

Another area of “Practice of Ministry” (a.k.a. Practical Theology)

Biblical Counseling has made a resurgence over the last 50 years, especially because of Jay Adams, Wayne Mack, and many others who have more recently taken up that mantle.

In much of our theology (trunk image), we relied on the inerrancy and infallibility of Scripture.

In much of our ministry practice (branches/leaves/fruit), we rely on the sufficiency of Scripture.

Sufficiency of Scripture w.r.t. Biblical Counseling:

- John 17:17 – “Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.”
- 2 Peter 1:2-3 ff. – “His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us to His own glory and excellence” (all the way through to vv. 12-13).

The Bible isn’t just for us to answer theological / doctrinal questions. It’s for all of life.

Implications:

- The pastor must understand that he cannot delegate the “life issues” within his congregation to counselors, psychologists, therapists, etc., outside the church. This is a dereliction of his duty as a spiritual shepherd
- The congregation must understand that the best solution to even many serious cases of addiction of various kinds, relationship issues, and “mental health issues” that people normally see psychologists and psychiatrists for is the teachings of Scripture and the loving care, assistance, and accountability within a local church.
 - o Psychotropic medications should not be the first course of action in most cases
- The congregation must also understand that the pastor should not be the only person in the congregation equipped to counsel people biblically. Even fairly benign issues require mature believers with solid biblical understanding and hearts to love and help people grow, not just the pastor’s “counsel.” Others in the church should be trained and equipped to counsel.
- Unbelievers, who are often down to their last straw can be exhorted and encouraged that God **can** truly heal all their issues (not that He necessarily will solve every problem that they

have), but that there will be things required of them (e.g. willingness to repent of sinful actions and attitudes, willingness to continually strive against sin, and so forth).

A caveat:

- I am not a medical doctor.
 - o Some cases do require medical treatment. But many people are unnecessarily medicated (and even harmfully medicated)
 - o Chemical imbalances in the brain may be real, but it's unknown whether those are the causes of problems or the result of problems (including various sinful lifestyles)

Biblical counselors should not charge for their services

- This is a gospel ministry
- People who need to pay for counseling/therapy, etc., will often want to use insurance. For you to accept insurance payments, you must abide by the DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders). This is an ungodly guide, driven not only by secular views about medicine but also ideological views about people that are directly contrary to God's Word, often even politically driven.

Biblical Counseling is *nouthetic*: involves admonishment/correction/instruction

This is *not* where the counselor or therapist just listens to you spill your heart or "vent." While it is true that in many cases a biblical counselor may not be able to tell someone exactly what decision they must make, still they are there to guide them with the clear teachings of the Bible.

Pastors and other biblical counselors must be willing to offer biblical teachings even within our culture in which many biblical teachings are considered unlawful

Training

INS – Institute for Nouthetic Studies – nouthetic.org

ACBC – Association of Certified Biblical Counselors – biblicalcounseling.com

Faith Biblical Counseling Ministries – faithlafayette.org

BCI – Biblical Counseling Institute – bciohio.com

IBCD – Institute for Biblical Counseling and Discipleship – ibcd.org