BC101 • WEEK THREE • WHOLE-PERSON INTAKE QUESTION BANK

Questions that help a person become known

Introduction to Biblical Counseling | Monday, September 21, 2026

Prepared for Dr. Jeffrey W. Gross • Fall 2026

A resource, not a checklist

Use one question at a time. Follow the answer rather than the numbering. Some areas may need several meetings, and a person may decline. Intake questions should deepen understanding, not reward the counselor for completing every category.

The Scripture references below ground the counselor's curiosity. They are not scripts to recite at the person and do not make each question a command from God. These questions are original applications of the course sources, not a reproduced instrument or a validated clinical assessment.

A relational pattern for using any question

Invite: "Where would you like to begin?" Listen without preparing the next speech. Reflect what matters: "It sounds as though the hardest part was being alone with it." Check: "Have I understood, or did I miss it?" Then deepen: "Could you take me into one recent moment?" Pause when emotion, consent, or safety calls for it.

From facts to meaning without guessing

Tripp distinguishes knowing general truths about humanity from knowing a particular life. Use survey questions to understand the broader world and focused questions to explore a moment. Ask what a person's familiar words mean. Powlison's questions about trust, desire, fear, hope, and refuge invite investigation; they do not license claims to see directly into a heart. (Tripp, 2002, ch. 9; Powlison, 2003, pp. 129–132.)

Four kinds of notes—not one confident story

Mark	Example
Reported	"Claire reports sleeping four or five hours on many nights."
Observed	"During this classroom scene, the speaker paused before answering."
Tentative interpretation	"The pause might reflect discomfort; ask rather than assume."
Unknown / follow-up	"The meaning of the pause and the full safety picture remain unestablished."

What the bank cannot do

It cannot establish a diagnosis, determine truth in a contested legal matter, replace a required consent or screening instrument, or authorize independent crisis work. A student may need direct yes/no questions for safety or clarification; that is an intentional safeguard, not a claim that every intake question must be open-ended. Seek supervision when the next action exceeds the role.

Sources: Gross, Foundations of Scriptural Restoration (2026), ch. 4; user-supplied intake-training transcript (September 16, 2026), pp. 4–7, 9–12; Tripp, Instruments (2002), chs. 7, 9–10; Powlison, Seeing (2003), chs. 7, 13. Biblical citations are the evidence for the proposed applications.

BEGIN WITH CONSENT AND PROTECTION

Choice, privacy, and immediate safety

Use the current approved intake and consent process before sensitive inquiry. Describe the actual student role, supervisor access, recording choices, confidentiality limits, and referral arrangements. Do not promise secrecy, clergy privilege, or deletion practices that have not been verified. (Gross, 2026, ch. 4, pp. 51–53.)

01 “What would help you understand my student role and the part my supervisor has in your care?”

02 “What are you comfortable sharing today, and what would you prefer we leave for another time?”

03 “How would you like us to handle prayer or Scripture? Are there ways spiritual language has been helpful or hurtful?”

04 “What is a safe way to contact you, and what should we avoid saying or sending?”

05 “Have you recently wished you were dead or would not wake up?”

06 “Are you thinking about suicide, or have you recently thought about killing yourself?”

07 “Have you been hurting yourself, or are you worried that you might?”

08 “Are you thinking about seriously hurting someone else?”

09 “Is anyone threatening, controlling, frightening, hurting, or forcing you into something? Is anyone preventing you from getting help?”

10 “Are any children or dependent adults unsafe, or is there something about their care that needs urgent help?”

11 “Is there an urgent medical problem, intoxication, withdrawal concern, or another reason you need immediate help to stay safe?”

12 “What would make it harder for you to tell me if you were not safe?”

Stop-and-connect rule

If a response indicates possible danger or remains concerning, pause the ordinary intake and follow current procedures with qualified supervision. Do not wait for a detailed suicide plan before seeking support. Do not manage an emergency alone. In the United States, call/text 988 for crisis support; call 911 or use emergency care for life-threatening danger.

This is a teaching question bank, not a comprehensive risk assessment. Safety basis: NIMH, 5 Action Steps to Help Someone Having Thoughts of Suicide (2024), and Help for Mental Illnesses (reviewed April 2026). Moral grounding for protective care: Proverbs 24:11–12; James 2:15–17. Statutory duties are not inferred from those verses.

QUESTION BANK • DOMAINS 1–2

Listen broadly; deepen where the story leads

Present concern and the ordinary day

Biblical grounding / application: Luke 24:17–21; Psalm 90:12; Mark 6:30–32. Ask about events, hopes, limits, and daily life rather than only a problem label.

13 Where would you like your story to begin today?

14 What happened, changed, or became harder that led you to come now?

15 Walk me through a usual day from waking up until you settle for the night. Which parts are hardest?

16 Which part of the day still feels meaningful, restful, or enjoyable?

17 When you call this “overwhelming,” what does that word describe for you?

18 What have you tried, and what helped even a little or made things more difficult?

Body, health, and access to care

Biblical grounding / application: Genesis 2:7; Psalm 103:13–14; 1 Kings 19:1–18. Embodiment is not an inconvenience to spiritual care; this is not permission to diagnose.

19 What have you noticed about sleep, appetite, energy, pain, or concentration?

20 What health conditions, medicines, or ongoing treatments would be important for your care team to know about?

21 Who is helping with medical or mental health care, and what has that experience been like?

22 What barriers—cost, transportation, timing, privacy, or something else—make care difficult?

23 When your body signals that you have reached a limit, what do you usually do?

24 What would it take to arrange appropriate help for a concern that falls beyond biblical counseling?

After a sensitive answer: reflect, check your understanding, and ask whether to continue. A question bank serves the relationship; the relationship does not serve the question bank.

QUESTION BANK • DOMAINS 3–4

Listen broadly; deepen where the story leads

Childhood, caregivers, and significant changes

Biblical grounding / application: Psalm 78:1–8; Deuteronomy 6:4–9; Genesis 37–50. Family history gives context, not a deterministic explanation.

25 Where were you born and raised, and what was that place like for you?

26 Who raised you, what work or responsibilities did they carry, and who else was part of the household?

27 When you were upset or afraid, who noticed and what happened next?

28 How were affection, anger, mistakes, disagreement, and faith expressed at home?

29 Which moves, losses, separations, or changes stand out, and what do you remember making of them?

30 What strengths from those years remain with you, and what learned expectations might you now want to reconsider?

School, belonging, culture, and identity

Biblical grounding / application: James 2:1–9; 1 Corinthians 12:14–26. Ask how differences are experienced; do not assign a story from an identity label.

31 What was school like, and when did you feel you belonged or stood apart?

32 What did you enjoy or feel capable of, and who noticed those strengths?

33 What made your friendships matter, and how did you learn whether people could be trusted?

34 What parts of your culture, community, language, or family traditions help me understand you?

35 Have you been treated differently or excluded in ways that affect how you approach people now?

36 What do people often assume about you that you wish they would ask instead?

After a sensitive answer: reflect, check your understanding, and ask whether to continue. A question bank serves the relationship; the relationship does not serve the question bank.

QUESTION BANK • DOMAINS 5–6

Listen broadly; deepen where the story leads

Current relationships, household, and caregiving

Biblical grounding / application: Romans 12:9–18; Ephesians 4:25–32; Galatians 6:2–5. Distinguish mutual conflict from intimidation and coercion.

37 Who shares your home or daily responsibilities, and what is that arrangement like?

38 Who feels safe, close, supportive, distant, or difficult to be with?

39 What happens when someone disagrees or says no? Could you give me an example?

40 How do people in your home make decisions about money, schedules, work, and children?

41 After someone is hurt, what usually happens—repair, avoidance, pressure, punishment, or something else?

42 What responsibilities are truly yours, and which ones have you been left carrying without enough support?

Closeness, intimacy, boundaries, and spiritual harm

Biblical grounding / application: 1 Corinthians 13:4–7; Ephesians 5:1–2; 1 Peter 5:2–3. Ask permission and focus on impact, freedom, and care—not graphic detail.

43 Would it be all right to ask a little about closeness and boundaries? You may choose how much to share.

44 What did your early experiences teach you about affection, your body, sexuality, and consent?

45 What does feeling emotionally close to someone mean to you?

46 Do you feel free to say no and have your boundaries respected? What happens when you do?

47 Has anyone used faith, Scripture, spiritual authority, or counseling language to pressure or hurt you?

48 What would help this relationship feel different from an experience in which your voice was not respected?

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QUESTION BANK • DOMAINS 7–8

Listen broadly; deepen where the story leads

Work, education, money, and practical life

Biblical grounding / application: James 2:15–17; Ephesians 4:28; 1 Thessalonians 4:11–12. Work has meaning, and material deprivation is not simply a mistaken belief.

49 What is your work or education like, and what do you value or find difficult about it?

50 How do schedules, caregiving, disability, transportation, or other demands affect what is possible?

51 What pressures around housing, food, bills, debt, or employment are weighing on you?

52 What happens inside when you need help or cannot meet an obligation?

53 How do you decide when to keep working, rest, or ask someone to share a load?

54 What practical support would make the most difference this week?

Emotions, beliefs, and a particular moment

Biblical grounding / application: Psalm 42; Mark 14:32–42; Ephesians 4:26–32. Strong feeling alone does not settle its meaning or moral direction.

55 Take me into one recent moment when this struggle became strong. What happened first?

56 What did you notice in your body, and what emotional words fit your experience?

57 What did that moment seem to say about you, the other person, or what might happen next?

58 What did you most want, fear losing, or hope someone would understand?

59 What did you do or say, and what happened afterward for you and for other people?

60 Looking back, what seems accurate in your understanding, and what remains uncertain?

After a sensitive answer: reflect, check your understanding, and ask whether to continue. A question bank serves the relationship; the relationship does not serve the question bank.

QUESTION BANK • DOMAINS 9–10

Listen broadly; deepen where the story leads

Coping, refuge, habits, and chosen responses

Biblical grounding / application: Psalm 46; Psalm 62:5–8; James 1:13–15. Explore what a practice provides and costs before assuming its function.

61 When distress rises, where do you turn for relief, company, distraction, protection, or control?

62 What role do alcohol, other substances, gambling, online activity, or other habits have in your life?

63 When does that practice help, and when does it create problems or become hard to stop?

64 What do you wish the practice could give you that seems difficult to receive another way?

65 Which responses would you like to change, and what makes changing them difficult?

66 What has supported a different choice before, even on one occasion?

Loss, suffering, guilt, and repair

Biblical grounding / application: John 11:17–44; Psalm 13; Psalm 32; 2 Corinthians 7:8–11. Keep sorrow over loss distinct from responsibility for wrongdoing.

67 What losses or painful experiences most need to be understood before we talk about change?

68 What has been done to you, and what have people expected you to do with that pain?

69 What do you miss, and what memories contain both sorrow and something you treasure?

70 When you say you feel guilty, what action or responsibility do you believe is yours?

71 Are you carrying blame for something another person chose, or for something you could not control?

72 Where is a truthful repair needed, and what would protect the person who was hurt rather than seek quick reassurance for you?

After a sensitive answer: reflect, check your understanding, and ask whether to continue. A question bank serves the relationship; the relationship does not serve the question bank.

QUESTION BANK • DOMAINS 11–12

Listen broadly; deepen where the story leads

God, Christ, Scripture, prayer, and community

Biblical grounding / application: Psalm 13; Psalm 139:1–18; Mark 8:27–30; Hebrews 4:14–16. Invite the person's account rather than grade a testimony.

73 When you speak to or about God, what names or words do you use, and what do they mean to you?

74 Who do you understand Jesus Christ to be, and what has your relationship with him been like?

75 When has God seemed near, distant, comforting, disappointing, or difficult to understand?

76 What do you believe about God, and what do you find yourself expecting from him in a difficult moment?

77 What is prayer like for you, and what is hard to bring to God? Would you prefer prayer, Scripture, quiet, or none of those today?

78 What has your faith community given you, what has been painful, and whom—if anyone—would you freely choose to involve?

Gifts, joy, hopes, and a shared direction

Biblical grounding / application: Philippians 4:8–9; Romans 12:4–8; Ephesians 2:8–10. Grace and gifts belong in the story from the beginning.

79 What brings you delight, tenderness, gratitude, or a sense of being alive?

80 What strengths do trusted people see in you that are easy for you to overlook?

81 Who or what has helped you persist through difficult seasons?

82 Using the image of a mountain, what burden would you most long for God to move? What makes it so important?

83 Imagine a later meeting in which this work has been useful: what is different in an ordinary day, a relationship, or your life with God?

84 What is one shared next step, how would you notice progress, and what should we keep learning before forming the fuller transformation plan?

After a sensitive answer: reflect, check your understanding, and ask whether to continue. A question bank serves the relationship; the relationship does not serve the question bank.