BC101 • WEEK THREE • DEEP NARRATIVE & APPLIED SCRIPTURE LAB

Hear the emotion inside the story

Introduction to Biblical Counseling | Monday, September 21, 2026

Prepared for Dr. Jeffrey W. Gross • Fall 2026

The aim is not to find an emotion verse

Read an entire scene deeply enough to notice its people, pressures, meanings, actions, hopes, and encounter with God. Then learn how that knowledge might shape care for a different person without forcing the stories to be identical.

Begin with Hagar and Hannah. Choose an additional station for deeper practice; the other stations can be revisited alongside later classes. Work from Scripture before reading the instructor's response guide. No one must share a personal experience.

Keep four meanings of "I feel" in view

A possible meaning	Example in a fictional intake	A clarifying question
Bodily experience	"I feel tight in my chest."	"What are you noticing in your body?"
Emotion	"I feel frightened."	"What are you frightened might happen?"
Belief / interpretation	"I feel nobody cares."	"What experiences lead you to that conclusion?"
Desire / impulse	"I feel like disappearing."	"What does disappearing mean to you?"

Powlison distinguishes these uses without calling emotion irrelevant or infallible. Tripp places emotion throughout situations, responses, thoughts, and motives. Use the distinctions to understand, not to correct a person's grammar. A phrase suggesting death or danger needs direct clarification and qualified support, not only literary or theological analysis. (Powlison, 2003, ch. 13; Tripp, 2002, ch. 10; NIMH, 2024.)

Move from reading to care

For each station: read the whole unit; mark what is explicit and inferred; identify the passage's main movement; name a proposed axiom; explain the limits of transfer; write a response shaped by Scripture; then ask how the person might experience it. A faithful response may be a pause, practical help, a protective action, a question, or permission to read together.

Sources throughout: the biblical units on each station; Powlison, Seeing with New Eyes, chs. 4 and 13; Tripp, Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands, chs. 7 and 10; Gross, Foundations of Scriptural Restoration, ch. 4. All dialogue exercises and applications are original. Full references are in Document 01.

STATION 1 • HAGAR

Affliction, power, and being seen

Read the full unit: Genesis 16:1–16; compare Genesis 15 and 21:8–21.

Narrative work. Locate Hagar within the household and the promise narrative. Distinguish Sarai's and Abram's actions, Hagar's responses, and the divine encounter. Identify what the narrator supplies that a present-day counselor would not automatically know.

Emotion and meaning. Fear, humiliation, hope, or relief may be reasonable hypotheses. Mark them as hypotheses where the text does not explicitly name them; do not write a psychological diagnosis for Hagar.

Fictional intake statement

"Everybody at church sees a dependable wife. Nobody asks what happens after we go home. I am afraid you will tell me to go back and try harder."

1. What textual details would keep you from treating this simply as a submission problem?

2. What does the narrative reveal about power and affliction? What is its place in the larger biblical story?

Boundary. Do not turn the return command in this event into universal advice for someone facing abuse. A present-day danger requires qualified safeguarding, not a reenactment of the narrative.

3. Write two sentences that embody attention and protection without quoting a verse.

4. Write one open question about the person's actual circumstances, then one permission-based invitation to discuss Hagar.

Peer review: What is rooted in the passage? What is an application rather than a command? What would you ask to learn how your response was received?

STATION 2 • HANNAH

Anguish that a helper misreads

Read the full unit: 1 Samuel 1:1–20; read into 1:21–2:11 for the narrative's larger movement.

Narrative work. Track repeated provocation, household responses, Hannah's prayer, Eli's interpretation, her correction, and what changes in the scene. Ask how private anguish connects with the book's unfolding history.

Emotion and meaning. Separate sorrow and distress named in the story from the meaning you infer from tears, silence, appetite, or facial expression. Notice both her grief and her agency in answering Eli.

Fictional intake statement

"When I cry, people tell me to be grateful for the children I have. I stopped explaining why I am sad."

1. What does Eli presume? What information becomes available only when Hannah speaks?

2. What should a counselor learn from this scene about interpreting silence, tears, and prayer?

Boundary. Do not promise a child, a repaired relationship, or emotional relief in exchange for sufficient prayer. Do not equate all grief with Hannah's particular longing.

3. Write a reflection that makes space for sorrow without assuming its full meaning.

4. With permission, introduce the narrative in context and ask whether any part connects—or does not connect—to the person's experience.

Peer review: What is rooted in the passage? What is an application rather than a command? What would you ask to learn how your response was received?

STATION 3 • ELIJAH

Fear, bodily limits, and isolation

Read the full unit: 1 Kings 18:36–19:18, giving close attention to 19:1–18.

Narrative work. Do not start at the meal alone. Follow the threat, travel, wish to die, bodily provision, repeated account of his predicament, divine encounter, and renewed tasks and relationships.

Emotion and meaning. Which fears and statements are explicit? What might the repetition of Elijah's account invite you to ask? Distinguish a theological reading from an unsupported retrospective medical diagnosis.

Fictional intake statement

"I have not been sleeping. I am holding everybody up. Sometimes I wish I would not wake up."

1. Which parts of the narrative resist both "it is all unbelief" and "a nap solves everything"?

2. What remains relational and theological even after bodily care is offered?

Boundary. This fictional statement requires direct suicide inquiry and prompt qualified support under the school's safety procedure. Do not continue an ordinary emotions exercise or wait for the person to volunteer a plan. NIMH's public guidance begins with asking and connecting to help.

3. Write the student counselor's first two sentences, including a direct safety question and a clear decision to involve qualified help.

4. Only after safety is addressed, identify one bodily, relational, and spiritual question that could guide later care.

Peer review: What is rooted in the passage? What is an application rather than a command? What would you ask to learn how your response was received?

STATION 4 • JONAH AND JESUS

Anger is not one simple thing

Read the full unit: Jonah 3:1–4:11 and Mark 3:1–6.

Narrative work. Read Jonah's response to mercy within the Nineveh narrative. In Mark, locate Jesus' response within the conflict over healing on the Sabbath. Attend to each person's object of concern and resulting action.

Emotion and meaning. Do not equate similar emotional words with similar moral meaning. Consider what is loved, feared, protected, resented, and done. Which judgments are supported by the narrative rather than by the emotion's intensity?

Fictional intake statement

"I am furious that he hurt someone and everyone is telling me to forgive. Part of me wants him exposed, and part of me wants him to suffer."

1. What differences between the two biblical scenes prevent a one-size-fits-all judgment of anger?

2. What facts would you need before distinguishing protection, justice, grief, and vengeance in this person's statement?

Boundary. Do not use Jonah to shame someone for opposing abuse. Do not use Jesus' anger to declare every angry action righteous. Affirm the importance of the concern without endorsing every intended response.

3. Write a response that acknowledges the harm and asks about the intended action.

4. Write one question exploring what the person longs to protect, and one question about what would constitute a truthful, non-retaliatory next step.

Peer review: What is rooted in the passage? What is an application rather than a command? What would you ask to learn how your response was received?

STATION 5 • PETER

Failure, sorrow, and a future beyond shame

Read the full unit: Luke 22:31–34, 54–62 and John 21:1–19.

Narrative work. Hold Peter's confidence and denial beside Jesus' initiative after the resurrection. Notice provision, conversation, the questions, and the charge. Attend to what is said and what the narrator leaves unexplained.

Emotion and meaning. Distinguish responsibility for an action, sorrow over that action, and a global conclusion that the whole person is worthless. Do not assign Peter a modern diagnosis.

Fictional intake statement

"I said something cruel to my daughter. I apologized, but now I am sure I ruin everybody who depends on me."

1. How does the narrative hold wrongdoing and continuing relationship together without pretending the denial did not occur?

2. What does the passage actually say about Peter's response? What part of your interpretation is inference?

Boundary. The possible link between three questions and three denials is a literary inference, not an explicit explanation in John. Do not use this passage to guarantee restored office or bypass protection and accountability after serious harm.

3. Write a response that takes the hurtful words seriously without agreeing that the person is beyond grace.

4. Ask about the child's experience, a non-burdensome repair, and what support could help the parent respond differently.

Peer review: What is rooted in the passage? What is an application rather than a command? What would you ask to learn how your response was received?

STATION 6 • TWO SONS

Resentment, belonging, and shared joy

Read the full unit: Luke 15:1–2 and 11–32; notice the intervening parables as part of the setting.

Narrative work. Identify the audience's complaint and follow both sons. Observe what the father does and says, how each son describes himself, and whose response is left unresolved at the end.

Emotion and meaning. Explore humiliation, longing, resentment, welcome, and joy without turning either son into a stock personality type. Ask what each person believes belonging should depend upon.

Fictional intake statement

"I am happy my sister is getting help. I also resent it. I have been the responsible one for years, and nobody notices when I am exhausted."

1. How does the setting of the parable shape its meaning? What is lost if only the younger son is discussed?

2. What would you need to know before assuming the speaker's resentment is simply entitlement?

Boundary. Do not identify every human parent with the father in the parable or demand unsafe family closeness. Do not invent the elder brother's final decision. Let the text's unanswered invitation remain visible.

3. Write a reflection that can hold genuine gladness and resentment together while leaving room to examine both.

4. Ask about unnoticed labor, receiving care, and the possibility of joy that does not depend on being the most deserving person.

Peer review: What is rooted in the passage? What is an application rather than a command? What would you ask to learn how your response was received?