyd and Florence agree that the same protocols are used; however, Floyd uses the objective assessment tools and results, whereas Florence does not.

When a person’s ordinarily healthy defense mechanisms are severely affected by the loss, tragedy, emotional and mental dysfunction, clinicians must assess threats and the risks of dangerous situations. In Everstine, assessment is vital to prescribing appropriate therapeutic interventions to mitigate harmful effects on personal well-being. The study's findings include various assessment tools to capture a person’s state of being presented in counseling. The device is used to construct a pattern of the damaging effects of situations confronting the individual. From the checklists and assessment reported, Everstine created interventions to align with the symptoms needing treatment. The assessed data demonstrates how mental health outcomes were achieved. This author has developed succinct constructs in which assessment determines which

---

33 Floyd, Ibid., 27.
Interventions are used for which disorders. The summary illustrates that treatment will help rebuild healthy defense mechanisms and construct behavioral patterns to help clients adjust to crisis after-effects.\textsuperscript{35}

Professional medical caregivers weigh in on assessing and treating wellness from the human condition, soul, mind, and body. The significance of some of the latest findings demonstrates that a person’s well-being is a concern for all health care providers. Caldeira highlights the nursing profession’s discovery that assessing an individual's emotional and spiritual background can reveal ways of ministering to those individuals to support their emotional, mental, and spiritual health.\textsuperscript{36}

This research supports methods to train nurses to assess and communicate with patients at their spiritual expression level. The training of spiritual conversation with patients has been incorporated in the nurse's training with nurses. As a result, nurses are more aware of patients' mental, emotional, and spiritual dialogue as they minister treatment regimens to patients. The aim is to support patients to maintain meaning in their lives, particularly during times of injury or illness. Nurses help patients by supporting, being present, enhancing the patient sense of self-worth, and preserving their dignity.

The nursing profession is unique in identifying and providing spiritual care to assess the patient’s spiritual needs. Nurses incorporate spiritual practices within sacred spaces to provide intervention when spiritual distress is evident.\textsuperscript{37} Nurses aim to aptly identify spiritual pain to

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{35} Everstine, Ibid.
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\end{flushright}
meet the spiritual needs of patients. The Caldeira study summarizes the use of ongoing formal and informal assessment embedded in nurses' interaction with patients, which demonstrates a positive change in patients’ attitudes, responds to treatment, and promotes patient well-being throughout treatment.

The nurses’ study demonstrates the efficacy and effectiveness of encouraging dialoguing with those suffering from the harmful effects of some experience in their lives. The comforting physical presence, along with faith-based words of encouragement, affirms healthy outcomes and promotes opportunities for well-being in clients and patients. The difficulty in the findings presented is highly subjective and lacking consistency in application and assessment.

Another professional service group, chaplains, is incorporating assessment to evaluate the religious (spiritual) functions they provide to benefit patients’ wellness and well-being. Flannelly points to a specific tool developed to integrate pastoral care principles by chaplains in hospital settings.38 Like Caldeira, chaplains would minister to patients in hospital settings using a standardized assessment tool to measure the effectiveness of ministry towards patients and their family members to improve patient health and accelerate the healing process.

The chaplain’s assessment consisted of information about how supportive the ministry was in providing comfort, reassurance, the ability to cope, and chaplains' competencies. One flaw in the discussion of both research efforts was the subjective nature of the reporting process used by nurses and chaplains. That reporting of the evaluative data was not consistent among

37 Caldeira and Timmons, Ibid.

nurses nor chaplains. Future training is needed to address that subjectivity and reporting discrepancies. While both Flannelly and Caldeira's findings reported positive results of the professional interactions of staff (nurses and chaplains), the assessment tool to measure patient satisfaction changes was very subjectively constructed and administered. The subjectivity of the recording and interpreting any assessment data undermines the project's credibility and calls into question any reliability claim. While both nurses and chaplains demonstrate a high level of effectiveness in their professional and spiritual responsibilities, discrepancies such as individual interpretations and inconsistent use of services can produce unreliable and unsubstantiated claims.

LaRocca-Pitts’ research also is targeted at chaplains who work in acute care settings. The study cited describes a tool used to assess chaplains' information regarding patient bio-psycho-social-spiritual and religious health characteristics. The assessment tool was designed to be simple, straightforward, and utilized from intake to acute care and long-term care and counseling sessions. The assessment tool provides a standard of practice for the Association of Professional Chaplains.

In this study, the assessment tool meets the criteria of providing a means and method to collect essential data more objectively. There are more objective data collected and analyzed to interpret results by various data collectors in the findings. This research model frames a valuable and beneficial paradigm for this paper in demonstrating the changes clients undergo over time.

---


40 Ibid., 58.
due to their counseling. They had a reliable assessment tool that is valid and reliable to accurately reflect what clients are experiencing offers essential information to evaluate the counseling program's efficacy and effectiveness in addressing patient well-being and documenting clients’ life satisfaction changes.

Rumbold studied chaplains working in church-operated health care institutions and other agencies. 41 That research focused on chaplains providing a fundamentally historical aspect of health care based on a robust pastoral care tradition. The study disclosed an evolving change in a society where religion and health care intersect, one in which profound changes can occur when the two work together. The research asserts that more health care institutions are using assessment for health care chaplains to ensure appropriate treatment and satisfy the requirement in quality control. Rumbold states, “Religious articulation of common beliefs was no longer a starting point, but more a goal, of pastoral conversation. Chaplains also found that conversations about values, identity, meaning, and purpose were welcomed by others, even those who no longer claimed a religious affiliation.” 42

Rumbold’s findings demonstrate the need for chaplains to change the conversation with clients (patients) to modify their cognitive patterns regarding the relationship of spiritual values to life experiences. By changing the way patients respond to health issues into a more positive perspective, a more positive mindset can influence health outcomes. This cognitive change will affect physical health because it is grounded in spiritual roots. The relationship between thinking


42 Ibid., 255.
and acting can effectively alter how ministry works to focus on the religious and the spiritual constructs of overall health and well-being. The growing favorable view from secular health care providers towards the spiritual models of care indicate a more integrated approach with collaborative efforts those could promote improved care to address the interconnectedness of body, mind, and soul. When the holistic approach is utilized and measured, the expected results will show how the system can integrate all aspects of the patient into tangible and remarkable outcomes.

The studies to this point have discussed an evolutionary process of moving from theory to practice as religious (spiritual) conversations with patients to improve health and wellness. With the attention on spiritual health, physical illness can be measured to determine how to enhance well-being. The implications of these studies strengthen the theoretical and theological foundations of this study. Improved life satisfaction and increased wellness and well-being can be subject to measurement to demonstrate counseling programs' efficacy.

LaRocca-Pitts’ underscores several previously mentioned research projects and their conclusions based on diagnostic and prescriptive assessment tools. These tools measure how spiritual beliefs significantly impact many patients’ health. The findings show the importance of how healthcare providers should assess the impact of spiritual beliefs on health. The study points out the needed characteristics of a useful assessment tool: brevity, memorability, appropriateness, patient-centeredness, and credibility.

The FACT Spiritual History Tool was recommended because it was designed by healthcare clinicians to provide essential data for appropriate treatment protocols. The FACT

---

43 LaRocca-Pitts, Ibid., 2.
Tool asks few open-ended questions and helps develop a care plan which allows adjustments to be made during the clinician's interventions. Using simple and more objective assessment tools can help improve the perception that religious and spiritual care can deliver measurable and valid results in improving clients' health and well-being.

There remain disparities within the religious and spiritual communities regarding standardized, neutral, and objective assessments to measure severe mental and emotional issues. Tartaglia’s research on chaplains found a problem area that involved reporting and recording data.\(^{45}\) The research findings examined the spiritual assessment patterns of the chaplain’s communication skills when charting patients in the emergency room of an academic medical center. The study points out an apparent gap in the subjective reporting on most chaplains and general themes and concepts used to describe the patient’s well-being. The author posited that less subjectivity in documenting data and training chaplains in their assessments' communication would result in more effectiveness. The interpretation of the evaluation paradigm does present challenges to measure the objective effectiveness of program goals. The conclusions reached underline the importance of reliable and valid instruments used to measure client responses and the need for evaluators' adequate training.

One secular research project focused on psychological and physiological functioning to measure mental health and total well-being. That project was based on Block-Jorgensen’s

\(^{44}\) LaRocca-Pitts, Ibid.

Centeredness Theory.\textsuperscript{46} Measuring the well-being of an individual can help increase the longevity and aging process. This research is based on the notion that to “assess the psychometric properties in a new questionnaire that measures the Centeredness Theory of well-being forms the basis of a systematic approach to self-actualization.”\textsuperscript{47} According to the findings, the Centeredness Theoretical Model validated well-being and mental health issues based on a psychiatric paradigm. The assessment instrument in this research is very objective-oriented; however, the data's interpretation needs to be implemented by highly trained clinicians to interpret data. In this research, the caveat is that simple, brief, and well-defined assessment tools will help reduce, if not eliminate, complex and technical problematic results.

The more complex and technical the tools used to define the results, the greater the risk of inaccurate or misleading data. The results of this study did confirm the factor analyses demonstrated good internal consistency reliability. Interestingly, this assessment of well-being designed, tested, and implemented by secular-based research determined that more extended life and healthy aging and well-being are possible. The Centeredness Theory may have some practical and useful benefits to share with the religious and spiritual communities; however, the limitations and risks resulting from detailed and complex measurements reduce the data's validity and reliability.

The religious and spiritual organizations seemed to have lagged well behind the assessment and accountability movement. A vast divide needs to be crossed to improve the


\textsuperscript{47} Ibid., 2.
church's credibility and sustainability of the church's health care activities. There is a need for greater evaluation measures in ministerial programs to effectively justify their existence and services to gain credibility in the public square. In a ministry research project by Azzopardi, the discipleship training program in a local group church setting measured the impact on well-being. The study involved the influence of Christianity as a potential provider of well-being.

Azzopardi measured the effect on well-being through discipleship training program. The project targeted measures that would improve the quality of life of the individual. His research found evidence that suggests a holistic construct of well-being (various dimensions of well-being such as happiness, subjective well-being, psychological well-being, and quality of life issues) gives a more accurate picture of well-being. Furthermore, Azzopardi’s research shows that Christian teachings and practices can be quantified in such a manner that well-being can be positively measured.

Warren studied the impact of learning and spirituality. In a church, the project measured the effects of spiritual well-being using Christian due to learning new concepts and skills. The assessment was used to evaluate spiritual improvement over a relatively short period. The study used a targeted homogeneous church population group. While the study demonstrated improved spiritual well-being in its assessment indicators, it was limited in scope, population sampling, and in-depth survey. Even though the population group seemed somewhat problematic, the


49 Ibid., 8.

results affirmed that spiritual perceptions and well-being could be improved by instructional means, highlighting spiritual concepts, principles, values, and mental health issues.

Clergy often interacts with their members and even non-members to help people deal with unusual and impacting circumstances in their daily lives and routines. Pastors often are called upon to give comfort, hope, and support to those in crisis. In general, it is the pastor that people first go to mitigate the hurtful, painful, and devastating events in their lives. Ministers and clergy are called upon to provide a multi-faceted approach to mental and emotional health care.

Vespi points to Christian mental health professionals lacking a model that bridges the gap between the psychological and religious world.\textsuperscript{51} There seems to be an invisible red line separating the two camps in which no one can cross over. The psychological communities have traditionally little agreement in the areas of theoretical and foundational issues with the sacred. Many religious organizations regard secular tainted by the world.\textsuperscript{52} Psychology and religion have often been at odds with each other, with psychology believing in the science of behavior and religion believing in God's power. There has been movement in recent research towards working jointly with those of diverse outlooks. More and more research is being conducted in which the opposing perspectives are working in greater harmony to help people face adverse situations.

The implications for an increased evaluation of church programs to include mental health can demonstrate the Christian ministry's efficacy and effectiveness. When churches

\textsuperscript{51} Stanley P. Vespi, "Attitudes of Southern Baptist Pastors Toward Professional Counseling" (PhD diss., Walden University, 2010), ProQuest Dissertations & Theses. Accessed http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/docview/821245773, 32.

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 27.
establish outreach programs, specifically in healthcare, the means of assessment as a science-based study is noticeably missing. The mental health issues non-existent in many isolated swaths of society do not demonstrate efficacy and effectiveness to those being served. Therefore, they are not regarded as entirely reliable or valid in scientific terms of the medical community.

The post-modern church needs to do its due diligence by incorporating God’s Word and His will for man in all aspects of life, including psychological, emotional, and mental health matters and well-being issues. The church does not need to back away from scientific evaluation and measurement and cede that domain to purely secular and non-religious institutions.

Vespi’s research analyzes the details of how ministers are expected to provide guidance, support, and comfort to those in church care. For the underserved people whom no church or clergy to serve, individuals are suffering and falling further behind in primary and necessary mental healthcare. Pastors give essential spiritual resources targeted to improve physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual well-being. The missing assessment instruments highlighted by this project will address issues and concerns of just how the relationship created between counselor and client will improve life satisfaction and wellness among clients.

Glen demonstrates the importance of the pastoral care ministry, namely, "Spiritual and religious beliefs play a crucial role in how humans make sense of life events and cope with challenging situations." The project measured a person’s resiliency as enhanced by faith. It combined spiritual and counseling resources to help people acquire positive outcomes following adverse situations in their lives. “Some participants in the studies reported their faith belief

---

helped them to believe that the odds could be overcome.” This research's cognitive connections point to the impact that therapeutic intervention can have on successfully change faulty thinking and successfully impact peoples’ lives.

This section of the literature review examined the issues of well-being. It evaluated how spiritual care impacts patients positively and how psychologically, emotionally, and spiritual wellness can be impacted in a positive manner. The studies mirror settings and environments that are comparable and consistent with the thesis of this project. With the assessment of pastoral counseling intervention involving people with wide-ranging mental health issues, lives have been changed, and their well-being improved. Early intervention and care maintenance can ease the underserved's needs and the marginalized before critical care mass is reached and necessary. The success of this research involving the assessment and efficacy of the project can be replicated in other communities.

**The Role of Ministers as Caregivers**

The role of ministers as caregivers addresses the religious and spiritual influences on clients' well-being and describes the resources needed to combat ill-health and promote well-being. Throughout the Bible, God’s Word addressed issues of healing and wholeness. The Bible is used as the solution and consolation for those afflicted. Pastoral staff routinely cared for the sick (Jas 5:13) and have played a vital role in ministering to and addressing health and wellness issues. In numerous articles and journals, researchers found that ministers perform a

---

54 Glenn, Ibid.

55 Exodus 15:26: “If you listen carefully to the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the LORD, who heals you.” Proverbs 4:20-22, Psalm 103:1-5, Isaiah 53:5, Matthew 8:16, 13:15, 1 Peter 2:24, 3 John 2.
wide array of varied care functions for people as representatives of Jesus Christ and his ministry while on earth. Those functions include teaching, preaching, and healing, and in those roles, ministers continue to care for people today.

Vespi cites many instances in which pastors provide health care and mental health care services. Pastors build long-term relationships with congregants and are among the first to observe early signs of distress that may lead to mental health issues. Pastors provide comfort, support, and guidance during times of trauma and disasters. Many people seek out their pastors and ministers to help in coping and adjusting. Ministers lead congregants with advice and instruction on dealing with people with unusual and impacting circumstances in their daily lives and routines. He cited that ministers regularly offer assistance during an unforeseen major crisis such as a family's death. Another advantage cited for clergy is to discern how congregants respond over time in dealing with life challenges. They regularly evaluate their congregants' heartbeat to incorporate spiritual interventions such as preaching, teaching, and healing activities to promote the well-being of members, staff, and the communities they serve.

Glen relates how peoples’ lives are impacted and improved through ministers' spiritual beliefs and religious activities. According to Glen, it is not only the caring and compassionate components that qualify ministers, but it is also the God divine element that empowers the called minister to administer supernatural gifts to improve and impact peoples’ lives. The wisdom of the world comes from God. Man utilizes the good capabilities he was endowed by his creator to help others; however, God, through the finished work of Jesus Christ, has enabled man to receive

---

56 Vespi, Ibid., 45.

57 Glen, Ibid., 40.
God's perfect gift of eternal wisdom that far surpasses human understanding and limits. Many people in need of care turn to their faith to help them during difficulties. Pastors develop long-term relationships and can view their congregants' progress in the areas of healing, wellness, and well-being.

Glen's findings, like Vespi, show how ministers as caregivers make a difference in people’s lives and that people can adopt coping strategies and skills to become resilient to even crisis kinds of situations. A great strength of the Christian faith alluded to by Glen is resiliency, humans' quality to hope and thrive again despite challenging and difficult circumstances. Glen and Vespi's shortcomings are that there are no definitive, hard-data assessment projects that test these caregiving skills to demonstrate their efficacy and effectiveness. A specifically targeted evaluation program needs to be included and an integral part of church-based faith-oriented community outreaches. Stakeholders and participants need to have trust and confidence that the plans will have positive expected outcomes that benefit the communities served. These assessments could prove that the interventions used with clients yield results. It is particularly relevant in societies where other care forms are unavailable, inaccessible, unaffordable, and ill-accommodating.

There will be situations beyond the scope and purview of ministers' role as caregivers. Profound and prolonged drug and substance and physical abuse in families, severe cases of prolonged depression, cyclical suicidal attempts, and extreme psychotic behavior are but a few of the types of life issues that may present themselves in counseling. At that point, ministers need to quickly assess what they are dealing with and refer them to more specialized help to relieve suffering and mitigate dangerous life situations.
Mannon’s study found a divergence of clergy practice when deciding whether they should counsel people with crises or refer people for specific issues.58 “The issues with which clergy were most confident in dealing with include spiritual and moral, relational (marriage and family), life adjustment, meaning and purpose of life, and emotional needs. Clergy were less confident to deal with severe mental illness issues.”59 This article served as a means of caution that clergy need to learn how to deal with issues they are trained for, have the time to get involved, and know when people need to be referred. According to this article, the dilemma facing the clergy is to whom do they entrust their congregants for treatment.

Many modern churches and ministries have seemingly adopted the position there are defined boundaries for ministry. Licensure and legal requirements enumerate specific health issues required by law to be referred to licensed health providers. There are those areas that ministers do provide spiritual care and well-being interventions to promote health and well-being. Each church body needs to consider these situations to guide them in deciding what boundaries determine the level of care provided to congregants and those seeking help. The findings in Mannon reveal disturbing societal challenges in which professionally certified mental health care providers need to address. For example, such cases involving significant and severe problems such as chronic depression, diagnosed mental disorders, and suicide dictate that other agencies and professional healthcare providers be called upon to deal with the issues.


59 Ibid., 225.
Other studies point to certain contingencies and life-altering issues which affect the minister’s role in providing health care. According to Scales, ministers are not historically trained to help those with special care needs or severe mental health issues. Clergy, as caregivers, can take risks and add self-burdens in caring for others. It is challenging to separate compassion to watch and the continued hurt and devasting impact of grief and trauma. If pastors are not equipped or trained for complex challenges, they can suffer from burnout if precautions are not taken.

Scales underscores the point that pastors are inadequately trained and lack the necessary resources to help people effectively cope with crises and trauma. Ministers and supervisory personnel need to monitor the counseling offered considering the potential drawbacks and limitations of investing high levels of care to clients. Knowing when and how to balance other peoples’ burdens and becoming so heavily invested in identifying clients’ hurts, pains, and problems could impair judgment and discernment.

The type of degree of care given by ministers needs to be considered considering the clergy's demands. During recruitment and retention of volunteer ministers, screening needs to be examined alongside the caregiving ministry's gifting and specific biases. A deep sense of caring and inherent compassion for Christ and others would be criteria for promoting ministers' role as caregivers. Scales’ results underscore the need to recruit ministers who have skillsets and healing gifts to care appropriately and adequately for clients experiencing crises and emotional pain. This

---


61 Ibid.
article also highlights the difficulty when clergy become overwhelmed by the weight of carrying others’ burdens.

The demands on ministers as caregivers place high orders on pastors, and many even say harmful effects on their well-being. Scales underscores the potential harm that is affecting the clergy. Burnout and rust out are two common phrases that summarize the dilemma for pastors. Scales' alert is that ministers need to indicate how sharing deep burdens can be impactful on caregivers. The process of serving others is not without its dangers. The issue raised by this article needs to be a concern at the forefront of every healthcare provider. Helping others should not be a self-sacrificing effort.

The literature review revealed a caregiving theme that emphasized a somewhat novel perspective of treating clients. Jankowski offered a synergistic approach by positing that "Healthcare in the U.S. is evolving from an exclusive concentration on the physical dimension of illness to a mere holistic model. The holistic model is patient-centered and considers the patient's psychological and spiritual needs." In this holistic model of Jankowski, chaplains and ministers should serve as a part of a larger professional healthcare team. They are responsible for assessing and improving patients' well-being and making other contributions to their care. The chaplain and minister use research findings to help guide them in the integration process to enhance spiritual and health care. This holistic model has many benefits that could provide valuable resources from various professional services to present to clients in need of long-term care.

---


63 Ibid.
This author endorses and supports the holistic approach in helping clients. Many clients come to the centers with a presenting problem, concern, and issue, but more severe or underlying issues emerge in counseling. Generally, focusing on one intervention or consuming the time with a sole strategy to address one aspect of the client may not adequately deal with the core issue or the total picture of what is needed.

The holistic approach to healthcare and wellness is vital on several fronts. It acknowledges the need for a more comprehensive and integrated spiritual approach to healthcare. There are advantages in this approach, as advocates who work in a hospital or clinical setting of this paradigm attest; however, it does not work necessarily in all situations. The need to put a team of professionals together to assess and prescribe treatment interventions may well be a coming norm in the medical community. Still, that trend does not appear so much in the religious and spiritual community. The client's holistic perspective and client care are essential in selecting clients' strategies and interventions, even for ministers working with disadvantaged clients. Many do not have access nor can afford ongoing healthcare supervision.

Nance posits, "The process of pathway development has significant educational benefits: chaplains learn to extrapolate useful information from a variety of multidisciplinary journal articles, and they develop some familiarity with how other disciplines assess and intervene with the psycho-social-spiritual issues they encounter."64 As new research, tools, and training become available, increased guidance can be incorporated to implement chaplain's and ministers' methodological approaches. These approaches will include assessment and intervention to

---

improve well-being and health care to patients, clients, and congregants. The care that chaplains and ministers provide for people facing crises and challenges will be a part of a team with various professionals represented. This approach would be ideal for extensive healthcare facilities and ministries; however, it becomes less practical for smaller rural areas where resources are limited.

This holistic approach sees individuals with mental health problems as composite parts, namely, mind, body, and soul continuum. These three spheres are identified as housing particular functioning aspects of the human being, but there is much overlapping, interaction, and interconnectivity among all three. Problems arise in the human condition when one or all three of these dimensional aspects become warped in some fashion by internal or external factors, work independently of each other, or breakdown in dysfunctional ways.

This study has significant benefits related more to an institutionalized setting where specialized professionals work together to help patients in more traditional settings. For this study's purposes, the Ministry Centers will serve as front-line screening caregivers fulfilling the role of remote and isolated relief stations that help those that would not generally seek out nor receive needed mental health care.

**Pastoral Care and Counseling**

Some issues emerged in the literature review that helped show how pastoral counseling differ from traditional mental health care services. The findings of Moran found that pastoral care was effective in certain areas. “On average, respondents felt most confident about their ability to deal with the traditional kinds of problems that clergy deal with, such as grief, death and dying, anxiety, and marital problems, and the clergy felt less competent to deal with
depressions.”65 Moran’s study highlights the need to address depression and the ideation that accompanies it. Specifically, the clients who come to the interview sessions for counseling live with many challenging life situations.

Depression and other severe mental disorders have points of origin, which, if left untreated, evolve into adjustment difficulty disorders and possibly coping dysfunction patterns. Clergy regularly encounters people who live out situations where stress, anxiety, fear, and despair are a part of their life experience. Ministers can interact with individuals as situations develop so that problems may be addressed in the early stages. They can discern when problems are becoming challenging to handle and intervene in compassionate and helpful ways to check the issues and promote healthy coping mechanisms.

Jesus Christ in Luke 4:18 gave the reason why He was sent, namely, to preach good news to the poor (physical poverty), proclaim freedom to the captives (mentally oppressed), and set the oppressed free (spiritually trapped). Christ died on the cross for all men and delivered all from the enemy’s oppression (darkness of the soul). There are different levels and degrees of depression, and in many cases, the pastors may be the only beacon of light and hope for those who are depressed, in debt, and discouraged and have nowhere else to turn. They struggle in a hopeless state and lack the resources to pull themselves out of the pit they find themselves in.

Another issue identified was the need for more in-depth planning and coordination in financial and human resources in caregiving activities. Newcomer revealed the issue of how critical assessment is by describing the “efficiency and effectiveness of functional assessment

---

derived from the support plans that need to be compared to non-function-based plans in terms of cost/benefit when considering time and resources required.”66 Newcomer highlights a very obvious cost factor in the interventions programs and how costs should be weighed as a cost-benefit construct. The study summarizes with the expectancy that more research should “… continue to focus on the treatment validity, efficiency, and effectiveness of behavior support plans based on functional assessment, compared to non-function-based interventions.”67

Very few resources identified the critical areas of planning with an outlook on costs. The function and services for giving health care treatment to people who would not otherwise take advantage of it are too important to use trial and error and learn-as-you-go methodologies to implement it. That is why a plan for the design and implementation of health interventions based on assessment is necessary. Costs and the allocation of financial resources must be included with the services rendered.

Vespi enumerates several positive issues that the clergy bring to well-being care. “The clergy offer strengths that a secular mental health professional would not be able to provide. Clergy usually have a long-term relationship with the person, allowing them to monitor the individual's progress and development.”68 Pastors have been trained and have acquired life experiences to offer compassion care during an unforeseen major crisis such as a loss due to death in a family, natural disasters, fatal accidents and injuries, and others. The findings in this


67 Ibid.

68 Vespi, Ibid., 45.
article point to the benefits ministers have in dealing with individuals. For short-term help, they are readily available to help and provide immediate relief and comfort.

In long-term situations, ministers are there for caring assistance to be a healing presence and support healing, growth, and well-being. Furthermore, ministers are trained to give the intangible spiritual needs that humanity seeks to satisfy. Clergy deal with a host of diverse people groups, including age, gender, socioeconomic status, and are trained to console and guide through challenging times and crises. Van Ness’s article states that religion and spiritual initiatives have played a significant role in abuse, addictions, and recovery. He says, "The combination of spirituality and sociality may be a beneficial factors in programs such as AA Twelve Step Program."69

For many years, recovery programs have been in existence, helping people survive severe health and mental wellness crises. In the twelve-step program, participants move through a twelve-step program. The addict is assessed and held accountable for successful completion before moving to the next progressive recovery step. The addicts know that they are one drink away from returning to their addiction. They acknowledge that their willingness to take ownership of their situation is critical to their success, and they are encouraged by support groups that assist in staying sober. These programs are in place all over the country and around the world, demonstrating an effective recovery rate of success.

One issue for caregivers is identified as the provision of spiritual care. People with deeply held spiritual beliefs and practices seek spiritual care even before seeking medical

---

treatment. These same individuals believe that physical health results from spiritual care and believe that a person cannot have one without the other. Caldeira reiterated that spiritual-care interventions contribute to patient well-being. These same interventions are foundational in the training and the subsequent life experiences of pastoral counselors. That study includes caregiving issues: a therapeutic relationship, active listening, healing presence, unconditional acceptance, intuitive sense, and exploring a spiritual perspective.\textsuperscript{70}

Caldeira’s findings were primarily addressed to those found having spiritual beliefs and practices. Still, Rumbold included the care given to those without any claim to religious affiliations, nor did the participants ascribe to a particular set of spiritual beliefs. It was stated that pastoral counseling in the past could assume the beginning point of care could begin with long-held religious views instilled previously. This issue no longer seems valid as clergy discover that even non-religiously affiliated people are willing and open to engaging in spiritual conversations of health care.\textsuperscript{71}

The conclusion of these two studies implicates that the giving and receiving of care is welcome by most regardless of its source. People are receptive to care given by those who exercise compassionate care. This has been the case in the Ministry Centers. Individuals come for food allotments but are receptive to the interview program and spiritual disciplines’ attention, such as prayer, Scripture reading, and spiritual wellness perspectives. Jesus tells the story of the good Samaritan in which care may come from an unlikely source, but it is the one who gives the support, who cares the most (Luke 10:25).

\textsuperscript{70} Caldeira, Ibid., 6.

\textsuperscript{71} Rumbold, Ibid., 255.
Benefits of Ministerial Care

A fourth theme revealed in the literature review addressed benefits from ministers' spiritual health care and documents how this spiritual health care impacts clients' well-being. In the study of Moran, his findings reveal many benefits from pastoral care, "Religion plays a particularly vital role in the lives of many people coping with illness. In a study, religious coping was the most important factor in sustaining many of these persons. Nearly 90% indicated that religion was used at least moderately to facilitate coping." Moran’s findings illustrate how spirituality and religious beliefs impact patients experiencing depression and help people on the verge of depression resolve issues.

Furthermore, Moran claims that people “… having a deep religious faith can provide a sense of control over situations or illnesses that otherwise seem beyond control. Prayer can provide hope, meaning, and endurance, relieving the sense of isolation so common with chronic illness.” Moran’s findings present a substantial basis for providing care and initiating interventions when clients are seen and counseled. The care alluded to provides ongoing interventions to mitigate situations experienced by people who do not have the necessary resources and skills to determine what to do in challenging life situations.

Park’s research into the benefits of pastoral care illustrates the changing nature of healthcare, “the pastor functions as a ‘representative of God’ and the faith community, a ‘servant’ directing him toward others, and a ‘carrier of tradition’ characterized by healing,

72 Moran et al., Ibid., 256.

73 Ibid.
sustaining, counseling, and reconciling.” Park’s results confirm the evidence that ministers play a vital role in the well-being of others. Contact with a minister is the primary means of receiving spiritual consolation and encouragement for many people. As members of a community of believers, pastoral care establishes relationships with God and one another, spiritual/religious foundations are strengthened, and hope for the future becomes a reality.

Moran’s findings focused on clergy's restorative care only in the New York City area as a supplement. The church is often the front-line counselor, with millions providing some form of healthcare. Clergy are vitally crucial in hospitals giving comfort and hope. They help to ease the stays in the hospital and prepare them for discharge. Patients often value interactions with community-based clergy and chaplains, reporting that pastoral visits bring hope, ease hospitalization difficulties, and prepare them for release.

In Krause, it was stated that “religion performs several important functions, one of which involves using the Bible for people to cope with adversity.” The study summarizes, “This is accomplished by helping people deepen their faith and develop more realistic and mature ways of thinking about the nature of God.” Kraus relates how ministers provide essential healthcare

---


75 Moran, Ibid.


77 Ibid.
benefits that mental health providers do not consider or utilize. The spiritual dynamics or religious beliefs are not a part of routine medical protocols.

There are many ways that Krause summarizes how religion and spirituality help people overcome adversity by reading and understanding scriptures. The findings relate that when people are taught to have a more mature view of God, the divine creator and sustainer of life, stressful situations are alleviated. A more positive attitude brings hope into their lives. They experience better-coping skills.78

Conclusion

Themes emerged from the research, which has provided support for this paper’s thesis. The study underscored how religious and spiritual precepts, presuppositions, and concepts taught from the Holy Scriptures impact peoples’ well-being. As ascribed in the Bible, well-being is a physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual wholeness that is both the will and God's plan for man.79 It is the complete integration of the person as created by God so that everyone can be made well, satisfied, whole, and thriving.

The various authors' and writers' viewpoints cover a spectrum of thought about how the Christian faith impacts well-being. The body of study, the research conducted, and the ideas proffered have been sorted into four main themes. The four sections include Assessing Spiritual

---

78 Pargament, Ibid., 1430.

79 Old and New Testament Scriptures are replete with references to God’s provisions for man’s wholeness, well-being, and peace. A few of these include: Gen 26:1-6, 50:19-21; Exod 3:7-12; 6:2-9; Deut 6:10-11; 8:12-18; 2 Chr 7:14-16; Pss 1,8, 23,34, 91, 103, 105; Prov 3, 4; Isa 40, 54, 61, Jer 17; Mal 4; Matt 6:33, 11:28; Luke 1:77-80; 4:18-19; John 4:13.
Well-Being, The Role of Ministers as Caregivers, Pastoral Care and Counseling, and Benefits of Ministerial Care.

Florence is a faculty member of a seminary and a spiritual care practitioner in a large hospital. In her article, she references others who support taking theology practical in public domains to enhance humanity.\(^{80}\) The intention of taking the gospel into the public domain is not a novel idea; however, it is noticeably absent in churches that seem to become in society as prayer and public discourse have all but eliminated Christian influence and participation through ministry outreaches to the public. It shows how effective and successful the gospel can make a difference in the lives of people served. She defined ministry in the public square as a necessity for service to the public using the gospel as the intervention tool.

Several studies demonstrated how assessment tools could be used to improve men’s perception of spiritual well-being. The research findings are relevant in explaining that individuals’ thinking perceptions can be impacted and improved, resulting in spiritual growth and well-being. The difficulty with many studies is the number and diversity of participants involved and the individuals who record and interpret the data correctly and consistently.

There was an agreement among many sources about the positive role ministers play as caregivers. The Vespi and Glen studies underscore people's perceptions that ministers are familiar with their congregants' issues. In many cases, they play a primary role as that of a first responder in crises. Ministers generally have a reliable and long-standing relationship with parishioners and can intervene to lessen situations or help people resolve issues.

\(^{80}\) Florence, Ibid., 2. [Florence cites Theimann, Byron Williams, Ramsey, Furst, Stackhouse, et al. who promote taking the gospel into the public domain as a form of Christian activism.]
The clergy is sometimes caught in a struggle regarding when congregants should be referred to trained and skilled licensed professionals. Knowing one’s limitations and the depth and level of training and licensure would help guide the clergy in making those decisions. Some who do not guide may experience negative involvement with their counselee to the point of burnout. Scales emphasizes this point as well.

One approach given by Jankowski offered a proper balance of knowing when and what care to provide and when and to whom to refer clients. Jankowski proposes teamwork of professionals with a chaplain or minister to offer a holistic approach to meeting patients' and clients' needs. The counsel from a wide variety of sources and specialties would promote well-being for patients and clients.

The findings of the research emphasized that ministers' training and experiences build beneficial relationships that help congregants and societal populations understand and deal with complex life issues. A minister does not solely concentrate on solving and resolving problems but is involved with individual lives to mentor and guide many people throughout various life stages. Ministers are often seen as compassionate and caring for the total well-being of people. Ministers are the representatives of God and are endowed with natural abilities and gifts of the Holy Spirit to provide healing.

The literature review points to the trend that indicates people are willing to talk about spiritual matters even if they do not necessarily want to associate with a church. The study suggests that ministry outreaches are one way of engaging with non-believers or the disassociated religiously in the churches' communities. People of faith turn to their faith in a time of need. Ministers respond by providing support, comfort, and encouragement, and hope to people going through or who have been through difficult times. Religious teachings, precepts,
and practices often help people endure and become more resilient after difficulty. The clergy are seen by faithful and non-affiliated alike as caring for the needs of others. They respond to many who are helpless, hopeless, and marginalized.

**Theological Foundation**

The Theological Foundations section will examine concepts and constructs of biblical teachings that highlight cognitive and behavioral areas known to improve life satisfaction and well-being. The teaching principles in God’s word will be used in pastoral counseling interventions and techniques to effect wellness in participants. The interventions used will address the ways and means to influence client life satisfaction and how counseling can change well-being. A standardized assessment will use pre and post-testing to be administered to participants with the expected outcome of demonstrating that life satisfaction and well-being can be positively impacted. This project's success will be shown in the change to clients' subjective evaluation regarding the impact on their lives because of counseling, teaching, and healing.

As has been reported in this paper, the topic of well-being is subsumed under humanity’s quality-of-life (QOL) issues. Related to subjective well-being are rates that include life satisfaction, long life, health and wellness, and prosperity (success). The quality-of-life manifest in human activity is significantly influenced by spiritual interactions based on divine origins. When used in counseling settings, how those spiritual interactions can increase clients' QOL is the primary focus of this assessment project.

---

In assessing the counseling interventions provided to clients of the Ministry Centers of the JBA, this research aims to increase self-reported life satisfaction and well-being to improve the quality of life for all clients. The implications for the change in clients’ thinking and behavior functions are far-reaching. The anticipated impact on clients is significant in and of itself; however, there is a broader peripheral impact anticipated on the community. The note that no person is an island unto themselves and that all humans belong to the family of man in which what happens to one can happen to others.

The quality of life, which includes life satisfaction and well-being issues, involves more than improving people’s lives beyond eliminating misery. Counseling strategies and interventions will be beneficial to the totality of the person so that as one area improves, the others benefit. The person is seen holistically with co-equal parts that overlap and interweave. The selected counseling approaches have an acceptable scientific background with many case studies. Simultaneously, the theological foundation will comprise spiritual resources that have been appropriated from long historical faith-based principles and practices.

Combining the counseling strategies, spiritual teaching, and theological resources will be the basis for the program to target the mind, body, and soul triad to effect change. The interventions are used in counseling to encourage, support, and inflate participants’ perspective that life satisfaction and well-being can be changed and improved. The assessment will provide data to show change has occurred. Through counseling, clients' expectations, peace, and hope

will be nurtured change with way participants view their worlds and situations. The project will measure the difference in clients’ change and the impact on reported indicators of well-being.

**Tools and Resources**

This section will discuss the tools and resources used to build and broaden clients’ quality of life issues to improve lives. In the program, clients will be introduced and taught to use these tools and resources to change old patterns of thinking and create new cognitions about life to achieve higher levels of well-being. These tools will help generate a difference in life outcomes via pastoral counseling interventions promoting client growth and development.

A holistic approach will encompass all client domains to more fully integrated mental and emotional, spiritual, and physical realms. The interventions will incorporate spiritual disciplines, which will challenge negative cognition (beliefs not found in Scriptures and thinking adopted from worldly influences) and provide alternative cognitive processing according to God’s Word.\(^ {83}\)

Adjusting faulty or illogical cognitive processing will occur in counseling sessions by discussing clients’ narratives (life stories). Each client can recall positive and negative events from their life experiences to reveal how the situations affected them and how they responded to them. The counselor will use these events to discuss clients’ issues in Scriptures regarding how God’s Word addresses situations. God’s Word is the reference manual that provides all believers with the necessary to know God and live according to His truth.\(^ {84}\) In the Holy Scriptures are

---

\(^ {83}\) Ps 109:115. Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. God’s Word is the standard by which God’s will is known. God’s will for man to live successfully is found in His word. Man cannot rely on his or her own thinking, but must hear, learn, and assimilate important truths from God’s Word to live the blessed life.

\(^ {84}\) 2 Tim 3:16. Every Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for instruction, for reproof and conviction of sin, for correction of error and discipline in obedience, and for training in righteousness.
eternal truths (standards for life), negative and positive examples (blessings and curses), practical
teachings for life application, examples, instructions, commands to regulate life, and warnings
about death.

Through the process of life experiences with consideration towards biblical truths, new
patterns of thinking and behavior can be learned to face new challenges as they arise. With
教学 and practice, clients can experience cognitive change that can be measured. The results
will demonstrate change levels in life satisfaction (often referred to as happiness), increase levels
and states of wellness (mental and physical health), improve well-being (emotional, spiritual, and
psychological health). 85

In Fisher’s paper, he states that all humans at the core are spiritual beings and that the
fundamental dimension of people’s health and well-being is spiritual health. 86 He defines
spirituality as a term to denote ways of discovering, experiencing, and living out the implications
of an authentic human life. 87 According to Fisher, the spiritual is a critical component of the
individual's health and state. The four domains include the 1) personal or intrapersonal (self-
reflective actions), 2) the communal, activity with others, 3) environmental, actions with nature,
and 4) transcendental, activity relating to the divine (beyond the human level).


86 John Fisher, “The Four Domains Model: Connecting Spirituality, Health, and Well-Being,” Religions,

87 Fisher, Ibid. [Note: “The general meaning in the Oxford English Dictionary is that vital principle which
gives life, transcending the material and mechanical and refers to the essential nature of human beings, their strength
of purpose, perception, mental powers, frame of mind; higher moral qualities, with some religious connotations and
higher faculties of the mind.” (p. 18)]
A person’s spiritual well-being (SWB) is comprised of their spiritual health and physical well-being. In the aggregate viewpoint, the quality of life is influenced by the relationships between and within these four domains. Fisher makes clear the distinction between spiritual well-being and the psychological notion of well-being. Through the idea of interconnectivity, the psychological concept of well-being is focused primarily on the mind's study (psyche). In contrast, spirituality encompasses all four domains centered on the individual's very heart or core being.88 In this perspective, the head knowledge (psychological) and the heart inspiration (spiritual) filters information such as thoughts, experiences, emotions through all domains to strive for harmony. The individual's spiritual well-being is reflected in the quality of life in the relationship that a person has with God, themselves, and others.89

The wellness or wholeness described in this report highlights the premise that health involves much more than physical fitness and the absence of disease. When the mind, body, and soul interact in sync among the four domains and align with the correct, objective truth, the person is balanced and prosperous.90 As a person learns to think correctly and logically and his heart (innermost being) aligns with objective reality, behavior and actions reflect greater life satisfaction and increased, positive states of well-being. In other words, correct thinking leads to correct behaving, or right thinking leads to right living. As a person grows in cognition (the

89 Ibid., 22.
90 3 John 1:2, “Beloved, I pray above all things that you may prosper and be in health, even as your soul prospers.”
highest and noblest of the cognitive enterprise) and matures through inspiration (through scriptural revelation), his life becomes healthier and more prosperous.\textsuperscript{91}

A study on life satisfaction and spiritual well-being determined that spiritual well-being could strengthen the psychic function and life satisfaction in patients affected by cancer.\textsuperscript{92}

Spirituality impacts people’s health and wellness by the presence of spiritual beliefs. Significant benefits can result from acquired spiritual practices such as increasing resiliency to disease, decreasing physical and mental symptoms, and more substantial resources to deal with health concerns, anxiety, and depression. Spirituality has been shown to affect the rapid recovery of chronic diseases.\textsuperscript{93}

Paloutzian et al. have followed the subjective spiritual well-being of people for many decades and reports that spirituality plays a vital role in how well a person faces the dilemmas related to health issues.\textsuperscript{94} Just to be clear, spiritual well-being (SWB) is not the same as mental or physical health but is closely associated with both. Paloutzian posits that SWB is an indicator

\textsuperscript{91} In Job 42:2, Job said to the Lord, “I know that You can all things, and that no thought or purpose of Yours can be restrained or thwarted. Who is this that darkens and obscures counsel without knowledge? Therefore, I now see that I have rashly uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.” Prov 4:20-23 states, “My son pay attention to what I say; turn your ear to my words. Do not let then out of your sight, keep them within your heart; for they are life to those who find then and health to one’s whole body. Above all else guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.” Jer 29:11 states, “For I know the thoughts and plans that I have for you, says the Lord thoughts and plans for welfare and peace and not for evil, to give you hope and a future”.


\textsuperscript{93} Jafari, Ibid., 1363. [Many biblical references give support to the notion that spirituality, which includes a belief in God, releases a power beyond self. These include: Ps 91, 103, Deut 28:1-15, Isa 53:17 –“No weapon formed against you will succeed.” Matt 8:17, Matt 10:1.]

of how well a person is doing in the face of whatever the person is confronting. The notion of SWB is that people need and desire transcendence.

People draw certain inferences and conclusive subjective statements about situations and experiences beyond their ordinary experiences because it fits a psychological need. By rationalizing their experiences, people make sense of life events and learn to cope with those explanations. Paloutzian cites Christian lay counseling studies in a local church that used SWB to investigate Christian interventions' effectiveness. The findings revealed that emotional distress was reduced, and significant gains were made in most indicators.

Moberg posits that the Christians' primary concern in exercising their faith is to enhance and promote spiritual well-being. In his study of the White House Conference on Aging (1971), Moberg examined the concept that spiritual life pertains to “man’s inner resources especially his ultimate concern, the basic value around which all other values are focused, the central philosophy of life—whether religious, anti-religious, or nonreligious which guides a person’s conduct, the supernatural and nonmaterial dimensions of human nature.” Moberg added that spiritual well-being is found in a relationship with God who affirms life and nurtures wholeness. In his study of exploratory efforts to construct instruments that measure spiritual well-being, he found that a multidimensional approach using numerous indexes of SWB would be the most appropriate. He wanted to measure individual SWB and use the data to determine the vital signs of healthy churches to ensure their success over time.

95 Paloutzian, Ibid., 2.
Life Satisfaction and Well-being

Moberg’s research in Sweden and the United States resulted in findings highlighting the most vital factor analysis of items about the Christian faith, self-satisfaction, and personal holiness, all of which are significantly correlated with subjective well-being. Also cited in the research results was a significant difference in the indexes confirming that evangelical Christians have higher spiritual well-being levels than other Christians. Even nominal Christians rank higher than persons who profess to be atheists, agnostics, or skeptics, verified with highly significant differences in purported indexes.97

The interesting aspect of Moberg is the recommendation that spiritual variables be considered in studying life satisfaction, holistic well-being, and religious research. Furthermore, tools such as the one in this project help QOL issues, clinical psychological practice, pastoral counseling, and the evaluation research and program planning of agencies and groups that promote spiritual health.98

The theological assumptions formulating this study are further developed in this section by introducing and detailing the strategies to be used in the counseling sessions, particularly emphasizing the interventions and the methods used in the project to effect change in clients’ well-being. The counseling interventions will be presented to the project’s randomly selected participants in five weekly sessions scheduled to last up to forty-five minutes each. The

97 Moberg, Ibid., 357. [Note by researcher: According to Moberg, his assessment findings have a high correlation and validity with the SWB instrument developed by Ellison and Paloutzian that will be used in this project. Moberg further adds that SWB deserves the benefits of triangulation (a diverse method of data collection used by multiple researchers) which will incorporated in this project’s assessment methodology.]

98 Ibid., 359.
participants will take a pre-assessment and post-assessment using the same standardized instrument to determine the differences in self-reporting responses.

The Spiritual Well-Being (SWB) is the tool used to assess whether changes in clients’ life satisfaction and well-being and if clients’ lives have been improved. During the counseling sessions, the counselor will record observational notes to include responses that show cognitive changes from previously registered answers to assess clients’ understanding of the causation of those changes and recorded observations of clients’ behavior and psychological affect.

The counseling sessions will discuss three selected biblical areas of focus, which incorporate vital spiritual disciplines. The three spiritual disciplines will focus on 1) the Lord’s Prayer, 2) the Lord’s Provision, and 3) the Lord’s Protection. This triad of spiritual disciplines was selected as robust Christian doctrine, practices, and promises in the Scriptures. These three topics are by no means the only spiritual disciplines that can be used. Still, they represent potent mega-themes for the personal application that enable believers to live a healthy and prosperous life. Several factors contributed to the selection, namely, a) time of teaching involved and the limitations of counseling in this study, b) the focused nature that pastoral counseling can

---

99 Roswitha Saenz and Michael Waldo, “Clients’ Preferences Regarding Prayer During Counseling,” Psychology of Religion and Spirituality, Vol. 5, no. 4 (2013):325-334. Accessed online July 30, 2020, doi:10.1037/a0033711. [Article Note: The number of Americans who believe in a higher power has never dropped below 90% during the past 50 years. Because of the statistics, professional organizations such as the American Psychological Association (2002) and the American Counseling Association (2005) have been increasingly focused on the importance of the spiritual dimension in counseling (p.325). Even 21% of those who indicated that they were atheists expressed a belief in God or a universal spirit, and more than half of those who called themselves agnostic expressed a similar conviction. According to Saenz, research has indicated clients want to include spirituality within mental health counseling, however, their preference for how spirituality is addressed during counseling has not been well researched.] Researcher’s Note: The setting of this research project is in Christian Ministry Centers where clients are told the Christian nature and mission of the organization, while at the same time ministers are sensitive to the spiritual beliefs of clients and are respectful of their wishes in counseling regarding spiritual matters.
positively impact client well-being, and c) the level of understanding of the subject matter by clients to assimilate the teachings to their advantage.

The Lord’s Prayer

The spiritual discipline of prayer touches the core of Christian belief and practices. Prayer is universal in its appeal to all persons, even atheists in a plane about to crash, or an agnostic in the middle of a hurricane. Studies show the value of praying aloud with clients during counseling sessions. This value is reflected in the following benefits: 1) enhancing therapeutic support, 2) enhancing spiritual lives, 3) clarifying clients’ perspectives, and 4) improving and enhancing interpersonal communications.\textsuperscript{100} Saenz makes a notable observation in referring to some of the studies that indicate clients would like to discuss spiritual and religious issues such as prayer in counseling. Still, there is a religious gap between clients and mental health professionals.\textsuperscript{101} Closing that gap is one of the main reasons for this project and assessment.

Weld posits that spirituality has been increasingly recognized as a) a critical in mental health practice, b) personally relevant, c) essential to people’s well-being, d) important to the therapeutic alliance, which contributes to positive outcomes.\textsuperscript{102} According to Weld, further examination is needed in determining client expectations about prayer in counseling, which is currently lacking.

\textsuperscript{100} Saenz and Waldo, Ibid., 326.

\textsuperscript{101} Ibid. [Christian clients have been found prayer to be included in Christian counseling. Saenz points to research which indicated that 78\% of counselors in Christian agencies and 100\% in Christian private practices believe it is appropriate to pray with or for a client (p.326).]

Since the need for prayer is recognized as essential and client expectation about prayer is an uncertain variable, this researcher examines the expectations set by God expects for his people in worship. By focusing on what God expects of individuals in prayer, clients can understand the concept of prayer and how prayer moves God to answer it. To do this, the Scriptures had given us a model that Jesus gave his disciples when they asked him to teach them how to pray.

Prayer is deemed spiritually essential and is the most frequently used spiritual intervention used by Christian counselors.\textsuperscript{103} The Lord’s Prayer is used in this study as a counseling strategy for working with clients to test the impact and improvement on well-being. It was chosen because it is the only prayer, He gave his followers and familiarity with the Christian community at large and secular society. It has the descriptive terminology of being called “the Heart of the Christian Life.”\textsuperscript{104} Within the Lord’s Prayer are two significant themes: the relationship between God and man and their dependence on God for life.\textsuperscript{105}

Pastoral counselors realize effective prayer with clients as the correct understanding of worship's nature and function evolves in the counseling sessions. Clients need to understand that prayer is the connection that initiates the flow of the living God into a person’s life. Prayer

\textsuperscript{103} Weld and Eriksen, Ibid.


\textsuperscript{105} Ibid. [Plessis relates that throughout church history, men such as St. Augustine and Martin Luther have observed that there is nothing more wonderful in the entire Bible than the Lord’s Prayer. John Calvin, she added, stated that the petitions in the Lord’s Prayer include everything that believers rightly wish from God. Furthermore, the importance of the Lord’s Prayer provides normative perspectives in the pastoral guidance process to enable the counselee to lead a life of justice and peace through the working of the Holy Spirit in the life of believers. Finally, the author posits the possible linkage between the realization of the responsibilities as found in the Lord’s Prayer and restorative justice that can heal brokenness in a community and that is what makes this prayer a unique and powerful spiritual tool.]
establishes the relationship with the creator priming the life flow from the life source to the life dependent (people).\textsuperscript{106} God expects that man sees his need for God and depends on the living God for life and well-being.

Without God, life does not exist. It is the belief that God exists and that He is sovereign over all creation that enables and promotes the continuous flow of life and blessings (life satisfaction).\textsuperscript{107} Through prayer, sincere communication with God, worshipful experiences can develop an intimate relationship with God.\textsuperscript{108} God's grace (undeserved, unearned, unmerited favor of God) is attracted by the person's faith in God (faith being defined as the belief He exists) and that He grace supplies every need of the person who receives His favor.

The importance of prayer and the intimate relationship with God provides the church body (corporately and individually), with a paradigm that teaches them how to pray, and consequently, live.\textsuperscript{109} Using the Lord’s Prayer to teach clients how to pray is a strategy designed to apply God's Word to the believer's life with the expectation that through faith, prayer is effective and positively impacts a believer's life.\textsuperscript{110}

Weld posited that only two empirical studies since 1957 had been conducted to determine the usefulness of prayer in counseling. In general, results indicated weak support for

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{106} John 1:4, “In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.” John 14:6, “Jesus said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.”
\item \textsuperscript{107} Heb 11:6, “And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and the He rewards those who earnestly seek Him.
\item \textsuperscript{108} Plessis, Ibid., 3.
\item \textsuperscript{110} Isa 55:11, “So shall My work be that goes forth out of My mouth: it shall not return to Me void but it shall accomplish that which I please and purpose, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.”
\end{itemize}
prayer’s helpfulness in the counseling process. He further reported that “intercessory prayer had the strongest effect on the cognitive symptoms of depression...”111

Clients will be introduced and become acquainted with the Lord’s Prayer over the course of the study to encourage a deeper, more intimate relationship with God. Participants are to reflect on the message of the Lord’s Prayer as its phrases are depicted in Table 2.1. This table captures the essence of God’s thoughts, words, and heart that the Father has for His image bearers. The clients will learn to visualize God’s love for all people, the forgiveness He sends to sinners, and divine protection.112

The Lord’s Prayer is universally identified for its depiction of the heart of God. Many faith communities use the prayer to teach children and adults essential truths. Other uses of the Lord’s Prayer include intercession, making requests to God, and comfort in time of crisis. The lessons will provide information that can be used by clients in counseling sessions to determine if there are faulty or illogical belief statements.

Lesson two in the Appendix provides more detail information concerning the Lord’s Prayer and how it will be taught to participant. There will be discussions as to how this spiritual resource can be incorporate daily in participants’ lives and impact well-being.

111 Weld and Eriksen, Ibid., 330.

112 Jer 29:1, “For I know the plans that I have for you”, declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”
Table 2.1 The Lord’s Prayer\textsuperscript{113}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Our Father which art in heaven</th>
<th>First grand petition: ‘Be God to us.’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hallowed be thy Name</td>
<td>Be God to us in our words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thy Kingdom come</td>
<td>Be God to us in our thoughts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven</td>
<td>Be God to us in our deeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give us this day our daily bread</td>
<td>Be good to us in our present needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors</td>
<td>Be good to us in things of the past that still hurt us through guilt or blame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil</td>
<td>Be good to us in things in the future that already hurts by making us afraid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever</td>
<td>The basis for the grand petitions—the power belongs to God, not to us or the prayer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Lord’s Provision

The second spiritual discipline used in the teaching guide discusses the efficacy of the Lord’s Supper. It can be taught in harmony with the Cross of Jesus, depicting numerous themes in Holy Scriptures. The cross describes the greatest act of God’s love for the man in giving His Son to die for the sins of the world. It is the apex of human history in that God spared nothing—not even His only beloved Son—to reconcile the world unto Himself (Rom 8:32). The Lord’s

\textsuperscript{113} Plessis, Ibid., 4.
Supper portrays God’s provisions in many ways; the primary among them is to save man from their sins and provide eternal life.

In the Lord’s Supper, Jesus observes the traditional Jewish Passover reenactment of the miracle of the last plague given by God that brought about the death of the firstborn of Egypt indicative of God’s wrath and judgment, and deliverance of God’s people, Israel, from the bondage of slavery and oppression. On the night of judgment, there was a plague for the Egyptians’ sins resulting in death, while on the same night in the Jewish homes, there was deliverance resulting in life, deliverance from slavery leading to freedom. Jesus shares the Passover meal to commemorate Israel's redemption while declaring a new work created by the Father in establishing a New Covenant in His body and blood.

Jesus instituted a new and living way for man to come to the Father. Jesus proclaimed that “He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life and that no many can come to the Father except through Him.”114 His death became the believer’s death and His resurrection, their new life. He came to fulfill the law so that believers could be freed from its bondage to live by the Spirit.115 No more would man have to struggle with the law-keeping, performance issues, and the curses of the law. Through Christ's blood and finished word, Man was liberated to become a new creature in Christ.116

114 John 14:6, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

115 In Romans 4, Paul teaches the promise of God given to Abraham and his heirs (believers) that inheritance of righteousness would be by faith and not by law. Romans 6, he lays out the new life in Christ.

As a young, born-again believer, the author partook of the Lord’s Supper in church viewing it from a rigidly solemn and fearful punitive mindset of judgment. The church taught that one had to examine all his life and confess (or repent) all his sins before partaking in the elements or there would be damnation brought from on God. In hearing other believers’ stories, it seems that many believers have unanswered questions and are filled with anxiety and worry about their salvation regarding the Lord’s Supper.

There are believers who feel that they must get rebaptized to be good enough to take the Communion (and some feel multiple times to make sure it took). In believers' minds, what is believed about the Lord’s Supper leads to the way we think about God. In this case, wrong believing (condemnation) can lead to wrong living (fear, worry, anxiety).\textsuperscript{117} Many believers have questions and are confused about the activity of God in their lives based on what they were taught about God. God has such a loving heart towards His children that is expressed in the Lord’s Supper. Believers should be taught the Scriptural truths in and surrounding the Lord’s Supper which directly affects health and wellness, wholeness, and well-being. Yeung states the significance of the Supper lies in this “undeserved God-sinner table fellowship and that we are received by Christ and restored as his covenant partners.”\textsuperscript{118}

The Apostle Paul indicates the connection between the Old and New Testaments that, according to Daise, explains how the unblemished sacrificial lamb of the Passover meal was

\textsuperscript{117} 1 Cor 11:29-30, “For he that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason, many are weak and sickly among you, and fall asleep. This researcher has heard many ministers pray the same prayer for the bread and the cup not differentiating (discerning) that the Lord’s body was beaten, broken, and crushed prior to the cross for our healing. Paul stated that it was the Corinthians falling asleep (dying) because they did not rightly discern that healing was made available at the scourging post for their benefit (Isaiah 53:5). Christ died for all who are unworthy.

\textsuperscript{118} Yueng, Ibid., ii.
equated with the sinless, perfect sacrifice of Jesus in the Lord’s Supper. This connection pointed to the OT's foreshadowing events when the Jews were commanded to kill the unblemished lamb, placing the blood on the doorpost (forming a cross), eating the entirety of the lamb. The next day all two to three million Jews, elderly grandparents, young children, men, and women walked out of Egypt delivered their bondage, free with silver and gold as back payment of four hundred years of slavery. Scripture says there was not one feeble among them, thus, fulfilling Isaiah 53:5.

Throughout the five-week counseling, clients are offered the Lord’s Supper. In counseling, clients are encouraged to remember the Lord’s Supper as the channel of God’s divine health and wellness. The Table 2.2 below compares the Old and New Testaments. In offering the sacrificial victim in the OT, the Jewish people had to continual offer animals which provided only a temporary covering for sins, whereas, in the NT, Jesus was offered for the forgiveness of sins and the establishment of righteousness once and for all.

It is crucial for participants to understand both testaments to live victoriously. The OT demanded righteousness but did not lift a finger to help, whereas in the NT Jesus provided righteousness as a gift in the shedding of His blood. Man is forgiven eternally through Jesus.

---


120 Jesus came to bring the Gospel of Grace. 2 Corinthians 3:6-18 says that the keeping of the law, namely, the Ten Commandments is the ministry of death. Believers are warned of going back to the law (Gal 5:4) or ascribing to a mixture of law and grace as in Revelations, the Laodicean Church was warned to be either hot or cold, but don’t mix the two or they would be spewed out of the Lord’s mouth (Rev 3:15-16).

121 Ro 7 - 8 provide source material used to help participants understand the OT and NT.
Table 2.2 Old and New Testament Teachings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Old Testament</th>
<th>New Testament</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Law-keeping requires a spotless animal sacrifice. The sinner put his hands on</td>
<td>Jesus’ perfect sacrifice. He knew no sin, He did no sin, in Him there was no sin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the lamb, transferring his sins to the animal. In return, the lamb’s innocent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>transferred to the sinner.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law-keeping required a continual</td>
<td>Jesus’ sacrifice was once and for all. All sins past, present, and future forgiven (Heb 10:14); through the Lord’s Supper, this is celebrated through eating and drinking in remembrance of what Jesus did for believers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sacrifice for sin; the lamb was slain for every sin committed and once a year</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for the Nation of Israel.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law-keeping stipulated that only the High Priest could enter the Holy of</td>
<td>On the cross, Jesus’ death tore the veil that separated sinful man from God was split allowing all believers to have access to the Throne of God,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holies and present blood sacrifice once a year for the Nation of Israel.</td>
<td>receiving righteousness and blessings. Believers celebrate this at the Lord’s Supper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law keeping was conditional for all Jews—those who kept it were blessed,</td>
<td>Jesus was raised from the dead to sit at the right hand of the Father. He sent the Holy Spirit as Comforter giving peace, wellness, and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>those who failed were cursed (Deut 28:1-15).</td>
<td>righteousness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law-keeping bestows righteousness conditionally only if the blood sacrifices</td>
<td>Jesus bestows eternal life on all believers through His shed blood. His broken body gives life abundantly, health, and wellness (Isa 53:5.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>are continuous. Jews were never assured of eternal salvation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law keeping is holy, but it cannot make man holy. God gave the Law for man to</td>
<td>Jesus fulfilled the law by His death, burial, and resurrection. For a believer to go back to the law means he falls from grace (Gal 5:4).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>see his need for a Savior (Gal 3:24).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For believers, the most significant expression of God's love for believers is the His love through the Lord’s Supper. In this narrative, God demonstrates His love for believers by giving his only begotten Son so that in (right) believing in Him, believers will have a righteous life, abundant life, and eternal life. Lesson three in the Appendix describes the teaching material in more detail for participants and includes homework assignments.
The Lord’s Protection

The third teaching segment presented in the project is learning how to walk in and under God’s divine protection as prescribed in the Scriptures. Clients will be asked to participate in visual imagery and imagination on how to put on the armor of God. This activity will inform and demonstrate to the clients how they can apply Scriptures to lead more successful lives in a world that continually challenges and strains their spiritual and physical resources. While the equipment is spiritual, it is designed for clients to learn how to protect and provide for their needs (Eph 6:12).

The armament given by the Lord is to fight the spiritual force that war against believers, providing them with strength and power to overcome evil and be victorious in life.122 Just as the antidote for worry is peace, for fear there is faith, for anxiety peace, the Lord provided people to fight the good fight of faith in the name of Christ Jesus. The spiritual armor’s strategy is to equip the believers how to live a prosperous life, one that brings ever-increasing life satisfaction, wellness, and well-being.

It is vital to understand that spiritual warfare is real; it’s an everyday reality, particularly for believers. Our daily routines must rule and reign in life (Rom 5:17). For many people, the battles of life, the stress, the struggles, the conflicts, the depression, and the defeatist's attitude come from one’s mental conflict, disturbances, and dysfunctions. There are two worlds

122 Eph 6:13-18, “Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. [Believers are not to fight among themselves, rather to love one another. It is the enemy of God and man, Satan, that according to John 10:10b comes to kill, steal, and destroy. The battle is the Lord’s and by right believing in what He gives each believer, all evil is trampled under the believer’s feet (Ps 91:13, Luke 10:19).
in which man exists that are at odds with each other and vie for man’s attention and will (John 18:36).

The pastoral counseling techniques used to address the participants in sessions and homework identify the weapons available, describe and teach their use, and relate practical ways of incorporating these techniques in daily life. Each weapon has a purpose and relates to ways people can get control over their thoughts and behavior. It is important for participants to see that the battle for control of the mind can produce two choices. One choice produces thoughts that are negative, hurtful, and untruthful. The other choice produces thoughts of positivity and affirmation, encouraging and hopeful, victorious and success depending on which choice the person makes. Table 2.3 depicts the armor of God and their uses.

Table 2.3 - The Lord’s Protection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Armor</th>
<th>Description/Definition</th>
<th>Practical Usage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belt of Truth</td>
<td>Truth holds all things truth together. Know the truth (Jesus). The truth sets you free</td>
<td>The more truth received, the more victory. Truth equals victory. Truth dispels the darkness and reveals areas in which one is still in the dark. Knowing the truth stops the devil from lying to you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breastplate of Righteousness</td>
<td>Righteousness protects the heart.</td>
<td>Righteousness is a gift, undeserved. The devil attacks your heart (with accusations) to stop your faith.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

123 Rom 5:17, Dan 9:24, John 16:8 “And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.” Be established in His righteousness and be righteousness conscious not sin conscious.
Spiritual warfare is a part of the human experience. There is no man free or immune to facing struggles, despair, emotional highs and lows, anxiety, worry, fear. The war is all around man as long as he lives on the earth. It is invisible, just like the air we breathe and the thoughts we think. Because there is the cycle of life, birth, growth, and death are a part of our existence. How a man deals with life and how he determines to live his life is crucial to how life is lived.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shod your feet with Peace(^{124})</th>
<th>Jesus is the Prince of Peace-He gives us His peace. Shoes are essential for a believer’s walk. If feet are injured, one can’t walk.</th>
<th>The devil cannot manage (trouble) a believer who remains in peace. The devil wants to disturb your mind. Jesus gives lasting peace.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shield of Faith</td>
<td>Shield of Faith is, above all, a top priority, great importance to extinguishing fiery missiles</td>
<td>When the devil fires angry darts (thoughts) at you, believers accept/reject them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helmet of Salvation</td>
<td>Salvation refers to preservation, wholeness, health, and prosperity. Believers must be assured of their salvation not based on their works but the faith of Jesus.</td>
<td>The helmet is the hope of salvation. Hope is the confident expectation of good. Believers hope (believe) good things will happen to them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sword of the Spirit</td>
<td>Refers to the Word of God. This is an offensive weapon used for attacking.</td>
<td>God’s is alive, powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword; meets man’s needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praying in the Spirit</td>
<td>Prayer is also an offensive weapon. Pray continuously</td>
<td>Praying in the Spirit helps one to receive answers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{124}\) John 14.27, “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”
Most people know and understand that native-born skills can be developed only so far, but it is the attitude of the heart and spirit that accounts for how well we spend our life on this earth.\footnote{125}

When humans are born, an automatic enemy is dedicated to his destruction. His name is Satan.\footnote{126} Satan hates man because man was made in His image. Man was given the privilege of ruling and reigning on the earth, but the devil deceived man to relinquish that role on earth. Knowing there is an enemy whose sole purpose and desire is to destroy every person living and knowing that he is spiritually seeking whomever he can annihilate. It behooves humanity to understand how to defend, protect, and defeat the enemy. Therefore, God, through Jesus Christ, has given man the equipment and knowledge how to protect and preserve life.

When everyone knows the situation and can appropriate the tools to defend and protect themselves, life satisfaction and well-being can be preserved and even maximized. The hypothesis for the Lord’s Protection is the knowledge given in the pastoral counseling sessions that will help clients to develop practical skills to use against the devil. How well clients learn to use the interventions will determine the impact on clients.

\footnote{125}{Any five-foot tall person knows that it is very difficult to compete with a six-foot+ basketball player who outweighs him by fifty pounds but learning to score with accuracy at further distances and from a myriad of shooting positions will help even the odds.}

\footnote{126}{John 10:10, “The thief comes only to steal, kill, and destroy. I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance (to the full, fill it overflows).}
Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical foundation will support a pastoral counseling approach targeting interventions using biblical teachings and principles to improve cognitive and behavioral functioning. A standardized assessment tool will measure the difference in pre-testing and post-testing to determine the change in clients’ well-being. The standardized assessment tool will depend on self-reporting responses of participants to measure the change of life satisfaction and the change of well-being.

This study will use spiritually tailored strategies and techniques with clients.127 The spiritual interventions will consist of strategies, techniques, and material that will be incorporated in a therapeutical approach based on appropriate theoretical principles. An evaluation process will be an integral part of the counseling process to show the impact the religious interventions have on changing life satisfaction and well-being. According to Miller and Thorensen, spirituality can be studied scientifically.128

There is an increasing call for investigating religious factors to health and wellness implications within the public domain. Research to measure Christian therapy is in demand by many clients; however, existing studies to examine its effectiveness are sparse.129 There is literature investigating how ninety percent of American have a favorable response to the impact

---

127 Some researchers differentiate spiritual from religious spheres by explaining that religion refers to the institutional aspects of religious practices in an organizational entity, whereas spirituality is understood to transcend ordinary physical limits of time and space, matter and energy, something beyond the self, one-on-one aspects, beliefs, feelings/emotions, and practices toward God or higher being.


on wellness by religious and spiritual perspectives. The findings indicate with those who were surveyed reported a belief in God and claimed some degree of religious institutional affiliation. Many practiced spiritual methods such as prayer or religious reframing.\textsuperscript{130}

In Wade, clients with religious commitment who were involved in Christian counseling claimed a closer relationship with therapists. They showed a more positive change as compared to clients in secular agencies. Counselors of all stripes need to be sensitive and intentionally more aware of clients' religious beliefs and practices. It is incumbent on mental health professionals to be apprised of counselees' religious domains and how those individuals' beliefs and practices affect or impact healing. This report, among others, underscores a clear recognition of the importance of many in American society's religious perspective, namely, the desire to be treated in practices with beliefs and viewpoints like theirs.

The information gained from the literature review research will be used to define the complex identity issue of believers who are ministers in Jesus Christ and the performance of the duties carried out by those ministers through a methodological approach in serving others. First and foremost, believers identify with Christ Jesus, and because of the new identity (born again experience), who they are is embodied in what they do.\textsuperscript{131}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{130} Wade et al., Ibid. \\
Defining Pastoral Counselor’s Ministry

In the literature review, there is a quest for identity in determining the work of ministers who serve in pastoral counseling. As believers and ministers of Christ Jesus, it is imperative that pastoral counselors recognize, value, and uphold the authority of the Word of God. Christian teachings and practices based on biblical truths and understanding should be the basis of the calling for those of faith to interact with the society in which they live. In conjunction with Christian identity, Pastoral Counselors operate in a professional context utilizing the training skills, clinical practices, and ethical and professional standards acquired while ever mindful of belonging to a faith community and representing a divine healing power. Pastoral caregivers exercise strategies and interventions that will enhance, impact, and improve clients' life and well-being from this perspective.

Park’s diagram in Figure 2.4 illustrates a process whereby the dynamics of theological perspectives intersect with human cultural conditions to form reflections about life experiences. Out of the pastoral practices and pastoral reflections, a methodological approach is formulated to focus the light of theological beliefs and practices unto the culture. The ongoing, continuous updating of the methodological approach provides a framework of understanding whereby ministers can teach. Counselors can heal, acquire more excellent knowledge, and personally

---

132 Park, Ibid.
assimilate God’s ways and purposes to help clients to flourish in life. Pastoral Counselors must emphasize the importance of God’s Word related to the human condition and connect the care given with biblical wisdom and revelation.

Declaring the importance of theology does not exclude psychological research and clinical findings that relate to and aid the human condition. The pastoral counselor examines the secular findings and the psychological implications for the human condition and incorporates meaningful principles into the cultural dynamics to further enhance the human condition.133 Using a theological framework, pastoral counseling can take the hermeneutic perspective of theology and combine other relevant theoretical disciplines to formulate an integrated method of delivering care and services to clients. This framework will help the client meet short-term and long-term growth and development in mental and emotional healthcare.

This paper posits that a biblical foundation can construct a meaningful, comprehensive, and integrative understanding of the human condition. Garzon writes that spirituality has become a more relevant and acceptable term with counselees in secular and faith-based settings. Garzon posits that spiritual resources can be added when client permission is obtained, and Scripture can be effectively used in clinical care when used in appropriate ways. He further states that as proper counseling guidelines and ethical requirements are met, the Word of God is a powerful resource with clients. 134

133 Park, Ibid., 22.

Mankind strives to address and resolve problems and challenging situations through self-efforts, scant resources, and limited understanding, which intensifies over time into the negative thoughts (perfectionism) and the unhealthy emotions that stress, worry, anxiety, and fear. When the mind is refocused, reoriented, and renewed towards the one true power of God, his absolute standards, and spiritual resources, lasting transformation is possible.

Pastoral counselors not only present this broad view understanding of the human condition, but they also share the revelatory and transformative solutions given by God for man’s best. In a rapidly changing world, academically and educationally, socially, and culturally, and politically, the Christ-centric theological perspective can and does provide a stable, viable, constant, truthful, and consistent refuge for believers and a lighthouse to the world in chaos.

Psychologists and mental health care workers have become more interested in how religion, religious thought, beliefs, and practices impact health and well-being. The two biggest questions up for debate among secularists are “What is the religious impact on well-being?” and “How does it work to improve positive and negative life satisfaction?” The subject of religion has intensified that there is an increasing call for understanding how religious interventions work with life satisfaction and well-being issues.135

Religious opinions abound in society, with many claims on the correct interpretation. Most people seem to espouse skin-in-the-game and have a definite opinion regarding the subject of religion. Faith is an area where the more significant questions of life, nature, and humanity take on greater significance. Those questions deal with the ultimate issues and include, “What is

---

the meaning and purpose to existence?” “What is the successful way to live life?” “Is there an afterlife?” and “Who is God?” William James, the American Psychologist, claimed that religion was the pathway to the highest of human potentials.136

This paper intends to focus on the twin hypotheses of, “What are the implications of religion on the man’s life satisfaction and well-being?” and “How does religion work to increase positive emotions and decrease negative ones to promote well-being?” Even if a person is not very religious, these ultimate concerns weigh heavily with most people.

Social sciences once regarded religion (religious thoughts and practices) as a homogenous group that had little to contribute, was incomprehensible to study, and beneath its scholastic attention; however, in recent years, more attention has been given to the study of religion and its implications for well-being. For the purposes of this paper there are two reasons for the shifting change: the secular sciences which have not adequately, sufficiently, or successfully been able to change life satisfaction or well-being. Many people have religious beliefs that are not addressed because of negative and judgmental attitudes that have been, frankly, hostile to religion.137

The following table highlights the conclusions that the literature review has drawn regarding religion that previously has been described by many in the social sciences as religious stereotypical principles, behaviors, and practices. The stereotypical perspectives of religion merely reinforce critical judgments and belittle the fact that “religion is a richer, more complex

136 Martinez et al., Ibid.
process than psychologists have imagined, one that has the potential both to help and to harm.”

In Table 2.5, Pargament delineates the descriptions of religious conclusions which explain various forms of beliefs and practices of believers. The levels of religious (and spiritual) experiences progress in evolutionary stages to indicate a deepening and maturation of faith.

Table 2.5 Pargament Defines Religious Conclusions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conclusions</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>Some forms of religion are more helpful than others. Well-being has been linked positively to a religion that is internalized, intrinsically motivated, and based on a secure relationship with God and negatively to an imposed, unexamined faith and reflective of a tenuous relationship with God and the world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>There are advantages and disadvantages to even controversial forms of religion, such as fundamentalism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third</td>
<td>Religion is beneficial to socially marginalized groups and to those who embed religion more fully in their lives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth</td>
<td>Religious beliefs and practices appear to be especially valuable in stressful situations that push people to their resources' limits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth</td>
<td>The efficacy of religion is tied to the degree to which it is well integrated into its life.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some researchers suggest that religious values have significant implications for promoting life satisfaction and increasing well-being by helping clients cope with stress and

---

138 Pargament, Ibid. [Author Note: Religion is the term to refer to both religion and spirituality. Martinez defines religiousness as a system of beliefs, values, and activities based on creeds; spirituality refers to transcendent experiences and understandings about God and/or other nonvisible characteristics of life and the universe. Individuals can be spiritual and religious, primarily religious but not particularly spiritual, or primarily spiritual but not religious (p. 944).]

139 Ibid., 168.
distresses, heal, and change and transform.\textsuperscript{140} These researchers highlight the need to address foundational theoretical concerns in several areas. These areas are described as pathways in the theoretical foundation formulated in this study. The pathways underscore the need for 1) the definition of terms, 2) the counseling approach, and 3) the assessment process.

**Definition of Terms**

McDowell reviewed nine measures of psychological well-being and offered recommendations on how these tools may be used.\textsuperscript{141} McDowell issued a caveat about the adequacy of instruments surveyed in evaluating health care interventions. “There remains active debate over how adequately the questions included portray the theoretical definition of well-being on which they are based.”\textsuperscript{142}

McDowell refers to the importance of an adequate definition of well-being. He posited a definition from the World Health Organization (1948), which pertained to the physical, mental, and social well-being, not just the absence of disease and infirmity. This definition, or any of the others proposed, is not sufficient; therefore, he expanded it to include outcome measures that reflected a broader treatment goal diverting away from a medically based construct to a more

---

\textsuperscript{140} Miller, Ibid. [Miller reviews epidemiological evidence linking religiousness to morbidity and mortality, possible biological pathways linking spirituality/religiousness to health and advances in the assessment of spiritual/religious variables in research and practice. McDowell concluded “that measures exist to assess several conceptions of psychological well-being. Most instruments perform adequately for survey research, but we know less about their adequacy for use in evaluating health care interventions. There remains active debate over how adequately the questions included portray the theoretical definition of well-being upon which they are based.” (p, 69).]


\textsuperscript{142} Ibid.
holistic approach. McDowell offered a definition that addressed that the concept of well-being by stating well-being is “life satisfaction (happiness) stemming from optimal function.”\textsuperscript{143}

The question posed with this definition is, “What is an optimal function?” McDowell asserts that optimal does not mean perfection. Instead, it is the subjective explanation of one’s aspirations and the thoughts regarding those aspirations. Simply put, each person makes a judgment of their status of well-being by how they view the way life affects them.

There is no one size fits all or one condition that is the gold standard for all people.

The image in Chart 2.6 represents emotional states of well-being along linear extremes. The diagram illustrates the conceptual coverage of measurement scales. For example, many distress scales over the chart's SE corner, while depression scales would be in the SSE quadrant. The scales of psychological and subjective well-being mainly fall in the WNW to the ENE sector. The diagram illustrates themes that emanate from the model's center, moving to extremes in the outer edges. From this model, researchers could choose assessments to measure a variety of affective states of the individual. It can determine the clients’ subjective feelings, thoughts, and experiences along the continuum of emotional progression.

The model shows a central point of origin in the depiction, namely, the center point, representing the human entity, wherein all matters intersect. The significance of depicting all attributes originating in the model's center is the problematic nature of those attributes' origins.

\textsuperscript{143} MacDowell, Ibid., 70.
Each human feature occurs and reoccurs at varying points along a linear aspect based on subjective self-reporting moments of clients’ feelings, thoughts, and emotions. At issue is the question, “When and how do you test for this variability?” and “What standard is used to determine the degree of change necessary to improve the condition of the individual?” There is a definite need for objective standards, evaluation, and certainty for improvement in human mental and emotional shaping to occur. The systematic process for guidance to happen is paramount.

The takeaway from McDowell is that there remains an active debate over the definition of well-being. All current and viable illustrations incorporate subjective self-reporting data subject to change depending on situational challenges and adversities, mental and emotional stability, and circumstances beyond the individual’s control. For this reason, the “optimal functioning” is still nebulous in contributing an excellent supplement to the definition for this project. Just adding the word “optimal” provides little clarity to the already highly subjective parameters for its meaning. Optimal is still a shifting qualifier without underlying standards to measure optimal performance, or how one goes about achieving the optimal level(s), or how one knows when it is has been obtained.

The importance of a definition that is acceptable to most social scientists in the research field is difficult but necessary for practical, descriptive, and evaluative purposes. This researcher will use McDowell’s theoretical definition, namely, “[Well-being is] life satisfaction with optimal functioning,” with an appendix added by this author. This paper chooses to qualify the

---

definitional statement by inserting a phrase that defines optimal functioning, namely, *well-being is life satisfaction with optimal functioning according to God’s best for the person.*

God’s best for the person highlights the foundational issue concerning truth statements and teachings which guide a person to wellness. The objective standards found in God’s Word allow people to decide how their thoughts, beliefs, feelings, and actions can produce well-being. God’s best represents a spiritual domain that is constant, consistent, and constructive in evaluating what is beneficial for that client. Each person can use those standards to form thought patterns that can help them thrive in life and be successful. The Pastoral Counseling approach will focus on intervention strategies to optimize people’s thinking to see how pastoral counseling can change well-being considering spiritual resources based on God’s Word.

The need for the addendum, *God’s best for the person,* to the optimal functioning definition is necessary to recognize the objective standard by which the client can judge his thinking, feelings, beliefs. The client’s cognitive reasoning will be linked with Scriptures to reveal God’s best for them.\(^\text{145}\) Life satisfaction and optimal functioning can be assessed in degrees and increasing intensity along a linear scale if there is a universal, truth-standard (God’s best for the person). This means that the universal idea of an omnipotent, omniscient, and divine

\(^{145}\) Joseph A. Stewart-Sicking, “Cognitive Therapy and the Punctual Self: Using an Ascetical Framework to Critique Approaches to Psychotherapy,” *Pastoral Psychology,* Vol. 64 (2015): 111-122, accessed online May 17, 2020, doi: 10.1007/s11089-013-0588-7, 112. Sicking writes that theory shapes practice, but practice changes the very conditions which we understand theory. “In making a distinction between ethics and morals, Ricoeur suggests that the more interesting subject of inquiry is not concrete rules, but the aims toward which the practice of one’s life points. This conclusion shows a blind spot in existing studies of counseling theories, which tend to focus on assumptions, principles, and deontology much more than virtues, practices, and ethical aims. This study hopes to show the promise of an ethics-centered approach through examining the ways in which counseling interventions can shape the kind of happiness and selfhood one pursues” (112).
being has given his creation his truth Word in Holy Scriptures by which that Word can be used as the one proper standard (ideal) for all life.

The Counseling Approach

Wolever presents a modus operandi to address issues in counseling using the model called Wellness Coaching.\(^{146}\) The approach was developed to address the worldwide increase in disease and unhealthy patterns. This wellness model serves to help individuals change their health habits through health and wellness coaching. The theoretical definition of the coaching context is to “enhance the well-being of individuals and facilitate the achievement of their health-related goals.”\(^{147}\) While the concept of coaching is not new, it seems unique when applied to health and well-being issues. The role of a coach incorporates teaching (skillsets), preaching (exhortation and emphasis), counseling (motivation), repetitions (trials and reinforcement), and assessment (measurement), all to train subjects to apply the principles learned in a competitive setting.

The ramifications for counseling are proactive, full of encouragement and support, and appeals to goal achievement's motivational efforts. Clients can relate to the more collegial atmosphere of support and encouragement. Knowing that the counseling provided helps the client become more satisfied in life through healthier behaviors and achieve success through increased positivity and goal attainment. This researcher has used the coaching model without realizing that it was an established model and using this approach to facilitate counseling.


\(^{147}\) Ibid., 39.
The more control and empowerment the client feels in therapy, the greater the odds of success in both the short and long-term realms. The interventions used to guide the process are:

1) the techniques used during the coaching process.

2) the theoretical underpinnings of the approach.

3) the frequency and duration of the coaching process.

4) the extent of human contact provided.

5) the degree to which content education is included in the intervention.

6) the professional background and training of the coaches.\(^{148}\)

The theoretical approach for the counseling used with clients in this project is based on the Cognitive Theory espoused by Aaron Beck in the 1960s. It is a widely accepted and practiced model to benefit clients. Also known as the talking therapy, the Cognitive Therapy (CT) model has been researched initially with clients experiencing depression but has been reported effective in helping wide-range distress and psychological and emotional dysfunction. CT focuses on clients' problems and offers guidance and solutions to solve the issue(s).

This theoretical approach targets the client’s thinking to discern where the client’s cognition has been affected by internal or external sources. The counseling observes the flow of conversation to determine where faulty, illogical thinking is the reason for cognitive dysfunction. As the counselor listens attentively to clients’ words, phrases, discussions, and body language, patterns emerge that reveal negative thoughts and unhealthy emotions. The client's cognition affects all aspects of his behavior, relationships, and ability to cope. Once the clinician

\(^{148}\) Wolever, Ibid., 40.
determines the cause and severity of faulty thinking, he addresses the clients’ issues to better cope with the problems confronting him.

The hypothesis of this paper is “How can client life satisfaction and well-being be effectively improved and measured within a pastoral counseling setting?” The testing of this hypothesis is the aim of this project. The Pastoral Counseling Program will utilize acceptable counseling theories and practices with clients over five weekly sessions. The Cognitive Theoretical counseling approach will be the primary practice used with clients and will be intertwined with spiritual and Scriptural resources as appropriate. The study assessment will include a short self-reporting examination at the beginning (pretest) and ending (post-test) counseling sessions to evaluate the impact of between the two means.

In Cognitive Therapy, the counselor listens to clients’ experiences, particularly current situations and issues causing stress or are problematic. The counselor focuses on how the client uses cognitive skills to organize personal experiences and how this process unfolds over time. The counselor evaluates patterns of faulty thinking, negative feelings, unhealthy emotions of the client to correct, change, or reframe illogical thoughts or unhealthy emotions that are more than likely antithetical to the presenting issue. An example of that technique from Garzon is described in the table below.

Table 2.7 shows the Cognitive approach as it flows through from an activating event to resolution by transforming the negative irrational belief into a positive restorative experience.

---

Table 2.7 Cognitive REBT Intervention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activating Event</th>
<th>Irrational Belief</th>
<th>Consequent Emotions</th>
<th>Disputations of Belief</th>
<th>Ratings of original belief following disputation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boss gets upset with the worker</td>
<td>Worker: “He knows I’m a good worker. Why is he so upset with me?”</td>
<td>Discouragement, sadness, depression (rate each 1 – 100%)</td>
<td>The boss praised his past deeds. This is the first time he was critical. “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” I am pleasing to God.</td>
<td>35% decrease in original</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The REBT is a cognitive approach that uses reason and logic as a primary strategy to address a client’s dysfunctional, irrational thinking or negative emotions. There is a difference between secular and spiritual approaches to problems presented to counselors in this theoretical platform. Intervention strategies and techniques are vitally important as tools for addressing problems and issues. Assessment of the intervention is critical to measure progress to achieve goals; however, the approach needs to be grounded in a theoretical construct with reliable and valid standards that are constant, consistent, and universally applicable.

For the secular counselor, this presents a problem. There are no genuinely objective standards that can be used to evaluate and measure such qualities as reliability, consistency, and universality. There are only relative professional and training standards highlighting best practices. On the other hand, the pastoral counselor has access to and can deal with spirit tools.

---

150 Fivush et al., Ibid. [Researcher’s Note: REBT stands for Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy. The five-column technique was credited to Greenberger and Padesky (1995). Through this technique, the inductive, Socratic strategy examines the counselee’s perceptions to correct maladaptive cognitions into more of a balanced understanding of the event, the rationale involved, and present a perspective to help correct false/hurtful emotions.]
and resources. He has the Scriptures, spiritual disciplines, and the Spirit of God to help provide
discernment and wisdom to matters that go much deeper to touch the individual's very core being
and bring about divine solutions. When pastoral counselors create methods that resolve complex
physical, temporal problems and apply spiritual and psychological interventions, successful
outcomes will illustrate the power of God for the benefit of man’s conditions.

The counselor can join the client in unfolding the experiences the client is living
through, how the past has impacted the present, and the future hopes and dreams to keep him
grounded. This approach's theoretical principles lend themselves well to Christian, spiritual, and
biblical narratives for teaching life skills and useful patterns for successful lifestyles.

The principles and practices that comprise this theoretical foundation include: 1) an
empathetic and consistently helpful mindset of the counselor to meet clients’ needs in therapy
(genuine care and compassion is a critical dimension of the Pastoral Counseling treatment); 2) a
Christian worldview that will develop positive life expectations, build confidence, solidify
beliefs; 3) project a future hope with the necessary resources to help clients grow and develop
ways to deal with the stress, worry, fear, and anxieties in clients’ lives; and 4) the religious
resources, strategies, techniques, and interventions used by counselors must heal past failures
and wounds, provide valuable tools and resources to deal with present trials and temptations, and
instill the client with a hopeful expectancy to meet future trials challenges with the calm
assurance of God’s strength.\textsuperscript{151}

The relationship between counselor and client forms a special bond that makes treatment
and the outcome(s) successful. The calling of a pastoral counselor working in tandem with

\textsuperscript{151} Fivush, Ibid., 13.
clients who are receptive to the teaching and coaching that counseling provides makes a significant difference in the effectiveness of the healing process. In this project, the researcher will rely predominately on the client’s religious and spiritual beliefs, feelings, and practices expressed by them. The pastoral counseling interventions prescribed in this study will include prayer as a spiritual discipline, applicable healing Scriptures, and reframing faulty religious thinking considering biblical truths as a means of support for enhancing spiritual experiences.

The Assessment Process

An essential aspect of this project is the assessment instrument use to measure the pastoral counseling program. The assessment instrument's results are expected to measure the effectiveness of counseling on life satisfaction and well-being. Additionally, the instrument should provide empirical findings that measure the impact of pastoral (spiritual) counseling on mental and physical well-being (the foundation for examining the spiritual dimension that exists in the relationship between spiritual and existential constructs that are considered inseparable and mutually beneficial).152

Chapter 3 - Methodology

Introduction

The development of an Intervention Plan for this project was challenging on several fronts. There were questions about fundamental issues discovered in the literature review that are unresolved. The questions were raised by academic sources, clinical experts, professional and lay mental health practitioners regarding the concern that a definitional construct of well-being did not exist. The elusive explanation for wellness presented a conundrum regarding efforts which needed to impact and evaluate life satisfaction and wellness. The fundamental definitional issue surrounding well-being cited by the experts affected several critical areas in research, namely, quantitative, and qualitative clarity, identifying integrative and overlapping components, and an evaluation process to determine change in well-being.

An ancillary issue uncovered from the literature review involved the consensus mental health methodology (referred to the secularists perspective) which illustrated an approach to well-being that takes an after-incident examination of a situation. Most secular health care providers viewed their role as modifying peoples’ life satisfaction and well-being in projects by preplanned interventions designed to create predetermined results. The emphasis is on changing behaviors to affect a desired outcome. The expected changes were optimal levels of functioning as self-reported by the individuals served. From those scenarios, larger population groups were created to address what behaviors they deemed in need of changing. The goal of the assistance rendered was to reconstruct a pattern of wellness behaviors through behavioral modification techniques.

In cases where mental health providers are dealing with more severe wellness issues such as mental and emotional crisis, panic attacks, real or imagined deep-seated fears, chronic anxiety,
high levels of stress, activity blockages, impaired thinking and judgment, cognitive dysfunction (illogical views/beliefs and patterns), counselors target clients’ ill-health behaviors to modify those behaviors to achieve a homeostatic operational state, that is, normalcy similar to clients pre-crisis behaviors. Such strategies may include improving coping behaviors, a more evenly balanced emotional and mental state, or increasing resiliency traits. The secularist’s approach involved a psychological model of behavioral modification to supply immediate relief of a problem rather than investigating root determinant factors to construct a long-term solution.

In this project, the Intervention Plan was created around a guided construct of well-being. The success of treatment plan will be facilitated by well-defined parameters for life satisfaction and well-being. Once the basis of understanding wellness is established, goals and strategies can be created for counseling to assist individuals. Participants will examine motivational issues which manifested in patterns of cognitive functioning that impact life satisfaction and health lifestyles patterns. A teaching component will use the Holy Scriptures as resource material to instruct participants of the cognitive and behavioral guidance recommended in biblical narratives best practices.

The intervention plan incorporates Scriptural teachings and lessons from the Christian beliefs and values which represent absolute standards set forth by God. The godly standards will be the plumb line for participants to compare their lifestyle patterns, behavioral responses, and motivational reactions so that corrections or modifications to well-being could be adopted. The plan includes several key components. First, a cognitive theoretical pastoral counseling approach would be integrated into the IP to help support, encourage, and give understanding and hope to participants lacking in or operating with less-than-optimal functioning. Second, a component would include teachings from a spiritual emphasis to connect with God in disciplines that would
change life satisfaction and well-being. Lastly, an assessment tool would be used in the program to measure the change in participants’ well-being. This measurement process will act as a reinforcement tool for the cognitive realignment supplied by the teaching lessons.

The IP was formulated to synthesize the various components into a unified gestalt for (totality, wholeness) for participants. The integrating of the mind, body, and soul triad will form a more complete understanding for thinking and behaving in more successful ways with self and others. By marrying the teaching of biblically-based standards with an effective counseling approach, growth and development can reconstruct positive changes in wellness that will produce healthier, flourishing outcomes to participants.

The overarching goal of the IP is to teach participants how to recognize that their thoughts, their cognitive processing, can be changed to produce better behavioral results. The holistic approach will focus on developing the soul, the innermost part of each being. Core beliefs are formed from the soul (referred to in the biblical sense as the heart). From one’s beliefs, the act of thinking emerges, producing intent and desires, feelings, and emotions. An individual’s thinking formulates actions taken by the person, which manifest positive outcomes. The belief system is developed by the person over time stemming from experiences and influencers. A person operates out of that core belief system. Right believing leads to right thinking and behavior. Conversely, wrong believing leads to wrong behaving.

The person’s belief system guides his or her thought process, and the person acts accordingly based on motivational and existential factors. In the secularist’s approach, right thinking is determined by each individual as he or she is guided by self-motivational and self-preservation principles. The person responds to external forces and significant influencers to mold the identity of personhood. There are no absolutes or objective standards to compare
thinking, beliefs, actions, and lifestyles. On the other hand, the pastoral approach views humankind as a free choice agent who can build a belief system around God. God's will reveal God's plans, and God has plans for people to live in a right, thriving relationship with Him.

A person whose belief system is centered on God receives guidance to his soul, allowing him to walk in predetermined pathways that provide peace, wholeness, well-being, meaning, purpose, and abundant life. The Word of God is the absolute truth and objective standards for believers to think and operate at optimal functioning according to God’s best for the person. Individuals respond to God’s Will as revealed in His Word to shape a person’s identity.

The Intervention Plan uses the truths of the Word of God for participants to compare their belief system alongside the Word of God to examine consistencies and variances to God’s plan for their lives. The alignment or divergence between God’s perspective and man’s lifestyle can be revelatory. With the counselor's help, a person’s thinking and actions can and should be made more congruent with God’s, not by force of will but by compassion and empathy.

A person believes right to live right. Right thoughts produce right living and behaviors. Conversely, wrong beliefs and wrong thinking produce wrong behavior. Where there is a divergence in thinking and actions from Scriptures, the participants can be taught how their thought life is the source of stress, fear, anxiety, and ill-health to change their beliefs, thinking, and behaviors.

153 Amos 4:13, He who forms the mountains, creates the wind, and reveals His thoughts to man, He who turns down to darkness, and treads the high places of the earth—the LORD God Almighty is His name.

154 Deut 8:18, And you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day.

155 Gen 1:27 Let us make man in our image...
Intervention Design

The Intervention Plan will include a teaching and counseling guide developed for clients who agreed to join the study. The purpose of the IP is to outline a plan of cognitive growth and development that will use and assess instructional material derived from the Holy Scriptures.\(^{156}\) The instructional material provided in the curriculum guide (see Appendix) will be presented in a pastoral counseling approach designed to equip clients with spiritual resources to improve life satisfaction and well-being. The spiritual tools and resources can also help clients develop and use coping skills in crises, acquire resiliency resources to overcome threats to well-being and learn to process situations cognitively to overcome negative thought patterns and responses to include behavior and outcomes.

In the pastoral counseling program, a set of theoretical and theological concepts were formulated for the study to help clients identify faulty cognitive processes and illogical core beliefs. These faulty beliefs block the client’s ability to think rationally and clearly, affecting the wellness and preventing progress towards well-being goals. Clients will be taught to replace negative or variant beliefs with more positive and beneficial Scriptural truths and teachings.\(^{157}\) The acquisition of new cognitive shifts is intended to empower clients with greater success in life and well-being. Concerning Scriptural teachings, client cognitive functioning is examined to

\(^{156}\) 2 Tim 3:16 All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

\(^{157}\) 2 Cor 4:4 For the god of this world (Satan) has blinded the unbelievers’ minds that they should not discern the truth, preventing them from seeing the illuminating light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, Who is the Image and likeness of God.
focus on God’s will and plans for their lives. What a person thinks about is the source reservoir and process that produces the actions and behavior of the person.\textsuperscript{158}

What a person believes is powerful. Harmful and adverse circumstances are often traced back to false beliefs (including lies and deception from within or externally), poor choices made, negative responses to life experiences, and addictive lifestyle patterns.\textsuperscript{159} As clients are counseled, faulty thinking and illogical belief patterns will be monitored relative to their current experiences and problem areas, crises (past and present), and any self-threatenning situations.

Clients will be taught from Scriptures how to discern the source of negative from positive thinking and how that thinking affects their responses in line with biblical teachings to deal with everyday situations.\textsuperscript{160} The Scriptural teachings will help clients change their thought lives by seeing and agreeing with God’s thoughts and truths. By learning biblical teachings and truths, clients can become more God-like in actions and behaviors.\textsuperscript{161} Godly thinking and responding will be highlighted from Scriptures to reveal God’s solutions to everyday situations and impact well-being (mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual).

As hurtful mental, physical, and emotional health issues are identified, Scriptural references can provide alternative cognitive responses that can be substituted and practiced in

\textsuperscript{158} Prov 16:25 There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end, it is the way of death. Matt 15:18 But whatever comes out of the mouth, comes from the heart, and this is what makes a man unclean and defiles him.

\textsuperscript{159} 1 Cor 13:10-12 Paul describes an evolutionary thought process from a growth construct. Thinking must be developed. Mental and emotional growth is developmental, gradually evolving with understanding to think what is in part to what is whole mature thought; what is good and necessary from what is insufficient and even harmful.

\textsuperscript{160} Many clients do not understand the biblical causation of good and evil, the reasons why bad (or good) things happen to them in life, and how to use spiritual tools and resources to deal with spiritual and physical life experiences. The general response to negative and hurtful problems is to blame self or others and that luck or chance are common source answers to unpleasant and serious circumstances. When God is mentioned, He often is envisioned as an angry judge ready to punish anyone who sins or breaks His laws.

\textsuperscript{161} 2 Cor 3:18 And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which come from the Lord, who is the Spirit.
practical ways by clients.\textsuperscript{162} Daily Bible reading, meditation, self-reflection, imagery include some techniques that can be used to address and reinforce appropriate and positive thinking.\textsuperscript{163} In addition, biblical teachings embedded in pastoral counseling strategies are designed to change awareness, understanding, and personal application to address wellness issues and thrive in life.

Scriptural doctrine and biblical teachings will relate God’s work in the Old Testament and are completed with the New Testament’s finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross.\textsuperscript{164} The death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus highlight the working of God’s divine activity in sending his Son, Jesus Christ, to redeem (to purchase, buyback) humankind. Many themes are found in the biblical account of how God relates to His plans for His creation.

The themes discussed in this project are used to check, clarify, correct, or confirm the thought processing between the client’s worldviews and the biblical accounts. Without a solid foundation in Scriptural knowledge and understanding, clients may develop misperceptions, misconceptions, and misappropriate thinking that can reflect physical and emotional distress. Many clients present various mental, emotional, and physical symptoms of stress and underlying phobias that negatively impact their lives and foster negative behavioral patterns.\textsuperscript{165}

Peoples’ problems are generally characterized by chronic fear(s), stress, anxiety, guilt, shame, condemnation, and other self-abusing behavioral patterns associated with illogical

\textsuperscript{162} Ps 139:23-24 Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

\textsuperscript{163} Prov 23:7 As a man thinks in his heart so he is.

\textsuperscript{164} John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son, that whosoever believes on shall not perish but have everlasting life.

\textsuperscript{165} Phil 4:6-7 Don’t worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests by known to God, and the peace of God, which surpasses every though, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Stress, fear, worry, anxieties are known negative conditions which affect the mind (will, emotions, thoughts), soul, and body triad.
thinking and negative mental and emotional states. These symptoms are covered in Holy Scriptures, and God’s Word offers instruction, guidance, and power to address them all. The client’s thinking and emotional states are treated with the utmost consideration and compassion.

Every client’s narrative and biblical understanding will be viewed through the empathetic lens as the sacred teachings are used to help correct illogical or mistaken theological perceptions. The clients typically have formed their opinions and viewpoints from various sources that may or may not grounded in the Word of God, and in many cases, are the opposite of the message and teachings presented in the biblical account.166

In Romans 10:17, Paul teaches that faith comes from hearing and hearing from the words of Christ. Paul, who wrote two-thirds of the New Testament, states in Romans 1:16 that he was not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ, for it is the power unto salvation to all who believe to the Jew first and then the Gentile. Paul said in Romans 12:2 for people not to be transformed by this world but be transformed by renewing the mind to be proven what God's good and acceptable and perfect will is for everyone. Elsewhere in the Scripture Ephesians 3:20, Paul writes letters to the churches he planted, teaching them that God can do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.

The Scriptures are replete with the teachings of how Christ tells his followers that he gives them authority, power, and victory over the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you found in Luke 10:19. Jesus Christ came to usher in the Kingdom of God to redeem and free people from their sins of the flesh, slavery to addictive and destructive behaviors, loss of relationships, health, and well-being described in John 10:10. Christ came to tear the veil that separated man from God due to sin and to rescue man out of darkness (spiritual

166 1 Cor 3:11 For no man lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.
wickedness and alienation from God) and place him into the Kingdom of Light (understanding, righteousness, and wisdom from Colossians 1:13).

Scriptural doctrine and biblical teachings relate God’s work in the Old Testament and extend it to the New Testament’s finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross. The death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus highlight the working of God's divine activity in sending his Son, Jesus Christ, to redeem (to purchase, buyback) humankind. Many themes found in the biblical accounts of God’s will relate to God's plans for his creation. The themes discussed in this project are used to check, clarify, correct, or confirm the thought processing between the client’s worldviews and the biblical accounts. Without a solid foundation in Scriptural knowledge and understanding, clients develop misperceptions, misconceptions, and misappropriate thinking that can reflect physical and emotional distress. As a result, many clients manifest various mental, emotional, and physical symptoms of stress and underlying phobias that negatively impact their lives and foster negative behavioral patterns.\textsuperscript{167}

Peoples’ problems are generally characterized by chronic fear(s), stress, anxiety, guilt, shame, condemnation, and other self-abusing behavioral patterns associated with illogical thinking and negative mental and emotional states. These symptoms are covered in Holy Scriptures, and God’s Word offers instruction, guidance, and power to address them all. Therefore, the client’s thinking and emotional states are treated with the utmost consideration and compassion.

\textsuperscript{167} Phil 4:6-7 Don’t worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests by known to God, and the peace of God, which surpasses every though, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Stress, fear, worry, anxieties are known negative conditions which affect the mind (will, emotions, thoughts), soul, and body triad.
Two questions will be the basis and criteria for the project: 1) What is God doing in the situation? 2) What transformative action will occur due to the encounter between God, counselor, and client?\(^{168}\) The evaluation process is designed to enable the researcher to reflect on God’s activity throughout the project. As Savage suggests, the two reasons for the evaluation are to observe change and discern transformation.

Many participants will present challenging life experiences. Clients will express their perspective of how and why God acts the way He does according to spiritual concepts, teachings, traditional practices, and doctrinal orthodoxy beliefs.\(^{169}\) As the authors of their life stories, the clients will reflect on God’s influence in their lives and to what degree they align with Him and His plans. Spiritual interventions in the counseling will provide opportunities for participants to process, incorporate, and adapt those interventions into their personal lives for life satisfaction and wellness.

Dialoguing with clients’ narratives to understand their life stories is vital in the discovery process of addressing their issues. The dialoguing with clients will also involve spiritual interventions designed to help clients comprehend a better, brighter, prosperous, and hopeful future than their current experiences and life patterns. The counselor will act as a facilitator to help the clients perceive how God’s activities have converged with their life experiences.

The counselor will use four sources for guiding this theological discourse: Holy Scriptures (God’s absolute truth); tradition (consistent uniform practices); experience (life


\(^{169}\) David G. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling: A Short-Term Structured Model* (Grand Rapids, MI:Baker Publishing, 2003), 88. [Benner states, “The pastor comes alongside the person in much the same manner as is conveyed by the New Testament Greek noun paraklesis, which suggests the action of coming alongside someone to give support. ‘God himself is pictured as ‘the God of all coming alongside.”’ (2 Cor. 1:3).
patterns that have confirmed the realities of God’s grace in their lives); and reason (rational thought leading to God’s truth. “In theological reflection, the resources of tradition, experience, and reason are integral to our study of scripture without displacing scripture’s primacy for faith and practice.”

The Cognitive Theoretical Approach will be the mode for the five counseling sessions scheduled during the study. After completing the post-test evaluation, scores for each client will be computed to determine if there are significant changes at the five percent level of confidence. In totality, the change will indicate the impact or change difference in life satisfaction and client well-being.

Clients will be assessed using the standardized Spiritual Well-being Scale as a pretest and post-test. This evaluation tool will be used in the first and last session to compare clients’ scores to determine any changes. The SWB Scale is comprised of three test scores to ascertain changes in clients' well-being. In addition, there is a total well-being test score, a religious well-being scale score, and the existential well-being scale score. The SWB Scale is an assessment tool that is brief, easy to answer, and easy to score. The client answers the twenty questions prompts, circling one of six responses on a Likert Scale. The SWB has a proven track record of reliability and validity in over three hundred research projects. It takes fifteen to twenty minutes to complete and can be read to the client who has difficulty reading the questions.

The findings will be reported from three areas of the assessment, a Total Well-being Test Score, a Religious Subset Score, and an Existential Subset Score. Clients will work interactively with the counselor through three teaching modules identified in the curriculum guide found in

---

170 Savage, Ibid., 18.
171 Ibid., 19.
the Appendix. The three modules list the material to be introduced and taught to clients over the five weeks from the curriculum guide. The counseling will involve ways and means (resources and tools) that clients can acquire to deal with wellness and crises.

The weekly teaching modules will use objective standards from biblically based truths to create, develop, or modify clients’ perspectives and improve client cognition. The Scriptural material will highlight godly perspectives which will reveal instances of client deception and misinformation concerning life purpose, alignment with God’s word, and the obstacles which prevented the power of the Scriptures to predominate in their lives.

Clients will examine how the Scriptures address and teach wellness and ill-health. Clients will learn how they can change behavior to adopt new ways to deal more effectively with problem situations. By identifying, correcting, or modifying their responses to coping conditions in a more positive manner, the expected outcome is that the new way of conducting more appropriate responses increases life satisfaction and well-being levels.\footnote{172}

The IP will teach scriptural truths that the client can meditate on and process the spoken word to become attached to the client’s soul. From the soul (often referred to as the heart), emotional and mental processes originate and predominate in the behavior and outward manifestation of behavior. Therefore, the longer the client hears, thinks, meditates, and practices the presented material, the more behavior will be affected to reflect the new alignment between Scripture and client well-being.\footnote{173}

\footnote{172} Heb 10:9 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

\footnote{173} 2 Cor 3:18 We all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.
Client cognition will be assessed to determine if the change has occurred to clients’ mental, physical, and emotional responses. By using the Scriptures about life satisfaction, health and wellness, and biblical standards, clients will discern areas of cognitive dysfunction, origins of emotional distress, and patterns of behavioral actions that produce stress, conflict, disorder, anxiety, and ill-health. In cases of ill-health, the relationship between faulty thinking and manifested symptoms can be established. Both teaching and counseling will present appropriate and positive ways for clients to dealing with wellness and critical life issues.

The IP’s assessment will play a key role in recording changes in the clients’ status. From the initial overview session, historical data of life experiences will help the counselor further substantiate the changes to clients throughout the study. The statistical analysis of the data, counselor’s notes, and feedback from clients will be important in determining the change in wellness.

Cognitive Theory relies mainly on the technique of questioning to allow the counselor to guide the flow of information to focus on clients’ situations. As clients self-report, a parallel is drawn between biblical and client perspectives to highlight important principles and teachings which need to be addressed. The goal is to discern how the clients’ accounts could be reauthored from ill-health to beneficial wellness. God is perceived as the one who works all things out for our good and His glory.¹⁷⁴

A hope-based strategy will also be incorporated into the CT regimen to deal with stress, phobias, hopelessness, and feelings of loss of control.¹⁷⁵ In the teaching material, hope is

---

¹⁷⁴ Ro 8:28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

¹⁷⁵ Ro 15:13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.
described as a weapon to protect the mind. The enemy attacks using negative thoughts and distorted views (lies) in the client’s thought process. Hope in the biblical sense is a positive expectation of good for the future, not the wishful thinking of human understanding. Included in this intervention plan is a component that will measure and assess client outcomes stemming from the counseling intervention techniques designed to help participants enjoy all God’s provisions for them and maintain a confident hope that things will work out in the future.\footnote{Jer 29:11 For I know the plans I have for you, plans for your welfare and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.}

The counseling program is designed to help clients reframe negative and illogical thinking found in their life narratives that often cause stress, fear, worry, and anxiety.\footnote{2 Tim 1:7 For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power, love, and a sound mind.} By changing their thinking from adverse reactions into a more positive one, clients are expected to reduce the harmful cognitive activity and negative emotional responses while learning more positive thriving skills.\footnote{John 10:10 The thief comes to kill, steal, and destroy, but I (Jesus) have to come to give abundant life (life overflowing for optimal functioning). Exodus 15:26 I am the God who heals you. 3 John 1:2 Beloved, I wish above all things that you may prosper and be in health, even as your soul prospers. Phil 4:13.} Thoughts are the one area people can and need to control. The direction of one’s life is dependent on and subject to a person’s thoughts. The positive and negative effects derived from the thinking process that counseling can and should impact increase well-being.

The more cognitive alignment achieved by clients between the Scriptural teachings and their responses to issues confronting them, the greater the life satisfaction and well-being will be accomplished. Negative thinking and emotional reactions, and behavioral patterns (cyclically learned experiences) can be changed or modified into more novel learned thinking processing
and appropriate behavioral responses. The integration of self-care in the client's mind, body, and soul are the anticipated results for transforming the client’s lifestyles.

After orientation and assessment information is completed, clients are scheduled for a pre-counseling session. This pre-counseling session provides a panoramic biblical overview of key themes and biblical truths addressed in each counseling session. This session begins with the biblical beginnings of creation and extends to the redemptive plan of the man portrayed in the cross of Jesus Christ. The importance of this biblical overview is to provide background information with the biblical themes to be discussed in counseling. Clients’ biblical backgrounds and understandings will be explored, and any variance from biblical teachings and truth statements will be revisited in counseling.

The Intervention Plan will note a specific phase, see Table 3.1, to classify clients by qualifiers. Table 3.1 lists three qualifiers to tailor the teacher material to meet their individual needs. Only the researcher will know which phase describes the participants. He will use that operational phase designation for the evaluation of data and observations. The three categories are labeled Phase 1, Phase 2, and Phase 3 to initially help the researcher target backgrounds that may need additional help. These qualifiers will be used by the counselor in discerning clients’ experiences and work with clients depending on their status. This table will help assess the client’s progress and determine the change in the client's well-being.

The data in Table 3.1 shows the initial status of clients before counseling. Clients have a wide array of backgrounds, learning experiences, and comprehension levels that affect self-discovery, meaning and purpose in life, and the client’s faith journey.

---

179 This biblical overview will involve a discussion with the clients as to how their thinking compares to biblical teachings. The dialogue is anticipated to reveal that clients present a divergence from Holy Scriptures. The degree of divergence will show areas to be discussed, corrected, and possibly counseled.
Table 3.1 Qualifiers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 1 - Qualifiers</th>
<th>Phase 2 - Qualifiers</th>
<th>Phase 3 - Qualifiers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. No Religious Affiliation</td>
<td>A. Raised in Church Affiliated Family</td>
<td>A. Saved in Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. Baptized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Not Baptized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. No Faith Group</td>
<td>B. No Current Faith Group</td>
<td>B. Faith Affiliation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. Church Affiliation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. No Affiliation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Unsaved, No Religion</td>
<td>C. Aware of Jesus Christ No Christian Practices</td>
<td>C. May Exercise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Health &amp; Wellness</td>
<td>D. Health &amp; Wellness</td>
<td>D. Health &amp; Wellness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Few Health Issues</td>
<td>1. Few Health Issues</td>
<td>1. Few Health Issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Some Health Issues</td>
<td>2. Some Health Issues</td>
<td>2. Some Health Issues</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The three phases marked Phase 1, 2, 3 list many criteria under each phase to indicate the clients’ perspectives on spiritual matters and conditional health and wellness status. Once the participants have been initially assessed and assigned to a numbered phase by the researcher, counseling strategies and techniques may be determined for the first scheduled counseling session. For example, clients assigned to Phase 1 would be given a more foundational counseling approach with material focused on spiritual experiences such as the 4 Spiritual Laws material.

Phase 2 clients would begin with targeted questions related to spiritual matters would help clarify what challenges and problems clients may be dealing with. Then, depending on the answers to the cognitive questioning, the orientation session will help determine what instructional material would help clients flow through the process.
If the participant's questioning reveals illogical or faulty thinking areas, a continuation of the CT approach might provide corrective biblical thinking and teaching to correct perspectives. As a result, the client has not been able to cope and deal with situations successfully. In Phase 3, the initial counseling approach would use CT to explore problematical areas, challenges, and concerns in clients’ lives and focus on problem-solving techniques using biblical insights and perspectives to give guidance, support, and encourage clients.

After the initial interview with clients by the researcher and the assignment of a numbered phase with tentative intervention strategies, the first scheduled counseling session involves a pretest assessment from a standardized instrument to record baseline data. The researcher will use feedback and client insight to the counseling sessions to check cognitive functioning, hope, or hopelessness levels and help plan future sessions. Each session will include Christian practices of Scripture and prayer.\(^\text{180}\)

The counseling sessions will focus on the clients’ conversations about their life stories, familial backgrounds, and spiritual experiences. The teaching material taken from the Scriptures will address the root causes of contradictory belief statements and offer alternative truths from God’s Word to understand, address, and resolve problems affecting the lives of clients. By examining the cause-and-effect relationships among stress, fear, and anxiety to mental health issues, the clients can focus on cognitively changing clients' thinking and behavior. Therapy is used to help clients overcome the effects of ill-health.

No client will be coerced into changing their belief systems or made to feel uncomfortable for the views they hold, which may be incongruent to Scriptures. Instead, from a

---

biblically spiritual perspective, information will be presented relating humans' origins and the relationship humans have with God, the origins of good and evil, and the sources thereof. The narrative proceeds through the meaning and purpose of life and the activity of God, which aims to bring salvation (redemption, wholeness, well-being, and well-being) to humankind.

Lynch suggests that pastoral theology is a process of theological reflection based on lived experiences that could generate new insights on how to live in the contemporary world.\textsuperscript{181} He posited that it was of pastoral concern and significance for the church to take care of all those to whom it was responsible for teaching, guiding, sustaining, and healing. Lynch’s approach is mirrored throughout this project, and by adhering to this principle, the study should be expected to show results proving that well-being can be positively changed.

This project will depend on spiritual truths and pastoral precepts to guide pedagogical techniques to impact client wellness. The three following foundational structures include 1) teaching, the sharing of biblical concepts and principles, 2) comparing illogical and inconsistent cognitive dysfunction with rational and biblical truth-based precepts, and 3) healing, using strategies and truths from God’s Word and the teachings of Christ.

The Henry County First Program will rely on clients' presenting issues and problems as the basis of directed counseling activity. The clients’ success in the program is based on several factors: client level of awareness of self-reflection and situational issues. The counselor will discern what intervention will be the most effective with each client as their problems and challenges are incorporated in the teaching and counseling approach.

Divergent thinking patterns from Scriptures may emerge during counseling, indicating inconsistent, illogical, or irrational cognitive processing. These anomalies from Scriptures may call for additional interventions or different strategies to be used. These are situations that need to examine root causes and sources of the tension and used Scriptures to modify or correct. Clients need careful explanations from God’s truth as they experience the negative thought, feelings, and emotional responses to issues that affect them. Clients may benefit from additional homework and meditation exercises to align their thoughts with God’s Word.182

The Intervention Plan is expected to change client life satisfaction and well-being through the pastoral counseling techniques, a systematic pedagogical approach, to spiritual influences participants encounter to change life satisfaction, impact health and wellness, and a significant change to well-being (psychologically, emotionally, and spiritually). Scripture in counseling will help develop a greater understanding of clients’ fundamental beliefs that align with God’s Word. The results found that clients who accept and believe the truth when shown relevant scriptural references made changes in thinking and behavior reflected in the test scores. In addition, when they are taught the truthful spiritual principles in the Word of God, cognitive growth and development occur.

The Intervention Plan incorporates Scriptural references into the counseling intervention to help clients process the biblical teachings in practical ways to the situations they face. From the Scriptures, clients will be taught how to apply them in their daily lives. The Holy Scriptures provide the means and power of dealing with circumstances that seem beyond their control and

182 A common spiritual discipline for helping people to change the negative and harmful thought patterns into positive ones recommends a specified period (such as thirty days) in which people repeatedly recite and meditate on targeted Scriptures for a particular problem or difficulty so that the brain can rewire itself to adopt the new thoughts and trigger positive emotions.
ability to resolve. Most unserved, underserved, and marginalized clients have had little experience, training, or guidance in dealing with and responding to issues using spiritual resources. Most participants coming to the Ministry Centers do not have spiritual tools and resources available to help them deal with life issues nor where to turn to find them. Most are all alone, isolated, lack many basic needs, and do not have a healthy functioning support system.

**Implementation of the Intervention Design**

This thesis project will begin in January 2021 after IRB approval and is projected to last through April 2021. The first step in the project is the selection of participants for the study. The Ministry Director will provide the researcher with a list of active clients and mail invitations. Clients will be invited to join the study, which explains the project and what is involved. The researcher will enlist all clients who are willingness to be a part of the study. The maximum number of participants for the study is projected to be fifty.

The IRB approved the project recruitment process for inviting and enlisting participants. Prospective participants would be notified by a letter delivered by the United States Post Office and asked to return the invitation by the same method. In that letter was an invitation to join the study, an explanation of the project, and a stamped envelope to send back to the JBA. A follow-up letter would be mailed to the same clients who did not respond in ten days as necessary.

Another method of contact and solicitation of participants approved by the IRB was posting a notice to all food bank clients coming into the reception area of the food bank office about the project and the necessary paperwork to complete and turn in to the receptionist at the food bank office. The food bank office receptionist was responsible for distributing the material, and the researcher was responsible for recording the clients who were willing to participate.
Once the participants agreed, the researcher scheduled an orientation session with each client to review the material, answer questions and obtain all study consent letters.

While over two hundred invites were mailed, the targeted number of participants was set at fifty. The COVID-19 Pandemic spread over the United States and the world, affecting many Food Bank participants with fear and uncertainty. The small number of participants who consented to the study were scheduled for the pretest assessment, monthly visits, and post-test assessment. All the project material was to be compiled by the researcher, who also conducted the statistical analysis of the data.

Once all the prerequisites have been completed, participants were notified by mail and a phone call of their scheduled counseling session in the food bank program. The researcher is responsible for the notification of appointment times and follow-up phone calls. Also, the researcher will manage client files of each participant, collecting and compiling each file for completeness and accountability and stored in a secured, confidential office of the researcher.

Table 3.2 outlines the project’s implementation for this study. The IRB granted its approval to conduct live research with clients so a plan of action was constructed to show what would happen for all parties and participants involved. The timetable was shared with the Director of the Ministry Centers and coordinated with the staff.

---

183 The return rate from the USPO was less than one percent. The most effect method for enlisting participants in the study was through posting in the Food Bank Office and one-on-one solicitation. There were over forty participants who agreed to join the study, but only twenty-one completed all five-weekly sessions.
Table 3.2 Timetable for Project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Researcher meets with Ministry Director for the project planning session.</td>
<td>The Director of Ministry Centers selects clients for the study.</td>
<td>The participants were invited by mail to participate in project. Information packets prepared.</td>
<td>Director sends 2nd invite letter. Invite letters &amp; study material posted in receptionist office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Days</td>
<td>2 Days</td>
<td>2 Days</td>
<td>7 Days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clients are scheduled for orientation &amp; five weekly sessions; forms signed.</td>
<td>Clients conclude all counseling sessions and take post-test assessment.</td>
<td>The Researcher prepares data for input and complete statistical analysis.</td>
<td>Researcher concludes data analysis and writes a summary of findings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49 Days</td>
<td>16 Days</td>
<td>15 days</td>
<td>30 Days</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Henry County First Counseling Program was designed to last five weeks. While traditional counseling may extend eight to twelve weeks, this study was limited in time and scope in part the factors of client faithful attendance and their willing participation for that designated time. A five-week counseling period should yield enough quantitative and qualitative data to form the foundational evaluation approach describing the directionality of clients’ perspectives acquired in the study.

The counselor will determine the appropriate counseling strategy and techniques to be used on clients after the initial screening and assessment session. The Cognitive Theory will be used as a means of revealing the direction and flow with client interaction. Through CT, opportunities to evoke meaning and purpose in clients’ lives by clarifying where before cognitive dysfunction or illogical perspectives showed blockage of growth and development.

111
The Assessment Intervention Tool

The specific tool to be used in this research project is the Life Advance “Spiritual Well-Being Scale” developed by Raymond F. Paloutzian and Craig W. Ellison, first copyrighted in 1982, Version 1.1, 2009. Paloutzian is a professor emeritus of psychology at Westmont College, Santa Barbara, California, and is a fellow American Psychological Association and American Psychological Society fellow. Craig Ellison is a professor emeritus of counseling and urban studies at Alliance Theological Seminary in Nyack, New York. His research and practice have focused on interpersonal trust, loneliness, and spiritual well-being.\footnote{184}

Since the 1980s, there have been many attempts to measure life quality (QOL). The aim was to measure life experiences other than the countable, tangible, and goal-oriented achievement events. The notion was that individual quality of life includes and is the result of his experiences in life.

The Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWBS) is a general indicator of well-being's subjective state, measuring the perceived spiritual quality of life as perceived through two perspectives, the religious sense, and an existential sense.\footnote{185} Most people refer to the spiritual life in one of two ways, a) their relationship with the god of their understanding, or b) the degree of life satisfaction. Even with non-religious individuals, most will have a sense of the divine, referring to some belief system. Being spiritual does not necessarily equate to religion. Spirituality connotes an awareness, a belief, and recognition in a higher, omnipotent being rather than organized religion consisting of a set of beliefs, teachings, and practices of a structured


\footnote{185} Ibid.
organization, entity, or charismatic leader. The SWBS has two subscales, the Religious Scale (RWBS) and the Existential Scale (EWBS).

According to the assessment authors, the RWBS, EWBS, and SWBS have good validity and statistical reliability reports. The test-retest reliability coefficients across four studies, with 1-10 weeks between tests, are .93, .99, .99, and .82.\(^{186}\) Also, the assessment's validity is rated as a good general indicator of well-being and is sensitive to a lack of well-being. The three scales positively align with a self-concept, a sense of purpose in life, physical health, and emotional adjustment. The research material noted that the SWBS is sensitive in the low score range for counseling, making it applicable to assessing and correcting dysfunctionality.\(^{187}\)

The SWBS consists of twenty items and the length of time to take the assessment is between ten and fifteen minutes. It may be self-administered or given orally when appropriate. Each item is answered on a six-point Likert scale. The two extreme phrases are “Strongly Agree” and “Strongly Disagree,” with varying gradations in between.

---

\(^{186}\) Paloutzin, Ibid., 3.

\(^{187}\) Ibid., 4.
Chapter 4
Results

This project created a counseling program and adopted an evaluation tool to measure the effectiveness of participants’ life satisfaction and well-being. After a review of the literature, it became apparent that well-being was a predetermined by external circumstances. These unsolicited external stimuli contributed to the outcome of life satisfaction and well-being. In this construct of life satisfaction and well-being, many factors affect the quality of life and well-being of an individual, such as levels of income, work opportunities and experiences, educational levels and career choices, immutable characteristics such as race, gender, place of birth, and community advantages, and familial dynamics and status.

This study proposed an opposing premise of well-being. An alternative perspective was offered to demonstrate that life satisfaction and well-being originate within the mind, soul, and body based on predominantly internal drivers. While every person does not live as an island immune or unaffected by external stimuli, individuals can be taught how to deal with the external circumstances so that the reaction elicited by the issues encountered does not negatively impact a person’s life satisfaction or well-being. By teaching people how to identify the dynamic spiritual, mental/emotional, and existential forces that affect the mind, soul, and body entity, they can learn to process and produce appropriate responses to maintain a healthy life satisfaction and wellness regimen.

The life forces that operate around the human condition can trigger negative or positive reactions and behavioral patterns, which can result in harmful effects if not cognitively processed in a healthy and wellness fashion. The negative responses are manifest in the stress, fear, anxiety, and depression responses leading to cognitive dysfunction and irrational reactions. The positive
responses are revealed in the protective resources that a person brings to bear on situations that bring forth edifying actions the build internal life satisfaction and wellness as a result of successfully dealing with the life forces. The negative response to life forces creates stress, fear, anxiety, and depressive reactions rendering the person unable to cope, survive, thrive, or succeed. In contrast, the positive responses identify protective resources to neutralize harmful, dangerous, threatening situations with courage, calm decisiveness, and hopefulness that all things will work out well.

The Henry First Counseling Program was a project conceived with the notion that such a claim that well-being is predominately influenced and affected by outside forces is the prevailing consensus of life satisfaction and well-being. Accordingly, it is reported that these external influences are conditions that primarily shape and determine a person’s well-being. The dominant position was designated as the null hypothesis. The research undertaken in this paper presents an alternative theory that recognizes other significant and demonstrably significant influencers that need to consider which can remarkably impact well-being; therefore, the results of the findings of this study leads the researcher to “not accept” the null hypothesis, that is, the dominant position on well-being.

The two possible results of this research are 1) reject the null hypothesis $H_0$ or 2) fail to reject the null hypothesis $H_a$ (See Box below). The findings of this study demonstrate that the null hypothesis is false and prove that the alternative hypothesis is true. The null hypothesis in

---

188 Fossas, Ibid., 1935. Developmental Psychologist Kegan refers to the process as one of increasing psychological complexity, by which the psychological relationship one holds between self and other gradually becomes more complex and nuanced throughout the lifespan as a result of numerous life experiences and conditioning. 1935. In life, other people are experienced...as the source of internal validation, orientation, or authority.

189 The author posits that the statistical format will show how the data collected will be calculated mathematically to demonstrate efficacy of the project tested. The project was designed with an “if, then” statement
this paper is the position that considers the status quo of the individual as perceived by the
individual’s self-reflected expression at a given moment in time. For this paper, that condition of
well-being, while formulated over time from past experiences, continues to be relatively static
time. Any changes to the person’s well-being predominately occur when circumstances have
positive or negative impacts on the person’s well-being.

\[ H_0: \text{The null hypothesis:} \text{ It is a statement of no difference between sample means or proportions or no difference between a sample mean or proportion and a population mean or proportion. In other words, the difference equals } 0. \]

\[ H_a: \text{The alternative hypothesis:} \text{ It is a claim about the population that is contradictory to } H_0 \text{ and what we conclude when we reject } H_0. \]

Since the null and alternative hypotheses are contradictory, the evidence collected
because of the assessment will decide if it is compelling enough to reject the null hypothesis. The proof is in the form of sample data.

After determining which hypothesis, the sample data support, a decision is made. There
are two options for a decision. They are "reject } H_0" if the sample information favors the
alternative hypothesis or "do not reject } H_0" or "decline to reject } H_0" if the sample information
is insufficient to reject the null hypothesis.\textsuperscript{190}

The Spiritual Well-Being Scale by Paloutzian and Ellison 1991 was the assessment tool for this project selected because of its validity and reliability over many years of research. The scale has been used in thousands of research projects and is cited in the literature countless times. It is a general indicator of perceived well-being used to assess both individual and group spiritual well-being. The scale can measure the perception of the spiritual quality of life, and in the results, there are several subscale sections for spiritual and existential well-being. The religious subscale assesses the individual’s relationship with God, and the existential subscale assesses the participant’s sense of life purpose and life satisfaction.191

The findings reflect several scores. The Spiritual Well-Being Total Scale Score reports a full-scale test reflecting overall life satisfaction and well-being. The assessment was administered using pre-testing and post-testing to twenty-one subjects.192 There were also results on the two subscales, Religious (RWB-measures the relationship and connection with God) and Existential (EWB-evaluates one’s level of life satisfaction and life purpose), which produce meaningful findings independently of each other. The Spiritual Well-being (SWB) Total Score is a 20-item paper-pencil instrument and is scored on a 6-point Likert scale, with the higher number representing greater well-being. The authors of the assessment instrument posit that the instrument is a valuable and valid tool for identifying group's sense of spiritual well-being, life satisfaction, and life purpose. Approximately half of the items are worded in the negative direction to control for any possible response bias.


192 The number of clients invited to participate was well over one hundred and twenty. Initial and follow-up letters were sent to clients encouraging them to join the study. Project information was also posted at the intake reception area where participants signed for food pick-up. The Covid-19 pandemic lockdowns and shutdowns, quarantines, the infected cases, hospitalizations, and mortality rates in January through April, 2021 adversely affected the willingness and availability of clients, but those who participated contributed richly.
Client data from the pre and post-test assessments were computed as matched or paired samples. When using a hypothesis test for paired samples, the following should be present.

1. Simple random sampling is used.
2. Sample sizes are often small.
3. Two samples are drawn from the same pair of individuals or objects.
4. Differences are calculated from the matched or paired samples.
5. The differences from the sample that is used for the hypothesis test.
6. The matched pairs have differences that come from a normal population, or the number of differences is sufficiently large so that the distribution of the sample mean of differences is approximately normal.\(^{193}\)

The hypothesis test for matched or paired samples includes subjects matched in pairs, and the differences are calculated. The differences are the data. The population means for the differences, \(\mu_d\), is then tested using a student’s t-test for a single population mean with \(n - 1\) degree of freedom, where \(n\) is the number of differences. In summary: a hypothesis test for matched or paired samples (t-test) has these characteristics:

- test the differences by subtracting one measurement from the other measurement.
- random Variable: \((x \text{ bar}_d, [\text{mean of differences}]) = \text{mean of the differences.}\)
- distribution: Student’s-t distribution with \(n - 1\) degree of freedom.
- if the number of differences is less than 30, it must follow a normal distribution.
- two samples are drawn from the same samples which are dependent.\(^{194}\)

\(^{193}\) OpenStax College, Ibid.

\(^{194}\) Ibid.
The Total SWB Pre and Post-Test scores are indicated in Chart 1. Only two subjects tested higher in the pre than the post-testing and the change did not affect their outcome. The Spiritual Well-being Total Test Score Categories are listed with the following ranges:

1) a score in the range of 20 – 40 reflects a sense of low overall spiritual well-being.

2) a score in the range of 41 – 99 reflects a sense of moderate spiritual well-being.

3) a score in the range of 100 – 120 reflects a sense of high spiritual well-being.\textsuperscript{195}

Chart 1 illustrates the pre-testing and post-testing of the total instrument. For each of the twenty-one clients tested, the paired column scores reflect the pre-test and post-test scores.

\textbf{SWB Total Test Pre/Post Test Results}

\textit{Chart 1}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{chart1.png}
\caption{Total SWB Pretest And Post-tests}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{195} Life Advance Website, Ibid.
In Chart 2, the student t-Test for paired two samples for means calculation was made.

**SWB Total Score Calculations**

Chart 2

**t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-test Total</th>
<th>Post-test Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>106.5714286</td>
<td>95.80952381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variance</td>
<td>107.1571429</td>
<td>220.6619048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>0.537580706</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesized Mean Difference</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>df</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t Stat</td>
<td>3.868876228</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P(T&lt;=t) one-tail</td>
<td>0.00048</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t Critical one-tail</td>
<td>1.724718243</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P(T&lt;=t) two-tail</td>
<td>0.00096</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t Critical two-tail</td>
<td>2.085963447</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data in Chart 2 indicates that the p-value for both one tail and two tail distributions is more extreme (0.00048 and 0.00096 respectively) than the level of alpha (0.05), indicating that the level of confidence is greater than 95% that these scores are more extreme than that of the level of significance or alpha. This shows that the increase in test results for the Total Test, Religion and Existential Subscores is not random or by chance; therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the H₀, the alternative hypothesis, is not rejected (but accepted).
The results for SWB Total Test Scores demonstrate that the p-values for both one and two-tail tests are smaller than the level of significance indicating that an increase in the well-being of test subjects has taken place. There is sufficient evidence to suggest that the mean scores of the post-test assessment data for spiritual well-being have exceeded the pre-test assessment data.

Conclusion: At a 5% level of significance, from the sample data, there is sufficient evidence to conclude that the strength development of the IP in the Henry First Program increased clients’ scores in the Total SWB Test increasing life satisfaction and well-being.

The Religious Scores are illustrated for all subjects. For each of the twenty-one clients tested, the paired column scores in Chart 3 reflect the pre-test and post-test scores.

**Religious Subset Results**

**Chart 3**

![Religious Pre Post-tests](chart3.png)

Pre and Post-Test scores are indicated for all twenty-one subjects. The Religious Well-being Total Test Score is a measure of how one views their relationship with God. It reflects one’s sense of satisfaction and positive connection with God. The categories are described as:
1) a score in the range of 10 – 20 reflects a sense of unsatisfactory relationship with God.

2) a score in the range of 21 – 49 reflects a moderate sense of religious well-being.

3) a score in the range of 50 – 60 reflects a positive view of one’s relationship with God.¹⁹⁶

**Religious Subset Calculation**

Chart 4  

*t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-Test Religion</th>
<th>Post-test Religion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>56.33333333</td>
<td>50.71428571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variance</td>
<td>43.63333333</td>
<td>66.51428571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>0.477052814</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesized Mean Difference</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>df</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t Stat</td>
<td>3.359519954</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P(T&lt;=t) one-tail</td>
<td>0.00156</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t Critical one-tail</td>
<td>1.724718243</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P(T&lt;=t) two-tail</td>
<td>0.00312</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t Critical two-tail</td>
<td>2.085963447</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹⁹⁶ Life Advance Website, Ibid.
The scores were computed using a t-test for a paired two sample for the means function. The p-value for a one-tail test is 0.0016, which is far significantly below the 0.05 alpha level of significance. The level of confidence at 95% is also exceeded, which justifies the rejection of the null hypothesis and the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis. The p-value for the two-tail test is 0.00312, which is significantly smaller than the 0.05 alpha level of significance and the level of confidence factor at 95%. The Religious Test Scores indicate that the p-values for both one and two-tail tests are smaller than alpha and that an increase in well-being has occurred.

Conclusion: At a 5% level of significance using the sample data, there is sufficient evidence to conclude that the Intervention Plan in the Henry First Counseling Program helped increase clients’ scores in the Religious Subscale.

In Chart 5, the Existential Test Scores are illustrated for all subjects. For each of the twenty-one clients tested, the paired column scores reflect the pre-test and post-test scores.

Existential Subset Results

Chart 5
The Existential Well-being Score is a measure of how one level of life satisfaction and life purpose. Categories are as follow:

1) A score in the range of 10 – 20 suggests a low satisfaction with one’s life and possible lack of the total for existential well-being.

2) A score between 21 – 49 suggests a moderate level of life satisfaction and purpose.

3) A score in the range of 50 – 60 suggests high life satisfaction and a clear sense of purpose.\(^{197}\)

In Chart 6, the student t-Test for paired two samples for means calculation was made.

**Existential Subset Calculation**

Chart 6

t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-Test Existential</th>
<th>Post-Test Existential</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>45.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variance</td>
<td>47.26315789</td>
<td>52.69473684</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>0.515715602</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesized Mean Difference</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>df</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t Stat</td>
<td>3.339782443</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{197}\) Life Advance Website, Ibid.
The pre and post-test data used in Chart 6 illustrate the Existential Well-being (EWB) scores which were computed using a t-test for a paired two sample for means function and yielded two important items of information for the study. The p-value for a one-tail test is 0.00172, which is far significantly below the 0.05 alpha level of significance. The level of confidence at 95% is also exceeded, which affirms the rejection of the null hypothesis and the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis. The p-value for the two-tail test is 0.00344, which is significantly smaller than the 0.05 alpha level of significance and the level of confidence factor at 95%. The results for Existential Well-being Test Scores demonstrate that the p-values for both one and two-tail tests are smaller than the level of significance, and since that is the case, then an increase in the well-being of test subjects has taken place. Furthermore, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that the mean scores of the post-test assessment data for Existential Well-being have exceeded the pre-test assessment data.

Conclusion: At a 5% level of significance, from the sample data, there is sufficient evidence to conclude that the strength development of the Intervention Plan in the Henry First Counseling Program helped to make the clients increase in the Existential Subscale.
Chapter 5

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to assess a pastoral counseling program regarding its effect on clients’ life satisfaction and well-being. The project's goal was to determine a significant change between the pre-test and post-test results. The evaluation findings showed an extreme significance between initial and final scores, with a probability factor at the 0.05 level of significance and a greater than 95% confidence level. The data showed that the results were not attributable to randomness or biases. The findings indicated significant increases in clients’ overall life satisfaction and well-being by participating in the Henry County First Counseling Program.

The three areas tested were the SWB Total Test, the Religious Subtest, and the Existential Subtest. There were twenty-one clients who completed all five counseling sessions and participated in the pre and post-test activities. In the SWB Total Test, findings included one and two-tail t-test calculations, yielding 0.00048 and 0.00096, respectively, indicating an extreme probability that the scores were not random, demonstrably more extreme than the 0.05 alpha level significance. The scores were consistently higher than the 95% confidence level, demonstrating an overall increase in life satisfaction and well-being due to the pastoral curriculum taught over the five-week counseling program.

In the Religious Subtest Score, the p-value for the one-tailed and two-tailed t-Test was 0.0015 and 0.0031, respectively, indicating an extreme probability that the scores were not random at the 0.05 level of significance. The Religious Well-being score is significant in that these scores were not due to randomness or biases. A higher than 95% confidence level demonstrated an increase in life satisfaction and a positive connection with God.
In the Existential Subtest Score, the p-value for one-tailed and two-tailed t-Test was 0.0017 0.0034, respectively. The p-value shows that the scores were more extreme and called for the rejection of the null hypothesis. The confidence level is greater than the 95% level of confidence showing the results indicate that an increase in life satisfaction and life purpose has occurred in the test subjects due to the pastoral counseling curriculum.

The Intervention Program consisted of a pedagogical intervention using Holy Scriptures as reference material presented in a pastoral counseling approach. The clients were administered a pretest at the beginning of a five-week counseling project and concluded with a post-test of the same instrument to measure the change in scores, thereby assessing the individuals’ life satisfaction and well-being. The findings showed that all the clients who participated in the program demonstrated a significant change in Total Wellness Scores, Religious and Existential Well-being Scores. The Religious and Existential Well-being Subsets, which can stand alone for measuring specific areas, illustrated a significant change to the clients’ recorded responses. Both religious and existential subsets measured discreet aspects, namely, clients’ positive connection with God and a perspective of purpose in life, respectively.

The comparison between the thesis project proposal and the study results yielded positive and substantial outcomes for clients. The increased client life satisfaction and well-being changes were significantly greater than a confidence level of ninety-five percent. The clients' comments at the end of sessions regarding the program were very positive and indicated a transformative change in their outlook and behavior.

The study findings demonstrated there was an impact on client wellness using guided instruction and counseling interventions. The approach to clients was based on using objective and absolute truths found in God’s Word to influence and impact peoples’ life satisfaction and
well-being. The findings showed that biblically-based teaching material (sourced from God’s absolute and objective standards) integrated with a pastoral counseling approach of support and encouragement creates a positive change to well-being that occurs irrespective of external circumstances and influencers. As clients focus on controlling illogical cognitive functioning and purposefully realigning positive perceptions through rehearing Scriptures, clients adopt God’s perspectives of life. As truths are revealed and assimilated into right thinking and conduct, cognitive functioning is improved for a more prosperous lifestyle.

The clients’ feedback indicated that clients’ cognition changed to incorporate a more proper understanding of life satisfaction and the meaning of life. As noted by incongruent thinking, the clients’ previous awareness changed and was reflected in pre-and post-testing differences. The interpretation of the findings is that clients’ thinking about life satisfaction, meaning, and purpose was changed. According to the data and feedback, the previous perceptions clients had regarding fear, stress, anxiety, mental and emotional distress were reportedly changed by the study’s interventions.

The author acknowledges that the relatively small study group and the short counseling period are limitations to the findings. Of the fifty participants selected for the study, only twenty-one completed all the requirements of the project. There were extenuating circumstances (Covid 19) that presented significant challenges to the project. To help participants retain and continue cognitive growth and development, additional review and reinforcement activities of the material learned (client self-study or institutional follow-up training) would benefit long-term results.

---

198 Ro 1:17 For in the Gospel a righteousness which God ascribes is revealed, both springing from faith and leading to faith, as it is written, the man who through faith is just and upright shall live and shall live by faith.

199 Prov 4:20-22 My son, pay attention to what I say: turn your ear to my words. Do not let them out of your sight, keep them within your heart; for they are life to those who find them and health to one’s whole body.

200 1 Tim 1:7 For God did not give us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.
Further testing in other settings could validate the results more convincingly. New thinking and understanding patterns were recorded in the clients’ feedback, which yields significant anecdotal findings. This changed thinking is the result of the cognitive adjustments made by clients during counseling. Clients responded with positive changes that reflected different views than had been previously held.

The transformation process through the growth and development of new and constructive thinking patterns was a dramatic discovery for most clients. The feedback from clients indicated that their thinking was changing and making a difference compared to previously held beliefs, thoughts, and behaviors. The techniques of meditation, Scripture reading, prayer, partaking in the Lord’s Supper, and the protection found in the armor of God were beneficial to their spiritual journeys and sense of well-being.

Negative, dysfunctional thinking often leads to harmful lifestyles that include destructive and addictive behaviors. The effects of prolonged and chronic cognitive dysfunction produce adverse reactions in mind (mental depression/oppression), soul (emotions and cloudy judgment), and body (physical symptoms). Valid, reliable, and convenient measuring tools help diagnose areas for practitioners to provide targeted resources to help alter, readjust, and correct mindsets that can reduce or eliminate stress, anxiety, and phobias to lead a more prosperous lifestyle.

The project was patterned after the life and teachings of Jesus Christ as he preached, taught, and healed all who came to him seeking answers for their lives. He would teach in the people in the synagogues, in the streets, in the countryside, and everywhere telling God's good news and truth, and he healed all who came to him. Jesus is the model of how believers need to

---

201 Ro 10:17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ. The faith presented by the very hearing context is in the Greek active present tense meaning ongoing and frequent hearing to establish what is taught and learned.
view the lost, hurting, and distressed people of the world. In his ministry, he showed how to change their thinking and beliefs about God to align well-being with God's purpose and plan for living successfully. He provides in his word a godly perspective of life that leads people to change (repent) the way they think and live.

There were several questions asked and answered in the project. The most salient question is “So what?” and it prompts the response that the use of cognitive clarification, integration, and understanding can help clients examine and assimilate universal standards of absolute truth found in the Word of God. As God’s word is internalized, it alters their patterns of thinking and behavior. Incorporating biblical truth in a personal and life-transformational way, tangible and positive changes can occur in life satisfaction and wellness. The changes noted in the clients’ assessments and the feedback information provided point to methods that ministers, counselors, and teachers can address faulty, illogical, and impaired cognitive functioning with God’s truth and life principles. Using biblical narratives and teachings, those in leadership positions can influence changes in the way people think, help improve their health, and even help transform peoples’ lives to become more productive and successful.

The study posed the question is “Does pastoral counseling make a difference in people’s quality of life?” This study demonstrates the effective use of God’s Word and teachings that change clients’ perceptions and thinking patterns. People who are experiencing life challenges, or dealing with harmful situations, or searching for answers, can find solutions in the Word of God. It is the ultimate standard for truth and life for all His creation.202

---

202 2 Tim 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness.
The Bible teaches that there are several reasons why people have poor life satisfaction and ill-health. The primary reason deals with original sin. In the beginning, God created all things beautiful. He formed every person in their mother’s womb, then breathed life in each one to have an intimate relationship with them. God provided a divine will, plan, and purpose for all humans. It was not God’s will for man to grow old, sickly, and die. God wanted man to eat from the tree of life whereby He would lead them in the paths of righteousness. It was Satan who deceived the first couple into disobeying God, and he continues to deceive humans.203

Many in religious communities struggle with Old Testament and New Testament law teachings and requirements. They live in fear and uncertainty about issues related to righteousness and salvation, suffer stress as to how they must keep the law perfectly, and are confused as to how to function, whether by grace or law or both.204 The law, which is holy and perfect, was given by Moses to strictly provide boundaries and guidance for the Jews to live righteously. Paul said that the law acted as a guardian to keep those under the law from sinning. Also, the law served as a tutor, a type and shadow of Christ to come who would impart righteousness as a gift. It is only by the blood of Christ and not by the human effort the righteousness is given.

203 Ro 5:17 For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

204 2 Cor 3:14 In fact, their minds were grown hard and calloused [they became dull and had lost the power of understanding]: for until this present day, when the Old Testament is being read, the same veil still lies on their hearts, not being lifted to reveal that in Christ it is made void and done away. [Paul was Jewish who strictly followed the law until a divine experience with Christ Jesus completed his faith journey. He wrote two-thirds of the New Testament. He explains the two covenants in detail in Romans 3,4,5 and Galatians 3,4,5. To live under law one must keep all ten commandments. If one law is broken, all are broken (James 1:5) and the person is condemned. Jesus came to die in obedience and fulfillment of the law so that through his blood sacrifice, people receive righteousness as a gift by God’s grace. No one has ever kept the law perfectly, not even King David who was God’s friend.]
Living according to the law for righteousness leads to death, while living according to the Spirit leads to life. Scriptures give a reason why many NT believers fall sick and die, and that is, they fail to discern the meaning of that the bread and wine used in the Lord’s Supper. The bread represents Jesus' body and by His stripes, we are healed. The wine represents his blood which was shed for the forgiveness of sins. The bread and the wine signify the power of communion. Christ paid for physical healing and released complete forgiveness of sins by His blood. These Scriptural teachings were the foundational material used to examine how participants understood the practices and disciplines of prayer, the Lord’s Supper, and the armor of God.

Many clients expressed faulty thinking in matters related to the Scriptures. They believed illogical and incongruent thoughts about God according to the interactions with and feedback from clients. The concept of a just and loving God was challenging for many to reconcile. Most clients lacked the basic knowledge of the Holy Scriptures and failed to understand the truths contained in God’s Word.

The clients’ feedback at the end of sessions was more congruent with God’s will in their lives. By the end of counseling, many understood why Jesus Christ was sent to die for the world's sins. Furthermore, many had a different understanding of the Father’s love for humankind and that the life abundantly and eternal life were given to all through Jesus Christ.

---

205 2 Cor 3:6 He has made us competent as ministers of the new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

206 1 Cor 11:29-30 For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgement on themselves. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number you fallen asleep.

207 John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life.
As clients heard, learned, and grasped the absolute truths in the Holy Scriptures, revelatory knowledge and understanding became a present reality. God’s will, his ways, and his plans are all expressed in his word. His plan for all persons is to prosper and be in health. When God’s truth is revealed and understood, participants renew their minds about life satisfaction, meaning, and purpose in their relationship with God.

In the literature review, significant differences between secular and sacred counseling approaches to life satisfaction and well-being were noted. The most noteworthy differences between the two philosophies pertain to focus and control. In a secular theoretical perspective, the self is the agency of focus that determines the composition of life satisfaction and well-being. In dealing with the self as the motivating agency, counseling focused on changing human behaviors due to environmental influencers that affect them. The problem with people is how to deal with the effects of life as it presses in on the self. People are affected by internal and environmental stimuli requiring optimal cognitive processing to work and react successfully. The reaction determines if the situation, crisis, or difficulty are successfully handled and what kind of outcome affects the individual.

In a secular mindset, a person responds to outlying conditions which affect his well-being. That is, things either make a person sad or happy, contended or upset. The secular counselor’s responsibility is to help the client make the necessary adjustments to formulate a response that minimizes the hurt and maximizes the happiness. The lay counselor is hard-pressed to define a one-size-fits-all life satisfaction and wellness paradigm except using the client’s self-reflection. The notion that a sick person makes himself well is counterproductive and meaningless.

208 3 John 2. Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in every way and be in good health.
The secular counselor does not have a set of objective truth standards by which to assist clients to align their thoughts, emotions, and behavior. Each counselee is responsible for creating directional guidance to be used to determine life satisfaction and wellness. Through behavioral modification, the counselor assists clients in making the necessary behavioral changes to cope. The counselor’s strategy is like a rear mirror approach to deal with the immediate problem at hand.

There is minimal teaching and guidance used in secular counseling on preparing clients for the next big challenge or crisis in life. The client is not instructed about the causation of the problem so that therapeutic intervention can be self-administered. Only after a crisis can the counselor evaluate the effects of what happened to the client’s well-being to devise a remedy.

In secular counseling, there are no absolutes, no universal truths, no objective standards, or criteria by which thinking and subsequent actions can align to provide a degree of stability, security, and certainty that changes lives. There are no ultimate and unquestionable truths by which counselors can guide clients to emulate or recommend clients to follow the correct way of living.

The opposite scenario happens with pastoral counseling. The pastoral counselor can approach the clients with a different frame of reference, spiritual and biblically-based. In that approach, there is a grand design, purpose, and meaning behind all that is visible, and that design points to a master designer. Only an omnipotent designer can be responsible for what exists. The designer thoroughly explains the origins of humankind, the nature and condition of man, the reasons for good and evil, and the choices the people can make to determine satisfactory outcomes in life. In this broad, biblical explanation, Holy Scriptures reveal how God works, how
people can discover the root causes of the problems and difficulties they experience, and how their life satisfaction and well-being are impacted.

The pastoral counselor can draw on the varied resources of the human experience of living a life in a divinely organized world to decide how to live based on their choices. Counselors who operate in this worldview drawing from a panoply of Scriptures containing a) absolute truths from the Creator; b) actual, genuine, and relatable characters of the Bible; c) standards of behavior distinguishing right from wrong, good from bad, blessed from evil, all as outlined in the Scriptures that are plainly stated and universally to be applied.

The counselor takes from the Scriptures lessons from the Creator and uses them to interact with the clients to develop appropriate responses to life’s circumstances that can improve life satisfaction and well-being. These lessons help clients prepare for life-threatening crises before they occur and navigate adverse situations that individuals encounter. Clients are given hope, security, confidence to face unforeseen events that may lead to fear, stress, anxiety, and negative behavioral patterns.

Fisher, in 2010 made an astute observation by concluding that few people consider themselves to be spiritually self-sufficient. He added that most need help to guide them along the journey of life to discover meaning, purpose, and values. Diener et al. reflected in 2009 that the potential problem for measuring well-being lies between the evaluative process and a person’s judgment of that process. The problem, he notes, is in people’s ability to provide


adequate reports of their well-being. The findings of both these authors seem to summarize the state of man’s life satisfaction and well-being.

The difficulties in defining well-being reported by researchers create significant challenges to devise relevant and decisive programs that help improve and effectively measure life satisfaction and well-being. Furthermore, subjective clients’ statements are primarily the means of measuring client behaviors in the evaluation process. With greater clarity in definitional guidance issues and less dependency on nebulous assessment information, achieving optimal life satisfaction and well-being becomes more confident and achievable. Improving the quality of life will produce more reliable and replicable models for future opportunities to help people grow and develop.

The targeted Henry First Counseling Program offers a pastoral approach in line with the scriptural truths and the teachings of Jesus Christ. In contrast to the studies included in the Literature Review, the pastoral counseling approach's focus concentrates on God’s will and plan for humankind. Divinity, not humanity, is the key to helping clients improve their life satisfaction and well-being.

The Henry First Counseling Program begins with a panoramic introduction of the creation with discussions about the will and plans for humanity, the fall of man, and the causal origins of human disorders, distress, depression, discord, disease, and death. Biblical truths are revealed as to what happened to cause the schism between man and God. The final theme in the overview is the divine rescue and reconciliation of humanity through the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross. The project designed an initial overview of the thematic material to be provided throughout the curriculum to lay a weekly discussion foundation. Clients are taught that the biblical references and scriptural explanations provided a foundation and clarity for the topics
discussed in each segment. Clients are given homework assignments each week to meditate on the material.

In the succeeding five weeks of counseling, thematic material from the Scriptures target three biblical areas highlighting God’s power gifts to humanity. The power gifts are presented in the Lord’s Prayer (Our Father), the Lord’s Provision (Holy Communion), and the Lord’s Protection (the Armor of God). In each spiritual area, God’s will and plan for humanity were taught, emphasizing His truth designed for man and how to be blessed and live a prosperous life. Dialogue with clients examined how thinking and believing patterns align (or not) with God’s Word.

Cognitive dissonance and dysfunction reveal the nature of mental and emotional issues that affect the clients’ ability to live successfully through life’s difficulties. The inference in the research findings was that there were a direct and positive impact on Total Well-being, Religious and Existential Subscores by the counseling material and approach. In the study, the clients showed a marked increase in all scores across the spectrum, and their feedback confirmed the change in their levels of well-being.

The targeted Scriptural approach establishes a firm foundation of the authority of God’s Word for clients to understand the norms and examples for well-being. Clients are taught by the Scriptures the meaning and significance of life. The targeted approach juxtaposes to the secular or standard counseling models. The Henry First Counseling Program uses God’s Word as the central therapeutic perspective rather than a client-centric view posited by secular counseling. In doing so, the clients are taught where life originated, God’s plan for humanity, the basis on what went wrong with creation, the reason for good and evil in the world, the causes of sin, disease, death, and the purpose of life.
This counseling curriculum instructs clients that there are spiritual forces and powers surrounding life events and issues. Man is a free agent, but there are spiritual forces behind the scenes directing human activity. By aligning the client’s ability to think right about the Word of God, clients can choose to live according to God’s will and succeed in life.\textsuperscript{211}

The Holy Scriptures hold the keys to right thinking and right living crafted by God for man’s good. Over the millennium, humankind has learned life’s lessons to successful living even through the trials, testings, and critical situations one often faces as man learns to conform to God's will, blessings, prosperity, and happiness result. By changing hearts, communities and society are elevated to thrive.

When confronted with fear, stress, and death, humankind can find solutions through the Holy Scriptures to correct incongruent and faulty thinking which have not aligned God’s truths. Sickness, distress, and death manifest from a fallen world marred by a sinful nature. The sinful nature prevents individuals from achieving optimal well-being.

“How do the results of this study compare with other research?” “How might this project be replicated in other ministry settings?” and “What questions need to be addressed to contribute to the improvement of peoples’ life satisfaction and well-being?” This project's conclusion addresses how pastoral counseling will impact clients’ life satisfaction and well-being. The program outlines specific interventions to teach, counsel, and heal (mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually). The program provides an assessment tool for evaluating progress and changes.

\textsuperscript{211} \textit{Ro 8:6: “To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For this reason, the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God’s law—indeed it cannot, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”}
The findings underscore the need for spiritual teaching to help clients cope with problems, issues, and negative life experiences and learn how to thrive despite the obstacles and distresses in life. These lessons are not only for the present and immediate situations but are necessary and should be incorporated into the human psyche as tools used to combat future difficult and potential hurtful situations. The assessment of this pastoral counseling approach has shown that there is a potentially effective means of teaching clients using the Word of God to improve their cognitive responses creatively and positively to problematical encounters faced in life.

This study specifically was designed to assess the strategies and interventions used in the Henry County First pastoral counseling program. It adopted a widely accepted counseling approach with the training material taken from biblical teachings and spiritual principles. The study was designed to last five weeks with clients who agreed to participate. The project assessed the participating clients using a standardized and effective pre and post-test instrument. The project results found that the hypothesis tested demonstrated the treatment program prescribed positively impacted wellness and improved cognitive functioning. The overall total test scores changed, thereby demonstrating a change of thinking and behavior that could decrease adverse, negative, and hurtful life experiences. The implications for the project should help coping and resiliency resources and alter spiritual and religious skill sets that could avert crises in future situations.

The study's outcome is encouraging for counselors and mental health caregivers, pointing to the need for additional research to include larger population groups that would strengthen reliability and validity findings. Further research could be conducted on cross-generational, socio-economic, various ethnic, and religious groups to determine the program's
efficacy. Churches could implement educational and lay counseling programs to impact and impact congregants' life satisfaction and wellness.

Pastoral counseling could play a crucial role in helping change clients' life satisfaction and improve their well-being and thereby change the communities' spiritual, mental, and emotional well-being that makes up the county population. The centers’ program could serve as a model to be used by churches and mental health providers to help a previously marginalized and disparate group of individuals.

There are churches in the county that assist individuals and families in outreach ministries. The program was designed to show how churches and ministries, large and small, can impact people in their communities by reaching people who are hurting and in need of Christian services, not just physical needs but also spiritual, emotional, and mental. How effective those efforts are to bring about changes for those served is not documented. The rural and remote communities could serve isolated segments of their group members by partnering with the JBA to take service programs like this to provide basic needs, educational, spiritual resources.

The definition of wellness and well-being continues to be debated by experts in the field. It is a paradox characterized by continual flux. The issue is analogous to stepping into a rapidly running river. Not only is the rapid river changing, but the one stepping is also changed. Man is affected by the ever-changing and swiftly moving societal and health milieux. Without a constant and permanent fixture of truth in his life, man flounders rather than flourishes, stagnates rather than progress, fails instead of succeeds. Just like mariners needed a permanent fix in the sky, a true north, he could not know where he was or where he was headed. Humans need this fixed guidance system to orient themselves in the right direction based on proper positioning. No
human is an island. The quest for spiritual meaning and purpose is in the heart and soul of everyone.

Man is dependent on the need for a directional guidance system by which he can operate, and he needs fellow humans to help man arrive at a safe harbor. At play is a dichotomy that presents blessings and curses. Man recognizes that he needs a higher power that has created and controls all things. He is also more increasingly aware of the need for help to navigate the world of shifting sand, first by God and second by others who can help him in his journey of discovering who he is, where he came from, where he is going, and what is his purpose. If he fails to learn what life is about, he will succeed at nothing. Only successful people who discover their true identity will achieve optimal life satisfaction composed of an abundant, thriving lifestyle and an abundance of well-being comprised of high energy and long-life levels.

This project had its share of challenges. The participants in the study were recruited from a group who often struggle in life, lack the necessities, and do not have the tools and resources to succeed in life. This lack of essential material and human resources present barriers to thriving or even coping today. This population group struggles in planning and meeting daily needs, much less looking ahead to monthly or yearly requirements. For many clients, the most subsistent living conditions are minimalist dependent on external circumstances. Many of them live on short-term prospects using short-term vision. These aspects can be helped through counseling interventions.

The counseling project began its implementation during a very trying Covid-19 pandemic in which the outbreak of disease affected a large segment of clients in the aged category. Many clients either were infected or had family members or loved ones who died. Quarantine and employment lockdowns also affected participation and involvement. Wearing masks often
became a security (and sometimes a shaming) symbol worn out of fear and concern for the unknown. Throughout the pandemic, the mixed messaging and misinformation from the health experts became prevalent, which only reinforced the continuation of fear and isolation felt by many. Despite these challenges, the clients who began and completed the project manifested a sense of eagerness about the teaching and counseling received.

The Henry First Counseling Program provided a valuable and beneficial model in a myriad of ways. It can be designed for a short term, five-weekly intervention strategy (teaching, counseling, and assessment) to help meet the needs of clients, or expanded into a small ongoing group meeting quarterly, semi-annually, or for a more continuing and in-depth Bible study group for long term sustainability of client needs. The model can be used in small groups to improve client coping and emotional resources, ongoing studies for those who chose not to affiliate with an institutional church setting.

The HFC program presented a crossroad of opportunity to relate vertically with a godly perspective of life and successful living. The horizontal plane of the crossroad is the life-enhancing and support relationships with others. The Judson Baptist Association decided to serve those in its communities living marginalized. The ministry centers’ mission is to help

---

212 In January 2020, Dr. Anthony Fauci was adamant that no masks should be worn due their ineffectiveness and improper care of users. He reversed in that late February-March to mandate masks; they help (there was no scientific data to back this claim. In Jan.-Feb., Fauci and the CDC doubled down on mandatory mask wearing, even advising to wear two masks.) In Jan.-Feb. 2021.

213 All the names that the Director of Missions presented to the researcher for participation in the study were invited to join. Initial and follow-up letters were mailed by the public mail, but only a small number were returned. The director related that participants in the food bank program do not generally respond to invitations by mail nor do many understand the psychological or counseling information and implications sent to them to make informed decisions. The director next placed flyers in the reception areas and asked the Food Bank interviewers to explain the project to clients. This method of contact resulted in over forty-five clients agreeing to participate, but only twenty-one of that group completed all five weeks of counseling. The researcher had extended the invitational period to solicit clients an additional two months with very little success in attracting more study clients. It is noted that the small number of participants and the limited number of weeks for counseling affects the significance and impact of the study. Covid 19 presented many challenges to all who endure the trying and difficult times.
clients through teaching, preaching, and healing, assessing its ministry to fulfill God’s call to serve others effectively.

The Chinese Covid-19 disease exploded into a worldwide pandemic, causing widespread death, and significantly affecting the health and well-being of people throughout the globe. As the study progressed, the project's emphasis included ways and means to help clients who manifested effects of stress, fear, and anxiety on wellness. The notion was to give hope to people facing a health crisis that could negatively impact the study. Early on, the facts revealed that the elderly were the most affected by the virus and that younger people and youth had a minimal negative impact. The greatest threat of the virus to well-being came because of the fear of the unknown and the death of loved ones. The expected outcome of the program was to help clients manage this present stressful and fearful situation that affected so many.214

With the disease spreading across the nation, suffering on an enormous scale became apparent. Hospitals were being overrun with elderly virus patients on ventilators. Images of body bags stacked in tractor-trailer trucks outside of hospitals were a vivid image and reminder of the serious nature of what was happening. Nursing homes were hard hit. The medical response escalated into rather draconian style edicts such as masks, at first discouraged and later mandated; social distancing even among family and friends; quarantining of infected individuals; businesses shut down indefinitely, and massive unemployment affected much of the population. The emotional, mental, and physical toll on human life mounted daily.

---

214 At the beginning of the Wuhan Pandemic, there was little known about the virus. Some efforts to learn more about the disease were even stymied for unknown reasons (such therapeutics as HCL-hydroxychloroquine). With time, it became known that the disease was most deadly among those 75 and older and those with pre-existing co-morbidities (heart disease, diabetes, respiratory issues, and chronic obesity). For healthy people below 75, the virus was like a flu condition. Young people were affected very little.
The lives of millions were affected by the government’s efforts to control the crisis. The most impactful mandate was the lockdown of society restricting constitutional freedoms. Governmental health care experts indiscriminately decided who and what was considered essential (allowed to operate) from those deemed nonessential (doors shuttered).215

Then there were the ancillary mental and emotional costs attributed to the Wuhan plague in the form of financial losses to businesses and people and the loss of Constitutional freedoms and rights. The loss of liberty (freedom of movement, freedom of religious worship, the right to earn a living, right of assembly) caused by public health and government officials unilaterally became law that required total obedience under threat of fines and imprisonment. Violators were punished by fines or imprisonment, or both.216

The Covid Virus pandemic brought a high human cost to the U.S. and the world. America began to emerge from the China plague in the spring of 2021, but there are indications that there will be long-term mental, emotional, and physical effects. With several miraculous vaccines created in November 2020, a new season of hope occurred, which began to mitigate the mental health crisis and provide emotional healing. As understanding of the effects of the virus increases, restoration and renewal of hope can promote healing.

---

215 Many people were baffled as to why chain and liquor stores, gambling businesses, abortion clinics, marijuana shops remained open and were deemed essential, whereas churches and houses of worship, small independent businesses, schools, and elective medical service providers were shut down and deemed unessential. Little explanation or science was cited to justify these decisions.

216 There were no published statistics indicating that shopping in Wal-Mart or chain grocery and box stores, liquor and lottery businesses, and marijuana shops were safer than any other retail shops. While the “essential” stores were allowed to stay open with apparent immunity from Covid, there were prohibitions, fines, and incarceration (including church leaders) who wanted to provide “essential” services. Weddings, funerals, medical procedures, and mental health counseling were forbidden.
The conclusion of the project would not be complete without a discussion of the meaning of well-being. The Literature Review indicated that a universal definition did not exist. There was agreement as to the factors creating or leading to well-being, but not a cogent definition.217

From Asian, Greek, Roman intellectual sources until the modern scientific investigation, efforts to improve humankind’s state of well-being have not produced a concise model of just what well-being is, nor how to impact people to enhance wellness effectively. The fact that well-being and life satisfaction cannot be adequately defined is problematic. Efforts to craft a definition that accommodates differences in various people groups are dependent on a multitude of causes. These causes vary regarding each person affected. The steps to achieve increased levels of well-being are more of a mystery and happen by chance rather than by forethought and planning.

Defining the problem is a necessary and critical step to developing a methodology that will apply intervention strategies to affect well-being. The definitions uncovered in the Literature Review reveal a nebulous and rather vapid outlook. Well-being meanings fit into categories about various factors such as levels of happiness and the emotional triggers that support it; a degree of contentment sourced in what one does or how one behaves or is regarded by others; a pleasure principle, whether hedonistic or eudemonic in origin. Generally, these definitional constructs are prompted by outside circumstances that influence the individual’s feelings, emotions, thoughts, and reactions. There is a mental, emotional, and physical reaction to an outside stimulus that negatively or positively causes the person to feel in a certain way.

This paper purports a need for a more concise, understandable, and global definition of well-being. A description that is not so easily swayed by outside forces nor inner fluctuating

---

217 Cragun et al., Ibid., 5.
emotions. Well-being needs an explanation that describes man's outward and inward condition. One that relates to the internal processor of the soul to reveal the guiding principles of their thoughts will, intents, and emotions. Well-being reflects what a person chooses to allow or disallow in their soul to affect them.  

While there is no doubt that outside circumstances and happenings affect the soul, the difference to the former model is that events do not nor should not take control of a person’s soul, thereby causing them to react in a specific involuntary manner. Any thoughts, intents, and inner emotions of the soul of man should not be the determining factor for the way they think, responds, or behaves. The soul of man should discern how external and internal stimuli compete within the soul to gain access, influence, and cause a reaction separate and apart from their desired response. Much of the life drama people live involves the continual struggle defined by Freud as the battle of conscious and unconscious spheres between the id, the ego, and the superego, all originating from evolutionary forces. It is characterized by what this author considers to be life drift, an aimless, purposeless ebb, and flow that leaves a person in a virtual life fog.

There is an acknowledgment of the struggle in life between the spiritual forces at work on the man’s agency of free choice in the pastoral counseling setting. God foreknew the struggle of humankind and predestined humans to have control over their free will. To make choices in life was to choose the direction and outcome of one’s life, good versus evil, right versus wrong. The bad choices result in evil, pain, sickness, and death. In contrast, the good life of

---

218 The Bible calls this free choice which was given to humankind by God to operate independently, self-sufficiently, and as a free agent.

219 This is referred to as the realm the conscience. Sigmund Freud predicated his life work on emphasizing the significance of unconscious processes in normal and neurotic behavior.

220 Eph 6:12.
righteousness before God leads to a life full of health, well-being, and success. This condition is what the Scriptures call the blessed life, a life of abundance, fullness, and well-being; the blessed life is found throughout Scriptures and is that state of man God intends for male and female to live optimally with Him.\textsuperscript{221} This life is characterized by a sense of life flow (or referred to as thriving or flourishing), meaning, purpose, and significance to one’s life. In this life flow, the individual can find peace, harmony, and a sense of unity with the Supreme Being of Creation.

The increasing struggles in life need to be better understood considering changing events. That is why an orientation session is given to clients of this study at the beginning of counseling to discuss the panoramic view of the Bible from the creation to the crucifixion. There are specific mega themes discussed in Scriptures regarding the origins of life, the good versus evil dynamic, the purpose and meaning of life, the reasons behind goodness and evil, and the plan for humankind to be saved and delivered. This background explains the historical predictors that ushered in God’s Plan for the Crucifixion and Resurrection stories, highlighting how God gives His people a righteous and blessed life.\textsuperscript{222}

The most significant difference between the secular and pastoral counseling approaches to life satisfaction and well-being are the source determinants of happiness and well-being. For

\textsuperscript{221} John 3: 16, John 10:10b.

\textsuperscript{222} Deut 30:15 acknowledges the blessings, “See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction. For I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commands, then you will live and increase and the LORD your God will bless you...” “Ps 34:8-10 attests to the favor and protection of those who fear the Lord, “Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him. Fear the LORD, you his saints, for those who fear him lack nothing.” Ps 133:4 says, “For there the LORD bestows his blessing, even life forevermore.” Ps 144:3, 15, “O LORD what is man that you care for him, the son of man that you think if him? Blesses are the people of whom this is true; blessed are the people whose God is the LORD.” Jesus Christ reiterated the blessings of God through his words given on the Mount of the Beatitudes. The Amplified Bible interprets Matt 5:1 as follows, “Blessed (happy, to be envied, and spiritually prosperous—with life-joy and satisfaction in God’s favor and salvation, regardless of their outward conditions) are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”
secularists, the source of flourishing is multi-dimensional, with variable effects affecting people in various, unpredictable ways. Therefore, there is difficulty defining what well-being means and how it is to be applied to all. Not only is there a paradox regarding the definition for secularists, but it is also challenging in quantifying and qualifying well-being to make effective changes. The problem of changing well-being is compounded by the fact that there are no objective and standardized constructs by which measurements can make and results determined relative to increasing or decreasing well-being.\textsuperscript{223}

Pastoral counseling views humankind’s life satisfaction and well-being universally and systematically. Using Scripture, counselors use absolute truths as the referential and optimal level by the one true source that created it all. The Scriptures enable the counselor to compare people’s thinking relative to God’s Word to point clients to the blessed life, the free flow favor of God. By using the Word of God, a dynamic relationship between humans and God emerge to point, protect, and provide for humans to live well. God's absolute, unchanging nature allows man to draw stability, confidence, security, assurance of how life is intended and creates changes necessary to accomplish the blessed life. Everyone all over the world is welcomed at the foot of the cross to do business with himself and others to satisfy the will of God for a blessed, fulfilled, and satisfying life. The life drifts that many humans experience can be changed to reflect more of a life flow established by absolute and applicable truths.

The findings of this research demonstrated that life satisfaction and well-being were increased due to the teaching curriculum presented in the five counseling sessions using the

\textsuperscript{223} James Strong, A Concise Dictionary of the Words in The Greek Testament, The Hebrew-Greek Key Work Study Bible, (AMG International, Inc., Chattanooga, TN: 1991), 46. In the side notes on page 1181, Spiros Zodhiates, editor, note, “This satisfaction is not the result of favorable circumstances in life. It comes only from being indwelt by Christ. Therefore, it would be wrong to translate makarioi as ‘happy’ (derived from the English word hap) because it relates to luck or favorable circumstances.
Word of God. Clients were asked what spiritual formations they were inclined to practice. All clients expressed spiritual tendencies, including traditional Christian doctrines, but most did not have a religious affiliation with any organized or set group.

The Intervention Plan included developing a curriculum around three principal topical areas. These included the Power of Prayer, the Lord’s Supper, and the Armor of God. Each topic was chosen to provide clients with the understanding and empowerment imparted from the Bible into the lives of believers.²²⁴

The absolute standards from the Scriptures enable clients to hear unchangeable and unshakeable truths from the Word of God. They can correct, modify, or reveal how the believer is to think and respond in their conduct to thrive in their everyday lives. As clients hear the Word proclaimed, it is their choice to assimilate those truths into their cognitive functioning to make the necessary modifications in how they live out what was learned. The feedback observed and recorded from clients indicates that they made those adjustments in their thinking and behavior.

In this paper, differences between secular and pastoral counseling were underscored to distinguish how the main approaches vary and demonstrate the methodology used to treat humankind's problems. Secular counseling views peoples’ fears (phobias), anxieties (worries), and stresses (lack of peace and wellness) as problems. The problems are attributed to outside circumstances (lack and misfortune), and the strategies selected to correct the problem(s) depend on the individual’s internal willpower and personal resources. By contrast, pastoral counselors see the difficulties of man arising out of spiritual roots (sin and disobedience), which derive from

²²⁴ 1 Cor 1:24, For those called of God, to the Jew first and then the Gentile, Christ is the power of God, and the wisdom of God.
personal choices or unknown spiritual forces. These problems require spiritual correction(s) that address God’s solution through the spiritual guidance and resources He provides.

McDowell was one source cited for the secular counseling approach. He offered his definition of well-being, namely, “life satisfaction (happiness) stemming from optimal functioning.”225 This definition generally represents how many secularists define the wellness and well-being topic. While it is succinct, it is not self-defining nor self-revelatory in origin or maintenance. The key term in this definitional context is optimal functioning, which means that every person has the variance to optimal functioning, how to achieve it, and how to evaluate it so that success can be determined in that functional state.

The author offers a supplement to make this definition to make it more agreeable to the pastoral counseling viewpoint, namely, according to God’s best for the person. This added phrase makes a significant difference. God’s best is the favor, the blessing, and the abundant life that is found in God’s will for each person, and it is what everyone needs for wellness, prosperity, and success in their lives.226

The difference between the two perspectives focuses on the source of power and strength involved to achieve the desired outcome. In the secularist viewpoint, the concern of the counselor is to bring about change in clients’ lifestyles through behavior modification (a Behavioralist approach). Behavioral modification is a target behavioral therapy that produces a behavioral result to ill-health issues. The individual’s willpower is the primary means of

---

225 McDowell, Ibid., 70.

226 John 10:10, 1 John 3:2.
achieving desired results. The person’s willpower is generally a script or process to follow and must have constant and continual reinforcement to obtain satisfactory functioning.

In pastoral counseling, the emphasis is on renewing the mind to align with God’s word, will, and truth refers to the situation (a Holy Spirit approach). The agreement with God’s Word leads the person into heart transformation. This process targets the soul (heart, mind, and emotions), which brings out the changes through improved cognitive abilities, affecting critical thinking skills, fears, negative emotions, behavioral changes.227 This collaborative process between a pastoral minister, a spiritual client, and the Holy Spirit of God references the Word of God that connects believers with the Spirit of God to bring about powerful and lasting change.

In dealing with cognitive dysfunction, untrue and irrational beliefs, the pastoral counselor discerns the disconnect in clients’ thinking via the contrast to God’s Word and determines how to align the two. The client’s cognitive dissonance occurs when the clients’ thoughts and beliefs are misaligned with God’s teachings and truth. The misalignment uncovers and illustrates the contradictory and inconsistent clients’ belief patterns, mental confusion regarding inappropriate thoughts and actions, emotional and spiritual disturbances stemming from believing in untruths, and negative behaviors that lead to ill-health.228 When client thinking is at odds with Holy Scriptures, the negative results can be mental and emotional confusion, distress, fear and anxiety, depression, spiritual instability, and possible addictive behaviors. Using the Word of God as the

227 Ro 12:2 states, “And be not conformed to the world; but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

228 Phil 4:6-7 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything with prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be known to God; and the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ.
objective standard of absolute truth, the counselor guides the client’s thinking to an intersection with Scriptures to promote levels of life satisfaction and well-being.

The work of the pastoral counselor is to use the word of God and spiritual resources to allow God’s power to flow into the clients so that renewal, restoration, reconciliation, and healing can occur. This approach addresses the immediate and long-term issues to help clients deal with any problems that confront them, thereby teaching and developing resiliencies and well-being regardless of the attending problems. The counseling strategies and interventions outlined in Chapter Three and the Appendix provide greater specificity in the curriculum material used in this study.

As indicated in Chapter Four, the level of confidence was greater than 95% in the Total Test Scores, and the two Subscores were called Religion and Existential. The level of alpha (significance at the 0.05 level) showed that the significant increases in life satisfaction and well-being were not random but were the result of the Intervention Plan. The IP demonstrated that the teachings found in God’s Word set objective standards and external sourcing for people to incorporate lifestyle changes for increased well-being. Humans can be taught to flow and thrive in the blessings of God to overcome all life challenges and prosper in life.

The blessed life comes from God, who bestows abundant life (fullness of life, joy, and peace apart from external circumstances). The Scriptures describe this as a gift from God. God’s

---

Eph 3:20 Now unto Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all we can ask or think, according to the power that works in us.

Ps 1 states, “Blessed (fortunate, prosperous, and enviable) is the man who walks and lives not in the counsel of the ungodly nor stands in the paths of sinners or sits down where the scornful gather. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law does he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree firmly planted by the streams of water, ready to bring forth its fruit in its season; its leaf also shall not fade or wither; and everything he does shall prosper [and come to maturity].”
will for a man (universal) is to receive and thrive in this environment. It was not the will of God for humans to grow old, succumb to ill-health and sickness, and die. The blessed life enables one to receive and enjoy peace, joy, and happiness not based on outward circumstances but on a confident expectation for good things to happen in life. Well-being is the blessed life defined in the Holy Scriptures that promotes and provides all those who believe and receive consistently high levels of life satisfaction and well-being so that recipients can meet all life challenges with an overcoming victorious attitude and lifestyle.

**Postlude**

It is noted that the population used in this study was a bi-racial group consisting of poor socio-economic backgrounds. There was a surprising diversity of employment experiences within the client population, as evidenced by the numerous residential locations they represented around the United States. While the sample population group shared a common propensity of low-income status, there was a great diversity in their life experiences and an inspiring level of spirituality.

All participating clients made changes in their life satisfaction and well-being, with most making significant gains. They all reported feedback that this study had been very insightful and helpful. Clients responded to the query about what had had the most impact on their well-being. The general response was that there was a greater understanding and knowledge of God. The information and revelation that was imparted from God’s Word improved their relationship with God, and that because of this encounter through His Word, their lives had changed for the better.

At the start of 2019, the world as its people knew it would be profoundly changed. As the Covid-19 virus spread, fear, anxiety, and stress became the new normal. The governmental edicts to wear masks; the civic authority mandates to quarantine people and lockdown businesses of the
nation; the orders for the closure of schools, businesses, and churches; and the job losses with chronic unemployment brought unprecedented high levels of angst, stress, fear, and hopelessness akin to mass public incarceration. Elected politicians relinquished their duly appointed positions of governance by abdicating their legal role to the authority of unelected public bureaucrats.

The food bank halted operation for about a month at the end of March 2019 because of Covid and resumed services on the first of May. In addition to the critical demand for food supplements, the counseling program continued to bless those served. Clients received help with physical, emotional, spiritual, and mental health needs.

The trends in 2021, as the nation views declining pandemic numbers, point to another underlying health crisis. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released a Weekly Report, August 2020, outlining the morbidity and mortality caused by the pandemic. A telling comment cited in the report was that forty percent of adults in 2020 had experienced higher adverse mental health conditions associated with the pandemic. Younger adults, minority populations, essential workers, and unpaid caregivers had disproportionately worse mental health outcomes, increased substance use, and elevated suicidal ideation than a year ago.\(^{231}\) The article said that mental health challenges are facing the nation brought about by the deaths of Covid and the mitigation activities such as the physical distancing and stay-at-home orders, which have led to anxiety and depressive disorders.

In the CDC report, a call for community-level efforts to tackle the growing crisis is now occupying the nation's attention as the pandemic recedes. A dilemma affecting half the U.S. population has its roots in public health policies created to address the primary Covid problem.

---

The same public health officials call for interventions to mitigate the issues from the first problem. The catastrophic response to the physical plague may result in an equally infamous impact on the mental and emotional psyche of the nation. The strategies to be determined will be critical to help meet the needs of the U.S. population.
Bibliography


Stanley, Andy *Deep & Wide: Creating Churches Unchurched People Love to Attend* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016).


Appendix A

Henry County First Program – Five Week Lesson Plan

Overview

This project evaluated a pastoral counseling program for the Judson Baptist Association Ministry Centers. The program enlisted fifty clients from the Food Bank Program, enrolled them in a five-week counseling program, and completed a pre and post-test assessment to determine the change in life satisfaction and well-being. During the five weeks, participating clients attended weekly counseling sessions lasting 30-45 minutes each. The teaching foundation of the program comes by the Holy Scriptures. There were three areas selected to work with clients 1) the power of divine connection in the Lord’s Prayer, 2) the power of the Lord’s provision in the Lord’s Communion, and 3) the power of the Lord’s protection in the Lord’s armor.

The pastoral counseling approach examined clients’ cognition in parallel with the Scriptural teachings to measure the degree of alignment and variance. The clients’ thinking process was the basis for counseling strategies and techniques to target life satisfaction and well-being. Each week the counseling schedule presented a theme that explored how clients perceive the themes and lessons of the Scriptures as they related to their everyday lives. Counseling illustrated how thinking can be modified, adapted, or acquired anew to improve behavioral outcomes to impact wellness. The five-weekly sessions followed specific outline of religious biblical teachings to counsel participants on dealing with life challenges, circumstances, and conflicts.²³² The weekly sessions taught biblical narratives, truths, and wisdom scriptures to

²³² For secularists, spiritualists, (and all those who regard themselves outside Christian orthodoxy), a separate curriculum track is given. There is much wisdom and truth in Scriptures that apply to all of humankind outside of the Christian dogma that could help people to use for everyday living. The program is open to everyone regardless of their beliefs, values, and opinions. No one will be denied or excluded from the pastoral counseling program. Everyone is given a choice to continue or terminate the program at any time for whatever reason.
compare the client’s beliefs and understanding. The teaching determined any cognitive misalignment of views and thoughts between what the Bible says and clients' beliefs.

A set of lesson plans were developed involving three targeted areas related to the thematic material of the Bible. The themes were chosen to help participants understand the truths proclaimed in Holy Scriptures regarding the origins of creation, the purpose and meaning of life, and the facts about God’s redemption plan for humankind. The counseling aspects of the program will examine how clients’ cognitive functioning (thoughts, impressions, emotions, and experiences) align with God's Word to help dispel confusion, misinformation, doubts, fears, and stress that are potential obstacles to abundant life and success in everyday living.

A valid and reliable assessment tool was used to capture pre and post-test data. The pre was administered before counseling and the post in the final session to measure the change in life satisfaction, spiritual and existential well-being.

**Goal**

The project aims to help teach and equip participants to help them improve cognitive skill sets that can impact their life satisfaction and well-being. The counseling approach will present biblically based teaching material to affect cognitive functioning, resulting in a more thriving lifestyle. The project's limitations consider the time for counseling, the material to be taught, and the testing necessary. The project should have a component of future guidance for clients as they deal with serious issues.

The project was designed to test the study's hypothesis to determine if a pastoral counseling plan could positively and substantially change clients' lives. The assessment of clients
is expected to demonstrate the effectiveness of the instructional, counseling, and healing approaches to help clients be more successful in their daily lives.

**Orientation to Counseling**

The first session scheduled for clients is the orientation conference. During this meeting, the project is reviewed with each participant, forms are completed, a five-week schedule is agreed upon, and an overview of the material is discussed. The summary presents several foundational keys for the clients to check their understanding of biblical knowledge and pinpoint areas that clients’ beliefs are incongruent with the Holy Scriptures. This will help prepare material that will help clients reflect where perspectives may differ and the implications for their well-being can be impacted.

**The Objective of the Lesson Plans**

The lesson plans' objective is to use Holy Scriptures as a teaching medium in a pastoral counseling approach to change clients’ life satisfaction and well-being. A pre and post-test assessment will be administered to participants. The post-test change will be determined at the 95% confidence rate using a .05% level of significance.
Lesson Plans

Week 1

The Power of Prayer

A prayer is an act of worship. People use prayer for many reasons, such as a cry for help, a need for whatever is lacking, an emotional plea out of desperation, a recognition of a higher power, and the list goes on. When a person cries out to God, the Scriptures say that God hears that cry and answers the person. When a believer enters the activity of prayer, it is both practical and powerful. The believer participates in a relationship through expressions of praise, desires, pain, needs, wants emotions, thanksgiving, and the intention to do God’s will.

There is a certain level of expectations that the worshipper has of the object of his worship. The lesser calls out to the great in anticipation that there will be a response to the more secondary. The relationship between the parties is mirrored in the bond of trust, faithfulness, and mutual regard one has for the other.

The Lord’s Prayer is the model chosen for this project for the main reason that this prayer was given by Christ in response to the disciple's request to teach them to pray found in Matthew 6:9-13. Even though Jesus is fully God, his disciples regularly observed him praying to the Father. Jesus’ prayed audibly to his Father before performing miracles such as the several occasions in which he feeds the multitudes and the raised of the dead. The Lord’s Prayer is the one prayer that is commonly and universally recognized worldwide by nonbelievers and people

---

233 Ps 65:2, You who answer prayer, to you all people will come.

234 James 5:15a-16b And the prayer of faith shall save the sick...The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

235 An example of this prayer activity and relationship is found early in the Genesis account of the Bible between Abraham and God referenced in Gen. 15, 16, 17, and 18.
of faith. The early Christian church used the Lord’s Prayer to teach new converts and children the fundamental of the Christian faith. The presentation of the Lord’s Prayer will be used with clients to teach truths about God and help establish a means for them that will empower them to pray powerful prayers to impact wellness.

The teaching and counseling aspect of this activity will include the breakdown of the Lord’s Prayer into its sequential phrases. Each phrase will be discussed, highlighting the significance of each expression and the implications for the believer.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Our Father which art in heaven</th>
<th>First grand petition: ‘Be God to us.’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hallowed be thy Name</td>
<td>Be God to us in our words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thy Kingdom come</td>
<td>Be God to us in our thoughts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven</td>
<td>Be God to us in our deeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give us this day our daily bread</td>
<td>Be good to us in our present needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors</td>
<td>Be good to us in things of the past that still hurt us through guilt or blame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil</td>
<td>Be good to us in the future that already hurts by making us afraid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever</td>
<td>The basis for the grand petitions—the power belongs to God, not to us or the prayer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

\[236\] Plessis, Ibid., 3.
The first phrase of Our Father who art in heaven is Jesus’ expression of who God is to creation. There are many names for God, but the one Jesus wanted His disciples to understand and relate to was Father. Recognizing God as Father helps believers know God’s love and the will of God for His children. Jesus expresses this dynamic relationship in Matthew 7:7-11. The significant gift that God gives us is salvation through belief in His son (John 3:16). Salvation comes from the Hebrew meaning to save, deliver, redeem, heal, providing prosperity and peace. From salvation flow all good and practical gifts (righteousness, sanctification, and redemption in 1 Cor 1:30.

The second phrase, Hallowed be thy Name, indicates that there is but one God represented by three persons of the Godhead. In honoring and hallowing the Name of God, believers acknowledge that He is the eternal God with no beginning, no end. He is the LORD of the past, present, and future. Hallowing the Name of God ascribes the attributes of sovereignty, all power, all-knowing, and all presence in which God is the source of all, is overall and can provide for every need.

The third phrase, Thy kingdom come, specifies a transcendency about God in which He exists outside of time and space, an eternal reality. Implied in this statement is a futuristic existence that will set all things right and be ruled by an all-superior being, and to that kingdom, there will be no end and no more sickness and death.

The fourth phrase, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven, is the expression that co-joins man into and with the Kingdom of God. God’s will that man dwells with Him in a place that He rules over all things, and man enjoys all His blessings is the absolute reality of God’s will. That is a promise of God made possible by and through the blood of the Savior, Jesus Christ.
The fifth phrase, Give us this day our daily bread, is the focus of the believer’s life in harmony with His father. Jesus reminded that his followers daily dependent on His provision and His favor. Each day is to be lived fully and abundantly in what God provides and how God sustains. The past cannot be relitigated nor define the believer since Christ makes all things new, and the future only God knows, so believers are to live in the present grace given.

The sixth phrase, Forgive us our debts as we forgive others, teaches believers how to be in a relationship with others. Forgiveness is the ultimate grace gift that Jesus came to give to grant man righteousness. Jesus fulfilled and annulled the law, which was based on man’s efforts. No man ever succeeded in obeying the law of God, and that is God found fault with it and provided a new covenant in Jesus’ blood.

The seventh phrase, And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, encapsulates the reliance man has on God to provide and protect him from an evil world. Man’s faith is constantly under testing from sin so that only a supernatural power can help him overcome the world. Testing could be used in the same word for temptation since, according to James 1:5 since God does not tempt.

The eighth phrase, For thine, is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever, is the doxology to the Lord’s Prayer reinforcing God’s sovereignty, power, and eternality.

**Homework for Week 1**

1. Clients are asked to meditate on the model prayer as often as they think about it. As they pray, the clients are encouraged to call upon the presence of God to be manifest in their lives. God is near promising never to leave nor forsake the righteous.
2. The nearness of God is a reality for believers, like the promise of the Kingdom of God.\textsuperscript{237} Prayer is a potent tool for believers to battle stress and conflict. The meditation on prayer can develop the believer’s perspective in controlling the negativity of situations they face. Believers can focus their energy on the relationship with the Father rather than trying to change their position by their efforts. Clients are asked to pray for the nearness of God.

3. The clients are asked to reflect upon the question, \textit{what is the importance of the Lord’s Prayer?} and \textit{How does the prayer impact their life?} When believers understand the benefits of prayer, the situations they face in their lives can change. Issues like dire needs, crises, stress, worry, and lack can all be affected by what believers think and how they incorporate prayer as continuous to God the Father.\textsuperscript{238}

4. Clients are given the illustration of Christ’s perspective of prayer when he confronted abuses in the Temple. His lesson is a spiritual lesson for believers today.\textsuperscript{239} Believers are the temple of God, 1 Cor 3:16, and as such, if it becomes a den of thieves, it can suffer loss (1 Cor. 6:19), affecting strength, health, hopes, and dreams.\textsuperscript{240}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{237} Luke 17:21 ...For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.
\item \textsuperscript{238} Hebrews 13:15 Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.
\item \textsuperscript{239} Mark 11:17 Then He taught, saying to them, “Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations’? But you have made it a den of thieves.
\item \textsuperscript{240} 3 John 1:2 Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in every way and that your body may keep well, even as I know your soul keeps well and prospers.
\end{itemize}
Week 2

The Power of the Lord’s Provision

The relationship between the two testimonies (covenants) unlocks the mystery of how to live the Christian life successfully empowered by God’s will and provisions. This session deals with many areas of faulty thinking and poor teaching among believers. If believers struggle with their beliefs or maintain incorrect and defective belief patterns, life satisfaction and well-being can be directly affected. Believers are to receive, not struggle with, stress over, or earn the promised inheritance of a successful life and wellness provided by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

In a legal sense, a will is not efficacious until there is a death of the person who authored it. Likewise, the latest legal testament supersedes and annuls previous testimonies. God willed that the New Testament be inaugurated with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The difference and significance of the sacrifices given by God between the Old and New Testimonies make the sacrifice of the latter greater, significantly more impacting, life-altering, and assurance giving to the believer than the former could ever perform.

For believers, faith must be understood in that a blood sacrifice (a death) had to occur and that forgiveness of sin. The punishment of blood had to be made by the sinner, either his own death or a willing and perfect sacrifice to redeem sin. This blood requirement was necessary for those who believed that a high price had to be paid for sin. Believers should understand that payment for sins must occur before righteousness is given.

In the table below, the two covenants are compared side-by-side to see the differences and understand why they are unique in their way.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Old Testament</th>
<th>New Testament</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Law-keeping requires a spotless animal sacrifice. The sinner put his hands on</td>
<td>Jesus offered a perfect and complete sacrifice. He knew no sin, He did no sin, in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the lamb, transferring his sins to the animal. In return, the lamb’s innocence is transferred to the sinner.</td>
<td>Him, there was no sin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law-keeping required a sacrifice for continual sins; the lamb was slain for sins once a year by the High Priest at the Temple in Jerusalem.</td>
<td>Jesus’ sacrifice was once and for all. All sins past, present, and future forgiven (Heb. 10:14); through the Lord’s Supper, this is celebrated through eating and drinking in remembrance of what Jesus did for believers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law-keeping stipulated that only the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies and present blood sacrifice once a year for the Nation of Israel. If accepted, all the people were accepted. If rejected, all of the people were rejected.</td>
<td>Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross tore the veil that separated sinful man from God was split allowing all believers to access the Throne of God, receiving righteousness and blessings. Believers celebrate this at the Lord’s Supper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law-keeping was conditional for all Jews—those who kept it were blessed, those who failed were cursed (Deut. 28:1-15).</td>
<td>Jesus was raised from the dead to sit at the right hand of the Father. He sent the Holy Spirit as Comforter giving peace, wellness, and righteousness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law-keeping bestows righteousness conditionally only if the blood sacrifices are continuous. Jews never received assurance that their sins were forgiven and they were accepted.</td>
<td>Jesus bestows eternal life on all believers through His shed blood. His broken body gives life abundantly, health, and wellness (Is. 53:5).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law-keeping is holy, but it cannot make man holy. God gave the Law for man to see his need for a Savior (Gal. 3:24).</td>
<td>Jesus fulfilled the law by His death, burial, and resurrection. For a believer to go back to the law means he falls from grace (Gal. 5:4).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The first Passover in the Old Testament involved the redemption of the Jews who were enslaved by the Egyptians. On the tenth and last plague sent by God, the death of the firstborn was inflicted on Egypt by God to convince Pharaoh to release the captives. The blood differentiated who was on the side of God. If the angel saw blood, they lived.

Moses instructed the Jews to select and kill a year-old unblemished lamb, use its blood to cover the doorposts as a sign, eat all the roasted lamb, and dress entirely for the exodus out of Egypt. At midnight, the death angel passed over, killing the Egyptian firstborn but sparing every Jewish firstborn who had marked the doorposts with blood. The next day, the two to three million Israelites marched out of Egypt laden with gold and silver and went to them as backpay by the Egyptians, not a sickly, lamb, infirmed, disabled person.

The Jews were redeemed by the blood and healed by eating the lamb. The law and the animal sacrificial systems of dealing with sin were a temporary solution to dealing with the sin of the people of God, and as for the law, no one was able to keep it. God found fault with the law in that it could not make anyone holy. It was designed to show the people their need for a savior (Hebrews 8:7-13).

The law was to serve as a shadow of the good things to come (Hebrews 10:1-4). Believers need to be taught that God will accept no one, nor will their sins be forgiven by their efforts, merits, or attempts to keep a holy law. This struggle leads many believers to have difficulty trying to fulfill religious and righteous rules and regulations, feel obligated to perform good works to earn favor with God, and live a good and moral life.
Moses, the servant, gave the law, but grace and truth came from Jesus Christ
(John 1:17). What the law could not do (save people), God sent His Son to establish a new
covenant in His perfect, sinless blood. The law demanded obedience to the law by which
righteousness from for bankrupt man was obtained, but grace and the gift of righteousness were
given by faith in the blood of Jesus Christ. Christ Jesus is the fulfillment of the law and the
sacrificial system of dealing with sin. His once and for all offering fulfilled the obedience to the
law requirement made on men and ended the need for continuous and ongoing sacrifices
(Hebrews 9:11-28). What shadows are found in the Old Testament conceal the truths found in
the New Testament? A good understanding of the two covenants clarifies what it takes to live a
life of peace, well-being, and success.

The righteous will live by faith (Romans 1:17). The two covenants laid side-by-side
reveal distinct and distinguishing differences between them. Each covenant must stand
alone on its requirements and stipulations, and neither be joined to form an amalgamation of the
two (Romans 3:21). When believers realize that living in the New Testament has fundamentally
different and unique precepts, commandments, and faith mandates. The believer can begin to
sense a release from the old covenant strictures of blessings only for the obedient and curses for
the disobedient and the continuous reminder of a sin consciousness when one does not perform
the law satisfactorily.

The believer can know rest in the finished work of Jesus Christ, who is the final
and ultimate payment of the blood sacrifice and fulfilled all the law demands on man
(Romans 5:1-11). He can then enjoy the peace of God through Christ, experience and
live in the born-again realization that sins have been paid for by Jesus, the reconciliation with his heavenly Father granting him Sonship, the seal of the Holy Spirit sent to indwell the believer by Christ Jesus, and the inheritance of all Christ’s blessings (Ephesians 1:3). The believer is now free to receive and enjoy the benefits of Deuteronomy 28:1-15 and receive none of the curses prescribed to the disobedient.

There are laws and commandments in the New Testament. These include the Law of Love, Law of Faith, and the Law of Liberty. Believers are admonished to live by the Spirit and not by the law. The provision of Jesus Christ as the acceptable redemption payment enables believers to identify with His death, burial, and resurrection. The believer is aware that he is accepted in the body of Christ so that the Father accepts the believer as much as He accepts His Son (1 John 4:13-17). He is a new creature in Christ; old things have passed away. He is now redeemed by Christ’s blood and is perfected (made complete) in God’s sight.

This new relationship with the Father due to the Son's sacrifice positions all believers to a status of rest. There is no more work to be done by the believer related to his forgiveness of sins and his acceptance by the Father. At the resurrection, Jesus sat down on the Father's right hand and enabled all believers to pass through the veil of the law to join Him. Believers now can live a victorious life with a clean conscience and the Holy Spirit's guidance. This provision of God gives a sense of love from the Father, peace from the Son, and comfort from the Holy Spirit.

**Homework for Week 2**

1. Reflect on the two covenants and delineate the changes from one to the other.

2. Meditate on the significance that Jesus Christ has for the life of the believer.
Week 3
The Lord’s Supper

The Lord’s Supper was the culminating event for Christ in his earthly ministry with his disciples. The time was approaching for him to leave this earth and return to his Father. He had so much to say and to teach his band of disciples who were a bit hard-headed and dull in understanding. The teachings he wanted to impart were not only essential for his disciples at the time but were for all future generations who would follow.

He would leave behind a three-year ministry full of signs and miracles but the gospel message that would have to be carried out through a group of unlikely characters. The success of the grace message that Jesus was sent to share with the world rested on the shoulders of a dozen ordinary Jewish men who were about to undergo a superordinary transformation. One would betray him, one would deny him, and one would doubt him. He wanted to tell believers what was about to happen and how they would deal with life without him. There has not been a leader who was ever born to die for the people he was about to save in all of history. Just as his birth was planned, so, too, was his death scripted.

His death for the sins of the world was imminent as he would soon inaugurate the New Covenant by shedding his blood for the eternal forgiveness of sins and the breaking of his body for healing. This redemption process he was sent to achieve would forever change how the world would relate to God and humankind. In Lesson Two, the two covenants were discussed as to how God used them for the redemptive process of humanity, one covenant began as a call for a special relationship with a chosen race of people, the second to fulfill, complete, and perfect the

---

will of God relative to the salvation of the entire world.\textsuperscript{242} God established both covenants to be holy, judicial, righteous, permanent. There are blessings and curses in each covenant that presented problems at their inaugurations and problems that people struggle with today. The problems manifest serious issues from humans as they try to relate to God, his activity, his demands, and his will for them.

The dilemma humans face is trying to reconcile the covenants. While both are perfect, holy, and just, they are mutually exclusive. The Old Testament was given through Moses on Mount Sinai, consisting of ten commandments. The set of ten was engraved on stone and told the people what was demanded of them to perform righteousness. To comply with the law, God instituted animal sacrifices to atone for the sins of the people. The New Testament came by Jesus Christ, who was the lamb that died for man's sins. His one sinless blood brought eternal forgiveness for all born-again believers. His substitutionary sacrifice satisfied the judgment of God, fulfilled the righteous obligation of the law, and bestowed Sonship status for all believers.

Both covenants required a blood sacrifice for the sins of the guilty.\textsuperscript{243} In each, death is necessary to save a life. Many believers do not understand that the Old Testament conceals the New Testament principles in types and shadows that must be discovered and revealed by Holy Spirit revelation. The New Testament reveals the fullness of God’s plan of salvation for man as God sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to die the ultimate, once-and-for-all death for the cleansing and

\textsuperscript{242} John 3:16.

\textsuperscript{243} Hebrews 9 and 10 provide the explanation of how the dichotomy of both covenants play out. Both covenants required a sacrifice of blood to forgive sins. God used the first (Old) Covenant to train a chosen group to be separate (holy) for his purposes. The Old Testament sacrifices could never remove sin and had to be repeated every time sin was committed. “The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming, not the realities of themselves,” Hebrews 10:1. Whereas, in the New Testament, Jesus came into the world to do the will of his Father by setting aside the first to establish the second, Hebrews 10:9.
removal of sin. The Old Testament demanded righteousness that the law could not and would not supply. Jesus Christ gave himself to redeem man from sin, providing grace, forgiveness, and mercy to all those who believe and receive the finished work of the cross.

The Lord’s Supper is all about the death of Christ on the cross; therefore, it is critical to understand what Jesus expounded on in that supper. Jesus did not come to do away with the Old Testament but to fulfill it so that by his obedience (the last Adam), we can obtain the forgiveness of sin and receive Sonship into the family of God. Believers in the New Testament no longer face the wrath for punishment from God; instead, they receive righteousness forever as co-heirs with Christ to rule and reign with Jesus forever (Rev. 1:6). Believers who try to keep both covenants, picking and choosing what they like or by mixing them, void both. Christ said he would that believer be hot or cold, but a mixture. Law-keeping is by man’s efforts; grace-keeping is forgiveness supplied to believers through the blood of Jesus Christ, the finished work.

The Jews in the Old Testament celebrated the Passover Supper by the blood sacrifice of the lamb. The blood was applied to the doorway to prevent the death angel from killing the firstborn. The lamb’s body was eaten during the night, and the following day the Jews left Egypt liberated, laden with gold and silver, and not a sickly or feeble person among them. In the Lord’s Supper, he proclaimed that the bread in the meal represented his broken and crushed body for believers’ healing, and the wine represented his blood shed for all sins.

Paul wrote in the letter to the Corinthians that so many believers fall ill and asleep because they fail to discern the Lord’s body. He explained that believers are not receiving their blood-bought right from God by partaking in the bread in this unworthy manner.

---

244 Isaiah 53:5 And with his stripes we are healed.
Week 4

The Lord’s Protection

The assurance of salvation stemming from the guidance of the Holy Spirit is the position of a New Testament believer. He abides in Christ, and Christ dwells in him. The believers are then equipped to walk successfully in abundant life. The Scriptures in Ephesians address how believers can and should walk in the paths of righteousness with the power of God to stand against and resist the devil. Believers need to understand that upon salvation, that is, receiving Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, they are given the Lord’s protection.

The Scriptures deal with supernatural protection in the same manner that Jesus did. When Jesus went ascending to the Father after three days and nights in the grace, he sent the Holy Spirit to indwell believers, enabling them to work with the Spirit in doing the same things that Jesus did (and even greater as promised by the Lord). The Holy Spirit anoints believers with gifts of God to do the works of God collectively in his body, the church, and individually according to God’s pleasure. The armor of God is a blessing bestowed by Christ that he left behind for believers to utilize. The equipment is analogous to a Roman soldier, with each piece serving a specific function helping the believer to realize fruition in the abundant life.

---

245 1 John 5:12-13 He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

246 Ps 91 and 103, Luke 10:19 and other Scriptures point to the protection afforded the believers to have life satisfaction and wellness.

247 1 John 4:17 ...because as He is, so are we in this world. Jesus laid his divinity aside and lived on earth as fully man. Jesus was baptized by John at the River Jordan where the Holy Spirit came upon Him to enable Him to work under the anointing of the Spirit.

248 John 14:12 I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, if anyone steadfastly believes in Me, he will himself be able to do the things that I do; and he will do even greater things than these, because I go to the Father.
The blessings of his armor are received by identifying with Christ through faith in the provisions of God. If believers are not aware of the biblical teachings in the Word of God about the armor of God, the believer will not appropriate the tools nor receive the blessing(s) that accompany it. Putting on the whole armor of God is a way that believers fight the good fight of life against all enemies such as foreign and domestic, visible or invisible, self-made or self-defeated. Each of the piece of the armor God provides specific protection to specific parts of the body that is vulnerable. Believers are to cognitively incorporate the weapons of their warfare so that, just like a soldier, he will be protected and safe. The benefits afforded by the equipment help believers to see how they can increase their quality of life and well-being.

The table below depicts the tools with their description and practical usage and are found in Ephesians 6:10-20. The Scriptures explain how strength and power come to believers through the tools that provide protection. As believers meditate on the armor and benefits, this exercise should become automatic rather than ritual. For example, a soldier would not dare go into battle without his protection equipment (both offensively and defensively), and neither should a believer. This activity is essential to believers because they are reminded that believers already have the promise of protection listed in each piece of equipment. The only thing a believer must do is regularly, and faithful receive the blessings by donning them.

**Objective:** Participants are to learn how they are empowered by Christ through the Holy Spirit to live blessed, protected, prosperous, and successful lives while on earth.
## The Armor of God

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Armor of God</th>
<th>Description/Definition</th>
<th>Practical Usage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belt of Truth</td>
<td>Truth holds all things truth together. Believers are to know the truth because the truth sets you free.</td>
<td>The more truth you receive, the more victory in your life. Truth equals victory. Truth dispels the darkness and reveals areas in which one is still in the dark. Once you know truth, devil cannot fool you. Truth equals God’s Word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breastplate of Righteousness</td>
<td>Righteousness protects the heart.</td>
<td>Righteousness is a gift, undeserved, unmerited. The devil attacks your heart (with accusations) to shut down your faith.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shod your feet with Peace</td>
<td>Jesus is the Prince of Peace-He gives us His peace. Shoes are essential for a believer’s walk. If feet are injured, one can’t walk.</td>
<td>The devil cannot manage (trouble) a believer who remains in peace. The devil wants to disturb your mind. Jesus gives lasting peace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shield of Faith</td>
<td>Shield of Faith is, above all, a top priority, great importance to extinguishing fiery missiles</td>
<td>When devil fires angry darts (thoughts) at you, believers accept or reject them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helmet of Salvation</td>
<td>Salvation refers to preservation, wholeness, health, and prosperity. Believers must be assured of their salvation based on their faith in Jesus.</td>
<td>The helmet is the hope of salvation. Hope is the confident expectation of good. Believers hope (believe) good things will happen to them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sword of the Spirit</td>
<td>Refers to the Word of God. This is an offensive weapon</td>
<td>The word of God alive and sharper than a sword</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praying with all requests in the Spirit</td>
<td>Prayer is also an offensive weapon; pray continuously</td>
<td>Praying in the Spirit helps one to receive answers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Scriptures tell believers that they do not wrestle with flesh but powers in the spiritual world that is mighty and can only be defeated by the blood of Jesus and his word's testimony. The devil is defeated but has the power of influence to question, doubt, and distrust God’s promises. The spirit world intimidates, instills fear, and establishes strongholds (cognitive malware) to shake the faith and ascribe to faulty beliefs and incorrect biblical thinking.

**Homework for Week 4**

1. Reflect on each piece of armor that is necessary to live the Christian life.

2. Crossmatch each piece of equipment with the truth of the Scriptures to live a victorious life.

3. Read Psalms 23, 91, 103

4. Meditate on and personalize what the author is contemplating and how the Psalm could be used to improve personal well-being.

**Objective**

Believers are to discover the things that have been given to them by Jesus Christ to form a hedge of protection around them, their families, and their loved ones.
Week 5
The Power of Hope
Impact Life Satisfaction and Change in Well-Being

Scripture says that in the fullness of time, God sent Jesus to redeem his own, and to them that received Jesus, God confers on them the right to be called his sons. God’s plan and his will are for all people to come to know, accept, and receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. This is the proper relationship God the Father wants with his unique creation, those made in his image. No other creature can become a son and, as a son, can inherit the blessings, the favor, and the provisions of God, including his Kingdom.

What are the blessings, favor, and provisions of God? God’s all and God’s best is found in his Son, Christ Jesus. What humankind seeks after, what is most desired by everyone is readily and freely available to all in and through Jesus. The Holy Scriptures' pure and simple gospel message is that God the Father sent Christ the Son to save man and that by receiving Jesus in our lives, all blessings, favor, and provisions are given. To receive the Son is to receive abundant life (life to the fullest now and eternal life to come), peace (the peace that only comes from God), righteousness (right relationship with the Father), and joy in the Holy Spirit.

In Christ, all things have their being. He created all things, sustains, and holds all things together, and will judge all things. He desires to be in the center of his creation, to be given the superior headship over all things. As Christ is regarded in the preeminent position, all

\[249\) Ro 8:32 He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things.

\[250\) Eph 1:3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.

\[251\) Col 1:18 And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.
blessings, favor, and provisions flow from Him to all who place their trust and faith in Him. Humankind’s satisfaction and well-being come from God, and nothing that is can function without him. With Christ, we can do all things, but without him, we can do nothing.

Suppose the blessings, favor, and provisions freely flow from God through Christ Jesus. Why do humans suffer ill-health, mental and emotional problems, crippling phobias, chronic pains, stress, and serious anxieties? Why do so many believers, specifically and nonbelievers, generally live life aimlessly, meaninglessly, purposelessly, and unhappily? Holy Scriptures give answers to life’s most perplexing issues. God’s Word addresses the problems that humankind faces, which did not originate with God, nor was the problem in his original design. In the Scriptures, all that God created was good or very good.

At the epitome of creation, he made man for his pleasure. To be free to love him, God created man with free will. The first man (Adam) exercised this free will by rebelling and disobeying God, thus, forfeiting his right to all of God’s free-flowing blessings, favor, and provisions. When sin entered the garden (world), different conditions arose that precluded mankind from enjoying the free favors, goodness, and presence of God. In addition to the original man’s rebellion, an outlaw spirit rebelled against God, Lucifer (later Satan). He, too, had a free will that rebelled against God taking a substantial force of other rebellious spirits with him.253

---

252 Eph 1:4-10 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding he made known to use the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.
At this point, creation had fallen from its original to become an altered edition of the original scheme. This alteration gave rise to more rebellion towards God, resulting in a world that spiraled out of control, deeper in sin, and evolving into a state of lostness towards its founder, God. Humanity’s beginnings are found in the Bible. Learning biblical events leads to understanding the origins. The who and what that caused the good and the evil, as well as the plan for salvation, are critical in finding the solution(s) of ill-health and poor well-being.

The solution is found in the Creator, who devised a plan for helpless mankind before he laid the earth's foundation, namely, to send his own Son to die for the world's sins. In Son’s death, the eternal forgiveness is provided; all sickness, diseases, and pain are dealt with; and the Spirit of God is supplied to all who receive the Son to guide them into the way, the life, and the truth about God. The truth about the Son sets humans free from all bondage.

Once the solution to humanity’s problems (Jesus) is received and adopted, what are some of the obstacles that interfere with or even block the free flow of blessings, favor, and provisions of God? Another way of stating this situation is, after sinners become saints, what’s next? For nominal Christians, this is akin to buying fire insurance. Once you secured your policy, there are no worries from now until eternity. Below is a list that enumerates the various interferences or obstacles that affect abundant life's free flow. The list is not comprehensive but elucidates many issues that obstruct God’s free favors.

---

253 Isaiah 14:12-14, Ezekiel 28:14-18, Luke 10:18, Revelation 12:3-4, 9. These Scriptures give background information to Lucifer become Satan and the events that occurred surrounding the fall.

254 Isaiah 53:6 We all like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

255 Romans 5:17 For if by one man’s offense death reigns by one, much more they which receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by the one, Jesus Christ.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Mankind is under attack.</td>
<td>Man’s enemy is called the accuser (Lucifer, Satan, devil). He plans to kill, steal, and destroy (John 10:10) the image-bearers of God. The battles in the spiritual realm and the weapons to defeat them must be spiritual (Eph 6:11-14).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Mankind is at war.</td>
<td>The war is within himself. The battle between the flesh and the spirit is real and perpetual. The spirit once dead is made alive, but sin resides in the flesh. Jesus conquered sin with his death, burial, and resurrection giving man the power to kill the sin in his flesh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Mankind is defeated.</td>
<td>Law-keeping voids faith. The OT law was a guardian of children until the maturity of the NT came through Christ. The work of the cross completely fulfills the judicial and righteous requirements of the law. Believers are to operate in the realm of the Spirit, not the letter of the law.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Mankind is lost.</td>
<td>By the resurrection, Christ sent the Holy Spirit to indwell the born-again believer with power, peace, comfort, wisdom, and guidance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Mankind is full of pride.</td>
<td>The flesh is composed of the lust of the eyes, the desire of the flesh, and the pride of life (1 John 2:16).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Mankind has little knowledge and understanding.</td>
<td>Believers need growth and development to realize that they have been made new to walk in the newness of the spirit and to do good works prepared for them (1 Cor 2:12).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Mankind lacks discernment.</td>
<td>Man is tempted by many spirits and needs wisdom and guidance about which spirit to follow (Phil 1:9).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Mankind does not obey.</td>
<td>Man’s nature is not to obey. The believer is given love and power from God to live the blessed life as witnessed in the Word of God, filled with the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit and His gifts, the power elements of Communion, and the Hope of glory, Jesus Christ (2 Cor 10:5).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Mankind mixes covenants.</td>
<td>Both covenants come from God, each designed for a purpose. Misunderstanding &amp; misusing the covenants create confusion, wrongs, and beliefs, and voids the power concerning God’s goodness, mercy, and grace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Mankind must grow up.</td>
<td>Sonship is the position for believers, seated with Christ beside the Father. This brings a transformation by the power of the Spirit, which freely flows into believers to operate with the gifts of the Spirit (2 Pe 1:2-3, Col 1:18).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The above list is in no way exhaustive but has been selected to bring understanding, guidance, and clarity to participants in a quest to change life satisfaction and improve well-being. The limited number of counseling sessions and the amount of time spent with clients construct a somewhat restrictive perimeter around the amount of instruction given.

**Thoughts for Week 5**

1. How does the new identity perspective change the way situations are handled?

2. How can the client bring out a new identity reality to affect lifestyle satisfaction?

3. Highlight the Provision of Protection to face future events with a degree of confidence.

4. Discuss thematic material considering a personal plan for developing, maintaining, and increasing life satisfaction and well-being.

**Curriculum Guide Summary**

This curriculum guide contains five weeks of teaching material to help participants to grow in the knowledge of what God has provided for them to flourish. These five lessons have a targeted scope of building a positive pro-growth foundation that will relate to believers’ lives and situations to apply the lessons taught and the objectives incorporated to impact their wellness. The Scriptural and counseling approaches have been designed for persons with a spiritual perspective toward God and godly living. For persons seeking life satisfaction and wellness from a godly worldview, their choices in secular professional counseling programs and resources may be limited, confusing, and irrelevant to the core beliefs held by those who claim spiritual proclivities. This guide was formulated for those who want spiritual guidance embedded in a
faith-based approach and is designed to meet daily needs, crises, find a deeper meaning and purpose in life.

The program's objective is to reach those who acknowledge God and spiritual beliefs with teaching material and resources that they can use to live abundant life and flourish. The guide does not preclude non-believers from participating in the program or from receiving positive and constructive principles from what is presented. All people can learn to grow in understanding of the joy of living, the reasons for why things happen, the origins of problems in the world, and the saving grace that could alleviate dissatisfaction in life and well-being.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>License Number</th>
<th>5116660483930</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>License date</td>
<td>Jul 26, 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensed Content Publisher</td>
<td>Elsevier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensed Content Publication</td>
<td>Journal of Psychosomatic Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensed Content Title</td>
<td>Measures of self-perceived well-being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensed Content Author</td>
<td>Ian McDowell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensed Content Date</td>
<td>Jul 1, 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensed Content Volume</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensed Content Issue</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensed Content Pages</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start Page</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End Page</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Use</td>
<td>reuse in a thesis/dissertation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Portion</th>
<th>figures/tables/illustrations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of figures/tables/illustrations</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Format</td>
<td>both print and electronic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you the author of this Elsevier article?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will you be translating?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Assessing Well-being in a Pastoral Counseling Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution name</td>
<td>Liberty University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected presentation date</td>
<td>Jul 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portions</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requestor Location</td>
<td>HEADLAND, AL 36345 United States Attn: Mr. Neil Dodson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publisher Tax ID</td>
<td>98-0397604</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>0.00 USD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### INTRODUCTION

1. The publisher for this copyrighted material is Elsevier. By clicking "accept" in connection with completing this licensing transaction, you agree that the following terms and conditions apply to this transaction (along with the Billing and Payment terms and conditions established by Copyright Clearance Center, Inc. ("CCC"), at the time that you opened your Rightslink account and that are available at any time at [http://myaccount.copyright.com](http://myaccount.copyright.com)).
GENERAL TERMS

2. Elsevier hereby grants you permission to reproduce the aforementioned material subject to the terms and conditions indicated.

3. Acknowledgement: If any part of the material to be used (for example, figures) has appeared in our publication with credit or acknowledgement to another source, permission must also be sought from that source. If such permission is not obtained then that material may not be included in your publication/copies. Suitable acknowledgement to the source must be made, either as a footnote or in a reference list at the end of your publication, as follows:

"Reprinted from Publication title, Vol /edition number, Author(s), Title of article / title of chapter, Pages No., Copyright (Year), with permission from Elsevier [OR APPLICABLE SOCIETY COPYRIGHT OWNER]." Also Lancet special credit - "Reprinted from The Lancet, Vol. number, Author(s), Title of article, Pages No., Copyright (Year), with permission from Elsevier."

4. Reproduction of this material is confined to the purpose and/or media for which permission is hereby given.

5. Altering/Modifying Material: Not Permitted. However figures and illustrations may be altered/adapted minimally to serve your work. Any other abbreviations, additions, deletions and/or any other alterations shall be made only with prior written authorization of Elsevier Ltd. (Please contact Elsevier’s permissions helpdesk here). No modifications can be made to any Lancet figures/tables and they must be reproduced in full.

6. If the permission fee for the requested use of our material is waived in this instance, please be advised that your future requests for Elsevier materials may attract a fee.

7. Reservation of Rights: Publisher reserves all rights not specifically granted in the combination of (i) the license details provided by you and accepted in the course of this licensing transaction, (ii) these terms and conditions and (iii) CCC’s Billing and Payment terms and conditions.

8. License Contingent Upon Payment: While you may exercise the rights licensed immediately upon issuance of the license at the end of the licensing process for the transaction, provided that you have disclosed complete and accurate details of your proposed use, no license is finally effective unless and until full payment is received from you (either by publisher or by CCC) as provided in CCC’s Billing and Payment terms and conditions. If full payment is not received on a timely basis, then any license preliminarily granted shall be deemed automatically revoked and shall be void as if never granted. Further, in the event that you breach any of these terms and conditions or any of CCC’s Billing and Payment terms and conditions, the license is automatically revoked and shall be void as if never granted. Use of materials as described in a revoked license, as well as any use of the materials beyond the scope of an unrevoked license, may constitute copyright infringement and publisher reserves the right to take any and all action to protect its copyright in the materials.

9. Warranties: Publisher makes no representations or warranties with respect to the licensed material.

10. Indemnity: You hereby indemnify and agree to hold harmless publisher and CCC, and their respective officers, directors, employees and agents, from and against any and all
December 9, 2020

Neil Dodson
Eric Maze

Re: IRB Approval - IRB-FY20-21-181 Assessing Client Well-Being in the Pastoral Counseling Program

Dear Neil Dodson, Eric Maze:

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB). This approval is extended to you for one year from the date of the IRB meeting at which the protocol was approved: December 9, 2020. If data collection proceeds past one year, or if you make modifications in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update submission to the IRB. These submissions can be completed through your Cayuse IRB account.

Your study falls under the expedited review category (45 CFR 46.110), which is applicable to specific, minimal risk studies and minor changes to approved studies for the following reason(s):

7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Your stamped consent form can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. This form should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document should be made available without alteration.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office