

## What is Biblical Counselling?

Biblical counselling is the wise application, to a troubled individual, of teaching, exhortation, encouragement, edification, consolation and admonishment. It is a spiritual gift described as a 'word of wisdom' by Paul (1 Cor 12:8); a gift which is required of pastors who shepherd God's sheep.

Such counselling can be performed by any mature Christian who cares for people, but it is especially required of leaders. Very complex and difficult personal issues may require several counsellors working in fellowship (Prov 11:14). Gender must also be taken into account; a male counsellor should never see a female 'patient' without a female assistant.

Counselling necessitates several things. First and foremost, a deep and thorough knowledge of the Bible so that it can be applied to a person properly. It is always the truth of God's word that brings power to a soul, not the advice of the counsellor (Jn 8:32). Since it is the truth that makes us free, a knowledge of true doctrine is required. It is one thing to know the Bible, but it is another to know what the Bible actually teaches consistently. Demons can quote Scripture but only those who know the truth can bring freedom. It is also important to understand the soul. People's problems always involve either an emotional, volitional or intellectual issue; understanding how the soul works is vital to fixing problems. When the soul is out of balance, then problems arise.

Much of modern church counselling is in error. A class of professional counsellors, that have been trained in secular institutions, have arisen in the churches; and yet personal problems have increased dramatically. As the psychotherapists have increased, so has the need for therapy (this mimics the secular world). The reasons for the failure of this counselling are multiple and various; chief among them is the focus on self-esteem instead of self-denial.

One issue is the rise of female professional counsellors being used by churches. Thus people go to secular trained women for help instead of going to male elders appointed by God. While women can counsel other women on matters they are familiar with (Titus 2:3-5) it is unbiblical for women to counsel men since that involves taking authority over the man, which is forbidden (1 Tim 2:12).

Another issue is that the roots of secular psychotherapy arise from the occult investigations of people like Freud and Jung, to say nothing of the appalling lies used to support Freud's claims. But that is another story.

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