

Westminster Today

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FORMING . TEACHING . ENGAGING

Cure of Souls

CCEF's
Biblical
Counseling



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Bandaids | page 14



Cure of Souls



Life-changing Truths of Scripture

THE CHRISTIAN COUNSELING and Educational Foundation (CCEF) is a ministry located in suburban Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Founded in 1968, their goal is to call the church back to the primacy of Scripture as the basis for pastoral care and counseling. Since then, CCEF has provided Westminster with biblical counseling professors equipping students with a “comprehensive and case-wise pastoral and counseling theology, something worthy of the name systematic biblical counseling.” CCEF’s mission is to “*restore Christ to counseling and counseling to the church*” whereas Westminster’s is “*to form Christian leaders to proclaim the whole counsel of God throughout a changing world.*” We count it a blessing to be ‘co-forming’ Westminster graduates around the world today!

Dr. David Powlison, Westminster adjunct Professor of Practical Theology and Faculty of CCEF, wrote *The Biblical Counseling Movement* claiming, “A revolution has occurred in the past fifty years, a counseling revolution.” In his “Cure of Souls” article, he explains: “The core intellectual agenda [behind CCEF] is: wise counseling recognizes that the Bible mandates development of a comprehensive pastoral theology distinctly different from prevailing cultural paradigms. A ‘biblical counseling’ movement has arisen to tackle this intellectual and educational task and has set out to address the counseling needs of the church with the specific goods of Scripture.”

Westminster and CCEF are uniquely united in the shared conviction found in Romans 1:16 (ESV), “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes...” and 12:1-2, “...by the mercies of God... present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God...”

Together, during the last five decades, Westminster and CCEF have collaborated to fulfill these life-changing truths of Scripture. Thanks for your partnership to impact God’s people through the message and ministry of the Wonderful Counselor, our Lord Jesus Christ!

In His service,

Rev. Dr. Peter A. Lillback, President

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Westminster Today's purpose is to highlight the way Westminster uniquely forms, teaches and engages in light of our overarching mission "to form Christian leaders to proclaim the whole counsel of God throughout a changing world."

In any given year, Westminster students—coming from over 100 denominations, 40 countries and 35 states—are being equipped to become ministers, missionaries, professors, writers, speakers and Christian workers worldwide.

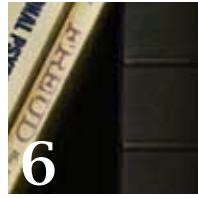
ON THE COVER

The Christian Counseling & Educational Foundation building's historic presence in Glenside, PA makes one mindful of CCEF's rich history.

COVER PHOTOS

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Look for this symbol to read **more...** at ccef.org

“...One thing is true of every family—each one is flawed. None of us grew up with perfect parents or perfect siblings, and none of us were perfect children.”



Excerpt from *Family Feuds – How to Respond*. Tim Lane, executive director and faculty member of CCEF.



Blame it on the Brain?

(Intro to Chapter 3)

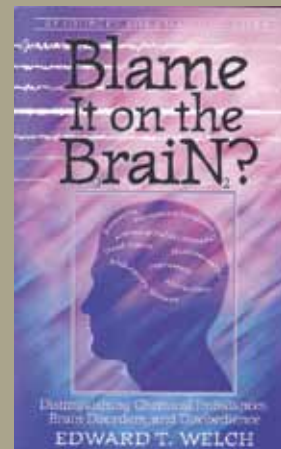
WESTMINSTER
SPEAKS

THEOLOGY IS FULL OF APPLICATIONS, and a basic theology of the body, the heart and their interrelationship is no exception. The more you live with it, the more you see its relevance to daily questions...

The first practical application of a biblical view of the heart and the brain is that the brain cannot make us sin. If you said that the body cannot make us sin, many people would agree. After all, a broken arm, acute back pain, or heart disease can be painful, but it cannot make us sin. But, for some reason, when the problem is an alleged brain problem, we often excuse sin...

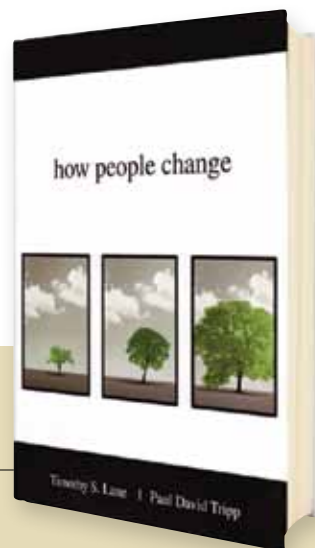
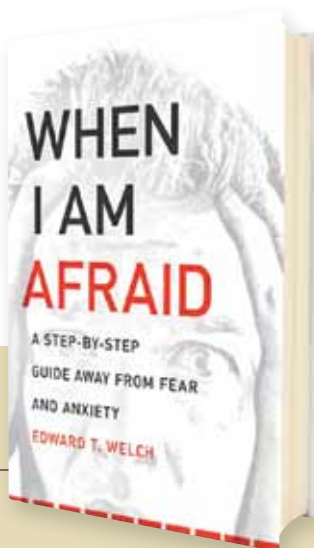
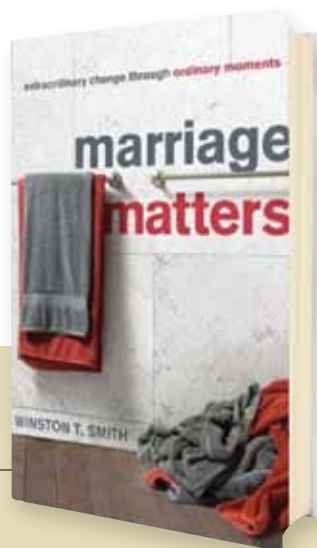
“If a person sins and does what is forbidden in any of the LORD’s commands, even though he does not know it, he is guilty and will be held responsible” (Lev. 5:17). Pleading ignorance to jaywalking when you didn’t know there was a law against it might get you off a ticket, but pleading ignorance to God’s law doesn’t work, especially since we all have “the requirements of the law written in our hearts” (Rom. 2:15).

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Must READS

When the Bible talks about the gift of a new heart, it doesn't mean a heart that is immediately perfected, but a heart that is capable of being changed.



This book offers a simple, yet powerful prescription for changing marriages one ordinary moment at a time. Change begins with understanding how and why small disagreements evolve into major problems, taking practical steps to love one another more effectively, and learning how to take those same steps over and over again. Interactions that used to devolve into pointless annoyances and fights can become opportunities for God's love to become increasingly evident and powerful. Winston T. Smith takes abstract, biblical principles and applies them to the concrete details of life so that ordinary marriages can become extraordinary.

You know how anxiety and fear feels—your stomach drops, your neck tightens, your whole body tenses—but do you know what to do when anxiety fills your days and troubles your nights? You've probably already tried a few strategies, like denial or working harder, and noticed that they aren't a permanent solution. If you are tired of dealing with anxiety and worry on your own, then this guide is just for you. As you go through each set of meditations, anxiety will gradually yield to hope, peace, and rest. Of course, this is a lifelong process, but going through this devotional guide, either on your own or with a small group, will kick-start the process and bring lifelong change.

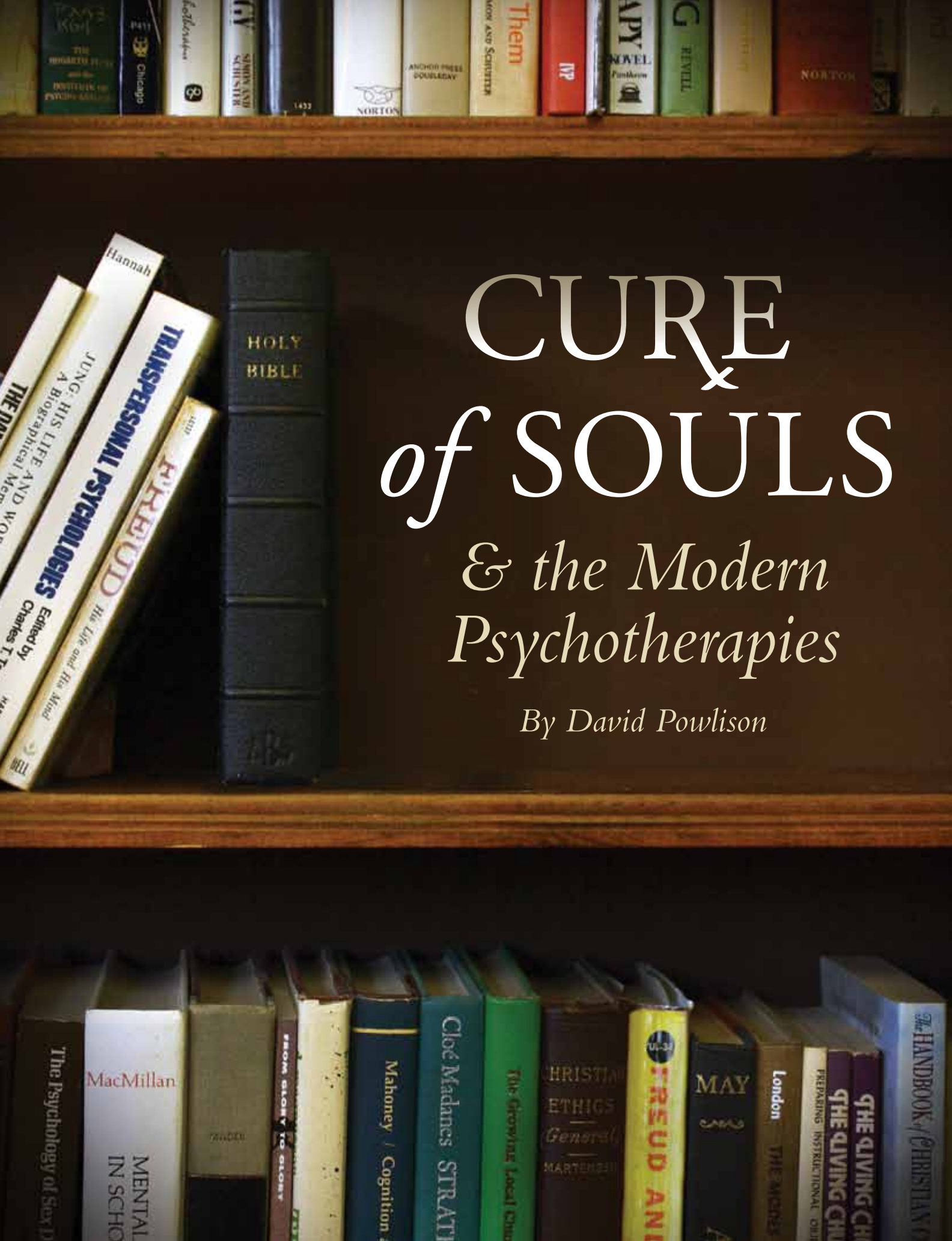
If you've ever tried, failed, and wondered why, you need *How People Change*. This book explains the biblical pattern for change in a clear, practical way that you can apply to the challenges of daily life. A changed heart is the bright promise of the gospel. When the Bible talks about the gift of a new heart, it doesn't mean a heart that is immediately perfected, but a heart that is capable of being changed. Jesus' work on the cross targets our hearts, our core desires and motivations, and when our hearts change, our behavior changes. But change involves more than a biblical formula: You will see how God is at work to make you the person you were created to be. That powerful, loving, redemptive relationship is at the heart of all positive change you experience.

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Winston T. Smith, MDiv., a faculty member and counselor at CCEF, has extensive experience as a marriage and family counselor, and teaches seminary students how to counsel couples. He is the author of the minibooks, *Divorce Recovery: Growing and Healing God's Way*; *Help for Stepfamilies: Avoiding the Pitfalls and Learning to Love*; *It's All About Me: The Problem with Masturbation*; *Who Does the Dishes? Decision Making in Marriage*; and *Burned Out? Trusting God with Your "To-Do" List*.



CURE
of SOULS
& the Modern
Psychotherapies

By David Powlison

Fifty years ago there was no comprehensive model of counseling within believing Protestantism.

The Counseling Revolution

We live in the epoch of a great revolution. Consider that in 1955, believing Protestants had no comprehensive models of counseling. *Theological conservatives had no educational programs to train pastors or other Christian workers in the face-to-face cure of souls.* Christian bookstores contained no books on the problems of everyday life and the processes of change.

Practical theology concerned itself with preaching, missions, education, evangelism, liturgical activity, church government, and administration. Good things all! Discipleship programs taught doctrine, morals, and devotional activity. Good things all! But what was the quality of corporate wisdom in comprehending the dynamics of the human heart? What sustains sufferers and converts sinners?

No systematic analysis of care for the soul grappled with the particulars of how souls needed curing. In 1955 the churches that took God at his word had little to say about “counseling.” *The counseling vacuum among evangelicals was inversely proportional to the counseling plenum in the surrounding culture.*

In other words, intrapsychic, interpersonal, and bodily phenomena pointedly did not operate vis-à-vis God. Religious beliefs, practices, and experiences might be privately engaging and meaningful, but the God of the Bible was insignificant for objectively explaining and addressing the human condition. We humans were not made and sustained; our diverse sufferings did not exist in a context of meaningfulness; we were not accountable, observed, and evaluated; we were not condemned; we were not pursued and redeemed. “God” was an objectively weightless concept

with respect to the human psyche; the weighty things in our souls had to do with other things.

The Revolutionaries

But a revolution has occurred in the past fifty years, a counseling revolution. Evangelicals have begun to counsel, to write about counseling and to educate counselors. One group developed in the footsteps of Clyde Narramore and Fuller Seminary’s Graduate School of Psychology. Its core intellectual agenda is: wise counseling requires that evangelical faith be carefully integrated with the theories, therapeutic methods, and professional roles of the modern psychologies. An “evangelical psychotherapy” movement has arisen to tackle this intellectual and educational task, and has set out to address the counseling needs of the church with the specific goods of psychology.

The other group developed in the footsteps of Jay Adams and the Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation’s pastoral training at Westminster Theological Seminary. The core intellectual agenda is: wise counseling recognizes that the Bible mandates development of a comprehensive pastoral theology distinctly different from prevailing cultural paradigms. A “biblical counseling” movement has arisen to tackle this intellectual and educational task and has set out to address the counseling needs of the church with the specific goods of Scripture.

During the tumult of passions, serene impartiality is impossible, even suspect and undesirable. How can a thoughtful person remain indifferent when the issues at stake

are so momentous? Our ability to love and address those outside of Christ is at stake. God's glory in this therapeutic culture is at stake. *How can we know and do what we need to know and do in order to cure souls?*

I believe that the church needs above all else a comprehensive and case-wise pastoral theology, something worthy of the name systematic biblical counseling. Truth, love, skill and institutional structure must all grow to the same stature. That is our Lord's call to his children in Ephesians 4.

Finding a Workable Taxonomy

People have staked education, career, reputation, institutions, and ministries on significantly differing points of view about what is true and necessary for the health of the church.

Psychology Bashers Versus Psychoheretics? God's children are rarely edified by scathing words. Reckless and factious words fail the test of constructive, gracious, gentle speech to which God binds us and by which he will examine us (Matt. 7:1–5; Eph. 4:15, 29; 2 Tim. 2:24f). We must listen, think, and argue well when we engage a thoughtful disputant.

I suspect that most of us are brothers and sisters to be dealt with gently. All of us are more or less ignorant and wayward, beset with weakness (Heb. 5:2). Many well-intended believers


grows through many trials and missteps, by the sustaining grace of God, toward the fullness of the mind of Christ.

So-called psychology bashers—those who believe in the sufficiency of Scripture for generating a comprehensive counseling model—do fundamentally disbelieve the modern psychologies, taking them to be systematic counterfeits and pretenders in the final analysis. They believe that the Bible fiercely resists syncretism. That Scripture is “sufficient” to transform us never means that the Bible is “exhaustive.” It does not mean that the Bible's message for us is accessed and communicated only through proof-texts.

All application of Scripture demands that we engage in a theological and interpretive task. Face-to-face ministry is not simply a matter of inserting proof-texts into conversation. All ministry demands sensitivity and flexibility to the varying conditions of those to whom one ministers.

Most supposed psychology bashers are not anti-counseling. *Most work to develop and practice loving and effective cure of souls as the alternative to secular or quasi-secular psychotherapy.* The debate is not whether to counsel; the debate is about what sort of counsel to believe, what sort of counseling to do, what sort of cure to offer.

So-called psychoheretics—those who believe that Scripture does not intend to be sufficient for generating a comprehensive counseling model—do see an essential role for the secular



Most supposed psychology bashers are not anti-counseling. Most work to develop and practice loving and effective cure of souls as the alternative to secular or quasi-secular psychotherapy.

on both sides of the debate are more clumsy than perverse. Our sin makes us clumsy thinkers, clumsy practitioners, clumsy theologians, clumsy exegetes, clumsy cultural analysts. We all get pigheaded, shortsighted, particularly stuck in those forms of error that contain partial truths. May God make us deft—together.

Throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first, the Bible-believing church has been woefully weak in the cure and care of souls. No doubt, the sower of discord and falsehood is always active in hindering the church from growing up toward real wisdom regarding both the ailment and the redemption of our humanity. But the Sower of love and truth seems willing to work amid the tumult of passions over the long haul: over decades, lifetimes, and centuries. Biblical wisdom does not spring full grown from the head of Zeus. It is born small and

psychologies. But the so-called psychoheretics still claim that the Bible must provide the final authority. That Scripture is not sufficient does not mean the Bible is irrelevant or that it ought to be subordinated to secular psychologies, but that the Bible itself mandates looking and learning from outside. The Bible itself resists biblicism.

Though one can find exceptions, most supposed psychoheretics are not out to swallow the camel of secularity and foist it on an unsuspecting church. Many work to critique the secularity of the modern psychologies and to screen out what seems to fail the test of Scripture.

Theologizers Versus Psychologizers? As a God-centered theory of human personality, biblical counseling claims to offer a psychology that systematically differs from the various secular personality theories. As a gospel-centered

approach to helping people, biblical counseling claims to offer a psychotherapy qualitatively different from the various secular psychotherapies.

On the other side, those who pursue an integration of Christianity and psychological theory specifically claim to do theology. There is solid theological rationale for viewing secular disciplines as fit subjects for hard study. The stuff of psychology does not necessarily wholly overlap the Bible. They frequently view their counseling practice as a communication of God's grace to people whose church experiences have often fed legalism and dishonesty. Where the church has been brusque, they aim to offer an incarnation of grace, a generous and accepting attitude in which trust and honest conversation can flourish. In sum, both parties claim to be both theological and psychological.

Pastoral Counselors Versus Psychologists? It is clear that the pastoral counselors strongly value explicit ministry of the Word. They think that counseling theories and practices should operate under theological accountability. It is equally clear that the psychologists strongly value state licensure for professional identity and because it makes possible insurance reimbursements as a fiscal underpinning. They resist coming under ecclesiastical jurisdiction for their ideas and their practice.

On one side, the "biblical counseling" group includes many people with credentials in social science and mental health fields: psychologists of various sorts, psychiatrists, neurologists, psychiatric nurses, social workers, MD general practitioners, graduate students, former psychology majors. They know the psychologies from the inside.

On the other side, the "psychologist" group includes many people with theological training, experience, and credentials: pastors, elders, deacons, seminary graduates and professors, lay counselors, graduates of pastoral counseling programs, members in good standing of local churches. Psychology, despite obviously bumbling the closer it gets to ultimate issues, validates neglected dimensions of human experience, prompts intellectual curiosity and encourages the patient pursuit of both self-knowledge and case wisdom. In sum, neither mental health nor ecclesiastical experience offers a predictable guide to the issues at stake.

Biblical Counseling or Christian Counseling? Consider their monikers: biblical counseling (as in Journal of Biblical Counseling) and Christian counseling (as in American Association of Christian Counselors [AACC])? The label biblical counseling seems to presume that whatever advocates believe and do comes with the full authority of the Bible, further implying that anything else is unbiblical. What if what they teach and do falls short of offering wise biblical help for strugglers? Similarly, the label Christian counseling seems to presume that what advocates believe and do is distinctly Christian. What if what they teach and do is at odds with their professed faith? In both cases, the reality beneath the label is a

complex maybe/maybe-not. *The terms biblical and Christian are precisely what is at stake and up for debate in the present tumults.*

The psychologists became more explicitly biblically oriented in the 1990s. Larry Crabb and the AACC are only the most visible exemplars of how the evangelical part of the evangelical psychotherapists' dual identity is no longer an embarrassment to professional identity. A more holistic view of human nature has emerged among many evangelical psychotherapists. Some still attempt to sector off "spiritual" problems from "psychological, emotional, relational, mental" problems, attempting to validate their professional existence and activity as something qualitatively different from cure of souls. Advocates have been won to John Calvin's foundational insight that true self-knowledge and knowledge of the true God are interchangeable perspectives.

Meanwhile, the "biblical counselors" have also changed. Their writing now evidences a broader scope than in the early 1970s - supplementing, developing, or even altering aspects of Adams's initial model. Examples include (1) intrapersonal dynamics such as motivation theory, self-evaluation, belief, and self-deception; (2) the impact of and response to varieties of suffering and socialization; (3) the compassionate, flexible, probing, and patient aspects of counseling methodology; (4) nuances in the interaction between Christian faith and the modern psychologies; (5) the practicalities of marital and familial communication; and (6) the cause and treatment of so-called addictions. The model of biblical counseling is now more detailed about "psychological" matters.

So, the psychologists seem more biblical and the biblical counselors seem more psychological. *However, I believe that the two visions are still fundamentally incompatible.* But I also believe that our current situation is ripe for a fresh articulation of the issues. After all, we serve the living God who masters history to his glory and our welfare.

The core question turns on the intent and scope of Scripture, the nature of pastoral theological work, and the degree of significance attached to what the church can appropriate from

the world. In short, is the engine of counseling theory and practice external or internal to the Faith? +++

David Powlison is a faculty member at CCEF and teaches Dynamics of Biblical Change at Westminster.

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SEVERE

SEX

HIGH

BEFORE

ELEVATED

MARRIAGE:

GUARDED

How Far Is Too Far?

LOW

BY TIM LANE

M

ost people think premarital sex is okay. What was once frowned upon is now an accepted part of Western culture, and sex education usually means learning about “safe sex.” But you have probably noticed that education about “safe sex” hasn’t protected those around you from experiencing broken relationships as they

have experimented sexually. Since God made you and also created sex, why not take the time to look at what he has to say about your sexuality and how it should be expressed? In the New Testament, the apostle Paul affirms the goodness of the physical world. Paul says that your body “is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?” (1 Cor. 6:13–15, ESV). Paul is reminding us that Jesus’ physical body was raised from the dead, so all those who believe in him will also be raised from the dead. Our physical bodies are one with Christ himself! Because the body is good, sex and other physical activities can be enjoyed to the glory of God with no sense of shame.

Sex is rightfully enjoyed within the context of an exclusive, heterosexual marriage. Paul says that intimate sexual relations should be reserved exclusively for two people who have entered into a commitment with one another in a religious or civil ceremony. A marriage is created when a man and a woman go on record in a public and legal context to acknowledge their commitment to one another. What makes a marriage is a covenant or legal commitment, so until you make that commitment with someone, you aren’t married. Certainly marriage is much more than the beginning commitment or promise, but it is never less than that.

Married sex is powerful. It communicates the intense, personal nature of the marriage bond. To have sex in a casual way goes against the grain of what sex was intended to communicate. It was never intended to be a casual, recreational activity that can be done with someone outside of the context of deep commitment and love.

Someone might ask: “*Lots of married couples have horrible sex and unmarried couples have great sex. Can something that feels*

so good really be wrong? And, isn’t it better to practice?” While it might be true that some married couples don’t have a good sexual relationship and some unmarried couples do, you shouldn’t decide whether something is right or wrong based on anecdotes. Instead of using anecdotes, we need to base our decisions on a standard outside of ourselves. The Bible tells us that there is a wise, loving, gracious, and personal God who made us and knows what is best for us. His commands are not capricious; they are for our good. He is not trying to spoil our fun. Instead, he wants us to learn how to delight in his world and in our sexuality in the context of marriage. Sex is not a matter of learning skills; it is about learning to sacrificially love someone in the context of an exclusive marital relationship.

Perhaps you already agree that you shouldn’t have sex before marriage, and for you the most pressing question is, “*How far can I go and still be sexually pure?*” While this question might be motivated by seeing how much you can get away with, it can also be a good, honest question about how to maintain sexual purity in a world with few boundaries. Young adults today are remaining single for a much longer period of time, have fewer restrictions on sexual activity from society, and are thus more susceptible to the temptations of sexual involvement prior to marriage.

So what does it look like to be sexually pure in the twenty-first century? Here’s an overarching principle to use as you try to answer that question: Don’t act like you are married when you are not! When you are married, you make an exclusive commitment to one another. Within that context, you also commit to do everything possible to serve one another in every way including sexually. If you are not married, then you should avoid the physical activity that goes with a formal, exclusive commitment to one another.

But what does this mean in practice? How far is too far? Some single couples make vows to not hold hands or kiss until they are married. How does Scripture address this whole question? In light of the positive case the Bible makes for sex inside of marriage, and the warnings it gives to those who practice sex outside of marriage, we can conclude that any romantic and physical intimacy that is reserved for marriage should not be practiced outside of marriage. This means different things for different relationships.

What does it look like to love and serve the other person in such a way that they are encouraged to grow in grace? This should be the fundamental starting point for all of your decisions involving physical contact with someone you are dating.

Practically this means not doing anything that may hinder

**“DO YOU NOT
KNOW THAT
YOUR BODIES
ARE MEMBERS
OF CHRIST?”**

1 Cor. 6:13-15, ESV

your date's growth in grace or create problems for him or her now and in the future. Can a couple hold hands? Is it permissible to kiss? These seem to be questions where there is a strong measure of freedom. A couple in their early teens, a couple that just started dating, and a couple that is thinking about marriage might each draw boundaries in different places.

How can you tell if even holding hands and kissing is going too far? Whenever your romantic activity leads to more involved physical touching, that seemingly harmless physical involvement should be up for discussion. Deep, exclusive romantic involvement should not be the norm in a person's life unless the relationship is moving towards marriage. If you are engaged, remember you are not married yet, so the same general principle of saving sex for marriage applies.

If you are currently sexually active and not married, God's grace can give you the strength to grow and change, just as it did for the Corinthians. Freedom starts when you come to him and admit that you have misused your sexuality and by doing so have not loved others as you should. This is humbling, but remember, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble" (Jas. 4:6). Jesus came to this earth, lived the perfect life you are not able to live, and died in your place to pay for all of your sins. He will give you the desire to change your sexual behavior and his Spirit will lead you to make the necessary changes in your relationships with others. And when you fail, as we all do, simply go back to the beginning—ask for forgiveness and help. Grace is for the humble, not the perfect.

Whatever your sexual behavior is doing for you, it's nothing compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ and becoming like him (Phil. 3:8).

Ask him every day for his Spirit to work in your life and change you to make you like him. Jesus knows all about your struggles and temptations, and he will help you find the "way of escape" through them. As he does so, you will have the opportunity to bring honor to him, to experience the blessing of living for him in our broken world, and to be a blessing in your relationships with the opposite sex. +++

Tim Lane is executive director and faculty member at CCEF.

more... at www.goo.gl/PLZJe

Faculty & Seminar Speakers

CCEF faculty teach classes in both On-Site and Distance Education programs. The On-Site counseling program is taught in conjunction with Westminster Theological Seminary. For the past 30 years, CCEF has been the exclusive provider of accredited counseling classes and degree programs for Westminster.

CCEF also has partnerships with other seminaries (Redeemer Seminary – Dallas, Texas; Biblical Seminary – Hatfield, PA and SEMBEQ Seminary – Montreal, Canada) and ministries where they teach courses in various formats, including distance education.

MEET THE CCEF FACULTY



CCEF faculty, as pictured left to right.

David Powlison, MDiv, PhD

David is a faculty member at CCEF and edited *The Journal of Biblical Counseling*. He holds a PhD from the University of Pennsylvania, as well as an MDiv ('80) degree from Westminster Theological Seminary. David has been counseling for over thirty years. He has written numerous articles on biblical counseling and on the relationship between faith and psychology. His books include *Speaking Truth in Love*; *Seeing with New Eyes*; *Power Encounters: Reclaiming Spiritual Warfare*; and *The Biblical Counseling Movement: History and Context*. David has taught across the United States and in Korea, India, Brazil, Europe, and Sri Lanka.

Julie Smith Lowe, MA

Julie is associate faculty and a counselor at CCEF. She has an MA degree in Counseling from Biblical Theological Seminary, is a Licensed Professional Counselor and has been trained as a Certified Christian Conciliator through Peacemakers Ministries. She has extensive experience with foster and adoptive families and speaks at events regarding women's issues, children and conflict resolution.

Edward T. Welch, MDiv, PhD

Ed is a counselor and faculty member at CCEF. He earned a PhD in Counseling Psychology from the University of Utah and has an MDiv degree from Biblical Theological Seminary.

Ed has been counseling for over thirty years and has written extensively on the topics of depression, fear and addictions. His books include: *When People Are Big and God is Small*; *Addictions: A Banquet in the Grave*; *Blame it on the Brain*; *Depression—A Stubborn Darkness*; *Running Scared*; *Crossroads: A Step-by-Step Guide Away from Addiction*; and *When I am Afraid: A Step-by-Step Guide Away from Fear and Anxiety*.

Timothy S. Lane, MDiv, DMin

Tim is executive director and faculty member at CCEF and has been counseling for more than 25 years. He has previous experience in both campus and pastoral ministry, including serving as a pastor for ten years. Tim has an MDiv ('91) and a DMin ('06) from Westminster. He is the author of several minibooks and is the co-author of CCEF's *Transformation Series Curriculum: How People Change*; *Relationships - A Mess Worth Making* and the newly released *Change and Your Relationships—A Mess Worth Making Study Guide*.

Winston T. Smith, MDiv

Winston is a counselor and faculty member at CCEF. Winston has been counseling for more than 15 years and holds an MDiv ('94) degree from Westminster Theological Seminary. Winston is the author of the minibooks: *Divorce Recovery*; *Help for Stepfamilies*; *It's All About Me—The Problem with Masturbation*;

Help! My Spouse Committed Adultery; and *Who Does the Dishes?* He has also just released his first full-length book: *Marriage Matters: Extraordinary Change Through Ordinary Moments*.

Monica Kim, MAR

Monica is associate faculty and a counselor at CCEF. She has an MAR ('96) from Westminster and has written for *The Journal of Biblical Counseling*. In addition to her work at CCEF, Monica serves on the pastoral staff at her church where she speaks, teaches Bible studies, leads women's groups and counsels youth and families.

Michael R. Emler, MDiv, MD

Michael practiced as a family physician for twelve years before joining CCEF as a counselor and faculty member. Mike holds an MD from the University of Pennsylvania as well as an MDiv ('01) degree from Westminster. He has authored the minibooks: *Asperger Syndrome*; *Help for the Caregiver*; *OCD*; and *Angry Children*, and has just released his first full-length book: *CrossTalk: Where Life & Scripture Meet*.

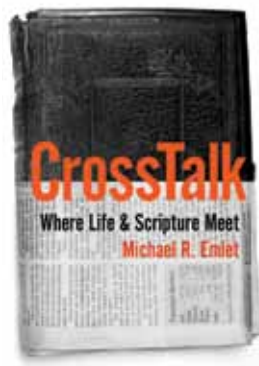
No More Bible Band-aids



By Mike Emlet

You've just learned that a male member of your youth group, Joel, has started dating a non-Christian girl and they've had sex on at least one occasion. He had made a profession of faith as a young child and lived, until recently, as a faith-filled disciple of Christ. How will you minister to this student? What notes do you want to strike as you bring the truth of the gospel to bear on his life? How you move toward him depends on at least two things—your general approach to Scripture and your general approach to people. These two overarching aspects will shape the way you specifically minister to this teen. It's important to be self-reflective about the ways we think about the Bible and about people if we are to be wise, compassionate, and gospel-centered in personal ministry. Let's look at possible approaches to Scripture in this first article.

If you tend to view the Bible as a sourcebook for timeless principles in living, you might turn to 1 Cor. 6:18—"Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body." Or perhaps 2 Cor. 6:14 comes to mind—"Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?" Both verses could provide very direct exhortation to your student. Or, if you tend to mine the pages of Scripture for examples to follow or avoid you might think of Samson and way in which his heart was led astray by Delilah (Judges 16). Or, if you tend to view the Bible in systematic theological categories, you



*(Adapted from the book:
CrossTalk: Where Life
& Scripture Meet,
New Growth Press, 2009)*

might engage your student in a discussion of how a holy life (sanctification) is a necessary outgrowth of justification (e.g. James 2:17). Any of these uses of Scripture might be beneficial to your teen, and none are wrong in and of themselves. But something is missing. Or better, *someone* is missing: the person of Jesus Christ!

If we don't ultimately view the Bible as an unfolding, cohesive story of God's redemption that comes to completion in Jesus Christ, our use of Scripture in ministry situations has the potential to miss Him—and so will our hearers. Those we minister to need more than commands, principles,

Scripture often explicitly reminds God's people of their true identity as image bearers (Gen. 1:26) and chosen, forgiven and redeemed children (Eph. 1:3-14; Gal. 4:6-7). Perhaps Joel has forgotten his high privilege and calling, and that he has been set apart for his own good and God's glory. Perhaps he needs you to recount the many ways God has worked in his life over the years growing up in a Christian family.

The Bible also addresses our experiences as sufferers. The Israelites in the wilderness, the psalmists crying for God to show himself faithful, the prophets lamenting during the

Those we minister to need more than commands, principles, examples, ... they need to be connected... with a Redeemer

examples, and systematic theological categories per se. Rather, they need to be connected in vital relationship with a Redeemer. Because the Bible tells the story of God's rescue mission that centers on the Redeemer Jesus Christ, wherever we are in Scripture we want to ask the questions, "How does this passage fit into the broader story of redemption?" "What difference does the death and resurrection of Jesus make for the way I would understand and apply this passage to my brother or sister?"

Approaching the Bible in this Christ-centered way in no way minimizes the importance of commands, principles, characters, and doctrine in Scripture. Rather, it puts all of them in a gospel-centered relational framework that avoids dispensing superficial "Bible-band-aids." Having advocated for this approach to the Bible, let us now discuss a general biblical framework for approaching people.

To apply the Bible to our contemporary lives we need to "read" (understand) people wisely as well. Here we follow the Bible's lead because in it God speaks His redemptive word to his people as saints, sufferers, and sinners.

Why is it important to highlight these aspects of our identity as believers? They describe our experience before Jesus returns to consummate his kingdom. Another way of saying this is that each person—including Joel—is wrestling in some way with two problems. The first is the problem of identity and purpose: who am I and what in the world should I be doing? (This corresponds to God's address to us as saints.) The second is the problem of evil: evil from outside ourselves (which corresponds to our experience as sufferers) and evil from within ourselves (which corresponds to our experience as sinners.) Let's look at each of these briefly.

exile, the groaning of God's children as we wait for the day when there will be no pain. Suffering is part of the warp and woof of life this side of glory. Are you attentive to Joel's suffering? What if you knew that he had been snubbed repeatedly by the most popular girl in the church? Or that his parents were in the middle of a messy divorce? Wouldn't that shape your overall approach to him?

Of course, Scripture also addresses our experience as sinners. As Christians we continue to struggle with the downward pull of sin in our lives. Throughout the Bible God calls his people to repentance and faith, to turn from empty ways of living and to walk in his righteous ways. There is no doubt Joel is in sin and loving ministry to him must explore the heart motives that underlie his actions (Luke 6:43-45) and must involve a call to repentance. To ignore that fact is to say "Peace, peace" when there is no peace (Jer. 6:14).

We need to be attentive to Joel's experience as a saint, sufferer, and sinner. All three aspects of his experience are important, although we may be tempted to zero in on his sin to the exclusion of everything else. But God approaches his people in multifaceted ways; his redemptive words confirm Joel's identity as a chosen child of God, comfort him in the midst of suffering, and confront the ways he is turning away from God. +++

Mike Emlet is a counselor and faculty member at CCEF.

more... at www.goo.gl/phA39

How Do You Respond to People Who Feel Shame?

By Winston Smith

Over the last several years I've spent a lot of time thinking about how to minister to people struggling with shame. As I've witnessed its power to crush the spirit, inflict suffering, and cultivate despair, I've been driven to scripture seeking the Lord's help to know how to love the victims of shame wisely.

Of course, I've naturally been drawn to passages where Jesus addresses it directly, and I'd like to share a few observations about one of those passages that can help us appreciate the experience of shame and how Jesus responds. In Mark 5:21-34 Jairus, a synagogue ruler, pleaded with Jesus to come to his home to heal his dying young daughter. Jesus agreed and went with Jairus in the company of a great crowd. But in the midst of the crowd was a woman who had suffered from an incurable issue of blood for twelve years. She had spent all of her money seeking medical help but nothing worked; in fact, it only grew worse. So

she approached Jesus from behind and touched his cloak because she believed that simply touching his clothes would heal her, and it did.

If you want a case study in shame pay attention to this woman. Notice her behaviors and attitudes. How do we know she was ashamed? First, consider her condition. Illness itself in Israelite culture was considered a form of "uncleanness" and sometimes considered a sign of judgment on sin. To live with a continual flow of blood would have meant that she was continually unclean (Lev.15:25-27) and at risk of making anyone with whom

she had contact unclean as well. She was probably shunned most of the time for this reason, an untouchable. We can understand why she would feel the need to sneak up on Jesus from behind.

But why not simply cry out, "Jesus, heal me!" Many had and gotten Jesus' attention and been healed. Who can say for sure? Perhaps shame had done more of its insidious work in her life than in others and she simply didn't dare believe that Jesus would take notice and help. Maybe she wasn't desperate enough. Maybe the anticipated rebuke of those around her or the fear of being ignored was just too much. But perhaps she also knew that this



PEOPLE WALKING: SHUTTERSTOCK/SVLUMA; GIRL SITTING: ISTOCK/STOCKSTUDIOX

crowd was on the way to Jairus' house. Who is she to think she could stop the parade? After all, Jairus is a synagogue leader. Surely her concerns aren't as important as his. And his daughter is dying. She's lived in this condition for years. So rather than risk exposure, rebuke, rejection, and more shame she decides to risk a touch. Just a touch.

Sound familiar? Do you know people who desperately want and need help but at the very same moment feel so unclean, so utterly defiled, so different from everyone else that most of their efforts go into hiding and covering up their problems? They can't believe anyone could possibly love them. For them, to be truly known is synonymous with rejection. Like the suffering woman they occasionally risk sneaking up on you and hoping for just a touch of compassion and help, but the risk for them is enormous. Know anyone who considers their very existence an interruption to the lives of others? Know someone who punctuates most of their sentences with "I'm sorry"? They know they need help but to ask anything of another is to be an infuriating interruption in someone's life.

Now consider Jesus' response. He stops the procession. He demands to know who touched him. What is the woman to do? She senses that she can't hide so she falls at his feet "trembling with fear and told him the whole truth". What will he do?

Rebuke her for her fear? "Why don't you just ask for what you need!?"

Ask her to search for the reasons that God has so afflicted her? "Surely there is some reason this has happened to you. Any unconfessed sin you would like to share with the crowd?"

Call her out for her sneaky approach? "You're trusting in yourself and your own sneakiness! Repent now or there will be no healing for you!"

No. He says, "Daughter, your *faith* has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering." [italics mine] Can you imagine the shock, the relief that this woman felt? She hadn't just been healed of a disease, but of shame. Jesus simple actions said,

"You are not an interruption."

"I'm not afraid to connect with you."

"I care about you."

And rather than picking over her actions and locating possible sins, he observes that for this woman, her actions are a testimony of faith.

I suppose the woman could have remained silent, sneaked away, and relished the healing she received. But I think that ultimately she would have been terribly harmed. Sure, the external source of her shame would have been removed, but what of her heart? Her efforts at covering herself would have been validated. She would have as much faith in herself as in Jesus. And what would her faith have been like? She would have great faith in Jesus power, but would she believe in his compassion and love?

There are many things we can learn from this passage but a few take-aways for me are:

- I want to combat shame by pointing people to the love of Christ, but just as importantly I want to embody that love. My actions and attitudes communicate. Jesus' words were important but his actions were too.
- I don't want to be so eager to identify sin in others that I miss the more immediate need of compassion and love. Locating sin and speculating about poor motives really is a lot easier than being patient, kind, and compassionate. I want to give others what they need in the moment, not what is easy for me.
- I don't want the people in my life to feel like an interruption. May God have mercy on me, because I think sometimes they do.
- I don't want people with problems to think I'm running from them, but sometimes in my fear I do.
- I can be honest about my limitations of time and wisdom without letting them think they are too needy to be helped or cared for. To do that I need to confess my own pride and self-reliance.

If you want to know how to love the shamed more wisely, the first step is to look around for those "sneaking up on you" just hoping to steal a touch and give it to them. Notice them. Make time for them. Invite them to give voice to their suffering. Embody and point them to the love of Christ. +++

Winston Smith is a counselor and faculty member at CCEF.

more... at www.ccef.org

Do you know people who desperately want and need help but at the very same moment feel so unclean, so utterly defiled, so different from everyone else that most of their efforts go into hiding and covering up their problems?

Depression's Odd Filter

By Ed Welch

Someone says to you, "I love you."

You hear . . . nothing. Actually you hear something. You hear "I'm worthless. You're only saying you love me because you think you have to."

Somehow, from the mouths of other people to your ear, all words of blessing and encouragement get tumbled upside down and confirm your suspicions about yourself. Depression corrupts every blessing and leaves the curses in their untouched, pristine form.

What kind words have other people said to you? What did you actually hear after your depressive, inner-translator did a number on it?

Now on to something more lethal.

God says, "I love you."

You hear, "God loves some people but he could never love me."

With this one, you don't even feel worthy to hear something personal from the Lord. So what came out the other side was your own voice, not God's!

"I love you," becomes "God could never love me." If someone else did that you would tell her she was crazy. But, somehow, for you, it makes perfect sense.

Against all the evidence, such as the sacrificial death of Jesus on your behalf, and his willingness to tell you, over and over, that he loves you, you stick with what you think you heard, as if the problem was hard-wired.

Let's say you go into the presence of a king – a powerful king. He tells you that he is pleased to put you under his protection. He invites you to live in the castle itself. You respond by fortifying your little shack, which stands a couple miles away.

Here is what you are saying to the king:

You aren't trustworthy. I don't believe you really want to invite me into your protection. You aren't powerful. I am safer outside the castle grounds.

But human beings are intended to live life with humility, first before our King, then before others. Sometimes you reject what he says and you trust in

yourself. At those times, the way ahead is clear – confess to the king that you didn't really believe what he said. You could call it repentance. Only those who walk humbly before the Lord can truly hear.

Be sure to say it: "Lord, I heard wrong. Help me to hear you correctly."

And once your ears are open you will hear plenty. For example, take a look at the letter we call 1 John. John, who knew Jesus and lived alongside him, was getting up in years, which meant that he was going to stay on message: Jesus loves, not because we are lovable but because he loves, and he will always love first and love most. Then, as one who knew Jesus' style well, since Jesus didn't say "I love you" once but

said it over and over, John was happy to repeat himself.

But those reversing filters can quickly return.

Jesus says, "I love you."

To which your inner voice says, "Not me, I'm not lovable."

Jesus responds, "But I do love you, not because you are lovable (nobody is) but because I love you."

Jesus loves you because he is love (1 John 4:8). He loves you because of who He is, not because of who you are. The evidence of his love? "This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our

sins" (1 John 4:10). If he died on your behalf, he certainly isn't going to leave you on your own now.

In human relationships, our love is way too dependent on how the other person is lovable. When you love others, they love you. When you don't, they don't. Jesus, however, is not like other people. When our love for him wavers, he loves us. Therein lies the fatal flaw in your hearing.

So you have your work cut out for you. Get rid of the tangled mess by confessing that you don't hear, and replace it with a very simple connection: God says it, I believe it. And truly hear. +++

Ed Welch is a counselor and faculty member at CCEF and blogs regularly at ccef.org.

more... at www.goo.gl/VCmGT



An Interview with Chris and Amy Carter:

What made you decide to come to Westminster to study Counseling?

CHRIS: “The more time I spent studying the Word, the more clear it became to me that all theology, by its very nature, intends to reach into our lives and affect us. A passion for two themes grew in me: one for the theme of restoration and the other for the relevance of the Word. Through the influence of my pastor, I was exposed to biblical counseling resources and in them found a rich, biblical exploration of these two themes that captivated me. The CCEF authors showed persuasively that the person of Christ was at the center of all true change. Convinced there was no better place to study than Westminster’s MDiv program combined with biblical counseling classes from CCEF, my wife and I finished our studies at another institution and made the move.”

How have you found the program so far?

AMY: “Every time I read one of the works from CCEF, or even when I sat in Dynamics of Biblical Change with Dr. Powlison, there is a real concern for identifying whatever particular sin the counselee is bringing to the situation, and a gentle concern for restoration. That’s what counseling is all about, it’s a hopeful ministry here. They’re really concerned about restoration, and they know that through Christ that’s possible.”



How have your scholarships helped?

CHRIS: “Scholarships have been a huge blessing. I was awarded scholarships my first semester at Westminster, and have received more since starting here. They have actually allowed me to take more classes sooner, which has been wonderful. The spousal scholarship has been a blessing too, because its allowed my wife to take classes with me that we couldn’t have afforded otherwise.”

AMY: “The hope would be that I could be a partner with my husband in ministry down the road, and whether that’s as a formal employee at the church is yet to be seen. The spousal scholarship has allowed me to even consider that, because I’m not sure it would be an option at this point without it.” +++



Business Ethics

Choose to do business God's way

Dear Westminster Friends,

IN TODAY'S BUSINESS WORLD, ETHICAL DILEMMAS ABOUND; THE ANSWERS NOT ALWAYS CLEARLY evident, and the motivation toward a Godly response is sometimes even less so. Whether we find ourselves in the marketplace or at home, each moment of our lives is strung together like pearls of decision – to choose to follow God's standard no matter how high the cost, or to follow paths of error and ease for selfish gain and immediate gratification.

Business Ethics Today, edited by Phil Clements, Managing Director of the Center for Christian Business Ethics, addresses the application of God's timeless principles of conduct in our fallen world. Whether businessman or consumer, pastor or layperson, *Business Ethics Today* will challenge and inspire the reader to apply God's truth to every facet of life.

With an introduction written by Westminster Theological Seminary President Dr. Peter A. Lillback, *Business Ethics Today* features articles by Biblical ethicists and Christian business leaders such as Charles Colson (founder, Prison Fellowship Ministries), and Dr. Phillip Ryken (President, Wheaton College). It also features articles from familiar Westminster faculty such as Drs. Richard B. Gaffin, K. Scott Oliphint, William Edgar, and Vern Poythress.

Business Ethics Today will make an excellent gift for the Christian business person, church leader, or recent graduate in your life, and is useful for stimulating discussion in college and career groups and other small group studies.

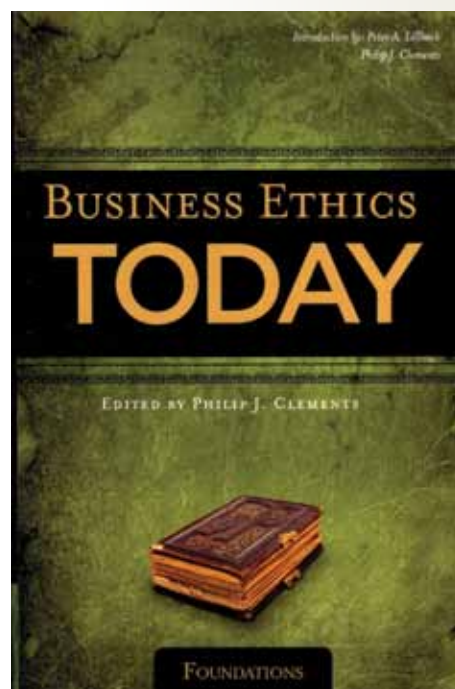
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In Christ,

Brown Vincent,
Vice President for Development



*Book retail value, \$30; according to IRS regulations, the remainder of your contribution is tax deductible.

BLOGS & PODCASTS AT CCEF.ORG

TOP
10

For the past four decades, the Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation has been growing and contributing to the biblical counseling movement as that movement has grown in both influence and maturity.

- 1** *How to Disarm an Angry Person (#1 Most-Read Blog Post of 2010!), Ed Welch.* Welch provides helpful guideline in thinking about how the cross of Jesus Christ changes everything in our preparation for a more effective confrontation.
- 2** *No More Bible Band-aids #1, Mike Emlet.* In this blog series, Emlet shows how the Bible is not just a source of principles for living, but an unfolding story of God's redemptive history that centers on the Redeemer, Jesus Christ.
- 3** *Hope for the Depressed, Ed Welch.* This blog is a message of hope and practical strategies for those suffering in depression. Welch shows that depression can't rob you of hope because your hope is in a person who is alive and with you.
- 4** *Facing Death with Hope: Living for What Lasts, David Powlison.* In this article, Powlison intends to help you face your death honestly by working through your fear and dread, and to know Jesus intimately by putting all your faith and trust in him.
- 5** *What Not to Say to Those Who are Suffering, Ed Welch.* Sometimes, your comments to suffering people are unhelpful, unloving, and discouraging. Read this blog post to consider how you can better communicate speak words of edification.
- 6** *Making Scripture Personal, David Powlison.* When Scripture seems distant, how do you come alive to the richness of God's Word? Powlison shares his insight on how you might make Scripture more personal and relevant.
- 7** *How Do You Respond to People Who Feel Shame?, Winston Smith.* Smith discusses the suffering and despair that people experience because of their shame, and what Scripture teaches about how to love the shamed wisely.
- 8** *EMDR and the Meaning of Suffering, Ed Welch.* Welch attempts to explore a biblical overview of how to understand popular forms of secular therapy and treatments such as EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing).
- 9** *Four Reasons to Incorporate Counseling Into the Local Church, Tim Lane.* In a two-part blog series, Lane provides reasons for why a local church should be committed to do counseling and how a local church should think about seeking outside help.
- 10** *Marital Intimacy, David Powlison.* In a 3-part podcast series, Powlison discusses the challenge of how to think about solving problems that arise out of conflict and tension in marriage.

CLASS NOTES

[*Westminster alumni*]

Do You Skype? Counseling in the Age of Technology *by Robyn Huck*

I was decidedly against it. I thought I had good reasons, and I laid them out. But none of them changed Alasdair's mind. In fact, Alasdair Groves (my boss) already had three Skype counseling sessions booked. But the idea of counseling by way of a video-internet connection still really bothered me.

First, I felt that video conferencing would be substituting technology for the personal act of loving someone through the process of counseling.

We aim to bring the love of Christ to counselees by actually embodying Christ's nature as much as we're able. Don't you need to actually be in the same room to "embody"? It can't be the same as actually being in the same room and witnessing the unspoken compassion of a person's sorrow.

Second, at times, part of counseling is helping someone change personal habits, or overcome fears, or communicate better. Counseling via computer screen is simply not the same as interacting with a person face to face. I know a woman who can speak civilly to her ex-husband on the phone, but

if he's in the room she explodes in rage. There's a comfort that is afforded by distance. This may be helpful in some rare counseling situations, but we're usually trying to help people be appropriately vulnerable and transparent in counseling so they're able to carry that skill to other relationships.

Finally, as I look around and see kids playing video games alone instead of pickup sports with neighborhood friends; teens continually thumbing their phones; and adults engaged in emotionally-charged relationships with people they've never actually met in person — I wonder if I really want to be part of this scene. Is counseling via computer screen encouraging this shift away from human face-to-face interaction?

After passionately presenting my arguments, Alasdair gave his incredibly succinct rebuttal. He shrugged. Then he said, "Sometimes it's all we have. And although it's not optimum, I've been having good success with it." +++

more... at www.goo.gl/XTA6e



Alasdair Groves (MDiv '09) and Robyn Huck, counselors of CCEF New England affiliate office.

Alumni Spotlight:

Laura Andrews

Many of us convince ourselves that we will be equipped to counsel people once we gain some knowledge about Scripture and a general understanding of how people function. However, we easily mistake our measure of knowledge and insight for growth in wisdom and love. It takes time before we realize that people are more complicated than we think.

This experience was not atypical of Laura Andrews (Westminster '10, MDiv, Biblical Counseling). Through her classes, Laura was constantly reminded of the truth that in order to counsel well, she needs to know the Wonderful Counselor. She needed to know God and His interpretation of reality by "thinking God's thoughts after Him," seeing the world and people as God does.

Laura has been greatly impacted by WTS' core value that all of Scripture points to our need of God and speaks to every area of our lives. From the language classes to the counseling courses, Laura was learning who God is and what His Word says. She was refining her methodology to build up individuals in grace and love. It was never explicit how her toilsome hours of parsing verbs and translating verses in Greek and Hebrew were fostering her counseling competency. However, she learned that the basic principle in growing as a wise counselor involves a continual process of getting to know God and being renewed by the Spirit.



As a former intern and current counselor at CCEF, Laura has had the opportunity to work with counselees and apply what she has learned at WTS. The initial challenge was evident: how do you embody all that you have learned in your classes? Laura gradually

realized that counseling is not so much about trying to re-teach everything you've learned in school, but rather helping the counselees to know God. She sought to direct her counselees' gaze upon the story of Christ that they might see how personal and relevant Scripture is to their lives.

While CCEF continues to challenge Laura to think practically about how to apply Scripture in her counseling relationships, WTS has laid the foundation of the framework of biblical counseling. Laura borrows a phrase when she says, "Seminary is like the backpack from which you're going to live out of the rest of your life." Although WTS may not have equipped her to have an answer ready for every unique situation, Laura feels prepared for a longtime journey. +++



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[*The discipline of biblical counseling*]

Shattered Assumptions

I have recently been reading about those who struggle with “shattered assumptions.” You often find this phrase in literature regarding those who have gone through some type of traumatic experience which has informed or “shattered” their view of life, their future or their sense of stability and safety.

People, who were once confident and at ease with their surroundings, suddenly find themselves dealing with a natural disaster, an act of violence or harrowing event that has broken their sense of security and constancy. So broken is their sense of stability, that they develop what is called a trauma-worldview. They see life through lenses that anticipate bad things happening. They begin to project this into their present situations as well as their future.

Several years ago I experienced an apartment fire. *Looking back, I believe I underestimated the impact it had on me. It was obvious I was not thinking clearly immediately after the event. I did not call anyone right away for fear I would wake them up in the middle of the night. I worried about getting to work the next morning with no clothing to wear and was concerned that my boss would be angry I was running late. Looking back, it is almost comical to see the lack of clarity in my thinking and how oblivious I was to my own state of mind. For months afterwards when I got into my car I prayed I would not get into a car accident. I walked around with a sense of heaviness and was easily startled.*

Had you asked me beforehand, I would not have assumed I was immune from fires, car accidents or bad things happening. Yet the reality of it unnerved me in ways I did not expect. Now consider those who have gone through far more traumatic events. How do they make sense of those experiences and the instinctive reactions that follow? How is their worldview shaped by their trauma? Do they underestimate the power it has in informing their sense of stability moving forward? I'd

argue that *when expectations or “assumptions” are shattered, people tend to fall into a belief that God has failed them, the world is not safe and they must be prepared for it or they fall into despair over the reality that they can not succeed at anticipating or avoiding tragedy.*

I wonder how often we as counselors, whether formal or informal, underestimate how such events impact a person's general worldview. Our inclination at times is to promise God's protection from such events. We then leave individuals feeling even more shaken by the reality that God did not “protect” them from an affliction. *At times we attempt to put ourselves in the position of explaining God's ways (as if we could), thinking an explanation will erase the painfulness of the event. We are at times uncomfortable with God's silence and lack of explanation, so we attempt our own.*

How does the gospel speak into these moments? How do we have a gospel-centered hope without allowing our expectations to inform what that must look like? Hope is found not in the stability and security of life. It is not found in the positive illusions we might hold about our lives. Nor can we rely on the promise of an explanation that may possibly justify suffering. *Our worldview is consistently threatened by the painful realities of existence, when it should be tied to the person of Jesus. Our goal needs to be to develop a worldview that is so bound in the character of Christ—so secure in a relationship with our Creator—that it cannot be shattered. +++*

Julie Smith Lowe is associate faculty and a counselor at CCEF.



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