

Christian Counseling— Is It Biblical?

Based on a message given by Curvin Wenger

Introduction

Alexander the Coppersmith. Remember him? He was the man that Paul warned Timothy of. (2 Ti. 4:14-15) Paul mentions him by name. While we are told to “judge not,” we are also told to beware of certain people, and groups and individuals are specifically named.

In this article, some people are mentioned by name. This is not to belittle, condemn, or get revenge ... it is simply that the reader may beware—be on the alert—about their teaching and/or practice.

The other point to make before we start is to acknowledge that this article is not complete. It speaks much of the wrong way to counsel people, but does not spend much time on the proper ways and methods. Lord willing, a future message will develop that portion of the topic. ~*The editors*

The purpose for sharing this is, first of all, because I was at one time in my life involved in counseling, looking for answers. I will get into that a bit later. Also, I came across some CDs published by a counseling center that were shared in my community within the last year. I went through those, and what I heard was very disturbing.

Before beginning, I would like to clearly say that I do not want to share anything to purposely be critical of any person or organization. But I would like us to be Bereans, biblical, and honest about what the Bible teaches. But before actually jumping into what the Bible says, I would like to lay a background for what I want to get into later.

My background

What the counseling movement calls “problems,” I had. What the counseling movement calls “the root of problems,” I had. The counseling movement defines “abuse” and “neglect” as “problems.” Every area or category that they define as being abuse was a part of my life. Every area that they call “neglect causing emotional damage” was a part of my life. That is who I was; and I was an emotional wreck. As a youth of about 18 or 19 years old, there were times when I would lay on the floor of the house and have no motivation to do anything. I was so hurting inside that I could not do anything. That is who I was.

I was seeking answers, going from seminar to seminar, counselor to counselor. I bought book after book, DVD after DVD. I was in counseling for close to twenty years. I spent thousands of dollars and hundreds of hours seeking the answer. I felt a little like the woman with an issue of blood who had spent all her living. I did not have much extra money since a lot went for my counseling.

And yet it still seemed like there were some answers here and some there, but there always seemed to be something lacking. It didn't quite satisfy. There were times I was so sure counseling was the answer. As an example, I was at this church¹ about ten years ago on the third Sunday of the month for a fellowship meal. I remember sitting across the table from some brothers, and one of them asked the other, “What do you think of Bro. Mose's tapes on counseling and psychology?”

When I heard that, something inside of me just kind of went tight. I remember telling the one brother something like, “Well, people who think there is no need for counseling have never been there.” Because I *was* there. It felt like a drowning man who is holding onto a log, and someone is telling him, “Let go of the log and climb into the boat!” But to me, the log was where the safety was, and someone was saying you need to let go of it ... I was sure I would drown.

Seeking for truth in the Bible

Let's look at Acts 17:10-11, where I would like to lay a foundation to help us all think biblically.

And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

In sharing what I am about to share, my request is that whoever reads this would consider what I say and then go search it out in the Scriptures. I am human; I am not God and do not understand all things.

James tells us that “the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreat-

¹ This message was given at Faith Christian Fellowship near Walnut Creek, Ohio.



ed.” One thing I have endeavored to do is try to exercise the ability to be easily entreated.

In John 8:31-32 we find these words:

Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

In consideration of what truth is, let’s look now at John 18:36-38:

Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all.

We find Pilate asking, “What is truth?” Jesus had prayed in John 17:17, saying, “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.” Next we want to consider deception, in 2 Corinthians 11:1-4:

Would to God ye could bear with me a little in my folly: and indeed bear with me. For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.

Now I wasn’t sure exactly what that last phrase meant, so I looked at a couple of different translations and came to the conclusion that Paul is saying that they were a very gullible people, a very willing and open people to receive anything that was different from that which they had first received from him. This goes along with what Paul tells

the Galatians in the first chapter. He explains how Christ was revealed to him and how he came to his understanding of the gospel.

A question arises: What is the gospel? It is the good news; and Paul told the Galatians that if anyone brings good news to them other than what he had preached, “let him be accursed.”

Are we willing to allow the Bible to speak to us clearly? Sometimes that is hard because we do not like to step on people’s toes, to be critical, etc. But let’s look a little further, in Philippians 3:7-21. Let’s consider several points here.

First, he speaks of “pressing toward the mark of the high calling.” He is forgetting the things behind him and reaching to the future. When people feel the need for counseling, it is usually because they are not forgetting those things which are behind. Or, they are having trouble pressing forward.

In verse 15, we see an openness to receive new things from God, and God was able to “arrest” him and get his attention. Then in verse 17 Paul is telling the people that they had himself and the others with him as examples of how to walk. And, those who did not walk as he walked, they were supposed to mark them, because they were enemies of the cross of Christ.

So there are people who will walk—and this gets worse as the end of time draws nearer—in a way that makes them an enemy of the cross of Christ. Notice that Paul said, “of whom I have told you often.”

Paul named people who were enemies of the cross. He pointed out specifically the person(s) who did not walk according to God’s Word. In one of his epistles, Paul said he heard a report from someone—what we might call gossip today—about a concern. Paul ended up writing a whole letter about that. So, from the Scriptures we have examples of looking at the errors of others and being honest about those errors. We do not want to be critical or unnecessarily offensive, but we cannot close our eyes and our ears to what is truth and what is not truth. That is my concern.

Peter also wrote some “strong” words concerning false teachers in 2 Peter 2:1-3:

But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

Weak defenses of counseling

As I was in that situation of looking for answers, and was concerned and upset with people who were critical of counseling, there were many biblical arguments that I and others used to defend counseling. One of those arguments was when Jesus was walking on the earth, others were trying to come against him, and someone said, "Let him alone. If it is not of God, it will come to naught. And if it is of God, we will be fighting against God."

Another argument was "judge not that you be not judged," a very well-used one. Then in Romans 2:1-3, where it talks of those who judge another. Bill Gothard used that argument years ago, but I saw how it went in reality, "in shoe leather." We were in connection with a pastor one time who took these verses to mean that if anybody comes to him with a personal concern, then that means the person approaching him had that problem in his own heart ... and so the pastor would look for ways to expose that problem in the person approaching him, rather than checking his own heart. Then, when this same pastor had a concern about someone else, he was sure that he had the same problem in his own heart, so he never talked about it and just tried to pray and ask God to show him his own problem.

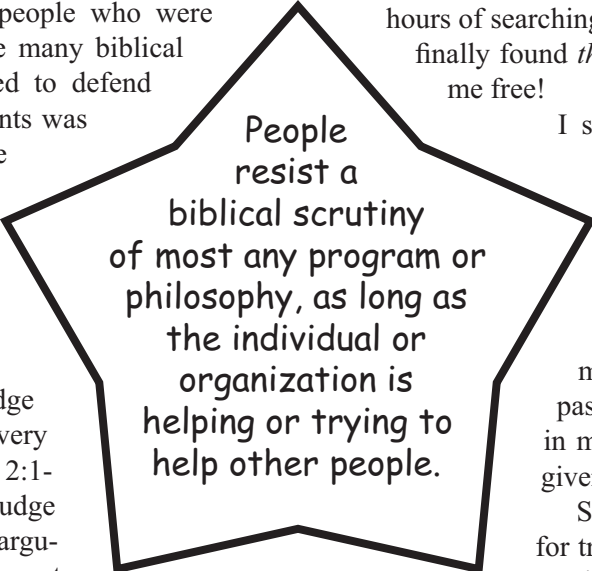
Such a view of Romans 2:1-3 totally shuts down the "one another" Scriptures. It does not work to take something out of context.

What is truth in the counseling movement?

So what does the word "counseling" mean to you? When we hear this word an idea forms in our mind. When we hear the term "Christian counseling," we have ideas in our mind about what that means.

What is truth? Well, let's look at a definition I have heard from various places. It goes like this ... "Since it is written, 'You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free,' therefore anything that brings a person more freedom to serve God is truth."

This is *not* sound reasoning, because what can happen is that the human mind can make something look and feel right, and make it feel that you are "free." Satan can deceive you that you are free while you are actually in bondage. The fact is that the Bible says you shall know *the* truth, not *a* truth, and *the* truth shall make you free. And I can attest to that, since that is exactly what happened to me. After all those years and thousands of dollars and hours of searching and reading and researching ... I finally found *the* truth in God's Word. And it set me free!



People resist a biblical scrutiny of most any program or philosophy, as long as the individual or organization is helping or trying to help other people.

I still fail at times, have struggles, and have to go and ask people and God forgiveness. But the past does not control me. Sometimes when I talk about the past, there are tears, because it did hurt. But it does not control me. When I lay down at night, the past is not going around and around in my mind, controlling me. God has given me peace.

So what is our basis or foundation for truth? How are we supposed to determine if something is from God or not? What does the Bible tell us about

false teachers and prophets? What is meant by "another gospel" and "another spirit"? What can we expect in the end times?

We can expect deception, false prophets, lovers of own selves, lukewarmness, and reprobate minds in the last days. As we look at some of what is going on in the counseling movement, keep these things in mind.

An inside look at the counseling movement

The waiting list is long and growing longer all the time. There are more centers being built and more people getting into the function of helping hurting people. Still the problem continues to spread and intensify. More and more people have a desire to learn how to reach out and touch those who are struggling. Church leaders will say, "Some of these problems are so confusing and difficult to sort out that we do not have any idea what to do. We are just so

thankful for professionals and specialized centers where we can send the problems that we do not understand.”

Psychiatry is developing more and more disorders in order to diagnose the bizarre behavior that seems to be spiraling out of control. People resist a biblical scrutiny of most any program or philosophy, as long as the individual or organization is helping or trying to help other people. “You shouldn’t be so critical or narrow-minded,” they say. “We are all trying to follow God and get to heaven.”

They will also say, “There are so many needs that there is room for anyone who has a heart to reach out and help. So stop being judgmental!”

Does the Bible speak to these problems, or are they “specialized” so that only a specialist or professional can help understand the cause and the cure? What is meant by the term “help” and how is it accomplished? What are the needs? Are they real needs, or perceived needs?

Some of those needs that are listed are hurts, abuse, neglect, broken hearts, emotional pain, generational sins, damaged hearts, broken families, traumatic childhood, dysfunctional homes, and struggling marriages.

What is the truth to help us determine real needs vs. perceived needs? The Bible says that the problem is sin. The answer is to repent and/or forgive.

God’s way, or Satan’s way?

A question: Is it ever right to use Satan’s methods to achieve God’s goals? Our terminology matters. There is secular terminology and there is biblical terminology.

The secular will talk about “needs.” The Bible talks about “desires.”

The secular talks about an “alcoholic.” The Bible talks about a “drunkard.”

The secular talks about “shacking up.” The Bible talks about “fornication” and “adultery.”

The secular talks about “abuse.” The Bible talks about “sin.”

The secular calls it “counseling.” The Bible talks about “discipleship and/or evangelism.”

The secular talks about “lie-based” theology. The Bible talks about “sin-based” theology.

A natural perspective that we tend to function out of without thinking about it is that we are a three-fold being: body, soul, and spirit. When your body is sick, you visit the doctor. When your spirit is sick, you visit the preacher.

Therefore, when your soul (psyche) is sick, you go to the (psych)iatrist or (psych)ologist, because they are the specialists; they understand these problems.

But the heart is the biblical focus, and there are many Scriptures that bring this out. Men may think that they can figure out what is going on inside the heart by watching the actions and listening to the mouth, but only God can really see the heart.

My experience

As I said, I was in lots of different counseling. The most in-depth was at Life Ministries. I was a part of their first counselor training program they put on, in which there was a very in-depth discussion, teaching, and training. They tried to teach us how to be counselors.

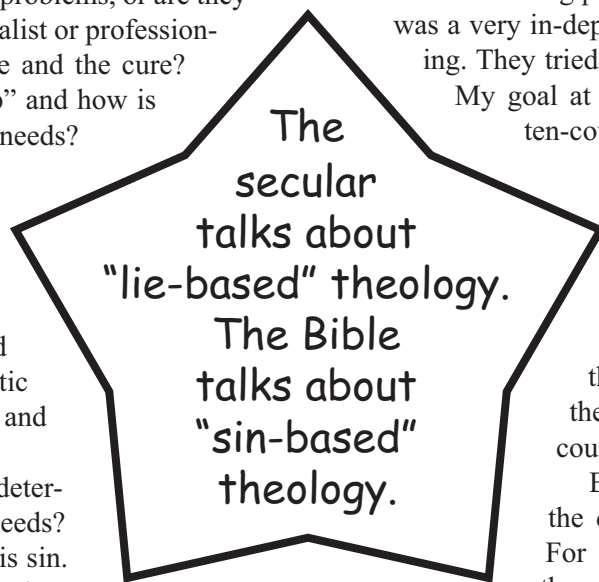
My goal at that point was to go through the ten-course program that was set up and become a licensed counselor. I finished two of the ten there. We travelled to Canada and took the third. And then two of the ten could be done at home. I got the material and went through those. So I took five of the ten with the goal of becoming a licensed counselor.

But God had other plans. He shut the door; He slammed it in my face. For a while I didn’t understand and thought God was not very kind to do that. I thought that God didn’t understand my “needs.”

And as I was going on through life, we were at Calvary Christian Fellowship. We were not there long until reports started coming back from Georgia, about Henry Wright. One of the young men in our congregation was down there doing voluntary service. This young man came to a brothers’ meeting and he was talking about the wonderful things God was doing. He said, “I saw holes this big in people’s heads close up. People were healed! It was amazing!”

And everybody in that meeting appeared to be accepting and believing this report. At that point I was open to anything God would have. I did not feel it was right to be closed, to have a “lock” in my heart, to not be open to whatever God had. See, before that, I had heard what John Regier taught about “locked hearts,” and “I knew” I had a “locked heart.” So I was trying to work through that.

Sometime later, the pastor, Phil Neuenschwander, and Steve Stutzman (of Strait Paths Foundation) went to Georgia with their wives to receive “the truth” from



Henry Wright. They came back saying it is amazing how God showed them the truth. It was all very exciting and they were convinced it was real!

I told my wife, “I want whatever God has for me. I would like to receive some counseling from them.” So we met with Phil and Steve and their wives and I shared what was inside, my struggles, what had happened, etc. They said what they saw as the problem was a huge “father wound” that was dwarfed by an even bigger “mother wound.” So the way to take care of that was to administer the mother’s love. So one of the ladies—which was not my wife—came and administered the “mother’s love” to me. This consisted of coming directly in front of me and speaking to my heart very emotionally. And of course it touched my heart that hurt, and I broke down and started crying. Then the way that hurt is ministered to is that the person who is ministering will hold the person who is crying in a close embrace, speaking sweet, emotional things into the ear, to comfort ...

It is all done in the perspective that they are doing it for God in place of the parent who failed. Some of you might think that is funny, others may think it sad, others may think it disgusting. As I look back, there is a whole mix of emotions. But that is simply where I was.

Where God got my attention was when my wife was sitting there beside me while I was crying, reaching her hand over to comfort me. I could tell that in an unseen way my wife was feeling left out. She was trying to get between the emotional connection that was happening between me and this other woman.

That is where God first got my attention.

After that I was so confused. I could not understand what was right and what was not right. God put me on a four-day fast. I did not do it. All of a sudden I lost all interest in food. I just drank liquid and went about my day, pouring out my heart to God.

The Word of God began to just come to me—I give God the credit. I would be driving along and a verse would come to mind. I would write it down. Then another one, and a little later another one, until all of a sudden I saw this context of Scripture showing that there will be those who will show great signs and wonders for the purpose of deceiving. And it came to me how that some people might not even realize that they are deceived, and they might

not realize that they are helping Satan to deceive other people. They honestly think they are doing what is right.

Christian psychology

Most of the counseling centers that call themselves “Christian” will use psychology. Psychology was developed many years ago, in a large degree by Sigmund Freud, to try to find answers in life, but without God. That was Freud’s purpose. He felt that religion was a mental illness.

Another aspect that enters in is called “Inner Healing.”

Inner Healing was developed by Agnes Sanford in the early 1900s. She got her thoughts from Karl Jung from Germany. He was a disciple of Sigmund Freud. Karl Jung was into the occult and had a familiar spirit that would tell him about the unknown. Agnes Sanford took from Jung and from her Pentecostal experience that she had and developed “Inner Healing.” This information is available on websites that favor Inner Healing, telling how it works and where it came from. The second generation took Agnes’ ideas and tweaked them a little bit so that they are more acceptable to the church in general. The third generation includes men like Art Zeilstra, Ed Smith, and John Regier.

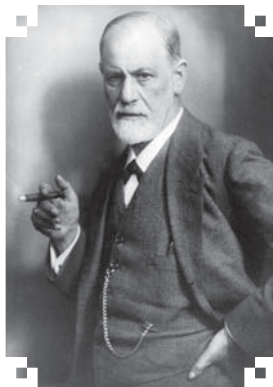
Inner Healing is described as “a look inside.” Counselors of this sort are always trying to look inside and are sure that the

problem of today has something to do with some deep hurt or problem inside. Psychology would say that you do what you do today in a negative way because you were damaged somewhere along the way. And, many times you do not even realize that you were damaged or what happened.

So, psychology has developed psychotherapy, which tries to dig into the past that you do not understand. They have what is called biofeedback, which is essentially the ability to consciously change automatic body functions like heart rate, skin temperature, etc. Psychology also uses hypnotism to discover what is inside a person, things the person is not aware of or does not know about himself.

Listening Prayer Therapy

The problem is that Inner Healing wants to be Christian. But since “Inner Healing” and its methods do not look very Christian, they have developed what is called “Listening Prayer Therapy.” Counselors have been trained to do this. James Wagler said, in the CDs that I listened to, “We cannot help anyone unless they are willing to pray with us.”



Sigmund Freud, considered the founder of psychoanalysis, felt that God was an illusion.

But what does the Bible say? “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Ro. 10:17

What does the Bible say about those who preach the gospel? People are changed by the preaching of the Word. In Acts 2 we see the preaching of the Word, and God changed people. Romans 12 tells us that we are transformed by the renewing of our mind. It is in our minds that change happens.

The heart

Let’s look at the heart now, since the counseling movement speaks much about the heart. They would say the heart is the feelings and the emotions. They separate the intellect from the heart. People say, “Well, I know it’s right; I know that is what the Bible says, but I just don’t

feel it.” I have been there myself, in that very condition! I just didn’t feel it.

The Bible tells us that the way to get the head and the heart together is through the Word.

There is talk about this divide, or divorce, between the head and the heart, and they try to get the two together. But the Bible tells us that the way to get the head and the heart together is through the Word; by drawing near to God, allowing Him to meet the needs we have.

Most of the counseling movement uses psychology, but there are others here locally that use the Inner Healing method and the Listening Prayer Therapy. John Regier claims that he used to preach and pray with people, but it didn’t work. So he prayed and asked God to show him why it didn’t work, and asked how he could help people. He says that one day God began to reveal to him the truth. And all the materials he puts out (I have his workbook, his *Twelve Locked Hearts*, and a great big, thick Counselor’s Manual) came from this revelation.

What he doesn’t tell you is that he went through seminary, and in seminary (at least some of them), they teach you psychology. Neither does he tell you that the ideas he is presenting are not just his ideas. Ed Smith and Art Zeilstra have similar ideas, and they come from Agnes Sanford and others. They try to say that it is all divine revelation.

Ed Smith would say that he received his theophostic counseling method by divine revelation. But when you look at what he writes, he says, “It is a wonderful, new breakthrough in therapy.” He says, “I tried all kinds of therapy, basically every kind that is out there.” So, he was dabbling into the evil, Satanic therapies in an effort to

help people. But now he claims to have had this divine revelation, which is theophostic counseling.

Sin-based or lie-based problems?

Ed Smith writes that for years the church had declared the problem with man was sin-based. But Ed Smith says this is wrong—we need a lie-based theology. This means, the reason we do what we do is because way back somewhere, something happened to cause us to believe a lie about life, our self, other people, and/or God. If he can only take people back through his Theophostic Prayer method—which is similar to Repressed Memory Therapy—to find the lie that was believed, the person prays and God will speak peace and truth to that lie. And when God does it, it is done right. The pain will instantly vanish, and every problem in that person’s life that is connected with that root will fall like a domino effect ... everything will fall into place.

So Ed Smith is very purposed when he says we need a lie-based theology rather than a sin-based theology. That is very unbiblical!

The church has never taught anything like that until these people brought it up, only in the last number of years. Ed Smith was popular in the 1980s and 90s. John Regier has been popular in the last 15-20 years. Agnes Sanford had her method in the early 1900s.

So you start asking, “Where did all this come from?” “What is it associated with?” “What does it look like?”

Repressed Memory Therapy, tweaked ...

Listening Prayer Therapy is praying to Jesus or the Holy Spirit about a specific question, receiving an instant, direct revelation to something unknown. I had a discussion with a counselor from Freedom Hills² about my concerns. This is his quote, “They as counselors need to be very discerning about which voice is speaking during this process, because it is so easy for Satan to speak.” Listening Prayer Therapy is in reality a “Christianized” or “spiritualized” form of Repressed Memory Therapy, which as I mentioned earlier believes that there is some repressed memory that we have—which we do not have any conscious memory of—that we need to uncover so we can get free from it.

Listening Prayer Therapy is in reality a “Christianized” or “spiritualized” form of Repressed Memory Therapy.

² A counseling center located near the speaker’s home.

True stories

I have a couple of stories to share about how these things work out in actual circumstances ...

A lady came for help at Freedom Hills. They “prayed”³ through some things the first day, but didn’t find any breakthroughs. She went to her cabin and came back the next day and said, “I am so excited! I know what my problem is! God showed me last night!”

“Oh, yeah?”

“God showed me that I was sexually abused by my dad when I was one year old.”

The counselor told us, “It is not our place to decide if that is from God or not.” So he told the lady, “I can help you work through that if you want to.”

Now, biblically speaking, is that from God or from Satan?

It is from Satan, because a one-year-old child has no conscious memory of things that happened. And so you cannot use such things as valid facts unless you have other people who can verify it. The biblical way to decide if something is true is to establish every word by two or three witnesses. That is God’s way to discern truth.

So, they started “praying” through this situation. As they were “praying,” the lady suddenly said, “Oh, now I know what is wrong with my husband! God just revealed it to me! The same thing happened to him!”

So, they start “praying” through that, phrase by phrase. Now, all of a sudden she says, “Oh, that wasn’t quite right! Now God is showing me more clearly that it was really when I was five years old, it happened to me again. It wasn’t really my husband at all; it was me. It happened again when I was five years old, and that is when everything shut down.”

The counselor said, “Stop! I am sorry, but I cannot help you anymore because Satan is speaking into the situation.” Then that counselor told us that they have a policy:

³ In the next paragraphs, when you see “praying” in quotation marks you need to think “Listening Prayer Therapy.” The way this happens is that the counselor will pray a short specific prayer, such as “God, will you please show me why I am struggling in this area?” The counselee will pray through the same words, word for word. Everybody has his eyes closed. When they are at the end of the prayer they are silent. The mind is empty or focused ... the counselee is waiting for the first thought or picture to come. As soon as it comes—they have already given themselves to the counselor as the specialist/professional—they tell the counselor exactly what that thought is. That is exactly like what is called contemplative prayer, or centering prayer. This is demonic, rooted in mysticism, with a mix of eastern religions.

what determines if it is from God or not is if the story changes; because God never changes. So if they start off and the story never changes, then they are sure it is from God. But since the story changed for this lady, then they were sure Satan was speaking in, so they had to tell her to stop. The lady got mad and left. The counselor told us, “I don’t know where she is at today.”

Well, this makes me a little upset because she needed help, and the answers were in God’s Word for her. But because they were using Satan’s methods to try to achieve God’s goals, it did not work and she did not get help.

Another story ...

In the CDs that James Wagler shared, he said a couple came in, and all the lady wanted was “the joy of the Lord in her heart.” She grew up in a very strict church;

people could not be honest with what was going on inside. And she could not be honest with those around her, and she was just sort of all tied up, so to speak, inside. So they were “praying”⁴ about different things, during which time the counselor felt led to just “pray” as follows: “God, would you please take the oil of joy [as he was sharing this story, he makes this disclaimer, ‘which is biblical, by the way’] and rub it over her heart.” The lady “prayed” after him word for word.

Prior to doing this, they “had found the little girl in her heart that just wanted to be all bubbly and carefree.” That is raw psychology! But the counselor said, “Every person has a little boy or little girl in them ...”

So the lady “prayed” that “prayer” and immediately she started to laugh and giggled like a little girl who had just been set free. She just laughed and laughed and laughed. Then she said to the counselor, “Stop! I can’t take it anymore!”

Then the counselor said, “Ah, I don’t really believe in all this ‘holy laughter’ stuff.” Realizing he was getting in deeper than he should, he said, “We’ll just leave that for now.” Well, that lady supposedly “met God” that day.

My question is, did she meet the God of the Bible, or did she meet another god? Because what happened with her is exactly what happens in Pentecostal churches. That is what happens when people are “slain in the Spirit.” That is exactly what happens when people have “holy laughter.” I have listened to Hank Hanegraaff and his re-

The biblical way to decide if something is true is to establish every word by two or three witnesses.

⁴ Again, using the Listening Prayer Therapy method.

cordings of what people say and how they laugh in those kinds of meetings. It is called “holy laughter.”

Now that counselor says he does not believe in “holy laughter,” and that he does not expect to have it happen again, but what I would like to present is that there are examples given in their own testimonies by which they condemn themselves. I will say of my own conviction that “holy laughter” is of the occult.

Yet another story ...

In Canada there is a place called Eagle Wings. We became aware of a situation up there in which the father called me and said his son was there to help and be helped.⁵

A counselor there was “praying” (using Listening Prayer Therapy) about some things with him and asking the Lord to help them understand why this young man was struggling in certain areas. As they were “praying” (remember, the mind is empty or focused, and the person has given himself totally over to the counselor, the “professional/specialist” who understands these problems) the word comes to mind, “Rape.” So they keep “praying,” and a little later the words come, “Gang rape.”

So they quit “praying” and the counselor reaches into his drawer and pulls out a piece of paper. He holds the top of the paper so that the young man cannot see what is written at the top, but it is a whole list of what is called “emotional pain words.” He then asked the young man, “How many of these words have you experienced in your life?”

In reality, those lists of words are common to normal human experience.

The reply, of course, was, “Well, all of them!”

So the counselor took his hands off and reveals the top where it says, “Emotional pain words of people who have been sexually abused.”

So what is the young man going to do with that? The “specialist” has just diagnosed his problem with a paper that a “specialist” put together. Well, the young man had no conscious clue of having ever been sexually abused. The counselor went on to say that because the word “gang

rape” came, that most surely means you were abused by Satan worshippers.

Did you know that one of the big things in some so-called “spiritual warfare” or “Christian Counseling” type places is “Satanic Ritual Abuse (SRA)”?

Some places seem to be sure that people have experienced it; the person was asleep or somehow someone came in and abused them. And of course the person has no conscious clue or memory that it ever happened to them ... But since the counselor has told them that is what it was, they now have to figure out how to deal with it; the “professional” said it happened.

So back to our story ... this young man has now been diagnosed as having been sexually abused through SRA. He was totally devastated and confused; all messed up inside. So they called his dad, and his dad says, “Nothing like that would have ever happened. No way!”

The counselor was convinced. The father was sure it didn’t happen. So the father called someone in California who gave him my uncle’s number, and my uncle then referred the father to me. And I told him, “That is of the devil! You need to get him out of there now! You cannot let him go through one more session, because that will damage him. That is spiritual abuse, if there is such a thing as spiritual abuse.”

Through discussion, the counselor finally agreed to stop. But instead, now they went and got the Bible and tried to patch things over.

They were using Satan's methods to try to achieve God's goals.

How does it work?

Now, after telling you those stories, let’s review Listening Prayer Therapy. It is a Christianized/spiritualized form of Repressed Memory Therapy. It was designed by pioneers of the New Age Movement. Catholics use the same method, but pray to Mary. The occult uses the same method, but prays to a familiar spirit. Those who speak favorably of the method on the Internet talk about “calling something up.”

The counseling centers in our community that use it will tell you that it works equally for the Christian and the non-Christian. John Regier would counsel people with this method that were divorced and remarried to their second, third, and fourth spouse. These same people would give testimony of how they prayed to Jesus and Jesus showed them what their problem was, that they had all this pain inside. And then, as they prayed and asked Jesus

⁵ It has come to our attention here at *The Heartbeat of the Remnant* that the counselor mentioned in this story has since expressed repentance for his actions. We are thankful for that, but we leave this story in the article as an example of how these things can so easily find their way into our churches. The purpose of using this story in our magazine is not to expose a particular *person*, but to expose a *method*.

to speak peace to the pain, Jesus brought total peace. Total peace!

That is where my first red flag came up about John Regier. How could Jesus in the New Testament be so clear and pointed about divorce and remarriage (saying that whoever divorced and remarried will not enter heaven), then today give someone living in adultery “perfect peace” in their heart?

The options

I started searching the Scriptures, looking at my background and what we as Anabaptist people believe about divorce, etc. Was there something wrong with our stance? I finally came to realize that there are several options:

1. What Jesus taught was not true.
2. There is a bunch of hocus-pocus going on in the counseling room.
3. There is an actual spirit speaking, another Jesus.

If you listen to what happens, there is a power that is in the counseling room, a power that fits what the Bible calls “another Jesus.” Are we willing to allow the Scripture to speak literally to a situation? We are not trying to be critical of any individual or organization. We are simply exposing the method they are using.

Blaming sin on pain

In the 14 CDs that I listened to (available from Freedom Hills) they say the heart is the emotions and feelings; that’s it. The problem we have is that we have been emotionally damaged; damage from abuse or neglect, in ways that hurt. This causes us to feel abandoned and betrayed and so on. This damage “causes” us to “fail” in these spiritual areas of bitterness, temporal-mindedness, pride, moral failure, etc.

So what they end up teaching is that the root of our problem is emotional. Emotional damage makes us feel a certain way. And because we feel that way, that makes us do evil.

They are very purposed in that. They use the story of Zacchaeus and say, “You know, Zacchaeus was a wee little man. And you know how wee little men are treated; they get laughed at and mocked.” They make Jesus end up saying, “Zacchaeus, I understand how little men are treated. I understand your hurt. I understand why you are trying to be a tax collector; so you can be somebody important ...”

He also says that youth are not rebellious because of sin, but because they have been damaged through control or rejection or some other pressures that authorities have put in their life. They would say that you cannot put truth on top of pain. If a youth is in rebellion because of pain

in their heart, you cannot put truth on top of that pain or everything will blow up.

So, parents’ hands are tied. Youth are rebellious because somewhere along the line the parents have damaged that youth’s heart. So now the parents cannot take God’s Word, which is truth, and give it to the youth, because they would be trying to put truth on top of pain. So you have to get a “specialist” who can come in the back door somehow and unlock the heart, because the heart is locked. They have defined 12 different locked hearts.

Just for fun, about a month ago, before I went to bed, I started going through the booklet (Twelve Locked Hearts) just to see what they are. People, they say, have one or more of these locked hearts. I had 11 of them! My heart was locked! And the reason I only had 11 is because in one area, your heart either locks one way or the other, so I could not have all 12. Actually, according to Scripture, I had a hard heart. If the heart is hardened, I did it; if it is “locked,” someone else did it. This is an example of how secular terminology shifts the responsibility.

They talk about husband/wife relationships and parent/child relationships. If a child has been emotionally damaged in a certain area, maybe through being pressured to perform or by being dominated or controlled by a parent being overly expressive, or being focused on self ... They have all these ways of “damaging” a child which are not in the Bible anywhere!

If a child has been damaged in a certain area at a six level—you have to determine, on a chart of one to ten, what level—then you can only discipline that child to a five level. If you discipline a child to a six or seven, you are only going to make things worse, and the child is not going to respond.

In husband/wife relationships, if a wife has been “damaged” in her home—say in the area of pressure or control—at an eight level, and then her husband “steps on her toes” a little bit, say at a one or a two level by saying nicely, “Hey, take the garbage out, please” ... well because of her “damage caused by control” she is going to blow up.

Adultery because of “emotional pain”?

The story of one Christian lady is that she was in a situation like I just described. All of a sudden this lady just moved out from her husband and shackled up (Remember

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that term? We talked about it earlier ...) with the town drunk. No one could understand why. The “professionals,” the counselors, are saying that it was because he, her new man, didn’t control her at all. In fact, he appreciated every little thing she did. She comes and cleans one little corner of his house—and it is better than what he had before—and he praises her. And so, she gets along with him.

Then the counselors help the first husband understand this. They help the husband get his hurts healed so that he responds to the wife properly. Now he can respond to his wife properly so she doesn’t feel any control whatsoever—because that is where she was damaged—and immediately she automatically comes back to him.

So the reason that she “shacked up” was because she had been damaged emotionally. It was *not* that she was committing adultery or fornication because she was a sinner at heart.

Now they also say that people do not reject Jesus, because Jesus said that “if I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me.” So if someone is not responding to Jesus, it is not that they are rejecting Him, but because of the way He was presented. Now, if you can just figure out how to properly present Jesus to the person—if you can figure out where they have been damaged and unlock their heart—they will automatically come to Jesus ... every time!

If you know your Bible, tell me if that is true. Let God be true, and every man a liar. ~

This message can be listened to at http://ephramministries.org/msg_detail.a5w?vlast_index=4761. The recorded message can also be obtained by writing or calling the contact information inside the front cover of this magazine.