

Philosophy of Biblical Counseling

Geoffrey R. Kirkland

CFBC St. Louis

Biblical counseling is a necessary part of the Christian life as it seeks to glorify God by acknowledging the absolute sufficiency of the Bible and its relevance to apply to every life situation. Biblical counseling is vastly different from secular counseling, therapy, psychology and psychotherapy and even many forms of so-called Christian psychology because biblical counseling immediately looks to the sufficiency of God's Word—and only God's Word—to decipher the problem, to proffer biblical wisdom to that particular issue, and to provide clear applicational principles to implement so as to produce God-glorifying change resulting in holiness and Christlike behavior.

1. The Scriptures are Totally Sufficient

The Bible unequivocally affirms that “all Scripture is God-breathed and profitable...so that the man of God may be adequate” (2 Tim 3:16-17). The Bible, then, is perfect and can restore the soul (Ps 19:7). The Word of the Lord is upright and can never lead astray (Ps 33:4). Therefore, because God's Word is totally sufficient it has the innate power to convict, confirm, change, and conform into the image of Christ (cf. Heb 4:12). The Apostle Peter even declares that God has granted to His elect precious promises contained in God's Word that gives us everything believers need for life and godliness (2 Pet 1:3-4).

2. The Spirit-Indwelt Christian Has the Ability to Change

The sinner that God graciously calls to Himself in repentance and salvation is given God the Holy Spirit who indwells in him and seals him till eternity (Eph 1:13-14). The Spirit of wisdom enables the elect to have the wisdom from God for life and implementing spiritual gifts within the life and culture of the Church (1 Cor 12:8). Therefore, because the believer has God the Spirit living *in* him, the Christian now has the ability to change to produce holiness (Rom 1:4-5).

3. The Application of Proper Hermeneutical Principles to Specific Life-Situations

Counseling depends on proper biblical interpretation. Therefore, if the counselor and the counselee properly interprets God's Word with full respect for authorial intent and the meaning of the text using historical-grammatical methods. When that meaning surfaces, the interpreter can then apply that meaning of the text to his own specific situation. In other words, one can apply God's Word to his life only when he has arrived at the proper single-meaning of the text the way the author intended it to be understood.

4. The Absolute Trust and Dependence on God's Word to Change Hearts and Lives

The Word of God is living and active and is therefore competent to change a life (Heb 4:12). Indeed, Paul noted to the Thessalonian Church that for those who receive the Word of God it will produce change and perform its work in true believers (1 Thess 2:13). Therefore, with a sincere commitment to and application of the Word of God, a believer can and will experience a changed heart resulting in changed behavior (cf. 1 Pet 2:1-2).

5. A Proper Theological Perspective of the Sin of Man and the Sufficiency Found in Christ

Biblical counseling begins with theological perspectives as the Bible speaks of them. All human beings are completely corrupt by nature (Eph 2:1-3) and are totally sinful (Rom 3:10-20) and have therefore fallen short of God's infinite worth and glory (Rom 3:23). There is not a righteous man on earth who does good and never sins (Eccl 7:20; Ps 143:2). Because of man's desperate predicament, only God by His sovereign power can give life spiritually (2 Tim 1:9). When a sinner repents and believes in Christ, the converted man delights in Christ (Ps 37:4) and considers everything else that this world has to offer as rubbish (Phil 3:8). For a Christian, a genuine delighting in Christ and in His glory will effect and result in a life of godliness and holiness (2 Pet 1:5-11).

6. Biblical Counseling Does Not Seek to Merely Give a Solution to a Problem, It Seeks to Get to the Core Sin to Rid It from the Believer's Life and Replace It with Something New.

Sin is rampant and will consume and destroy a life and thrust an unrepentant soul into hell. Therefore, it does no good to add a temporary, quick-fix solution to a sin problem. Sin is a problem of the will, heart, and mind that believers through the power of the Spirit can and must turn away from. The biblical picture is to find the sin problem and cut it off from its roots so it does not spring up again. The language is to put off the old sin issue and put on something new. This then replaces the old sinful pattern with a new Godly pattern (cf. Eph 4:25-32; Col 3:8-14; cf. 1 Pet 2:1-2; Rom 13:12; Heb 12:1).