Quotes of Note from *Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling*
By Robert W. Kellemen

*Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling* is the collaborative effort of forty leading biblical counselors united together in the Biblical Counseling Coalition. I had the privilege of serving as one of the managing editors of the book.

Each of the forty authors made a wonderfully unique contribution. The following *Quotes of Note* offer you a glimpse into this unique book.

If you'd like to learn more about *Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling* you can download a free PDF here that includes the Table of Contents, the Foreword by David Powlison, and Chapter One by John Piper and Jack Delk.

If you'd like to order your copy at 35% off, you can do so at either the Biblical Counseling Coalition Store or at the RPM Ministries Store.

**Introduction: In Christ Alone—Bob Kellemen and Steve Viars**

Biblical counseling does not offer a system or a program, but rather it shares a person—the Person—Jesus Christ.

As we unite to write this book, our purpose is to equip God’s people to change lives with Christ’s changeless truth.

We want to grow together in learning how to *promote personal change centered on the person of Christ through the personal ministry of the Word.*

*Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling* heralds a grace-based and gospel-centered foundation for all of life, all ministry, and all biblical counseling.

**Chapter One: The Glory of God: The Goal of Biblical Counseling—John Piper and Jack Delk**

Biblical counseling is God-centered, Bible-saturated, emotionally in-touch use of language to help people become God-besotted, Christ-exalting, joyfully self-forgetting lovers of people.

The desire to be happy is the same as the desire of being hungry. It is a God-given thing, written right on our hearts.
God put Himself as the all-satisfying center of all joy. The reason you are not happy, if you are not, is because you have not gotten to the center yet.

If biblical counseling is about the glory of God, and if God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him, then the role of the biblical counselor is to help increase satisfaction in Jesus Christ.

**Chapter Two: The Power of the Redeemer—Ernie Baker and Jonathan Holmes**

Jesus felt deeply the needs of others. So, if we are going to be Christ-like counselors, we too ought to be moved with the needs of people.

The gospel is not just a message to believe; it is a Person to follow.

Biblical counseling is broken people helping other broken people find healing through the power of the Gospel and in the power of the Spirit as they apply the living principles of Scripture to life.

God not only wants to bring us to Himself, He desires to make us into the image of His Son. What a difference from systems of therapy which seek to help people become an improved version of themselves.

**Chapter Three: The Ministry of the Holy Spirit—Justin Holcomb and Mike Wilkerson**

Rather than asking about the role of the Holy Spirit in counseling, we should be asking about the counselor's role in the Holy Spirit's counseling.

As much as we may need to remember to *get out of God’s way*, we must also remember to get *in* His way—meaning, we should prayerfully seek to understand the Spirit's “way” in any situation and go there, following His lead.

Counseling that lacks this dependence on the Holy Spirit ceases to be Christian.

Prayer is not just a technique of spirituality; it is conversation with our Redeemer, a person.

**Chapter 4: The Unity of the Trinity—Kevin Carson and Jeff Forrey**

The relationship exhibited by the Triune God becomes the standard for unity, intimacy, perfect fellowship, harmony, and oneness among Christians.

The believers’ love and friendship with one another should intentionally reflect the relationships within the Trinity.
When the process of counseling flows out of a Trinitarian model, the counselor and counselee share a rich, deep-rooted, tender, and united relationship with each other in Christ.

All forms of detached, professional, solution-oriented, aloof therapy fail to satisfy the depth, intimacy, and energy demanded by the unity of the Trinity and unity among believers.

The counselor/counselee relationship emanates from a shared relationship in Christ.

Chapter 5: The Grand Narrative of the Bible—John Henderson

If we intend to counsel from the Scripture well, we must resolve to see and apply it within the form God wrote it—as a narrative.

Remedying the “one-problem- one-verse-one solution” approach to ministry means we comprehend the Bible’s grand narrative and connect it with wisdom to our daily lives.

The redemptive movement of the Bible provides a context within which and from which we offer wise biblical counsel.

Scripture, like a pair of corrective lenses, helps us see rightly. The story of Scripture interprets and speaks into the story of your life.

Chapter 6: The Sufficiency of Scripture—Steve Viars and Rob Green

Wise counselors spend large amounts of time discussing the practical implications of the gospel indicatives.

We are so prone to move into all the DOs and DON'Ts of the Christian life that we miss the rich blessings that attend meditation on what God’s sufficient Word tells us about our new identity in our Savior.

The Scripture provides followers of Jesus with a rich tapestry of gospel indicatives, explanations of who we are in Christ.

Scripture challenges us to face the hard reality that we are active worshippers who continually reveal the identity of our functional god(s) by the ways we think, speak, and behave.

Chapter 7: The Spiritual Anatomy of the Soul—Bob Kellemen and Sam Williams

The end goal of biblical counseling is our inner life increasingly reflecting the inner life of Christ.

Our goal is not simply symptom relief, but Christlikeness. We are not solution-focused; we are soul-u- tion-focused.
Biblical counseling seeks to help the whole person to become a whole person in Christ.

Creation is a theater in which God has chosen to project His glory in manifold ways. God intended that one particular part of the created order—His image bearers—would play a central role in reflecting and representing Him.

Central to the essence and nature of humanity, of what it means to be human, is to be created by, like, and for this God.

If our counseling is truly Christ-centered, then our counseling must be Christ-like. This includes our character as a counselor and our compassion as we counsel. But it does not stop there. It must also involve understanding people the way Jesus understands people.

**Chapter 8: The Influences on the Human Heart—Jeff Forrey and Jim Newheiser**

Through faith in Christ, we’re freed from bondage—freed to live a new lifestyle of holiness reflecting our relationship with our Father in heaven.

Bodily weaknesses do not have to hold us back from spiritual growth and are often used by God to help us to grow spiritually.

Christians must never forget the resources they have in their relationship with the living God who will never fail or forsake them.

Those who lean upon other sinners too much will be like wilting bushes in the desert, but those who trust God will be like trees planted by a stream of water. They will flourish even during times of external trial.

**Chapter Nine: The Problem of Sin—Robert Jones and Brad Hambrick**

Counselors must understand the nature and origin of human problems to know what questions to ask and what answers to listen for.

For the biblical counselor, accurately understanding people and their problems begins with assessing them through the lens of God’s Word.

To decipher the full breadth of life’s struggles, we need something deeper than a Vacation Bible School view of sin.

Biblical counseling includes ministering the gospel’s full redemptive impact to the personal, social, physical, and cultural effects of sin.
Chapter 10: The Centrality of the Gospel—Robert Cheong

The meaning of life and the purpose for living are found in Christ and are lived out through our relationship with Him.

The Scriptures, from Genesis to Revelation, is God’s story of redemption where the passages and plot line point to the Redeemer, Jesus Christ (Luke 24:27).

Our approach in caring for others is directly related to our personal understanding and experience in living out the gospel.

The gospel that saved us by grace through Jesus’ finished work on the cross is the same gospel that is changing us by grace through His Spirit’s enduring work in us.

The never-changing gospel is all we have and all we need as we counsel one another, regardless of the struggle or struggler as we live under the redemptive rule of Jesus.

Chapter 11: The Gospel in Balance: Stuart Scott

It is surely our job as biblical counselors to integrate key gospel truths into all aspects of the help we offer.

We must continually spotlight all that Christ is and all our position in Him means.

As we press those who are changing from within to actively apply biblical principles for change, we will point them back to the great love of Christ, who we are in Him, and dependence on all His resources, each found in the gospel.

Chapter 12: The Pursuit of Holiness—Lee Lewis and Michael Snetzer

If we misunderstand the gospel as one of prosperity, we will surely think we are on the wrong road when suffering comes our way.

The grace of God not only saves us, it enables to live new lives. He is not only our future hope, but our present help.

In order to truly uproot the weeds in our life we must not just examine and turn from our immoral behavior, we must also look beneath the surface to the roots which are producing the weeds.

A healthy church provides an environment of redemptive relationships that provide the nutrients necessary to enrich spiritual growth.

The body of Christ is about doing life together, and by doing life together sin is revealed. And where sin is revealed there is an opportunity for relationships to be healed.
Chapter 13: The Weapons of Our Warfare—Bob Kellemen and Dwayne Bond

The role of biblical counselors is to nourish the discovery of a greater God awareness through spiritual eyes that look at life through scriptural lenses.

Sin is like a malicious virus that relentlessly seeks to erase our memory of our trusting relationship with our trustworthy God.

In the flesh we use every strategy at our disposal, every scheme we can imagine, to not need God’s grace. Whenever we mistrust God’s good heart, we always trust our own fallen hearts.

First Satan tempts us to sin, and then he taunts us for having sinned. Satan presents the pleasure and profit of sin, but hides the misery that follows.

Our role as biblical counselors is to remind broken people of the gospel script. We’re soldiers in a battle standing back-to-back as spiritual friends speaking God’s truth in love.

Chapter 14: The Hope of Eternity—Nicolas Ellen and Jeremy Lelek


Our hearts are wired for worship, and our worship is directly tied to our sense of hope.

When we pray, we are not only communicating with God, we are reminded that humanity is in perpetual relationship with eternity.

Prayer awakens our hearts to the vivid reality that the privilege of communion with God resides in the finished work of Jesus Christ.

Prayer holds the potential of thrusting upon our awareness the awesome reality that we are taking part in something far more expansive than the simple here and now.

Chapter 15: The Biblical Counseling Ministry of the Local Church—Rob Green and Steve Viars

We pray that you want your church not only to have a counseling ministry, but to be a counseling ministry—a place where the sufficiency of the Scripture and the doctrine of progressive sanctification permeate everything.

If you have been in ministry for very long, you know that there are some knots that can only be untied in a more personal time of sharing God’s Word one on one.

Biblical counseling is part of the way that maturity, teaching, and completeness occur within the body of Christ. Throughout Scripture this involved both a public and private
ministry of the Word: a ministry of proclamation and a face-to-face ministry around his Word.

Chapter 16: The Health of the Church and Biblical Counseling—Deepak Reju and Mark Dever

Counselors who go at it alone forsake one of God’s greatest means of change: a loving, unified, self-sacrificial church.

Word-centered churches produce Word-centered people who are eager to share the Word with those around them who are struggling.

In a healthy church, the members have an expectation that it is normal for believers to care for and counsel one another with the Word.

When a church has a culture of discipling, the whole personality of the church is one of making and caring for disciples. Discipling is in the DNA of the church.

Chapter 17: The Personal, Private, and Public Ministry of the Word—Kevin Carson

It is contradictory to say that we are biblical counselors and that the Spirit of God uses the Scriptures to change people, if we consistently get the Bible text wrong.

Self-counsel means the daily perpetual invitation to heart searching, heart repentance, and heart renewal through God’s Word.

Before we work on our theological system and before we move toward others in ministry, we must make a conscientious effort to walk in the power of the Spirit through the Word.

The private ministry of the Word must always rest solidly upon a passion to use the Word of God accurately and a passion to minister to God’s people with Christ’s love.

Recognizing the importance of the Bible to the change process, biblical counselors strive to minister the Word with excellence in personal, private, and public ministry.

Chapter 18: The Transformational Tie Between Small Group Ministry and Biblical Counseling—Brad Bigney and Ken Long

We’re convinced that the biggest reason for the high percentage of failed small group ministries and constant ‘makeovers’ is that churches have not intentionally developed their small groups to be a place of grace and growth for all of the walking wounded that are coming through our front doors.

Even struggling small group ministries can be revitalized by refocusing the purpose of the small groups on spiritual formation and by tying the small group ministry to the church’s biblical counseling ministry.
Don’t start a small group ministry without an equally vital biblical counseling ministry.

A transformational small group focuses on everyone giving and receiving hope and help from God’s Word to spiritually mature in Christ.

**Chapter 19: The Goal and Focus of Spiritual Formation—Robert Cheong and Heath Lambert**

The goal of the disciplines—of spiritual formation—is Christ, Himself.

Biblical counselors are not narrowly concerned about changing behavior. As important as these things are, biblical counselors are satisfied with nothing less than formation into the likeness of Christ.

Any counseling that does not pursue spiritual formation through an intimate relationship with Jesus by faith as one of its chief goals is not worthy to be called *biblical* counseling.

**Chapter 20: The Importance of Multiculturalism in Biblical Counseling—Rod Mays and Charles Ware**

As biblical counselors, we must adhere to a biblical theology that addresses a variety of cultural realities.

The biblical counselor must always remember that *the root problem is deeper than skin, it is sin*. The ultimate cure is not culture, but Christ.

While Christ is the universal cure for the human family, the Word of God warns us of possible cultural biases that may reside in the counselor. The biblical counselor needs to honestly and continually examine his/her motives and perceptions, otherwise cultural bias may hinder one’s counsel.

**Chapter 21: The Nature of the Biblical Counseling Relationship—Jeremy Pierre and Mark Shaw**

But for biblical counseling, friendship is central to the counseling relationship because it is a key aspect of the gospel.

Our vision of the counseling relationship begins to form around this task: to make disciples to the glory of God. And God uses the love of a Christian for his or her friend to accomplish this—a Word-dependent, Christ-trusting, God-glorifying love. Any other kind of love falls short of the calling of the biblical counseling relationship.

Biblical counselors have the responsibility of pointing counselees to Christ Himself, the object and source of hope. Like pointing to the coming dawn in the dark night, the counselor points counselees to consider the glory of Jesus that provides light for navigating what seems so dark.
Chapter 22: The Central Elements of the Biblical Counseling Process—Randy Patten and Mark Dutton

Our ability to minister God's Word to hurting people with confidence, competence, and compassion is significantly influenced by how well we understand counselees as individuals, their circumstances, goals, and motives.

Lasting change that pleases God in your counselee's life begins with understanding and purifying one's motives.

A detailed definition for biblical involvement is: "Accepting the counselees as persons important to God, and coming alongside in concern and love to see their problems in order to help them find biblical solutions and change for God's glory and the counselee's benefit."

Chapter 23: The Diagnosis and Treatment of Idols of the Heart—Howard Eyrich and Elyse Fitzpatrick

Idolatry happens when we invest something...anything...with the power to bring us peace and joy, to give us what we should seek only from God.

At its core, all idolatry is deception, delusion. It is belief in the lie that something other than God's perfect plan for our lives will satisfy us.

Only a stronger love can kill our idolatries.

At the end of the day what we need, and what will transform our hearts, is dwelling on the love of God: the free, everlasting, overflowing love He's demonstrated for us in Christ. It is in the light of this mindboggling love that we, by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, are enabled to annihilate the delusions of idolatry.

Chapter 24: The Power of Confession and Repentance—James MacDonald and Garrett Higbee

An experienced counselor knows that the power of pain, shameful secrets, and sins is chiefly in their insistence on remaining hidden and un-confessed. As we create a safe place to confess sin, the power of repentance becomes the starting place for hope and a deeper abiding in Christ.

Biblical counseling at its best disarms the counselee's fears that confession will only lead to greater feelings of guilt and more judgment from God as it also helps the counselee see that the Righteous Judge is also filled with loving-kindness and ready to forgive.

Repentance is the funnel through which all personal revival flows.

Repentance is the first step in the personal cleanup of the wreckage that sin brings.
Chapter 25: The Power of Forgiveness—James MacDonald and Garrett Higbee

There are no lasting relationships without forgiveness.

Forgiveness is the decision to release a person from the obligation that resulted when they injured you.

Unforgiveness is like drinking the poison of bitterness and expecting the other person to die.

Here is a truth to remember: the forgiven forgive.

Chapter 26: The Ministry of Soul Care for People Who Suffer—Bob Kellemen and Greg Cook

Biblical counselors understand that many issues people struggle with are not the result of their direct personal sin, but rather are the result of living in a fallen world.

Pastoral care is defective unless it can deal thoroughly with these evils we have suffered as well as with the sins we have committed.

We help people to understand that even when life is bad, God is good. We help suffering people to find God even when they can’t find relief.

Shared sorrow is endurable sorrow.

Our role as biblical counselors is to crop Christ back into the picture.

Eternal hope provides an eternal perspective.

Chapter 27: The Biblical Understanding and Treatment of Emotions

Emotionality is part of God’s good design for humanity.

Christians can become emotionally whole as they become emotionally holy.

Although emotions are just as affected by the Fall as other aspects of our lives, they are also equally transformed in a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Christians should be intentional about nurturing righteous emotions as part of their spiritual formation.

Chapter 28: The Complex Mind/Body Connection—Laura Hendrickson

The final two chapters of Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling address two aspects of human existence that have not always fared well in Christian thinking—emotions and the body.
Our emotions and our bodies are God’s idea. “We are fearfully and wonderfully made—including our emotionality and physicality.

It is important to realize that every emotion involves a complex interaction between body and soul.

Understanding people, diagnosing root sources of problems, and prescribing wise treatment options requires robust, relational, comprehensive, and compassionate care grounded in our shared redemptive relationship to Christ.

**Conclusion: Unity in Truth and Love—Bob Kellemen and Steve Viars**

*Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling* is about one-another ministry, mutual spiritual friendships, discipleship, mentoring, pastoral care, and daily Christian living—lived out together life-on-life in and through the body of Christ.

*Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling* is a local church book about how we shepherd one another toward growth in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ so that our lives progressively reflect Christ and increasingly glorify Christ.

Perhaps you’re a pastor and you’re finishing this book and thinking, “Now what?” First, we would say to you, “Don’t take a back seat to anyone! You are competent to counsel (Romans 15:14).”

Perhaps you’re someone experiencing intense suffering or struggling against a besetting sin and you’re finishing this book and thinking, “Now what?” First, we would say to you, “Don’t lose hope! Christ cares and He is in control. Turn to Him, not to a system, or a theory.” Second, “Find help. Turn to Christ and the body of Christ. Turn to His Word which is living and active, powerful and effective, sufficient and authoritative, relevant and profound.”

Our initial prayer is also our ongoing prayer: that *Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling* will equip you to equip others also so that we bring Him glory through our individual and corporate growth in Christlikeness.

**Join the Conversation**

Which Quote of Note impacts you the most? Why? How?

**RPM Ministries**: Equipping You to Change Lives with Christ’s Changeless Truth