

# Arab Baptist Theological Seminary

## كلية اللاهوت المعمدانية العربية

[www.abtslebanon.org](http://www.abtslebanon.org)

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We love to see God working in the lives and ministries of our students. Although the program is made up of distance-learning components, we do not only get to offer students the tools and knowledge to grow in life and ministry, but we also get to walk closely with them, forming friendships and offering mentorship. Rabih Hasbany, the Program Lead, shared:

Due to their earnest desire to apply the course material, students often come to me with updates seeking feedback and counsel. Sometimes, it's about whether they should stay in their home countries or not. Sometimes, it's about starting a new ministry. For instance, a student in the south of Lebanon shared how the program courses led him to start an outreach ministry in his city. Several students recently shared how the *Small Groups* course led them to change the way they do home groups. Students often tell us about the change they are experiencing while studying in this program, and we give the glory to God.

We started a new term in April, and students enrolled in four courses. The following are some of the experiences our students and tutors have had with the courses so far.

### Pastoral Counselling

Sevine, a Syrian Kurdish student, lives in Lebanon and serves 206 families through her local church's ministry. These families were impacted by the Syrian war, and because of that, the *Pastoral Counselling* course was timely, especially since she is part of the pastoral counselling and trauma healing team at church.

She shared, "Many of the people I serve need psychological healing. The course is teaching me to avoid being preachy when what they truly need is someone to help them find the answers for themselves. In one of the course's units, we learned about empathy. If I manage to mirror their feelings and experiences, then I can connect with them in a much more fulfilling way."

*"The course is teaching me to avoid being preachy..."*

Like Sevine, each one of our students has those who need pastoral care within their own circle of influence, wherever they are in the region and beyond. Church leaders are looking for material that helps them serve those who are tired, both



spiritually and emotionally. This course is intended to enable students to do just that.

“Humanity has been groaning ever since its separation from the source of stability,” shared one of the course tutors, who pastors a home group in Morocco alongside her husband. She continued:

*“Humanity has been groaning ever since its separation from the source of stability...”*

Today, we suffer from wars, epidemics, displacement, consumerism, the widening gap between children and parents, and other arrows that the enemy continues to direct at us. Here lies the need for counselling as it seeks to stand by the broken and unbind those who have been fettered by all sorts of chains.

This is the first time that I accompany students in this particular course, and I have come across some common misconceptions about counselling which I hope that they were able to change through this course. These include trying to think for people when offering counsel, deeming counselling as solely the pastor’s responsibility, and ignoring the need for professional intervention.

## Biblical Theology

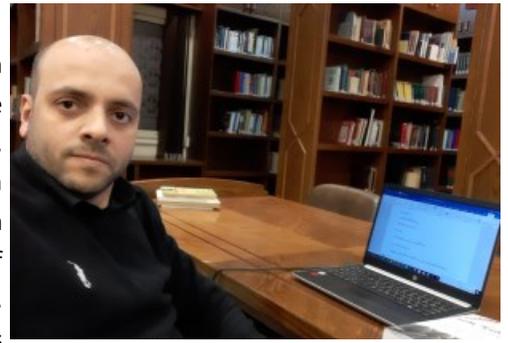
The Bible tells the story of God’s unrelenting resolve to carry out His redemptive plan. As our student Elia from Syria put it, “This course made me see that the Bible tells one story of God’s love and justice and the gradual fulfilment of His redemption. Right from the beginning, God wanted His people to be a beacon and to tell the nations of His salvation.”



Because our student Elia is passionate about sharing the gospel, this course has helped him have a fuller view of the gospel and of God’s Kingdom, motivating him to take part in God’s mission. In addition to helping students understand the timeline of God’s story with humanity, this course helps them understand theological concepts such as land, covenant, choice and the

second coming.

Ashraf from Egypt, one of the course tutors, graduated from ABTS with a Bachelor of Theology in 2012,



and today, he is the pastor of the Evangelical Baptist Church in Ezbet El Nakhel, Cairo. He has also been a part-time teacher of biblical Greek at Petrescue Bible Institute, Cairo, for the past five years. Ashraf recently joined the Certificate in Ministry team of tutors, and this is the first course that he tutors.

He shared regarding his experience so far, “I am always excited to see the progress of my students. As I get to know them more, I strive to value each of their distinct characters to create a productive learning environment. It has been a joy to watch them excitedly reap the fruit of their work every week.”

*“It has been a joy to watch them excitedly reap the fruit of their work every week.”*

## Church as a Restoring Community



The Church has always had to deal with conflict. That is why church leaders need effective tools to be peacemakers and reflect the best image of God’s Kingdom in their local communities. This course then aims to help Christ followers understand their responsibility of spreading a culture of peacemaking in their surroundings.

Our student Sanaa is part of the women’s ministry at her local church in Syria. She shared,

*When you have a goal set before you, it becomes a part of you, and you do your best to make it happen. This is how I feel about studying theology. With each course I take, I feel that my ministry has gained more depth, and I understand God’s word better.*

The *Church as a Restoring Community* course has positively influenced my ministry with the women at my local Baptist church in Jaramana, Syria. It is taking a new direction as we join hands and use our gifts to fulfil the Great Commission. Together, we have come up with a lesson plan for believers of a non-Christian background so that we can follow up with them and encourage them to share the gospel.

***“When you have a goal set before you, it becomes a part of you...”***

Walid, a Syrian Kurdish student, serves home groups of Syrian refugees living in Lebanon, and he intends to start a ministry for the internally displaced within Syria. He shared that the course taught him healthy ways to be a peacemaker and work humbly towards doing God’s will just like Moses.

Our student Charbel from Lebanon disciples more than 260 new believers at his local church. He also pastors small groups. He recently shared, “This course showed me how I can help the people I disciple to deal with conflict within their families or other areas of life. It showed me a better form of reconciliation as well as my responsibility to bring people together and work towards a healthy community. The God of peace has asked us to be peacemakers and ambassadors for Christ—to reconcile creation to God so that He restores it to what it was meant to be, in a state of perfect harmony.”

***“She had recently lost her husband in a car accident. She was still mourning, and she blamed God for allowing her husband to die...”***

## Nature of God

The task of this course is “the study of God”, who is in fact beyond any study. This course aims at studying what God has revealed Himself to be in the Bible. It is not meant, however, to merely offer abstract knowledge about God but to show Him as living among us, heeding our cries, and feeling our pain. One of the tutors of this course, our alumnus Elia from Egypt shared,

This week, a student contacted me, and she was crying because, at one point, students were asked to share a personal account on losing a loved one. She told me that she had recently lost her husband in a car accident. She was still mourning, and she blamed God for allowing her husband to die. I encouraged her to write about it in the form of a lament, to spill out all the pain she had kept inside and the anger she had harbored against God. In our relationship with Him, God has given us the space to vent our anger. One of the things this course deals with is that moment when a fallen, suffering human faces a loving God who deeply cares about us.



Our student Maan teaches God’s word at the National Evangelical Alliance Church in Iraq. He is also part of the home group ministry, and he is currently taking the *Nature of God* course. He shared:

Some inadvertently portray God as a tyrant who crushes all those who do not worship Him and then throws them into the pit of fire. Then, when they begin to talk about God’s sacrificial love, it seems as if God’s attributes are contradictory. This course taught me that the only way to resolve these contradictions is the Lord Jesus. When we see how He loved the prostitute, the tax collector, and the leper, we can be certain that God feels for us, and He desires to save us.

Please continue to pray for our Certificate in Ministry students. God is using each of them in their unique locations across the region. We praise God for the opportunity to serve them and their churches by offering leadership training and theological education.



## A new Blog Post goes out every Thursday!

Check out the latest posts below:



[Should a Faithful Christian Vote in the Lebanese Election \(or Any Other Election\)?](#)



[Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus, Let Our National Borders Grow Strangely Dim](#)



[The Talents of Our Youth: The Importance of Youth Empowerment for an Aging Church](#)



[A Movemental Turn in Missions: Thoughts on New Eras and New Wineskins](#)



### Pray with Us!

#### Prayer Requests from Some of our Certificate in Ministry Tutors and Students

**Ashraf from Egypt | Tutor and ABTS graduate**

Lord, grant my heart to be always filled with mercy and kindness so that the people around me are drawn to You, and use me to make a change in my community. Grant me a daily measure of wisdom and help me to be more aware of the needs of Your people. Help me have a disciple-making mindset so that I help believers mature in a Kingdom community that impacts the world and tells of God's love.

**Sevine from Syria | Student**

Please pray that the Lord uses me and my husband for His service so that we share with others the Good News of salvation. Please pray that the Kurdish people in Afrin are freed from oppression. Like many Kurdish Christ followers, we had to flee the war in Afrin after extremist groups attacked our city.

**Charbel from Lebanon | Student**

Pray for the small groups that I pastor. Our Lord is being glorified among us, and we are seeing fruit. So pray for the brothers and sisters that I disciple, and pray that the Lord uses me as a peacemaker among them.

**Elia from Egypt | Tutor and ABTS graduate**

Please pray that the Lord of all knowledge grants me wisdom to understand His will for my life and to use every responsibility that He has given me for the glory of Christ.

**Woman from Morocco | Tutor and ABTS graduate**

Pray for all the students who took the *Pastoral Counselling* course. May it be a tool in their hands to serve the Lord. May they not be contented with handing in their assignments and fulfilling the course requirements without experiencing a real, practical change. Pray also for the Church in Morocco because it is still a growing church, and many are still hesitant about sharing their suffering openly with their brothers and sisters because they are not used to ask for counsel or offering it.

**Almess from Iraq | Tutor and ABTS graduate**

Please pray for all our students who are having to deal with power cuts and internet shortages in their journey of online learning.