

## BECOMING A BIBLICAL COUNSELOR<sup>1</sup>

*“And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.” – Romans 15:14*

**“During the last [couple of generations] a big umbrella was opened.** Beneath its huge, over-arching expanse you now find people with the most diverse problems and difficulties. Under its shadow they have been gathered together according to the novel idea that nearly everybody who is having problems, regardless of what his difficulties may be, is sick. **The name of this umbrella is *Mental Illness*.**

“This umbrella was designed and opened by Charcot and Freud and others who worked with them. **Until their time, ‘illness’ meant physical illness. But they stretched the concept of illness until it pertained to nearly any and every sort of difficulty in life...** if you want to learn more about how it came about, borrow Thomas Szasz’s book, *The Myth of Mental Illness*, and read the first two chapters. You will find that he explains very plainly how this happened. What is of importance is that Szasz shows how **Charcot and Freud used the medical model (illness) to declare those who previously had been called malingerers, to be sick.** You will find this history most enlightening.

**“Regardless of the historical background, we are all aware that the umbrella is wide open today.** Huddled together under it are people with organic problems and people with non-organic problems; people with perceptual difficulties and people with behavioral difficulties; people whose brains have been damaged and people who, to put it simply, have never learned how to get along in life...

**“All sorts of people, then, have been labeled mentally ill.** My thesis is that you who are ministers of the gospel must not be content with these current conditions. You may not condone the practice of confusing illness with behavioral deviation; such a position is clearly contrary to the Word of God. You must take out of the rack an entirely different umbrella, a much smaller one, for that big umbrella is the product of a wholly wrong concept. It was manufactured according to non-Christian specifications and has been used for humanistic purposes. You must do all that you can to reduce the big umbrella to its proper size.

**“There is a much smaller umbrella that legitimately might be labeled mental illness; but it is very small, almost minute, in comparison to the Freudian umbrella...There are, of course, people who are mentally ill.** If I were to raise a crowbar and bring it down squarely across your head, you would have—literally—mental illness; there would be no question about it. You would have an *illness* caused by physical, organic brain damage... Some people whose brains have been injured by toxic substances have mental illness. It is possible that some genetic and some chemical problems may cause a physical or organic type of illness very similar to brain damage. All of these problems are valid instances of mental illness. But by comparison...the number of people who have that kind of true illness or sickness due to some sort of organic mental malfunction is small.

**“Under the big umbrella are people who have difficulty keeping a job, who do not get along with their husbands or wives or children or parents, and who are irresponsible and undependable. In short, they are people who have learned all sorts of sinful behavior patterns that, in God’s world, eventually get them into a peck of trouble. Although they are not, they have been erroneously declared mentally ill.”<sup>2</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> Compiled by Mike Edwards, Madison, Ohio, June 2017 (revised March 2019). Note: Material in parentheses occurs as such in the original, while that in brackets, as well as all bolding, underlining & colorizing has been added by me. -mwe

<sup>2</sup> Jay E. Adams, *The Big Umbrella and Other Essays on Christian Counseling* (Baker Book House: Grand Rapids, MI, 1972), pp. 3-5, italics in the original.

**“Now let me punch a few holes in the big umbrella.** The new concept of Mental Illness, naturally, required a new sort of practitioner. Consequently, the profession of psychiatry was developed to work with these supposedly non-organically ‘sick’ persons. In order to chalk out an area for his newly-spawned discipline, the psychiatrist moved into territory that once was inhabited by Christian ministers and by physicians. The larger amount of territory, by far, was usurped from the minister. The psychiatrist drove out pastors from the land of their forefathers, a land originally given to them by God. Pastors... must recognize the fact that they moved onto *your* inheritance and stole *your* birthright. They now are situated firmly on that land as squatters. Asserting squatters’ rights, they now have the audacity to defy ministers to move back...

**“To put it another way, I find it necessary to question seriously whether there is any legitimate place for the psychiatrist.** Is there any territory allotted to him in the economy of God? Physicians, psychologists, ministers of the gospel, all have legitimate functions—but psychiatrists? Where is there room for a third person to stand midway between the physician and the pastor? ...What territory, what discipline is rightfully his and his alone? Is there anything that he does that no one else has any right to do? I think not. **My point is that in order to justify his very existence he has had to take a little bit of land from the physician and a great deal from the minister...**

**“One way to determine whether this is true is by asking the question, ‘What does a psychiatrist do?’** The more that you think about it, the more difficult it is to discover any function that he performs that gives him the right to claim that his work is a specialty of his own. For instance, a psychiatrist is not necessarily a medical man. In other countries (Europe, for example) the psychiatrist is not required to have a medical degree. Freud himself was very plain about this matter. He did not believe that a psychotherapist had to be a physician... In this country, because of a prestigious alliance with the A.M.A., a psychiatrist is required to have an M.D. ... **The point is this: there is nothing that a psychiatrist does with his medical training that physician couldn’t do just as well or better. And the physician could do it in conjunction with a pastoral counselor.** The psychiatrist may write prescriptions for tranquilizers or other pills now and then, but a physician does that all of the time. There is no need for a specialty in order to prescribe pills...

**“What is it then that psychiatrist mainly does if he does not do medical work, if he is not really a medical specialist? He talks; that is what he does.** He spends most of his time talking to people about their problems (*although some psychiatrists spend most of the time listening*) [i.e. Rogerian counseling<sup>3</sup>]. What does he talk about? People go to a psychiatrist because something is wrong: they don’t feel right, other people say they don’t behave properly, or they themselves recognize that they are not making it in life... They go to a psychiatrist hoping that he will be able to get them out of trouble. They want him to show them the way to eliminate the pressures, the tensions, the difficulties and the terrible tangles into which their lives have been [twisted]. And this he tries to do, presumably by talking. **Now that is not medical practice; there is nothing peculiarly medical about solving problems by talk.** Indeed, if these people were really sick, it would seem to be a strange means of dealing with sickness and disease.”<sup>4</sup>

**“Preachers once were known as the people who talked to other people about their problems.** They used to direct people to God’s solutions as they are found in the Scriptures. But it is strange how modern preachers have learned to keep their mouths shut when listening to people’s troubles. They have been willing to learn not to talk. They have been brainwashed by floods of propaganda into refusing to talk to

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<sup>3</sup> See William Kirk Kilpatrick, *The Emperor’s New Clothes* (Crossway Books: Westchester, IL, 1985), *Encounters with the Quiet Revolutionary*, pp. 127-184 for an incredible first-hand description of what Rogerian counseling looks like fleshed out, with Carl Rogers himself leading a group therapy weekend.

<sup>4</sup> Adams, *ibid*, pp. 5-7, italics in the original.

these people. They have been taught, instead, to refer them to psychiatrists so that they may talk to them. **But talk hardly makes the psychiatrist's discipline unique. It has always been the province of the minister to speak to men collectively and individually about the welfare of their souls** (cf. Col. 1:28; Acts 20:31)...

“**But perhaps the content or end of psychiatric talk is unique, you may protest.** Fair enough; let us ask, what is it that psychiatrists talk about and what is it that they want to accomplish by means of this talk? **Psychiatrists wish to change feelings and behavior; that is the end that they have in view. They are concerned to change attitudes and feelings, character and behavior; in short they want to change the client's way of life in some fundamental way.** They seek to alter behavior, attitudes, values, etc., **but in accordance with what standard?** According to their own goals and beliefs? According those that the counselee may suggest? You see, this poses a fundamental problem that we must consider before we are through...

“**Behavior modification and the discussion of values and attitudes is something that preachers have been doing ever since the beginning.** As a matter of fact, that is a large part of what a minister's activity is all about. God has commanded [them] to talk to men about their sinful lives and their need for a Savior... God has told us that it is the Spirit's work in their lives that changes sinful human character. He brings men to repentance and makes their lives fruitful in all the good attitudes and behavior mentioned in Galatians 5. Sanctification, the process of putting off the old man and putting on the new man (Eph. 4, Col. 3) involves just the sort of attitudinal and behavioral change that the psychiatrist also seeks to bring about. The two will be in conflict unless the Word and the Spirit are involved in both. But if they are, of what need is the psychiatrist?

“**So I say that the psychiatrist has usurped the work of the physician, but mostly the work of the preacher.** And he engages in this work *without warrant from God, without the aid of the Scriptures* (in almost every case), *and without regard to the power of the Holy Spirit*. Thus he seeks to change the behavior & the values of peoples in an ungodly manner. Insofar as he succeeds, the results may be feared.<sup>5</sup>

“**The work of changing men's lives belongs to the Christian ministry in particular and to Christian people in general;** not to some self-appointed caste of humanistic priests that has moved into the Church's territory, and, by declaring hosts of people mentally ill, has said, ‘*We who are mental specialists alone can deal with these people.*’ **At every point the Word of God challenges this claim.** Can you not see that there is something radically wrong when, after collecting a crowd under the umbrella of *mental illness*, the psychiatrist quickly throws aside all medical pretenses and instead starts *talking* about values and behavior change?”<sup>6</sup> So, in light of what has been said, let us consider...

## **FIVE IMPORTANT FACTS FOR BELIEVERS IN COUNSELING & HELPING PEOPLE:**

### **1. YOU HAVE GREATER OPPORTUNITIES THAN YOU MAY THINK.**

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<sup>5</sup> It's a well-known fact that psychiatrists have the highest suicide rate of all medical professionals! For instance, in the standard college textbook *Understanding Abnormal Behavior* in the chapter on suicide we find this statement “Among medical professionals, psychiatrists have the highest (suicide) rate and pediatricians the lowest. Such marked differences raise the question of whether the specialty influences susceptibility or whether a suicide-prone person is attracted to certain specialties.” (David, Derald Wing & Stanley Sue, *Understanding Abnormal Behavior* [Houghton Mifflin Company: Boston: MA, 2000], p. 368)

<sup>6</sup> Adams, *ibid*, pp. 7-9

**“There is a host of people who have been declared sick who are not sick at all. They may be sick as a *result* of their poor behavior, or course, but I’m talking about the *cause*, not the *result*, of their problem.** The cause is not sickness. The cause of their problem is, to put it generally, that they have not been living as God says man should. They are people with personal problems; that is what is wrong with them. They have not been making it in life because they are not doing what God says they must do in one or more life situations. Therefore, there is a great opportunity for you to help those people. **They are not getting much help through psychiatry. The rate of recovery for psychoanalysis, *Eysenck showed, is precisely the same as the spontaneous remissions rate, i.e., the rate of recovery for those who DID NOTHING about their problem.*** The psychoanalysts have had a rate of success that is precisely the same as if they did nothing... Can you, a minister of the gospel [or a Christian believer], do any worse?

Throughout the Scriptures, pastoral work is consistently described in terms of helping people who are in trouble...**ALL Christians are encouraged to participate in this kind of work,** but [preeminently] this is pastoral work. For example, in Colossians 1:28, Paul says when he is summing up his whole ministry: *‘We proclaim him’* (speaking of Christ) *‘nouthetically confronting every man and teaching every man with all wisdom that we may present every man complete in Christ.’* ...Paul was a great teacher. We rightly think of him as such, for he was a tremendous teacher. He taught publicly from house to house (Acts 20:20). Everywhere he went and all of the time he taught...but he did other things too; teaching, he himself says, was only half of his work.

“The work that he mentions first is *‘nouthetically confronting every man.’* The coin of teaching has another side. On the flip side, according to Paul, is *nouthetic confrontation (whatever that might mean)*. ☺ But before we explain the term, let’s look at another passage in which Paul again speaks about this question...In Acts 20...in that touching scene by the seashore He urged the Ephesian elders to *‘be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to nouthetically confront each one of you with tears’* (Acts 20:31). Note carefully these words: *‘night and day.’* That involves a large slice of time... Paul spent more time in Ephesus than in any other city...as far as the record goes, he was at Ephesus longer than anywhere else. Consequently, at Ephesus his work was more pastoral than at other places... He says...*‘I did not cease,’*...**He did not do this work only part of the time or at certain seasons...he did it continually throughout the whole length of the three-year ministry.** “Now [with the above in mind]...*I must tell you something about the biblical idea of nouthetic confrontation.*

#### **WHAT IT MEANS TO “ADMONISH”** (i.e. nouthetically confront)

**“Fundamentally it means this: God using one man to confront another verbally about something that God wants changed for the benefit of the individual who is confronted...** Let us then see what God has said about nouthetic confrontation.

- 1) **“The first element in the word *nouthesia* involves the idea that there is SOMETHING WRONG in the Counselee’s life that God wants changed.** That means that known sin in the lives of the members of the church must not be winked at. It is a responsibility of those who have the rule over the flock to lead the sheep in the paths of righteousness as the Great Shepherd has directed. That will often involve confronting them when they wander into the paths of unrighteousness.
- 2) **“The second element in the word is that the change is attempted by use of APPROPRIATE VERBAL MEANS in personal confrontation.** The idea of personal counseling is clear. The counselor does not attempt to change the person he is confronting by manipulating him in some

behavioristic fashion, but he does so by personal counseling, by a verbal confrontation, by sitting down and talking through his problems with him. **Hopefully to reach biblical solutions to them.** He uses verbal confrontation and a verbal methodology; that is to say, a ***counseling methodology***. Talk, the psychiatrist's methodology, was not given to him but was ordained by God for the work of the ministry. **Yet it is talk of a specific sort. *Nouthesia* is plainly *directive counseling*; it involves the application of biblical principles to concrete life situations.**

- 3) **“There is also a third element in that word: the confrontation takes place *in order to CHANGE THE PERSON for HIS OWN BENEFIT; for his own welfare.* There is the connotation of *loving concern* in this word; the New Testament never loses sight of that element in the word.** You see it emerge where the term is used in familial contexts. For example, this element is prominent when Paul told the Corinthians, ***‘I do not write these things to shame you but to confront you nouthetically as my beloved children’*** (I Cor. 4:14). When he talks about the disciplining of a brother, he urges, ***‘Do not look on him as an enemy, but confront him nouthetically as a brother,’*** or, ***‘as you would confront a brother’*** (II Thess. 3:15). And in that family context in Ephesians after he has instructed children to obey their parents, he addresses their fathers with these words: ***‘Bring them up in the nurture (‘discipline,’ or ‘training,’ as the word *paideia* means) and the nouthetic confrontation of the Lord’*** (Eph. 6:4) ...**And so the word occurs in these warm contexts, showing that *it carries the idea of concern for the other person.*** Even in Acts 20:31 that note also is sounded strongly when Paul says, ***‘I did not cease to nouthetically confront each one with tears.’*** The deep involvement of Paul for each one of these believers, the personal attention and ***‘the weeping with those who weep’*** [Rom. 12:15] is apparent. The words ***‘each one’*** occur not only in Acts, but also in Colossians (cf. Col. 1:28) ...**Counseling must be done in love, and love must be *‘in the truth’*** [Eph. 4:15 cf.] (2 John 1; 3 John 1).”<sup>7</sup>

“ Now the reason I have brought the word *nouthesia* over into English from the Greek New Testament instead of simply translating it ***‘admonish’*** or ***‘counsel’*** or ***‘warn’*** or ***‘instruct’*** or by some other term, is because **none of these words in English has the depth and fullness of meaning that is inherent in the Greek term. So far as I know, there is no English word that adequately expresses the three elements in the Greek word *nouthesia*.** It seems important to note that whenever you do not have a word for the thing, usually you do not have the thing itself. Where you do not have a word to describe an activity adequately, it is normally because you are not engaged in pursuing it. Indeed that seems to be the fact in this instance...e rarely see this kind of confrontation of church members; overwhelming concern for people that compels us to go to them and talk to them in order to change their lives is virtually nonexistent. We know little about nouthetic confrontation in our society... true biblical nouthetic confrontation rarely exists.

**“And so, what I’m saying is that you have greater opportunities than you may think...The possibilities and opportunities that nouthetic activities offer for the edification of the saints are as unlimited as the need is great.”**<sup>8</sup>

## 2. **YOU HAVE GREATER QUALIFICATIONS THAN YOU MAY REALIZE.**

**“LOOK...AT YOUR QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE WORK.** What training, for instance, is really best for the task of changing men’s & women’s lives? Medical training? Psychiatric training? Training in some clinic or theoretical school of psychotherapy in New York or Washington? University training in psychology? ***Think***—what is the best training and background for the work

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<sup>8</sup> Adams, *ibid*, p. 14, most italics in the original.

**of changing the lives of other people? I maintain that a good [biblical] background is the best education for the work of changing lives...** When we give a man the tools (Greek, Hebrew, hermeneutics, exegesis) so that he can study the Word of God for the rest of his life and find out what this Book has to say, we are giving him the background that he needs for counseling as well as for preaching... **the fundamental ideas, concepts and principles of God's Word...*these* are needed to help people with personal problems...** People whose marriages are all mixed up need to know how to live *before God*. Parents and children at odds need to be brought together *in the Lord*. **Apart from the Word of God (*and the God of the Word*) such goals can never be attained.**

### **“WHAT ARE THE FUNDAMENTAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR SUCH WORK?”**

“Well, if you look at the passages that talk about nouthetic confrontation, you will discover what those qualifications are. In **Romans 15:14**... Paul speaking to laymen in the church at Rome, says that they are ‘*competent to counsel,*’ or ‘*capable of nouthetically confronting one another.*’ He says he believes this ‘*because I am convinced that you are full of goodness and filled with all knowledge.*’ In **Colossians 3:16**, where he talks about ‘*nouthetically confronting one another*’ as well as ‘*teaching one another,*’ he speaks again of being filled with the knowledge of Jesus Christ: ‘*Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly.*’ There he adds a third element: ‘*with all wisdom.*’ These verses mention three things that qualify one for nouthetic activity: **GOODNESS, KNOWLEDGE** and **WISDOM**. These are the three fundamental qualifications of [someone] who is going to confront others in order to change their lives:

- 1) “He needs (first of all) to **KNOW GOD’S WORD WELL**: the Word of Christ must ‘*dwell within him richly.*’ He needs to be ‘filled’ with a knowledge of the Scriptures. I do not know of any university training in clinical psychology, or of any psychiatric institute that attempts to fill a man with such knowledge. [However] **Knowledge has an EXPERIENTIAL side that must not be missed**; it is to ‘*dwell within him*’; i.e., become a living, vital part of the fabric of his being [In other words, it’s not just “head” knowledge]. Unfortunately, seminaries have not always stressed this fact.”
- 2) “**Secondly**, the nouthetic counselor needs to be **FULL OF WISDOM**. Wisdom means (among other things) **the practical application of that knowledge**; the ability to apply a truth found in the Scriptures to a man’s life at the place where he lives. Wisdom brings the Word of God to bear upon problems in pertinent and relevant ways. **Again, it has an experiential side that says something about the man who possesses it (cf. James 3:13-18)**. “*Who is a wise man and endowed with knowledge among you. Let him show out of a good manner of life his works with meekness and wisdom. But if you have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.* [cf. II Tim. 2:24-25 – “*And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.*”] (NKJV)
- 3) “**Thirdly**, there is the essential quality of **GOODNESS**. The word goodness probably does not refer so much to the goodness of the life of the counselor (though that certainly is involved in it and behind it) **as it does to his goodness of attitude toward others**. It is this quality that in loving concern motivates a pastor to take the time and make the effort to seek out God’s answers to

the problems of another. Such goodness toward others continually gets him involved in another person's life for his good.

**“Those are three basic qualifications that the Scriptures require of a counselor. Those are also basic requirements of a good minister of the Word. Certainly no man should be in the ministry unless he has those qualifications; which is to say that if a minister is not qualified to counsel, he is not qualified to minister.**

“It is essential to have a knowledge of the Scriptures in order to evaluate man's problems and to discover God's solutions to them; to become wise in the ability to deal with counselees in personal confrontation (note the use of ‘wisdom’ in a similar connection in Colossians 4:5-6); to have goodness of heart to motivate one to engage in the difficult task of confronting another and to condition his attitudes in doing so).

- 4) **“There is a fourth qualification that must be mentioned because it is the most basic of all and stands as bedrock beneath the first three.** In Galatians 6:1 Paul says that if any brother sees another caught (or possibly catches another) in sin, he must restore him. **This commandment is directed to those ‘who are spiritual.’** Picture a brother whose life is badly messed up. For all practical purposes he has ceased to function vitally as a member of the Church. Paul does not say that he may be referred to an unsaved psychiatrist or to an unbelieving marriage counselor for help. Indeed, he explicitly forbids Christians to obtain help from those who know nothing about Jesus Christ; the brother must be helped by ANOTHER CHRISTIAN: ‘Ye who are spiritual.’ ...So what Paul is saying in Galatians 6:1 is, *‘You in whom the Spirit dwells must be the ones to restore your brother.’* This prerequisite is a fundamental factor that disqualifies all but Christians.”<sup>9</sup> “But let me also encourage you further by asserting that...

### 3. **YOU HAVE GREATER KNOWLEDGE THAN YOU MAY RECOGNIZE**

You say, *‘I do not. I wouldn't know what to do if I had to confront somebody who is severely depressed. I don't know how to help a homosexual. Suppose somebody starts running down the street naked with a meat cleaver; I wouldn't know how to handle that!’* Well, maybe you should think further about what to do in such specific cases. But I believe that basically you do know what to do, though you may not realize it.

**“FIRST of all, you have inside information about man's fundamental problem.** You can pull books off the shelves by the dozens that theorize about what is wrong with man, but **YOU KNOW** that the answer lies in the third chapter of [Genesis]. That chapter shows how, as the result of man's sin, all sorts of tragic problems began to complicate his life. **The dynamics of sin were exposed at the very beginning.** Reconstruct the scene. Adam and Eve have sinned...

“Notice what happens when God begins to deal with Adam in a nouthetic [confrontational] fashion. **Adam makes excuses...** Not only do the basic problems that have come snowballing down through history already appear, but along with them can be seen the fundamental sinful response patterns that cause additional confusion and complicate the situation... **In seed form, at least, every major problem that a counselor must handle today is found there at the beginning...** **There is no repentance in his reply. There is no feeling of personal sorrow about what he did. He does not assume responsibility for his sin. Instead, we see only blame-shifting, excuse-making, and even complaining;** Adam attempts to throw the responsibility for his sin

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<sup>9</sup> Adams, *ibid*, pp. 15-19, italics in the original.

back upon God... People still run from this and from that, but reflection upon the fact leads to this conclusion: **just as all blame-shifting (ultimately) is blaming God, so all running is (in the end) nothing less than man running from God...** You *know that*... Most of the hypothesizing, theorizing and speculating on the part of the psychiatric schools about what is wrong with man and how he got that way is useless chatter. **There is only one right answer. And you already know the answer. You are way ahead.** ‘But,’ you say, ‘I still don’t know what to *do* to help people.’ Yes you do. You know more than those writers who fill the libraries with the products of their speculation; you know a *lot* more (read again **Psalm 119:99**). What you need to do is to recognize how much you already know. You...hold to some basic biblical presuppositions just as every other counselor does...*No one is neutral*. You have yours (*which, hopefully, are not yours but God’s* [from His Word!]). Every person thinks and acts according to his presuppositions, whether he knows it or not, and whether he can articulate them or not.

**“What are your presuppositions? Well, to begin with, because you believe the Bible you know much about the counselee... your presuppositions are founded not upon speculation, but upon the revelation of God...**

- a) “You...know... **that he is a sinful son [or daughter] of Adam...** The Bible is plain about man’s sin and how it has affected his life...**You need a new confidence that the Word of God is sufficient & true.** You need to believe that it is adequate both to *describe* and to *meet* man’s needs.
- b) “You also know... **that according to the Scriptures, sinners, simply because they are sinners, develop sinful life patterns.** These patterns, the Bible says, are hard to break. They are called the ‘*old man*’ by Paul. These old ways of living need to be ‘*put off*’ (abandoned) after a person becomes a Christian, and new patterns of living must be ‘*put on*’ (developed). (cf. **Eph. 4:22-32; Col. 3:8-14; Rom 12:1—2; I Cor. 10:13**; etc.) ...Eventually...sinful living gets people into trouble. Sinful responses to life’s problems begin to pile up and complicate the original problems...sometimes so much that people don’t know which way to turn next, and they *give up*, or *blow up*, or *crack up*. Now you know *that*, you *know* that! You are not so ignorant about people and their problems as you may pretend.
- c) “**You also know the goals for human life...** What do psychiatrists want to do to a ‘patient’? What are their goals? Where shall they get them? ...Who can answer their questions? It’s a very subjective problem; no wonder that they get into hassles and debates over this matter. They don’t even know where they want to go. **The psychiatrist...lacks the divine *Road Map*. But...you know what you want to do with him (or you *should*) because God’s goals are set forth clearly in the Scriptures.** You have the Ten Commandments that spell out the whole of God’s will for man’s life. You have the **characterological goals** that are described as the ‘*fruit of the Spirit*’ in the fifth chapter of Galatians, which, incidentally, are the fruit of the **Spirit**. (That’s one reason why only a spiritual man, somebody who is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, can help a brother to produce and gather more of the fruit of the Spirit.) ...You cannot ‘*work up*’ the fruit of the Spirit by human effort or techniques. That is why it is called fruit, rather than works...**There are many conditions necessary for the growth of fruit. But the fundamental condition that is essential for the fruit of the Spirit is the Spirit’s presence.** How can we hope for love, joy or peace, for instance, in either the counselee or in the counselor, apart from the Spirit? Listed as part of the fruit is ‘self-control,’ one of the crucial elements that nearly every counselee so desperately needs. But how do we expect him to learn self-control in a Spiritless counseling session?



**“The Scriptures must be the basis for all that is said and done in counseling.** The Scriptures must strongly influence the content of all counseling. They must be the source of every *goal*, the authority for every *purpose*, and they must contain the principles behind every *procedure*. **If the Scriptures do not permeate counseling, and if the Christ of the Scriptures does not emerge at the center of the counseling sessions, then you cannot expect the Spirit to do His sanctifying work.** It would be extraordinary if He did work where His Word was neglected, **because this is the means of grace by which He Himself has chosen to carry on such work.** It was He who ‘moved’ men [2 Pet. 1:21] to write the Scriptures for this very purpose. **Why should we expect Him to abandon the means He took pains to perfect? In all nouthetic confrontation, then, the ‘word of Christ’ must be used ‘richly.’** [Col. 3:16]

- d) **“But you know still more; you also know the solutions to man’s problems.** You know that the basic solution lies in the redemption of Jesus Christ. You know that to enjoy the fruit of the Spirit a man must be saved. He needs to repent and believe the Gospel; he must have his sins forgiven... Brethren, *you* know all of these things. But that pagan...counselor knows none of them. This is the basic dynamic of change according to which God has called us to minister to the needs of men...**Why be something else when God has told us what to be and what to do? ...Open the Scriptures and...minister...out of the goodness of your heart.”**
4. **YOU CAN OFFER GREATER RESOURCES THAN YOU SUPPOSE.** “What does a psychiatrist have? He has a grand mass of contradiction and confusion; the ideas of one cancel out those of another... *and most psychiatrists know it.* But what resources do you have? The Holy Spirit who is called the ‘Comforter’ (but better translated, the ‘*Counselor*’)...He is the one who counsels *through* you, *by* you and *with* you. You never need to counsel alone He is also there at work in the counselee. [And] **He works through His Word...don’t undersell the Word of God and the Spirit working through that Word...**And don’t forget that the Spirit of God is at work in *you* (1 Cor. 2). He gives you the wisdom that need (James 1:5)...Humbly admit it when you don’t have the answers or can’t handle a case. But instead of despairing, seek harder for the answers in the Word of God so that the next time...you will know what to do.
5. **YOU SHOULD HAVE GREATER HOPE THAN YOU PERHAPS HAVE.** “You should have hope...because of the great truth that Paul revealed in **1 Cor. 10:13** ...There is enormous hope in that promise. Have you ever thought about it? **Paul is saying that there is really *no new problem.*** That is what I was saying earlier when I mentioned the fact that **it is all—in seed form, at least—in Genesis 3.** No one is going to present to you a unique problem tomorrow or next week. Of course, the specific features of each problem are unique...no two cases are ever exactly the same. But at the bottom, when you boil off all of the fat, when you get down to the bones and meat, the problem is precisely the same as the problems that you must face or that anybody else has to face, or anybody in the future will ever have to face. That is what Paul explains in **1 Corinthians 10.** He was writing to Corinthians who lived in a cosmopolitan setting... He wrote, ‘*You upon whom the ends of the ages have come*’ (vs. 11)...He wanted them to know that all of the things that happened to the Israelites in the desert long ago when they were living a nomadic existence under *entirely* different outward circumstances than those in Corinth **were nevertheless relevant.** He said, in effect... ‘*Although you live at this late date in history, in those kinds of circumstances; even though you are so culturally removed from the Israelites, and despite the fact that you are so many generations removed from them, I want you to know that the things that happened to that nomadic group of people wandering through the desert on their way toward Palestine are written for your example*’ [1 Cor. 10:6, 11]...**The Christ who was in the wilderness is still the same; in the wilderness of Sinai, Corinth or Manhattan.**

**“When we try to be gentle and kind by euphemistically labeling sinners ‘sick,’ we really do them a cruel disservice. Labels tend only to categorize one for life; a counselee gets a label on his file and that is the end of it (and him). He is one of those for the rest of his life. He may come to half believe it too. He may think that he has some incurable illness and lose all hope. He is stuck with it for life. There is little hope in that approach. But there is great hope in calling sin ‘sin.’ Every Christian knows that God sent Christ to deal with sin. It is not an unkindness, then, to be clear about sin; the most kindly thing you can do is to tell the truth. It is not only unkind, but even cruel to label sin something else, because there is no hope for sin apart from the acknowledgment of it before God in true repentance.**

**“A psychiatrist’s openers through the years have sounded something like this, ‘Now you know we can’t guarantee anything, and you know that this may take a long time—two, three, four, five or more years.’ ...The counselee meekly replies, ‘Yes,’ as all hope vanishes. What a way to start counseling—‘I can’t guarantee anything’; ‘It make take a long while’! What a discouraging way to begin; what little hope! ...when you see how poorly such sessions begin, you should not wonder why more is not accomplished. When a counselee comes with little or no hope to begin with, and then hears that, his worst fears are confirmed. Hope is destroyed...And when he comes back session after session, and nothing ever happens, except talk and more talk, when no change takes place and none of his problems are solved, hopelessness turns into despair...**

**“In contrast, what should happen when someone goes to a Christian counselor?** We say to him:

*‘We can guarantee you everything, everything that God promises. You can have it all if you are willing to do what God requires. We can guarantee that your problem can solved, God’s way. Indeed, if you don’t go out of here changed to some extent **tonight**, then it is your own fault. You can be different **today** to some extent. Not every problem can solved today, but you **can** at least take the first step in the right direction.’ We build into our pattern of counseling the biblical idea that change is not only demanded by God, but also possible.’<sup>10</sup>*

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<sup>10</sup> Adams, pp. 19-34