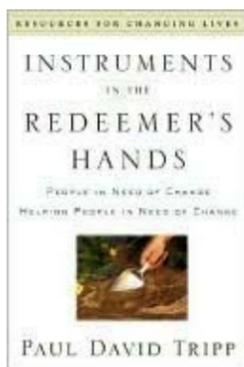
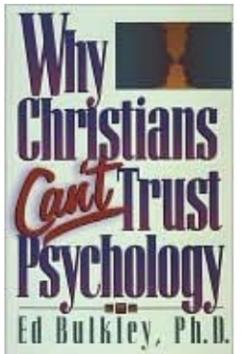


Resources for Life Change

(Resources are available in the Grace Resource Center):

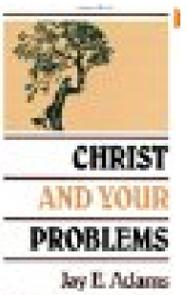
“Why Christians Can’t Trust Psychology,” by Dr. Ed Bulkley---In light of the articles written in this newsletter and in previous newsletters, it might be worth the readers’ time to get this book and examine the issue stated by the title. Bulkley walks the reader through the various problems with the psychological world, as it relates to psychotherapy. He offers documentation after documentation to show why Christians cannot trust Prescriptive Psychology. Based upon a true story, the story line that is interwoven throughout the book makes the book more readable. It is sure to be a discussion starter. This is a great book, addressing a great subject.



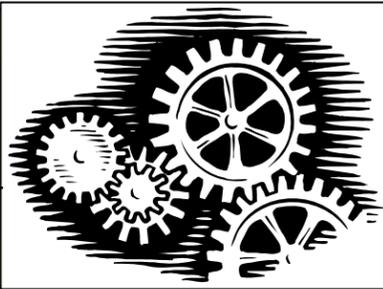
“Instruments In the Redeemer’s Hands,” by Paul Tripp---This very helpful book is written in an easy to read style that will help the reader understand the joys, the challenges, the reality of, and the process of counseling. It’s a great book for you to start off with if you want to figure out how to practice nouthetic ministry.

FREE ARTICLE: “RAPHA: THE GOLDEN KEY TO MENTAL HEALTH? OR PSYCHOHERESY?” With the increasing popularity of various counseling techniques and philosophies one that is sure to be talked about in our area is “Rapha Counseling Philosophy.” Not every thing that claims to be biblical is actually biblical and this article gives you an understanding of this very point.

“Christ and Your Problems,” by Jay Adams---Many people who are struggling with various aspects of living life often feel like they are the only one going through the struggle, that they can’t overcome the struggle, and that there is no way to conquer the sin. In this short booklet, Adams unpacks I Corinthians 10:13 and brings great hope to the reader about the commonality of temptation, the faithful God who provides a way of escape, and the fact that all believers can indeed have victory over sin.



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By Pastor Blake Shaw

Caution: The article you are about to read might just irk you. That's not the intention, but if perhaps it does step on your proverbial toes and get you to

WHAT IS
MOLDING AND
SHAPING YOU?

think about your long-held, but possibly wrong beliefs, then perhaps a little toe squishing isn't so bad. Besides, doesn't it do our hearts some good to every-once-in-a-while have someone state something that causes us to think about what we believe and why? Sure it does. It might hurt. We might not like it at the time, but in the long run, I think many of us appreciate having truth brought to the forefront of our lives.

We are all, as Christians, in a process of growing. If you are not growing to be more like Christ, then there is something terribly wrong and the problem isn't outside of you. If there is no growth to a deeper and richer love for Christ and His Word and work, then something is wrong internally. True believers are in a process of growing and changing. We are all in the process, or at least should be, of learning more about God and His Word and making changes in beliefs and thought patterns..

Because of this reality, it didn't really catch me by surprise when Mary (not her real name), a 50 year old woman from a solid biblical church shared her thoughts about people's problems and her thoughts were loaded with psychological jargon. Mary had been disciplined in the confines of the modern American church with all of its psychology, and yet, by her own admission, something just wasn't quite right. Mary understood that one becomes like her teachers. She understood the influence of the American church culture. She had 50 years of influence and teaching that was shot-through with a compromise with psychology. Think about it: 50 years of teaching and counsel that resonated more with what godless men like Freud, Rogers, Maslow, Jung, Skinner, etc. taught about man's problems and the answer to those problems than what God's Word says. To be sure, such teaching wasn't in every sermon, every Sunday school class, or every book read, but unbiblical teaching and philosophy was effectively interwoven through radio programs, sermons, articles, books, Bible studies, and other avenues; all of which were designed to convey a message and impact lives. This teaching resonated with Mary, as it does with so many others, because it seemed to describe life as we understand and experience it. It has been said that the most dangerous lie is the one that has a lot of truth mixed with a little bit of error and false doctrine. That is precisely what Mary had embraced.

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As Mary stated her thoughts on the problems we face she spoke of things such as unmet needs, poor self-image and poor self-esteem, of certain rights that all humans have, of people being good-hearted, of Satan being the cause of peoples' sin. Yet Mary, wisely, was unsettled in all of her explanations. She had lived through the self-image/self-esteem movement and saw its emptiness and futility. She had attempted to drink at the Love and Respect well, embracing the idea that she needed love. But again she came up empty for her husband's supposed lack of love; it had left her bitter. She had tried the love language route as well, but found that such teaching pushed her deeper into self and left her angry because, "her husband had spent years expressing love for her, but in totally the wrong way."

She grew up in an era when Flip Wilson's, "The Devil Made Me Do It" comedy routine had left the realm of comedy and sadly, been embraced by folks in the church as a means to explain why people sin. It only made sense: "The Devil made me do it." We humans look for a blame shift and Satan seems like an easy target. And there were many pastors, Bible teachers, counselors, and radio personalities promoting teaching that allowed Mary to do what Eve did in the Garden of Eden, blame Satan.

Mary had been drinking from broken cisterns that can't hold water (Jeremiah 2:13) and now she wondered, "Pastor Blake, have we been sold a cheap bill of goods? I'm just wondering if all that I've been taught and all I've taught and embraced and promoted is actually contrary to God's Word." Mary is asking the question that far too many of us have never asked about the things we have embraced over the years.

You see, Mary gets it. When God says, "Blessed is the man who does NOT walk in the counsel of the wicked," He means just that. Mary's unsettledness was due to the fact that she was starting to see that the church had compromised and that she too, had compromised with the counsel of the wicked. She was starting to see that both she and the church had embraced the godless idea that if we add psychology to the Bible, we can offer a superior counsel. Mary is running---make that sprinting---back to the All Sufficient Word of God. As she walks in discernment, humility, brokenness, gratitude, love, and Christ-dependence, she becomes useful to the Master. How about you?



Renewing Our Minds

WHY BIBLICAL COUNSEL IN THE LOCAL CHURCH: PART ONE: "Broken Cisterns versus living water"

By Pam Gannon

First Corinthians 10:31 tells us, "...whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." Since our purpose is to glorify God by being and making disciples, how do we glorify God by offering biblical counseling at Grace? How does biblical counseling at Grace Bible Church fit within this 'life purpose' statement given to us by God? I think we could answer this in three ways. First, we glorify God by using His Word as our source of truth for counseling issues. Second, we glorify God by committing to His counseling purpose and methods. Third, we glorify God by utilizing counseling as outreach/evangelism. In this article, we'll talk about the first way to glorify God: by using His Word as our source of truth for counseling.

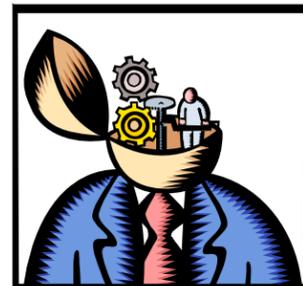
Considering the plethora of ideas about counseling that vie for attention in our culture. The first issue to be clarified is: "What is the source of truth for counseling?" While most Christians would acknowledge the Bible should make *some* contribution, biblical counselors believe that the inerrant, authoritative, inspired, infallible, and sufficient Word of God must have active, functional control in how and what we counsel. Counseling should *emerge* from Scripture, not merely be consistent with it. This means that what Scripture emphasizes is what our counseling emphasizes. God is man's creator and the Bible is His Word, and His Word claims sufficiency for life and wisdom (Ps. 119:99-100; Ps. 19:7; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3-8). We find in its pages an accurate diagnosis, explanation, and effective treatment for our souls. God knows us better than we know ourselves and better than other people know us. God's Word is the Wonderful Counselor (Isa. 9:6; John 1:1). We glorify God as we acknowledge the **sufficiency** of His Word and commit to it as our source of counseling truth.

What do we mean when we say that Scriptures are **sufficient** for counseling? It means that we understand every counseling problem ultimately relates to God, because according to Acts 17:28, all human problems occur in 'God context': "...in Him we live and move and exist." God has something to say about all our desires, thoughts and behavior; all our trials, suffering and experiences. The Bible, as God's Word, is sufficient for life and godliness when properly interpreted and applied (2 Peter 1:3). No other revelation is necessary. The Bible reveals to the believer all the data necessary to understand his need for Christ, how he can please the Lord, and how to live in a God-honoring way regardless of the circumstances—whether comfortable or oppressive.

However, the Bible is not exhaustive when it comes to the specific daily struggles of life. Rather, God chose to equip His people for a life of holiness in a different way. God equips us for all of life's joys and sorrows by revealing Who He is, who we are, why we do what we do, and how to solve our problems. He has given us a complete manual that delineates what is wrong,



what is right, how to get right and how to stay right (2 Tim 3:16-17). He shows us the nature of sin in the heart. He describes how to respond properly to suffering. The Bible covers everything we need in order to function well, in order to have or restore 'mental health' (to use the common vernacular). When there are spiritual/psychological problems, the Bible defines the trouble and gives the solution. It gives encouragement and motivation to function in a fruitful manner. God tells us how to fulfill what we were created to do - to glorify Him. The Bible is the very wisdom of God, available to apply to any of our struggles, and infinitely superior to man's wisdom.

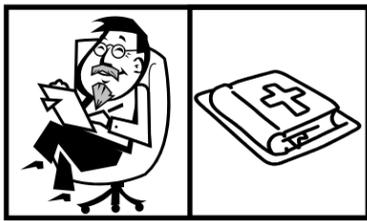


And speaking of man's wisdom, if we consider Scriptures to be sufficient for counseling, how does biblical counseling interact with worldly counsel/counselors? In biblical counseling, we start with the revealed truth from God's word and proceed from biblical presuppositions. We can then determine if other information conforms to His truth. (For example, many psychological *descriptions* about how people act are valid, but psychological *diagnosis and prescriptions* are biblically problematic). We want to be discerning, because in First Corinthians 3:19 Paul tells us that to rely on man as our source of wisdom is foolish "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God." A theory of man that starts with man's wisdom is problematic because the Bible says that man's wisdom is 'evil, darkened and vain, at war with God, defiled, corrupt, and blinded.' God tells us, "The Lord nullifies the counsel of the nations...The counsel of the Lord stands forever" (Ps. 33:10-11). Yet, we realize some Christians would say that modern man needs the Bible, **plus**...plus psychology, plus psychiatric medicine, plus the latest in worldly "knowledge" to adequately address spiritual problems. This thinking implies that biblical solutions aren't quite enough for our 'deep' problems...that God has left us with inadequate resources in order to live well. However, because the Bible is inspired, inerrant, and infallible, it is the sole reliable and sufficient authority for dealing with *any* counseling problems we may have. The Bible is the **authoritative** source by which all truth claims, including claims made by science and history, must be evaluated. As a result, we reject all counseling theories that use presuppositions, principles, and methodologies that are inconsistent with the proper interpretation of the biblical text.

Dear member of Grace, God is glorified when His people look to Him and His superior, life giving Truth, rather than to other seemingly easier worldly solutions. How do we know this? Many passages of Scripture tell us to turn to God in trouble, but perhaps one of the most poignant is in Jeremiah, "'Be appalled, O heavens, at this, And shudder, be very desolate,' declares the LORD. 'For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, The fountain of living waters, to hew for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water'" (Jeremiah 2:13). Let that not be said of us at Grace! Let us return whole-heartedly to the fountain of living water, that we may be refreshed, restored, and energized for the tasks that lie before us. Let's counsel one-another with biblical truth!

Q: Pastor Blake, often it is noted that you seem to take a stand against modern psychology. Certainly you aren't saying that all psychology is wrong are you?

A: This is a great question and one that must be answered from a biblical counselor's perspective because it is often a charge that is leveled at biblical counseling philosophy. To begin this discussion, let's define some terms. We must understand that the biblical counselor views psychology from two different perspectives. I believe that because many people don't understand this breakdown, this creates a misunderstanding. So let's understand the two different categories of psychology. Think of psychology in two different categories. The one category is Descriptive Psychology. The other category is Prescriptive Psychology. Descriptive Psychology is generally not going to be accused by a biblical counselor of being wrong, bad or dangerous. All Descriptive Psychology does is describe things. It describes development of humans and conduct and reactions to certain stimuli. Descriptive Psychology is actually scientific and fascinating. I took a course in child psychology years ago. Some of the course was based upon Descriptive Psychology where scientists studied the development of a baby, starting from the time of conception through teen years. It described all that took place as the baby grew in the womb. Descriptive Psychology presented the "normal" development of the child in stages such as, birth to 6 months, 6 months to 1 year, etc. It was descriptive. Biblical counseling would not object to such descriptive psychology. In fact, it can be very fascinating to people. It doesn't provide a solution to man's problems but is fascinating nonetheless.



Q&A

But where the problem arises is in the area of Prescriptive Psychology. "Prescriptive" is a word that should stand out to you. If you are sick you go to a doctor and get a prescription for a medication to take care of the sickness. I think you can see where I am headed with this. When it comes to the counseling realm, we as biblical counselors would say that Prescriptive Psychology is wrong because it is not based upon the All-Sufficient word of God. In others words, Prescriptive Psychology, which is where psychotherapy would fit, is intended to tell people what their problem is and then provide an answer for that problem. That is where the rub comes in. We believe that we don't need psychology to diagnose what man's true problems are, nor do we need psychology to help us find an answer to man's true problems. So are we opposed to Prescriptive Psychology? Yes.

But let me add one point that is critical. As Biblical Counselors, we really do want people to learn discernment, because we believe that God wants His people to be discerning. We are very concerned about the compromise in the church that is alluded to in the first article in this newsletter. We do want people to know that they can't trust Prescriptive Psychology, but that is not what we want to major on. We want to major on the truth that our Creator understands the soul, the heart, the mind, the totality of life and He has given us His All-Sufficient Word by which we can counsel people and help them deal with life in this sin-cursed world. In other words, it would be our desire that people would not think of biblical counseling, so much as for what we are against, but instead, for what we are for. We refer to psychotherapy and Prescriptive Psychology as broken cisterns. These cisterns can't hold water. We believe that the Living Water of Jesus Christ and His Word always offer real solutions to life's problems.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: The Community of Grace Biblical Counseling Ministry and the editor of the monthly newsletter welcome letters from the readers. Letters may be edited if the editorial team deems it necessary to do so to fit the space allowed or due to unbiblical communication practices. We encourage the reader to write with edification in mind. If you have a question about counseling that you would like to ask for future publications feel free to submit those questions to Pastor Blake Shaw.

