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The Biblical Foundation for Social Workers as “Shepherds” Who Care for God’s Flock

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### Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to reveal biblical foundations of caring for people in the context of professional social work practice. To accomplish this, the paper first identifies principles of caring as articulated in the accounts of shepherds and shepherding found in the Bible. Shepherding and the “Good Shepherd” discourse provide the biblical foundation for understanding what it means to care for others. Second, the core values of the social work profession are examined alongside the biblical principles, as they provide a professional foundation for the care social workers provide their clients. Third, overall biblical principles are compared with the core values of professional social work practice in order to understand where similarities and differences exist. The paper reveals similar themes of caring found in biblical principles and social work core values of practice. These include service, relationships, worth of the person, and social justice. Important differences include responsibility and self-determination. Additional biblical material is incorporated from outside of the shepherd discourse to elaborate on the similarities and differences of caring. Finally, an example is provided of a model for the integration of the information gathered in the paper into an advanced social work practice course. This example provides a model for incorporating biblical foundations of social work practice within a specific course.

*Key Words:* Biblical foundations, social work, principles of caring, shepherd, Good Shepherd, biblical principles, service, relationships, social justice, responsibility, self-determination

## The Biblical Foundation for Social Workers as “Shepherds” Who Care for God’s Flock

### Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to discover biblical foundations of caring for people in the context of professional social work practice. To accomplish this, the paper first identifies principles of caring for others as articulated in the accounts of shepherds and shepherding found in the Bible. Second, the core values of the social work profession are examined as they provide a professional foundation for the care social workers provide their clients. Third, biblical principles are compared with the core values of professional social work practice in order to understand where there are similarities and contrasts. Finally, an example of the integration of the information gathered in the paper is provided for an advanced social work practice course. This example provides a model for incorporating information regarding the biblical foundations of social work practice within a specific course.

In the Bible, God’s call to His followers to care for other human beings is clear (Philippians 2:4; 1 John 3:17-18; Proverbs 19:17 New International Version). In fact, Jesus states that one of the most important commandments is “love your neighbor as yourself” (Mark 12:31). This command comes second only to loving God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength (Mark 12:30). The Bible contains much instruction regarding how we are to love and care for others (Matthew 25:31-46; Luke 3:11; Luke 10:30-38). As Seventh-day Adventist Christians, the Bible should be the foundation on which we build our understanding of the purpose and meaning of caring for people.

For the scope of this paper, the biblical example of the shepherd as the caregiver is used to outline important principles of caring. Indeed, the metaphor of leader as shepherd and people as sheep is common in the Bible (Genesis 48:15; Numbers 27:17; 2 Samuel 5:2; Psalms 23; Ezekiel 34; Zechariah 11; Matthew 2:6; Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-4). Author Ellen G. White (1890) articulates this in her book *Patriarchs and Prophets*: “The shepherd’s life of diligence and care-taking, and his tender compassion for the helpless creatures entrusted to his charge, have been employed by the inspired writers to illustrate some of the most precious truths of the gospel” ( p. 109.103).

One of the greatest discourses used in the Bible to illustrate principles of caring is Jesus’s description of Himself as “the Good Shepherd” (John 10:1-20). Jesus chose an illustration of Himself that was familiar to the Jewish people. The association would have been clear to his audience, allowing them to see themselves as sheep

and Jesus as a faithful shepherd (White, 1898). Jesus used this illustration to help us understand His role in the lives of human beings. The principles of caring, found in Jesus's parable of the good shepherd are indeed precious truths of the gospel that provide the foundation for our interactions with others as we love and care for our "neighbors."

Social work is often referred to as a helping or caring profession. The purpose of social work and the core values that underpin professional social work practice have a strong foundation in the Bible. Many do not see this biblical foundation despite the fact that in North America and Great Britain, the profession of social work has its origins in Christianity and Christian institutions (Scales&Kelly, 2012). Today, the profession of social work is often seen as secular, postmodern, and humanist (Bowpitt, 1998; Williams & Sewpaul, 2004). While this is not entirely inaccurate, it is a decidedly incomplete view of professional social work.

Social work can be broadly defined as a profession of caring for others. Specifically, the National Association of Social Workers' (NASW) preamble to the code of ethics states that the primary mission of the profession is enhancing people's well-being, meeting their basic needs, and restoring their capacity for social functioning. To accomplish this mission, social work also focuses on the well-being of society and attempts to create societal conditions favorable for the well-being of all (National Association of Social Workers, 2008).

In a biblical worldview, social workers may be described as representing the hands and feet of Jesus here on earth. They work with the most vulnerable among us and often begin with meeting people's basic physical needs. This is an imitation of Jesus's interactions with people while He lived among them: feeding the 5,000 (Matthew 15:32; John 6:10), providing wine for the wedding feast (John 2), making breakfast on the shore for His disciples (John 21) and healing the sick time and again (Luke 5:13; Luke 18:42; John 5:8). Secular social scientists might see starting with basic needs as following Abraham Maslow's famous hierarchy of needs (Kirst-Ashman, 2010). Through His actions, however, Jesus introduced this concept well before Maslow.

### **Christian and Biblical Origins of Professional Social Work**

The precursor to organized social work in the United States emerged in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century when volunteers began to attempt to ameliorate societal problems associated with the Industrial Revolution. This early

social work began primarily with religious groups, clergy, and religious social agencies responding to the needs of a changing society (Scales & Kelly, 2012).

The primary values which underpinned this charity work were decidedly biblical. They were based on the biblical principle of protecting vulnerable people such as the hungry, the sick, prisoners, widows, orphans, and foreigners (Jeremiah 22:3; Matthew 25:31-45). Many early social workers were Christians who felt called by their faith to carry out the gospel through social action (Scales & Kelly, 2012).

As the movement grew, there was a push to distance social work from religious influences while embracing an empirical and scientific focus. In part, this mirrored a greater societal shift in thinking, one which may have been due in part to negative aspects of the early intervention by Christians and Christian organizations. Particularly harmful was the practice of blaming the poor and categorizing them as “deserving” or “undeserving.” This categorization was often based on the individual or organization’s beliefs about morality (Kriegelstein, 2006).

### **The Shepherd and the Social Worker**

Shepherds were a central part of life in the ancient world, having complete responsibility for one of the most valuable commodities of the time: sheep. With such high value placed on sheep, it is no surprise sheep were used many times in the Bible to describe God’s people. It follows, then, that the role of the shepherd was crucial. Furthermore, the role of the shepherd was taken up first by the owner of the sheep and then by his sons and daughters, only hiring non-family members when necessary (Genesis 29:9; 1 Samuel 16:19). The shepherd, often the owner himself, desired that only those with a sense of ownership be responsible for the sheep.

Jewish shepherds tended sheep mainly for what they provided in wool, milk, and cheese products. Sheep were usually only slaughtered for sacrifice or for meat on special occasions (Walvoord & Zuck, 1983). Being a precious resource, sheep were guarded carefully—and without danger. According to Ellen White, the shepherd encountered many threats while caring for his sheep. There was little protection against beasts of prey or thieves outside the town walls. A shepherd did his work at the peril of his own life (White, 1898).

In the ancient world, there were many tasks and skills involved in being a competent shepherd. These can be grouped under six main principles of care for the sheep: keeping them safe; meeting their basic needs such as food, water and shelter; providing them with comfort and rest; establishing a close relationship with the sheep;

showing them compassion; and valuing each individual sheep. We can use these six principles of caring to build a biblical foundation for one model of caring for others today- as shepherds of God's people.

The social work profession demonstrates care for people through the implementation of the profession's core values. Social work has numerous values embedded in current social work practice (Kirst-Ashman, 2010). In 2008, a committee within the NASW systematically reviewed historical and current social work sources to identify fundamental principles. Of the themes that emerged, six were identified as core values and were included in the professional code of ethics (Reamer, 2013).

Practitioners use the values to guide them in their interactions with clients. The whole profession is rooted in these six ideas: service, social justice, the importance of human relationships, the dignity and worth of every person, integrity and competency (Reamer, 2013).

### **Biblical Principles and Social Work Values of Caring**

The six principles of care demonstrated through the biblical account of shepherding align with the six core values of the social work profession.

#### **Shepherd: Safety**

The shepherd was entrusted with the safety of the sheep in all circumstances, including during travel, in the pasture, and in the sheepfold. While traveling and in the pasture, the shepherd and the sheep faced robbers, ferocious animals, rugged terrain, and inclement weather (White, 1898). The shepherd used such tools as a club and a sling shot for defense and a staff for guiding the sheep (1 Samuel 17:40; Psalm 23; Zechariah 11:7). He went before or ahead of the sheep in order to be the first to face potential danger (Ezekiel 34:16, 22, 28).

When storms or heat threatened the sheep, the shepherd would build temporary shelter in the pasture. He was both their shade in the heat of the day and their shelter in the dark of the night (Isaiah 4:6). The sheepfold that enclosed the sheep at night was usually constructed with high walls, a covering and only one opening. After carefully returning the sheep to the fold, the shepherd (or an under-shepherd) then guarded the sheep for the night. He used his body to block the opening to the sheepfold, forming a literal "gate" to keep the sheep in and danger out (Edersheim, 1953).

**Shepherd: Leading Sheep to Their Basic Needs**

The shepherd led his flock by his voice-not through force or fear, but through calling them (White, 1898). He provided for all of the basic needs of the sheep, including food, water, shelter, and safety (Gangel, 2000). He led the sheep to different pastures to find grass; when grass was unavailable, he fed them grain. The shepherd made sure the sheep had water even in the driest of times. When water was abundant, he would create shallow pools from running water in order for the sheep to drink more easily (Isaiah 49:9-10).

**Social Worker: Service and Social Justice**

The core value of service refers to the priority that social workers place on helping others. Social workers believe that all people deserve help, regardless of any differences (Barsky, 2010). Ethically, the primary goals of social work are to help people in need and to address social problems. This is evidenced in practice by putting aside the personal desires of the individual social worker and focusing on the needs and desires of the people he or she serves (Barsky, 2010). Additionally, the NASW encourages social workers to volunteer some of their time without the expectation of significant financial return (2008).

As a core value, social justice likely encompasses the largest potential arena of practice- the world. Achieving complete social justice would mean that all people would have the same basic rights, opportunities, protections, and social benefits (Barsky, 2010). From an ethical standpoint, social workers are called to challenge social injustice whenever they encounter it. They do this by promoting respect and equality, as well as by seeking to fix social injustices such as poverty, discrimination, and oppression (National Association of Social Workers, 2008).

**Shepherd: Providing Comfort and Rest**

Basic needs were not all the shepherd provided; he also sought conditions for his sheep to flourish and prosper in (White, 1890). It is not mere water he sought, but clean, cool, and refreshing water (Psalm 23). The shepherd used olive oil to treat small scrapes and wounds on the sheep (Manners and Customs of Bible Lands, bible-history.com). He was tender towards his feeble sheep, as well as the nursing ewes and lambs making sure to give them enough rest and not drive them too hard (Genesis 33:13; Isaiah 40:11). He recognized that sheep were



easily frightened and so provided comfort through his strong presence. Knowing what was best for them, he brought them rest (Psalms 23:2; Solomon 1:7; Jeremiah 33:12).

### **Social Worker: Competency**

Competency in social work is not static but continues to develop over time with experience and appropriate supervision. Social workers seek to possess the skills that will help people flourish. In order to be competent, social workers must have obtained the professional knowledge and skills necessary for effective practice at a certain level. In addition, some sense of self-awareness is required for competent social work practice. Competency also means making a commitment to lifelong learning within the field and the development of new knowledge and skills. While cultivating new knowledge and skills, social workers must practice under the supervision of those who are competent in the new area.

### **Shepherd: Close Relationship with Sheep**

The sheep were comforted by the shepherd through his close relationship with each one of them. He knew his sheep by name, and they knew him. (White, 1898). This mutual strong attachment was based on ownership, selflessness, and love (Gangel, 2000). The sheep were so connected to the shepherd that they would follow only his voice, being so acquainted with it. The sheep would not respond to the call of another shepherd or a stranger, even when someone attempted to imitate their shepherd's voice (John 10:3-5 NIV). They would flee at the attempt of another to call them. Several different flocks were often sheltered together at night in the fold; a simple call from a shepherd separated them and brought his own sheep to him. (White, 1911). Motivated by a sacrificial love, the shepherd regularly puts his needs aside in self-forgetfulness and risks his life for his sheep.

### **Social Worker: Importance of Human Relationships**

Social workers recognize that it is within relationships between and among people that change occurs. In order to be effective in helping people, social workers seek to develop positive relationships with clients (Barsky, 2010). An important part of this is relating to each individual that he or she is valued, respected, and seen as having inherent worth. To do this, social workers must view clients as partners in the helping process. Those in the profession have an ethical responsibility to view people in the context of their social environments and

relationships. They demonstrate this core value by providing genuine support, care and concern, unconditional regard, and empathic understanding (National Association of Social Workers, 2008).

#### **Shepherd: Compassion**

Love was the basis for the shepherd's compassion for his flock. Sheep who were weak, feeble or sick were picked up and carried (White, 1890). The shepherd was moved to compassion by his sheep and relieved their suffering whenever possible, whether it was by providing simple shade in the heat, or by "snatching" away a sheep from a wild animal who sought the sheep as prey (Ezekiel 34:16, 22, 28; White, 1905). The Shepherd showed compassion by seeking lost sheep and not allowing them to suffer alone (Ezekiel 34:12; Luke 15:4). This compassion provides a foundation for the relationship that has developed to deepen.

#### **Social Worker: Integrity**

In addition to compassion, integrity is integral to developing relationships. The core value of integrity emphasizes that social workers are to be honest, responsible, and reliable, behaving in a manner that builds trust with people (National Association of Social Workers, 2008). Demonstrating integrity is essential in establishing therapeutic relationships with clients. Social workers can evidence integrity in practice by being open with people, following through on our obligations and being accountable for their actions (Barsky, 2010). In addition, social workers must be open and honest with themselves as practitioners.

#### **Shepherd: Valuing Each Individual Sheep**

It is clear in the actions of the shepherd that he valued his flock as a whole, as well as every individual sheep. While knowing each sheep by name may seem like a great feat in a flock of up to 100 sheep, the shepherd went even further in knowing his sheep. He learned the sheep's needs, their traits, and their fears (Gangel, 2000). When he brought them into the fold at night he counted each one (Luke 15). If a single sheep was missing he tirelessly searched until he found the lost sheep. He did this over and over, never wanting to lose a single sheep (John 18:9). To the shepherd, the sheep were of infinite value. He showed that he valued them by daily risking his own life to care for them (White, 1890, 1898).

### **Social Worker: Dignity and Worth of Every Person**

Social workers place a high value on people. All individuals are believed to have worth, to deserve respect, and to possess strengths. This worth is inherent in all human beings regardless of differences. In treating people with dignity, social workers embrace each person's right to socially responsible self-determination. This is evidenced in social work practice by embracing diversity in people, working in collaboration with clients, and acknowledging each client's strengths, capacity for change and their autonomy (Reamer, 2013). Social workers have a dual responsibility to both their clients and society at large. Accordingly, they seek resolutions to conflicts between individual's interests and society's interests (National Association of Social Workers, 2008).

### **Discussion**

#### **The Alignment of Biblical Principles and Social Work Values of Caring**

The natural alignment of biblical principles and social work values is easily seen. The strongest alignment exists in the areas of service, dignity and worth of the person, social justice and relationships. While some core values align more easily with biblical principles, all six core values of professional social work have a foundation in the Bible.

Biblical texts can be found that support *service* (Matthew 25:31-45; Luke 10:25-37; 1 Peter 4:10; James 2:14-17; Ephesians 2:10), *social justice* (Jeremiah 22:3; Micah 6:7-9; Isaiah 58:6; Isaiah 1:17; Proverbs 31:8-9; Amos 5:24; Deuteronomy 16:20), *the dignity and worth of the person* (Isaiah 49:16; Matthew 10:31; Luke 12:6-7; Psalms 139:14; Romans 5:8), *the importance of human relationships* (Matthew 5:23-24; Matthew 22:37-39; Mark 12:31; Philippians 2:2-8; 1 Corinthians 12:17-20; Hebrews 10:24-25; 1 Peter 4:8-10; Matthew 18:20), *Integrity* (Psalms 25:21; 1 Chronicles 29:17; 2 Timothy 2:15; Proverbs 10:9; Proverbs 11:1-3; 2 Corinthians 1:12) and *competence* (Proverbs 3:21-23; Proverbs 3:5; 2 Timothy 2:15; 1 Corinthians 2:13; Romans 12:2).

The biblical principles of caring primarily focus on serving other people. This same value is present in professional social work. The shepherd puts his needs aside to the point of risking his life for his sheep. Social workers do not sacrifice at this level but do give of themselves. They put aside their personal desires and focus on the desires and needs of their clients. The well-being of all people is of great concern for social workers. Social work's main goal is to help others and to service the larger society.

Biblical principles provide the foundational information regarding developing relationships. Social workers believe that relationships are essential for any significant change to occur.

Jesus's example in the Bible of the shepherd's search for even one lost sheep illustrates the inherent value of each individual. In the biblical account there is no distinction between the sheep, none is more or less valuable. This principle aligns with social work's values of social justice and the dignity and worth of the person. Social workers believe that all people have inherent worth. In the Bible the greatest price of all, the life of Jesus, is offered up for the benefit of all, but is also paid even for just the individual. The value of human life is immeasurable from a biblical perspective because of the price that was paid to save humanity (John 3:16; Romans 5:8).

In the biblical account, the shepherd valued relationship so much that he lowered himself to learn the individual needs of sheep. The relationship is two-sided in that the sheep also relate to the shepherd, trust him, know his voice, and follow him. Social workers also value relationships. For social workers the relationships with clients are based on equality between the client and the social worker. Social workers develop relationships with people in order to serve them. From a social work perspective, relationships are so valuable that change is not believed to be probable without relationship.

By identifying and examining the areas of biblical and social work alignment, social workers can develop a clear connection with their faith and their practice. This information is an important resource in helping Christian social workers see the biblical foundations of their profession and incorporate that vision into the care they provide others.

### **Limitations**

An allegory or story can only go a certain distance in bridging our understanding of the topics involved. There are limitations in the applications of stories such as that of the Good Shepherd. The following differences relate specifically to the Good Shepherd allegory/Shepherding metaphor. The story itself does not provide a complete model for addressing all of the social work values.

### **Differences in Biblical Principles of Shepherding and Social Work Values**

While there is a great deal of alignment between biblical principles illustrated through shepherding and social work practice values, there are at least three areas where there are clear differences. These differences relate primarily to limitations of responsibility and boundaries, as well as the social work principle of self-determination in ethical social work practice.

The first distinct difference is the dissimilarity between the biblical example of the level of responsibility in caring and the level of responsibility assumed by the social worker. The social worker does not take responsibility for their clients to the level that the shepherd does for his sheep. The main responsibility is to provide competent social work service to the client. The client has a similar responsibility to participate in services on their own behalf. This assumes a level of competence on the part of the client. Social workers choose not to take responsibility for their clients out of respect for the client. Respect dictates that a client's strengths and capabilities be identified and honored. In addition, social workers are not asked to be responsible for providing for all of their client's needs. There is an expectation of clients to provide for themselves as they are able and a belief in empowering clients to have control over their own lives.

The second distinct area of difference is in self-determination. This is closely related to the issue of responsibility. The principle of self-determination falls under the larger core value of dignity and worth of the person. Part of treating clients with dignity is acknowledging their right to make their own decisions and believing that they possess the strengths to accomplish this. Self-determination as defined in social work encourages a level of autonomy and decision-making that conflict with the biblical example of the sheep as dependent on the shepherd to lead them in all things. Whenever possible, social workers discourage the dynamic of client dependency as it diminishes the client's power and control. The Bible encourages total reliance on God for all things. This principle of reliance on God does exist at a personal level for many social workers and their clients; however, the profession itself does not promote this principle.

Finally, social workers are not regularly asked to provide the level of sacrifice that is displayed in the biblical principles of shepherding. While social workers are encouraged to set aside personal desires and focus on the needs and wishes of their clients, they are not regularly asked to risk their life in service to their clients or to

put their own safety needs aside. While they are not asked to do so, there are social workers who choose to provide service in hazardous conditions and do sacrifice their lives in the process. Particular contexts of social work practice such as child protective service and international social work can be highly dangerous.

### **Biblical Support Outside of the Shepherd Metaphor**

While the shepherd allegory/metaphor does not align perfectly with social work core values, there is biblical evidence outside of this allegory that provides more information regarding the values involved in social work practice. For the purposes of this paper three areas will be addressed outside of the shepherding metaphor. They include responsibility, self-determination, and free will/control.

First, the analogy of people as sheep breaks down when looking at personal responsibility. By contrast, if we identify ourselves with the Good Shepherd we see that the Bible states that the shepherd lays down his life of his own accord, no one takes it from him. He has authority over this decision and his life. He is ultimately responsible for himself. A biblical worldview that sees Jesus as human, facing similar temptations and decisions that all humans face, would acknowledge that human beings have the ability to take authority over their own lives and their decisions (John 10:18). In 2 Thessalonians 3:7-10, the apostle Paul provides a model for people to imitate which includes not being idle, paying for what you use, and working for your food. One assumption this author makes is that Paul as a "model" was in good enough health and was *able* to do these things.

The second value in question is that of self-determination. In First Corinthians, Paul encourages us to take control over ourselves through training and purpose, implying that we have the ability to do so (9:24-27). Indeed, from the beginning of the Bible (Eve; Cain) to the end (Judas; Paul), there are many examples of God allowing people to make their own decisions, even when they are not deciding for Him (Genesis; Luke; Acts).

Finally, in order to have responsibility and self-determination there must be free will. Beginning with the story of creation, God demonstrates that humans have free will (Genesis 2:16-17; Genesis 3:6). In the Bible God clearly gives the people of Israel a choice of who to serve and worship (Joshua 24:15; Deuteronomy 30:19-20). He does not make the choice for them. He presents them with their options. Jesus does this also when He calls people to decide for or against Him in Mark (8:34-35).

### A Model of Biblical Foundation Course Incorporation

The biblical principles gathered and examined in the paper are the foundation on which we build our knowledge of caring for people. In this paper, a model is proposed that incorporates this biblical foundation of caring into a graduate level advanced social work practice course. The graduate social work program is provided in a hybrid format which includes online course delivery and face-to-face instruction. Each course has eight modules of instruction.

The format begins each face-to-face class period with a focused worship thought drawn from the biblical principles emphasized in that module and includes relevant Bible texts. The worship is shared at the beginning of the class period. Next, the alignment of the biblical principles, the social work core values, and the social work practice skills are highlighted in the current module. Each module provides questions for class discussion at the end of each class period. These questions reflect on the biblical foundation of the social work practice skills that were covered in class that day and their alignment with the social work core values of the module (see Figure 1 and Table 1). For information on all eight modules for the course, see Appendix A. To view the content of the biblical verses by module, see Appendix B.

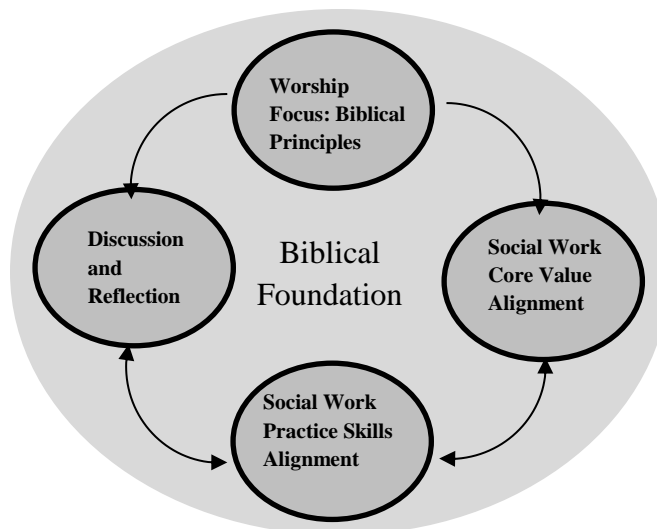


Figure 1. Conceptual model of the incorporation of a biblical foundation in an advanced practice social work course. This figure illustrates the elements of the model that will be utilized during the class period for each module. The arrows indicate the flow of knowledge and questions in the process.

### Conclusion

The biblical principles that serve as the foundation for Christian life and for social work existed at the beginning of the profession and remain today. While not all will choose to acknowledge the profession's biblical foundation, those who are looking for that foundation can hardly miss it. As Christians our worldview is based on the foundation of the Bible. We must be careful not to repeat the mistakes of the past by treating our clients contrary to biblical principles. In the Ministry of Healing, Ellen White (1905) reminds us that "If Christ dwells in us, we shall reveal His unselfish love towards all with whom we have to do. As we see men and women in need of sympathy and help, we shall not ask, "Are they worthy?" but, "How can I benefit them?" (p.162.2). If we are Christians, we will see the profession of social work through a lens that is developed from a foundation in the Bible and centered on Jesus. This does not mean that our Christianity gets in the way of ethical social work professional practice. It means that purpose and strength is drawn from the Bible and that Jesus is the source of our ability to care for others more fully through ethical social work professional practice.



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**Appendix A**

Table 1 SOCW 611 Advanced Clinical Practice: Clinical Interventions Module One		
Worship Focus		Biblical Texts*
<p><b><i>It is about being in relationship with Jesus. He is the source of all relationships.</i></b>                      He calls us by name, knows us individually.                      He knows our fears and needs, intimately.                      He claims us as His own.                      We know His voice.                      We follow where He leads.</p>		<p>John 10:1-18                      Psalms 23                      Psalms 9:10</p> <p>*New International Version (NIV)</p>
Biblical Foundation Principle	Social Work Core Value	Module Social Work Practice Component/Skills
Relationship	Importance of human relationships	Developing a therapeutic relationship
Relationship	Dignity and worth of the person	Interviewing Skills Listening Skills Confidentiality including limitations of confidentiality
Discussion Questions:		
1. How does the biblical example of Jesus’s relationship with us help us to understand what is important in therapeutic relationships with our clients?		
2. What does the personal and individual nature of the relationship Jesus has with us tell us about the worth of each individual client?		
3. How can we use this biblical knowledge to strengthen our social work practice?		

SOCW 611 Advanced Clinical Practice: Clinical Interventions		
Module Two		
Worship Focus		Biblical Texts*
<p><b>God calls us to serve others, comfort them, and to help give relief from burdens and distress.</b></p> <p>God asks us to shepherd his flock.                      God gifts each of us with different skills in order to care for others.                      God provides rest to the weary and relief of life’s burden.                      God knows that not only others benefit, but we are blessed when we care for others, and give of ourselves.                      God cares about our thinking process.</p>		<p>1 Peter 5:2-3                      1 Peter 4:10                      1 Corinthians 14:20                      Matthew 11:28-30                      Isaiah 40:1                      Acts 20:35</p> <p>*New International Version (NIV)</p>
Biblical Foundation Principle	Social Work Core Value	Module Social Work Practice Component/Skills
Comfort and Rest	Service	Cognitive Model: “Dysfunctional thinking is common to all psychological disturbances. When people learn to evaluate their thinking in a more realistic and adaptive way, they experience improvement in their emotional state and in their behavior” (Beck p.3).
Compassion	Service	Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for symptom relief
Discussion Questions:		
1. God gave you specific “gifts.” How does it feel to know that the gifts you have for serving, providing comfort and easing distress were given to you as a part of God’s plan for your life?		
2. How does the knowledge that God cares about how we “think” impact your view of cognitive therapy?		
3. How can we use this biblical knowledge to strengthen our social work practice?		

SOCW 611 Advanced Clinical Practice: Clinical Interventions		
Module Three		
Worship Focus		Biblical Texts*
<p><b>God cares about our thinking and our minds. He calls us to renew our minds and not be conformed to the thinking of the world.</b></p> <p>We must be leaders in helping others.</p> <p>First we need to identify our own weaknesses, before we become competent to help others.</p> <p>Jesus knows our weaknesses and has empathy because he was also tempted. Even in our darkest/scariest times we have no need to fear because God is with us.</p> <p>The fruit of the spirit is what should guide our thoughts: love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.</p>		<p>Matthew 7:4                      Hebrews 4:15                      Psalms 23:4                      Romans 12:2                      Ephesians 2:10                      Galatians 5:22</p> <p>*New International Version (NIV)</p>
Biblical Foundation Principle	Social Work Core Value	Module Social Work Practice Component/Skills
Leading & Safety	Competence Integrity	Utilizing CBT techniques of identifying your own common automatic thoughts, emotional reactions, and behaviors
Leading	Service	Educating clients regarding thoughts verses emotions
Discussion Questions:		
1. We learn human wisdom in our training, but God calls us to look to Him first to renew our minds and not be conformed to this world. Do you see within your own thoughts, emotions, and behaviors the distinction between what comes from God and what comes from the world?		
2. What ways can you use the fruits of the spirit to identify automatic thoughts that are not of God and are messages from this world?		
3. How can we use this biblical knowledge to strengthen our social work practice?		

SOCW 611 Advanced Clinical Practice: Clinical Interventions		
Module Four		
Worship Focus		Biblical Texts*
<p><b>Human thought and traditions can be hollow and deceptive. Our worldview must come from a foundation in Jesus.</b></p> <p>People get trapped in empty wisdom when they depend on their own understanding.</p> <p>Human philosophy distorts our view of the world and our view of our own value.</p> <p>God calls us to be centered in Him and to encourage and build up others.</p> <p>We do not need to worry because He will keep our paths straight.</p> <p>Jesus has shown us how much he values people and the depth of His love by dying for us while we were still sinners.</p> <p>He has compassion on us and treasures us.</p> <p>WE ARE VALUABLE! No matter what the world says.</p> <p>Following His example means helping others to understand that He treasures them and that they are valuable!</p>		<p>Colossians 2:8</p> <p>1 Thessalonians 5:11</p> <p>Proverbs 3:5-6</p> <p>Matthew 10:31</p> <p>Luke 12:6-7</p> <p>Malachi 3:17</p> <p>Romans 5:8</p> <p>*New International Version (NIV)</p>
Biblical Foundation Principle	Social Work Core Value	Module Social Work Practice Component/Skills
Valuing each individual	Dignity and Worth of the Person	Identifying patterns of thoughts that lead to chronic distress. "For lasting improvement in patient's mood and behavior, cognitive therapists work at a deeper level of cognition: patient's basic beliefs about themselves, their world, and other people" (Beck, 2011, p. 3)
Comfort and Rest	Social Justice	Connecting patterns of thought to intermediate and core beliefs
Discussion Questions:		
1. In what ways do human philosophy and messages from the world establish and reinforce our intermediate and core beliefs about ourselves?		
2. A common core belief (deep down below the automatic thoughts) that people have is that they are somehow not valuable or that we are worthless. What does the Bible tell us about our value and the value of our clients?		
3. How can we use this biblical knowledge to strengthen our social work practice?		

SOCW 611 Advanced Clinical Practice: Clinical Interventions <b>Module Five</b>		
<i>Worship Focus</i>		<i>Biblical Texts*</i>
<p><b>God calls us to free the oppressed and love each other as He has loved us.</b>                  We have been given knowledge and skills. The Holy Spirit has given us these so that we can shepherd God’s flock (be overseers).                  God calls us to loosen chains of injustice and to free the oppressed.                  He calls us to meet the needs of others                  He has distributed faith to each of us.                  People will know that we are His by the love we show others.</p>		Isaiah 58:6-8 Acts 20:28 Romans 12:3 John 13:34-35  *New International Version (NIV)
Biblical Foundation Principle	Social Work Core Value	Module Social Work Practice Component/Skills
Safety	Importance of human relationships	Deepen skills of empathy and client connection to create a sense of safety
Compassion Comfort and Rest	Social Justice Service	Challenging beliefs about self and the environment that are harmful
Discussion Questions:		
1. Is it possible to love others like God does? What would our social work practice look like if we took this command seriously?		
2. What ways can we help free clients from oppression and injustice?		
3. How can we use this biblical knowledge to strengthen our social work practice?		

SOCW 611 Advanced Clinical Practice: Clinical Interventions		
Module Six		
Worship Focus		Biblical Texts*
<p><b>God has made each person different, with different functions and different gifts.</b>                      There is a plan to how God has made us different. We are all one body but many parts.                      We do not need to worry about how to treat people, including people who are different than us.                      God gave us the blueprint, which is to be gentle, kind, compassionate, humble, patient and forgiving.                      He calls us not to oppress people, to do right, and seek justice.                      We should not oppress the foreigner (someone different than us). Because as sinners we have been foreigners too.                      We should forgive as God forgave.</p>		<p>Romans 12:4-8                      Ephesians 4:32                      Exodus 23:9                      Isaiah 1:17                      1 Corinthians 12:17-20                      Colossians 3:12-14</p> <p>*New International Version (NIV)</p>
Biblical Foundation Principle	Social Work Core Value	Module Social Work Practice Component/Skills
Valuing the Individual	Dignity and worth of the person	Clinical Assessment: Intake interview and Client History
Relationship	Integrity Social Justice	Diagnostic Statistical Manual 5 (DSM-5): The client's life in cultural context
Discussion Questions:		
1. When we assess people it should be with an understanding that God has purposely provided diversity within humanity. How does this help you to see people who are different than you as valuable?		
2. Are there any populations/types of clients that you are uncomfortable working with? What does the Bible say is the blueprint for how we should treat people?		
3. How can we use this biblical knowledge to strengthen our social work practice?		



SOCW 611 Advanced Clinical Practice: Clinical Interventions		
Module Seven		
Worship Focus		Biblical Texts*
<p><b><i>We can be confident in what we do because our competence comes from Christ.</i></b>                      God has a plan for each of us.                      He plans for us to prosper and succeed.                      He wants us not to speak from a place of human wisdom but from spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words.                      By being securely founded in him, we can lead others to security.                      He is happy with us for encouraging and refreshing others.                      Whatever God has called us to do; he wants us to do it with all our heart and to do it for him.</p>		<p>Colossians 3:23                      Jeremiah 29:11                      1 Corinthians 2:13                      Philemon 1:7                      2 Corinthians 3:4-5</p> <p>*New International Version (NIV)</p>
Biblical Foundation Principle	Social Work Core Value	Module Social Work Practice Component/Skills
Leading Comfort and Rest	Service Dignity and Worth of the Person	Termination: ending therapeutic relationships and transitioning clients to independent use of therapeutic skills
Safety	Competence Integrity	Self-Evaluation of your own knowledge and skills through comparison of your baseline video with your final CBT video demonstration
Discussion Questions:		
1. When we are learning new knowledge and skills we are sometimes overwhelmed and worry that we will not be competent. What does it mean to you to know that your competence comes from God?		
2. How does knowing that God has a plan for you impact your view of your future work?		
3. How can we use this biblical knowledge to strengthen our social work practice?		

SOCW 611 Advanced Clinical Practice: Clinical Interventions		
Module Eight		
Worship Focus		Biblical Texts*
<p><b>God is good! All good things come from God!!</b></p> <p>Because God is a God of compassion, grace and love, He enables us to love others. He comforts us in all of our troubles which then empowers us to comfort others. While the world is a place full of distress, God provides the answers to relieve our discomfort and the discomfort of others. He knows that our thoughts have a great impact on us. To help us, He directs our thinking towards what is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, and excellent, and praiseworthy. He tells us to dwell on these things. Because we know Him, we are able to use our knowledge and skills to help lead others safely to comfort and rest.</p>		<p>Psalms 103:8                      2 Corinthians 1:3-4                      Philippians 2:1-2                      Philippians 4:8-9</p> <p>*New International Version (NIV)</p>
Biblical Foundation Principle	Social Work Core Value	Module Social Work Practice Component/Skills
Comfort and Rest Compassion	Competence	DSM-5: Mood and Anxiety Disorders Understanding Psychological Distress
Leading Safety	Service Integrity	Cognitive Model: The ability to reason. "The highest faculty in our mind is the ability to reason—to think, to weigh evidence, and then to draw conclusions. It enables us to contemplate and to understand" (Jennings, 2012, p. 18).
Discussion Questions:		
1. God has given us the ability to think and reason. He has not left us to do this on our own. How do you think that dwelling on the things that God has directed us to will impact our lives and our client's lives?		
2. If <i>your</i> source of strength, courage, comfort, and compassion is not from God, where is it coming from?		
3. How can we use this biblical knowledge to strengthen our social work practice?		

## Appendix B

**Bible Texts by Module****Module One:****John 10:1-18 (NIV)****The Good Shepherd and His Sheep**

“Very truly I tell you Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger’s voice.” Jesus used this figure of speech, but the Pharisees did not understand what he was telling them.

Therefore Jesus said again, “Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”

“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. “I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.”

**Psalms 23 (NIV)**

The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name’s sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

**Psalms 9:10 (NIV)**

Those who know your name trust in you, for you, Lord, have never forsaken those who seek you.

**Module Two:****1 Peter 5:2-3 (NIV)**

Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; Not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.

**1 Peter 4:10 (NIV)**

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.

**1 Corinthians 14:20 (NIV)**

Brothers and sisters, stop thinking like children. In regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be adults.

**Matthew 11:28-30 (NIV)**

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

**Isaiah 40:1 (NIV)**

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.

**Acts 20:35 (NIV)**

"In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

**Module Three:****Matthew 7:4 (NIV)**

How can you say to your brother, "Let me take the speck out of your eye," when all the time there is a plank in your own eye?

**Hebrews 4:15 (NIV)**

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin.

**Psalms 23:4 (NIV)**

Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

**Romans 12:2 (NIV)**

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

**Ephesians 2:10 (NIV)**

For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

**Galatians 5:22-23 (NIV)**

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

**Module Four:****Colossians 2:8 (NIV)**

See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.

**1 Thessalonians 5:11 (NIV)**

Therefore, encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

**Proverbs 3:5-6 (NIV)**

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

**Matthew 10:31(NIV)**

So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

**Luke 12:6-7(NIV)**

Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

**Malachi 3:17 (NIV)**

"On the day when I act," says the Lord Almighty, "they will be my treasured possession. I will spare them, just as a father has compassion and spares his son who serves him."

**Romans 5:8 (NIV)**

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

**Module Five:****Acts 20:28 (NIV)**

Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

**Isaiah 58:6-8 (NIV)**

Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard.

**Romans 12:3 (NIV)**

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you.

**John 13:34-35 (NIV)**

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

**Module Six:****Romans 12:4-8 (NIV)**

For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

**Ephesians 4:32 (NIV)**

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

**Exodus 23:9 (NIV)**

Do not oppress a foreigner; you yourselves know how it feels to be foreigners, because you were foreigners in Egypt.

**Isaiah 1:17 (NIV)**

Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow.

**1 Corinthians 12:17-20 (NIV)**

If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

**Colossians 3:12-14 (NIV)**

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves in compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

**Module Seven:****Colossians 3:23-24 (NIV)**

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

**Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)**

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

**1 Corinthians 2:13 (NIV)**

This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words.

**Philemon 1:7 (NIV)**

Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the Lord's people.

**2 Corinthians 3:4-5 (NIV)**

Such confidence we have through Christ before God. Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God.

**Module Eight:****Psalms 103:8 (NIV)**

The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love.

**2 Corinthians 1:3-4 (NIV)**

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.

**Philippians 2:1-2 (NIV)**

Therefore, if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind.

**Philippians 4:8-9 (NIV)**

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.