BC101 • WEEK THREE • SCRIPTURE-FIRST STUDENT ACTIVITY

Why must we know the person?

Introduction to Biblical Counseling | Monday, September 21, 2026

Prepared for Dr. Jeffrey W. Gross • Fall 2026

Begin with Scripture—not the answer key

An axiom in this activity is a carefully argued working principle for care. Derive it from what the passage supports, then state what the passage does not allow you to assume.

Work with a partner or small group. Read each assigned unit in your Bible before consulting the textbooks. Record observations first. Resist writing “we should listen” until you can show where the text gives your claim substance. Use fictional examples; personal disclosure is not required.

Core reading

Read Genesis 16:1–16 and Psalm 131 in full. Then choose two supporting units: Genesis 1:26–28 and 2:7, 18–25; Proverbs 18:13, 15, 17 and 20:5; Luke 24:13–35; Romans 12:15 and James 2:15–17. Read enough surrounding text to identify speaker, audience, and purpose.

Make five distinctions

Category	What belongs here?
Observation	Something the text explicitly says or shows. Identify the verse.
Interpretation	Your reasoned explanation of the passage’s meaning in context.
Axiom	A limited principle for learning a person that follows from that meaning.
Practice application	A question, posture, action, or restraint appropriate to an intake.
Boundary / unknown	Something you cannot conclude about this person or this text.

Example of the reasoning—not an answer to every passage

Proverbs 18:13 criticizes an answer given before hearing. A working principle is that a helper should understand the account before proposing its explanation. One application is, “What happened next, and what did that mean to you?” The proverb does not say a counselor can postpone a response to immediate danger until the entire life story has been heard.

Before reading: What do I tend to assume when someone asks for counseling?

This activity is an original adaptation. Readings and method align with Gross, 2026, Foundations of Scriptural Restoration, ch. 4; Tripp, 2002, ch. 9. Faculty responses are in Document 01, not this worksheet.

CLOSE READING • HAGAR

Learn the story before extracting a principle

Read Genesis 16:1–16. Place it beside the covenant concerns of Genesis 15 and the later Hagar account in Genesis 21. Do not collapse those episodes into one conversation.

1. Who acts, speaks, decides, and has power? Cite two textual details.

2. What does the passage explicitly say about Hagar's circumstances? Which emotions are named, and which would be your inference?

3. How is Hagar addressed? What do her words reveal about how she understands the encounter?

4. Write one axiom about learning a person's life. Explain the connection to the text.

5. Write a question this axiom would shape, and one conclusion you must not impose.

Interpretive safeguard

A divine direction to Hagar within this narrative is not a universal instruction for a counseling recipient to return to an abusive situation. Explain why a narrative detail does not automatically become the helper's authority over another person.

CLOSE READING • PSALM 131

Let Scripture examine the counselor first

Read the whole psalm. Attend to the speaker's posture, the relational image, and the final address to Israel. Do not treat quietness as a required facial expression or a ban on grief.

1. What does the speaker renounce? What is affirmed? Name the verses.

2. How does the child-and-mother image differ from emotional detachment?

3. Where might my need to be impressive, certain, or useful interfere with knowing a person?

4. Derive an axiom for the counselor's conduct. Give one observable action and one restraint.

5. A person says, "Please do not tell me to calm down." How could this psalm shape your next response without being quoted?

After completing the observations, compare Powlison, Seeing with New Eyes, ch. 4, especially pp. 75–78 and 88–89. Distinguish his argument from your own proposed intake application.

SYNTHESIS • TURN CONVICTIONS INTO INQUIRY

Our group's six working axioms

Use the two core passages and your supporting readings. For each entry, write a principle and its biblical basis. In the second column, show what you would actually ask or do. Do not repeat the same principle six ways.

Axiom + textual evidence	A fitting intake question or action + a limit
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	

What important area of human life is still missing from our axioms?

What would change in our questions if the person disagrees with our first interpretation?

Report to the class

Present your strongest axiom, its actual textual evidence, and one way a counselor could misuse it. Then revise one question after hearing your classmates. Do not count the number of verses as a measure of biblical faithfulness.

Bring this reasoning into Document 03 (emotions) and Document 06 (dialogue critique). Book comparison: Gross, Foundations, ch. 4; Tripp, Instruments, chs. 6–7, 9; Powlison, Seeing, ch. 4. This is a supplemental learning exercise, not a change to syllabus grading.