

Episode 6-18: Dealing with Crisis

Resources:

Books

[Biblical Crisis Counseling - John Babler](#)

Website

[Association of Certified Biblical Counselors Dr. Babler Resources](#)

[Joyful Journey Speaking](#)

Transcript:

Jocelyn: I don't just need to feel better. I need the truth. And ultimately that will make me better.

Janet: I just want to make it as totally simple as possible for ladies to see that the Bible is really applicable to their everyday life.

Jocelyn: When they understand theology, the application flows out of it quickly with joy.

Janet: It is a journey, but even the journey itself is joyful when I'm doing it, holding the hand of my savior and trusting him all along the way. This is the joyful journey podcast, a podcast to inspire and equip women to passionately pursue beautiful biblical truth on their journey as women of God. When you choose truth, you're choosing joy.

Noelle: Welcome back, Joyful Journey listeners. This is Noelle, and I'm here with a special guest today, Dr. John Babler. Dr. Babler is one of the professors that teaches in our MABC program at Faith Bible Seminary, and we've asked him to come and talk with us today, mostly centered around a book that he wrote and I recently read called Biblical Crisis Counseling: Not If, But When.

We'll talk about a few other things as well. But first, Dr. Babler, why don't you just tell us a little bit about who you are?

Babler: Sure. Thank you, Noelle. Thanks for having me. My background is I've been a seminary professor for a number of years. I've taught at, two different seminaries, one in Fort Worth for 28 years, and current position is at Mid-America Seminary in Memphis.

I've taught there for six years. But in regard to the topic of this book, I was first introduced to crisis in the context of a church shooting in Fort Worth, Texas, in 1999.

Noelle: Mm. Mm.



Babler: And I had just become a fire chaplain after a crisis, a church fire that had happened earlier that year, and three firefighters were killed. One of them was my daughter's Sunday school teacher.

Noelle: Oh, wow.

Babler: And as I got involved in chaplaincy, it was a firefighter as well, I had the opportunity to respond to this, shooting at Wedgewood. And since that time have worked in the fire department, ultimately becoming a fire chief of our small volunteer department.

I also worked with an organization called the Texas Line of Duty Death Task Force, where we help, fire, police, and EMS departments and families where someone's killed in the line of duty.

Noelle: Okay.

Babler: And then since that time, after leaving the fire service, I became a police officer in Texas and did police chaplaincy as well. So a lot of, work as a first responder for over 25 years, and that, supplements and feeds into my teaching at the seminary level, and of course, gives me opportunity to minister scripture as well.

Noelle: Sure. Absolutely. And tell us a little bit about your family and what you like to do outside of the counseling world.

Babler: Sure. my wife and I have been married 42 years. We only have 11 children, but it's a start. We have 16 grandchildren, and our oldest son is 41. Our youngest daughter is 15.

Noelle: Okay.

Babler: And so never a dull moment in our home. And so if you think about that and the teaching, I've also been-- am a director of biblical counseling at our church, and was part-time minister of missions for 17 years.

I'm not sure that I have a whole lot of time to do much else besides that. But, that's a little bit about what we do.

Noelle: Sure. That's awesome. I love that. I love a big family. One of my best friends has nine kids. So I'm around big families a lot. I love that.



So obviously, you're involved in the counseling world. Why specifically did you choose to write a book on crisis counseling? I mean, you mentioned being around-

Babler: Sure ...

Noelle: as a fire chief, police. All of that, but tell me more about how you chose to write this book.

Babler: So after the Wedgwood shooting, I was on faculty at Southwestern, and after the Wedgwood shooting, one of the staff members at the church, who was their director of counseling, was not a biblical counselor, but he had been shot in the shooting, in the Wedgwood event. And afterwards, he came to me and asked, "Does biblical counseling have anything to offer in a situation like this?" He said, "And the reason I'm asking is 'cause I'm not sure that my people got the help they needed." He said, "Lots of people came and offered counsel. We had church counselors and other counselors.

I mean, everybody came out to help and offer counsel, but there was no unifying theme, so I'm not sure that our people really got what they needed." And I said, "Well, if you're asking is there a resource out there in the biblical counseling world, a book or even an article that I could give you, no, I'm not aware of any."

Noelle: Okay. "

Babler: But if you're asking does biblical counseling have something to offer, of course it does."

Noelle: Sure.

Babler: And so after that, my colleague, Dr. David Penley and I and two of our doctoral students decided we would look at developing a model for biblical crisis response, biblical crisis intervention. It was a great time in regards to what had just happened in Fort Worth, so there was very much an interest in how to respond to such a tragedy.

Noelle: Yes.

Babler: And so we began that process by deciding well, if we're gonna develop a biblical model, we probably ought to see what the Bible says. So-

Noelle: Right.



Babler: We divided the Bible into four sections, and each of us read a section specifically looking at what does that section have to say and teach us about crisis and challenge and suffering.

Noelle: Okay.

Babler: And we came back to the table a few weeks later. To a person, every one of us were shocked at how much crisis there was in scripture.

Noelle: Right.

Babler: Maybe we shouldn't have been, but all of us were. And we just realized that from Genesis and the Fall through the Second Coming in Revelation, the Bible is chock-full of crisis.

Noelle: Yes.

Babler: And, again, that's not the primary focus of the Bible. The gospel is the primary focus of the Bible.

Noelle: Right.

Babler: But the fact that it was there was intriguing to us. And so out of that, we developed the model that is featured in the book. After we did some seminars on the, model itself, it developed into a book.

Noelle: Okay. Before we get to talking about the model, I wanna bring up a quote that I read the other day. It said, "A biblical view of crisis is not a blanket approach." So could you speak a little bit more on that? 'Cause I think that's an important introductory remark. You said it in the book. Let's say it early on in the podcast. "A biblical view of crisis is not a blanket approach."

Babler: I think we're always looking for a step-by-step guide-

Noelle: Sure.

Babler: When we wanna help people, we wanna know step by step how to do it. And because of my work in the emergency services, I'd been through secular training, in regards to critical incident stress management. And, I didn't do that in the sense of trying to figure out and get a method to help me. I did that, to be honest, as more of like a union card.

Noelle: Sure.



Babler: The way I was able to practice chaplaincy and be on scene and respond to these issues and these disasters was to have that training But they had a, it's not a step-by-step guide, but they had a phase approach. You know, phase one, phase two, phase three.

And as we were talking about this model and how to develop it, I mean, that would be our desire. can we put together something biblical that says, "Do this, and then do this, and then do this?"

Noelle: Right.

Babler: And as we looked, we began to realize, well, no, we, really can't. There's not going to be a single approach, a blanket approach, a step-by-step guide. And one of the reasons is because of the fact that it's simplistic to say that you can treat everybody who's dealing with a crisis the same way.

Noelle: Right.

Babler: The crises are different. The people are different. The context is different. The counselor, the chaplain is different. And so it's really simplistic to say, "Here's the way to do it. Here's a blanket approach to deal with it."

And so what we had to develop was instead a basic structure- to allow people to flesh that out in regards to responding to crisis.

Noelle: Right. That makes sense. Yeah. I appreciated that a lot, and then as I read through the BCI model, Biblical Crisis Intervention, is that what BCI stands for?

Babler: Yes.

Noelle: Right. That model that you talk about in the book, that made a lot more sense in light of the fact, okay, this isn't a blanket approach. This is some general things that we can then use to kind of think through-

Babler: Right

Noelle: the crisis itself. Okay, so let's talk through each of those components. I'll-

Babler: Sure

Noelle: I'll list them, but then we can take time with each one.



Babler: Okay.

Noelle: According to the book, and of course you wrote the book, so you already know, you have compassion, serving, listening, ministering the Word, and then those things are covered in prayer.

Babler: Correct.

Noelle: So-

Babler: Right.

Noelle: Would you say there's four components or five components? Do you-

Babler: Well, so there's actually a foundational aspect of it which would be the same foundation, I think, that would guide pretty much any biblical counseling. But so I'd start with a foundation of biblical, so-

Noelle: Right

Babler: And it's almost like we shouldn't have to say that, right?

Noelle: Right.

Babler: But, well, we do, so it's biblical. It's also relational.

Noelle: Right.

Babler: It's not a dispensing of anything. It's relational in the context of crisis. One of the great things about ministering to people in crisis is that people in crisis are open to spiritual things.

Noelle: Right.

Babler: And so we have opportunity to develop that relation. It's also comprehensive. We don't just look at trying to deal with the psychology or the mind or the emotion, but we're ministering to the whole person, and so it's biblical, relational, comprehensive, and it's practical.



And so, those are the foundation pieces, and then out of those foundations, or upon those foundations, then yes, we'd have the four pillars, that we'd say the model, and then kinda the roof holding it all together would be prayer.

Noelle: Okay. So why don't we talk through each of the four components.

Babler: Sure.

Noelle: Compassion, serving, listening, and ministering the Word. Just speak to each of those, and we can go one by one, and how they are involved with biblical crisis counseling.

Babler: Sure.

Noelle: So let's start with compassion.

Babler: Okay. Yeah, compassion is interesting because you would almost think, well, is that, do we really need to mention and address compassion? I mean, some of these crises that we've dealt with, I've been to three other mass shootings. I've been to, numerous, natural disasters, earthquakes, tornadoes, hurricanes, responding to those things. I've been to the floods recently in Kerrville, Texas. So I've been to a lot of these, crises and disasters and when you think about or you see what people are going through, it seems like compassion's a pretty natural response.

But I wanna flesh out the fact that when we talk about compassion in the model, that it's a biblical compassion. And so to illustrate that, I'll go to Matthew 9:3-6, in that verse we see Jesus had compassion on people. He saw the multitudes. He had compassion on them, for they were distressed and downcast, like sheep without a shepherd. So the first thing is that Jesus saw the people.

Noelle: Right.

Babler: And in the midst of crisis, sometimes it's hard to do that, especially some of these large scale disasters, it's hard to see that they're individual people here. But He saw them and as He saw the multitudes, He looked at individuals. Why? Because He knew they looked distressed and downcast.

Noelle: Right.

Babler: And then ultimately, He had compassion on them, for they were like sheep without a shepherd. I grew up in Dallas, Texas, and, sheep without a shepherd was just a biblical phrase-



for many years. And then God decided to give us a child who loved animals of the large variety, and so we've had the opportunity to own and show over 20 Texas Longhorns. we've had-

Noelle: Wow.

Babler: I think seven horses and some bunnies and some beehives. And in the midst of that, we had the opportunity through 4-H to get to know some people who had sheep.

Noelle: Okay.

Babler: And first of all, I was thankful that we didn't have sheep. As I had the opportunity to get to know some of these people that cared for sheep, I came to understand that sheep are defenseless and stupid animals. They're so defenseless, that a bird of prey can land on a sheep's head, eat its eye out, and there's nothing the sheep can do about it. That's pretty defenseless.

Noelle: Yeah.

Babler: And you know a turtle is on its back, it can't get up, same thing with a sheep. Sheep are so stupid that they will literally die of thirst within feet of a perfectly safe stream as it makes noise going over the rocks, and the noise scares them.

Noelle: Okay.

Babler: Now, don't look now, but the Bible refers to us as sheep.

Noelle: I was gonna say.

Babler: And that's,

Noelle: There's a passage in John.

Babler: That's, yeah, that's right. There's a topic for another podcast maybe. But, if you know anything about sheep, that biblical phrase becomes more significant because it's not a biblical phrase, it's a recognition of the fact that anyone who knows sheep knows that sheep without shepherd are dead meat. They don't last long. So the compassion that Jesus had had to do with the lives, the literal lives of the people that He saw.

Noelle: Right.



Babler: And so the compassion that should motivate us is not just helping them recover from the crisis, but ultimately help them deal with the eternal issue of if they're saved or not.

Noelle: Right.

Babler: And if they're not saved, to help them deal with what it looks like to become more like Christ even in the midst of a crisis.

Noelle: Yeah. that's a good point, and I think just thinking through, "Oh, I see the people," instead of, "Oh, there's been a tornado," or- "There's been a shooting," or ... Yeah.

Babler: Right.

Noelle: That's, really good. Okay. the second component that you talked about was serving.

Babler: Sure.

Noelle: Why don't you expound on that a little bit?

Babler: Sure. And I would say serving's something the church does pretty well in the midst of crisis. I mean, it-

Noelle: Yeah ...

Babler: some of these large scale disasters and crises that I've responded to, many people haven't had much experience with, but, churches certainly experience crisis. Unexpected death is a crisis. and so we tend to respond pretty well in regards to serving people in the midst of a crisis.

Now, part of the challenge is that service may be too little and too short.

Noelle: Sure.

Babler: Because a lot of times when people really begin to consider the significance of their loss, everybody's gone.

Right.



And so that's something to keep in mind. But we always wanna look for opportunities to serve, and sometimes those opportunities to serve provide opportunities to do the ministering scripture, the other things that we really wanna do to deal with the sheep without a shepherd, the eternal aspect.

But part of that then requires us to develop an eye for looking for opportunities to serve. My wife and I had, some good friends. In the midst of growing, and parenting a large family, housekeeping wasn't always our strongest suit, well, never our strongest suit. and so in the midst of, the death of, my wife's father, we had some friends, a couple, that knew us well enough to know that about us, and also knew us well enough to know that it would be acceptable for them to offer while we were at the funeral home to straighten our house up.

Noelle: Oh, that's so kind.

Babler: And they served us in a way that... and I will tell you, that is the only couple that my wife would've ever let do that. So that relationship allowed them to serve.

Noelle: Sure.

Babler: But a recognition of the opportunity to serve-

Noelle: Right.

Babler: Was what motivated them to do that.

Noelle: Yeah, absolutely. When I was reading through your book, I was thinking along a similar alliance when someone has served me that's been such a blessing, when I was in a crisis. My grandma actually passed away earlier this year, and My grandparents and I lived together, and so it was a significant loss. And one of my best friends came over, and her husband, who is also my good friend, came over, and he just came and shoveled my sidewalk and driveway.

And I didn't ask, and it was crazy because the snow had been compacted, and I mean, he probably was shoveling for two hours, you know? And it was just one of those things that afterwards I just thought, "Oh, man, that was so practical and so helpful, and such a way to minister to my soul," while then also my friend ministered to me in different ways, you know? And so yeah, that can definitely be impactful.

Okay, let's talk about listening.



Babler: Okay. When we see people hurting, we wanna help them.

Noelle: Yeah.

Babler: you see somebody that's twisted their ankle, you wanna, help lift them up and help them get to the wherever they're going. The natural desire is to help them. When we see people that are spiritually hurting, we wanna help them spiritually as well.

It's easy sometimes to feel uncomfortable in dealing with people in crisis situations.

Noelle: Yeah.

Babler: And so sometimes not knowing what to do, we may jump into deciding how to serve. And so again, this model is not sequential. It's not that you do compassion and then you do... it's a skeleton that you put flesh on, in essence.

And as you listen, you can recognize sometime through relationship, like this couple I mentioned, they recognized the opportunity to serve because they knew us.

Noelle: Sure.

Babler: But a lot of times you may be ministering to people who you don't know, or you don't know very well. And so by listening, you can often find out what some of the opportunities to serve are, what some of the challenges for them are.

And sometimes in listening, they will share things with us of a spiritual nature or give us an opportunity to address things. So we want to listen, and as we listen, we want to ask questions. A lot of times we think asking questions is just for gathering information, but it has other benefits as well. It can show that we're concerned. It can help develop relationships. Maybe not in this context, but in a broader counseling context, it can help bring conviction. It can help people look at in regards to what their priorities are.

Noelle: Absolutely.

Babler: But some of the things I'm interested in listening to people in crisis, I wanna listen and find out information about how they're doing physically. Are they hydrating? Are they eating? Are they sleeping? Because if they're not, they're not going to be handling this crisis very well.

Noelle: Sure.



Babler: They're gonna have a difficult time. And, so I wanna do that. I wanna know what kind of support they have.

Noelle: Sure.

Babler: Do they have family support? Do they have church support? Just because somebody's a member of a church, even our church, doesn't necessarily mean that they know people, doesn't mean that that's really the support that it can be or the support that we'd want it to be.

Noelle: Sure.

Babler: Maybe they know people, but they haven't told them what's going on for one reason or another.

So listening can lead to action. But we wanna listen. And so physical issues, we wanna listen to relational issues, support issues. Sometimes we may need to, especially if somebody's in a context of an unexpected death, we may need to ask some questions about finances. Again, depends on our relationship with them.

Noelle: Absolutely, yeah.

Babler: But sometimes that may be a huge challenge for them. And sometimes it's as simple as, "I want to serve and help you any way I can. Is there anything I can do for you?" Now, the problem with that is that A lot of times people in crisis don't know what they need to have done, and so if we ask them that question, they'll just say, "Well, I'm fine." So putting some suggestions to that question can be very helpful as well.

Noelle: Sure. Absolutely. I appreciated in the section on listening when you said, "Listening requires time," and this one is convicting for me, "a willingness to humbly refrain from interrupting with our own opinions or quick fix answers."

Babler: Yes. Yep. Yep. Listening requires humility.

Noelle: Yeah.

Babler: I mean, Because especially if you've done ministry or ministry in a similar situation. When I responded to Hurricane Katrina, and went to New Orleans, my first contact was with a New Orleans Fire Department crew that had actually been there and rode out the storm, and it was six people, an overstaffed engine crew. And I was visiting with them, and I visited with five



of them. It was getting late. It was dark. Everybody was tired. We were hungry. Dinner was served in the building next door. The other five guys had already left. It would've been very easy for me to say to the sixth man, "Hey, I talked to your crew. I have an understanding of what went on. That was really tough situation. How are you doing?" And he would've said what any good firefighter would've said, "I'm doing fine."

Noelle: Sure.

Babler: And we would've gone to eat dinner. I didn't do that. I said, because no matter what I thought I knew about the situation, I didn't really know anything, and I certainly didn't know what he was thinking.

And I'm glad I didn't just go eat dinner or ask him how he was doing, because he was at a different window on a different side of the building.

Noelle: Okay.

Babler: And through that window, he saw a woman clutching her child being swept to their death. And in addition to that, as I continued to listen, I found out that he was trained as a swiftwater rescue technician. So he was trained to save people in that situation, but he couldn't do anything.

Right? And so there is a humility that says not only do we need to not think that we have the answers for what they need, but we also need to recognize that even if we've dealt with this situation many times before, or even if we've dealt with other people in this specific situation, we still need to listen.

Noelle: Yeah.

Babler: The other thing is, even if he'd told me the same story, he would've recognized the respect and the value I placed in hearing his story.

Noelle: Right.

Babler: As opposed to dismissing it or minimizing it.

Noelle: Yeah. I can't remember who told me this. I think it was one of the professors I've had in the MABC program, but they were talking about listening in general in the counseling context,



and saying, "You know, you can always tell when someone's listening to you thinking about how they're gonna respond and thinking about what's coming next"

Babler: Sure.

Noelle: And it sounds like you're saying pretty much the opposite.

Babler: Right. Yeah. It's good.

Noelle: Yeah. Man, that's convicting for me. Okay, the fourth one was ministering scripture.

Babler: Right.

Noelle: Which seems silly to say, like, "Okay, we need to talk about this," but we do because it's important. So talk to me a little bit more about ministering scripture.

Babler: I would say that if serving is that which Christians do best in regards to crisis, ministering scripture is what we do worst-

Noelle: Okay.

Babler: Or least in regards to scripture. And there's several reasons for that. First of all, most of us, and one of the great things about biblical counseling is we have the opportunity to confront and encourage people to actually minister scripture.

Most of us have been trained into looking at the Bible primarily as a book to be studied.

Noelle: Okay.

Babler: And so we know how to study it, we know how to teach it, but as far as a book to be applied, not so much. And so in general Christian life, we typically aren't ministering scripture. How much harder is it to do that in the context of a crisis situation?

Noelle: Right.

Babler: And so I would say ministering scripture is very significant because it is God's living and active word, because the Holy Spirit uses it to bring comfort.



Noelle: Right.

Babler: And so when we share scripture with people in crisis, we're actually ministering that which is living and active. And no matter how much we encourage somebody, and hug on 'em, and love on 'em, when they walk away, they may remember that, but when we share scripture with them, not only may they remember that, but the Holy Spirit's job is to bring that to their mind and to use that to encourage and to comfort them.

Noelle: Right.

Babler: And so to the extent that we minister scripture, our influence and impact can be carried by the Holy Spirit as opposed to just our actions or even just our words. And so that ministering scripture is significant, and that's, probably the biggest challenge as I work with churches to help them prepare to deal with crisis situations. That's probably the area where we focus on the most, is helping people think through and maybe prepare to, minister scripture to people in crisis. What passages, what emphasis they could use, so.

Noelle: Sure. What's the difference between... Sometimes I struggle with thinking through, you know, you've probably been the recipient of someone attempting to minister scripture to you. And it kind of feels like, you know, a Band-Aid on a bullet wound-

Babler: Sure.

Noelle: Which, I mean, I don't know what that feels like, but where it's just like they're, "Okay, Noelle, but, you know, you can trust God," or, "God says all things work together." Sure. Which is true, and I don't wanna take away. Obviously, it is true.

But what would you see as key differences as truly ministering scripture, as opposed to just slapping it on and moving on?

Babler: That's great. I think the illustration is good in the sense that I think we sometimes, are tempted to, and usually people are well-meaning, they just-

Noelle: Right.

Babler: Haven't thought through or haven't been trained. And so in essence, it is kind of like putting a Band-Aid on a wound that may need a tourniquet. And obviously that's not gonna be effective. Sometimes people do that in the sense that it's not so much ministering scripture to the other, it's making themselves feel better.



Noelle: Oh, yeah.

Babler: Right. You know, it's like, "Well, I, tried to help him. I shared scripture with him." And the focus is wrong. The heart attitude's wrong.

Noelle: Sure.

Babler: It's self-centered rather than other-centered. But, in light of that, I think it's important to remember that when we minister scripture, we're actually ministering God's living and active word in relationship with a person who's created in His image-

Noelle: Right

Babler: and who is a brother and sister in Christ. and so that fleshes it out a little bit in the fact that it's a conversation-

Noelle: Right.

Babler: With a person. It's not a dispensing of scripture Band-Aids or scripture pills. Here, take two scriptures and call me in the morning. It's not dispensing scripture, but it's ministering God's word in the context of a relationship and a conversation with people.

Noelle: Right.

Babler: and that takes, effort to be able to do that.

Noelle: It does.

Babler: It takes effort to be able to weave scripture into general conversation. But the good news is that I was trained as an integrationist counselor. I was a licensed social worker before God showed me the sufficiency of scripture. And at that point in time, as I began to realize the importance of ministering scripture, I had grown up in a church where we didn't memorize much scripture. I didn't have much scripture memorized, and so I began focusing on memorizing scripture. And as I began to do that, God would give me opportunities. I may have had five or six scripture verses memorized, but I would have opportunities. I was working at a children's home as an administrator at that time. But it seemed like every day I'd have an opportunity to share one of those verses with somebody.

Noelle: Cool.



Babler: And I got to see people impacted by scripture. So what I can tell people is if you purpose in your heart to learn how to minister God's word, to share it, to use it in conversation with others, to help them, that it gets easier-

Noelle: Okay.

Babler: As you do it.

Noelle: Yeah. That makes sense. And I think also what struck me was thinking through, okay, you didn't just say, "All right, and here we're gonna minister scripture." You said, "This is built on the foundation of it being biblical and relational and practical, and then together, along with listening and serving and ministering the word." You know, these things work together.

Babler: Right.

Noelle: And I think that's really beautiful.

Babler: That's good insight. It's a model. It's not a, again, it's not a step-by-step guide.

Noelle: Right.

Babler: And so it's, hey, we work on, as the context, as the Spirit provides opportunity, we work on integrating this together.

Noelle: Right. That makes sense. Okay, and then it's covered with prayer.

Babler: Sure.

Noelle: So let's talk about- the vitality of prayer.

Babler: Well, prayer is significant. I encourage people who are in ministry and who may have to, or especially those that do respond to crises, to have two people in their life that they know two things about.

One is that if you call them anytime day or night and say, "I'm dealing with a crisis situation. Will you pray for me?" They know two things. First of all, they know that the person will pray for them, and second of all, they know that they're not gonna ask any questions. If I'm responding to a crisis, I don't want somebody asking, "Oh, well, what's there? What's going on?"



How are they?" I don't want them to ask their curious questions to me about the crisis thing that I'm on.

Noelle: Sure.

Babler: And I also just need to know that they're praying. And so part of prayer is for those of us who are ministering in the context of crisis.

Noelle: Yeah.

Babler: But part of it is for those of us that are ministering to pray for those that are in the crisis themselves. I believe that God does, as you mentioned, God does bring good out of evil, as Romans 8:28 says. I encourage people to not use Romans 8:28 without verse 29-

Noelle: Absolutely.

Babler: Because it is the one guaranteed outcome of God bringing good out of evil, and that is we look more like Christ.

Noelle: Yeah.

Babler: And so in light of that, as people minister scripture, they can pray and focus on the fact that, "God, would you please not only bring good out of this, but would you help them look more like Christ-

Noelle: Right.

Babler: In the midst of this? Would you keep them open to what it is that you want to teach them, even in the midst of this?"

We see the Holy Spirit is identified as Comforter. God, would you comfort through your Holy Spirit? Would you comfort this person, this people, the people that are impacted by this? And so prayer for the helper, and prayer for those that are being helped is important. And then as we have opportunity to do the ministry, we need to pray with those that we're helping, pray for them-

Noelle: Right

Babler: and, surround our whole efforts with prayer as well.



Noelle: Yeah. Absolutely. I was thinking through the whole praying with them and praying for them when I was reading your book. And I think a lot of times in Christian world, we like to say, "Okay, I'm gonna pray for you," and then walk away and kinda forget.

And so I'd just like to encourage the listeners, first of all, that that's a common error to make.

Babler: Yes.

Noelle: But second of all, to work on it. You can work on it.

Babler: Right.

Noelle: And there's actually a couple different methods that Janet and I have talked about in a former episode about just helping yourself remember.

Babler: Right.

Noelle: But I would just encourage people to write it down on their phone, or write it down on their planner or something because there's so much that we say we're going to do-

Babler: Right.

Noelle: And yeah, prayer is important.

Babler: And another thing we can do is actually just stop and pray for them.

Noelle: Absolutely.

Babler: Right? And say, "I'm gonna be praying for you about this. Hey, may I pray with you right now?"

Noelle: Yes.

Babler: And then if, and prayerfully we won't, but if we do forget, we have prayed for them, right?

Noelle: Yeah.



Babler: So it's beneficial to that point, too.

Noelle: Absolutely, yes. Okay. Maybe we should have started with this, but I wanted you to speak to a little bit about the common listener of the Joyful Journey Podcast is probably not a fire chief-

Babler: Right

Noelle: and is probably not a person that's responding to-

Babler: Right.

Noelle: Major crises. Talk to us a little bit about, okay, why are these things important to learn about anyway? I-

Babler: Sure.

Noelle: Talk to me. I'm a high school teacher. I don't actually even formally counsel.

Babler: Sure.

Noelle: So how does learning about Biblical crisis counseling help me in my daily life?

Babler: Yeah, great question. And, one of the things is that the best time to prepare to deal with anything serious is not when something serious has just occurred.

Noelle: True.

Babler: Right? And so one of the things, when I was a fire chief, I would drive around my town, and I would sometimes think, "Well, if that house catches on fire, what am I gonna do?"

Where's the fire hydrant? Where am I gonna stage the engines? What am I gonna do if that house catches on fire? And so I would prepare for that which didn't happen.

Noelle: Okay.

Babler: But I would prepare for it in case it did. Because the time to figure out where that fire hydrant is is not at 3:00 in the morning-



Noelle: Right

Babler: when I'm still half asleep and it's dark, and that's not the time to figure it out, right? So it's in a similar vein, you mentioned high school. It's sad to say, but it's quite possible that suicide might impact your high school.

Noelle: Yeah, absolutely.

Babler: And the time to prepare to help people deal with the tragic death of a teenager committing suicide is not the day that that occurs. Right? And so to prepare for those, what we pray won't happen, crises, is very important. Now, I don't think it's so important that we have to think about where's the fire hydrant level of thinking and preparation.

Noelle: Sure.

Babler: But to think about what would... And especially if, some of these women are in context maybe, in a school setting, a job setting, maybe in a homeschool co-op or, whatever where something occurred, the very least, how would we communicate if a crisis occurs?

Noelle: Absolutely.

Babler: How would we let people know? How would we, so even just stepping back to that level of basic thinking, because the time to figure out how to call parents in the midst of a crisis and where their phone numbers are-

Noelle: Right.

Babler: And, you know, that's, not gonna happen very effectively in the midst of a crisis, right? So, maybe even preparing at that level.

Another reason it needs to occur is because of the fact that even though most of the listeners are not going to be going out, seeking out, and responding to crises like I have, sometimes God has a way of bringing crisis directly to the church.

Noelle: Sure.

Babler: And so whether it be through an untimely situation like that or a church that I assisted where a woman and her child were turning left into the church for Sunday evening service, they were rear-ended, pushed into, literally into the church driveway, and were both killed. That's just



a very sad example, though, of the fact that God literally brought that crisis into the driveway of the church. And the pastor was humble enough to recognize that he didn't really have any idea of how to deal with that.

Noelle: Okay.

Babler: And so called me, and I was able to call some others, and we came in and worked with them to help them prepare for that. So I think that's why it's important to be aware of this, is that the other thing is it helps us, even if we don't have the, specific planning down, it can help us recognize that I can, not because I've had the experience that, for example, that you've had the experience that I have- but we can come back and say from that position of, Because of the fact that I'm a transformed believer in Christ, and because of the fact that the Holy Spirit lives within me, and because of the fact that I have God's living and active word, even I can help people in crisis.

Noelle: Absolutely.

Babler: And so it's empowering to recognize that we don't have to be intimidated.

Can we be a little bit hesitant? Can we be prayerful? Can we be maybe a little concerned? Absolutely. But I don't have to be intimidated and think, "Oh, but what if I say the wrong thing?" Or, "What if I..." Because we can respond, and we have that competence to be able to minister in those situations because of who we are, whose we are-

Noelle: Right

Babler: and what we have to minister.

Noelle: Absolutely. And I think if you think through the definition of crisis even, everyone at some point is going to be affected by -

Babler: Right.

Noelle: Something. And so-

Babler: Absolutely.

Noelle: It doesn't even necessarily have to be something as horrific as what happened in that church where the woman and her son passed away in the church parking lot. It could just be



quote, unquote, just be suffering through the loss of a loved one- Right ... or, a hard medical diagnoses-

Babler: Sure.

Noelle: Or, yeah.

Babler: But one of the things about this Biblical Crisis Intervention Model is that indeed it was designed and, often taught in the context of these large scale disasters and crises. But yet, the same principles are applicable when somebody loses a job. The crisis of that to be compassionate

Noelle: Right.

Babler: To, listen.

Noelle: Right.

Babler: Rather than to say, "Oh, well, I've got a new job for you," or, "Here, let me help you with this." But, you know, to be compassionate, to minister scripture, to listen-

Noelle: Right

Babler: to pray. All of those things apply-

Noelle: Absolutely.

Babler: Even in less traumatic and less dramatic crises.

Noelle: Absolutely. Yeah. They're principles that could apply just to the daily suffering. Right. Yeah, absolutely.

Okay, another question for you. What would be errors that you've either learned from personally or witnessed in other situations that you'd like to help our listeners avoid? So whether they're in formal counseling or informal counseling, helping a friend through something or, thinking through a really hard crisis, what's something that maybe you've seen people often do, or even just sometimes do, that you think is unhelpful-

Babler: Sure.



Noelle: That we could learn from?

Babler: One of the things you already hit on, which is the fact that they come in and awkwardly try to do what we're talking about here. They to help them feel more comfortable or just because well, I've got to throw scripture at this somehow. And so I think sometimes if you're not fully comfortable sharing scripture, that should be a note, I need to work a little bit on that, but at this point I'm gonna be here and I'm gonna visit with the person. I may not try to push that to make it work. I don't wanna check it off.

Noelle: Absolutely.

Babler: As saying, "Okay, I, shared scripture with them, so it, must be okay." So I think that would be it. I think there also is a tendency to just go into a situation like this, fearful, and God's not the author of fear. Satan is. And so to go in trusting God, and dependent on him. And then also to realize that sometimes we don't have to say anything. Now, there some in the counseling world, not the biblical counseling world, but the broader counseling world, that would say, "Well, really all you need to do is listen," and I don't think that's true at all.

But I remember, when I worked in hospice, one of the rural ranchers that I cared for as he was dying of cancer, I came in one morning to visit him, and he said, "Hey, I had the best visit last night I've had this whole time." I said, "Oh, tell me about it." And he said, "Yeah, my friend," we'll call him Jim Bob, "My friend, Jim Bob came in at about 10 o'clock at night, and he came over and he smiled at me, and he, touched my hand, and then he went back and he stood by the window."

And he said, "And he didn't say a word, and he stood up with me all night long. And at 6:00 this morning, he came over and touched my hand again and left." He said, "That was the most significant visit I've had." Now, is that the only visit he needed? No. I had the opportunity to go in and to minister scripture, and others as well.

But sometimes the opportunity of being there and being with somebody-

Noelle: Yes.

Babler: Can have a significant impact on them.

Noelle: Yes.



Babler: Again, we've gotta be careful, just like we don't wanna just share scripture in a awkward way to, make ourselves feel more comfortable. We don't wanna not share scripture-

Noelle: Absolutely

Babler: to make ourselves feel more comfortable as well.

Noelle: Right.

Babler: And so, those are some things that I've noticed that people may lean towards or some temptations, tendencies that people have.

Noelle: Sure. Yeah. That's helpful to think through. Do you have anything to say to our listeners that feel like they want to grow in this area, so thinking through biblical crisis counseling, but they aren't formally trained, they're not maybe planning to become certified as a biblical counselor? What would be a good next step for them-

Babler: Sure

Noelle: ... if they've heard this podcast episode and they're thinking, "Man, I wanna grow."

Babler: Sure.

Noelle: How could they? What should they do next?

Babler: Well, I think the book that you've mentioned that I've written, I think is a good starting place.

Noelle: Yeah, I agree.

Babler: I think that can provide not just some perspective and even some, context, but it also can provide some direction and suggestions.

Noelle: Absolutely.

Babler: And then I'm a part of the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors, and the website for ACBC is biblicalcounseling.com. And if you go into their resources section, you can search my name, and there's several podcasts that are available there-



Noelle: Okay

Babler: ... where I talk about trauma and crisis counseling as well. So that might be another, place that they could look to get, some basic tutoring and a head start. The other thing is, I think a lotta times we need to intentionally discipline ourselves to, as we read scripture, think about how it can apply. And so maybe as they're reading the Bible, think about and pray that God would help them see, oh, this verse or this passage might be helpful if I was dealing with somebody who's dealing with a crisis.

Noelle: Absolutely.

Babler: And not just to make note of that in the sense of, oh, that might be helpful, but then to actually take that and put it somewhere where they can access it. As I began, I shared early in my biblical counseling journey, I began memorizing scripture. It wasn't too long, as I began reading scripture that way, it wasn't too long before I realized I'm not gonna be able to memorize all this.

And so I joke that I began my personal counseling concordance in the blank pages in the back of my Bible. And, you know, you may think the blank pages are there because of the printing process, but no, they're really there so that you can write down verses that you need to return to. And so-

Noelle: I love that

Babler: you know, you might be able to, as you're reading that, you might make a note. I remember the first entry I made many years ago, and I've developed that into a little pocket handbook for counseling as well. But, I remember the first one I entered was anxiety, and then I put a hyphen and wrote Philippians 4:6.

And then as I read Matthew 6, I said, "Oh, that would be helpful for anxiety," and went back and put Matthew 6 into that and began adding that. and so not just reading from the perspective of, oh, this could be helpful in dealing with somebody in a crisis situation, but then making sure that you have some way that you can recall it.

Noelle: Right.

Babler: Either through memory or through some, when like you mentioned the phone, as I memorize verses, I put them on one of five lists. I review one each day of the week and So those are things to, just intentionally appropriate scripture to be able to use it.



Noelle: Absolutely.

We're gonna end here in prayer in just a moment, but before we do that, I wondered if there was anything that you thought, "Oh, man, I really hope she asks me about this" Or, "This is something I think really needs to be said," surrounding this topic. I wanted to give you the opportunity just to open mic time if there's something that you want to make sure gets said.

Babler: Sure. I appreciate it. And First of all, I thank you for having me on. I think it's a good topic for people to consider, so I'm glad to have this opportunity. But I guess if I had to say one thing, because sometimes people ask me, when I share some of the crises and disasters I've been involved in, and so many over the years, "How do you, how do you deal with that?"

Noelle: Yeah.

Babler: You know, "How do you do that?" and I just wanna remind people as we think about crisis of two things that keep me going. And the first one we've already covered a little bit, and the fact is that God brings good out of evil. And in the midst of my experience working with people in crisis and traumatic events, and disasters, I've had a front row seat to see God bring good out of evil. And so that's just been a huge blessing to me. The second one is we're not home.

Noelle: Yeah.

Babler: Revelation 21 is true. There will be a new heaven and a new Earth. There will be no more crying. There will be no more tears, and no more death. And-

Noelle: Yeah.

Babler: Those two things together, have been greatly encouraging to me, as well as the challenge I think for all of us as we think about maybe entering into or as we have an opportunity either preparing to or ministering to somebody in the midst of crisis.

As we think about the challenges, the tears, the sadness, the grief, the lament that can come with that, to be able to say, "Okay, but I get to see God bring good out of evil. I get to be a part of God bringing good out of evil." And this isn't it.

Noelle: Yeah. Praise the Lord for that. All right. Thank you so much for joining us today.

Babler: Sure, Thanks for having me.



Noelle: I'd like to end our time in prayer together. Father, you are good and you do good, and I just thank you so much for this opportunity that you've given me tonight to talk with Dr. Babler. And thank you, Father, for the ways that you've used him, as a professor for the past 30-odd years, and specifically, in this area, growing him in his ability to counsel in crisis situations.

Father, what a hard thing. but we're thankful for the chance to learn and grow from his experiences, and I pray that you would help each of the listeners today, and help me, as we enter in different crises with others, that you would help us to be compassionate and to listen well and to serve well and to minister the Word well, and help us to cover situations in prayer and, to remember that all of this is built on the foundation of your Word, of the Bible, and to be relational with others.

And, God, I just pray that it wouldn't be us, that it wouldn't be our efforts, but that we would do that through the strength that you give us. And Lord, I pray that you would help each of us to be able to love well because we are loved well, and that we would remember who we are and whose we are. And thank you, God.

I pray that you would use this episode in the lives of the listeners, to be your hands and feet across the world. Lord, help us to love others well. In your name we pray, amen.

Babler: Amen.

To keep from missing any future episodes, please sign up for our newsletter on our webpage faithlafayette.org/JJP From there you can also subscribe to this podcast on Apple, Google, or Spotify. You can also visit us on our Facebook page or Instagram at Joyful Journey Podcast. If you have questions or comments for us, you can email us at joyfuljourneyquestions@outlook.com. Joyful Journey Podcast is a ministry of Faith Bible Seminary. All proceeds go to offset costs of this podcast and toward scholarships for women to receive their [MABC through Faith Bible Seminary](#).

Host Janet and her husband, Brent, also speak at a variety of conferences as a way to raise money for the seminary. If you want to look at what they offer or book them for a conference, [go to their website](#).