

THE BIBLE: God's Manual for Biblical Counseling

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Here's a rocket science question: What is the best source for biblical counseling? The answer is obvious, or at least it should be, that the Holy Bible—the 66 books in the Old and New Testaments—is the manual for biblical counseling. This doesn't mean that there aren't commonsense truths from other sources that don't contradict the Bible that may be used too.

Here are a few of the reasons the Holy Bible is God's manual for biblical counseling:

1. The Bible is given by God to His creation in order for us to know how to live and please Him: *...His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue (2 Peter 1:3)*. Since He created us in His image it follows that He knows perfectly what we need, and it is found in the Bible.
2. The Bible is *breathed from the mind of God*, which is called inspiration: *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16, 17)*. These verses affirm that God's word is able to equip His creation in every area of life. The challenge is to apply it, which is one of the goals of biblical counseling. To be *doers of the word* (*cf. James 1:23-26*).
3. God's counseling manual is able to make a person wise unto salvation: *[A]nd that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus (2 Timothy 3:15)*. There is no other message source that can save; only the Gospel (Romans 1:14-18).
4. The word of God is the bread of life, it alone can sustain us: *But He answered and said, 'It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God"' (Matthew 4:4)*. This is why the word will be the standard by which we will be Judged in the end (*cf. John 12:48*). We must ingest, digest and be energized by it.
5. The word of God can be known and it can liberate the person who applies it: *Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed, 'If you abide in My word, you are My disciples in deed.*

And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free' ... Therefore, if the Son shall make you free, you will be free indeed (John 8:31, 32, 36). There may be some great advice and philosophies in the ranks of men, but it is only God's word that liberates.

6. We can trust the word of God to be and do what God affirms: *Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth (John 17:17). For the law was given by through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ (John 1:17).* Secular counseling is built on a foundation that is shifting sand—always changing. Biblical counseling is built of the eternal, never changing, word of God. It is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow.
7. The word of God is applicable to all people, in every nation. The Gospel in the message that must be preached to every person: *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and of the Holy Spirit, TEACHING them to observe all things that I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age (Matthew 28:19, 20).* The Gospel is God's only power unto salvation (cf. Romans 1:14-16). Salvation is the core for solving all problems.
8. The Bible, God's counseling manual, is a safe alternative to the secular counseling that is so prevalent in the world and church today. *Blessed is the man who walks NOT in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law meditates day and night (Psalm 1:1, 2).*
9. At the heart of man's problems, according to Jesus, is man's thinking (cf. Mark 7:21-25); (cf. Proverbs 23:7; Jeremiah 6:19). God's counseling manual provides us with a perfect thinking agenda: *[A]nd the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever things are **true**, whatever things are **noble**, whatever things are **just**, whatever things are **pure**, whatever things are **lovely**, whatever things are of good **report**, if there be any **virtue**, and if there be anything **praise worthy**—MEDITATE on these things (Philippians 4:7, 8).*
10. The word of God—Scriptures—cannot, from heaven's standpoint, be broken or changed: *Jesus answered them, 'Is it not written in your law, "I said, 'you are gods'? If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken)*

(John 10:34, 35). While it is truth that men break and ignore God's word (cf. mark 7:7, 9); from heaven's declaration it will never happen. We can trust God's counseling manual.

THE 119 ATTITUDE TOWARD GOD'S COUNSELING MANUAL

In my opinion there is no chapter in God's counseling manual that extols the power and virtue of God's word more than Psalm 119. It lays the building blocks that rise from the foundation of the inspiration of the Scriptures. This 119th chapter does seven major things relative to using God's word as our counseling manual:

1. Presents God as the ultimate, perfect, and only guaranteed Helper of man.
2. Presents the power of God's word when applied to sustain man.
3. Presents the self-examination of a man and his needs.
4. Presents the fact that reliance on God's word is not an occasional thing, but perpetual.
5. Presents various ways to appropriate God's word in real life situations.
6. Presents God's picture of a wise man using God's word.
7. Presents a model for us to adapt and follow, both as a counselor and counselee.

EXAMPLES OF THE 119 ATTITUDE TOWARD GOD'S COUNSELING MANUAL:

- ✓ *Your word have I hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You (Psalm 119:11).*
- ✓ *I will delight myself in Your Statutes; I will not forget Your word (Psalm 119:16).*
- ✓ *Open my eyes that I may see wondrous things from Your law (Psalm 119:18).*
- ✓ *Your testimonies also are my delight and my counselors (Psalm 119:24).*
- ✓ *Make me understand the way of Your Precepts; so shall I meditate on Your word (Psalm 119:27).*
- ✓ *The law of Your mouth is better to me than thousands of coins of gold and silver (Psalm 119:72).*
- ✓ *It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I may learn Your statutes (Psalm 119:71).*
- ✓ *Oh, how I love Your Law! It is my meditation all the day (Psalm 119:97).*

- ✓ Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path (Psalm 119:105).
- ✓ Therefore all Your precepts concerning all things I consider to be right; I hate every false way (Psalm 119:128).
- ✓ Your word is very pure; therefore Your servant loves it (Psalm 119:140).
- ✓ My eyes are awake through the night watches, that I may meditate on Your word (Psalm 119:148).

These are only 12 examples of the 176 verses in the 119th Psalm. What do you suppose would happen if both the counselor and counselee applied God's word to their lives? This is why God's word *thoroughly furnishes us with everything we need to live life successfully in His sight.*

APPLICATION EXERCISE

1. Why do some secular counselors, and so-called Christian counselors, tend to reject or make light of the Bible as a sufficient counseling manual?
2. Why should we use the Bible as a counseling manual?
3. How does God being our Creator relate to His counseling manual?
4. What could be some possible "dangers" in using the Bible as a counseling manual?
5. How can Psalm 119 be used in a positive way to help counsel a person?
6. What is the major point you have gained from this lesson?
7. What additional observations do you have?
8. How do you intentionally plan to use this lesson
9. ?