

# Professional Counseling versus Body Life Sanctification

But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ ([2 Corinthians 11:3](#)).

We live in a culture that is "addicted" to talk-therapy. It is how the world copes. This same mentality has invaded much of the Western Church. What did pastors do one hundred years ago? Was anyone competent to minister, before the advent of modern psychotherapy and in its trail, the "Biblical Counseling Movement"?

**Note:** Being addressed are problems related to sin, salvation, and sanctification. Medical problems per se requiring medical attention are not essentially in view, although root spiritual problems may certainly result in medical problems. Specifically, what I am addressing is **talk-help** related to the problems of life. My contention is that the various **models** of "professional counseling" developed by the world, and then adapted by the church, at many points do not square with the Scriptures. I contend that Christ, His Word, and the Spirit-Gifted Body of Christ are sufficient. That was true one hundred years ago and it's still true today. Many give lip service to this, but in practice they deny it. Note some of the concerns:

1. Self-oriented therapy versus Christ-oriented discipleship.
2. Problem-oriented obsession versus Precept/Promise-oriented focus.
3. "Expert"-oriented (a special "priesthood caste" called counselors) versus Body Life-oriented (the priesthood of all believers, with God-ordained leadership/elders).
4. System-oriented (techniques & methods) versus Spirit-led oriented ministry.
5. Money-oriented (charging for ministry) versus GRACE ministry-oriented.
6. Integration (Mixture of Psychology and Bible)-oriented versus Bible sufficiency-oriented.

Subtly we have been turned from the "simplicity that is in Christ" (2 Cor. 11:3) to very complex systems that require the injection of human wisdom in order to be qualified to minister. The Bible does not teach that you have to be an **expert** in sinful dysfunctions in order to effectively deal with sin issues. Rather it teaches we need to

**know** God's **truth** and be able to properly apply it to the issues of sin which are "common to man" (1 Cor. 10:13, 1 Jn. 2:15-17).

Texts like Romans 6 and Colossians 3 are presented as sufficient truth regarding the problems of life and sanctification. Paul was confident that believers were able to "admonish one another" (Rom. 15:14). The body is sufficiently equipped and gifted to build itself up in love (Eph. 4:11-16).

On the one hand, we have a **professional model**. On the other hand, the Bible presents a **body-life model**. There is a great divide between the two. The body-life model emphasizes the sufficiency of Christ, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, set in the context of a gifted body of believers who minister to one another. Concerning all matters of faith and practice related to sin, salvation, and sanctification, the Body is fully equipped (Eph. 4, 2; Tim. 3:15-17; 1 Pet. 4:7-11; 2 Pet. 1:3-4). The truly biblical model is a **family model**. In this family model, the emphasis is on discipleship, sanctification, edification, and accountability. God has given leaders to the church who have **word-based** ministries (Eph. 4:11). They minister the Word for the building up of the Body, so that in turn, the Body can effectively minister to one another. The key is always the Word and Body-Life Ministry! The matters of "counseling" are really matters involving **salvation/ sanctification** that relate to **body life**. If you lack wisdom for godly living, in faith, ask God, and He will give it (Ja. 1:5-8). If you are weak, call on the strong men of prayer (elders), and God will honor it (Ja. 5:14-18). Where necessary, confess to "one another," etc. (Ja. 5:16).

In many ways, the "Counseling Movement" has become a compromised substitute for Body-Life Ministry. The professional model undermines the sufficient **grace** ministry that God intended to function within the context of the **body**. Selling "ministry" is a "selling out" of **grace!**

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**Thought:** "The church is so subnormal that if it ever got back to the New Testament normal it would seem to people to be abnormal" (A.W. Tozer).