

a comparison of counseling philosophies



Importance of _____ counseling philosophies

1. It helps us know whether what counseling we do is biblical. (John 17:17; Ps 19:7-11)
2. It helps us know whether we are able to counsel.
3. It helps us know how much the person you are counseling has been influenced by secular psychology.
4. It helps us know how much we have been influenced by secular psychology.

_____ of a counseling philosophy

1. Presupposition – everyone develops a philosophy by their own perception of knowledge.
 - Intuition
 - Reason or theories produced by reason
 - Empiricism or discoveries of human studies
 - Revelation
 - General revelation (creation - Ps.8:1, 3; 19:1-6; Rom1:20; & conscience - Rom1:19; John 1:9; 14:8)
 - Special revelation (Ps.19:7-10; 119; Rom 4:20, 21; 10:17; 2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Pet 1:3)
2. Process – as Christians we have a process for determining our philosophy that is different from others.
 - Level one [canonical]—we must begin by identifying God’s Word as the authority for knowledge.
 - Level two [exegesis]—we then seek to understand the Scripture through proper exegesis.
 - Level three [biblical theology]—we engage in the discipline of biblical theology by formulating propositional doctrinal statements from the exegesis of Scripture.
 - Level four [systematic theology]—the propositions of biblical theology are correlated topically to produce a systematic theology.
 - Level five [practical theology]—we may arrive at practical theological conclusions (philosophy) about life by building upon a thorough systematic theology.

NOTE: Biblical counseling falls within the discipline of practical theology.

for evaluating various counseling philosophies

1. Doctrinal guidelines for evaluating various counseling philosophies
 - Theology – What do they believe about God?
 - Epistemology – How do they propose to know what they know?
 - Anthropology – What do they believe about man?
 - Hermeneutics – What is their view of sin?
 - Soteriology / Christology – What do they believe about salvation and Jesus Christ?
 - Pneumatology – What role do they see the Holy Spirit having?
 - Ecclesiology – What is the church?
 - Eschatology – What do they believe eventually happens to people?
2. Practical guidelines for evaluating various counseling philosophies
 - How is the problem defined?
 - How is the problem solved?
 - How important are the motives?
 - What is the goal of counseling?
 - What is the role of the counselor?

of a biblical counseling philosophy

1. Components of a biblical philosophy
 - Must have a high view of God.
 - All counseling is God-oriented. (Ps 73:25; Rom 11:36)
 - The relationship that the counselee has with God is priority.
 - Must see God's Word as sufficient (2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Pet 1:3)
 - Biblical counsel is the only counsel that offers real hope of life and change. (Rom 6:3-4, 12:1-2; Col 3:1-17; Ps 119:9-16)
 - Apparent similarities between biblical counsel and secular counsel do not justify the use of their philosophy and method.

- Must have an accurate view of man.
 - Guilt is taken seriously. (Ps 51:4; 32:1, 2)
 - Responsibility of counselee is recognized. (Ezek 18:4; Rom 14:10, 12; Jer 31:29, 30)
 - Behavioral change can occur now. (Eph 4:22-24; 2 Cor 5:17)
 - Counselee is accepted as a person God created. (Lk 6:27, 28, 32-35)
- Must understand the purpose of the church.
 - The church exists to be a repository of truth. (1 Tim 3:15)
 - The church exists to provide a context of loving fellowship with one another for the purpose of mutual edification (Eph 3:16–19, 4:12–16).
 - The church exists as a training center whereby people can grow through the application of teaching and the utilization of their spiritual gifts.
 - The church exists to be a light in this dark world, for the evangelization of God's elect (Titus 2:11–14).

2. Comparison of counseling philosophies

- Survey of counseling methods (see chart at the end of notes)
- Theological problems with some Christian counseling books
 - Absence of the Holy Spirit
 - Neglect of the Church
 - Lack of emphasis on prayer
 - No commitment to the sufficiency of Scripture
 - The renaming of sin and the omitting of sorrow/repentance
 - Man-centered—feelings oriented/needs (wants) oriented
 - Psychologized terminology
- What is so different about biblical counseling?
 - Different view of **person**: active-responsible heart NOT passive-reactive-victim heart
 - Different view of **situation**: significant to know When? Where? With Whom?, contributing to the form of an individual's life patterns NOT determinative Why?, focusing on external causes

- Different view of **resources**: triune God and His Word NOT meet built-in needs for love and self-esteem
- Different view of **change process**: repentance, faith, renewal of mind, new obedience, progressive sanctification, so I can glorify and esteem the worthy God NOT get needs met, or find inner healing, or find accepting people and set attainable goals, so I can feel self-confidence, self-esteem, self-worth
- Different view of **God**: the Sovereign, Triune Lord; the Son of God who was crucified as the Lamb of God in sinners' place; the Holy Spirit of Sonship who indwells us to destroy sin, to magnify Christ, to teach us to know our Father NOT the powerless bystander on our troubles; the therapist in the sky who meets our emotional needs, whose death showed how valuable and important we were to God, who accepts victims of others' sins
- Different **goal**: concerned about the counselee's walk with God and glorifying God NOT concerned with counselee merely coping or being happy or with "whatever works"

Survey of counseling methods

	Neuroscience	Psychodynamic	Behaviorism
LEADER:	Santiago Ramon y Cajal (1852-1934)	Sigmund Freud (1856-1939)	B. F. Skinner (1904-1990)
Who & What is man?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Man is biology • Evolutionary being • Animal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Man is an instinctual animal • Human nature is deterministic • Personality is structured around three psychological processes: id, superego, ego • Consciousness & unconscious 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Man is a conditioned animal (deterministic). • A blank computer card • Not a free agent
How is the problem defined?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chemical or biological 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict between id and superego. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • His environment has produced behavior that is unacceptable to his environment (society's failure).
Who is responsible?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not man 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not man 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not man
What is the view of man's guilt?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Result of bad biology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Result of imposed standards from others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not important (no evils)
What is the treatment?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change the chemicals • Adjust biology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actualize potential • Strengthen the Ego • Make the unconscious conscious • Find source in insight and awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restructure man's environment • Counselor determines what they want • Therapist determines how it will be changed
What is the goal of counseling?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accept biology • Change behavior with drugs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To get rid of guilt by shifting blame and labeling guilt as false. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To change the standard according to the client's "needs."
What is the role of the counselor?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biologist / Doctor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expert 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technician
What are some problems with this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unbiblical view of man. • Counselor is not responsible • My "body" fails me so I must accept who I am • My problem is a medical issue, similar to an illness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unbiblical view of man • Counselor is not responsible • Promotes self-absorption, narcissism • Victim mentality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselor is not responsible since his behavior is determined by his environment • Only behavior is subject to examination; observed, measured & manipulated • Ignores man as spiritual being • Victim mentality

	Rational-Emotive Theory	Humanistic	Biblical Counseling
LEADER:	Albert Ellis (1913-2007)	Carl Rogers (1902-1987)	God (self-existent – eternity)
Who & What is man?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basically good • Potential within 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Man is unique in himself and basically good. • Potential is within; he matures like a flower. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Man is created by God in the image of God in order to honor God • Man is rational and morally responsible
How is the problem defined?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victim of flawed irrational beliefs about themselves • Rooted in childhood • Man’s belief system is the cause 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The social environment interfered with his ability to realize his potential. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fallen image-bearer (nature) and sinner by choice
Who is responsible?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not man 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not man 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Man
What is the view of man’s guilt?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crooked thinking: results in neurotic thinking & behaving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not important 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Result of sin • Real
What is the treatment?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminate self-defeating outlook on life • Acquire a rational view of life • Process of re-education • Practice actively changing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-directive or client-centered therapy • Help realize potential • There is a focus on feelings or attitudes • The solution to the problem is within himself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initially, justification by faith alone • Progressive sanctification to deal with personal sin and suffering in order to honor God in life • Spirit & Word • Focus on objective data
What is the goal of counseling?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggest changes in thinking that will lead to changes in behavior, thereby alleviating or improving symptoms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be comfortable with self 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To live in the Spirit through the Word • Deal with sin • Deal with response
What is the role of the counselor?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher & educator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mirror 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biblical disciple / counselor
What are some problems with this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unbiblical identification of beliefs • Substitution of therapist’s beliefs system rather than God’s Word for counselee’s belief system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unbiblical view of man • Counselee is not responsible since his social environment impeded his inherent potential • Solution is within rather than in Christ • Victim mentality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NONE that can’t be overcome by God, His Word & His obedient children: Counselee is responsible before God, guilt is taken seriously, & counseling is God-oriented.