

# What Makes Biblical Counseling Biblical?

**THE GOSPEL  
INSTITUTE**

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# Why is This Topic Needed?

1. In the early 1900's the Inspiration of the Scriptures was attacked.
2. Then the inerrancy of Scriptures was attacked.
3. Then the authority of Scriptures was attacked.
4. Now the sufficiency of Scriptures is being attacked – much of the American Christian culture assumes that the Bible is limited in its scope and purpose and has integrated secular wisdom into the ministry of soul-care.
5. Because it is easy to stray from the foundation and framework of biblical philosophy and methodology in the care of souls.

# Why This Topic Needed? (cont')

## Because Cultural Wisdom Prevails

6. Because of the hundreds of varied definitions and opinions of counseling in the culture and the Church.
7. “The Scriptures, both Old and New testaments, are the inspired, inerrant and trustworthy Word of God, the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of human beings, and the final authority for all matters about which it speaks.”<sup>1</sup> A.A.C.C.
8. Popular Christian author<sup>2</sup> – “At last, I am surrounded by wilderness. ....out here in the wild, I’m searching for ....something that can only be found through the help of the wilderness. I am looking for my heart.”

# What Makes Biblical Counseling Biblical?

“Evangelical, systematic theology is the comprehensive study and coherent organization of what can be known (primarily from scripture, that is, **theology’s only final and ultimate, authoritative source** and secondarily from any and all other relevant sources) about God and his relation to the created universe in a manor that is understandable and applicable to contemporary audiences; to the end that God’s people will be strengthened and satisfied in Him to the praise of his glory of his name.”

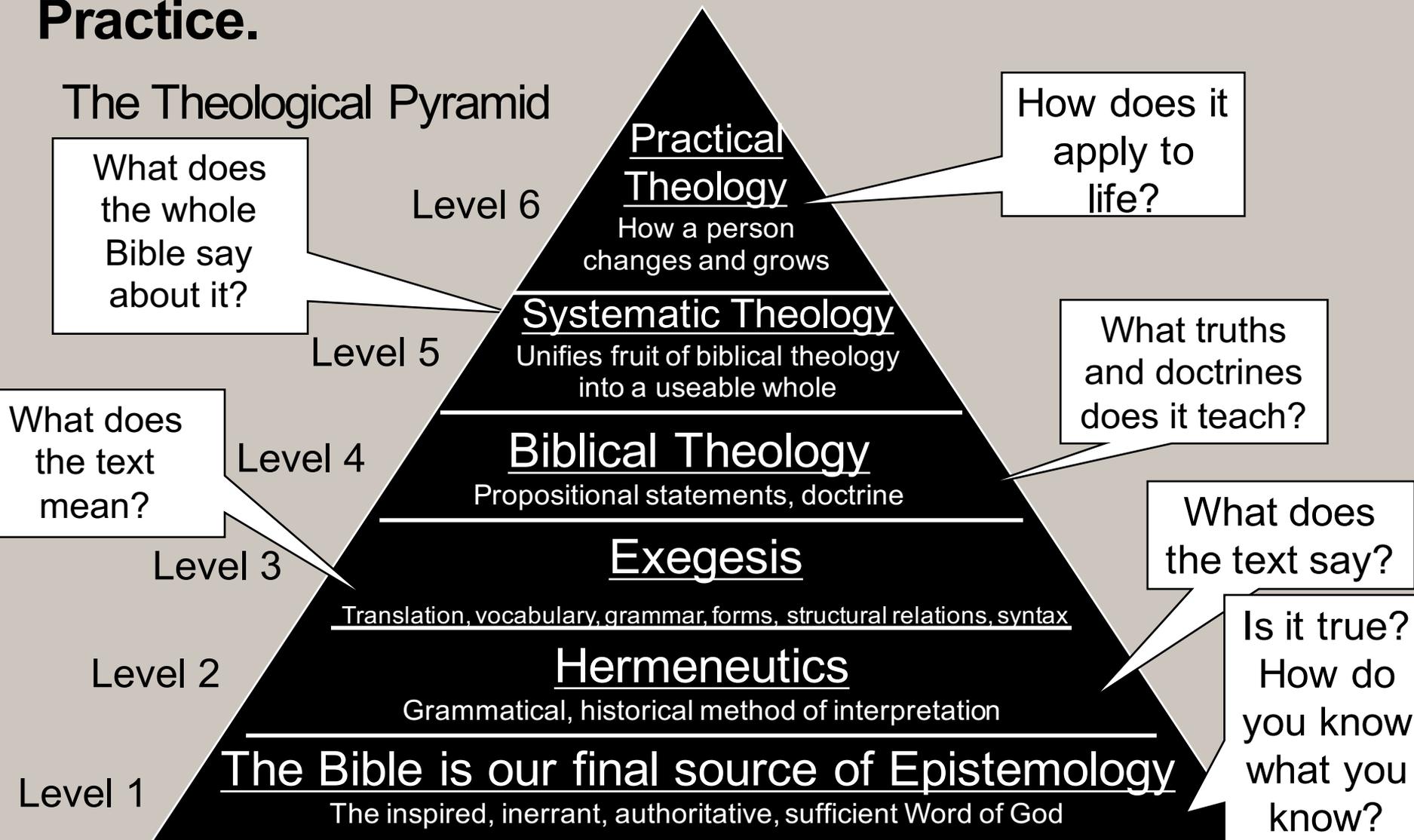
Bruce Ware, *Theological Prolegomena*<sup>1</sup>

# What Makes Biblical Counseling Biblical?

1. When the Bible is the **final & ultimate, authoritative source** for understanding human behavior and thinking and which shapes methodologies that *“attempt to change the way a person believes, processes thoughts, acts, feels or establishes values”*. (taken from Ed Bulkley) (Acts 20; John 8)
2. When philosophies & methodologies of ministry exalt Christ & the local church is central & foundational.
3. When it recognizes that all believers are equipped & called to some level of biblical counsel/discipleship (as limited by abilities and giftings) and are responsible to grow in their abilities to minister the Word more effectively. (Rom. 12)

# When the Bible is the Final & Ultimate Authoritative Epistemological Source for Matters of Faith and Practice.

## The Theological Pyramid



What does the whole Bible say about it?

How does it apply to life?

What truths and doctrines does it teach?

What does the text mean?

What does the text say?

Is it true? How do you know what you know?

# Counseling without the Foundation of Systematic Theology is not Biblical Counseling

1. Level 6 without levels 1-5 is not *biblical* counseling.
  - a. Biblical counseling is not a secular counseling system with Scriptural labels.
  - b. Counsel that is not grounded in solid, systematic theology cannot offer advice on how to understand the human heart accurately, nor can it inform the counselee how to change, why to change, or can it define the goal of change.

# Counseling without the Foundation of Systematic Theology is not Biblical Counseling

(continued)

- c. Counseling presuppositions that are based on the observations (or general revelation), reasoning and conclusions of unbelievers will be unreliable at best, if not foolish and deceptive.
- d. Man-centered conclusions and presuppositions that shape models & systems of counseling are suspect.
- e. The Fall has corrupted the mind/heart; thinking & reasoning are ultimately unreliable (the noetic effect of sin). (Jer. 17:9)

# Systematic Theology without Practical Application Misses the Point of Theology & the Gospel

2. Levels 1-5 are incomplete & ineffective without the wisdom & skills that apply them at Level 6.
  - a. Theology is intrinsically practical. Theology is never presented in a vacuum in Scripture. It is always given with the goal of application, change, & growth (progressive sanctification).
  - b. The task of biblical counselors (and all believers in general) is to *minister* the Word of God with the goal of heart-change, rather than simply changing behavior.

# **Systematic Theology without Practical Application misses the Point of Theology & the Gospel (cont')**

e.g. “When I first started doing pastoral work (at age 24) I knew exactly diddly-squat about counseling and caring for people. People would come in to my office, share their struggles and issues, and I would sit across from them with my best “pastor face” on while simultaneously feeling totally helpless, inept, and unqualified. I often silently wondered to myself, ‘How can I ever help this person? I have no idea what to say or do!’”

(thinktheology.org)

# Counseling is Biblical when the Bible is Considered to be Sufficient

1. His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, (2 Peter 1:3)
2. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup>that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work. (2 Tim.3:16-17)

# The Bible is Sufficient

1. Due to rebellion and The Fall, Man is totally helpless to understand himself and solve his problems.
2. Therefore the primary human need is a restored relationship with God through the Gospel.
3. Therefore the answers to all of life's problems first begin with God and the Gospel, every problem man faces in this life is first and foremost a spiritual problem – to be understood in the story-line of Creation-Fall-Redemption-Glorification

# The Bible is Sufficient, Teaching Us...

1. How to think, reason, make decisions.
2. Why we do what we do.
3. How to respond to personal conflicts.
4. How to be good stewards of finances and material assets.
5. How to respond to physical illness.
6. About marriage and parenting.
7. How to respond to loneliness, anxiety, depression, fear, anger, grief.
8. How to respond to life-dominating problems and addictions.

# Jesus Practiced Sufficiency

1. For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak. (Jn. 12:49)
2. It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. (Jn. 6:63)
3. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. (Jn. 15:7-8)
4. I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. (Jn. 15:15)

## Paul Believed in Sufficiency

But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people.

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup>that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work. (2 Tim.3:1-5; 16-17)

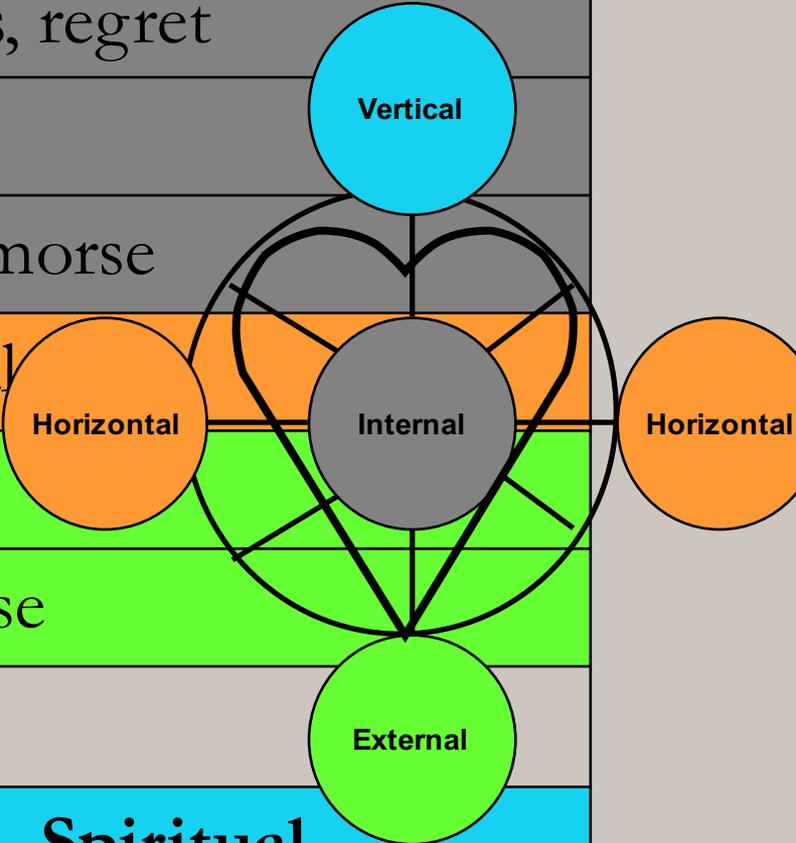
## Paul Believed in Sufficiency (cont')

I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house, (Acts 20:20 ESV)

Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all, for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God. Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.  
(Acts 20:26-28 ESV)

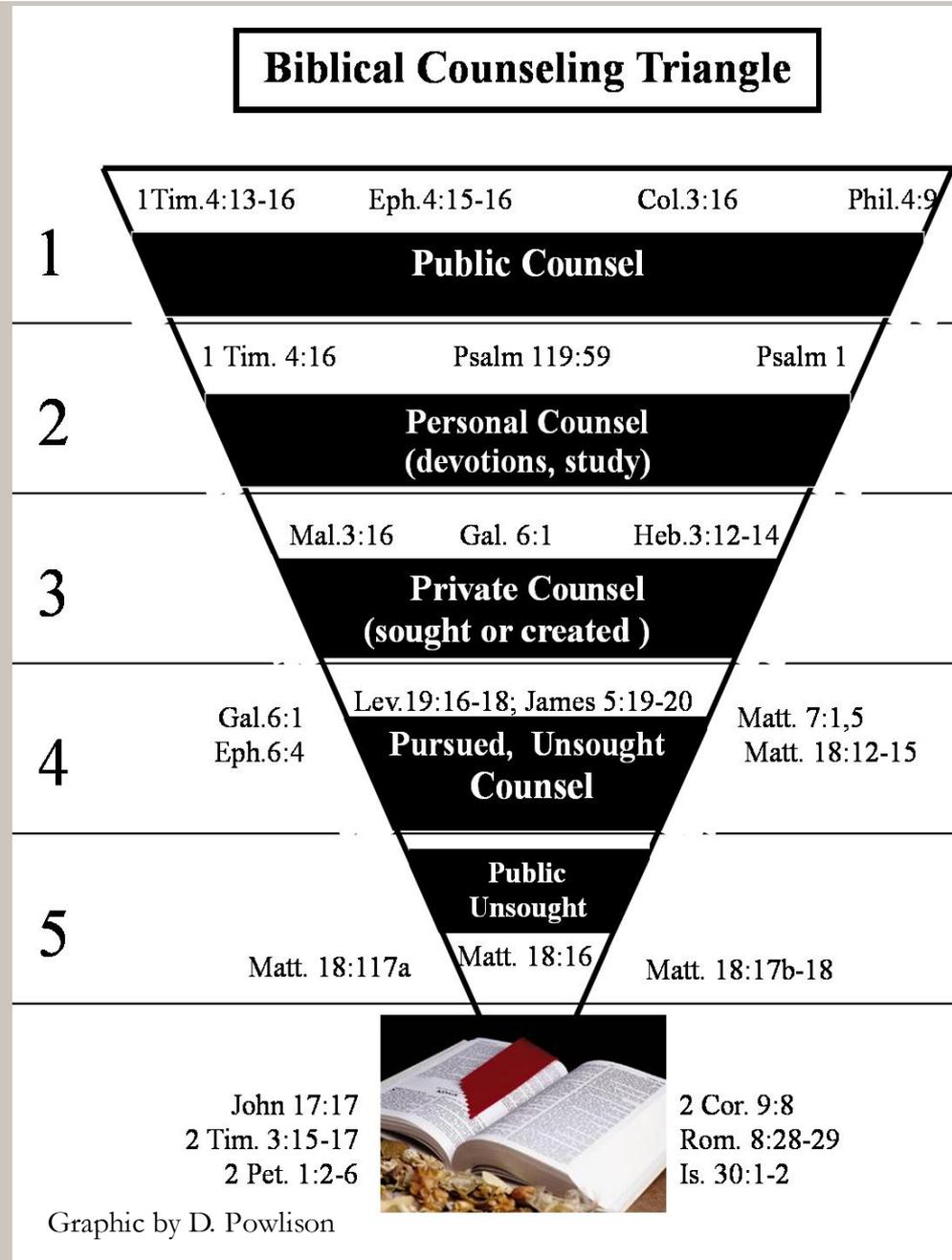
# Sufficient to Teach us to Respond in All 4 Dimensions

Guilt, shame, fear, condemnation	
Fear, confusion, double-mindedness, regret	
Pain, grief, suffering, shame	
Despair, disappointment, failure, remorse	
Conflict, isolation, rejection, betrayal	
Physical loss, hardship, lack, pain	
Harm, injury, shame, weakness, abuse	
<b>Two Realms</b>	
<b>Physical</b>	<b>Spiritual</b>

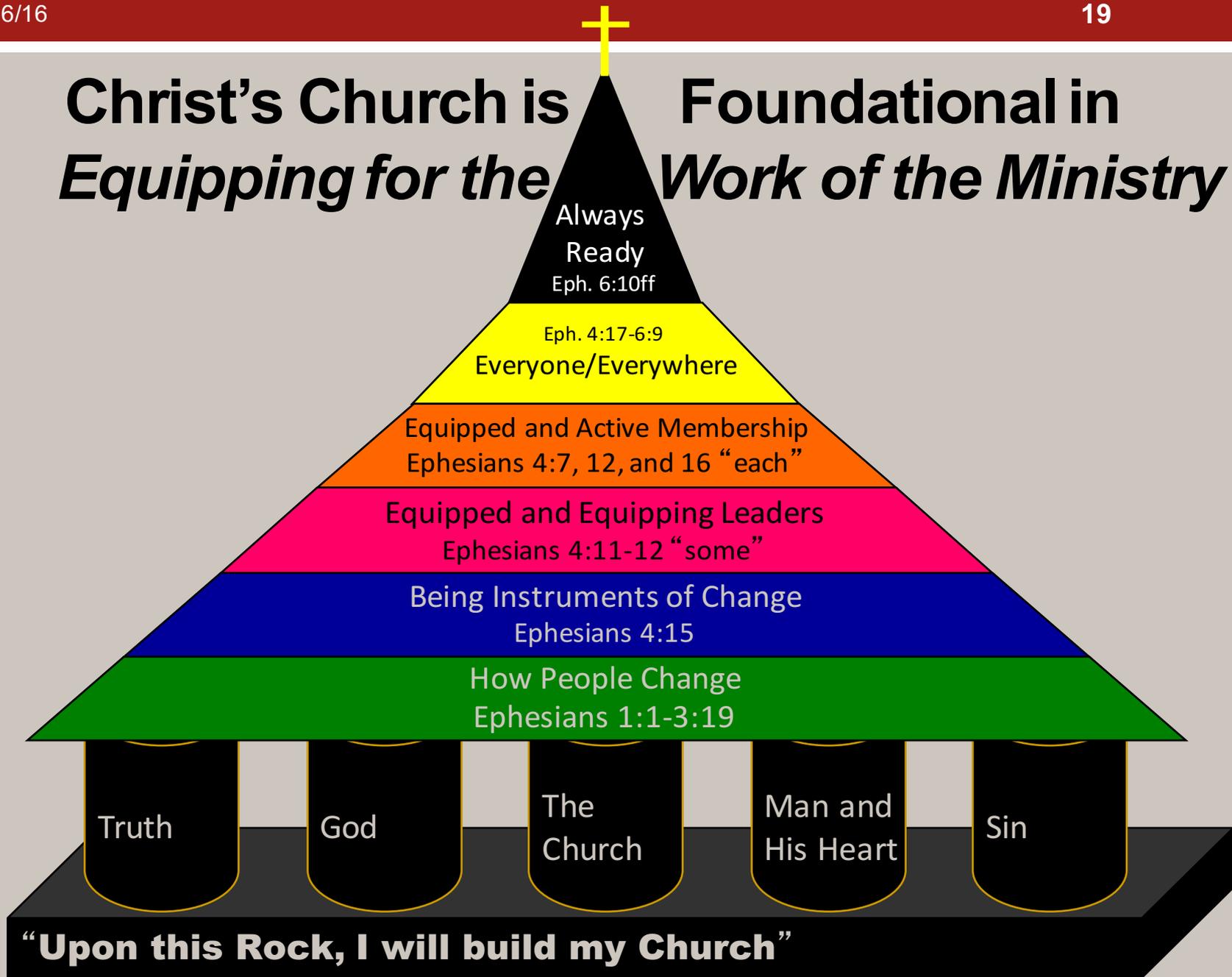


# Exalting Christ & the Local Church

All Biblical Counseling, public & private, is application of the Work of Christ & the Word of God, & are therefore functions of the local Church - for God's glory, for the good of every individual & for building up of the Body of Christ.



# Christ's Church is Foundational in Equipping for the Work of the Ministry



# God Provides the Church with Believers Who are Uniquely Gifted

1. Believers who are 'spiritual' (Gal. 6:1-2) should be able to address a majority of the soul-care needs of the local church.
2. Biblical counseling truths are “public domain”, available to all who have the Holy Spirit.
3. Some are uniquely gifted by God (like pastors and teachers) to help with the more difficult issues, however, the Body of Christ is called and enabled to meet all of the non-physical, counseling needs of the church. (Eph.4:12-16; Rom. 12: 1 Cor. 12; 1 Pet.4)

# Everyone Needs Biblical Counsel

1. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. (Heb. 3:13)
2. Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.□  
(Prov. 27:17)
3. The counselor needs counseling as much as the counselee.
4. “You won’t be a good counselor until you first become a good counselee.”
5. “We are simply spiritual beggars showing other beggars where to find the bread.”

# Theology without Sufficiency Creates a Vacuum for Human Philosophies

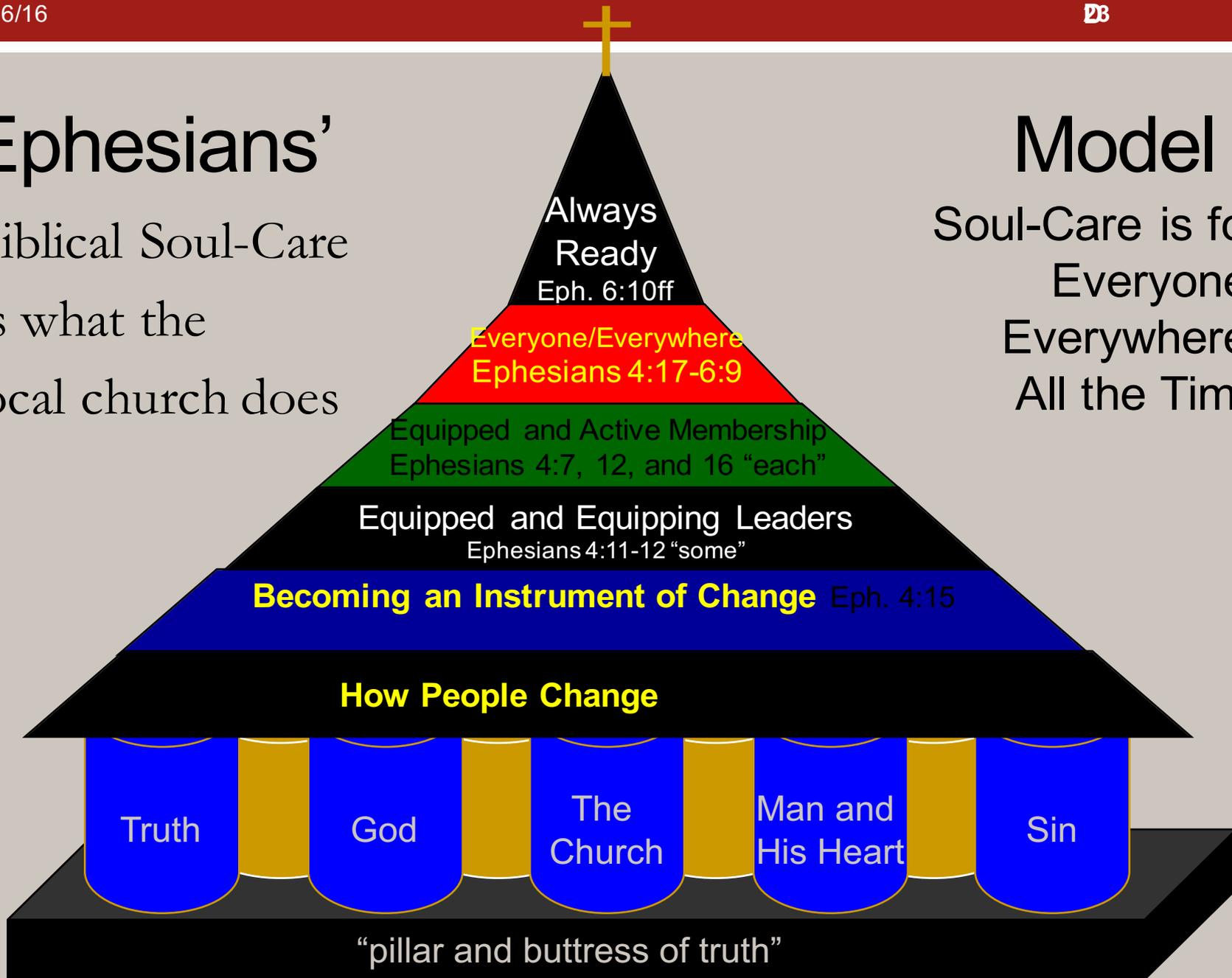
1. The noetic effect of sin causes false assumptions, man-centered presuppositions, and misleading conclusions; the wisdom of man is foolish and unreliable.
2. Man cannot know how to live rightly in the 4 dimensions of life or solve his problems through observation of General Revelation. (Jer. 17:9-10)
3. See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. (Col. 2:8)

# Ephesians'

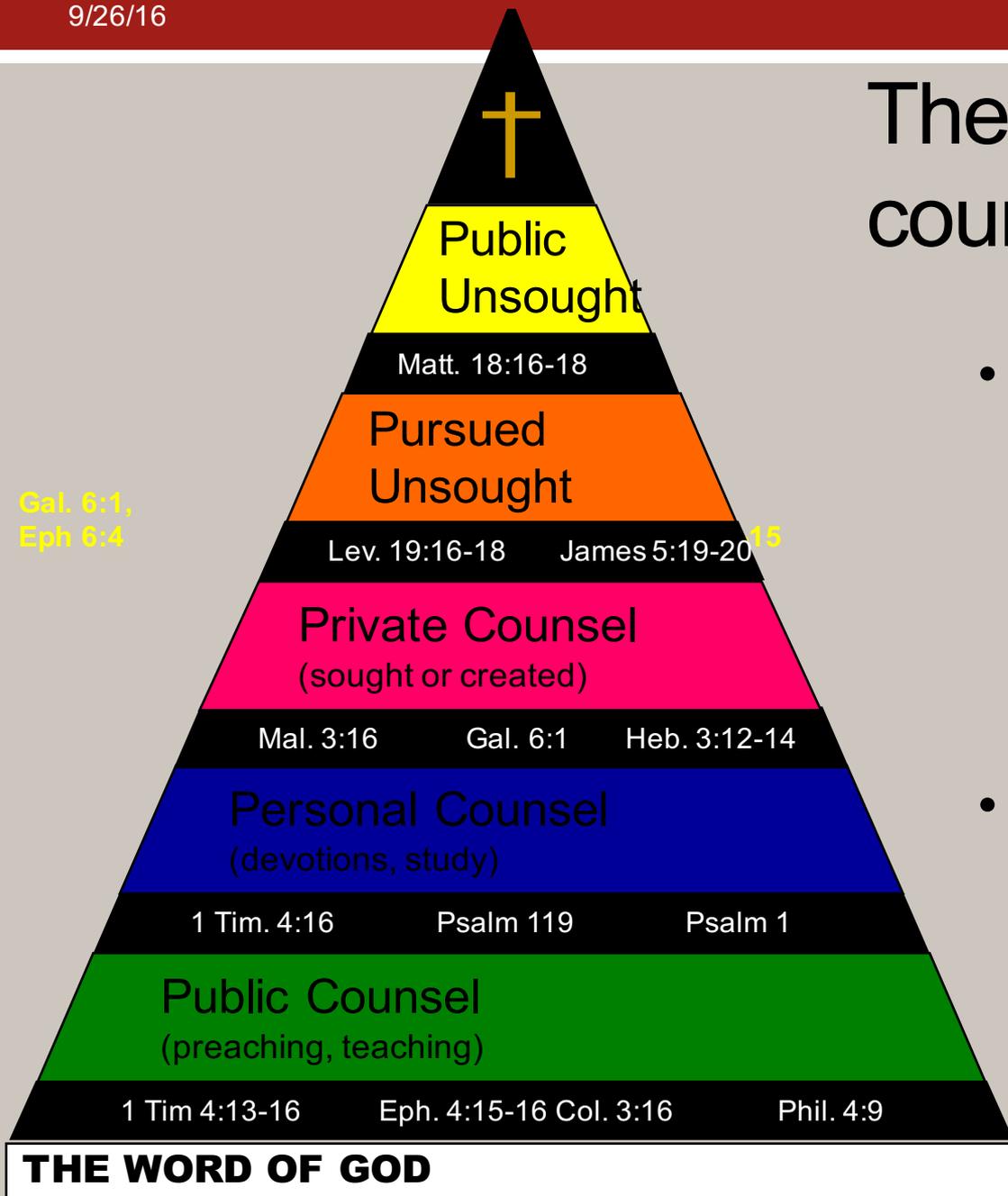
Biblical Soul-Care  
Is what the  
local church does

# Model

Soul-Care is for  
Everyone,  
Everywhere,  
All the Time



# The biblical counseling pyramid



Gal. 6:1,  
Eph 6:4

- Public and private counsel is an integral part of the church for the glory of God.
- Founded on “the pillar and ground of the truth”, all counsel is based on Truth.

# Soul-Care River



**Preparatory  
Discipleship  
(Evangelism)**



**Towards Christ-likeness** →

**Normal Discipleship  
(Soul-Care)**



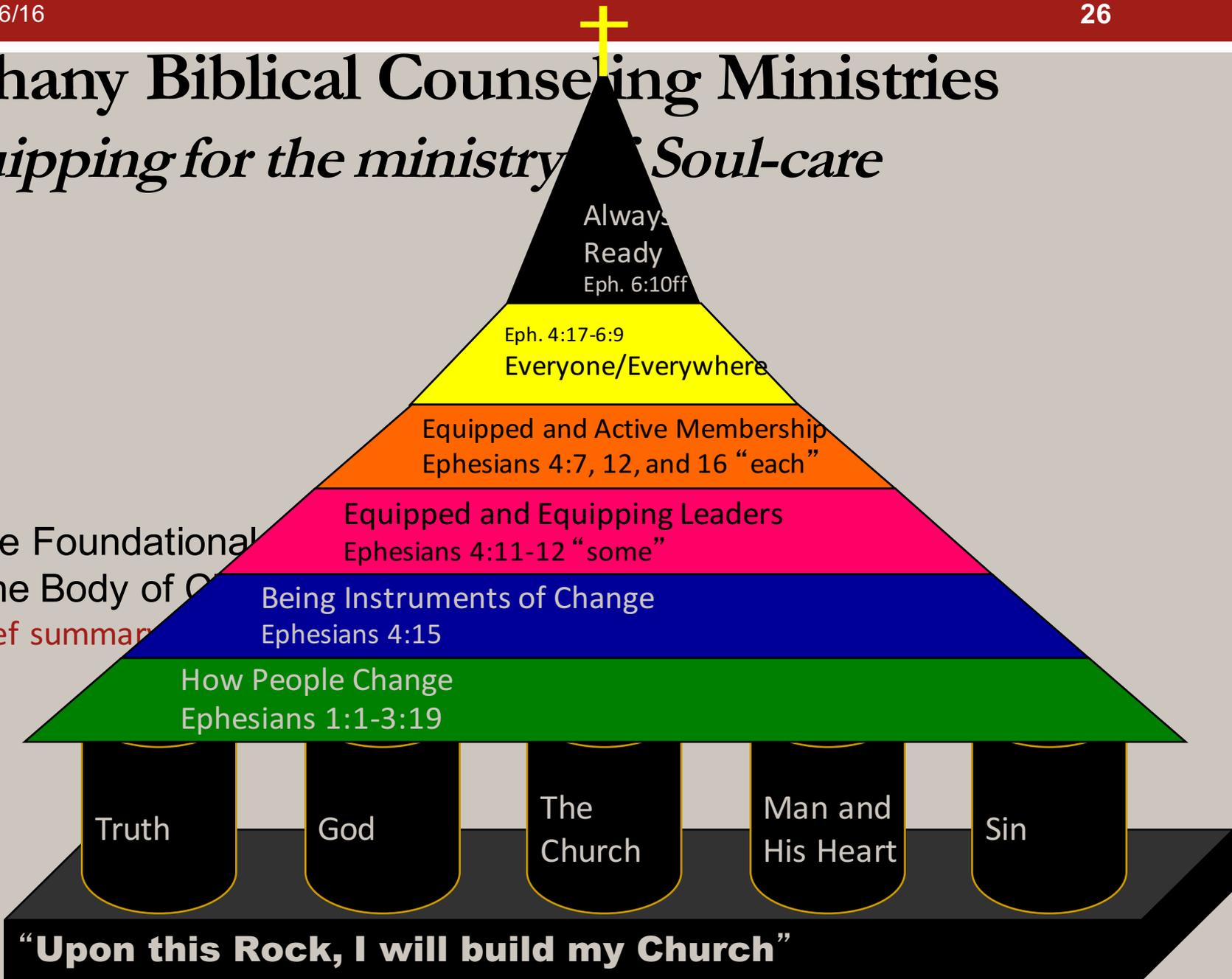
**Concentrated  
Soul-Care  
(Counseling)**





# Bethany Biblical Counseling Ministries

## *Equipping for the ministry of Soul-care*



Some Foundational  
for the Body of Christ  
(a brief summary)