

THE ATTRIBUTES OF A CHRIST-LIKE COUNSELOR

George Scipione

Engaging the Heart

- I. Who is a good counselor? What makes him a good counselor?
 - A. Many would give different answers.
 - B. I would argue that the best is easy to know: Jesus Christ. "The Wonderful Counselor". The Other Counselor, the Holy Spirit, is equal to Him, Cf. Is 9:6; Jn 14:26. Cf., "The Wonderful Counselor, the Other Counselor and Christian Counseling" *WTJ, Vol. 36, No. 2, 175-197.*
- II. We can study this in two ways. I highly recommend this as a study project.
 - A. We can study the Gospels and learn how Jesus counsels people.
 - B. We can look at a prophesy that Jesus fulfills, Is 11:1-6 which is more suited to our time limitations.
- III. Understand the context of Isaiah.
 - A. Isaiah preached under the reigns of Uzziah, Jothan, Ahaz and Hezekiah
 - B. He preached judgment on Judah resulting in the Exile but that a remnant will be saved.
 - C. He pointed to the Messiah as the One who would save His people.
 - D. **Isaiah 11:1-5**

Exposition of the Word

- I. The line of David will be cut off but a branch will grow out of the stump of Jesse, 11:1.
 - A. The Savior, the Branch, will save. His name will be Immanuel, Is 7:14; The Wonderful Counselor, Is 9:6.
 - B. This Savior will have the Holy Spirit without measure, John 3:34. This is the Spirit of Jaweh.
 - C. The Holy Spirit is the Source of His counsel as to His human nature.
- II. The Holy Spirit supplies the Messiah with six qualities or abilities.
 - A. Wisdom:
 1. The noun means wisdom, skill, ability; the verb = to be wise, skilled, shrewd.
 2. The concept is best seen in Proverbs 8:1-31. Wisdom is personified and she calls to the simple to learn from her, 1-11; she lives with prudence, knowledge and discretion. This equals the fear of J and the hatred of evil, pride, arrogance, perverse speech which enables kings to rule, 12-21; she was with God at the creation and before it and was instrumental in the creation, 22-31; therefore listen to me and be blessed, 32-36. Chapter 9 contrasts her with Folly.
 3. This is the skill with which God made all things. This is the skill needed in counseling. You need the skill to devise ways to face challenges in a God pleasing way. In a creaturely manner you need to create solutions.

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B. Discernment:

1. The noun means understanding, insight or discrimination. The verb = to understand, discern, look carefully at, examine carefully and analytically.
2. The concept is best seen in God's discernment, Deut 31:21; 1 Sam 16:7; 1 Chron 28:9; 1 Kgs 8:39; Jer 17:9; Matt 9:4 and in man discerning another, Prov 20:5.
3. You need to be able to discern and distinguish individuals and circumstances before you wisely solve issues.

C. Counsel:

1. The noun means advice, plans to accomplish goals. The verb means to advise, give plans.
2. This is best seen in the prophetic work of Isaiah, 41:21-42:9; and Paul's apostolic ministry, Acts 20: 17-38.
3. You need to counsel to counsel! You need to form plans that connect the Word of God to the counselee in his providential world. Counseling is giving advice in the form of a plan to accomplish God's goals for the counselee.

D. Strength:

1. The noun means strength, power, might, achievement. The verb means to be strong, mighty, powerful, victorious, triumphant.
2. This is best seen in God's displays in creation and redemption. Also, you see it in the mighty deeds of David as King and God's servants in Heb 11.
3. You need strength to hold up and carry the lambs and chase down the stubborn ones! You will need to fulfill Jam 5: 13-20.

E. Knowledge:

1. The noun means knowledge, learning. The verb means to know or learn.
2. This is best seen in God as the heart knower; also, in truth as the foundation of the armor of God, Eph 6:10-20. John 1 tells us that Jesus brings us truth and grace. Reality is what God sees and knows. Messiah will not judge by what He sees or hears but with justice in truth.
3. You need truth to counsel. That comes from the Word, Heb 4:11-13 which in turn feed discernment, Heb 5:11-14. This is the cycle of learning and growing in knowledge.

F. The Fear of the Lord:

1. The noun means dread or awe. The object of the fear is the triune God. The verb is to fear, stand in awe of, respect.
2. This is the subject of another workshop: The Fear of the LORD is the Beginning of Counseling. Prov 1:7.
3. Without this fear both the counselor and counselees will not be properly motivated and thus may miss God's blessings.

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- III. The Holy Spirit must be present in your counseling.
 - A. He must give you these Christ-like attributes.
 - B. He counsels you so you can counsel others, cf., 2 Corinthians 1:3-11.
 - C. He uses the Word in combination with His providential poundings and the example of those who disciplined you!

Exhortation for Life

- I. There is no better model than Jesus or the Other Counselor.
- II. You have access to the same source of wisdom, discernment, counsel, power, knowledge and fear. Yes, it is qualitatively less, but it is real. Yes, it is limited, but it is real.
- III. The Word is central; we hear this all the time in our circles. Amen! But it needs to function this way or our counsel will be weak and powerless.
- IV. BUT, prayer becomes a key ingredient in Biblical Counseling. Which is another whole workshop that needs emphasis in our circles.
 - A. Christ is not only the Prophet and King, He is as well the Priest.
 - B. Your “prophetic”, small “p”, ministry needs to follow His.
 - C. You and your disciples need regeneration, justification, adoption and sanctification.
 - D. You need these attributes to counsel.
 - E. You can only get them through study **AND** wrestling with God.
- V. May He give you these attributes in full measure so that you will be fruitful, 2 Peter 1:3-21. This is the only way you will counsel not by what you see and hear but in righteousness and faithfulness like the Wonderful Counselor. This is the only way you will see conviction of sin, righteousness and judgment like the Other Counselor.