

Why Biblical Counseling?

Research tells us that the national divorce rate in the United States is rapidly approaching fifty-percent. Today approximately forty-percent of America's children are raised in a single parent home. A quick review of the news reveals that the institution of marriage is eroding into a non-descript mass of unions, associations, and partnerships with no respect for God's order and plan for humankind.

Yet while we are disturbed by the condition of the world, and to some degree expect ungodly choices by those who are without salvation and the workings of the Holy Spirit, we must take notice of these disturbing trends and their infiltration of the Church. As an example, the divorce rate among professed born-again Christians is alarmingly similar to that of the general population. According to Barna Research Group (www.barna.org), about half of new Christian marriages will end in divorce. But there is more...

- Approximately one-third of professed Christians now live together before marriage
- Seventy-percent of pastors report a history of *significant marital stress*
- Forty-percent of ministers admit to some form of *extra-marital involvement* during the course of their ministry
- Depression, anxiety, suicide, alcoholism, and the use of psychiatric medications are common and increasing in their occurrence within the Church

Often Christians are alarmed to see these statistics. But when we consider our personal circle of relationships (family, friends, co-workers, church family, etc.), we realize that these and other issues, are all around us. Christians and non-believers alike are suffering and far too often are reaching for the wrong solutions from the wrong resources.

In a world of immediacy, we have welcomed the *friendly and reasonable* teachings of Humanistic Psychology into our minds, hearts, homes, and churches. Christians and non-Christians alike are drawn to the permissive mantra of secularism that encourages us to respond to our emotions, needs, and personal agendas without guilt or conviction, placing our impulses ahead of God's teachings and the needs of others. But the Apostle Paul wrote about the inherent danger found in earthly solutions in 1 Corinthians:

For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God... (1 Corinthians 3:19a).

Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men (1 Corinthians 1:25).

Taking Paul's warning to heart, the true biblical counselor must rely upon the sufficiency of God's Word and its capacity to address all aspects of life, along with the inner workings of the Holy Spirit, as the core features of any counseling or change process. The apostle Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 3:16-17:

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Therefore, any position of support, counsel, training, discipline, or teaching should be grounded in the *inspired* Word of God. The Scriptures provide a template that defines *normal* and *abnormal*. Humans operate and function at their optimum when they are aligned with God's principles of order and structure. Anything outside His order places us in discord with the Holy Spirit and will produce psychological, relational, and spiritual consequences.

Biblical Counseling then, is a process of realignment: bringing those aspects of life that have fallen outside God's proposed boundaries, into agreement with His teachings, commands, callings, principles, and promises. It is impossible to counsel someone into *healthy alignment* when using the template of the world. As a result, a counselor must become intimately knowledgeable and responsive to the Word of God and to the leading of the Holy Spirit, if he/she is to be effective in the delivery of godly care.

BIBLICAL COUNSELING ANSWERS THE SCRIPTURAL MANDATE OFFERED IN EPHESIANS 4:

...that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head--Christ— (vv. 14-15).

As the Body of Christ, we bear the responsibility of building up one another, perfecting and maturing our faith, so that we are not vulnerable to the seductive and harmful teachings of the world that so quickly lead us astray. *Truth in love* fortifies and protects the individual and his/her family by providing God's plan and order for living a life of peace. God's peace is one of correct doctrine, stable unchanging positions, truth that is clear and direct, found in His written Word, and then enacted through the Holy Spirit.