



Enhancing Marital Relationships Through Scripture: Biblical Counseling for Christian Married Couples in BuroI, Dasmariñas, Cavite

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Abstract

This study examined the perceived role of biblical counseling in enhancing marital relationships within Christian churches in BuroI, Dasmariñas, Cavite. It aimed to investigate couples' perceptions of counseling effectiveness on communication, their reported levels of marital satisfaction, and the correlation between these two self-reported factors. A mixed-methods design was employed, integrating quantitative surveys and qualitative Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). Using purposive sampling, data were gathered from 50 married couples who had participated in biblical counseling programs. Findings indicated that participants perceived counseling as "very effective" in improving communication (average weighted mean [AWM] = 3.63) and reported being "very satisfied" with their marital relationships (AWM = 3.82). Statistical analysis showed a strong, significant positive correlation between perceived communication improvement and reported marital satisfaction (Pearson $r = 0.76$, $p = 0.000$). Complementary qualitative data highlighted that participants experienced spiritual growth, improved conflict resolution through biblical principles, and reinforced their view of marriage as a sacred covenant. These results suggest that, from the perspective of Christian couples, faith-based counseling plays a vital role in strengthening relationships, promoting marital fulfillment, and nurturing spiritual commitment.

Keywords: Biblical counseling, Christian couples, marital relationship, faith-based intervention



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INTRODUCTION

Marriage, as a divinely instituted covenant, is a foundational relationship in society and the church. Within Christian communities, couples are encouraged to uphold biblical principles that foster love, respect, and mutual submission. However, marital challenges such as communication breakdowns, infidelity, and emotional disconnection remain prevalent, even among believers (Ripley, 2019). In response, Christian churches have increasingly turned to biblical counseling to guide couples toward spiritual and relational healing. This faith-based counseling integrates scriptural truths with pastoral care to restore the divine purpose of marriage (Jones & Butman, 2011).

Strengthening marital relationships through Scripture involves applying biblical teachings to

real-life situations, encouraging couples to emulate Christ-like love and forgiveness. The Bible provides timeless principles for handling conflict, fostering emotional intimacy, and cultivating mutual support, particularly through passages such as 1 Corinthians 13 and Colossians 3:12-14 (Tripp, 2010). Biblical counseling also helps couples identify and correct unbiblical thinking patterns, encouraging transformation through the renewal of the mind. Christian counselors equip couples to build resilient marriages centered on faith and obedience to God's word by grounding counseling practices in Scripture (Keller, 2011). Supporting literature affirms the effectiveness of biblical counseling in marital enrichment. Tan (2016) emphasizes that integrating prayer and Scripture into counseling leads to deeper emotional healing and relational growth.

Meanwhile, Ripley et al. (2019) found that spiritually integrated interventions can significantly improve marital satisfaction and forgiveness outcomes in couples' therapy. These studies highlight the potential of faith-based approaches to transform struggling marriages into Christ-centered partnerships. This study focuses on Christian married couples in Burol, Dasmariñas, Cavite. It examines their perceptions of biblical counseling's effectiveness in enhancing communication, improving marital satisfaction, and exploring the relationship between the two. This study aims to answer the following questions:

1. How do Christian married couples in Burol, Dasmariñas, Cavite perceive the effectiveness of biblical counseling in enhancing marital communication?
2. How do they perceive its influence on marital satisfaction?
3. What is the relationship between marital communication and marital satisfaction as influenced by biblical counseling?
4. What are the experiences and spiritual growth of the married couples as a result of engaging in Biblical counseling?

The study is limited to legally married Christian couples in Burol, Dasmariñas, Cavite who have participated in biblical counseling sessions for at least three months. It excludes couples outside this geographic or religious context and does not consider counseling from secular or non-biblical sources. The findings may not be generalized to all Christian communities due to variations in doctrine and counseling structures. Additionally, as data rely on self-reports, responses may reflect personal perceptions and biases.

For the purposes of this study, the following key terms are defined. Biblical counseling refers to the Christ-centered, Scripture-based process of guiding married couples toward resolving relational and spiritual concerns through pastoral or church-led support. Christian church pertains to congregations in Burol,

Dasmariñas, Cavite that uphold Christian doctrines and offer spiritual services, including counseling. Communication refers to verbal and non-verbal interactions between spouses, including expression of thoughts, feelings, and conflict resolution. Married couples are legally married heterosexual partners who have participated in biblical counseling for at least three months. Marital relationship encompasses the ongoing emotional, spiritual, and practical bond between husband and wife. Marital satisfaction refers to contentment and fulfillment in marriage, particularly in love, respect, and harmony. Scripture pertains to the Holy Bible as the foundation of counseling sessions. Spiritual growth denotes the deepening of a couple's relationship with God and each other through prayer, faith, forgiveness, and application of biblical principles.

METHODS

Research Design. This study utilized a mixed-method research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to gain a comprehensive understanding of the impact of biblical counseling on marital relationships. Quantitative methods were employed to measure levels of communication, conflict resolution ability, and marital satisfaction through standardized survey instruments. Meanwhile, qualitative methods were used to explore couples lived experiences and spiritual growth through in-depth interviews. This combination allowed for a robust analysis of both measurable outcomes and rich narratives. The study aimed to provide a holistic evaluation of the counseling process by using both approaches.

Respondents of the Study. The population of the study consisted of fifty (50) married couples who are active members of Christian churches located in Burol, Dasmariñas, Cavite. The respondents included couples who have undergone or are currently undergoing biblical counseling as part of their church's marital support program. The research locale was purposely chosen due to the presence of

multiple Christian congregations offering biblical counseling services within the area.

Purposive sampling was used as the primary sampling technique for this study, as it allowed the researcher to intentionally select individuals who could provide relevant and meaningful insights into the role of biblical counseling in strengthening marital relationships. This non-probability sampling method is commonly used when the study requires participants who meet specific criteria related to the research objectives. The technique enabled the researcher to focus on couples who had direct experiences with biblical counseling, ensuring that the data collected would be applicable to the study's aims.

The criteria for selecting the respondents included: (1) being legally married and members of a Christian church in Burol, Dasmariñas, Cavite; (2) having participated in at least three sessions of biblical counseling within the last year; and (3) willingness to participate in both the survey and the interview components of the research. These criteria ensured that the respondents had adequate exposure to counseling and were capable of reflecting on its impact on their marital relationship. The inclusion of both husbands and wives in the study provided a balanced perspective on the effectiveness and influence of biblical counseling.

Instrument and Validation. This study utilized two primary data gathering instruments: a structured survey questionnaire and a focus group discussion (FGD) interview guide. The structured survey questionnaire was used to gather quantitative data on married couples' perceptions of biblical counseling in relation to communication and marital satisfaction. Meanwhile, the FGD interview guide was developed to elicit qualitative responses and deeper insights regarding their lived experiences and spiritual growth after participating in biblical counseling sessions. These tools were designed to complement each other, allowing the researcher to capture both measurable trends and personal narratives.

The structured questionnaire consisted of closed-ended questions categorized under the key variables of the study. The survey was divided into three main parts to cover all dimensions of the study's objectives based on the statement of the problem. Part 1 asked respondents' demographic profile in terms of age, sex, number of years married, frequency of attending biblical counseling, and church affiliation. Part 2 measured the perceived extent of effectiveness of biblical counseling in improving communication, using a 4-point scale from 4 (very effective) to 1 (not effective). A sample item under this category was: *"Biblical counseling helped me and my spouse communicate more openly."* Part 3 consisted of Likert-scale statements (very satisfied to not satisfied) measuring the level of marital satisfaction among Christian couples in participating in biblical counseling. A sample item was: *"I am more content with the current state of my marriage after participating in biblical counseling."*

The questionnaire was written in clear and simple language to suit the comprehension level of the target respondents. A pilot test was conducted among 10 non-participating married individuals from a nearby church to assess the clarity and reliability of the instrument.

The FGD interview guide, on the other hand, consisted of open-ended questions aimed at exploring the participants' reflections, personal changes, and spiritual growth as influenced by biblical counseling. These questions were arranged thematically, corresponding to the study's research questions, and allowed for follow-up or probing questions during the actual discussion. The FGDs were conducted in a comfortable and confidential environment to encourage open sharing among participants. Audio recordings were made (with consent) for accurate transcription and analysis of qualitative responses. The discussions helped provide deeper context and validate findings derived from the survey results.

Data Gathering Procedure. The data gathering process began with securing the necessary permissions from church leaders and local

authorities in Burol, Dasmariñas, Cavite, Philippines, to conduct the study among married couples in selected Christian churches. Upon approval, the researcher coordinated with church coordinators to identify potential respondents and schedule appointments for both survey distribution and focus group discussions (FGDs). Ethical considerations were strictly followed, including obtaining informed consent and assuring participants of confidentiality and voluntary participation. The data collection was carried out in two phases to ensure thorough and organized execution.

In the first phase, the structured survey questionnaires were distributed to the selected married couples after church services or during scheduled small group meetings. The participants were given time to read and respond to the items independently, with the researcher present to clarify any questions. The completed questionnaires were collected on the same day or within an agreed timeframe. The responses were then coded and tabulated for statistical analysis. This provided the quantitative data needed to assess communication improvement, conflict resolution, and marital satisfaction.

The second phase involved conducting FGDs to gather qualitative data that supported and enriched the survey findings. Small groups of 5–8 participants were invited to join moderated discussions guided by the prepared FGD interview questions. Each session lasted around 60 to 90 minutes and was audio recorded (with consent) for transcription and analysis. These discussions allowed participants to share their personal experiences and perceptions of biblical counseling more openly and deeply. The triangulation of both quantitative and qualitative data enhanced the validity of the study's results.

Data Analysis. The researcher employed both descriptive and inferential statistics for the method of analyzing the data. The collected data in this study were subjected to various statistical treatments to analyze and interpret the quantitative information obtained from the structured questionnaire. These statistical procedures aimed to provide meaningful insights, establish relationships between

variables, and test the research hypotheses. All statistical analyses were carried out using Microsoft Excel and IBM SPSS Statistics Version 25 (64-bit), which was employed to generate descriptive summaries, establish relationships between variables, and test the research hypotheses.

The summary of data was organized and presented in tabular form for the purpose of interpretation. Microsoft Excel and Data Analysis application were used to analyze the data. To interpret the data gathered, the following statistical treatments were used:

Weighted Mean. This was calculated to determine the average responses of the respondents on the Likert scale item-questions on Parts 2 to 3 of the survey questionnaire. This is also intended to answer research questions 1 and 2.

The result of the weighted mean in research question 1 on the perceived extent of effectiveness of biblical counseling in improving the married couples' communication within their relationship, was interpreted using the following scales and interpretation in Table 1.

Table 1
Scale in measuring married couple's communication

Point	Scale	Verbal Interpretation
4	3.25 – 4.00	Very Effective
3	2.50 – 3.24	Effective
2	1.75 – 2.49	Slightly Effective
1	1.00 – 1.74	Not Effective

The result of the weighted mean in research question 2 on the level of marital satisfaction among Christian couples in participating in biblical counseling, was interpreted using the following scales and interpretation in Table 2.

Table 2
Scale in measuring the level of marital satisfaction

Point	Scale	Verbal Interpretation
4	3.25 – 4.00	Very Satisfied
3	2.50 – 3.24	Satisfied
2	1.75 – 2.49	Slightly Satisfied
1	1.00 – 1.74	Not Satisfied

Pearson Product Moment Correlation Test. This was computed to measure the strength and direction of association between variables and examine the relationship between the extent of effectiveness of biblical counseling on Christian couples' communication and their level of marital satisfaction.

To interpret the computed Pearson correlation coefficient (r), the following descriptive interpretation scale, adapted from Schober et al. (2018).

Table 3
Descriptive interpretation scale

r value	Descriptive Interpretation
0.00 to ± 0.10	Negligible Correlation
± 0.10 to ± 0.39	Weak Correlation
± 0.40 to ± 0.69	Moderate Correlation
± 0.70 to ± 0.89	Strong Correlation
± 0.90 to ± 1.00	Very Strong Correlation

Frequency Count. This was used to quantify how many participants expressed each theme, helping to present the data more clearly and meaningfully. The frequency of each theme was tabulated to highlight which aspects of spiritual and relational growth were most commonly experienced by couples.

Manual Thematic Analysis. This was used to identify recurring themes and sub- themes from the participants' narratives. Thematic analysis involved carefully reviewing transcripts of Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), coding significant statements, and grouping them into overarching themes such as enhanced communication, strengthened spiritual intimacy, improved conflict resolution, greater emotional closeness, personal spiritual growth, and renewed marital commitment.

Ethical Considerations. This study observed strict ethical standards throughout both the survey and focus group discussions. Prior to data collection, the researcher secured permission from church leaders and local authorities in Burol, Dasmariñas, Cavite.

All participants were informed of the study's objectives, procedures, and instruments, including the structured questionnaire and the focus group discussion (FGD) guide, and gave their voluntary consent before participating. They were also assured that their participation was confidential and that they could withdraw at any time without consequence.

FGDs pose unique ethical challenges beyond those of one-to-one survey; thus, they were briefed beforehand about the unpredictable nature of group interaction and were reminded to respect each other's privacy. Although full anonymity cannot be guaranteed in FGDs, confidentiality was emphasized, and only pseudonyms or codes were used in transcripts and reports. The moderator monitored discussions carefully to avoid over-disclosure or potentially harmful exchanges, while still allowing space for meaningful sharing. Sessions concluded with a debriefing to process experiences and ensure that no distress remained unaddressed. These measures ensured that the ethical concerns specific to surveys and FGDs were properly addressed, protecting participants' rights, dignity, and well-being.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Effectiveness of biblical counseling in enhancing marital communication as perceived by the Christian married couples. The quantitative analysis of the survey data in Table 4 yielded significant findings regarding the effectiveness of biblical counseling. The perceived effectiveness of biblical counseling in improving communication among married couples received an Average Weighted Mean (AWM) of 3.63, which corresponds to a descriptive rating of "Very Effective." This indicates that participants strongly felt that the counseling process fostered more open, empathetic, and respectful dialogue within their relationships.

Regarding marital satisfaction, couples reported a high level of contentment, with an AWM of 3.82, corresponding to a descriptive rating of "Very Satisfied." This suggests that

participation in biblical counseling contributed to greater emotional and spiritual intimacy, enhanced trust, and improved role harmony between spouses. These findings are consistent with Ripley et al. (2019), who emphasized that spiritually integrated counseling fosters healthier communication patterns by grounding relational dialogue in biblical principles.

Table 4
Perceived Extent of the Effectiveness of Biblical Counseling in Improving Couples' Communication

Indicators	WM	Descriptive Interpretation
1. Biblical counseling reduced misunderstandings in our communication.	3.80	Very Effective
2. We are now more willing to listen to each other after attending biblical counseling.	3.75	Very Effective
3. Counseling sessions provided us with biblical principles to guide our conversations.	3.50	Very Effective
4. We can now better express our feelings and needs to one another.	3.47	Very Effective
5. Biblical counseling reduced misunderstandings in our communication.	3.61	Very Effective
6. Our discussions are now more respectful and grounded in spiritual understanding.	3.85	Very Effective
7. Biblical counseling taught us to handle disagreements with kindness and patience.	3.70	Very Effective
8. Our communication has become more constructive and solution-focused since attending sessions.	3.56	Very Effective
9. The counseling process helped us become more empathetic communicators.	3.43	Very Effective
10. We actively apply what we learned in counseling when communicating daily.	3.60	Very Effective
Average Weighted Mean	3.63	Very Effective

Additionally, Lambert (2016) noted that biblical counseling promotes empathy, patience, and kindness — attributes that the current findings also reflect, particularly in managing disagreements and reducing misunderstandings. Francisco's (2021) study in the Philippine context, which found that couples experienced greater relational harmony and deeper emotional connections following faith-based counseling interventions. Overall, the results affirm that biblical counseling plays a significant role in enhancing the communication dynamics of Christian couples.

Perceived influence on marital satisfaction. Table 5 shows the result of the survey on the level of marital satisfaction among Christian couples as a result of participating in biblical

counseling. The results indicate that Christian couples who participated in biblical counseling reported a very high level of marital satisfaction, with an overall Average Weighted Mean of 3.82. The highest-rated items include feeling more content with their marriage (WM = 3.90), experiencing a more peaceful and fulfilling relationship (WM = 3.90), and an increase in mutual trust (WM = 3.88).

Table 5
Level of Marital Satisfaction Among Christian Couples in Participating in Biblical Counseling

Indicators	WM	Descriptive Interpretation
1. I am more content with the current state of my marriage after participating in biblical counseling.	3.90	Very Satisfied
2. My spouse and I express love and appreciation more frequently as a result of counseling.	3.74	Very Satisfied
3. Biblical counseling has deepened our emotional and spiritual intimacy.	3.85	Very Satisfied
4. I feel that my spouse is more attentive and responsive to my needs after counseling sessions.	3.80	Very Satisfied
5. We are more satisfied with how we manage household roles and responsibilities.	3.72	Very Satisfied
6. Counseling sessions have helped us experience a more peaceful and fulfilling marriage.	3.90	Very Satisfied
7. Participation in biblical counseling has strengthened our mutual trust.	3.88	Very Satisfied
8. I would recommend biblical counseling to other couples to improve marital satisfaction.	3.80	Very Satisfied
Average Weighted Mean	3.82	Very Satisfied

The results also show that counseling contributed to deepening emotional and spiritual intimacy (WM = 3.85), improved expressions of love and appreciation (WM = 3.74), and greater attentiveness and responsiveness between spouses (WM = 3.80). These findings align with Ripley et al. (2019), who demonstrated that spiritually integrated counseling leads to higher marital satisfaction and emotional closeness by fostering shared faith practices and values. Further supporting these results, Ripley et al. (2019) highlighted that couples who engage in faith-based counseling often develop a stronger sense of relational purpose and cohesion, which translates into greater satisfaction and resilience in marriage.

Relationship between marital communication and marital satisfaction. The relationship between the effectiveness of biblical counseling on communication and the level of marital satisfaction yielded a Pearson r -value of 0.76, indicating a strong positive correlation between the two variables. The p -value of 0.000 confirms that this correlation is highly significant at the 0.05 level of significance. This means that as couples perceive biblical counseling to be more effective in improving their communication, their overall marital satisfaction also tends to increase. These findings are strongly supported by Ripley et al. (2019), who concluded that improved communication through spiritually integrated counseling plays a pivotal role in enhancing marital satisfaction.

Table 6
Themes on Experiences and Spiritual Growth as a Result in Engaging Biblical Counseling

Themes	Sub-themes	Frequency	Sample Responses
1. Enhanced Communication and Understanding	- Improved openness in conversations - Active listening	8 out of 8	"We now talk more openly and listen with understanding, which was hard before counseling."
2. Strengthened Spiritual Intimacy	- Shared prayer life - Joint Bible reading	7 out of 8	"We now read the Bible together and pray regularly as a couple, which deepens our bond."
3. Greater Emotional Intimacy	Increased affection and empathy	6 out of 8	"I feel closer to my spouse now; we are more affectionate and considerate after counseling."
4. Conflict Resolution through Biblical Principles	- Applying patience and forgiveness - Using Scripture in conflicts	7 out of 8	"Now, when we argue, we remember to apply what the Bible says about forgiveness and patience."
5. Personal Spiritual Growth	- Deeper relationship with God - Increased personal prayer life	6 out of 8	"My personal faith grew stronger; I learned to trust God more through this process."
6. Strengthened Marital Commitment	- Renewed sense of commitment - Clearer understanding of marriage as a covenant	5 out of 8	"The counseling helped us see our marriage as a covenant, not just a relationship."

Experiences and spiritual growth of the married couples as a result of engaging in Biblical counseling. Table 6 presents the themes, sub-themes and sample responses in the Focus Group Discussion (FGD). In the thematic analysis of the FGD responses, it revealed several key experiences and areas of spiritual growth among Christian couples who participated in biblical counseling. The most frequently cited change was enhanced communication and understanding, where all participants reported improved openness, active listening, and mutual respect during conversations. Many couples also experienced strengthened spiritual intimacy, particularly

through the development of shared spiritual practices such as praying together and reading the Bible as a couple. This aligns with the findings of Ripley et al. (2019), who noted that biblically integrated counseling fosters both emotional and spiritual closeness in marriage. These results confirm that as the effectiveness of communication improved through counseling, marital satisfaction also increased significantly.

The qualitative analysis of the Focus Group Discussions (FGD) provided deeper insights. Three major themes emerged:

Nurtured Spiritual Growth. Couples described how counseling strengthened their individual and shared faith, leading to a more profound understanding of marriage as a sacred covenant.

Enhanced Conflict Resolution. Participants reported learning to apply biblical principles, such as forgiveness and humility, to resolve conflicts constructively.

Strengthened Marital Covenant. The counseling experience reinforced their commitment to their marriage, viewing it not just as a social contract but as a divine partnership with God at the center.

Conclusion. The findings of this study strongly affirm the significant and positive role of biblical counseling in strengthening marital relationships among Christian couples. The quantitative results, which show high levels of effectiveness in communication (AWM=3.63) and marital satisfaction (AWM=3.82), align with existing literature that highlights the benefits of spiritually-integrated interventions (Tan, 2016; Ripley et al., 2019). The strong positive correlation ($r=0.76$) between improved communication and marital satisfaction provides empirical evidence that effective, biblically-grounded communication is a cornerstone of a healthy Christian marriage. When couples learn to communicate with openness, empathy, and respect—skills fostered in counseling—their overall satisfaction with the relationship deepens. The

qualitative themes further illuminate how this transformation occurs. Biblical counseling appears to be effective not just because it teaches relational techniques, but because it facilitates spiritual growth. By grounding their relationship in shared faith and biblical principles, couples develop a more resilient framework for navigating challenges. The emphasis on marriage as a sacred covenant, as described by participants, elevates their commitment beyond mere personal happiness to one of spiritual stewardship. This aligns with Keller's (2011) view that grounding counseling in Scripture helps transform the heart and mind. Based on these comprehensive findings, it is concluded that biblical counseling is a vital and effective tool for Christian ministries seeking to support married couples. It directly addresses key relational dynamics like communication and conflict resolution while simultaneously fostering the spiritual foundation necessary for a lasting, God-honoring union.

Recommendations. From the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are hereby given:

For Church Leaders and Counselors. It is highly recommended that churches in Burol, Dasmariñas, Cavite, and beyond, continue to offer and enhance structured biblical counseling programs. These programs should explicitly integrate communication skills training, faith-based activities, and spiritual disciplines.

For Married Couples. Christian couples are encouraged to proactively seek biblical counseling not only as a corrective measure for existing problems but also as a preventative tool for marital enrichment and spiritual growth.

For Future Researchers. Further studies could explore the long-term impact of biblical counseling or compare the effectiveness of different biblical counseling models to identify best practices.

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