



# Counseling...Based on What?

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For decades, a minority of believers in Christ have faithfully fought to maintain biblical standards regarding counseling beliefs and methodologies in the Body of Christ. At stake in this struggle are such principles as:

- God's ways *versus* man's ways
- Supernatural change of heart *versus* self-motivated change of habits
- Divine power *versus* human effort
- Christ-reliance *versus* self-reliance
- God's wisdom *versus* man's wisdom
- Biblical authority *versus* psychotherapy and secular psychology
- Prayer to God Almighty *versus* self-oriented meditation
- Christ-like growth *versus* self-oriented changes

Discerning believers in Christ easily recognize the battle lines listed above. They know that God the Father, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the Bible are more than sufficient to help people face and deal with any challenge of life. As a result, those receiving Christ-centered biblical counsel can glorify God by responding to every situation in a Christ-like manner.

On the other hand, unbelievers as well as many professing Christians continue to rely on secular counseling, a methodology based on worldly psychology and psychotherapy. The birthplace of both secular psychology and psychotherapy is in the graveyard of worldly wisdom, a fact that most Christians ignore or do not realize.

Discerning believers, however, recognize the insurmountable differences and inherent incompatibility between biblical counseling and secular counseling. Yet, hundreds of thousands of church leaders over the last half century have failed to warn fellow believers of the incongruity between the two counseling approaches. Consequently, dozens of denominations, most mission groups, numerous Christian schools, and hundreds of millions of unsuspecting believers have tolerated and, sometimes, even embraced secular counseling, a methodology rooted in the false premises and promises of worldly psychology and psychotherapy.

This article will demonstrate that using secular counseling betrays an ignorance of its tenets or effectiveness and indicates a diminished trust in God the Father, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the Bible.

## **THE BASIS FOR COUNSELING IS TRUTH**

In responding to life's challenges, every person will choose a source of truth. (*Before continuing in this study, you would profit considerably by reading*

**TRUTH: The Measurement for all Aspects of Life and Relationships** at <http://wordtruth.org/PDF/Truth.pdf>).

Truth is the divide between biblical counseling and secular counseling. The article **TRUTH** – *referenced above* – reminds us that truth is inherent to God the Father, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the Bible. However, is truth inherent to secular counseling?

Those who use secular counseling overlook the truth. Take time to review the following three articles.

**Truth is Personal, Not Merely a Concept** (<http://wordtruth.org/PDF/Truth%20is%20Personal.pdf>)

**The Illusion of Hope in Psychotherapy** at <http://wordtruth.org/PDF/The%20Illusion%20of%20Hope%20in%20Psychotherapy.pdf>

**Counseling Must be Based Solely on the Bible** at <http://wordtruth.org/PDF/Counseling%20Based%20Solely%20on%20the%20Bible.pdf>

These articles emphasize the necessity of recognizing and responding to truth in order to face and deal with life's challenges. When believers understand the reality of God's power and provisions, they will demonstrate trust in the truth by choosing biblical counseling over any hint of secular counseling.

## THE BENEFITS OF SECULAR COUNSELING ARE AN ILLUSION

Many teachers, practitioners, and authors who *favor* secular counseling and its underpinnings of psychology and psychotherapy have practiced and evaluated these methodologies and results. Much to their chagrin, they cannot verify the expected beneficial outcomes of such “therapy” for patients and/or counselees. In fact, when measured, the predicted outcomes were illusive, and unintended outcomes were useless or harmful.

Note the following observations from secular psychologists who realized the illusion of truth in their professions.

*The following material, listed by page number, is used by permission and is reprinted from Psychoheresy (revised and expanded edition): The Psychological Seduction of Christianity by Martin and Deidre Bobgan (Eastgate Publishers, 2012).<sup>1</sup>*

*You may download the book at no cost from <http://www.pamweb.org/e-books/PHR-ebk.pdf>*

*Page 102* - Psychologist Roger Mills, in his article “Psychology Goes Insane, Botches Role as Science,” says: The field of psychology today is literally a mess. There are as many techniques, methods and theories around as there are researchers and therapists. I have personally seen therapists convince their clients that all of their problems come from their mothers, the stars, their bio-chemical make-up, their diet, their life-style and even the “kharma” from their past lives.

*Page 108* – Sir Karl Popper declares that psychological theories formulated by Freud, Adler, and others, “though posing as sciences, had in fact more in common with primitive myths than with science; that they resembled astrology rather than astronomy.”

*Page 109* - Research psychiatrist E. Fuller Torrey, in his book *The Mind Game*, says, “The techniques used by Western psychiatrists are, with few exceptions, on exactly the same scientific plane as the techniques used by witchdoctors.”

*Page 109* - Psychiatrist Lee Coleman titled his book about psychiatry *The Reign of Error*. In this book he demonstrates that “psychiatry does not deserve the legal power it has been given” and that “psychiatry is not a science.” He says, “I have testified in over one hundred and thirty criminal and civil trials around the country, countering the authority of psychiatrists or psychologists hired by one side or the other. In each case I try to educate the judge or jury about why the opinions produced by these professionals have no scientific merit.”

*Page 121* - Psychologist Carol Tavris compares astrology and psychotherapy. She says, “Now the irony is that many people who are not fooled by astrology for one minute subject themselves to therapy for years, where the same errors of logic and interpretation often occur.”

*Page 139* – Dr. Thomas Szasz refers to the dangers of psychotherapy as religion: It is not merely a religion that pretends to be a science, it is actually a fake religion that seeks to destroy true religion.

*Page 180* - Professor of psychiatry Donald Klein, in his testimony before the Subcommittee on Health of the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Finance, said, “I believe that, at present, the scientific evidence for psychotherapy efficacy cannot justify public support.”

*Page 181* - Michael Shepherd from the Institute of Psychiatry in London summarizes the outcome studies in psychotherapy: A host of studies have now been conducted which, with all their imperfections, have made it clear that (1) any advantage accruing from psychotherapy is small at best; (2) the difference between the effects of different forms of therapy are negligible; and (3) psychotherapeutic intervention is capable of doing harm.

*Page 184* - A book entitled Psychotherapy Research: Methodological and Efficacy Issues, published by the American Psychiatric Association, indicates that a definite answer to the question, “Is psychotherapy effective?” may be unattainable.

*Page 185* – In reviewing this book (*mentioned in previous paragraph*), the Brain/Mind Bulletin says, “Research often fails to demonstrate an unequivocal advantage from psychotherapy.” The following is an interesting example from the book:... an experiment at the All-India Institute of Mental Health in Bangalore found that Western-trained psychiatrists and native healers had a comparable recovery rate. The most notable difference was that the so-called “witch doctors” released their patients sooner.

*Page 187* - One group of researchers, after surveying the “best minds in the field of psychotherapy” conclude: It is clear that negative effects of psychotherapy are overwhelmingly regarded by experts in the field as a significant problem requiring the attention and concern of practitioners and researchers alike.

*Page 188* - Michael Scriven, when he was a member of the American Psychological Association Board of Social and Ethical Responsibility, questioned “the moral justification for dispensing psychotherapy, given the state of outcome studies which would lead the FDA to ban its sale if it were a drug.”

The above evaluations illustrate the views of many in the fields of psychology and psychotherapy, the building blocks of secular counseling.

Although some Christians believe that secular psychology can produce illegitimate or harmful results, they also erroneously believe in the benefits of “Christian psychology.” They do not realize that the supposed field of Christian psychology does not exist.

*Page 245* - . . . quoting the Christian Association for Psychological Studies (CAPS), “there is no acceptable Christian psychology that is markedly different from non-Christian psychology.” CAPS confesses, “It is difficult to imply that we function in a manner that is fundamentally distinct from our non-Christian colleagues.”

Although some Christian counselors use psychology in their practices, this use does not make unbiblical, secular viewpoints Christ-honoring, glorifying to God, or helpful to counselees.

*Page 125* - Although the church has quite universally accepted and endorsed the psychological way, there are others who have not. Dr. Jay Adams says, “In my opinion, advocating, allowing and practicing psychiatric and psychoanalytical dogmas within the church is every bit as pagan and heretical (and therefore perilous) as propagating the teachings of some of the most bizarre cults. The only vital difference is that the cults are less dangerous because their errors are more identifiable.”

*Page 126-27* - God has given believers far more than psychology can offer. There are hundreds of Bible verses that attend to this, such as 2 Peter 1:3: “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue.”

Irenaeus, an early church father, wrote a treatise against Gnosticism titled *On the Detection and Overthrow of Knowledge Falsely So Called*. Counseling psychology is not only “science falsely so called”; it is “knowledge falsely so called.” It is out of this false science and false knowledge that there are almost 500 often incompatible psychological approaches and thousands of conflicting techniques. In a word, this all results in psychoheresy!

Psychotherapy is a most subtle and devious spectre haunting the church, because it is perceived and received as a scientific salve for the sick soul rather than as what it truly is: a pseudo-scientific substitute system of religious relief.

## **A SIGNIFICANT EXAMPLE OF A DEPARTURE FROM TRUTH IN COUNSELING**

In the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, one of psychology’s most common, yet false, claims featured the supposed need for good self-esteem. Surprisingly, many trusted Christian leaders and Christian institutions ignored biblical truth and embraced this error.

When leading psychologists and psychiatrists – and much of the church world – accepted the self-esteem fallacy as truth, “self-esteem” became a cornerstone of counseling theory and practice.

The articles below show the error of the need for good self-esteem, a concept birthed, nurtured, and promoted by adherents of secular psychology.

**False Teaching in the Church** (<http://wordtruth.net/PDF/False%20Teaching%20in%20the%20Church.pdf>)

**Scriptural Response to Self-Esteem Teaching** at <http://wordtruth.org/PDF/Scriptural%20Response%20to%20Self-Esteem%20Teaching.pdf>

**The Folly of Good Self-Esteem** (<http://wordtruth.net/PDF/The%20Folly%20of%20Good%20Self-Esteem.pdf>)

**Self-Esteem Fallacy Unmasked Years Ago** at <http://wordtruth.org/PDF/Self%20Esteem%20Fallacy%20Unmasked%20Years%20Ago.pdf>

**Self-Orientation Cripples Spiritual Awareness** (<http://wordtruth.org/PDF/Self%20Orientation.pdf>)

## **THE VALUE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL INSIGHTS**

Are psychological insights always wrong? The short answer is “no.” Many practitioners and researchers in the field of psychology are astute observers of human behavior. However, the field of psychology has no accepted authority underpinning it.

Psychology is not a science with recognized and uniformly accepted parameters. Without an accepted authority, the psychological world is disunified. Today, psychologists and psychiatrists use about 500 different psychological perspectives in counseling practices world-wide. Everyone does what is right in his own eyes.

Many Christians study psychology and its varied applications. Christian colleges teach and even offer degrees in “Christian psychology.” Although many Christians have degrees in psychology, as mentioned earlier, a recognized field of “Christian Psychology” does not exist as of this writing (2016).

## WHAT ABOUT INTEGRATING SECULAR COUNSELING WITH BIBLICAL COUNSELING?

Believers disregard truth when they attempt to integrate secular counseling and biblical counseling. This integration supposedly produces better results than either counseling approach could achieve alone. However, can integration ever work between two belief systems based on opposing sources of authority and expressed in conflicting methodologies? Can a mixture of divine wisdom and natural wisdom provide the best outcome? Can the “wisdom” of Adler, Freud, Jung, Ellis, Perls, Erickson, Glasser, Kinsey, Lang, Maslow, Rogers, and other leading secular psychologists add to and improve on the wisdom of God? Can a mixture of divine wisdom and natural wisdom provide a better outcome than divine wisdom alone? Obviously not. Integrating biblical counseling with secular counseling cannot glorify God.

Significant questions arise when Christians try to integrate biblical truth with worldly wisdom. How did Christians overcome life’s challenges before secular counseling entered the church? Were Christians ill-equipped to deal with problems when their only printed resource was the Holy Scriptures and their only power was the Holy Spirit living within them? Believers who accept secular counseling ignore almost 2,000 years of Christian history in which Christians were more than conquerors without the aid of psychology and psychotherapy.

Still, unbelievers as well as many naive believers trust secular counseling, either by itself or as part of the pseudo-mix of biblical and secular counseling. Today, most Christian organizations, church leaders, and fellow believers approve of adding man’s way with God’s way in dealing with life’s difficulties. Despite this prevailing view, relying on secular counseling demonstrates a lack of trust in God the Father, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the Bible.

### THE BIBLE REVEALS THAT NO EARTHLY INSIGHT OR POWER CAN COMPARE TO GOD THE FATHER, JESUS CHRIST, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Bible presents unalterable and astounding truths about God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

#### God of the Bible – Divinity of the Trinity

<http://wordtruth.org/PDF/God%20of%20the%20Bible%20-%20Divinity%20of%20the%20Trinity.pdf>

God’s Attributes (<http://wordtruth.org/PDF/Gods%20Attributes.pdf>)

Jesus – Who is He? (<http://wordtruth.org/PDF/Jesus%20-%20Who%20is%20He.pdf>)

Holy Spirit – The Divine Developer (<http://wordtruth.org/PDF/Holy%20Spirit%20Divine%20Developer.pdf>)

The Bible also proclaims the reality of the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Jesus IS Lord (<http://wordtruth.org/PDF/Jesus%20IS%20Lord.pdf>)

Is Jesus Lord of Your Life? (<http://wordtruth.org/PDF/Is%20Jesus%20Lord%20of%20Your%20Life.pdf>)

The Bible presents many aspects of a believer’s relationship with Christ.

Spiritual Realities Before and After Receiving Christ (<http://wordtruth.org/PDF/Spiritual%20Realities%20Before%20and%20After%20Receiving%20Christ.pdf>)

Your Identity in Christ (<http://wordtruth.org/PDF/Your%20Identity%20in%20Christ.pdf>)

Jesus has no deficiencies and possesses strength upon strength. He is perfect. Secular psychology and psychotherapy, two significant examples of the world’s wisdom, can never make believers in Christ more like Him.

**1 Corinthians 3:19-20** (NASB), For the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God. For it is written, “*He is THE ONE WHO CATCHES THE WISE IN THEIR CRAFTINESS*”;<sup>20</sup> and again, “*THE LORD KNOWS THE REASONINGS of the wise, THAT THEY ARE USELESS.*”

### TRUSTING GOD’S WORD IS VITAL

God’s Word proclaims truth, but does it contain sufficient truth for all aspects of life and relationships? Scripture answers that question with a resounding “yes.”

**Psalms 19:7-11**, The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.<sup>8</sup> The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.<sup>9</sup> The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether.<sup>10</sup> They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, by them Your servant is warned; in keeping them there is great reward.

**2 Timothy 3:16-17**, All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;<sup>17</sup> so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

**Hebrews 4:12**, For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

If God's Word does not have totally sufficient truth to offer salvation in Jesus Christ and to instruct believers how to live in a manner pleasing to the Lord, then God's Word is deficient . . . which is obviously not the case.

See **Divine Sufficiency or Divine Deficiency** at

<http://wordtruth.org/PDF/Divine%20Sufficiency%20or%20Divine%20Deficiency.pdf>

When seeking wisdom or counsel in any aspect of life and relationships, remember, God's Word contrasts earthly wisdom with divine wisdom and emphasizes the centrality of Jesus Christ for all of life.

**1 Corinthians 1:18-31**, For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. <sup>19</sup> For it is written, "I WILL DESTROY THE WISDOM OF THE WISE, AND THE CLEVERNESS OF THE CLEVER I WILL SET ASIDE."

<sup>20</sup> Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? <sup>21</sup> For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not *come to* know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. <sup>22</sup> For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom; <sup>23</sup> but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness, <sup>24</sup> but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. <sup>25</sup> Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

<sup>26</sup> For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; <sup>27</sup> but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, <sup>28</sup> and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, <sup>29</sup> so that no man may boast before God. <sup>30</sup> But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, <sup>31</sup> so that, just as it is written, "LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD."

## **DYING TO SELF IS NECESSARY FOR A BELIEVER TO LIVE WHOLEHEARTEDLY FOR GOD**

Instead of following the world's wisdom (which is foolishness), a believer can learn from God's Word how to die to self, grow in Christ, and glorify God. Secular counseling has no power to help a believer grow spiritually because Christ-like growth is a result of a believer's loving obedience to Scripture and a corresponding reliance on the Holy Spirit.

**Christ Crucified – The Solution to Self-Dependency** at

<http://wordtruth.org/PDF/Christ%20Crucified%20Study%20with%20Outline.pdf> and

**Holy Spirit: The Divine Developer**, read *Point II. The Holy Spirit provides an overcoming and abundant life for believers in Christ* at <http://wordtruth.org/PDF/Holy%20Spirit%20Divine%20Developer.pdf>

## **WHERE YOU LOOK FOR COUNSEL REVEALS WHERE YOU PUT YOUR TRUST**

When facing difficulties in life, people seek counsel from sources they trust the most. Would they go to secular counselors if they fully trusted God the Father, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the Bible to help them deal with life's challenges? The answer is obvious; they would not choose the wisdom of the world found in secular counseling.

## **CONCLUSION**

If you have read this article and the referenced studies, you know the biblical answer to the following question – *What do God the Father, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the Bible lack that requires anyone to use secular psychology or psychotherapy to face and deal with life's challenges?*

- Is God, the maker and sustainer of the universe, too weak to help people facing life's challenges?
- Is the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior and supreme example, somehow deficient in His life, death, and resurrection so that believers are still enslaved to sin and have no adequate example of how to live to please God?
- Is the Holy Spirit lacking wisdom and power or ill equipped to direct God's children and strengthen them to face and deal with life's challenges?
- Is the Bible incomplete and, thus, unable to give believers adequate direction for glorifying God in every situation?

Answering "yes" to any of the four questions above is blasphemous! Yet, many professing believers actually demonstrate that they agree with similar blasphemy when they do not depend solely on God the Father, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit and the Bible to face and deal with life's challenges.

Believers and unbelievers alike realize that the foundation determines the value of anything or anyone. This is especially true with regard to counseling. This study began with eight contrasting principles in the counseling world.

- God's ways *versus* man's ways
- Supernatural change of heart *versus* self-motivated change of habits
- Divine power *versus* human effort
- Christ-reliance *versus* self-reliance
- God's wisdom *versus* man's wisdom
- Biblical authority *versus* psychotherapy and secular psychology
- Prayer to God Almighty *versus* self-oriented meditation
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The left side of the list identifies eight foundation blocks of biblical counseling. The right side identifies eight pretenders of truth. May God grant each of us the wisdom to distinguish the two sides and to base our spiritual growth and service on the sure foundation of the Word so that God will receive all the glory.

**1 Corinthians 10:31**, Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

**1 Peter 4:11**, Whoever speaks, *is to do so* as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves *is to do so* as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> Comprehensive, biblical information refuting secular psychology and psychotherapy is available on the Psychoheresy website which can be accessed at <http://www.psychoheresy-aware.org/mainpage.html>  
 The free e-book Psychoheresy (468 pages) is at: <http://www.psychoheresy-aware.org/e-books/PHR-ebk.pdf>  
 and 16 free e-books written by the Bobgans are available at <http://www.psychoheresy-aware.org/bksonline.html>