

Biblical Application to Life Management Skills (BALM)

Teacher/Mentor: Gail K Efting

Type of Class: Group class - This is a two-year program of instruction which can be started at any time.

Class Fee: \$1,240 per year (\$620 per semester) per person

If paying monthly, 10 monthly payments, \$130.00 per month, beginning August, 2024.

All tuition and fees are payable directly to: Gail Efting at: 527 S. Frances St., Sunnyvale, CA 94086, or contributed to your school.

Questions: Email Gail Efting at BALMinstitute@gmail.com

Minimum & Maximum Class size: Minimum - 5, maximum - 18 students

Credit: Successful completion can be used to satisfy requirements for studies in Rhetoric, Logic, Biblical Hermeneutics, Leadership, Microeconomics, Life Management Skills, Communication, Apologetics, Leadership Skills, Psychology, Philosophy and World View, Senior Thesis, or elective credit, depending on hours spent on the various aspects of the coursework.

This class description is long. I understand your time is very valuable. If you sign up for this class, please make some time, right away, to read this description all the way through - as the teaching philosophy and assignments which must be done BEFORE CLASS BEGINS are contained herein. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me immediately at BALMinstitute@gmail.com. Thank you, Gail K Efting

Course Description: Our students are well trained academically. But there are many additional challenges for which they need to be prepared. We can't tackle these challenges for them, but like a good coach, our goal is to train and prepare them to excel on their own. In order to do their best as unto the Lord in every aspect of their lives, our students will need to know how to apply Scripture to every situation, every day. They will need to be able to think clearly and with discernment, to work through issues logically, to respond effectively and appropriately, and to make sound, Biblical decisions based on accurate observations and conclusions. They will also need to be prepared for typical life management tasks.

Biblical Application to Life Management (BALM) is simply applying Biblical principles to real life situations. This course will give students the tools they need to think Biblically as they build useful skills related to the many practical, every-day life issues they will face as adults. It will encourage them to develop their critical thinking skills and teach them effective, scripturally based strategies for Life Management.

Every class session is experiential and discussion based, and will focus on a different aspect of Biblical Life Management skills. Socratic and Pauline discussion, practice in Logic and Rhetoric, interactive and generative activities, experiential learning, and written reflection and analysis will provide the students with opportunities to absorb, process and use the material presented. After each topic is covered, students will be required to submit written and/or verbal feedback. Additionally, projects will be assigned every class session, for completion before the next class.

Course Content: *This course is a two-year study.* Students may begin at any time and continue through the cycle to their end point, as the blocks are separate subjects, not progressive. Students who repeat the two-year cycle will process the material in a more thorough and mature way, develop and practice leadership skills, and have opportunities to serve in the larger community. Some of the areas of study include;

"World View" or mental models and how they affect our thinking, "thinking Biblically", underlying bias, presumptions and expectations, reality vs. fantasy, deception vs. truth, perceptive grid, mind-set, and values.

Decision making skills - observation and discernment, action and reflection, 'T squares', priorities, God's will and our choices.

Strategic planning and goal setting skills - vision casting, purpose and mission, identifying appropriate goals, effective planning and 'blocking', successful self-management by objectives.

Perseverance and effective follow through - building consistent patterns to completion, the "enthusiasm parabola", dealing with frustration and learning from "failure", not growing weary in well doing; going to the Word during difficulty.

Time management - scheduling, organization, margin, "Sabbath rest", incremental orientation, dealing with procrastination and perfectionism, short- and long-term tasking, "bubble time".

People skills - communication styles and patterns, emotional intelligence, communication levels, social intelligence, communication tracking; "communication stones", conflict transformation, Biblical mandates for resolution and reconciliation, social intelligence, connection and engagement, complementarity, speaking the Truth in love, accountability, relationships in hierarchical situations.

Money management - financial tracking and planning, budgets, ownership and debt, giving, Biblical attitudes toward "need", consumerism, counting the cost, short- and long-term financial planning.

Critical thinking skills – research and investigation, distractions to discernment, “emotional charge”, emotional intelligence, critical analysis, logic, rhetoric, “persuasion by exposure”, “taking every thought captive”.

Applied Biblical Hermeneutics – reading the Bible as a pattern for life, inductive study, levels of reading in the Bible, applying Scripture in “real life”, Biblical research, word and topic studies, use of Biblical study tools, checking against Biblical principles, “doing the Word.”

Leadership skills – team building, leadership types and theories, systems thinking, evaluation and application in conflicted, cooperative or collaborative situations, transactional and transformative learning, building learning communities, servant leadership, and more.

Assessment: I will be available to parents as needed to answer questions or simply to be a sounding board for discussion. Please talk with me as often as you like. You are welcome to sit in on the class on a regular basis, even all year if you like. I want to do everything I can to assist you in this important process of training students to think Biblically and use effective skills in all aspects of their lives. Please keep in mind that the purpose of this class is NOT primarily to ‘pad a transcript’, but to mold a life.

This is not like any other class your students will ever take. Its purpose is to help them prepare for REAL LIFE, of which classroom experiences and academic endeavors are only a very small part! Therefore, a parental concern about “how well the student is performing” in the class can be counterproductive to their real growth process.

I know suspending this concern can be very difficult. I can guarantee you that they WILL learn a tremendous amount, students always do. And they will be better prepared for college and life than you could imagine because of what they learn in this class. In fact, many students choose to take the class more than the recommended four semesters, so they can glean even more. There is so much material, no one can get it all the first (or even second) time. But in order to accomplish that tremendous learning process, you MUST permit the student to fully experience the material and coursework COMPLETELY, themselves. The more you do for them (thinking, explanation, retention, etc.), and the more you worry about “how they are doing”, the less they will gain and retain for life. Most of us apply what we gain from our OWN realizations, our own “aha” moments, rather than from instruction or inculcation by others.

If you will, think about how we all learned to walk. Imagine what would have happened if someone had tried to do that learning process FOR us, or to explain it to us (assuming we could have understood them). What if no one ever let us down on the floor without a protective halter holding us up “in case we might fall”? If we were exhorted to “perform” our walking and then were judged critically on that performance? Now imagine what it would have been like if someone had been GRADING us on our progress and trying to figure out how to help us get better grades in walking! How different would our lives be now! Would we be walking so smoothly and thoughtlessly as so many of us do? I wonder.

We walk because we had the DESIRE, the OPPORTUNITY, the ACCURATE FEEDBACK (through failure in a safe environment), and the MODELING for it. We experienced REALIZATIONS about it. We experienced a SENSE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT in the face of frustration (sometimes quite severe) when we had some small success. And remember, we were DESIGNED to do it! We walk because we EXPERIENCED the walking process, done poorly and well, over and over again, and we learned as we went. Please permit your student to learn these life skills in that same way, free of judgment or evaluation. They will learn so much more!

Parent involvement in students' work for this class is a priority. They need to be able to observe, ask questions, do interviews, and bounce ideas off of you, as their Godly counsel. They need to be able to ‘think out loud’ with you and express their observations and opinions about a LOT of things. They need to be allowed to fail and learn from their failure. I’m just asking that you let their learning flow where it goes, without external control or restriction. I strongly request that you permit your students to experience the joys, confusions, frustrations, successes, and even failures, through which they will be stretched and grow in this class. Your encouragement for them to persevere will make all the difference for them.

My goal for our students in teaching this class is fourfold;

- 1) to encourage students to build the habit of seeking Godly counsel in decision making,
- 2) to stimulate students’ transition from seeing parent as leader/authority to parent as wise counselor and mentor,
- 3) to give the students experiences and realizations which will stimulate the growth of a real, day to day, ability to consistently apply Scripture to life,
- 4) to give the students reality-based attitudes, clear understanding, and concrete skills related to aspects of life they will have to face as they mature into adulthood.

Performance in the class will not be evaluated like a “regular” class! If you decide to use some of the material covered for transcript (academic) records, please contact Gail Efting. Information can be gleaned from the required weekly commentaries, in the online resource, on class participation, on work submitted, and for completion of assigned projects. You will be able to give them a grade at the end of the year, if you choose, and this class does provide opportunities to fulfill academic requirements. But perform Mok ance in life will be evaluated based on applying the material learned to real life situations, and THAT will take a while!

Course Requirements: My commitment is to provide opportunities, instruction and encouragement in observation, discernment and critical thinking, communication, both written and verbal, life management skills, and discovery and application of God's truths in every-day situations around us. I will provide material and training which will be beneficial long term and practically useful.

The commitment requested of each student is to be in class ready to start on time for every session, to submit required postings on time, to complete assignments appropriately, prepared to observe, listen, learn, think, participate, and contribute at his/her best "as unto the Lord". This class requires extensive thought and work. Students will get out of the class what they put in, no less, no more.

Every week students will post a commentary, online, within two days of class adjournment. This required commentary includes:

1. What happened in the class,
2. what the student learned in class,
3. how the student felt or what the student thought about what s/he learned or experienced in class, and
4. an overview of the assignments for the coming week.

This commentary will also function as a communication device for you, to clarify your weekly work process and help you focus on some of the issues we are discussing in class. This commentary is designed to provide your student with an opportunity for review and reflection, which are important aspects of conversion from transactional learning to transformational learning. If completed correctly, it will also provide the parent, as teacher of record, with the information necessary to complete any accomplishment descriptions throughout the year.

The commitment requested of each "coach" (or Godly counsel) is to help your student be accountable for the requirements of the class, starting on time, submitting work as instructed, participation, doing their best "as unto the Lord". Also, many of the projects may require your input or availability for interviews or processes. Please do not do the work FOR your student, or give them the answers to thought questions, but encourage them to persevere (sometimes in the face of frustration) to their goals. A commentary IS required from each student for every class.

Attendance: Class learning is often experiential and interactive, and cannot be easily repeated outside of the group experience, so consistent attendance within each topic block (both in class and online) is EXTREMELY important. There is new material given almost every week, which students may not obtain easily if they miss a class of a weekly posting.

Additionally, it is often difficult or impossible for students to complete 'homework assignments' when they have not participated in the preceding class. However, because of the "block" nature of the coursework, a topic is reviewed and combined with new information each week through the progression of the block. Also, if necessary, a block could be missed in its entirety without too seriously damaging the learning process during the rest of the year. And, of course, students are always welcome to gather some of the information they missed during the following class, or during that block the following cycle. This does give you the flexibility which is so important to the homeschool experience. If you have scheduled to miss classes for any reason, please let me know as soon as YOU know, so that I can adjust as necessary, to make the learning process easier. Courtesy mandates communication.

Classroom Expectations: Real learning is exciting, stimulating and tremendously interesting. It has intrinsic rewards of discovery, growth and realization. Every student should feel free, and safe, to embrace the joy of learning without distraction. In this class, students are encouraged to put in the effort to take every thought captive to the obedience of Jesus Christ, ready to give an answer with gentleness and respect, considering one another ahead of themselves. Nothing will be permitted in the classroom which distracts students from the thrilling process of learning. All students should come to class, and post online, attentive, courteous, interactive, and teachable.

Assignment Criteria: Overviews of assignments are given in the BALM Institute online platform, and often are activity or interview oriented. Topic blocks range from 4 to 8 weeks, depending on the subject matter being studied, with submission of online posts and a project (which requires several weeks to complete) due during each block. Students are STRONGLY encouraged to seek Godly counsel between sessions, and often have interview assignments. Parents are encouraged to attend class to observe if they desire, so that they are familiar with the processes experienced by their students. Many do so.

Growth in life is based, to a large degree, on perseverance. Because of the nature of student-centered teaching, students will get just as much benefit (guidance, feedback, help and growth) as they contribute of their own effort to the learning process. It's that simple. For example, if you want to change an attitude, gain knowledge or develop a skill, and are willing to participate in the class learning experiences and do your best with the block projects, I will be in class ready to start on time for every session, to submit required postings on time, to complete assignments appropriately, prepared to observe, listen, learn, think, participate, and contribute at his/her best "as unto the Lord". This class requires extensive thought and work. Students will get out of the class what they put in, no less, no more.

Your questions and comments are encouraged, and I will respond respectfully and thoughtfully to any question you ask. Basically, you get the benefit of availability of a skilled Biblical counselor, on ANY topic, throughout the time you are in the BALM class. Please make sure you send the email to BALMinstitute@gmail.com and put "BALM" in the subject line. Additionally, I am available for questions, additional discussion or assistance in Biblical research or with projects, in the BALM Library by appointment.

Materials: **BIBLICAL APPLICATION IN LIFE MANAGEMENT (BALM) NOTEBOOK** (please bring every week)

- **BIBLE, in which the student can make notes.**

Students will be marking and making notes in these Bibles. Please make sure your student has a Bible they will feel comfortable writing in. Notebook sections should include;

This class description in the Binder, in front of the sections listed below.

Bible / Information Requests

Notes

Observations and realizations journal

Project Records and Documents

Research Materials

You may use an electronic Notebook equivalent if you have the capacity to access online resources in class. Do not presume that we will have WIFI. If your student is using an electronic device instead of a 'hard' notebook, these sections should be set up before class, with all required information and files ready to go for each category.

Put your **BALM Notebook** together before the first class. Make sure that you have your Bible, a good translation that you can write in, ready to go. You will need to bring your Bible with you to EVERY class. Make sure your mind is ready to FOCUS (well rested, well fed, well exercised, comfortable shoes, etc.) and RESPECTFULLY DIALOGUE about the subject matter, when you come into class. If you have any questions about these assignments, feel free to send a note.

Workload: All classes taught by Gail Efting are student and family centered. You, as teacher of record, will be evaluating whether your student will be working at middle, high school, or honors levels (Gail Efting can help you with that). There are several ways to determine workload, based on how you plan to evaluate course credit. Determination before the class begins, of the method to be used, makes the workload planning and record keeping process much easier. Two common methods of valuation are by **time** (based on the number of hours of coursework completed in the year) and by **competency** (based on the actual performance of the student in the area of study).

Time based methods (called Carnegie hours) are used by most school systems, as the time spent is easy to track. But I recommend the **competency** method, because this method is actually more student centered. Competency measurements allow the student to interact with the content and process as long (or as little) as is necessary for acceptable performance in each area of study. This gives the student the opportunity to learn how to become a self-directed, life-long learner. Competency based measures are more effective in allowing students to work to mastery in areas of interest, by stimulating learning autonomy (a very important capacity, if they intend to go to college or get a job). Honors work requires more time and effort, of course, but in an area of passion, it is well worth while to allow time and energy for work to this level. The online system will keep track of assignments and commentaries completed, records of posts, and any other project materials the student chooses to store there. Please contact Gail Efting if you would like to discuss any of this further.

Curriculum: The Holy Bible (accurate translation, no paraphrases) in which you can write. All other necessary coursework materials will be provided online.

About Your Instructor: Gail Efting's purpose is to live each day as unto the Lord, doing the works He has prepared for her, in the light of God's Word. Her mission is to encourage others to consistently apply God's Truth to every aspect of everyday life. She has served as a Bible teacher and Biblical counselor for many years, serving as librarian for the Theological Library at PBC, Palo Alto, and host of Bible Dig for 23 years. Her BALM (**B**iblical **A**pplication to **L**ife **M**anagement skills) class is an outgrowth of this mission.

'Mrs E' has taught at all levels, in Christian private school settings and homeschool Enrichment classes, as well as in college classrooms and corporate boardrooms. She has offered help and encouragement to Christian homeschooling families for over 40 years, including serving as Director of TKA's Enrichment Program for 18 years. She has also encouraged and supported many new Christian schools in development and growth. The Eftings homeschooled their own children through High School. Mrs. Efting has taught the BALM class, in various forms, for over 35 years.

Contacting the Teacher: If you have any questions, comments or suggestions, please feel free to send Gail Efting an e-mail at BALMinstitute@gmail.com. Please make sure you put, "BALM", your name, and your topic in the subject line of your note.

Teacher Assistant Position Available: One TA position (with tuition discount) is currently available for this class. If you would like to enjoy some lively discussions with curious and insightful students and have participated in at least two years of BALM (or can support the class with adult insight, or in a more "behind the scenes" way) please send Gail Efting an e-mail immediately.

Assignments before classes begin: As soon as you read through this Info Sheet, the student should IMMEDIATELY send

Gail Efting an e-mail at BALMinstitute@gmail.com. In the subject line, enter "BALM" and your name. If you are registering for an online supported class, as soon as confirmation of your registration for this class has been received, you will receive a student ID and password by email, from BALMpathwright. (Make sure you check you spam folder, in case your system rejects it.) Please go online to the URL given, and begin the intro process for this course. You will be asked to complete your registration online and answer several questions before class begins. Please make sure you have set up your student account online no later than September10th.