

A biblical counseling approach. Jay Adams (1970) is well known for his strident criticism of modern psychology and Christian adaptations of it. His position is not surprising given the state of affairs at that point in history (Johnson, 2010b). Time has shown this to be a critical turning point, as it played a role in evangelicals' becoming more serious about the integrity of their faith as they worked in psychological fields, and it rallied together those who see the Bible as a basically self-sufficient counseling manual. Founded by Adams in 1968, the Christian Counseling & Educational Foundation has, for many, been the standard bearer of this approach (www.ccef.org). Johnson offers a brief history, and Powlison (2010a) presents a detailed one as biblical counseling, too, has had diversity of opinion. Partly the debate has been on how much dialogue to have with scientific psychology and other approaches. Even since these were published, however, biblical counselors have moved to unite through several meetings in 2010, forming the Biblical Counseling Coalition (www.biblicalcounselingcoalition.org).

David Powlison (2010b) offers a summary of his biblical counseling position in *Psychology & Christianity: Five Views*. Immediately stating his position, he contends, "Christian faith is a psychology. . . . Christian ministry is a psychotherapy" (p. 245; italics in the original). Conceding that there are many competing psychologies from outside the Christian faith, Powlison would direct us to the only one that is truly rooted in the nature of God and his revelation in the Bible.

Powlison (2010b) begins by stating that merely amassing psychological facts (as in modern science) without keeping God in view is inadequate. In contrast, he maintains three assumptions that underlie his position. First, God is the Maker of all, and to truly know and love this Maker is to be fully human. (Only the Christian faith, then, can show us our ultimate well-being.) Second, the Lord is judge of the living and the dead, knowing and evaluating us completely. We are to be loyal to this God and nothing else. Finally, Christ came to us and for our salvation. This restoration climaxes in a restored relationship with God, which affects all aspects of our psychological functioning.

Building on this, Powlison (2010b) deconstructs current meanings of "psychology" by breaking it into six pieces, progressing from concrete to abstract. Psych-1 is like a good movie or novel; it "simply describes how we operate in the world we inhabit" (pp. 249-50). It concerns the person interacting

with his or her entire life situation, including behavior, motives, what rules you, and ultimately the living God. Psych-2 is a detailed knowledge of human functioning, like *science*. It includes "close observations and systematic descriptions of human functioning" (p. 253). Here Powlison admits we can learn from secular psychology, but only some "neurotic insights" (p. 255) and nothing systematic given the problems of their version of Psych-3, the interpretive and explanatory level based on Psych-2. For Christians, this must be explicitly a Christian worldview, as it is like *theology*.

This brings us to the focal aspect for our current project. Psych-4 is the practical applications of the above to psychotherapy, and is like *the cure of souls*. For Powlison (2010b), this is a task of Christian wisdom, informing counseling just as it informs preaching or worship. Thus it, too, must be explicitly and wholly Christian as we depend on that (Psych-3) to offer an ideal for human functioning to provide a direction for change. "All counseling does attempt pastoral work, shepherding the souls of wandering, suffering sheep" (p. 258). Other therapies are secular pastoral workers who "heal lightly the woes and wrongs of the human condition" (p. 259).

Psych-5 is a system of professional and institutional arrangements. Powlison (2010b) believes the dominant system in the West is secular and leads to professionals licensed by the state. In contrast, for Christians, Psych-5 is like *church* (and parachurch), where ministry models are integral to the institutions. Finally, Psych-6 is the mass ethos where all of the above takes place—popular culture or *the world*, or spirit of the age. Here Powlison argues Christians should build a counterculture based on biblical wisdom.

In short, only biblical wisdom can form a Psych-3 to understand and interpret the experiences of the person (Psych-1) correctly. Counseling (Psych-4) must follow from that, leaving place only for occasional insights (Psych-2) from secular psychology. Moreover, the context of Christian counseling is more properly outside licensing laws and inside the church or parachurch organizations (Psych-5).

As noted earlier, each approach is more of a family than a singularity. Given the Christian Counseling & Educational Foundation was represented by David Powlison in the *Psychology & Christianity: Five Views* book (Johnson, 2010a), we step outside that organization to get a different perspective from within the Biblical Counseling community. Dr. Stuart Scott is Associate Professor of Biblical Counseling at the Southern Baptist Theological Sem-

inary in Louisville, Kentucky, and Executive Director of the National Center of Biblical Counseling. Prior to this, he garnered over 25 years of counseling and ministry experience, serving most recently as Associate Pastor of Family Ministries and Counseling at Grace Community Church in Los Angeles, where he also taught at the Master's College and Seminary. Author of several books (Scott, 2000, 2009; Peace & Scott, 2010), Dr. Scott has also been active in the formation of the Biblical Counseling Coalition. We look to him as a guide into the use of biblical counseling with Jake.

Charting the Course

Shortly we will let these authors speak and share how these five approaches apply in counseling and, in particular, with Jake. As you read, observe the similarities and dissimilarities to the representative in the earlier volume. These authors focus primarily on case matters and thus will offer only limited commentary to characterize how their own counseling strategies correspond to the overarching view. The practical, applied orientation of this text leaves to the reader the pursuit of the links or distinctions between each theoretical position's spokesperson and practitioner. Such investigation will add depth to an understanding of each view as the flexibility and expertise necessary to move from theory to practice is exemplified. The strategy bound into the chapters ahead is not to expound on the assets or fine points of each unique set of conceptual principles and convictions. Instead, we will witness via demonstration how each unique Christian helping paradigm is manifested in actual application.

There is much to learn for us, and several roads to help for Jake. Let us seek God's guidance as we merge these journeys in the pages that follow.

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