

Philosophies of Counseling

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- Preface -

When you consider all the ideas there are about counseling one becomes aware that it is not very scientific. The world has over 10,000 ideas about counseling and over 200 different therapies. This means that most people who are trained in the state schools, even if they are saved, become very eclectic. Either the Word of God is their authority or the ideas, concepts, etc. of their unsaved professors has become their source of authority. Too often the Christian counselor is seeking after some Scripture to support his counseling tenets. Psychology is the foundation of his ministry. It is wise to understand that there is a great chasm between what God says and what man teaches. May God be true and every man a liar. (Also study the *Biblical Basis For Counseling*.)

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Comparisons of Counseling Philosophies

Few people realize that there are over 10,000 different ideas in the field of secular counseling, and over 250 different therapeutic methods. The whole field is in a state of flux... constantly changing. New methods, theories, or ideas of how to counsel come on the scene regularly. It is obvious that it is a very unscientific field.

One of Dr. Gary Collin's books sets forth about a dozen different approaches among those who consider themselves to be Christian counselors, and these ideas represent but a few of the many held by Christians.

Consider these questions in evaluating various theories: (It is in the answer of these that we find a great difference between counselors. Many who profess to be Christian counselors are so in word only but are eclectic and if they use the Bible it is used to support the psychological view which they hold.)

1. How do they view sin?
2. How do they approach anthropology? (Or their view of man.)
Behind every secular psychology is an unbiblical anthropology .
3. How do they view psychology?
4. What is most important: philosophy and psychological training or theological training?

Psychology may be helpful toward understanding the problem (diagnosis) but modern secular psychology is very poor at giving the remedy for the problems of mankind.

5. How do they define the problem?
6. How important do they consider feelings as the basis of the counselee's problems?
7. What is the goal of counseling?
8. What is the role of the counselor?
9. What is the source of TRUTH to be used by the counselor?
10. Is the problem of the counselee to be improved, cured or changed?
11. What is the counselor's methodology in counseling?

Consider the "epistemology" in their counseling: (Epistemology -- is the *division of philosophy that investigates the nature and origin of knowledge.*)

The issue is: "How do they propose to know what they know?"

1. By human intuition -- They go by their hunch.
2. By human reasoning -- It seems to make sense, so I will "run with it."
3. By empiricism -- (***Empiricism: the view that experience of the senses is the only source of knowledge.***)

4. By Divine Revelation -- What does God say? (Jh. 8:32; 17:17; Psa. 19:7-14)

Consider some issues at stake:

1. Is my counseling different from others? If so, why?
2. Can I safely refer a person to other counselors? If so, on what basis, what criteria, and based on what facts?
3. How careful should I be in reading, absorbing, using ideas of writers (even Christians) in the field of counseling. Are most of them eclectic?
4. How can I weight the issues and know when I can use ideas gleaned from various writers?
5. How can I get across to counselees an understanding of my approach, my method in counseling so they understand the difference, and why?

Consideration of: from my counseling manual, appendix's

Consideration of: material from Croom, pg 39, Vol. I

Consideration of chart made from materials from Faith Baptist Church Ministries.

The Bible Is Our Source For Restoration

“How Can I Have a Part in Restoring Others?”

The early church was made up of imperfect people. Sometimes we idealize the apostolic period. There were plenty of problems in the churches. (Consider the book of Galatians or I and II Corinthians.) Yet, they were urged to be involved in a *restoration ministry*.

Such a ministry among God’s people is greatly needed today. It should be carried out by church leaders, by workers in the church toward one another and in the home from parent to child. Counseling is a process by which one Christian restores another to a place of usefulness to Christ in His Church. The very philosophy of position we should maintain in counseling would be for the purpose of using the Word of God to bring about change in the lives of others as well as in our personal needs.

I. The GOAL of ALL COUNSELING IS CHANGE AND RESTORATION!

A. What does it mean to bring about restoration through change?

(Gal. 6:1)

1. It means the same as mending torn fishing nets, or restoring a broken bone. We seek, biblically, to help another put into place that which is out of place. This necessitates *change in the person’s life*.
2. The torn net and the broken arm are of little value until restoration has taken place.
3. Restoration is the obligation of the Christian to his brother. (Gal. 6:1-4; Col. 3:16; Col. 1:28-29)
4. Because of love for the brethren (I Jh 3:16) we are to seek to restore them.
5. Love should be strong enough to cast out any fear. (I Jh 4:17-18)
6. Counseling is part of the ministry that God expects to use through us as a means for the *church to build up itself in love*. (Eph. 4:11, 12, 16).
7. The pastor, as the teacher of the flock, is to equip all the saints for their work of the ministry; that means that he must train his members in counseling. We need a ministry of restoration!

B. Biblical counseling is using the Word of God with another person. To bring a) *change*, b) through *confrontation*, c) out of *concern*. (Gal. 6:1)

1. This means there are sinful patterns and activities in the life of the the counselee, (child, youth, friend, etc.) that God wants *changed*.
2. This change is brought about through a *verbal confrontation* of the counselee with the Scriptures as the counselor (parent, friends, etc.) ministers them in the power of the Holy Spirit.
3. This confrontation is done in a loving, caring, familial manner out of *concern*, for the sake of the counselee.

4. Counseling basically is the labor or effort whereby we seek to help another apply the Word of God to his life.
(II Tim. 3:16-17; II Tim. 2:15; James 1:19-25)
5. Spiritual restoration takes place as the Word of God is applied, and by the Holy Spirit's power in our own lives.
 - a. The Holy Spirit is the *Spirit of counsel* -- Isa. 11:2; Jh 14:26
 - b. It is from Him that all wisdom and ability to do Scriptural counseling flows.
 - c. There must be:
 - a prayerful willingness and obedience,
 - coupled with a diligent study of the Word of God,
 - and a deep love for Christ, and
 - love for His church through which the Spirit works.

C. Who is to be involved in restoring others? (Gal. 6:1; Col. 3:16)

1. "All who have the Spirit" (Gal. 6:1) are to have a counseling ministry.
2. All those, who at that moment do not have a need to be restored themselves, are to minister to those whom God providentially places in their pathway.
3. We are to be **ready** to rebuke, encourage, instruct, counsel or any combination of these.
4. The saved, who meet the Biblical directives, are *potential counselors* (not in the formal sense) or they are *potential counselees* in need.
(Rom. 15:14; Col. 3:16)
5. He makes us experienced counselors as we learn from His Word, and obediently live it out in our personal lives first of all.
6. Obedience must begin even though we may have fears,
 - a. for, you must begin counseling others because God says so,
 - b. in spite of how you feel,
 - c. in spite of fears and apprehensions.

II. HOW DOES RESTORATION or CHANGE TAKE PLACE?

Let us note, in more detail:

A. There must be *change*!

1. In restoring another to usefulness a change is needed, in --
 - a. sinful beliefs, attitudes, thoughts and
 - b. in sinful behavior. This must be replaced by righteous acts.
2. All counseling has to do with change in sinful beliefs, judgments, values, relationships, and behaviors to be replaced by righteous ones.
3. Sin in the life has led to distortion of life in each of these categories.
4. There ought to be both *preventive* and *remedial* counseling.

B. There must be *confrontation*:

1. Face to face contact by which the counselee is faced with Biblical principles that apply to his situation.
2. Not is harshness, meanness, or criticalness, etc., but in godly love. (Eph. 5:1-2; Rom. 12:10; I Pet. 1:22)

C. The element of great *concern* must be present.

1. Caring for another with strong desire and untiring effort to relieve the other person from the misery that sinful life patterns bring -- this ought to be the *motive* of all counseling.
2. Out of concern one ministers the Word of God -- interpreting, applying the precepts and principles of the Word of God.
3. It is a ministry cared out prayerfully with God's power.

D. The Word of God is the tool God promises to use: (II Tim. 3:16-17)

1. *Doctrine* -- teaching the Word, setting forth the standard.
2. *Reproof* -- bringing conviction -- for all genuine change only takes place where there is a level of depth through conviction.
3. *Correction* -- Correction brings the person to the place of confessing sin, to come to the place of repentance, or change of mind leading to change in behavior.
4. *Instruction in Righteousness* -- training in a righteous life.

III. "WHAT IF I GIVE THE WRONG COUNSEL?" "I am not trained to do this counseling, we might say!"

1. "Suppose I do more harm than good?"
2. What is the answer?
 - a. **If** you are always carefully to advise only those things that you are absolutely certain are Scriptural, and
 - b. **if** you will earnestly pray about your effort, asking God to work through you, and
(*Be sure you share what God has said in His Word.*)
 - c. **if** you are ready to admit your lack of knowledge when you don't have the answers, and
 - d. **if** all this is done in a spirit (or attitude) of meekness, you can do the other person no harm; *you cannot go wrong.*

These are crucial "ifs!"

3. Never guess! Never bluff! Tell the truth, even when it hurts.
4. Admit it when you are stumped! Ask them to pray with you for God to reveal His answer in His Word. Search, study, and seek out the answers during the next week.

5. When you proceed this way, God will bless your efforts, and work in hearts. You will be surprised how quickly you will grow, and how much you will learn.
6. Your only task is to share God's Word,
 - a. analyzing the problem in the light of God's Word,
 - b. mapping out a solution from the Word, and
 - c. to improvise ways and means for doing so at every point.
 - For truth grows out of and is appropriate to the Scriptures.
 - All you do from start to finish, is to follow God's Word, the Bible.
 - The Spirit, who inspired it, works through His Word.
(We will share more of this along the way in this seminar!)

IV. SOME QUALITIES That I NEED to FULFILL The TASK!

God is addressing the average person in the pew in the following references.

A. Goodness, Rom. 15:14

B. Knowledge of the Word of Christ, Rom. 15:14; Col. 3:16;

C. Wisdom, Col. 3:16; James 1:5-8;

D. Based on these characteristics, the following is true:

1. Giving guidance and direction are definitive of God's view of counseling.
2. Good counselors confront the counselee in his situation,
 - a. guiding him into interpreting his situation in the light of the Bible,
 - b. and through direction, give encouragement and
 - c. monitoring his progress, help him to make whatever changes God requires.

V. HOW I AM TO COUNSEL OTHERS?

A. God's Word is sufficient for counseling and molding a life.

1. You possess an all-sufficient and absolutely correct source of information -- the Scriptures.
2. You have inerrant text -- God's textbook.
3. The Word of God never becomes obsolete. It contains all that anyone could ever need to live a life of godliness in every age and culture.
4. It is God's revelation, and especially deals with all kinds of interpersonal relationships.

5. It tells you how to relate properly to other people in ways that glorify God. It tells us how to **repair broken relationships**.
 - a. This concern centers around children, spouses, parents, persons at work, relatives, and ourselves.
 - b. In His Word, God gives us guidance for all kinds of problems and needs.

B. Giving Biblical answers, Biblical teaching is what God desires!

1. Biblical **teaching** is teaching that conforms to the Holy Spirit's intention and plan in the use of the Bible.
 - a. Much of counseling is guiding the person into the knowledge of God's will, (Eph. 5:17; 6:6) and
 - b. the doing of the will of God as the Word of God is applied. (Col. 4:12; James 1:21-22;
2. Biblical teaching is sharing the **whole counsel** of God. (Acts 20:27, 31; 20:20)
3. Biblical teaching is teaching that **grows** in fullness and depth. (II Tim. 2:15; II Tim. 3:16-17)
4. Biblical teaching in counseling involves **explaining** both --
 - a. the meaning of the verses, and
 - b. a discussion of how they relate to the counselee.
 - c. Christ spent much of His life teaching the Word, and in so doing counseled many then, and now, as we apply his Words.
5. In counseling, Biblical teaching is clear, **direct** and to the point. (Consider Col. 3:8-14; Eph. 4:17-32)
6. In counseling, Biblical teaching **deals with** sin, repentance, forgiveness, sanctification, and other theological matters. (See above texts and James 3:13-18.)
7. Biblical teaching through counseling **promotes God's glory**. (I Cor. 10:31-32; Eph. 1:12)

Conclusions:

- The spiritual Christian (See Romans 8:1-13) has God-given ability, through the use of the Word of God to minister that Word.
- We are to do this by the power of the Holy Spirit, to the end we may witness change and restoration in the lives of those whom God brings into their lives.
- The greatest need is our dedication, and our intense study of the Word of God so we can be used to restore others for God's glory. II Tim. 2:15; 22-26)
- This is all a great contrast to what the world teaches, or their approach to counseling, or what they even expect to achieve. If you study all of the various themes dealt with on our web site... you will understand what God wants.

Similarity of Methods -- Secular and Biblical

There are apparent similarities between Biblical counseling and other methods -- secular and "so-called" Christian. These do not justify the Biblical counselor using their methods.

1. In questions about the past and the extent to which the past impacts the present.

Depth psychology

ventilation
blame-shifting, projectionism

Biblical truth

face sinful patterns, habits
recognize past sins with
continued present effects

2. Pressures and stress in life

Depth Psychology

stress is the problem

Biblical truth Reaction

to stress is the problem.
"Belief system, self-talk"
self-generated attitudes

3. Modify Behavior

Depth Psychology

"Behaviorist theory"
all is relative, no standard

Biblical truth Changed

by the Word of God,
become God's kind of person!

4. Habits of life

Depth Psychology

"Behaviorists' position"
we are the product of environment,
and evolution. (no hope)
failure.

Biblical truth

Result of sinful thoughts
and actions.
Result of programming of

"Sow thoughts, -- reap actions,
sow actions-- reap
habits , sow habits -- reap
character,
sow character -- reap
destiny."

5. Listening to understand the problems

Third Force Psychology

non directive counseling,
listen to know the feelings,
solution within the client,
good listening may be the cure

Biblical truth

Prov. 18:13; James 1:19;
it is extremely important to
face facts, and to
listen to know the needs.

6. Asking questions, probing

Third Force

mirror questions -- client will find
answers within self

Biblical truth

understanding needs, &
truth, focus on problems

All truth is not God's truth!" All "Christian" counselors are not Biblical counselors. Secular psychology may at times be accurate in descriptive elements, but is wholly lacking in prescriptive elements.