



STATEMENT DP220-4

**PSYCHOLOGY AND THE CHURCH (Part Four):
The High Cost of Biblical Compassion and Commitment**

by Bob and Gretchen Passantino

Summary

Biblical diagnosis of the complex, intersecting worlds of psychology, counseling, and the church is elusive and also only a small step toward approaching a productive individual, congregational, and Christian commitment toward helping hurting people. Although a well-rounded, biblically based program of personal change and growth with the help of a committed, mature Christian is the best choice for most troubled people, Christians often feel cut off from that help because they don't know qualified Christian counselors, they are isolated from mature Christian counseling, they are afraid to impose their problems on others, or they have been hurt by Christians who violate confidences, are unfairly judgmental, or who misuse Scripture to harm rather than help. Biblical problem resolution demands sacrifice, compassion, and commitment, all of which are rare in the church today.

What's wrong? Where is God in all of this? Why am I so miserable?" I clutched the telephone to my ear as though, if only I could get it close enough, my father's wisdom and spiritual stability would somehow flow through the line and into my heart. My father listened patiently and quietly as I poured out our troubles. It was Christmas week, we were temporarily sharing our apartment with a missionary family, our oldest child had an ear infection, our second child had scarlet fever, our baby had a life-threatening respiratory crisis that landed him in the hospital just one hall away from me, in the surgery wing where I had just undergone emergency surgery for an appendix that had ruptured Christmas Eve. My husband, Bob, was stretched to the limit coping with sick children, hospital visits, and houseguests, so I really felt alone. I was depressed, tired, distressed over our sick children, in a panic over our finances, and dangerously close to accusing God of neglecting us. I needed a good counselor, and I knew of no counselor better than my dad.

Unfortunately, many people, Christians as well as non-Christians, don't have a gifted counselor like my dad as close as the telephone. We stumble through life, wrestling with depression, loneliness, fear, sorrow, or anger. Christian leaders struggle to help with these problems as well, often feeling inadequate, untrained, and lacking the expertise to provide substantive help. At first we may turn to our closest friends, or someone in our church who seems to understand. Too often, however, we don't get the help we need, and sometimes we even incur more problems from poor or inattentive

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counselors. Many of us suffer in silence and isolation. Many others turn to “professionals,” both inside and outside the church: counselors, therapists, psychologists, and psychiatrists. Do we find workable solutions from sources in harmony with a biblical world view? Or do we settle for second best, or even embrace error, somehow missing God’s answer?

Our survey over the previous three articles in this series did not provide easy answers to these questions. Human nature is complex, and much of it is only partially and imperfectly discerned through common methods of evaluation. When humans encounter problems with daily living, including problems with their relationship with God, the discovery, understanding, and resolution of those problems is equally complex. Both the church and the world offer a myriad of approaches to stability and personal growth, some obviously antibiblical, some consistent with biblical teaching, and some derived directly from Scripture. Despite such complexity, however, our survey has led us to some important conclusions:

- (1) Psychotherapy is pervasive in our culture and touches all of our lives, whether or not we personally seek out a professional therapist.
- (2) Many people, including Christians, turn to professional therapists rather than to the church because they are not convinced the church can meet their personal needs.
- (3) Human nature, science, psychotherapy, and biblical paradigms of personal understanding and fulfillment are complex and people often simplistically mischaracterize them.
- (4) The Biblical Counseling Movement (BCM) represents one approach to applying the Bible to personal problem resolution. The BCM is characterized by a number of positive, helpful, biblically centered principles, although it falls short of a comprehensive program in some aspects.
- (5) God provides the standard by which all counseling must be judged. Our most complete and trustworthy record of God’s standard is in His inerrant, perfect Word, the Bible; but God’s truth may also be discerned in other forums such as natural theology, conscience, and practical wisdom (all ways that must be tested by God’s standard revealed in the Bible).
- (6) Psychotherapy is complex, inconsistent, of varying value, sometimes even harmful, and mostly based on non-Christian, materialistic foundations.
- (7) Psychotherapy as practiced is usually a compilation of techniques and principles gathered almost haphazardly by clinicians with little regard to a consistent, cohesive, and coherent world view.
- (8) Even Christian psychotherapists, who hold to a biblical world view and who attempt to test their therapeutic assumptions and techniques by the Bible, generally have not developed a comprehensive biblical paradigm for their therapy.

In this concluding article, we address three additional issues: (1) Some aspects of psychotherapy can be in harmony with a biblical world view and can enhance a biblical approach to personal development. (2) A comprehensive biblical approach to personal development and problem resolution requires a sacrificial level of Christian commitment, discipleship, and compassion. (3) We can identify both general and specific considerations necessary for finding a good counselor.

ALL TRUTH IS GOD'S TRUTH

One of the most emotionally “loaded” statements in the controversy between the church and the world is, “All truth is God’s truth.” Does it mean that whatever anyone thinks is true is true? Does it mean that nothing is true unless God declares it to be true? Does it mean that whatever anyone believes to be God’s will is true? Does it mean that anything that is objectively true is known by God to be true? Do its adherents worship truth as God? Does it elevate reason and knowledge above God?

Different people mean different things by this ambiguous statement. When we (and most other conservative, evangelical Christian thinkers) use this term we mean that, since God is truth (Isa. 65:16; cf. John 14:6) and knows all things (Jer. 23:23-24), there is nothing that is actually in existence, no fact, no knowledge, and no truth — nothing that corresponds to reality — that He does not know. For example, while the Bible does not contain the multiplication tables through 100, it remains true that 100 times 100 equals 10,000, and we can count on that as “God’s truth” because it corresponds to reality, including the laws of logic. There is nothing *true* that is not in accordance with the God of truth.

When we apply this principle to psychology, we say that, while not everything about human nature is completely explained in Scripture, the human condition is described in terms of sinfulness, repentance, and sanctification; and principles of human nature are summarized and illustrated in Scripture. However, we can come to a more complete, comprehensive understanding of human nature by a variety of truth-gathering activities, including observation, rational evaluation, assessment, and application of what we already know to be true.

Of course, every aspect of our understanding must be tested by, and conform to, the Bible, even if that aspect is not explicitly taught in Scripture. “All truth is God’s truth” in the sense that no true discovery, by whatever means, can contradict what God has clearly revealed in the Bible, even if the details or the complexities are not discussed in the Bible. If there is any true discrepancy with the Bible, what has been discovered must be rejected or re-evaluated. The Bible’s clear position is never discarded or changed.

For example, the Bible does not specifically state that cigarette smoking is wrong, but it does specifically state that Christians have a responsibility to maintain a healthy lifestyle (1 Cor. 6:19). We can rationally argue from this that, since scientific testing clearly associates disease with smoking, smoking violates 1 Corinthians 6:19.

This seems like a straightforward principle, but some critics reject its application to the field of human problem resolutions. Author Dave Hunt, for example, says,

This specious phrase is put forth whenever questions are raised and is generally accepted without further thought by those inquiring.

What is meant by *truth* is seldom elaborated. Are we talking about *scientific facts* involving the brain and body, or about *God’s truth* involving the soul and spirit? Jesus said, “Thy Word *is truth*,” not *part* of the truth. Psychotherapy deals with a subject upon which God has spoken with finality and about which He claims to have communicated in His Word the *whole truth*. There are not parts of this truth missing from the Bible and left in limbo, only to be discovered somewhere in the secular world. (emphases in original)¹

We agree that the Bible contains all of the basic principles for personal development and problem resolution, and certainly the entirety of what is necessary for reconciliation with God through Christ's death on the cross, which results in our ultimate personal fulfillment in heavenly glory (Rom. 8:28-30).

We do *not* agree that the Bible contains all of the details and/or applications of all of the basic principles for human problem resolution. Hunt and some other BCM advocates take 1 Peter 1:3 out of context and apply it to all areas of human fulfillment.² The verse reads, "His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness." Its context is *salvation*, not the details of daily human living.

Certainly, in the scope of eternity, one's redemption through Christ is the supreme personally meaningful event. And certainly, meaningful principles of morality, discipleship, and holiness need to be founded in the Bible. In fact, salvation and eternal life with God is the aspect of human experience on which the Bible focuses. Any theory of personal problem solving that neglects this core focus is ultimately inadequate. David Powlison, BCM advocate and editor of the *Journal of Biblical Counseling*, correctly notes,

Psychology has pushed us to ask the right questions, but it teaches us the wrong answers. Psychologists, sociologists, historians, newspaper reporters, your pagan uncle who lives down the street, they can all be extremely astute observers of life. Where the rub really comes is how you explain what you observe. It's the system, it's the theory, it's the interpretive matrix. That interpretive framework, if it's not premised on the fear of the Lord and who God is, is false. Because you're trying to explain behavior without understanding what behavior really has to do with. Behavior does have to do with God. Emotions have to do with God. Thoughts have to do with God.³

However, God has provided more for us than the bare essentials of salvation (as infinitely glorious as they are); desires more for us than minimal spiritual growth; and has given us a complexity of sources for personal development in harmony with what He has clearly revealed in Scripture.

Using Scripture as our foundation, we can learn additionally from observation, experimentation, the experiences of others, and rational evaluation. We grow not only from the Holy Spirit working in our lives individually, but also through the wisdom and actions of others. We even learn what to avoid or reject from the mistakes and faulty assumptions of others. To restrict godly living to an isolated relationship between an individual and the Bible is to neglect the fullness of God's plan for our lives to continue in growth and understanding.

For the careful Christian thinker, "all truth is God's truth" reflects an appreciation of the complexity of God's plan, His implementation of His will through a variety of means, and the overarching supremacy of the Bible as the perfect repository of His eternal standards.

Before society became dichotomized between the church and the world, Christians used the Bible as the embodiment of God's standard, and assumed that learning in science, philosophy, the arts, and mathematics applied God's standard to all aspects of life. Christians did not choose *between* the Bible and science — science *complemented* Scripture and *was founded on* Scripture.

Today, rather than accepting a false isolation of the Bible from all other sources of knowledge and discovery, Christians should restore biblical standards to all areas of learning and application. When

we adopt this more traditional, biblical view toward learning, we will be able to use those aspects of psychology that are in harmony with Scripture. Areas from which we can benefit include the observation of human behavior, educational techniques, rational evaluation, practical wisdom, and practical experience. Each of these areas, we stress, must be understood and applied according to a biblical world view, not in isolation from or in opposition to a biblical world view.

For example, the Bible commands us, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:6-7). The basic anti-anxiety principle is clear in Scripture. The basic remedy for anxiety is clear in Scripture. However, we can gain a greater appreciation for God’s promises, and a greater understanding of how to apply God’s assurances, through a variety of means — each tested by God’s Word. We can learn from others’ observations of many anxious people that keeping busy helps us to avoid focusing on our anxiety. We can learn from educational studies concerning anxiety what kinds of situations tend to provoke anxiety. We can talk with a trusted person of wisdom to help us understand our own anxiety and how we are failing to apply God’s Word to dispel it. We can listen to a sensible counselor who can help us see our continued anxiety in the face of God’s promises as irrational. We can practice applying God’s promises in our own anxious situation with honest feedback, encouragement, and correction from an experienced teacher.

While this approach is complex, it is still *based upon* the clear principles of God’s Word. However, the BCM view generally discounts or even rejects such a complex approach, instead affirming that the Bible should be our *sole* source of godly wisdom for personal living.

Many of the “truths” that can be brought to bear on personal problems within a biblical context are discoverable even if the discoverer does not personally hold a biblical world view. For example, a researcher can interview a thousand people working on anxiety and discover that keeping busy diminishes the amount of focus one can put on his or her anxiety. This principle works — to a greater or lesser extent — regardless of one’s relationship to Christ. However, it is only the anxious Christian who can apply that “truth” in a biblical context, recognizing God’s care and keeping busy with evangelism, Bible study, and so on.

Christian therapists must keep their biblical theology at the core of their practice, not on the periphery, and certainly not isolated from their practice. The Christian counselor who neglects to put theology first can never be any better than a secular therapist who only inadvertently borrows principles from a biblical world view. Professors of psychology Stanton Jones and Richard Butman summarize this important point:

It is essential to be informed biblically and theologically about God’s caring for his people and about the instruction he has given us for the care of souls in the church. Too much of what passes for integration [of psychology with Christianity] today is anemic theologically or biblically, and tends to be little more than a spiritualized rehashing of mainstream mental health thought. The church has a rich corporate history in the field of pastoral care which we need to know about if we are to be Christian psychotherapists. Psychology was a division of practical theology long before it became a separate field and the pastoral care tradition has rich resources to digest.⁴

The best Christian “integrationists” apply this principle in their attempts to use compatible and truthful principles from psychotherapy without compromising their biblical world views.⁵ Robert C. Roberts, a

professor of philosophy and psychological studies, observes that “Christian psychotherapy will be ‘eclectic’ in bearing a number of resemblances to the secular therapies; some of these will be as a result of its integrating features of those other therapies. But first and foremost, Christian psychology must be true to the complexity of human nature and to the distinctive biblical view of the self.”⁶ This is not a perfect system, and we repeat our exhortation from our previous article: “Such an attempt will be more or less successful depending on several factors: first, the Christian therapist’s understanding of and commitment to a comprehensive, coherent, biblical world view; second, an understanding of the foundations of the various psychologies; third, an examination of how integrally any theory or technique is connected to its foundational psychology; and fourth, an assessment of the degree of correspondence that can be obtained between a given theory or technique and biblical principles.”⁷

THE COST OF CONGREGATIONAL COMMITMENT

The popularity of psychology in the church today is directly attributable to the failure of Christians to assume their proper responsibilities. As mature Christians, we must be willing to sacrifice on behalf of others. As hurting Christians, we must be willing to submit to God’s will, even when it is painful.

Instead, when confronted with our own problems, we commonly fail to learn the principles for godly living from God’s Word. We fail to follow God’s direction. And we fail to practice what we know will bring us stability and maturity in Christ.

When others come to us with their problems, we are reluctant to become involved in their lives. We don’t ask for accountability from them. We pay lip service to compassion. We are impatient with their stumbling. We don’t want to sacrifice on another’s behalf. We are quick to judge and slow to forgive. We neglect the encouragement, admonishment, and support that can help our brother or sister overcome the personal problem with which he or she is struggling. We don’t have the self-discipline to learn the best ways to help others who are hurting.

Christian psychologist Larry Crabb has been at the forefront of “integrationist” Christian psychology. His books, lectures, and tapes have reached thousands of congregations and millions of Christians across the country. However, Crabb recognizes that Christian psychotherapy has become popular in the church only because the church has not assumed responsibility for committed caregiving to its members. He urges Christians to recover that commitment and reduce the need for professional counselors. Crabb recognizes that the best psychotherapy mirrors biblical standards of committed interpersonal relationships. Answering the question, “But hasn’t psychotherapy worked for many people?” Crabb responds,

Yes; but ask most people who have had two or three years with a good therapist what it was that helped them. Nine times in ten they say, “This guy really cared about me. He looked at me and said, ‘I really want to see you feel better.’” The therapist’s caring was much more important than his or her professional interpretations. Those therapists who are doing really good work are, in fact, doing what I’m calling “eldering.” And if eldering is being done within a professional setting, why can’t it be done in the nonprofessional setting of the church? I think it can be, and I think that’s where it really belongs.⁸

Crabb’s observations are backed up by secular surveys as well. As we noted in our previous article, psychotherapy is, at best, moderately successful; and many of the most successful techniques are derived from biblical principles of interpersonal commitment. A “Science and Society” report in *U.S.*

*News and World Report*⁹ evaluated successful and unsuccessful psychotherapy and concluded, “Training and experience play a significant role, though their impact has proved surprisingly hard to document. But to some extent therapists are born, not made. ‘It’s analogous to musical talent,’ says Jerome Frank, professor emeritus of psychiatry at Johns Hopkins Medical School. ‘Some people are just tone-deaf.’ Those therapists who can carry a tune seem to share certain qualities: Empathy, warmth and genuineness pop up repeatedly.”¹⁰

While the best secular therapists may unintentionally mirror biblical principles for committed interpersonal relationships, the best Christian therapists deliberately attempt to model those principles. However, even here, the professional therapist is filling a gap that should be filled by a congregation of people who are committed mutually to each other. The person who counsels as a vocation has neither the strength nor the stamina to immerse himself or herself in the lives of numerous hurting clients. But what a professional cannot do, a brother or sister in a local congregation should feel privileged to do. Crabb describes how the Christian lay member of a nurturing congregation, in contrast to a professional counselor, shouldn’t maintain a “professional distance” from someone who is hurting: “In Acts 20, Paul talks to the elders of Ephesus, saying that he gave himself to them ‘day and night with tears.’ This implies that there is no ‘distance’ in eldering. The meaningful connection of shepherding will require an enormous emotional price, and elders must be prepared to pay that. Certainly, though, the wisdom and support of fellow elders will be required to avoid emotional burnout.”¹¹

When a church combines an expectation for *individual* spiritual accountability with a sacrificial *corporate* commitment among its members, it will develop an environment where “professional” counselors and psychotherapy generally are not needed.¹² Instead, the best truth from a variety of sources will be approved by the standard in God’s Word and applied individually and compassionately to all who are in need.

Two factors lead the causes for Christians turning from biblical counseling to some sort of psychotherapy: (1) Troubled Christians haven’t found the help they believe they need within the church. (2) Through lack of information they are unaware that comprehensive biblical counseling is available.

It is fair to say that many Christians haven’t been helped *despite* the availability of good biblically based counseling. Sometimes they are unaware of its availability. Sometimes people receive good counsel but don’t apply it for a variety of reasons. However, we must also recognize that in many fellowships and congregations today, not only is biblically based counseling unavailable, being replaced with psychotherapy, but also many Christians have failed to fulfill their biblical responsibilities to “bear one another’s burdens.” Too often we have rejected the suffering Christian and he or she has nowhere else to turn but to psychotherapy, which in its best forms uses biblical principles even though they may be divorced from a biblical world view. Larry Crabb notes that “since we’re never going to get [the ideal functioning church], there will always be a place [for professional counselors]. There’s obviously a need for professional counselors for hurting folks who cannot find the kind of help that should be available elsewhere.”¹³

HOW TO FIND A GOOD COUNSELOR

Recognizing the inadequacies in contemporary American churches, we should commit ourselves, individually and congregationally, to restoring the interpersonal commitments epitomized by Paul in his analogy of the church as the body of Christ, “so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it” (1 Cor. 12:25-26).

As we commit toward that kind of congregational reformation, we should be prepared to guide hurting Christians toward significant, biblically based help. The following considerations may help a hurting Christian find a good counselor whose advice can be weighed against Scripture in the journey to Christian maturity and stability.¹⁴ It is always preferable to find a counselor who has adequate training in both biblical theology and sound principles of counseling from the Bible and from other sources (always tested by the Bible).

General Considerations

Be sure you are part of a small Christian church, Bible study, or fellowship where you can develop friends, be accountable to others, and be used by God to help others.

Be sure you are in regular, informed study of God’s Word, preferably through a Bible study or Bible class setting where you can learn from someone wiser, more experienced, and more knowledgeable than you, and where you can ask questions with confidence that they will be answered.

Be sure you have a regular outlet for Christian service, such as serving once a week in a soup kitchen, teaching children’s Sunday school, tending the garden at your church, hosting a fellowship in your home, or other volunteer service to a Christian ministry or church.

Be regular in worship, prayer, praise, and contemplation on God and the Bible. Remember that our greatest fulfillment as Christians is to worship and serve God, not simply to feel good, actualize ourselves, develop healthy self-esteem, or be happy.

Practice regular self-evaluation in the light of the Bible. Conform your thoughts, convictions, and actions to the clear teachings of God’s Word. Don’t wait for your emotions to inspire you to discipleship; use your discipleship to conform your emotions.

Refrain from regular “fellowship” with people who are not committed Christians and whose actions, speech, and/or ideas make it easy for you to turn away from God’s will in your life.

Look for opportunities to pass on what you have learned to someone with less experience, maturity, or biblical knowledge.

Specific Considerations

Carefully evaluate your problem to determine whether you truly *don’t know* what to do, or you *don’t like* what you *know* is the right thing to do.

Look first for a pastoral counselor whom you know and trust already. (Be careful about sharing confidences with someone who might not have the counseling experience or wisdom to respect your privacy.)

Check with a biblically mature Christian pastor you know for a recommendation to a good counselor.

If you have a friend who has had a successful counseling experience, ask for a recommendation. (Since most counselors have a particular specialty, a counselor good for your friend's problem may not be the best for you, but you can ask your friend's counselor for a recommendation to a counselor who does specialize in your kind of problem.)

Ask your prospective counselor for a short telephone or personal interview *before* you agree to become a client. Explain that this interview is for you to determine if this counselor is appropriate for you. You should not be charged for this interview if your time and scheduling requests are considerate and reasonable.

Specific questions for a prospective counselor could include:

What branch or school of psychology (analytic/dynamic, behavioral, or humanistic) represents your (the counselor's) educational background?

What kind of theological or biblical education or training do you have? Have you given little thought, serious thought, or both serious thought *and* application to developing a counseling methodology in accord with God's Word?

How would you describe your counseling world view or paradigm?

What is the average length of treatment for your clients with this kind of problem?

What percentage of your clients are still in therapy after more than one year? (Although length of treatment does not necessarily relate to quality of counseling, a counseling program that encourages — implicitly or explicitly — a long-term dependency relationship of client upon counselor is less likely to be compatible with a biblical counseling foundation.)

What kinds of problems do you specialize in?

What is your highest earned educational degree related to your counseling work? (Educational level does not necessarily relate to counseling competence, but the greater investment of time, labor, and funds into a counseling education, the greater the likelihood that the counselor is serious about his or her profession.)

How do you handle questions of religion, belief, and religious commitment with your clients?

What is your personal perspective on religion, and specifically Christianity, and how does that affect your counseling?

How do you charge for your services? What insurance do you accept? Can you make arrangements on a sliding scale for needy clients?

How long have you been a professional counselor?

Generally speaking, what specific goals do you have for clients with my kind of problem?

If you do not specialize in my kind of problem, who would you recommend and why?

To conclude, how did my dad help me when I was in such despair that I couldn't (and almost *didn't want*) to hear from God? He listened with his full attention. He told me he loved me. He cried with me. He shared God's truth from his own experience.

"Gretchen, you know that I know how alone and scared you feel." I couldn't doubt him. He was talking to me from his hospital bed, his heart damaged beyond repair, physically dependent on others for every day of life, facing the prospect of leaving my mother in this world at any moment.

"I struggled like you for a long time," he continued. "I couldn't understand why God had taken my strength, my independence, my ministry from me when I was enthusiastically serving Him with my whole being. I don't deserve to be trapped in this wrecked old body."

I cried as I pictured my strong father wasting away in that white, cold bed.

"Then God finally got my attention. I began to understand that it wasn't my responsibility to figure out why I was suffering. It is my responsibility to listen to God's voice, to be ready for whatever He wants me to do. I don't need to know why. Hush up, little girl, quit griping. You'll miss God's mission. Remember Paul's words, 'I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things....I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation....I can do everything through him who gives me strength'" (Phil. 2:8; 3:12-13).

I got better and helped Bob nurse the rest of our family. Our missionary family went back to the field and shared the gospel. My father went to be with the Lord three weeks after my tear-filled call.

NOTES

¹ Dave Hunt, *Beyond Seduction: A Return to Biblical Christianity* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1987), 137.

² *Ibid.*, 133.

³ Quoted in Tim Stafford, "Needs and Idols," *Christianity Today*, 16 May 1994, 21.

⁴ Stanton Jones and Richard Butman, *Modern Psychotherapies: A Comprehensive Christian Appraisal* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 415.

⁵ See the previous article, "Can Psychotherapy Be Integrated with Christianity?" in *Christian Research Journal*, Summer 1995, 16-40 for a comprehensive discussion of this issue.

⁶ Robert C. Roberts, "Psychobabble," *Christianity Today*, 16 May 1994, 24.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁸ Kevin Dale Miller, "Putting an End to Christian Psychology," *Christianity Today*, 14 August 1995, 16.

⁹ Erica E. Goode with Betsy Wagner, "Does Psychotherapy Work?" 24 May 1993, 57-65.

¹⁰ Ibid., 61.

¹¹ Ibid., 17.

¹² Certain extreme mental disorders, such as schizophrenia, so interfere with the individual's ability to think, listen, and communicate that medical intervention is necessary before lay counseling can have effect.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ While these considerations are important and helpful, they are no guarantee that one will find completely trustworthy Christian counseling. We do not endorse or recommend any particular counselor, counseling method, or counseling program.