



Biblical Counselling with CCEF

by Sally Orwin

What is Biblical Counselling?

We know that the world is not as God originally created it to be. Nor are we. We suffer as things happen to us: a spouse dies, a business collapses, an earthquake may destroy our home and livelihood. At the same time, we react to life and people in ungodly ways through fear or pain or anxiety. Life may not deliver according to our expectations and we become angry or disappointed.

From out of this Christian worldview, biblical counselling explores the *comfort* and *call* of the Gospel: the comfort in knowing that God is sovereign, that he loves us, and that he has a plan to redeem us. But God also has a radical agenda for change, calling us to the lifelong process of shaping us into the likeness of Christ. We know this can be painful. Peace is not the absence of struggle; it is the fruit of wrestling through it *with* God and others to make a difference in the tough challenges of life. Every Christian is a biblical counsellor.

Many readers will have their own experiences of ‘Christian’ counselling as opposed to the application of secular psychological methodology by Christians and for Christians in a counselling context. This is not the place to explore the merits of biblical counselling in comparison with the many other models which Christians may have found helpful or not. I hope in a future article to develop this theme more fully and collaboratively, particularly in the context of offering pastoral and social care to Christians on God’s workplace frontline.

Biblical Counselling with CCEF

Since 1968, the Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation (CCEF) has built

progressively upon the work of Jay Adams. As a young pastor thrust into the everyday rough and tumble of church life, Jay quickly discovered that whilst theological training had equipped him to preach well from the pulpit, it had not equipped him to pastor or counsel his church flock in handling the everyday struggles which make up the human condition.

He set to work to engage biblically in these human struggles, accessing the Word of God to equip Christians to minister to one another within the body of Christ. He based his conviction on Romans 15:14: ‘I am convinced, my brothers and sisters, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with knowledge and competent to instruct one another’ (NIV). Paul urges the Thessalonian Christians in the midst of persecution to ‘admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all’. In the midst of illness, depression, confusion, trouble, anger, pain and distress, how do we love with a love that ‘issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith?’ At home, at work, at college, at church? How do we love well the exasperating colleague who doesn’t get it, the depressed brother who absorbs our energies, the friend trying hard to shake that irritating habit?

Over the years, CCEF has developed material and run courses to equip every kind of Christian in any walk of life to be an instrument of redemptive hope, of Christ’s compassion for us in our brokenness (the suffering that happens to us and robs us of hope) and in our rebellion (the sin that comes from within our own hearts). This calls us to examine the motivation of our hearts and to rivet biblical wisdom into every detail of our lives so that we can be free to love others as he has loved us. ■

Sally Orwin is a co-editor of this journal. She is studying Biblical Counselling with the Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation (CCEF), Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, USA. You can find out more about CCEF at www.ccef.org.

