

A CHRISTIAN COUNSELING MODEL FROM A BIBLICAL PSYCHOLOGY PERSPECTIVE

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Many scholars show interest in the integration of psychology and Christianity. Many of them have trained as professional psychotherapists or counselors and are Christians or pastors at the same time. Some are interested in theoretical integration, criticizing psychology and formulating models of Christian counseling. Others are interested in practical integration, focusing on how to use biblical passages and prayers in their counseling sessions. Some of them are interested in personal integration, balancing psychological values with Christian beliefs. All of them, however, struggle with the issues and problems relative to the integration of psychology and Christianity.

One group of scholars criticizes the trend of integration, claiming that integration is not necessary in Christian counseling. The theological orientation of these scholars is conservative and seems to be fundamental. They believe that the Bible is the only source of counseling and therefore there is no need to integrate psychology with Christianity. They also say that church has been too psychologized as a result from utilizing psychology in pastoral care. In their opinion, the psychological methods and ideas have deeply penetrated Christianity so that even Christian scholars and leaders do not realize the danger of psychology in Christian life. The conservatives also argue that integrationists reject the biblical truth in their work when they accept and use psychology for doing counseling. These conservatives have their own unique perspective about why there is no need of integration.

This paper seeks to uncover the conservative scholars' view of Christian counseling. The conservative people see Christian counseling as biblical counseling arguing that the term biblical counseling is more appropriate than that of Christian counseling. They believe that the Bible is the only and sufficient source of counseling. Biblical and

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therefore counselors do not need to have any other sources. In this regard, psychology is considered a secular discipline in a corrupt world; hence, biblical counselors hardly find any truth in psychology. All Truth comes from God. Counselors who try to help the troubled clients must know the relevant biblical passages and understand the principles drawn from these biblical passages. Otherwise, it is dangerous to help the suffering people. This paper begins with the origin and major figures of biblical counseling and will proceed on how to relate psychology and Christianity in the next section. Then, it will address the theories of personality and major pathologies. Finally, the issue on how to help as biblical counselors will conclude this paper.

ORIGIN AND MAJOR FIGURES

Jay Adams is one of the major persons to reject the influence of psychology on Christianity. Many pastors and Christian leaders had accepted psychology without any criticism in their ministries, trying to help their members of the congregation through psychology. They trained other pastors and Christian leaders with psychological methods. This trend formulated the society of pastoral counseling. Most of these pastors and Christian leaders were from liberal theological schools. Adams strongly criticizes the liberal pastors and leaders for accepting psychology without any critical evaluation. He claims that they have been misled on how to use counseling in the church.

In his book, *Competent to Counsel*, in 1970, Adams insists that the Bible is the only source for doing counseling. He argues that Christians and pastors do not need psychology because God is the only source of counseling. Adams calls his approach nouthetic counseling, from “nouthesis,” which has been traditionally translated as “admonish,” “warn,” and “teach” (Adams, 1970, p. 44). His method of counseling is very directive and authoritative because he gives counseling with the authority of the Bible. Nouthetic counseling is currently advocated by David A. Powlison and Edward T. Welch, who serve on the faculty of Westminster Theological Seminary. However, both have replaced the term nouthetic counseling to biblical counseling.

Adams was born in Baltimore and graduated from Johns Hopkins University. He earned a B.A. degree with a major in Greek. He received B.D. from the Reformed Episcopal Theological Seminary and a S.T.M. from the Temple University School of Theology in

Homiletics under W. Blackwood. He also received a Ph.D. degree from the University of Missouri. Adams further studied at Pittsburgh-Xenia Theological seminary and held a post-doctoral fellowship in psychology at the University of Illinois under O. Hobart Mowrer. He held pastorates in Reformed and old United Presbyterian churches in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. He taught at the University of Missouri for three years, teaching speech, and, for twenty years, also taught homiletics, counseling, and pastoral theology at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. Adams also supervised the Doctor of Ministry program at Westminster Theological Seminary in Escondido, California for seven and half years.

Adams is the founder of the Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation of Laverock, Pennsylvania. He edited *The Journal of Pastoral Practice* and served as a president of the National Association of Nouthetic Counselors. As a world-renown speaker, Adams wrote over 60 books including *Competent to Counsel*, *The Christian Counselor's Manual*, *A Theology of Christian Counseling*, *Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage in the Bible*, *The Christian Counselor's Case Book*, and *Is All Truth God's Truth?*. He recently completed the ten-volume Christian Counselor's Commentary Series.

David A. Powlison earned a B.A. degree from the College of Harvard and received his M.Div. from the Westminster Theological Seminary. He has a Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania. Currently, Powlison serves as a counselor at Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation. He is the editor of *Journal of Biblical Counseling* and teaches at Westminster Theological Seminary as a part-time lecturer. He has written numerous articles on Christian and biblical counseling and about how Christians execute their faith and practice in the modern psychological world.

Edward T. Welch earned a B.A. degree from the University of Delaware and received his M.Div. from the Biblical Theological Seminary. He completed his Ph.D. in counseling psychology (neuropsychology) from the University of Utah. He concurrently serves as the Director of Counseling, the Academic Dean, and a counselor and faculty member at the Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation (CCEF). He also serves as a professor of Practical Theology at the Westminster Theological Seminary. Welch wrote a book, *When People Are Big and God Is Small* and more than ten articles for the *Journal of Biblical Counseling*.

PSYCHOLOGY AND CHRISTIANITY

In 1970 Adams developed his method of counseling called “nouthetic confrontation” (p. 41), which Powlison and Welch later renamed as biblical counseling. Adam believes that all Christians should have nouthetic confrontation with one another. Accordingly nouthetic confrontation is evident in Colossians 3:16 and Romans 15:14 (Adams, 1970, p. 41). In these passages, the church should confront the world and each other nouthetically. Nouthetic counseling is based on biblical principles and practices; hence it is biblical counseling.

Biblical counseling is epistemologically biblical exclusivism. Welch (1997) defines biblical counseling as “a hybrid of discipleship and biblical friendship. It begins with God speaking to His people” (p. 2). Biblical counseling is based on the fact that “the triune God has spoken to us through the Scripture” (Welch, 1997, p. 3). Biblical counselors believe that “Scripture contains within its pages all of the principles and information we need to know how to live godly lives” (Beck, 2003, p. 24). Powlison (2003) understands that this method aims to “connect one bit of Scripture to one bit of life” (p. 3) and “bring one bit of Bible to one bit of life” (p. 3). Biblical counselors strongly believe that only the truth of Christ can correct all problems (Powlison, 2003, 2000a; Welch, 1997; Adams, 1979, 1970). The Bible, as the special revelation to people, is adequate and sufficient for human problems and counseling.

There is no room for secular psychology in biblical counseling. Because the Bible has the only and sole authority to do counseling, “no other system of counseling has authority” (Adams, 1979, p. 20). It is dangerous to interpret the biblical passages from a psychological perspective. The psychological interpretation of Scripture means contamination from the secular world. Adams (1973) notes, “Counselors who have psychologized the Scriptures on this point invariably find themselves getting nowhere” (p. 147). From the biblical counseling point of view, there is no non-organic mental illness (Adams, 1973, p. 9). There is only sin, not illness (Adams, 1970, p. xi). Also, there is no psychiatry in the Bible (Adams, 1973, p. 9).

In view of the above, an integration of psychology and Christianity is not necessary. “Attempts to learn how to live well from other sources are thus insults to the comprehensiveness of Scripture and function as

denials of its sufficiency to meet all of our needs” (Beck, 2003, p. 24). Powlison (2001) criticizes the integrationists as “psychoheretics – those who believe that Scripture does not intend to be sufficient for generating a comprehensive counseling model-do see an essential role for the secular psychologies” (p. 28). Powlison (1993) analyzes integrationists with the anthropological question of ‘what is at the bottom of the heart of man?’ (pp. 24-34). Some notable integrationists are Larry Crabb, Gary Collins, Jones & Butman, and Sin-Yang Tan. Powlison (1993), however, opines that integrations are based on need theories rather than sin theories (p. 29). He criticizes integrationists of having the basic assumption that humans are fundamentally good because they focus on need for love rather than fallen beings.

Every other science including psychology should be under the authority of Scripture. Nouthetic counselors say that there is no need of psychology at all. They totally reject secular psychology. But biblical counselors have slightly different opinions about psychology. Powlison (1993) remarks, “Nouthetic counselors have claimed, on the contrary, that the imports consistently hijack biblical truth and ministry. This is not to say that biblical counselors should ignore or dismiss the various secular psychologies” (p.24). Hence, biblical counselors use psychology but also attempt to be consistent with biblical truth although Scriptural authority limits the biblical counselor’s activities. Therefore, biblical counselors accept the term psychology or counseling and the form of psychological activities.

Biblical counseling is based on “faith psychology” (Powlison, 2000b,p. 219). Biblical counselors start their counseling with a God-environment. Simply, God is sovereign (Adams, 1993, p. 4) and He knows and cares about everything. God can do anything according to His own will and acts in His own time. Humans live in “God-made, God sustained, and God-interpreted world (Powlison, 2000b, p. 202). Humans exist in an environment of “human-before-God realities” (Powlison, 2001, p. 46). There are only two options whether to live in God’s environment through obedience or in a sinful environment through disobedience. Sin is the fundamental element in biblical counseling at the core of dealing with human problems. Humans suffer because of their intentional sins (Welch, 1998, p. 24). Human sufferings are related to four different realities: God, individual sin, Adam, and Satan (Welch, 1994, p. 8). Sometimes, suffering falls under one or two categories, and at times, under all of them. Healing,

solutions, and cures come from God. Therefore, biblical counselors are the people who guide the sufferers from a sin-bound environment to a God-bound environment.

Biblical counselors expect to know all the biblical passages that relate to the problems of sufferers in order to guide them to a God-environment. The Scriptures provide everything necessary for the problems of the sufferers because the Bible is inerrant and sufficient. Biblical counselors must not only know the relevant biblical passages but also interpret them biblically. As Adams (1998b) writes, "A person who can't interpret the Word of God properly can't counsel biblically" (p. 5). He (1998a) further shows how to interpret the Word of God by explaining human element, literary element, divine element, grammatical and historical analysis, systematic, theological analysis, literary and rhetorical analysis, and telic analysis (pp. 23-30). Simply put, biblical counseling should be based on proper Bible interpretations.

THEORY OF PERSONALITY

Biblical counselors hold on to a "theocentric view" (Powlison, 2000, p. 220) on humanity. They assert that humans exist in relation to God. Human beings are "creatures of the Bible's God, made for loyalty but gone wild" (Powlison, 2000b, p. 198). They are fundamentally dependent on God and have the responsibility of taking care of other created things for God (Powlison, 2000a, p. 20). The essence of a human being is defined through God's perspective. God is the center for understanding and defining human beings. This theocentric view on humanity requires a serious look at the Bible because it is the special revelation of God. The Scripture reveals what human beings are. Humans live in the environment that God created. Humans are morally responsible and transformable for further development. This type of God's psychology or Bible's psychology that is called "hyperpsychosocial theory" (Powlison, 2001, p. 47). Psychosocial theory simply means that human beings are defined from a perspective of a psychosocial reality; however, hyperpsychosocial theory means that humans are defined beyond the psychosocial reality. Humans are defined by God's reality.

Hyperpsychosocial theory holds a duplex view on man. Humans have body and spirit, that is, a material and non-material being (Welch, 2002, p. 17). Adams holds the same view on humanity but uses the

terms dust and spirit. Echoing Genesis 2:7, Welch (1998a) asserts, “We are composite beings—a natural organism tenanted by, or in a state of symbiosis with, a supernatural spirit” (p. 33). God made Adam from the dust and gave life through His breath, which makes a human being having a body and spirit.

A theocentric view on humanity has two different realities: reality before the fall and reality after the fall. First, before the fall, the human is material, spiritual, moral, social, and a working being (Adams, 1979, pp. 105-138). The human is a materialistic being originating from the earth with a physical body that is formed from dust. Secondly, the human comes to life through God’s breath, after which the spirit becomes alive in the body. God’s act of breathing into the body makes the human soul alive. Third, God created the human in His image that made him a moral being. Because the human possesses God’s likeness, he or she can act or think as an individual being. Different from animals and plants, the human has a mandate to be responsible for other creatures. Fourthly, the human is a social being. In order for Adam not to be alone, God created another person, i.e. a woman. Adam and Eve had fellowship with God, and together, they established a godly society on earth. Finally, God allowed Adam to rule over the created world, giving names and taking care of them. As companions, Adam and Eve worked together as stewards of the earth. This was God’s commandment for them.

After the fall, humanity became sin-bound (Powlison, 2001, p. 47). This sin theory depicts the biblical basis of understanding human personality (Powlison, 1993, p. 29). After the fall, humanity commits sins and suppresses the awareness of God. Mankind is controlled by the cravings and desires of the flesh. Human beings became totally depraved, meaning that “in all parts and aspects of his life he is depraved—no area has escaped sin’s blighting effects” (Adams, 1979, p. 141). Human beings became sinners. “Sin is any want [lack] of conformity unto or transgression of the law of God” (Adams, 1979, p. 99). Because of sin, humans do not do what God wants but rather what they want to do. Sin affects all the areas of humanity. Thus, human beings became morally bent, dark, dysfunctional, and unholy (Powlison, 2000, p. 220).

God, however, created humans to be transformed. Although human beings sinned against God, they can be restored through Jesus Christ. The most important identity of a human is that of a child of God

(Adams, 1973, p. 145). Even though humans reject God and do not accept Him, they can still become children of God by confessing their sins and accepting Jesus as their Savior. Humans can be restored and changed from sinful to righteous. God knows what to change and how to change humans because He created them. God created humans to be “salvageable and transformable through the Word” (Powlison, 2000b p. 196).

The human is a pilgrim being (Adams, 1973, p. 161). Human life is not static but dynamic, and humanity is defined in relationship with God. Change in human life is very essential for understanding humanity--a stranger on earth. Humankind moves from one status to another. As a pilgrim being, human character endures the ongoing process of change. On the way to heaven, human character changes from the old to the new self. This is the sanctifying process. Sanctification is a gradual process of changing the human character and it becomes stronger through self-denial. The denial of self means the death of the sinful way of thoughts, emotions, behaviors, and habit. The old sinful self needs to be surrendered to Christ. Sanctification transforms Christians so that they can have the character of Christ.

MAJOR PATHOLOGIES

There are three different kinds of sources on pathology according to the biblical perspective (Adams, 1973, p. 9). The first one is demon activity. Demons possess humans' spirit and produce pathological symptoms such as deceitful actions, lying, killing, suspect or doubt, threats, personality fragmentation, and others. The individual does not have any control of the symptoms but rather demons control the sphere of human existence. Second, personal sin produces pathological symptoms such as depression, psychosomatic symptoms, paranoia, identity disorders, sexual disorders, addiction, and others. Personal sins relate to willful actions and misbehaviors. Third, pathology can also come from organic illness. It produces dysfunctional relationships, mentally retarded symptoms, and others.

Counseling deals with the symptoms produced by personal sins. Pathology is based on the sin theory. Powlison states, “Sin-the desires we pursue, the beliefs we hold, the habits we obey as second nature-is intrinsically deceitful” (Powlison, 2001, p. 48). He (2001) further notes that “sin is a darkened mind, drunkenness, animal-like instinct, and

compulsion, madness, slavery, ignorance, stupor” (pp. 48-49). Sin is deeply seated in one’s character, which accounts for the problem that results in pathological symptoms. Welch (1999) stresses that “sin is your deepest problem” (p. 24). Pathological symptoms are the result of sin. The fundamental problem of all human symptoms is sinful desire.

Sin is “any want [lack] of conformity unto or transgression of the law of God” (Adams, 1979, p. 99). In other words, sin is “what God forbids, or failing to do what He requires, in the Scriptures” (Adams, 1979, p. 99). Sin affects one’s relationship with God and it is always willful action or volitional awareness (Powlison, 2001, p. 49). The individual betrays God according to his or her own will; he or she acts consciously. He or she is always aware of what to do and how to do. “Sinners think, want, and act sinlike by nature, nurture and practice” (Powlison, 2001, p. 49). Human desires are based on intentions. Pathological symptoms caused by sin are human responsibility because they are created by willful choices.

Sin has four common features in all people (Adams, 1973, pp. 123-124). The first is rejection of God. Humans became rebellious because of sin. They no longer listen and follow God’s Word. They want to do whatever they want. The second common feature is the painful and cursed life. God expelled Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden and cursed them. Therefore, human lives become very difficult and painful. The third feature is denial and plight. Humans run away from God and try to hide things from God and other people. If they did something wrong, they want to cover it up immediately. The fourth common feature is the shifting of blame onto others. When God asked Adam why he ate the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, he blamed Eve. Eve then blamed the serpent. Descendants of Adam and Eve now blame their own sin on others. They do not want to have personal responsibility for their sins.

Humans are totally depraved. The concept of total depravity does not mean that “every person is as bad as he might be. Rather, this idea behind the word *total* is that *in all parts and aspects of his life is depraved*” (Adams, 1979, p. 141). Sin influences all of the human character and life in that human thought became perverse and distorted. Humans have sinful attitudes, actions, feelings, emotions, and behaviors. Sinful thought breeds sinful feelings and sinful actions.

The results of sin are many. Adams (1979) lists the results of sin as guilt, misery, and habit (pp. 143-173). Guilt is “the basis for a sense of

guilt (or bad feelings triggered by a guilty conscience)” (Adams, 1979, p. 144). The psychological meaning of guilt is the violation of one’s psychological standard. Hence, the sense of guilt is not always bad. It is necessary for humans to have a sense of guilt in order for them to know what the right standard is. But a sense of guilt also creates pain and suffering. The sense of guilt relates to a thinking pattern. Distorted thought results in a sense of guilt; hence, humans suffering because of wrong thinking. Adams argues that “human misery is the result of God’s judgment upon man’s sin” (1979, p. 152). Before the fall, misery was non-existent. Adam and Eve enjoyed God’s creation. The couple had a good relationship with each other, and they there was no conflict between the two. But their interpersonal conflict came after their disobedience, which resulted in their being outcast from Eden. God then cursed the ground so that Adam and Eve have to toil hard for their survival. Human misery also produces psychosomatic illness and depression (Adams, 1970, pp. 114-116). The last one is habit. Sinful behaviors create wrong habits. Rebellious behavior produces antisocial habits. Humans have a hard time getting along one another because of their antisocial behaviors.

Welch (1994) presents four different areas of human suffering: others, the individual self, Adam, and Satan. Humans sin against each other. People become deeply as a result from the wrongdoings of husbands, parents, peers, teachers, fellow workers, and others. Humans also suffer because of their sins, such as lying, cheating, betraying, and violating laws, among others. Adam sinned against God and brought misery and suffering onto his descendents. Humans experience death, accidents, injuries, traumas, and others. Satan also brings suffering to humans lies, deception, conspiracy, and false accusations.

Biblical counselors deal with many other human problems. As a result of sin, humans experience many problems such as anger, worry, addiction, suffering, alcoholic, boundary issues, depression, self-injury, among others. In his works, Welch deals with the problems of addiction (2001), boundary issues (2004a), depression (2000a), alcoholism (1998b), and self-injury (2004b). Powlison, on the other hand, deals with the problems of suffering (2004), anger (1997), and worry (2003b) in his published works.

COUNSELING

The goal of biblical counseling is to renew human life. Powlison (2001) claims that the four different areas of renewal are hearts, manner of life, community, and body (p. 43). The renewal of heart means to regenerate thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. The renewal of the manner of life means to change man's attitude or daily behaviors. The renewal of community is to change the relationships among the people in the community in a corporate way, the aim of which is to build a good system of the community. The renewal of body means to strengthen the functions of the body. Some functions of the body must be restored or resurrected. Biblical counseling deals with comprehensive renewal (Powlison, 2001, p. 43). Therefore, biblical counseling relates to sanctification (Adams, 1970, p. 21) and growth process (Powlison, 2000a p. 20). Sanctification means the gradual change of character grounded on Christ's personality. In other words, sanctification means to grow gradually. The change of character relates to the present rather than the past (Adams, 1973, p. 173). The past has nothing to do with the sanctification or gradual change. In order to change, clients should change their current attitudes and behaviors.

Powlison (2001) defines the scope of biblical counseling in six different areas (pp. 30-31). The first area is intrapersonal dynamics. Biblical counselors seek to know the basic human motivation, how to self-evaluate, what belief looks like, and how people self-deceive. The second area has to do with suffering. How does suffering influence people's lives? How do people respond to suffering? What are the reasons that cause suffering? The third area is methodology of counseling. How much flexibility do biblical counselors have in relation to biblical teaching? How do biblical counselors approach the clients' life? How compassionate biblical counselors are towards their clients? The fourth area is the relationship between Christian faith and modern psychology. There is no way to be total free from the influence of modern psychology. How should biblical counselors control the influence of modern psychology? The fifth area is marriage and family area. How much do biblical counselors know about the practical aspects of marriage and family? The last area is addiction. How much do biblical counselors know about the practical aspects of addiction? .

The qualifications of a counselor are the same as that of a pastor (Adams, 1973, p. 13). A counselor's qualifications are as follows:

Scriptural knowledge of the will of God, divine wisdom in one's relationships with others, and discernment of God's will and concern for other members of the body of Christ. Counselors should know the wrong behaviors of clients that God intends to change. Counselors should be able to verbally confront clients with the Word of God in order to change attitudes and behaviors. Counselors should be able to confront clients for their own benefit. These qualifications for counselors are exactly the same with those of pastors. Pastors do these things when they preach to the members of the congregation, while counselors do these things through a one-to-one format in the counseling room.

The method of counseling should be directive. Counseling has to do with the authority of the Bible (Powlison, 2001, p. 30) because the Word of God is true. There is no error in the Word of God. Clients must know the Word of God in order to be changed. The issue is whether the clients follow the Word of God or not. It is up to the clients to obey the Word of God or not. Counselors should encourage clients to follow the Word of God. Biblical counselors should also know the biblical passages that address the clients' problems. Accordingly, the Bible, which is a special revelation, has all the answers for the client's problems. Counselors should demonstrate the ability not only to know the biblical passages but also to interpret the given passages in a proper way. Counselors should be able to apply the passages and interpretations to the client's problems.

There are several different elements in counseling. The first one is hope for the clients. Hope is "a confident expectation" (Adams, 1973, p. 39). God made the promise of hope to humans. Hence, hope is very certain even though humans are suffering. Hope is always there for people and people cannot live without hope. Adams (1973) says that there are people who need hope in their lives: those with long standing problems, those with peculiarly difficult problems, those who have enormous amount of problems, those who are harassed by fear, those whose hopes have been dashed repeatedly in the past, those who have tried and failed, older people, depressed people, suicidal people, and people who have suffered life-shattering experiences (pp. 41-46). Hope is based upon trust in God. If clients do not trust in God, they cannot have hope for their problems. Welch (2000b) suggests three important steps of counseling for depressed clients. These are trust and worship in God, confession of sin, and obedience to God. Confession of sin and

obedience to God could be done when clients trust God. If they trust God and follow the way of righteousness, then they can have hope.

The second is prayer. Prayer is always the basis for counseling process from a biblical perspective. The counselor should invite the Holy Spirit to work through prayer during counseling. The counselor begins the counseling session with prayer. The issue of where, how, when, who, how prayer is used depends on the counselors. They should decide the use of prayer in the counseling session. The power of the Holy Spirit will work through the prayer offered by both the counselor and clients.

The third element of the counseling is reconciliation and discipline. The purpose of counseling is reconciliation with God, self, and others. The reconciliation process begins with the confession of sins. The Holy Spirit will lead the client in how to confess, what to confess, and when to confess. God and others will forgive their sins through confession. Forgiveness will lead the client to have a reconciled relationship with God and others. Based on the reconciliation, clients can build new relationships. Building new relationship always requires discipline and training. The process of building relationship requires training the clients according to God's will. However, the sinful nature of clients will hinder the new relationships.

The process of counseling has four different components: teaching, conviction, correction, and disciplined training in righteousness (Adams, 1986). The most important work for counseling is the regeneration of clients to the biblical level of character. The four steps outline how to change clients in the counseling process. The first one is to teach God's standard because He gives the true guidelines for change. God's standard is revealed in the Bible, which consists of biblical principles. In order to change clients, counselors should know what the client's problems are and what kinds of biblical principles apply to solve the problems. Biblical principles should be applied for immediate outcome or change. Counselor should teach clients to learn something under pressure. Clients have to learn truth from a troubled environment since learning from such environment is one of the most important elements of teaching.

The second step is conviction. The role of conviction relates to the awareness of God. When clients go to God, they need a conviction of their sinfulness before God. Once they have conviction of their sins, then they can know that God is calling them to be changed. Counselors

should be able to prove that clients are sinners before God through data collection. If counselors show enough data to clients, then clients can have conviction that they are sinners. Then they can be guided to obedience to God. They became sinners because of disobedience to God. Counselors should be able to use the Scriptures that contain enough information and data for the conviction of sin.

The third step is correction, which involves repentance, confession of sin, forgiveness, and restoration. Repentance means “a change of mind about one’s beliefs’ attitudes, and behavior that involves regret about sin and issues in a change of life style as outward of a desire to be different” (Adams, 1986, p. 144). In order to repent, clients should confess their sins. They ask forgiveness from God and others outwardly, and then forsake their sinful ways and lifestyle. They can start living to please God.

The last step is disciplined training in righteousness. Christian life deals with sanctification, which is a gradual process of change. To be righteous before God means to conform to God’s standards. In order to stand before God, clients should be able to deal with their old sinful lifestyle. The change of a lifestyle is a gradual process. Training has to do with both sides. One side of training is to give up old sinful lifestyles; the other is to build have a lifestyle that meets God’s standard. This training has to do with the way of God, that is, a disciplined training in and for righteousness.

There are three different stages in counseling: getting started, breaking through, and finishing well (Adams, 2002). The first deals with matters concerning one session counseling, counseling environment, data collection and counseling agreement, the authority of counseling, hope for counseling, agenda of counseling, problems of clients, homework assignment, and counseling involvement. In the first stage of counseling, counselors need to understand clients and explain policies and involvement of counseling to clients. The second stage seeks to change clients actively. This stage includes turning point, repentance, learning and understanding, homework assignments, crisis, and commitment. In this stage, counselors use Scriptures for clients’ problems that could result in self-discipline. Then, they have to deal with the resistance of clients by caring for them carefully. The last stage is the termination step that involves transition, follow-up, formatting termination, signs of termination, and the attitudes of the clients.

CONCLUSION

Biblical counselors hold a firm conviction about counseling. All truth is God's truth. The Bible is the only source of counseling. They believe that the Bible contains all the answers to the problems of clients. If the Bible does not say anything, then it does not exist. There is no mental illness because the Bible is silent about it. The Bible is the special revelation of God. Psychology from the secular world does not have any ground in biblical counseling.

Biblical counseling has changed from Adams to his followers. The name of counseling changed from nouthetic counseling to biblical counseling for the reason that nouthetic counselors hold a stricter position than that of biblical counseling. The strict adherence to nouthetic counseling showed the counselors suspicious attitude towards modern psychology. Nouthetic counselors totally reject the contemporary psychological resources but biblical counselors see a possibility of using contemporary psychological resources. Biblical counselors show a more generous attitude towards modern psychology than their nouthetic counterparts.

Biblical counselors present many counseling resources. Jay Adams, for one, provides a lot of information about counseling. He uses biblical interpretations in dealing with clients' problems. He also provides a theology of biblical counseling through his publications. Powlison provides readers with his sharp understanding of counseling from biblical perspectives. He also dialogues with those who hold differing views on counseling using the Bible. Welch joins the team by offering rich information about troubled clients based on his personal views. These three are the major proponents who established and enriched the field of biblical counseling.

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