

What Makes Someone a Faithful Biblical Counselor?

***Truth and Love Interactions About
Priest, Zombies, and Prophets***

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By

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and

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Introduction

In Hopes of a Constructive Conversation

On May 13, 2024, Heath Lambert and his team at First Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Florida began a series of controversial posts on the current state of the modern biblical counseling movement. As of this writing, they have produced the following podcasts with manuscripts:

1. May 13, 2024, by Heath Lambert: [*Priest in the Garden, Zombies in the Wilderness, and Prophets on the Wall: The Current State of the Contemporary Biblical Counseling Movement.*](#)
2. May 17, 2024, by Heath Lambert: [*A Commentary on Priests, Zombies, and Prophets.*](#)
3. May 19, 2024, by Heath Lambert: [*The Powlison Legacy.*](#)
4. May 20, 2024, by Heath Lambert: [*Six Crucial Confusions of the New Integrationists.*](#)
5. May 31, 2024, by Ryan Trzeciak: [*The Misguided Hope of Mental Health.*](#)
6. June 5, 2024, by Sean Perron: [*Mislabeling Counseling and the Great Commission.*](#)
7. June 10, 2024, by Sean Perron: [*Summer of Sufficiency.*](#)

After praying and after consulting many other leaders in the biblical counseling world, I decided to wade into the discussion—focused primarily on Heath Lambert’s first post. As of this writing, I have crafted the following blog posts related to the First Baptist series.

1. May 15, 2024: [*3 Biblical Principles to Apply in Response to Heath Lambert’s Confrontation.*](#)
2. May 17, 2024: [*Priests, Zombies, and Prophets, Oh My!: Engaging Publicly with Heath Lambert’s Public Writings—Heath and Bob \(1 Thessalonians 2:8\).*](#)
3. May 20, 2024: [*Heath, Jay, and Donn...And Mischaracterizing Fellow Biblical Counselors.*](#)
4. May 21, 2024: [*Engaging Publicly with Heath Lambert’s Public Writings: Hearing Heath.*](#)
5. May 25, 2024: [*David Powlison on Zealous Polemicists.*](#)
6. May 26, 2024: [*Count the Cost...When Wading into Biblical Counseling Controversies...*](#)
7. May 27, 2024: [*Is Bob to the “Left” of Dale and Heath in the Modern BC Movement? “No.”*](#)
8. June 6, 2024: [*Do We Need a “Reset” on the Term “Biblical Counseling”?*](#)
9. June 7, 2024: [*Soul Tsunami: The Relational Side of the Current Biblical Counseling Conflicts.*](#)
10. June 9, 2024: [*A Far as It Is Depends on You, Live at Peace with Everyone.*](#)
11. Addendum: [*55 Resources for Counseling the Whole Person: The Bible, the Body, the Embodied-Soul, Research, Science, and Neuroscience.*](#)

Since many people have asked me to collate all of my response posts, I’ve developed this document. I do not know what additional posts Heath and his team may create, or I may craft. In the spirit of Ephesians 4:29, I pray that my posts might add to the conversation in a constructive way.

“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.”

Post # 1: May 15, 2024

[3 Biblical Principles to Apply in Response to Heath Lambert's Confrontation](#)

Recently, Heath Lambert shared what he called a long-form essay entitled [Priest in the Garden, Zombies in the Wilderness, and Prophets on the Wall](#).

You can also easily find reactions on social media, ranging from praise/applause to grief/disagreement.

I'll have more to say about Heath's post at a later date.

What Are Biblical Principles for Responding to Confrontation That I Perceive to Be Unbiblical?

Today, I want to encourage us apply three biblical principles if we find ourselves in the following scenario:

What biblical principles would guide us if someone confronts us in a way that we believe is unbiblical, untrue, un-Christlike, ungracious, and unfair?

Some see Heath's confrontation as brilliantly biblical and boldly truthful. Others see it as lacking in both truth and love. The discussion/debate will not die down anytime soon.

In today's post, I am not making an assessment of what Heath said. Instead, I want us to examine God's all-sufficient Word as it *applies to those who perceive someone's confrontation as having been spoken without truth in love*. If you found yourself in a situation like this,

What does the Bible teach?

What biblical passage would you apply in biblical counseling?

**Biblical Principle #1:
Heart Humility for and from Everyone**

My good friend, Pastor Kevin Carson, [blogged yesterday](#) about one type of response. I might call it the inner heart response. Kevin challenged everyone to focus on humility. He used Dr. Bob Smith's teaching to encourage us to ask ourselves,

"Lord, is there anything You want me to learn, even from combative confrontation?"
(That's my wording, not Kevin's.)

Following this biblical principle, both the confronter and the confrontee should pray for Christlike humility. I applaud Kevin for highlighting this type of response, and for seeking to apply passages such as Romans 8:28-28; Ephesians 4:1-6; Philippians 2:1-10; and more.

Accurate, But Potentially Incomplete Counsel

I've shared with Kevin my affirmation of his counsel *as far as it goes*. I've also shared that I see additional biblical principles that need to be considered and applied. Kevin's foundation leaves open two essential biblical questions that I want us to explore.

*What is biblical confrontation (and thus, what is **un**biblical confrontation)?*

Interpersonally, how do we biblically respond to unbiblical confrontation?

I've also shared with Kevin that leaving out these two categories:

- Could leave the unbiblical confronter blind to their potential sin issues in their confrontation. *"Everyone humbly responded to my confrontation; it must have been spot on! I'll keep relating like this."*
- Could leave the person who was unbiblically confronted un-shepherded and unprotected. *"I guess I'll just 'suffer well,' allow people to speak to me in unbiblical ways, and never address their sin against me and against others."*

So, for the sake of comprehensive biblical wisdom, let's apply further principles of scriptural confrontation.

Biblical Principle #2: Identifying Biblical, Christlike Confrontation

Confrontation is rarely if ever "pleasant." So the "gauge" or "test" of confrontation is *not* whether I emotionally disliked the experience of being confronted. The test of confrontation is, of course—does the confrontation follow *biblical* principles?

Many of us teach many biblical passages about the process of confrontation. I have an entire section dedicated to loving confrontation in [*Gospel Conversations: How to Care Like Christ*](#). Here's a brief summary of some of the passages to ponder regarding Christlike, biblical confrontation.

Galatians 6:1: "Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted."

Here, Paul teaches us that the person doing the confronting must first humbly look at their own life (or, in this case, their own model of counseling) watching and assessing ourselves

and our model *before and while* we seek to humbly assess another person. And when we do approach that person, we do it *gently*.

Matthew 7:3: “Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?”

Similar to Paul in Galatians 6, here in Matthew, Jesus teaches us first to look at the huge log in our own eye *before and while* we detect the tiny speck in our brother or sister’s eye. Both Paul and Jesus highlight our propensity toward being blind toward our own faults—whether they be moral/spiritual sins or theological/counseling errors.

2 Timothy 2:22-26: “Flee the evil desires of youth and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. Don’t have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Opponents must be gently instructed, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.”

When I equip biblical counselors for biblical confrontation, we spend *a lot of time* exegeting and applying this passage. Again, I’ll be brief here, but you can learn more in *Gospel Conversations*.

First, it is an indication of immaturity (spiritual youthfulness) to focus our life and ministry on foolish and stupid arguments and on provoking quarreling (2:22). The spiritual adult, the spiritually mature Christian, pursues peace (see also the peace-focused marks of spiritual wisdom commanded in James 3:13-18).¹

Second, in confrontation, the Lord’s servant is not quarrelsome, but kind—to everyone.

Third, those who are perceived to be wrong, are to “be gently instructed.”

Fourth, we don’t play God in confrontation. We leave the results to Him—He will grant the person repentance. This avoids power plays and power struggles; it avoids manipulation and condemnation; it avoids shaming and defaming.

Biblical Principle #3: Confronting the Unbiblical Confronter and Warning the Divisive Person

Track with me thus far.

The heart principle that Kevin Carson rightly highlights is our inner life principle of humility before God and with one another.

Then we have the biblical confrontation principles—out of what character and mindset and in what manner do we confront?

Next, the Bible builds on this inner heart principle and on the confrontation principles by following up with the interpersonal relationship principle.

For example, based upon 2 Timothy 2:22-26:

We could biblically confront the person who confronted unbiblically—in fact, that would be our biblical responsibility.

God's all-sufficient Word takes this even further.

Titus 3:9-11: “But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless. Warn a divisive person once, and then warn them a second time. After that, have nothing to do with them. You may be sure that such people are warped and sinful; they are self-condemned.”

Notice a clarification. I am *not* making a judgment in this current situation that anyone has fallen into Titus 3:9-11 sin. I *am* outlining the Bible's sufficient teaching on how to respond if that were the case.

Notice the *context* in Titus 3. The mature minister of the Word, like Titus, like anyone who seeks to be a Christian leader, avoids foolish controversies, arguments, and quarrels—because these are unprofitable and useless.

Of course, as with all biblical application, *we must seek to biblically, wisely discern if any given confrontation is truly biblical, or if it has crossed the line into unbiblical divisiveness.* That is what this principle seeks to help us to consider and apply.

Notice the *consequence* in Titus 3. If a person refuses to avoid foolish arguments and quarrels, they are considered a divisive person. What does God's Word say to do with a divisive person? Warn/rebuke/confront them once.

And, if that person continues in a pattern of divisiveness, then what do we do? Warn/rebuke/confront them a second time.

And what do we do if they refuse to repent and change, and instead they continue to be divisive, quarrelsome, and argumentative? We separate from them—because, according to Paul, they are warped, sinful, and self-condemned.

Not all confrontation is biblical. The Bible commands us to respond differently depending on whether the confrontation is biblical or unbiblical. Rather than appeasing or enabling unbiblical confrontation, God's sufficient Word instructs us to biblically warn, rebuke, and confront someone who confronts unbiblically.

Additional Resources:
Biblical Resources for Engaging with Fellow Biblical Counselors

When we disagree with other biblical counselors, how could we handle those differences biblically? Here are resources to help us think through this vital issue.

- [*5 Biblical Counseling Principles for Addressing Disagreements Among Biblical Counselors*](#)
- [*6 Types of Biblical Self-Examination Questions to Ask Before Criticizing Fellow Biblical Counselors*](#)
- [*Are We Reasonable or Unreasonable in Our Interactions in the Biblical Counseling Movement*](#)
- [*3 Nouthetic Cautions About Nouthetic Critiques of Others; From John Bettler*](#)
- [*16 Self-Assessment Questions to Ask Ourselves as We Evaluate Other Counseling Models*](#)
- [*Humility and Charity in Biblical Counseling: A Guest Post by Nate Brooks on David Powlison and Eric Johnson*](#)

Putting It All Together and Pondering/Applying Scripture Together

1. In responding to confrontation, how would it be helpful to seek to apply all three of these biblical principles?
2. What might happen if we left out any one of these three biblical principles?
3. If we only highlight principle one about heart humility, could it lead to enabling a sinful confronter? Might it lead to a failure to shepherd and protect those who are sinfully confronted?
4. What does a model of loving, gentle confrontation look like when we build it upon passages such as Galatians 6:1; Matthew 7:1-5; 2 Timothy 2:22-26; and James 3:13-18?
5. How/when would the biblical principle of going to a brother who has sin against you come into play in this scenario? If the confrontation was public, can the response also be public? (This would be a fourth biblical principle to follow in this situation.)
6. How/when would the biblical principle about the value of a multitude of counselors fit here? When should we seek wisdom from others if we think we have been unbiblically confronted? (This would be a fifth biblical principle to follow in this scenario.)
7. If you were spoken of unbiblically, how would you apply biblical principles about lamenting mistreatment (see many of David's psalms), grieving being sinned against

(again, many of David's psalms, plus many of Job's response to his three miserable counselors), and groaning the fallenness of this world (Romans 8:17-27)? (This would be a sixth biblical principle to follow in this situation.)

8. What additional biblical principles would you highlight in the case of confrontation that might be unbiblical confrontation?

Post #2, May 17, 2024

**[Priests, Zombies, and Prophets, Oh My!:
Engaging Publicly with Heath Lambert's Public Writings](#)**

Heath and Bob (1 Thessalonians 2:8)

Introduction: Of Zombies and Social Media Dust Ups

A little over a week ago, I saw a Twitter/X tweet from Heath Lambert announcing that he would be sharing a “long-form” podcast/manuscript about the state of the biblical counseling movement. I assumed Heath would be talking about strengths, areas for growth, developments, and a vision for the future. Thinking that, I began assembling a team of biblical counseling leaders to share guest posts for my [RPM Ministries Truth & Love blog site](#) so that we would have *a spectrum of views* on the present state and future vision for biblical counseling.

Well...I in was in for a surprise!

We had just moved from Washington to Florida. Shirley and I were out shopping for furniture when a friend of mine sent me a text image of a zombie! I soon learned this was a reference to Heath's post, [Priests in the Garden, Zombies in the Wilderness, and Prophets on the Wall: The Current State of the Contemporary Biblical Counseling Movement](#).

This was *not* your father's genteel summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the modern biblical counseling movement. Unless your father was Jay Adams, who, like Heath, was quite skilled at stirring up “discussion” (some might say, “debate”).

I would have rather been in my new lanai soaking in the sun in our new Florida home. Instead, I received texts, emails, private messages, and calls from brothers and sisters in Christ who were “concerned” about Heath's podcast. They wanted to know what I thought.

Then, after I read Heath's manuscript, they wanted me to publicly share my perspective. I was (and am) *very* hesitant. I do *not* like public debates. I do *not* enjoy conflict. I just want to enjoy my wife as we enjoy our lanai together.

So I started slowly. Rather than share my thoughts on what Heath said, I shared some biblical principles on how anyone might respond if they thought they were facing unjust criticism. You can read it here: [3 Biblical Principles to Apply in Response to Heath Lambert's Confrontation](#).

“So Why Respond, Bob?”: *Safety* in a Multitude of Counselors

Heath's initial post was over 8,000 words. That's about 8 typical blog posts (about 4 or less of my long posts!). That's about two chapters in a book. Many biblical counselors love, love,

love what Heath wrote. Many other biblical counselors are in strong disagreement with what Heath wrote.

I thought I would let social media take the lead, tweet some, and leave it at that. Then I saw that Heath had produced a second post. In that post he indicated he was going to share a series of posts sharing his perspective on the (dire) state of the modern biblical counseling movement.

The Bible says there is *safety* in a multitude of counselors (Proverbs 11:14). Heath is sharing his perspective on the modern biblical counseling movement. I will add my perspective to this conversation by engaging with Heath's posts.

It's probably important for you to know that I've been speaking into the current state of the biblical counseling movement for quite some time. Specifically, over the past two-to-three years I have shared 55 resources related to current issues in biblical counseling. Here's a link to all of those resources: [55 Resources for Counseling the Whole Person: The Bible, the Body, the Embodied-Soul, Research, Science, and Neuroscience.](#)

“Are You Taking This *Personally*, Bob?": I Don't Think I Should

I don't think there's any reason for me to take this personally. Heath hasn't mentioned me (so far). Initially, he's focusing a lot on "clinically-informed biblical counseling." While I have many good friends who use the label "Clinically-Informed Biblical Counselor," I have never used that title for myself.

Those who know me well, will *not* be surprised that I use a much longer self-description. I am all about being comprehensive! You can read about my 16-word label for my counseling here: [6 Biblical Counseling Convictions.](#) If you want a short-cut, here's my self-description:

- *Gospel-Centered, Theologically-Saturated, Relationship-Focused, Church History-Informed, Research-Aware Soul Physicians of Embodied-Souls*

Heath and Bob: “So Why Not Do This *Privately*?”

Since I announced my intentions to engage Heath's public posts privately, some of my biblical counseling friends have asked me (and Heath) to consider having this conversation privately.

I have no problem having private conversations with Heath. In fact, my mind goes back about ten years ago. I can picture myself in my living room in my home in Indiana talking on the phone privately with Heath about a controversial issue he was engaged in with a fellow biblical counselor. Heath and I have talked privately before; we could do it again.

However, this is *not* a private offense. Heath has not personally offended me. As I mentioned, I don't view Heath as talking about me (maybe he is).

Heath initiated a public confrontation aimed at biblical counselors he sees as infected zombie priests. I am responding publicly to Heath's public writings.

One of my friends explained that people could see two Christian leaders model biblical relationships if we talked privately. Well, no. They would not see or hear or read anything if we talked privately.

However, depending on how I (and Heath if he chooses to engage with me) interact *publicly*, then people could see two Christian leaders modeling biblical interaction about difficult issues. I have a history of doing exactly that. My friend, Pastor David Murray, and I engaged in a public blog interaction years ago. Read the comments on the posts and you'll see that people did indeed benefit from the respectful, humble ways we sought to interact.

People fear it's going to get messy if I respond publicly to Heath. Friends, *it's already messy*.

People fear it's going to get divisive if I respond publicly to Heath. Friends, *it's already divisive*.

What's the alternative to publicly responding? Talk to Heath privately. But others have already done that. And Heath's response was [his follow-up post](#) where he "doubled-down" on his initial post by point-by-point defending as correct every issue that people privately or publicly raised with him.

So what's the alternative if no one publicly responds to Heath? As people say these days, "Crickets." Meaning, silence. Meaning, Heath has the floor, has *the say*, has *the only word* on the current state of the modern biblical counseling movement.

Now, I'm not naïve. I likely have 10% of the "following" that Heath has. And 1% of the team that Heath has. Heath's podcast is professionally done, manuscripted. He's in a suit and tie in an office with someone filming him. For me, right now it's 5:00 AM and I'm sitting on the bathroom floor typing. (We're staying at a friend's home while our new home is finished.) I don't have the "clout," or nearly the "reach," or the "following" that Heath has. Heath will receive 60,000 Twitter/X views. I'll receive 6,000...maybe. But that's okay.

My voice is not as loud as Heath's. But my voice counts, too.

And so does *yours*.

Modeling Scripture *and* Soul Biblical Counseling: Truth *and* Love Interactions

Rather than jump right into exploring what Heath said in his first post, I want to talk about Heath and Bob. Why? Because it is *biblical* to focus not only on truth but also always on love.

“We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God, but our own lives as well, because you had become so dear to us” (1 Thessalonians 2:8).

Biblical counseling is always *Scripture and soul*.

Interactions about biblical counseling must always be Scripture *and* soul, truth *and* love, theology *and* relationships.

I'll engage plenty with Heath's theological assessments. But first, let's lay a scriptural, biblical, relational context of brothers in Christ.

Heath and Bob: A Dozen Similarities

I've considered Heath a friend. I consider Heath a colleague in ministry. I consider Heath a fellow biblical counselor. I consider Heath a brother in Christ.

I was recently reflecting on a number of similarities.

1. Heath and I have both shared publicly about our difficult childhoods. You can read part of [my story here](#) (and see an adorable picture of “little Bobby”). You can listen to part of [Heath's story here](#).
2. Heath and I both have extensive higher education training in theology, pastoral ministry, Bible, and the languages. I have eight years of higher education in these areas, including a BS in Bible and Pastoral Studies, and a Th.M.
3. Heath and I both have been pastors. I have served for twenty years in pastor/elder roles.
4. Heath and I have both been seminary professors. I have served for twenty-five years as a seminary professor. (A story few people know—when Heath left his role at SBTS/Boyce, I was asked several times by the administration to consider taking that position. Each time I said “no thank you” because I did not believe God was leading me to leave the ministry I was in at that time.)
5. Heath and I both were Executive Directors of leading biblical counseling organizations. Heath led NANC/ACBC. David Powlison, Steve Viars, Randy Patten and other biblical counseling leaders asked me to be the founding Executive Director of the Biblical Counseling Coalition.
6. Heath and I have each written many biblical counseling books. You can read about the first [twenty-three of my twenty-five books here](#).

7. The same editor and VP of Acquisitions at Zondervan oversaw Heath and I writing books on the theology of biblical counseling—in the same year. You can learn more about my book, [Gospel-Centered Counseling: How Christ Changes Lives, here](#).
8. Heath and I served together as founding members of the Biblical Counseling Coalition.
9. Heath wrote chapters in several books that I oversaw/edited.
10. While Executive Director of NANC/ACBC, Heath had me speak numerous times at the NANC/ACBC National Conference.
11. My wife and I prayed for Heath diligently every morning for months. Heath was undergoing numerous serious brain surgeries. Shirley had suffered a life-threatening hemorrhagic stroke. We sensed a kinship in the shortness of life and in the seriousness of brain health issues.
12. Heath and I both live in Florida (I've been a Floridian for all of 7 days). (I wanted a dozen similarities, so I had to add this one!)

Heath and Bob: Half-a-Dozen Differences

Similarities, yes. But, of course, we are different people. Some of these differences are *my perceptions of Heath*. He may see these differences differently!

1. **Prophet/Priest:** I see Heath as a “prophet” who sees himself, at least in part, as called to speak out against errors he perceives. I see myself, at least in part, as a “priest,” called to empathize with the suffering and shepherd the hurting.
2. **Public Debates:** As I've said, I do **not** enjoy public debates. I don't know if Heath “enjoys” them, but he does seem to get into his fair share of public disagreements. [Heath and Eric Johnson](#). [Heath and Brad Hambrick](#). [Heath and Donn Arms](#) over Heath's views of Jay Adams in Heath's dissertation. Heath and half of the biblical counseling movement ([with his “Zombies” post](#)). For me, I tread into these public discussions *very reluctantly, very hesitantly*.
3. **Powlison or Adams:** While Heath and I are both “men of conviction,” my perception is that we tend to hold those convictions a bit differently. I tend to see myself personality-wise more like David Powlison who loved nuance and loved seeing both sides—affirmations and denials. I am very much a both/and thinker. I perceive Heath to be more like Jay Adams—cut-and-dry, black-and-white, cut-to-the-chase, be the prophetic voice of confrontation, say with conviction: “this is clearly right and that is clearly wrong!” God makes us each fearfully and wonderfully unique. So neither “style” is “better.”
4. **Age:** We are different ages. I am old enough to be Heath's father. I have adult children around Heath's age. Again, neither age is better, of course. But we grew up in different

eras. I've seen life from the perspective of a man Heath's age; and now I see life from the perspective of a man in a much later stage of life. Different. Not better.

- 5. Perception of Others/Style of Relating to Others:** We see others differently. At least that's my perception. I'll get into this more when I start engaging the first couple of paragraphs of Heath's first podcast. There seems to be an "us-versus-them" mindset in how Heath looks at others. There seems to be a "my group-versus-your-group" mentality. I could be wrong. It's just my perception. I see myself more as seeking to build bridges. My "whole thing" as the Biblical Counseling Coalition Executive Director was bring people together, creating synergy, harmony, seeking peace/unity. On the Truth/Love Continuum, maybe we differ a bit on what we emphasize, or how we seek to journey on that continuum. Some people perhaps might see me as "too empathetic," or even as "too wishy-washy." Some people perhaps might perceive Heath as "too harsh," or "too in-your-face."
- 6. Addressing Concerns with _____-Informed Biblical Counseling:** Heath and I have each publicly written about people using the phrase "_____-informed biblical counseling." If you read Heath's posts and my posts, you will likely detect differences in our approach to addressing those concerns (note, we have both shared some concerns). Here's one of mine to consider: [*Ponderings About Being a "_____-Informed Biblical Counselor."*](#) I shared this post almost two years ago. It was first a Twitter thread (back when Twitter was Twitter and not X, and back when you had to keep to a limited number of characters in each tweet). Here are four of my tweets. **Tweet 6:** Here's where we might want to be a tad self-critical as "_____-informed" #BibleCn Is our focus foremost on the Word's wisdom or the world's research? If we don't have a rich biblical-theological foundation then it's easy for the world's information to trump the Word's wisdom. **6/ Tweet 7:** Is there a place for #BibleCn to engage with the world's research? Yes. I've "taken heat" for affirming that. I've written much about it: [*55 Resources for Counseling the Whole Person: God Designed Us as "Embodied Souls"*](#) **7/ Tweet 16:** I suspect, or at least hope, that concerned #BibleCn folks might be a tad less nervous about "_____-informed BC" if they heard biblical counselors often repeating that first and foremost we want to be "biblically-theologically-informed biblical counselors." **16/ Tweet 17:** And I suspect they might be a tad less nervous about "_____-informed BC" if they saw us as #BibleCn consistently demonstrating how we use the sufficient Scriptures to carefully assess and evaluate research. **17/**

What Are My Hopes?

Like I said, I wanted to introduce *you* to Heath and me—at least through my eyes, before we jumped into my thoughts on Heath's podcasts.

What are my hopes in engaging with Heath in future posts?

- 1. Iron-Sharpening-Iron (Proverbs 27:17):** I hope that I can learn from Heath, and that Heath can learn from me.

I hope that Heath and I hear each other's voices well.

2. **Being Fair and Balanced:** I am praying that I am fair and balanced in my engagement with Heath. I do not anticipate that I am going to agree with Heath's overall assessment of other biblical counselors. But I do want to listen well to Heath, not mischaracterize what he says, and represent accurately his positions—even if/when I disagree with them.

I pray that I hear and represent Heath's voice accurately.

3. **Sharing a Different Perspective:** Heath is sharing his perspective on the current state of the modern biblical counseling movement. Heath and I seem to perceive the biblical counseling world quite differently. I want more than one voice speaking into this important issue of *what makes biblical counseling truly biblical*. I do **not** view the modern biblical counseling world the same way Heath views it. We **both** seek to see with new eyes (to use David Powlison's language). But my eyesight and Heath's eyesight are different when it comes to how we see other biblical counselors.

I want people to hear another biblical counseling voice.

4. **Shepherding Faithful Biblical Counseling Shepherds:** There are some hurting biblical counseling shepherds out there. No, they aren't so "touchy-feely" that they can't take confrontation. Instead, they are faithful biblical counselors who believe they have been "targeted" and "mischaracterized" by Heath's first podcast, and by being labeled zombie-infected priests. On the other hand, many other biblical counselors are literally rejoicing that Heath, in their minds, has had the guts to say what they have wanted to say—to call out the syncretists, the "new integrationists! As I see it, those so-called syncretists are actually faithful biblical counselors.

I want to give voice to faithful biblical counselors who are being called zombie-infected priests.

Join the Conversation

If you're a follower of my blog, then you know that for two decades now I have ended most of my posts with "Join the Conversation." This is where I specifically invite *you* into interaction about my blog post.

Here's my suggestion/request related to this series of posts.

If you choose to join the conversation, rather than being "team Heath" or "team Bob," perhaps when you post on my site or on social media, seek to be "fair and balanced."

Post #3, May 20, 2024

[Heath, Jay, and Donn...And Mischaracterizing Fellow Biblical Counselors](#)

No, the title of today's post is neither the name of a new music group, nor the start of a joke about "three men walk into a ..."

Heath is Heath Lambert. Jay is Jay Adams. Donn is Donn Arms.

Bob and Donn

I'm sure all my readers know who Heath and Jay are. I'm not as sure that all of you know [who Donn is](#). For decades, Donn Arms served as Jay's right-hand man—no pun intended on "hand" and "arms."

I've had several private interactions with Donn over the past twenty years. Though our personalities are quite different, and though the way we communicate our biblical counseling convictions can differ, I have *always* appreciated that I knew exactly where Donn stood. I have appreciated that Donn really listened to me and did not seek to mischaracterize my views. I have always appreciated that while Donn can pushback, he is willing to receive pushback also. Donn is open to give-and-take. He doesn't accuse others of making it personal or being mean just because they disagree with him. I've always felt that Donn has been respectful in his interactions with me, and I hope I have always been respectful in my interactions with Donn. I like Donn. I hope and think he likes me. I know he has faithfully prayed for Shirley and me since Shirley's stroke three years ago. Thank you, Donn.

Now, I don't say all of this to imply that Donn and I are "Team Donn and Bob Biblical Counselors." I've already acknowledged that we have our differences on the exact nature of biblical counseling. I'm not saying all of this to "align" Donn with me, nor to "dis-align" Donn with anyone else. I'm just giving my sense of our history.

A Parenthesis

[After penning Part 1](#) in my engagement with Heath Lambert, I spent small slivers of several days working on Part 2. *This is not Part 2*. I'm still working on Part 2 (it's difficult to do such important and careful research and writing work in the midst of a 3,100-mile move from Seattle to Port Charlotte). I still hope to post Part 2.

However, ever since I read [Heath's first post on zombie-infected priests](#) I've had a specific nagging concern about a couple of paragraphs scattered throughout Heath's post.

Don't Demean and Mischaracterize the First Two Generations of Faithful Biblical Counselors

Here are several examples of similar wording from Heath. In each, he warns, confronts, or challenges those he sees as zombie-infected unfaithful biblical counselors to stop demeaning and mischaracterizing the first two generations of those he sees as faithful biblical counselors. First, Heath narrates an us-versus-them, faithful-versus-unfaithful, one-side-versus-another side, "team Heath-versus-the wrong team" story of the current biblical counseling world.

"The voices in this transition are not neutral. One side is urging us to use this time of transition to rediscover our past and be faithful to the principles that have defined our movement since its founding. Another side would have us move away from our past convictions and embrace beliefs very different from the ones espoused by the bright lights of our movement."

Then Heath specifically nouthetically confronts those he deems unfaithful biblical counselors.

"You do not have to spend your energy demeaning and mischaracterizing those of us who have devoted our lives to sharing the truth of Scripture with people in pain."

"You don't have to keep denying biblical truth embraced for years by your brothers and sisters in Christ. No one is forcing you to stay locked in doctrinal and ministry confusion. You don't have to disrupt life in the garden. You can change."

"But that change will require a humble embrace of the truth. You will have to admit where you've been wrong. You'll have to retract public statements you've made. You will have to stop publicly opposing faithful ministers of the Word."

Those are strong words, and I have some strong counter-narratives about those words. However, that's not my point today.

As I read and re-read Heath's words about not demeaning and mischaracterizing faithful biblical counselors from previous generations, *I kept hearing the voice of Donn Arms*. I had this nagging thought that I remembered reading an article by Donn where Donn charged Heath with having mischaracterized Jay Adams and "the first generation of biblical counselors."

Recently I had time to do a Google search of "Jay Adams, Heath Lambert, and Donn Arms" and another search of "Lambert's Dissertation/Book and Donn Arms." Sure enough, this article by Donn Arms from 2012 showed up.

[Book Review by Donn R Arms Published on January 30, 2012, of *The Biblical Counseling Movement After Adams* by Heath Lambert.](#)

Has Heath Done to Jay Adams What Heath Says Others Are Doing to Heath and Faithful Biblical Counselors Today?

I imagine folks on “Team Lambert” reading this header and being upset. “No one would ever accuse Heath of demeaning or mischaracterizing the leader of the first generation of biblical counseling! No one! No way! Never!”

Well...I'd encourage you to [read Donn Arms' book review](#) of Heath Lambert's dissertation/book. Don't have that much time? Here are some snippets—from Donn Arms.

“Most biblical counselors would dismiss the term *schizophrenia* as an unhelpful and confusing label. Heath Lambert has demonstrated, however, that the term has validity as a literary genre. *The Biblical Counseling Movement After Adams* is a *number of contradictory things*. It is a respectful recounting of the contributions of Jay Adams *and a collection of harsh and unkind epithets about the man and his followers*. It is both a carefully researched Ph. D. thesis *and grievous academic malpractice*. It identifies important issues within the biblical counseling movement *and embraces as authoritative, shoddily constructed straw men*. Lambert praises concepts he himself finds questionable, *and confuses movement with maturity, differences with development, and provocation with progress*. Upon a careful reading of this book, biblical counselors who are familiar with the issues reported here will be made both thankful *and appalled*.”

And:

“He [Lambert] seeks to identify specific areas where, *in his view, Adams' work was deficient—even erroneous—and marshals support* for his conclusions by quoting as authoritative those who do not share his deep respect for Adams—many of whom have *misrepresented Adams, and questioned his integrity, character, and scholarship*.”

And:

“As a credible scholarly work *The Biblical Counseling Movement After Adams* was *doomed from the beginning*.”

And:

“...while Lambert is willing to *critique, criticize, and at times condemn Adams and his 'first generation' writings*, there is only praise and commendation for Powlison and his 'second generation' colleagues. *In most of the book, Adams serves as a foil, a warden from whom the 'second generation' has been able to free the movement*. Lambert quotes some outrageous things these 'second generation' men have written about Adams and his followers as though they are authoritative and gives them a pass.”

And:

“While Lambert believes these differences are the result of growth and maturity in the movement, a careful examination of Lambert’s evidence *often reveals a departure from what is biblical and helpful* and is a *retreat back to the mindset of the pre-nouthetic Rogerian practices of our forefathers* which Adams inveighed against over 40 years ago.”

And:

“Here Lambert identifies two areas where he believed *Adams was deficient* and lauds the ‘second generation’ for *correcting them*. First is the issue of *suffering*.”

After quoting what Lambert’s book said about Jay Adams, Arms writes:

“Adams, of course, believed no such thing.”

“Over and over again these straw men about Jay Adams and his followers are served up and Lambert cites them as authoritative. He questions none of it. Instead, their observations are cited as ‘progress’ within the biblical counseling movement rather than condemned as the slander that they are.”

Arms continues:

“The second issue Lambert cites is that of *motivation* and he begins the discussion with the claim that “Adams’ view of the dynamics of sin *is unusual*.” *In fact, he claims “it is a theological innovation”* (page 67).

“This ‘second generation’ view of motivation is hardly progress. It is a view of the heart that Adams has been criticizing and opposing for the last 20 years. *This is not building on Adams’ work, it is a rejection of it.*”

Next, under the header of “How Biblical Counselors Do Counseling,” Arms writes:

“Here Lambert seeks to make the case that ‘second generation’ counselors have advanced in their *methodology by rejecting Adams’ tendency ‘to obscure the importance of building loving relationships with counselees’* (page 88). *Here again Lambert quotes as authoritative those who paint Adams as a harsh, uncaring, authoritarian counselor.*

“Lambert concludes the chapter *by comparing Adams to Job’s counselors ‘. . . who had a monolithic view of Job as a sinner. They ministered to Job in a static and ultimately unhelpful way. Their counsel failed because they did not identify with Job as a sufferer or seek to minister to him accordingly.’*”

“Lambert has demonstrated here that there is a stark difference between Adams and the CCEF orb. The difference isn’t one of development or maturity as Lambert postulates. *The ‘second generation’ approach is a retreat, a throwback to pre-nouthetic times when relationship trumped truth and commiseration with a counselee was called ‘counseling.’*”

Next, under the header of “How Biblical Counselors Talk About Counseling,” Arms says of Lambert:

“In this chapter Lambert seeks to make the case that *Adams drew the wrong conclusions from his failed attempts to interact with secular counselors and integrationists.*”

“For Lambert ‘the *biblical counseling movement has a responsibility to engage an atheistic society and the surrounding culture*’ though he does not explain why. For Adams, the believer has a responsibility to *evangelize*, not engage—proclaim, *not dialog*. The theologian has nothing to learn from a Mormon. An astronomer has nothing to gain from the astrologer. *Biblical counselors can hope to find no help from the secular psychologist. Those who seek to influence their integrationist friends find they become influenced instead.*”

As Arms moves to the conclusion of his charges against Lambert, Arms writes:

“Lambert has, probably unwittingly, demonstrated the *distain* many in the CCEF orb have for their founder. In one place or another in his book Lambert quotes them referring to Adams and his nouthetic model as “*stoic,*” “*bombastic,*” “*indifferent to suffering,*” “*insensitive,*” “*harsh,*” “*ignores clear themes of Scripture,*” “*approaches counselees with a condemning, self-righteous spirit,*” “*cheap and platitudinous,*” “*unbalanced,*” “*legalistic,*” “*moralistic,*” “*behavioristic,*” “*immature,*” “*sees counselees in a monolithic way as sinners,*” has a “*stand above you as one who has arrived*” character, and is “*less than biblical.*”

“Twenty years ago one could read and hear countless secular and eclectic counselors *scorch Adams for his views and the caricatured portraits they painted of him.* One does not hear so much of it from that camp today. Today, they *have been replaced by Adams’ ‘friends.’*”

“Hear then, Lambert’s conclusion to the whole matter. Comparing Adams and his ‘first generation’ counselors to the CCEF ‘second generation’ Lambert concludes that *‘The movement is more thoughtful; it is more caring; it is learning to speak more wisely and loving to outsiders—the movement is more biblical’ (page 159).* Does any of this really sound wise, or caring, or more loving? Indeed, is this *more biblical* than Jay Adams?”

And Donn’s final words:

“My advice to the reader? Buy this book and see for yourself. Just be careful not to read it too close to an open flame. *Straw men are easily combustible.*”

And Now...

I’ve done several Google searches to see if Heath ever provided a response to Donn. If he did, I have not found it. I also searched to see if Donn ever retracted or redacted his critique of Heath’s book. If he did, I have not found it.

Now, I imagine that Donn would agree with at least some of Heath’s article on zombie-infected priests. So I am not quoting Donn in any way to indicate that he and Heath see the current scene differently. I also know that Donn does not see eye-to-eye with me in everything I’ve ever written about Jay. So I am not quoting Donn in any way to imply alignment.

Heath, Jay, and Zombie-Infected Priests

I’m about 100% positive that Heath does *not* think he did to Jay Adams what Heath says zombie-infected priests are doing to faithful biblical counselors—*demean and mischaracterize*. So I would sincerely ask Heath:

In light of Donn Arms article, how is your treatment of Jay Adams different from what you accuse zombie-infected priests of doing to faithful biblical counselors?

Was your dissertation/book in any way communicating, “move away from our past convictions and embrace beliefs very different from the ones espoused by the bright lights of our movement” (the bright light of Jay Adams and the “first generation of biblical counselors”)?

Was your dissertation/book in need of the same confrontation you gave? “You do not have to spend your energy demeaning and mischaracterizing those of us who have devoted our lives to sharing the truth of Scripture with people in pain.”

Did your dissertation/book “disrupt life in the garden” as it had existed between what you labeled “the first generation of biblical counselors” and “the second generation”? Was the response by Donn any indication that you had created a disruption?

Heath, today you said [in your latest missive](#), “When counseling practitioners debate other counseling approaches, it is easy to get entrenched in your own perspective and mischaracterize the positions of others with whom you disagree.” Based upon the feedback from your brother, Donn Arms, is it possible that you have mischaracterized the positions of others with whom you disagree in the past with Jay Adams, and in the present with fellow biblical counselors?

If Donn Arms was right, would your confrontation of others perhaps fit yourself?
“But that change will require a humble embrace of the truth. *You will have to admit where you’ve been wrong. You’ll have to retract public statements you’ve made. You will have to stop publicly opposing faithful ministers of the Word.*”

**This Is Relevant to the Current Conversation
(If It Is to Be a Conversation and Not Just a Monologue)**

This is important. Heath sprinkled throughout his zombie post statements which were “conversation stoppers.” In essence Heath was saying, “I can write against you folks because I am biblical and I am speaking truth in love. However, since you are unbiblical if you respond negatively to me, you are proving your unfaithfulness by publicly opposing faithful ministers of the Word like me and those who align with me.”

Well, which is it?

Can we have intramural discussions in our biblical counseling world where someone like Heath can strongly take to task Jay Adams?

Or, is it divisive and demeaning if anyone publicly espouses views different from Heath—even if they develop those views biblically?

I honestly want to know. Is it okay if someone responds to Heath, or does that automatically indicate opposing faithful ministers of the Word? Is this truly a mutual conversation among mature brothers and sisters in Christ?

Post #4, May 21, 2024

[Engaging Publicly with Heath Lambert's Public Writings:](#)
[Hearing Heath](#)

What *Did* Heath Actually Say?

I said in [Part 1](#) that I wanted to *hear Heath's voice accurately*.

Before we can wisely engage and accurately understand anyone, first we have to listen well.

"To answer before listening—that is folly and shame" (Proverbs 18:13).

In my attempt to listen biblically, I've been reading and re-reading Heath's [post on priests, zombies, and prophets](#). I've been collating direct quotes in context and looking for themes and patterns that will help me to hear Heath well.

Heath's first podcast manuscript ran 8,000 words long. That's a lot to take in, to digest. It's almost impossible to interact with in bite-size tweets. Perhaps that's one reason there's been a lot of talk back and forth on social media that stays in generalities.

"I love what Heath said!" "Heath spoke truth!"

"Heath was wrong in what he said!" "Heath mischaracterized faithful biblical counselors!"

So in today's post, *in Heath's own words*, I want to summarize three areas that Heath addressed:

1. Who Are Heath's Priests, Zombies, and Prophets?
2. Who Is Heath Talking About?
3. What Is Heath Saying About These People?

After collating Heath in his own words, I'll start sharing some of my thoughts. People have been "clamoring" for this. "Bob, tell us what you think about what Heath has said."

Then I'll wrap up today's post with some interactive questions that will hopefully expand the conversation—so Heath and I can hear each other's voices.

Who Are Heath's Priests, Zombies, and Prophets?

Heath used an analogy from [the zombie world](#) to illustrate his concerns. In his own words, here's what Heath meant by priests, zombies, and prophets.

- **Priests = Biblical Counselors:** “This glorious garden is where biblical counseling happens, and the *priests are the ones who do it.*”
- **Faithful Priests = Biblical Counselors Studying/Applying God’s Word:** “The priests in this magnificent garden are all the faithful people who study the words of our God and apply them to the lives of hurting people.”
- **Zombie-Infected Priests = Unfaithful, Compromised Biblical Counselors:** “*Compromised* individuals have infiltrated our garden and are *masquerading as faithful*. They *present* themselves as biblical counseling priests *studied in our movement* and *learned in theology*. They are *neither.*”
- **Zombies = Secular Counselors:** “Zombies are secular people offering secular support for secular problems.”
- **Prophets = Guardians of the Galaxy of Biblical Counseling:** “The prophets on the wall stand facing the zombie *throng* and defend the garden from attack. Their *weapons* of issuing warnings, of calling out specific errors, and of correcting erring priests are powerful and *loud.*”

Who Is Heath Talking About? Who Are the Zombie-Infected Unfaithful Biblical Counselors?

Though Heath did not “name names,” Heath did identify *the category of people* that he opines are zombie-infected unfaithful compromised biblical counselors.

Let’s hear Heath.

“I am telling you that our garden has been *invaded*, and we are in danger. *The invaders look like priests but have been compromised by the zombie bite of secularism*. Some of these counter-converted priests are *current and former leaders of biblical counseling organizations*, some are *professors of biblical counseling in our seminaries*. They identify as biblical counselors on social media, get interviewed as authorities on podcasts, and speak at conferences. They are writing books, articles, and social media posts that you are reading, recommending, and giving to your friends.”

Heath’s zombie-infected unfaithful biblical counselors include:

- Current leaders of biblical counseling organizations.
- Former leaders of biblical counseling organizations.
- Professors of biblical counseling in our seminaries. ([In another follow-up post](#), Heath specifically takes aim at and targets the biblical counseling faculty of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.)

Let’s hear Heath.

“The infected priest subtly *undermines Scripture* by saying things like, “Of course, I am a *biblical counselor, but I am clinically informed.*” The only priests who ever say such things are ones with *deadly infection coursing through their ministry veins.*”

“I am a biblical counselor, but I am *trauma-informed*.” Such talk *never comes from faithful priests who believe the Bible speaks powerfully, relevantly, and authoritatively* about human pain and provides God’s unique perspective on how to address the horrors of life in a fallen world. Such talk comes from people who like the Bible *but believe that we must add the fallen wisdom of lost people to Scripture* in order to offer *real* care. This language is...zombie talk.”

Heath’s zombie-infected unfaithful biblical counselors include:

- Those who describe themselves as “clinically-informed biblical counselors.”
- Those who describe themselves as “trauma-informed biblical counselors.”

As the saying goes, “*This is not rocket science!*”

Do a Google search for “clinically-informed biblical counselors.” Do a Google search for “trauma-informed biblical counselors.”

You’ll find ACBC-certified counselors, graduates of Southern Baptist seminaries and of other ACBC-approved seminaries, professors at Southern Baptist seminaries and other ACBC-approved seminaries, Council Board members of the Biblical Counseling Coalition, leaders associated with ABC, CCEF, etc.

***Note:** As I mentioned in Part 1, I am not taking Heath’s labels personally, nor am I defensive about these labels. [I do not use](#) “clinically-informed” or “trauma-informed” to describe my biblical counseling. But I have many friends who do—friends who are faithful, non-zombie, uninfected biblical counselors.

Let’s hear Heath.

“A defining characteristic of infected priests is their *confused misapplication* of the true doctrine of common grace.”

Heath expends a good deal of time, energy, and word count discussing common grace. I may interact with this discussion further in future posts. For now, we can note that Heath’s zombie-infected unfaithful biblical counselors include:

- Those who biblically define and apply common grace differently than Heath does.

Again, do a Google search on “biblical counseling and common grace.” You will find faithful biblical counselors discussing common grace theologically, biblically, and historically (church history) and coming to different applications than Heath.

Let’s hear Heath.

Heath shares other defining characteristics that identify the category of people that in his opinion are zombie-infected unfaithful biblical counselors:

“Watch for the use of uncontroversial and reasonable-sounding words like *nuance* and *balance*. These *benign* words mask a *malignant* agenda.”

“One great example that is popular out there has to do with counseling and the *human body*. Counter-converted priests roll this out all the time. *As the whites of their eyes turn yellow with infection, they shriek*, “The body is *crucial* in counseling, so we need to learn all the stuff they know out there in the wilderness about therapy and the body.”

Heath’s zombie-infected unfaithful biblical counselors include:

- Those who use words like “nuance” and “balance.”
- Those who discuss the role of the body in biblical counseling and come to different theological conclusions and biblical applications than Heath. ([I have biblically addressed “embodied-souls” for forty years.](#))

In summary, in Heath’s words, zombie-infected unfaithful compromised biblical counselors are:

1. Current leaders of biblical counseling organizations.
2. Former leaders of biblical counseling organizations.
3. Professors of biblical counseling in our seminaries (including [SEBTS](#))
4. Those who describe themselves as “clinically-informed biblical counselors.”
5. Those who describe themselves as “trauma-informed biblical counselors.”
6. Those who define and apply common grace differently than Heath does.
7. Those who use words like “nuance” and “balance.”
8. Those who discuss the role of the body in biblical counseling and come to different theological conclusions and applications than Heath.

What Is Heath Saying About These People?

Remember who “these people” are. They are seminary professors in ACBC-approved schools, seminary graduates from ACBC-approved training centers/schools, current leaders of biblical counseling organizations, past leaders of biblical counseling organizations, members/certified counselors associated with ACBC, CCEF, ABC, Biblical Counseling Coalition Council Board Members. Here is how Heath describes them, *in his own words*.

1. “**Erring** priests...”
2. “Bitten and **infected by the zombies...**”
3. “A **threat** to the faithful priests.”

4. "**Compromised** individuals have **infiltrated** our garden and are **masquerading as faithful...**"
5. "**Infected priests** who want to draw them in close enough to **spread their deadly infection.**"
6. "...a **malignant agenda...**"
7. "As the whites of their eyes **turn yellow with infection**, they **shriek...**"
8. "When infected priests want to **woo** you out of the garden, they **add deceit...**"
9. "Bitten by zombies and are on the way to **becoming one themselves.**"
10. "Infected priests..."
11. "An infected priest..."
12. [to them] "the gospel of grace and the words of Scripture seem **old, quaint, trite, and boring.**"
13. "They **present** themselves as biblical counseling priests studied in our movement and learned in theology. They are neither [**not studied in biblical counseling nor learned in theology**]."
14. "...now carries the **deadly virus of secularity** in a package of **apparent faithfulness.**"
15. "The **zombie-infection of secular psychology** begins to **take over the life** of a **once-faithful** biblical counseling priest."
16. **Note:** Heath describes "the wilderness" as "the lost world apart from God/Christ" and as the place where "secular people offer secular support for secular problems." Heath then says about infected biblical counselors: "**constant longing to return** to the wilderness [lost world] & take others with them."
17. "**Constant talk** of the **need** to learn more about what is going on in the wilderness."
18. "Counter-converted priests **love the wilderness** [former or fake biblical counselors love the wilderness of godless secularism]."
19. "Wilderness facts **captivate** their ministry imagination" [these fake biblical counselors are captivated by secular ideas].
20. "**Constant** longing for the wilderness" [for life without Christ].
21. "Bitten by the zombie bug of the **secular** and therapeutic, they **long for** the wilderness" [infected biblical counselors long for secular theory without God/Christ].
22. "...**longing for the wilderness and pining discussions** for how great it is out there."
23. "Don't you see that the intelligent ones they praise always **love more of the wilderness.**"
24. "...deviation from Scripture..."
25. "...**rancid zombie breath** that exhales frustration disguised as pious sophistication..."
26. "The infected priest subtly **undermines Scripture.**"
27. "'Of course, I am a biblical counselor, but I am clinically informed.' The only priests who ever say such things are **ones with deadly infection coursing through their ministry veins.**"
28. "...feigned sophistication..."
29. "The ability of faithful priests truly to help a struggling person without wilderness knowledge is **obviously** called into question" [by zombie-infected priests].
30. "Zombie infection **clouds the mind of infected priests** and leads them to **confuse friend and foe.**"

31. "They [zombie-infected unfaithful biblical counselors] rob the credibility of healthy priests by slandering their position and hoping you will believe it. When you hear those false allegations, you are witnessing **an attempted zombie invasion.**"
32. "Priests **infected with the zombie disease of therapeutic secularism.**"
33. "Infected priests **must destroy** prophets because they are a clear and present danger to zombies" [unfaithful biblical counselors "must destroy" faithful biblical counselors].
34. "The **invaders** look like priests but have been **compromised by the zombie bite of secularism.**"
35. [Who are these zombie-bitten secular invaders?]: "Some of these **counter-converted priests** are **current and former leaders of biblical counseling organizations**, some are **professors of biblical counseling in our seminaries**. They identify as biblical counselors on social media, get interviewed as authorities on podcasts, and speak at conferences. They are writing books, articles, and social media posts that you are reading, recommending, and giving to your friends."
36. "Bitten by zombies and are **on the way to becoming one themselves**" [Note: Heath insists that he does **not** call biblical counselors "zombies" only zombie-infected. I'm not a connoisseur of zombie literature, but I believe once infected, don't you become a zombie—the living dead? And, as Heath specifically says in this quote, once bitten, they are on the way to becoming zombies themselves. That seems pretty equivalent to saying they are zombies...maybe "zombies-in-the-making"?]
37. "...the **spiking fevers of zombie infection.**"
38. "The **New Integrationists are here, and they want you to believe they are the biblical ones.**"
39. "...the **zombies are in charge...**"
40. "...the **zombie infection of secularism...**"
41. "I am a **biblical counselor, but I am trauma-informed.**" Such talk **never comes from faithful priests who believe the Bible** speaks powerfully, relevantly, and authoritatively about human pain and provides God's unique perspective on how to address the horrors of life in a fallen world. Such talk comes from people who like the Bible but believe that **we must add the fallen wisdom of lost people to Scripture** in order to offer *real* care. **It is zombie talk.**"
42. "Today the voices calling us to integrate deceptively **call themselves** biblical counselors. The **opposition** has concealed themselves in our midst. [Note: Like much of this podcast, it is fertilized by warfare language of opposition, attacking zombie hoards, gallant bravehearts at the gates guarding the garden.]
43. "As the **zombie disease of secularism takes over the lives of infected priests**, they **seek to create conflict among the healthy members of the garden.**"
44. "The sophisticated-sounding summons for balance on the matter of sufficiency is **an ignorant appeal from Zombieland.**
45. "Counter-converted priests claim the existence of common grace **requires** Christians to **incorporate secular realities into counseling.**"
46. "But **infected priests** claim God's common grace adds **necessary** insight to a Bible in need of no additional insight."
47. "If you insist that common grace supplies **crucial** information for counseling that God left out of his Word, then **you must deny that the Scriptures are sufficient** for counseling ministry" [Note: Notice Heath's choice of words in the last few quotes:

- “requires,” “necessary,” “crucial,” and search to see if any current and former biblical counseling organizational leaders, and biblical counseling seminary professors are actually using the words “requires,” “necessary,” “crucial.” More on this in a moment.]
48. “If you are **an infected priest**, I pray you would neither persist in your untrue understanding of common grace nor make matters worse by **denying the sufficiency of Scripture.**”
 49. “A defining characteristic of **infected priests** is their **confused misapplication** of the true doctrine of common grace.”
 50. “I am talking about **bad counselors.**”
 51. “Today, the future of the biblical counseling movement depends on you recognizing **the zombies.**”
 52. “**...they pose a serious threat.**”
 53. “**...all the infected priests disturbing the tranquility of the biblical counseling garden.**”
 54. “You don’t have to **keep denying biblical truth embraced for years** by your brothers and sisters in Christ.”
 55. “No one is forcing you to stay **locked in doctrinal and ministry confusion.**”
 56. “You will have to stop publicly **opposing faithful ministers** of the Word.”
 57. “We need you here as a help and **not a hindrance.**”
 58. “You don’t have to spend your energy **demeaning and mischaracterizing** those of us who have devoted our lives to sharing the truth of Scripture with people in pain.”

“What Do You Think, Bob, About What You’ve Heard?”

I’ve had people say to me, in response to my posts about Heath, “You’re too nice, Bob.” I’ve had other people say, “Bob, you imply stuff about Heath; just come out and say it!”

Here’s where I begin saying what I think about what I’ve read from Heath in his [zombie post](#).

Worn Out

First, I am worn out. Mentally fatigued.

I wanted to hear Heath. I did. I’ve heard fifty-eight Heath Lambert long-form quotes about zombie-infected unfaithful compromised biblical counselors—who are current and former leaders of biblical counseling organizations, professors at Southern Baptist seminaries, etc. These fifty-eight accusations are over 1,000 words—a full blog post worth of accusations. I did a Word “find” search. Heath uses “zombie” seventy-three times. Heath uses “infected” thirty-one times.”

Reading that was exhausting, to be honest. But I’m not asking you to feel sorry for me. You wanted to know how I responded to Heath’s first post. I’m sharing that. And here’s more...

A Word About Words

Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks (Luke 6:45).

Words matter.

God's Word says that our words reveal our hearts.

The words we volitionally choose to use about those who disagree with us matter. Using words that accurately characterize rather than mischaracterize people matters to God (Ephesians 4:15; Ephesians 4:29).

Words Matter About Common Grace

Heath repeatedly says that zombie-infected compromised biblical counselors say that common grace findings are "necessary," "critical," "crucial," "essential," "need/needed." Choosing those words matters. So far, Heath has not quoted anyone using those words. Maybe he has examples of that language. I would like to read them.

The faithful biblical counselors I read who talk about common grace are using phrases like those used in the Biblical Counseling Coalition's [Confessional Statement](#) and [used by David Powlison](#) about common grace such as "helpful," "brings many good things to human life," "can contribute to our knowledge of people," etc. ([Read Calvin's quotes on common grace here.](#))

Words Matter About the "Wilderness"

In talking about fellow biblical counselors, Heath describes them as enamored with the wilderness of learning from the lost world of people apart from God and Christ where secular people offer secular support for secular problems. Heath colorfully portrays these unfaithful ones as *constantly longing* for the wilderness, *constantly talking* about the wilderness, *loving* the wilderness, being *captivated* with the wilderness, *longing* for the wilderness, *constantly longing to return to* the wilderness, the *constant need* to learn about the wilderness, *pinning discussions* about the wilderness, emphasizing *how great* the wilderness is, *always praising those who love* the wilderness.

Again, I would like to see the quotes that depict these chosen, inflaming modifiers. I hear and read fellow biblical counselors expending their time and energy in Scripture *and then* wisely reading other literature as a catalyst.

Think about Jay Adams who read copiously the writings of secular atheist behavioral psychologist [O. Hobart Mowrer](#). Adams also spent six weeks in a 24/7 training environment with Mowrer. Would we say that Adams was *captivated* by Mowrer, *constantly longing to return to* Mowrer, etc.? I don't think so.

Time spent in reading extra-biblical literature and then using the new eyes of Scripture to assess them (as Powlison often described it) does not equal *longing for and loving* the wilderness.

Words Matter About Counseling and the Human Body

Lambert waxes poetic and paints with dark shadows when he exclaims:

“One great example that is popular out there has to do with counseling and the *human body*. Counter-converted priests roll this out all the time. *As the whites of their eyes turn yellow with infection, they shriek*, “The body is *crucial* in counseling, so *we need to learn all the stuff* they know out there in the wilderness about therapy and the body.”

Note again Heath’s volitionally, purposefully selected word choices of modifiers like “crucial” and “need.” And it is impossible not to notice Heath’s fanciful wording about “the whites of their eyes turning yellow with infection, they shriek”!

Lions, and tigers, and bears! Oh my! Zombies, and infected priests, and prophets! Oh my!

Allow me to place myself into this narrative. I’ve spent parts of four decades exploring biblically, theologically, and historically (church history) the doctrine of humanity— theological anthropology. I did my Th.M. thesis on Old Testament Hebrew anthropological words for our inner nature. I’ve spoken at NANC/ACBC conventions on embodied-souls. I’ve written books endorsed by NANC/ACBC Fellows that biblically examine what it means to be soul physicians of embodied souls. I’ve collated [55 Resources on Counseling the Whole Person: The Bible, the Body, the Embodied-Soul, Research, Science, and Neuroscience](#).

“Oh, my! Fifty-five! That’s a lot! You must *love* the wilderness!”

No.

I love studying Scripture and what it says about embodied-souls, the Creation/Cultural Mandate, Common Grace, research, science, neuroscience, the noetic effect of sin, general revelation, special revelation, the sufficiency of Scripture. Before our preparation for our move from Washington to Florida, I had collated over 400 pages of single-spaced notes on a cover-to-cover biblical study of what God’s Word says about being soul physicians of embodied-souls. And so far I’ve only gotten from Genesis to the Wisdom Literature. I anticipate having well over 1,000 pages of notes before I finish.

Why bring myself into the narrative? I want to illustrate that we must allow people to define their terms biblically, rather than shrieking about “buzz words” and mischaracterizing what people actually believe, teach, write, and practice.

[See here for more on “buzz words”](#) and biblical definitions.

Personally, I'd be happy to engage in iron-sharpening-iron interactions about any of my fifty-five resources. I'll do that with Heath. We can learn from each other.

It Is Legitimately Biblical to Discuss What Makes Biblical Counseling Truly Biblical

In 2010, Randy Patten, Steve Viars, and David Powlison asked me to consider being the founding Executive Director of the Biblical Counseling Coalition. When I said I thought I was the wrong choice—because of how some might perceive me, David Powlison spoke up—not just to me, but in the presence of the initial Board of Directors of the Biblical Counseling Coalition.

“Bob, I believe you are the exact right choice. You're our litmus test. If people can't see you as a biblical counselor, then they wouldn't be a fit in the Biblical Counseling Coalition.”

David and I then facilitated three dozen biblical counseling leaders in the development of the [Biblical Counseling Coalition Confessional Statement](#). I thoroughly enjoyed that ten-month privileges of working shoulder-to-shoulder with David.

In an organization designed to unite biblical counselors, why did we need a confessional statement? We saw it as a way to express a unified, agreed upon, comprehensive, collaboratively-developed summary of the essence of the modern biblical counseling movement—as three dozen biblical counseling leaders conceived it. We **did** want a guide and guardrail—the Biblical Counseling Coalition Confessional Statement.

Over the years, I was tasked by David Powlison and the rest of the BCC Board of Directors with overseeing the detailed interviewing of prospective BCC Council Board members. Our assessment especially hinged on whether those prospective members would affirm (initially and annually) their agreement with the BCC Confessional Statement as representative of their understanding of what the Bible says about biblical counseling.

So, I agree with Heath about our need to have guardrails and guides.

I happen to think that guidelines developed collaboratively by dozens of biblical counseling leaders from a multitude of churches, seminaries, para-church groups, and from around the world is a much better guide than anything that any one individual speaking on their own could produce.

I also think that we need to be careful not to confuse “the modern biblical counseling movement” with “historic Christian soul care” and the two-thousand-year history of biblical counseling. See, [When Did Historical Biblical Counseling Begin](#).

Ideally, our confessional statements about biblical counseling examine the Scriptures collaboratively—with others alive today *and* with that great cloud of Christian witnesses who have gone before us (Hebrews 11-12).

The Big Reveal

Heath's initial post was his attempt to lay out his concern that some who were claiming to be biblical counselors were instead zombie-infected compromised and unfaithful biblical counselors. Initially it could have been hard for anyone to assess Heath's words because of his choice not to name names.

If there is a hoard of invading zombie-infected compromised unfaithful biblically counselors in our midst, then let's guard the walls! "Frankenstein's monster is on the loose! Protect the children! Guard the village! Light the lanterns! Get out the pitchforks!" (These monster analogies can get creepy...)

Of course, the question is,

Who are these monsters, these zombie-infected priests?

Well, it took me long enough to read and re-read Heath and collate Heath's words, that [we now have the big reveal—at least Reveal #1](#).

The monster zombies at the gate are the biblical counseling faculty members at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (SEBTS). Heath named names: Nate Brooks, Brad Hambrick, Kristin Kellen, and Sam Williams.

Brad Hambrick was (and is) one of the founding Council Board members of the Biblical Counseling Coalition—selected and affirmed by David Powlison and the rest of the BCC BOD.

Sam Williams was one of the founding Council Board members of the Biblical Counseling Coalition—selected and affirmed by David Powlison and the rest of the BCC BOD. Of the thirty-six biblical counseling leaders who collaboratively crafted the BCC Confessional Statement, the three most actively involved were David Powlison, myself, and Sam Williams.

Kristin Kellen co-authored a major biblical counseling text with two life-long leaders of the modern biblical counseling movement—Pastor Rob Green of Faith Biblical Counseling Ministries, and Dr. Robert Jones of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Nate Brooks is a Ph.D. graduate of the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary studying under ACBC Executive Director, Dale Johnson, was a TA for Jeremy Pierre at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary for six years, and was a biblical counseling professor ministering with Jim Newheiser at Reformed Theological Seminary in Charlotte, North Carolina. Nate's theological education neatly parallels that of Heath Lambert.

These four are among the zombie-infected hoards infiltrating the pristine garden of the modern biblical counseling movement. "Brad, Sam, Kristin, and Nate! Oh, my!" (Now, some

will chide me for language like that. Well, Heath used some creative metaphors about zombie infestations. I'm using some creative imagery in response. Oh, my!)

Hitching to Heath?

Heath named names. We can also name names of those who affirmed and applauded Heath's post(s). It's as easy as going to social media. Some, of the many, who praised, supported, and/or defended Heath's post(s) are folks like Mark Williams who works for Donn Arms at The Institute for Nouthetic Studies. And Julie Ganschow who oversees Reigning Grace Counseling Center. And Dale Johnson, Executive Director of the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors. And, many, many, many more.

I respect and like Mark, Julie, and Dale. I'm *not* saying, "Mark, Julie, and Dale! Oh, my!" I do want to engage with these folks as representatives of those who are affirming Heath's post(s).

1. As you re-read the fifty-eight quotes I collated from Heath's first post, and as you see now that they apply, at least in part, to Brad, Sam, Kristin, and Nate, do you still affirm all that Heath said about them being zombie-infected compromised unfaithful biblical counselors? Do you believe that Heath has accurately characterized them?
2. As you answer that first question, how do you factor in how Heath characterized Jay Adams and the first generation of biblical counselors? (Consider reading Donn Arms' assessment of Heath's assessment of Jay: [Heath, Jay, and Donn: Mischaracterizing Fellow Biblical Counselors.](#)) Did Heath get it right then when he nicely positioned himself as to the "left" of Jay and first-gen biblical counselors? Or, as Donn Arms charges, did Heath consistently mischaracterized Jay Adams and even consistently quote slanderous things about Jay Adams? If Heath got it wrong then, is he getting it right or wrong now in his characterizations today?
3. As you answer that first question, how do you factor in how Heath characterized Eric Johnson? (Consider Heath's public repentance over how he mischaracterized and spoke sinfully about Eric: [Clarifying and Confessing: A Letter from Heath Lambert.](#)) I affirm Heath in his public humility and repentance over his treatment of Eric. With Eric, Heath neatly positioned himself to the "right" of Eric. In Heath's mind, he is to the "left" of Jay and to the "right" of Eric. If Heath needed to publicly confess mischaracterizing Eric, and if Donn Arms is right that Heath mischaracterized Jay, then given Heath's history, do you affirm that all that Heath said in his recent post(s) about invading infected zombie hordes of compromised unfaithful biblical counselors is true? Or, is it possible that there is a pattern of Heath not accurately representing those with whom he deems to his "left" and to his "right" *as he positions himself in the goldilocks zone of biblical counseling rightness?*

Hearing Each Other: A Dozen Questions I'd Like to Ask Heath

In [my first post](#), I stated that one of my goals was to hear Heath.

Another stated goal was that Heath and I might hear each other well.

With that in mind, based on my reading and re-reading of Heath's first podcast manuscript, I would ask Heath the following questions:

1. Have I quoted you accurately and fairly in today's post?
2. In this post, have I stated accurately how you define priests, zombies, prophets, and zombie-infected priests?
3. In another post, I examined [biblical models of confrontation](#). In your post, you used Jesus calling others "wolves" as part of your model. In your public words, have you used passages like Galatians 6:1; Matthew 7:1-5; and 2 Timothy 2:22-26, as models for how you publicly confronted other biblical counselors? For instance, have you looked at possible faults in your own biblical counseling to the same degree that you are looking at faults in other people's models? Have you looked at any possible specks in your eyes-in your model, or is the focus looking at logs in other people's models? Do you believe that your post aligns with 2 Timothy 2:22-26 and "not producing quarrels, "the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but must be kind to everyone," "gently instructing" others?
4. People have suggested that you and I speak privately. Are you open to that?
5. Your quotes explain that a focus on the body can become a way for zombie-infection to sneak into the biblical counseling movement. [I've written at least 55 resources](#) on a biblical theology of embodied-souls. Would you be interested in interacting together about any of those resources and mutually biblically assessing them?
6. Your post clearly provides descriptions and categories that indicate who you are speaking about. (Your latest post now names names at SEBTS.) Have you spoken to any of these people to see if your characterizations of them are accurate? Have you offered any of them an opportunity to "rebut" what they believe are mischaracterizations? If not, would you prayerfully consider doing that?
7. Your quotes indicate that zombie-infected biblical counselors say that common grace findings are "necessary," "critical," "crucial," "essential," "need/needed," "requires" to do biblical counseling. The faithful biblical counselors I read who talk about common grace use phrases like those used in the Biblical Counseling Coalition's [Confessional Statement](#) and [used by David Powlison](#) about common grace such as "helpful," "brings many good things to human life," "can contribute to our knowledge of people," etc. Is it possible that you are putting words into the mouths of these biblical counselors? Or, do

you have quotes that demonstrate that biblical counselors are saying common grace findings are “necessary” (etc.)?

8. Your quotes note that only zombie-infected biblical counselors would ever use terms like “trauma-informed biblical counseling” and “clinically-informed biblical counseling.” Is this a blanket statement and final judgment, or do you allow such counselors to define their terms biblically, theologically, and historically (church history)? ([See here for more on “buzz words”](#) and biblical definitions.)
9. On September 11, 2017, [you publicly repented of the way you spoke of Eric Johnson](#). In your mind, how is your post on [priests, zombies, and prophets](#) different from how you spoke of Eric? Considering the fifty-eight quotes above, how is your speaking about fellow biblical counselors different from your words about Eric Johnson? You called others to repentance in your first post; is there any desire or need to search your heart to see whether that call might also apply to you?
10. Since you insisted that zombie-infected compromised unfaithful biblical counselors stop “demeaning and mischaracterizing” you or others like you, as you prayerfully re-read these fifty-eight quotes of yours, do you think you may have done any “demeaning and mischaracterizing” of biblical counselors who disagree with you? Or do you stand by your conviction that what you said was all truth in love? [Donn Arms nouthetically confronted you for mischaracterizing and demeaning Jay Adams and first generation biblical counselors](#). Is it at all possible that you have done that again here?
11. In your posts, you exhort the zombie-infected biblical counselors to stop being divisive. As you re-read the fifty-eight quotes, do you see your posts only as speaking the truth in love? Or, do you see any chance, any possibility, that your post could be divisive—not because of others responding poorly, but because of what you wrote—the words you volitionally chose to use?
12. What question(s) would you want to ask me?

What’s Next?

Honestly, I don’t know what’s next. I’ve written a lot already—in this post and in others, [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).

[Heath’s latest post](#) focused specifically on the biblical counseling faculty at SEBTS. If anyone were to speak into that, I think it should be SEBTS biblical counseling professors. (I also think it would be helpful if biblical counseling professors from other Southern Baptist seminaries explained whether they agree or disagree with Heath.)

In Heath’s zombie post, he focused a lot of energy on trauma-informed and clinically-informed biblical counselors. Since I don’t use that language to describe my biblical counseling approach, I think it would be best if those biblical counselors who use those terms responded to Heath.

Given that I have chosen to publicly engage with Heath, I would not be surprised if Heath chooses to publicly engage with me. If that occurs, then I'll prayerfully consider what is best to do (Philippians 1:9-11).

And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.

Post #5: May 25, 2024

David Powlison on Zealous Polemicists

Any of us—myself included, can become “zealous polemicists.” David’s words, which I was recently reminded of by a Twitter/X friend, Dane Hays, ought to be convicting to all of us—myself included.

David Powlison in *Cure of Souls* on Zealous “Polemicists”

“Often polemicists excuse their loveless rough edges by the demands of truth. But they lose more than they realize. In fact, when love and the growth of positive truth are lost, truth is also lost.

Biblical truth loses its scope, balance, depth, applicability, savor, and growing edge when the second priority seizes center stage. The positive theological task that is the need of our age gets obscured. Caricatures of truth and discernment replace the realities.

Words that are not constructive, timely, and grace giving are rotten and nonnutritive, whatever their formal likeness to Christian content (Eph. 4:29). To lose charity, tenderheartedness, sympathy, and generosity is always to simultaneously pervert the redemptive nature of biblical revelation.

Narrowed “truth” *may bristle enough to defend one city wall*, but it is not good enough to conquer the world.

Only when our first priority is first do we Christians have a robust, radiant, and sensible alternative in our hearts and in our mouths, something good to offer those we critique, those we counsel, and ourselves.”

Post #6: May 26, 2024

[Count the Cost...When Wading into Biblical Counseling Controversies...](#)

A Recent History Lesson

In the past two weeks, I've crafted four blog posts related to discussions within the biblical counseling community:

1. [3 Biblical Principles to Apply in Response to Heath Lambert's Confrontation](#)
2. [Priests, Zombies, and Prophets, Oh My!: Engaging Publicly with Heath Lambert's Public Writings](#)
3. [Heath, Jay, and Donn...And Mischaracterizing Fellow Biblical Counselors](#)
4. [Engaging Publicly with Heath Lambert's Public Writings: Part 2: Hearing Heath](#)

These posts have been my attempts to respectfully and reasonably engage with Heath Lambert's first post in his series of posts about what Heath sees as compromise from within the modern biblical counseling movement.

1. (First Post): [Priests in the Garden, Zombies in the Wilderness, and Prophets on the Wall: The Current State of the Contemporary Biblical Counseling Movement](#)
2. (Follow-Up Post): [A Commentary on Priests, Zombies, and Prophets](#)
3. (Follow-Up Post): [Six Crucial Confusions of the New Integrationists](#)

A Multitude of Counselors

Before I decided to craft these posts, I privately sought the wisdom of numerous biblical counseling leaders. In the multitude of counselors, I received a multitude of counsel. I can divide that counsel into three categories.

1. **Yes, Please:** "Yes, Bob, please address these issues. Another voice speaking into these issues will be helpful. With your long history with the modern biblical counseling movement, your voice will be important to hear."
2. **No, Please:** "You likely won't be heard. Let's just all humbly seek peace and not respond to Heath."
3. **Please Be Careful; Please Count the Cost:** "Bob, history says, that if you publicly speak into these public issues, *it could get ugly for you*. When other people have sought to do this in similar settings in the past, they have been *cancelled*—some fired, some removed from leadership in BC organizations. Rather than engaging with what you have actually written, your words will be twisted. You will be called divisive. Your character will be attacked. You've been known as a bridge-builder and peace-maker, but none of that will

matter now. They will imply that you are a trouble-maker and an outsider. You can anticipate a coordinated attack against you.”

After much prayer and consultation, I decided to dip my toe into the conversation. Then I waded in. Then I jumped in head first. [I’ve shared why I decided to speak into this.](#)

Seeing with Glued Eyes

David Powlison often wrote about “seeing with new eyes.” He meant seeing life through the lens of Scripture.

My header is a play on words from David—seeing with *glued* eyes. If we’re honest, we all tend to have pretty firm opinions that are not easily changed—our eyes can be glued shut to other perspectives.

When someone writes from *our* perspective, we perceive them with *positive* eyes—eyes wide shut or glued shut to negative perceptions of their writings and motives. When someone writes from *another* perspective, we perceive them with *negative* eyes—eyes wide shut or glued shut to any positive perception of their writings and motives.

People who are “pro-Heath,” or “aligned with Heath,” are seemingly 100% positive about what he has written. People who are “pro-Bob,” or “aligned with Bob,” are seemingly 100% positive about what I have written in response to Heath. People who are “pro-Heath” have been pretty “not-so-positive” about what I have been writing in response to Heath.

Bob Kellemen: “Humble, Gentle, Reasonable, Respectful, Biblical”?

Read the comments on my blog posts and on social media from people who “align with me” and you’ll see a lot of positives about what I have written, about my tenor and tone. People graciously are saying that as I’ve engaged with Heath, I have been:

- “Humble”
- “Gracious”
- “Respectful”
- “Reasonable”
- “Gentle”
- “Winsome”
- “Biblical”
- “Courageous”
- “Careful”
- “Fair”
- “Comprehensive”
- “Balanced”
- “Christlike”

**Bob Kellemen:
“Divisive, So-Called Biblical Counselor, Passive-Aggressive”?**

On the other hand, those who are “Heath-aligned” so far have either been pretty quiet, or they have been, shall we say, “less-than-positive” about my responses.

- Three have said that my blog posts and social media posts in response to Heath have been “divisive.”
- I’ve been labeled by one person as a “so-called biblical counselor.”
- One person privately said that I was being “passive-aggressive” by being subtle about what I really think about Heath’s writings. On the other hand, another person said I was being “aggressive and overt” in my responses to Heath.
- At least one person has questioned my motives.
- At least one person publicly nouthetically confronted me and told me, “Stop it!” (I couldn’t help but think of [the classic Bob Newhart spoof of psychologists, *Stop It!*](#))
- Several people “in the know” have told me to expect an upcoming post, perhaps collaboratively written, taking me to task for my response to Heath, calling me divisive, and questioning my motives.

What Does a Biblical Response to Conflicting Feedback Look Like?

Who is one to believe? Who is one to receive? How am I to process such varied and diverse perceptions?

While I’m thankful for people who affirm my writings and my character, I also try to heed [Dr. Bob’s Smith counsel](#) to use any critique as an opportunity for progressive sanctification. I seek to prayerfully reflect on feedback and ask the Spirit to speak to my spirit through His Word.

I also think it is wise to “consider the source.” I don’t mean that pejoratively. I mean that realistically. People who are “aligned with me” will likely be quite positive about what I write and who I am. People who are “aligned with Heath” will likely not be quite so positive about my writings and character.

**Bob Kellemen:
Biblical Counseling Insider or Outsider?**

I think it may be helpful, especially for those who are neither “Bob-aligned” nor “Heath-aligned,” to know a bit about where I am coming from with all of this.

- What’s my history with the modern biblical counseling movement?
- Am I an outsider or an insider to the modern biblical counseling movement?
- Have I been considered a “member in good standing of the modern biblical counseling movement?”

- Have I been considered a rabble-rouser and trouble-maker or a bridge-builder and peace-maker?
 - Who is this Kellemen guy?
1. I was introduced to the modern nouthetic biblical counseling movement before many current biblical counseling leaders were born. Fifty years ago, Pastor Bill Goode taught me and other youth at Grace Baptist Church in Gary, Indiana about this new stuff—“nouthetic counseling.”
 2. At the invitation and encouragement of David Powlison, Randy Patten, Steve Viars, and others, I served for six years as the founding Executive Director of the Biblical Counseling Coalition.
 3. In 2010, when we were discussing whether I would take on the role as BCC ED, David Powlison spoke up—not just to me, but in the presence of the initial Board of Directors of the Biblical Counseling Coalition. David shared, “Bob, I believe you are the exact right choice. You’re our litmus test. If people can’t see you as a biblical counselor, then they wouldn’t be a fit in the Biblical Counseling Coalition.”
 4. David Powlison and I facilitated three dozen biblical counseling leaders in the development of the [Biblical Counseling Coalition Confessional Statement](#). I thoroughly enjoyed that ten-month privileges of working shoulder-to-shoulder with David.
 5. At the invitation of Randy Patten, I spoke numerous times at the annual NANC Conference.
 6. At the invitation of Heath Lambert, I spoke numerous times at the annual NANC/ACBC Conference.
 7. For the past twenty years, I’ve spoken locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally not only at NANC/ACBC conferences and seminars, but also at CCEF events, Faith Biblical Counseling events, ABC events, IBCD events, CBCC (Canadian Biblical Counseling Coalition) events, BCC events, been the keynote speaker at Julie Ganschow’s Reigning Grace conference, spoken at biblical counseling events in Germany, Brazil, Romania, and Canada.
 8. I was the General Editor overseeing three collaboratively-written books by dozens of biblical counseling leaders, including dozens of NANC/ACBC leaders, NANC/ACBC Certified Members, NANC/ACBC Fellows, NANC/ACBC Board of Directors, and NANC/ACBC Academy Members.
 9. [My books](#) have been endorsed (or Forewords written for) at least **72 times** by NANC/ACBC Academy Members, NANC/ACBC Fellows, NANC/ACBC Board of Directors, and NANC/ACBC Certified Members, such as:

- Ernie Baker (6 times)
- Steve Viars (6 times)
- Jim Newheiser (5 times)
- Julie Ganschow (4 times)
- Brad Bigney (4 times)
- John Street (3 times)
- Randy Patten (3 times)
- Howard Eyrich (3 times)
- Paul Tautges (3 times)
- Jeremy Pierre (3 times)
- Paul Tripp (2 times)
- Ben Marshall (2 times)
- Andrew Rogers (2 times)
- Wayne Vanderwier (2 times)
- Alexandre Sascha Mendes (2 times)
- Amy Baker (2 times)
- Nicolas Ellen (2 times)
- Pat Quinn (2 times)
- David Powlison (1 time)
- Wayne Mack (1 time)
- Bob Somerville (1 time)
- Ron Allchin (1 time)
- Charles Hodges (1 time)
- Kevin Carson (1 time)
- Kevin Hurt (1 time)
- Mark Shaw (1 time)
- Shannon McCoy (1 time)
- Tom Zempel (1 time)
- Jeff Ballard (1 time)
- Brent Aucoin (1 time)
- Lilly Park (1 time)
- Cutis Solomon (1 time)
- Michael Leister (1 time)
- Ken Long (1 time)

10. [My books](#) have been endorsed (or Forewords written for) at least **49 times** by other biblical counseling leaders, such as:

- Ed Welch (5 times)
- Robert Cheong (5 times)
- Elyse Fitzpatrick (5 times)
- Garrett Higbee (5 times)
- Jonathan Holmes (5 times)
- Mike Emlet (3 times)

- Deepak Reju (3 times)
- Betty-Anne Van Rees (3 times)
- Jeremy Lelek (3 times)
- Charles Ware (2 times)
- Sam Williams (2 times)
- Jeff Forrey (2 times)
- John Henderson (1 time)
- Lee Lewis (1 time)
- Jason Kovacs (1 time)
- Eliza Huie (1 time)
- David Dunham (1 time)
- Brad Hambrick (1 time)

11. [My books](#) have been endorsed (or Forewords written for) at least **19 times** by evangelical Christian leaders, such as:

- Steve DeWitt (4 times)
- Al Mohler (2 times)
- Daniel Akin (2 times)
- J. D. Greear (2 times)
- Timothy Paul Jones (1 time)
- Mark Vroegop (1 time)
- Tim Challies (1 time)
- Joni Eareckson Tada (1 time)
- Brian Croft (1 time)
- Jonathan Dodson (1 time)
- Nancy Leigh DeMoss (1 time)
- Alistair Begg (1 time)
- Matt Chandler (1 time)

Who Changed?

Perhaps I have changed?

Perhaps since these endorsements, since these invitations to speak at NANC/ACBC, since my leadership in the modern biblical counseling movement—I have changed? Perhaps I am less biblical and perhaps I am less Christlike?

I'd like to think that I am growing in progressive sanctification and that therefore my biblical counseling is more biblical and I am slowly becoming more Christlike. But perhaps I am mistaken, self-deceived.

Perhaps some of those who endorsed my works, invited me to speak, and wrote chapters under my direction have changed?

Perhaps they are “further to the right” or “more conservative” or “more fundamentalist” (I don’t mean that as a negative, just as a descriptor) than they were in the past?

What’s Next?

In [one of Heath’s response podcasts](#), he claimed,

“Even now, just as I warned in my essay, they (‘those who are guilty of compromise’) are working to make sure I stay quiet.”

I know the feeling, Heath. The temptation I face is to “make sure I stay quiet.” I mean, who enjoys character accusations for responding to another brother in Christ? I don’t.

Should anyone (Heath or Bob) be intimidated into silence by coordinated efforts that subtly or overtly say, “Stop it”?

I would *love* to step out of these controversial discussions initiated by Heath Lambert—to which I *chose* to respond.

I would *love* to do what I *love* doing most—providing *pro bono* counseling to pastors, counselors, missionaries, and educators, writing books, writing blog posts that equip God’s people, providing *pro bono* consulting, providing *pro bono* supervision, etc. I *am* continuing to do all of this ministry.

But time will tell what comes next from others. Then time, prayer, and consultation with others, will tell whether I will forever step out of these discussions, or whether I will reluctantly step back in.

Please Pray

I would appreciate your prayers. Honestly, I would appreciate your prayers for me—for wisdom and maturity. I would appreciate your prayers for others in this conversation—for wisdom and maturity.

May we all “see with new eyes” and not with “glued eyes.”

Post #7: May 27, 2024

Is Bob to the “Left” of Dale and Heath in the Modern BC Movement? “No.”

Twitter/X Interaction with Dale Johnson

Since I’ve posted responses ([such as here](#)) to Heath Lambert’s podcasts about the state of the biblical counseling movement ([such as here](#)), it’s not surprising that I’ve had online interactions with other biblical counseling leaders. For instance, ACBC Executive Director, Dale Johnson sent me a public tweet saying,

*“To clarify, you would say you’re not **left** of Heath or me or others in the movement?”*

I appreciate Dale’s forthright question. I’m glad he publicly asked it.

I had several public responses.

1. I don’t like to use the language of “left” and “right” for the BC world because who defines that?
2. Dale, could you define what you mean by “left”?
3. “No. I would not *at all* say that I am ‘left’ of Heath, you, or others in the BC movement.”
4. Dale, I would happily have you read *any* of my books, booklets, articles, blog posts and you and I then engage in any discussion you want about the content of those resources.

“Left”?

I assume that many biblical counselors would define “left of” as *not* developing our theology and methodology of biblical counseling on the Bible. I surmise that some people assume that biblical counselors to their “left” are less committed to theologically-saturated biblical counseling, less committed to sufficiency of Scripture.

It is my conviction that I build my model of biblical counseling theology and methodology biblically, theologically, and historically (church history).

It is my conviction that I am just as committed to the sufficiency of Scripture as Dale/Heath.

It is my conviction that I use God’s sufficient Scriptures to [build a biblical theology of research, science, neuroscience, descriptive research, and being soul physicians of embodied-souls.](#)

How would *you* assess those claims?

How would *Dale* assess those claims?

Let's explore those questions together.

**“Bob, Why Post About This Stuff?
Why Address Your “Place” in the Modern BC Movement?”**

[I've shared previously](#) why I believe a public response to Heath's public podcasts is legitimate.

But why post a public response to Dale's public Twitter/X question about whether I am “left” of Dale/Heath?

- Responding is *not* necessary for those who know me, read me, listen to me teach, or have studied under me.
- *It may be necessary* for those *who don't know me* other than as someone responding to Heath—who they know. It would be helpful for people reading my interactions with Heath to know where I am coming from theologically as a biblical counselor.

Let's be honest. We all have a built-in bias toward those we know. We implicitly give “more of a benefit of the doubt” to those we know and have read. That makes sense.

So, if Heath and I engage in a public discussion about biblical counseling and some folks know Heath, but “don't know Bob from the man in the moon,” then they will filter their perception through their familiarity with Heath and through their assumptions about Bob. If you assume that I am “to the ‘left’ of Heath/Dale, then you'll likely give my perspective little hearing.

And that shuts down iron-sharpening-iron conversations among biblical counselors.

But It's Not Really About Bob

Here's the main reason I'm crafting this post.

There seems to be this assumption/perception by some that those who are not aligned with Heath, Dale, and ACBC are to the “left” of them *biblically*.

That is an assumption that I trust this blog post might begin to dismantle. I am hoping and praying that we can actually do the hard work of listening to one another and reading one another “through Berean eyes” (Acts 17:11).

Let's drop the assumptions that “our group” has cornered the market on truth.

Let's drop the assumption that "other groups" are automatically less biblical—just because their biblical interpretations and applications may be different than our group.

What Do Other Biblical Counseling Leaders Think About Bob?

I'm biased about me! So, don't take my word for whether I am on the "left" of the modern biblical counseling movement. Take the word of **72** endorsements by some of the most "conservative" (another word I don't like without definition) biblical counseling leaders on the planet.

1. [My books](#) have been endorsed (or Forewords written for) at least **72 times** by NANC/ACBC Academy Members, NANC/ACBC Fellows, NANC/ACBC Board of Directors, and NANC/ACBC Certified Members, such as:

- Ernie Baker (6 times)
- Steve Viars (6 times)
- Jim Newheiser (5 times)
- Julie Ganschow (4 times)
- Brad Bigney (4 times)
- John Street (3 times)
- Randy Patten (3 times)
- Howard Eyrich (3 times)
- Paul Tautges (3 times)
- Jeremy Pierre (3 times)
- Paul Tripp (2 times)
- Ben Marshall (2 times)
- Andrew Rogers (2 times)
- Wayne Vanderwier (2 times)
- Alexandre Sascha Mendes (2 times)
- Amy Baker (2 times)
- Nicolas Ellen (2 times)
- Pat Quinn (2 times)
- David Powlison (1 time)
- Wayne Mack (1 time)
- Bob Somerville (1 time)
- Ron Allchin (1 time)
- Charles Hodges (1 time)
- Kevin Carson (1 time)
- Kevin Hurt (1 time)
- Mark Shaw (1 time)
- Shannon McCoy (1 time)
- Tom Zempel (1 time)
- Jeff Ballard (1 time)
- Brent Aucoin (1 time)

- Lilly Park (1 time)
- Cutis Solomon (1 time)
- Michael Leister (1 time)
- Ken Long (1 time)

2. [My books](#) have been endorsed (or Forewords written for) at least **49 times** by other biblical counseling leaders, such as:

- Ed Welch (5 times)
- Robert Cheong (5 times)
- Elyse Fitzpatrick (5 times)
- Garrett Higbee (5 times)
- Jonathan Holmes (5 times)
- Mike Emlet (3 times)
- Deepak Reju (3 times)
- Betty-Anne Van Rees (3 times)
- Jeremy Lelek (3 times)
- Charles Ware (2 times)
- Sam Williams (2 times)
- Jeff Forrey (2 times)
- John Henderson (1 time)
- Lee Lewis (1 time)
- Jason Kovacs (1 time)
- Eliza Huie (1 time)
- David Dunham (1 time)
- Brad Hambrick (1 time)

3. [My books](#) have been endorsed (or Forewords written for) at least **19 times** by evangelical Christian leaders, such as:

- Steve DeWitt (4 times)
- Al Mohler (2 times)
- Daniel Akin (2 times)
- J. D. Greear (2 times)
- Timothy Paul Jones (1 time)
- Mark Vroegop (1 time)
- Tim Challies (1 time)
- Joni Eareckson Tada (1 time)
- Brian Croft (1 time)
- Jonathan Dodson (1 time)
- Nancy Leigh DeMoss (1 time)
- Alistair Begg (1 time)
- Matt Chandler (1 time)

Steve Viars: “Have You Read Bob’s Stuff? Have You Talked to Bob?”

Back in 2010, when David Powlison, Randy Patten, Steve Viars, and others asked me to be the founding Executive Director of the Biblical Counseling Coalition, some members of the modern biblical counseling movement did not know me. They would say to Steve, “We trust you. You trust Bob. But who is Bob as a biblical counselor?” Steve responded repeatedly,

“Have you read Bob’s stuff? Bob writes a lot. He’s an open book about biblical counseling. Read Bob’s writings.”

“Have you talked to Bob?”

I’m thankful for many biblical counseling leaders who did exactly what Steve encouraged them to do. They read my stuff. They talked to me. Kevin Carson is one prime example. Over the years we have become good friends, ministered together, and Kevin uses a number of my resources.

What About Bob?

Why would I say to Dale, “No. I am not *at all* to the ‘left’ of you and Heath?” Though I realize we are all self-biased, there are actual facts to support my conviction.

- I have been biblically studying and doing biblical counseling since 1974 when my pastor, Pastor Bill Goode, introduced me to it.
- I have a 50-year commitment to developing a biblical theology and biblical methodology of biblical counseling.
- I wrote my Th.M. thesis on [Hebrew Anthropological Terms as a Foundation for a Biblical Counseling Model of Man](#).
- I wrote my Ph.D. dissertation on Martin Luther’s theology and practice of pastoral counseling. That dissertation became my book (endorsed by biblical counseling leaders like Wayne Mack, John Street, and others): [Counseling Under the Cross: How Martin Luther Applied the Gospel to Daily Life](#).
- For an introduction to my biblical theology of biblical counseling check out: [10 Major Bible Doctrines Applied to Biblical Counseling: A Theology of Biblical Counseling](#). This post is based on my book, [Gospel-Centered Counseling: How Christ Changes Lives](#).
- For my more recent summary of my approach to biblical counseling check out: [6 Biblical Counseling Convictions](#). Here’s my summary. As biblical counselors we seek to be: *Gospel-Centered, Theologically-Saturated, Relationship-Focused, Church History-Informed, Research-Aware Soul Physicians of Embodied-Souls*.

- Check out any of my writings here at [RPM Ministries](#) and the [RPM Ministries Truth & Love blog site](#).
- Engage with any of my [25 books on changing lives with Christ's changeless truth here](#).
- For a summary of my biblical, theological, and historical (church history) study of current issues in biblical counseling, see: [55 Resources for Counseling the Whole Person: The Bible, the Body, the Embodied-Soul, Research, Science, and Neuroscience](#).

I'd make *you* the same offer to you that I made to Dale.

Feel free to read any of my stuff. Then let's have an "adult-to-adult conversation" about whether or not it is biblical.

Bob Kellemen: Biblical Counseling Insider or Outsider?

As you read my engagement with Heath, especially if you are more "Heath-aligned," it will be helpful for you to know a bit more about Bob.

- What's my history with the modern biblical counseling movement?
 - Am I an outsider or an insider to the modern biblical counseling movement?
 - Have I been considered a "member in good standing of the modern biblical counseling movement?"
 - Have I been considered a rabble-rouser and trouble-maker or a bridge-builder and peace-maker?
 - Who is this Kellemen guy?
1. As I mentioned earlier, I was introduced to the modern nouthetic biblical counseling movement before many current biblical counseling leaders were born. Fifty years ago, Pastor Bill Goode taught me and other youth at Grace Baptist Church in Gary, Indiana about this new stuff—"nouthetic counseling."
 2. At the invitation and encouragement of David Powlison, Randy Patten, Steve Viars, and others, I served for six years as the founding Executive Director of the Biblical Counseling Coalition.
 3. In 2010, when we were discussing whether I would take on the role as BCC ED, David Powlison spoke up—not just to me, but in the presence of the initial Board of Directors of the Biblical Counseling Coalition. David shared,

“Bob, I believe you are the exact right choice. You’re our litmus test. If people can’t see you as a biblical counselor, then they wouldn’t be a fit in the Biblical Counseling Coalition.”

4. David Powlison and I facilitated three dozen biblical counseling leaders in the development of the [Biblical Counseling Coalition Confessional Statement](#). I thoroughly enjoyed that ten-month privileges of working shoulder-to-shoulder with David.
5. At the invitation of Randy Patten, I spoke numerous times at the annual NANC Conference.
6. At the invitation of Heath Lambert, I spoke numerous times at the annual NANC/ACBC Conference.
7. For the past twenty years, I’ve spoken locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally not only at NANC/ACBC conferences and seminars, but also at CCEF events, Faith Biblical Counseling events, ABC events, IBCD events, CBCC (Canadian Biblical Counseling Coalition) events, BCC events, been the keynote speaker at Julie Ganschow’s Reigning Grace conference, spoken at biblical counseling events in Germany, Brazil, Romania, and Canada.
8. I was the General Editor overseeing three collaboratively-written books by dozens of biblical counseling leaders, including dozens of NANC/ACBC leaders, NANC/ACBC Certified Members, NANC/ACBC Fellows, NANC/ACBC Board of Directors, and NANC/ACBC Academy Members.

Be a Good “Berean” (Acts 17:11)

Again, this is really not about me. It’s about *us*—all of us as biblical counselors, as brothers and sisters in Christ.

My requests:

Please don’t assess me or others as “left” of Dale/Heath/ACBC without actually examining, first hand, our actual writings and teachings.

Please assess us biblically.

As the Bereans did with Paul in Acts 17:11, please examine the Scriptures to see if what we write, teach, and practice is biblically faithful.

Post #8: June 6, 2024

[Do We Need a “Reset” on the Term “Biblical Counseling”?](#)

The Context

In another post by the folks at First Baptist Jacksonville, this one by Sean Perron, Sean proclaimed,

“I am convinced we need a reset on the term biblical counseling.”

5 Reflections on Resetting the Definition of Biblical Counseling

Sean’s post and his exhortation that we “reset” the term “biblical counseling” got me thinking. Here are a few brief, quick reflections...

1. Who Gets to Define Biblical Counseling?

Almost two years ago, I addressed this very issue here: [Who Gets to Define Biblical Counseling?](#) In this post, I suggested that:

- Modern discussions about the *modern* biblical counseling movement often neglect 1,950 years of church history.
- We act as if biblical counseling was started in the 1970s by one person in the United States.

My post links to an array of church history resources documenting the long history of biblical counseling—which pre-dates the modern nouthetic counseling movement by millennia.

Not surprisingly, when Sean supports his preferred definitions of biblical counseling he links to resources that highlight the past 50 years.

Please note, I am *not* against those youthful, fifty-year-old-or-less descriptions. I am simply emphasizing:

- Our potential *historical ignorance* if any of us, myself included, act as if biblical counseling arose within our lifetime.
- Our potential *historical arrogance* if any of us, myself included, act as if we can define biblical counseling apart from that great cloud of historical Christian witnesses from the past 2,000 years—as they built their definitions on the authoritative, sufficient Word of God.

G. K. Chesterton pictures this poetically and prophetically:

History and tradition are *democracy extended through time*. History gives “votes to the most obscure of all classes, our ancestors. It is the *democracy of the dead*.” It refuses to submit to the small and arrogant elite “who merely happen to be walking around.” (Chesterton, *Orthodoxy*, p. 3, emphasis added).

2. A Church History-Based Definition of Biblical Counseling

In [Who Gets to Define Biblical Counseling?](#) I collate Scriptures and church history to suggest this historical definition of the ancient art of soul care, one-another ministry, pastoral care and counseling—biblical counseling.

The personal ministry of the Word of sharing Scripture (the gospel) and soul (relationship in Christ) (1 Thessalonians 2:7-8) through speaking God’s truth in love with grace (Ephesians 4:15) to sustain, heal, reconcile, and guide saints who experience suffering and struggle against sin on their sanctification journey, as practiced by pastors through pastoral soul care and spiritual direction and as practiced by believers through one-another ministry.

So...if we are considering a “reset,” So...if we are considering a “reset,” I would suggest the Scriptures as our foundation and two-thousand years of church history as a guidepost, rather than leaning primarily on the past fifty years.

3. A Collaborative, Comprehensive Definition of Biblical Counseling

If we want to “reset” or develop an agreed-upon definition of biblical counseling, I suggest the [Biblical Counseling Coalition Confessional Statement](#). This document was produced over the course of ten months in 2010-2011, by over three dozen biblical counseling leaders from around the world who represented a cross-section of biblical counseling churches and para-church organizations. David Powlison did extensive work on this document. Here is the Biblical Counseling summary statement on what makes biblical counseling truly biblical:

Biblical counseling occurs whenever and wherever God’s people engage in conversations that are anchored in Scripture, centered on Christ and the Gospel, grounded in sound theology, dependent upon the Holy Spirit and prayer, directed toward sanctification, rooted in the life of the church, founded in love, attentive to heart issues, comprehensive in understanding, thorough in care, practical and relevant, and oriented toward outreach.

This statement summarizes a dozen statements developed from Scripture and church history.

4. One Person's Contribution to an Interactive, Collaborative Discussion

Again, for emphasis, I do *not* think any one person or any one group should develop *the* exclusive definition of biblical counseling. At the same time, each of us ought to develop theologically-saturated, church history-informed convictions about what makes biblical counseling truly biblical. Here is my attempt to contribute *one* such statement.

As biblical counselors we seek to be:

Gospel-Centered, Theologically-Saturated, Relationship-Focused, Church History-Informed, Research-Aware Soul Physicians of Embodied-Souls

I develop and support this statement foundationally from Scripture and secondarily from church history in this document:

[6 Biblical Counseling Convictions](#)

5. Reset?

If we reset, then who is “we”?

Who gets to claim the mantle of the authority to reset what makes biblical counseling truly biblical?

Is resetting done by one individual?

Is resetting done by one group of individuals from one church or para-church organization in one city, or state, or country?

Or, is resetting done collaboratively by dozens of biblical counseling leaders from around the world representing major biblical counseling churches and para-church groups? (See the Biblical Counseling Coalition [Confessional Statement](#))?

If we mean resetting *historical* biblical counseling, then, please, let's look beyond just the past fifty years. Let's focus on the 1,950 years that preceded the modern nouthetic movement.

If we mean resetting *collaborative* definitions of *modern* biblical counseling, then the Biblical Counseling Coalition Confessional Statement already accomplished that.

Summary for Clarity

In his article, Sean uses various words and phrases like “reset,” “mislabel,” and “genuine biblical counseling content.” Whichever word or phrase one uses, my point would be the same:

We need more than one person or one group from the last fifty years to rest the definition of biblical counseling, to correctly label biblical counseling, and to assess genuine biblical counseling content.

On Twitter/X, Sean publicly responded to my post. I responded to Sean on X, asking:

“Sean, would you agree or disagree with this summary?”

To determine biblical counseling orthodoxy, we need the collaborative wisdom of biblical counselors today, and we need the collaborative wisdom of 2000 years of the history of Christian soul care and biblical counseling.

Post #9: June 7, 2024

Soul Tsunami:
The Relational Side of the Current Biblical Counseling Conflicts

Recently, I've been [writing about](#) the current conflicts in the biblical counseling world. In my posts, I've been responding to an ongoing, growing series of posts by the folks at First Baptist Jacksonville.

My responses, for the most part, have remained at the level of theology of biblical counseling.

The Personal Side of Biblical Counseling Conflicts

Today's post is different. I hope to open a window into the soul of people who are being hurt by all of this—including me.

By sharing my personal pain, I am *not* saying that I am right, and others are wrong. I am *not* asking you to choose my side because of sympathy for my suffering.

I'll be focusing on the hurt experienced by those being called "so-called biblical counselors," "zombie-infected biblical counselors," "new integrationists," "neo-integrationists," "passive-aggressive" (my favorite!), "unfaithful biblical counselors," "compromised priests," etc.

I know that those making these accusations also say they have suffered personal pain in all of this—several have told me so. They are free to tell their story. I am *not* free to tell their story.

I am free to tell *my* story—carefully, as confidentially as possible.

I am *less free* to tell the story of others who have been called out as unfaithful, compromised biblical counselors. So, due to confidentiality, I'll share general statements about how others have been hurt.

The Great Costs of These Accusations

Over the past several years, accusations of not being faithful biblical counselors have come with great costs to many of my friends.

- Some have been "canceled" by other biblical counselors to the point of losing their jobs—their vocations, their livelihood.
- Some have been "canceled" by other biblical counselors to the point of losing income as their good reputation as biblical counselors has been publicly slandered.

- Some have been “canceled” by other biblical counselors to the point of losing their place on boards of leading biblical counseling organizations.
- Some have been “canceled” by other biblical counselors to the point of choosing to receive biblical counseling and soul care to deal with the pain of false accusations, and the suffering of lost relationships.
- Some have been “canceled” by other biblical counselors to the point of needing to find a new church.
- Some have been “canceled” by other biblical counselors to the point of deciding that they needed to resign from long-time membership in various biblical counseling groups or organizations.
- Many have been “canceled” by other biblical counselors who had been their dearest friends, their most important mentors, their closest co-workers, and even by family members.
- Many who have been “cancelled” by other biblical counselors have a spouse who feels their pain even more than the one who was canceled.

The Painful Process

It’s important to note that the *vast, vast* majority of this canceling is being done publicly before *any* attempts at private conversations. There is not even the offer of:

“Hey, I’ve written this piece. It’s not going to be fun to read because it is negative about you. But before I post it publicly, could you let me know if I have accurately represented you?”

Instead, people are shocked to read publicly for the first time ever that they are the specific target of accusations of being compromised biblical counselors. No private conversation. No warning. No invitation for clarification.

Many of these accusations are being done with “cherry-picking.” Rather than robustly and accurately quoting a fellow biblical counselor, snippets, or one-sided sentences are extrapolated from much larger, longer explanatory sections. I’m sure that those doing this writing would disagree. However, those being spoken against say to me,

“That doesn’t represent me at all. I’m being consistently mischaracterized.”

When faithful biblical counselors are publicly called out in ways that mischaracterize them as unfaithful and compromised, the personal pain is great.

What About Bob?

I haven’t lost any jobs or ministries or book contracts over any of this. So far, publicly, I have not been canceled. Privately—to my face and in writing—two people have said critical things about me and my biblical counseling model.

More often, I have had people talk negatively about me *behind my back to others*. My friends will share,

“I hate to have to be the one to tell you this, Bob, but so-and-so accused you of not being a true biblical counselor. They said unkind and critical things about you and your counseling model.”

Sadly, and ironically, these biblical counselors who have been negative about me have not followed biblical principles in talking to me first or at least allowing me a chance for a response. Some have even continued to act like friends, while behind my back assaulting my character and counseling.

David’s Personal Pain: Former Friends and Close Companions

And...most sadly...it has been by friends...or at least...former friends.

Let these words of soul injury from David sink in.

⁴ My heart is in anguish within me;
the terrors of death have fallen on me.
⁵ Fear and trembling have beset me;
horror has overwhelmed me.
⁶ I said, “Oh, that I had the wings of a dove!
I would fly away and be at rest.
⁷ I would flee far away
and stay in the desert;
⁸ I would hurry to my place of shelter,
far from the tempest and storm” (Psalm 55:4-8).

Body and soul—as an embodied-soul—David experiences heart anguish, terrors, fear, bodily trembling. Horror overwhelms him like a tsunami.

Where does David run when a tsunami comes? He flees far away—to the desert. He hurries to a place of shelter—far from the tempest and storm—from the soul tsunami.

What is the origin of David’s intense trauma?

¹² If an enemy were insulting me,
I could endure it;
if a foe were rising against me,
I could hide.
¹³ But it is *you, a man like myself,*
my companion, my close friend,
¹⁴ with whom *I once enjoyed sweet fellowship*
at the house of God,
as we walked about
among the worshipers (Psalm 55:12-18).

Friends.

Close friends.

The insults from close companions.

How does David describe these verbal assaults?

Day and night they prowl about on its walls; malice and abuse are within it.
Destructive forces are at work in the city; threats and lies never leave its streets
(Psalm 55:10-11).

David pictures those on the walls not as guardians, but as destroyers. They ceaselessly prowl about as malicious abusers, endlessly filled with threats and lies. They are predators, not prophets.

From Friendship to Foeship

Like David, I experience a depth of sadness when a friend I once enjoyed sweet fellowship with chooses to be my foe, my enemy, my adversary, my judge. It is painful to experience a friend rising *against* me, speaking against me—but not speaking to me.

Keeping confidences by being generic, here are some of the friend-connection-situations that have evaporated into criticism over the past two years.

- One biblical counselor who no longer sees me as a real biblical counselor came to me over the past two decades on at least six separate occasions for soul care. This person trusted me for twenty years as their soul care-giver. Now they see me as a “so-called biblical counselor.”
- One biblical counselor who no longer sees me as a real biblical counselor came to me for counsel while having church-related conflicts. This person and their family stayed in our home for respite. Now they talk about me behind my back, but never talk to me.
- Several biblical counselors who no longer see me as a real biblical counselor wrote multiple endorsements for my various books.
- One biblical counselor who no longer sees me as a real biblical counselor was someone I fought for to help them become a member of a leading biblical counseling organization.
- One biblical counselor who no longer sees me as a real biblical counselor had me counsel several of their immediate family members.
- One biblical counselor who no longer sees me as a real biblical counselor was someone who I shared over two dozen meals with where we met for one-another encouragement.
- One biblical counselor who no longer sees me as a real biblical counselor was someone who I helped gain a “prestigious” ministry position in a major biblical counseling academic setting.

With David, I cry out:

If an enemy were insulting me, I could endure it; if a foe were rising against me, I could hide. But it is you, a man like myself, my companion, my close friend, with whom I once enjoyed sweet fellowship at the house of God, as we walked about among the worshipers.

This is the pain of friendships that turn into foeships.

Who Changed?

Perhaps I've changed. I think *I have changed* over the past half-decade. I think I have become *even more biblical!* I keep [studying God's Word about biblical counseling](#).

But, perhaps I am blind. Deceived.

Or, perhaps my former friends were blind and deceived for a quarter-century when they not only saw me as a biblical counselor, but chose me as *their* biblical counselor, or as the counselor for *their loved ones*, or glowingly endorsed my books.

Or, perhaps they changed. And perhaps the climate in the modern biblical counseling world has changed—toward a neo-fundamentalist, judgmental, Pharisaical mindset. (I'm not blind to or insensitive toward the fact that my words in this last sentence might not feel too good to others...)

Life and death are in the power of the tongue (Proverbs 18:21).

I'm choosing to use my words to give you a glimpse into the personal pain of broken relationships, of what feels like betrayal, what seems like unbiblical judgment and ungodly gossip. It feels, from my limited, even biased, perspective, like innocent suffering at the hands of former friends—close companions who now have chosen to be foes.

This Is *Not* Fun Stuff!

I'm writing this *not so much for me*. I'll be fine. I'm retired. I can't lose my job. I've written everything (and more) that I ever thought I would write. All of my ministry now is *pro bono* (free) and there is plenty of it.

No, I write this for others—younger biblical counselors in the midst of their calling—who are being called out as unbiblical counselors. Frequently called out publicly before any private conversation. Often called out by former friends who are now acting like foes.

It hurts. Any and every human being created in the image of God would hurt when friends become foes.

I want to give a human face, an image-bearer soul to all of this. These are real people being accused, not AI or androids.

“But, Is This Biblical?”

Some may respond, “This post is too personal!” Or, “Cry me a river!” Or, “Just get over it; stop being so sensitive!” Or, “Be biblical!”

I wonder if anyone said that to David after he penned Psalm 55? According to the Bible—including Psalm 55—it *is* biblical to publicly lament the pain caused when friends become foes.

Please Pray

Please pray for unity in the biblical counseling movement. Sadly, this side of heaven, unity is not always an actuality.

So, please pray for hurting biblical counselors who are being called unbiblical counselors by their former friends and close companions.

The pain is real. The suffering is legitimate.

I’m not asking you to be *so empathetic that truth is thrown out the window*. I *am* asking you to suffer with those who suffer (1 Corinthians 12:26).

Even if you disagree with their biblical counseling model, *be* a biblical counselor by putting yourself into their souls and imagining what it is like to be publicly called out without being privately confronted in love. Sense what it is like to give your whole life to the ministry of biblical counseling and to have other biblical counselors publicly label you “an infected-zombie,” “a compromised biblical counselor,” “an unfaithful priest,” “a new integrationist,” “a neo-integrationist.” Empathize with the pain of former mentors now maligning you, of former friends now accusing and attacking you.

Please Stop; Take a Break; Take a Breath; Talk to God; Talk to Your “Foes”

To those doing the public canceling, the public calling out, the public accusations and judgments—please stop.

I know you think you are doing the Lord’s work in the Lord’s way. I know you think you are “cleansing the temple like Christ.”

At the very least, please stop long enough to pray—and to ask the Lord if you are really doing His ministry to His ministers.

Please take a break. Your posts are coming out one after another, rapid fire, wave after wave, like a continuous tsunami. Please take a breather.
(Yes, I've been posting, too. Someone needs to publicly have the backs of those being accused. I'd be very happy to stop all of this. I've invited private conversations.)

And, please, while you take a breath to talk to God; talk to those you consider your foes—to those you consider unfaithful biblical counselors. Have a private conversation.

Cast Your Cares on the Lord

How did David handle his soul-tsunami when his friends became his foes?

Cast your cares on the LORD and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous be shaken (Psalm 55:22).

When friends become foes, turn to the Faithful Friend.

Peter quotes Psalm 55:22 in 1 Peter 5:8.

Cast all your care on him *because* he cares for you.

When friends seem careless with your soul, turn to the One who cares for you.

Peter continues:

And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen. (1 Peter 5:10-11).

When friends cause soul suffering, stay strong and steadfast in your Infinitely Strong and Eternally Steadfast Savior.

In Christ Alone

Ultimately, it really doesn't matter what others think of us or say about us. The common way we tend to say this in the modern biblical counseling world is,

"Don't live in the fear of man."

"Don't make a heart idol out of what others think of you."

That's Peter's counsel.

Yes, of course, we search our hearts to see if there is any secret sin.

Yes, of course, we search our theology and methodology of counseling to see if we can learn anything even from what seems like unfair critique.

But at the end of the day, at the end of our life, we answer to Christ alone. We fear Christ alone. We live in the grace of Christ alone.

To Him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

Post #10: June 9, 2024

As Far as It Depends on You, Live at Peace with Everyone

My [most recent and most personal post](#) addressed the relational side of the current biblical counseling conflicts. In that post, I shared about several past friends who now have issues with me and my biblical counseling. I mentioned that in most cases, they have not talked to me, but instead have talked about me to others.

In desiring to follow the Scriptures, I have begun reaching out to each of those individuals. I shared the following general wording with each person.

Reconciliation Contact

Name,

It has been a while since we connected.

Someone we both trust, reached out to me to share that they heard you speaking negatively about me and my biblical counseling approach.

This surprised me, given our long history of spiritual friendship, mutual respect, mutual ministry, and mutual one-another care.

So, first, perhaps the person was wrong or misunderstood, and a clarification is all that is needed. Were they wrong in thinking you were publicly and/or privately speaking against me and my biblical counseling? If so, I will gladly notify them and correct their misperception.

If they were correct, and if you have spoken publicly or privately against me and my biblical counseling approach, I would be happy to talk to you about any concerns you have. Again, this would all surprise (and saddened) me, as I had no indication that you had any concerns about me or my biblical counseling. The last I knew, our friendship and mutual ministry respect was happy and holy and whole.

If you would like to talk, I'd be happy to schedule a call or a Zoom meeting with you. I want to "make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3). "As much as is possible, as far as it depends on me, I want to live at peace with everyone" (Romans 12:18). If there are ways you want to speak into my life and ministry, I would be happy to apply Proverbs 27:17, "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another."

In Christ's Grace,

Bob

Responses

So far, I have had just one response. Sadly, it was not positive. The very brief response concluded with this terse sentence.

"We don't have interest in engaging further."

I surmise that is why Romans 12:18 says, "if it is possible, *as far as it depends on you*, live at peace with everyone."

Sadly, not everyone has an interest in engagements leading toward peace—including not every biblical counseling leader.

But since God calls us to pursue reconciliation, I will continue to seek to do so regardless of the responses of others.

Addendum

[55 Resources for Counseling the Whole Person: The Bible, the Body, the Embodied-Soul, Research, Science, and Neuroscience](#)

Addendum Note

The conversation which Heath began is really about the sufficiency of Scripture and counseling the whole person. It is about what the Bible says about the body, the embodied-soul, research, science, and neuroscience. It is about how we apply the sufficiency of Scripture to our theology and methodology of biblical counseling.

Because of that, it will be helpful to add this final post. In it I collate fifty-five resources I have produced over the past forty years on the sufficiency of Scripture and the Bible's teaching on descriptive research.

A Word from Bob

If you are looking for *15 Resources for Counseling the Whole Person*, then you have come to the right place. Since that original post, I have added additional materials about biblical counseling and the Bible, the sufficiency of Scripture, the body, the embodied-soul, research, science, and neuroscience. So, at least as of today, this post is now *55 Resources for Counseling the Whole Person*. I suspect that it will keep growing...

3 Premises and 2 "Therefores"

Premise #1: *God designed us as complex body/soul beings—embodied-souls.*

- **Genesis 2:7:** "Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being."

Premise #2: *God fearfully and wonderfully uniquely designed each of us.*

- **Psalm 139:13-16:** "For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be."

Premise #3: *In the Creation/Cultural Mandate, God calls His image bearers to be "under-shepherds" (God is the Great Shepherd) and "under-scientists" stewarding His creation.*

- **Genesis 1:26-28:** “Then God said, ‘Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.’”
- **Psalm 8:4-8:** “What is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them? You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor. You made them rulers over the works of your hands; you put everything under their feet: all flocks and herds, and the animals of the wild, the birds in the sky, and the fish in the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas.”

Therefore #1: *Biblical counselors—as under-shepherds—will develop and follow a “theological anthropology”—a rich and robust biblical understanding of embodied souls that leads to relevant and practical counseling that ministers to people comprehensively—as relational (spiritual, social, self-aware), rational, volitional, emotional, and physical beings—embodied-souls.*

Therefore #2: *Biblical counselors—as under-scientists—will use the lens of God’s sufficient Scriptures to carefully assess and evaluate neurological research regarding the brain/body connection and then will potentially discerningly implement interventions that specifically address our embodied nature.*

Be Like the Bereans in Acts 17

I suspect that most biblical counselors would agree with my 3 premises, and with my first “therefore.”

I imagine that some biblical counselors might get nervous about my second “therefore.” As a “movement,” we’ve been cautious—perhaps overly-cautious—when it comes to even considering neurological research findings.

I get it. I understand the cautions.

Because of that, I’ve crafted a number of resources to help us to be “good Bereans” (see Acts 17)—thinking Christians who search the Scriptures and then use God’s Word to evaluate any extra-biblical teaching—including research from the world of neuroscience.

Here’s a sampling of some of those resources, in no particular order:

Resource #1 (Free): [*Scripture and Soul: How to Study the Bible for Biblical Counseling*](#)

I could simply “give you a fish” by giving you results of my biblical studies. Or, I could “teach you to fish” by equipping you to do your own first-hand exegesis of Scripture. That’s what this free 24-page PDF provides: a step-by-step process for developing a biblical theology for biblical counseling.

Resource #2 (Free): [10 Questions About Biblical Counseling and Neuroscience: Becoming Soul-Physicians of Embodied-Souls](#)

This post collates my thinking about embodied-souls into a preliminary proposal for what an in-depth book on this topic might look like. If you have time for just one post among this list of 55, then *this post might be the one to start with...*

Resource #3 (Free): [Fearfully and Wonderfully Made: Becoming Soul Physicians of Embodied-Souls](#)

This post is a shortened and updated post from [10 Questions About Biblical Counseling and Neuroscience: Becoming Soul-Physicians of Embodied-Souls](#). It provides a book proposal and table of contents for a biblical counseling book on the body and on biological interventions that biblical counselors could engage in as we serve as soul physicians for embodied souls.

Resource #4 (Free): [Hebrew Anthropological Terms as a Foundation for a Biblical Counseling Model of Man](#)

This is my Th.M. Thesis (from way back in 1985)—available at the link above for free. As the title suggests, it explores Old Testament Hebrew terms and develops a **four-fold** understanding of the overlapping capacities of the soul:

- We are *relational* beings: Affections, longings, and desires
- We are *rational* beings: Beliefs, thoughts, ideas, and images
- We are *volitional* beings: Motivation, the will, choices, purposes
- We are *emotional* beings: Moods, feelings, and emotions

My thesis focused purposefully on our inner, immaterial nature—the capacities of the soul, and did not focus *per se* on our physicality. This thesis seeks to make a contribution to the process of developing a robust “theological anthropology”—a biblical understanding of people.

Resource #5 (Free): [A Biblical Counseling Perspective on Neuroscience and the Soul](#)

The link above provides you with free access/download to the 20-page manuscript of my 2006 ETS (Evangelical Theological Society) paper/presentation. This paper suggests that the history of soul care, historical Christian theology, scriptural exegesis, modern neuroscience, and biblical psychology/biblical counseling all *unite* to teach *holistic functionalism*. That is, a human being is one whole being with a variety of complex functioning capacities—relational (spiritual, social, self-aware), rational, volitional, emotional, and physical—with an intricate, intimate *psychophysical interactionism*. Additionally, this paper considers what scriptural *interpretation* and scientific *interpretation* combine to say about the nature of human nature. Thus, it explores the supposed “Scripture/science problem” and recommends a path that emphasizes scriptural authority, sufficiency, and relevancy while also appreciating the catalytic role of scientific research.

Resource #6 (Free): [Biblical Counseling and Scientific Research](#)

In this post, I use recent research on the serotonin-theory of depression to explore how biblical counselors typically use (or misuse) research (the “co-belligerent” use of research). Then I examine and suggest perhaps a more biblical way for us as biblical counselors to assess, evaluate, and potentially use neuroscience-related research.

Resource #7 (Free): [Biblical Counseling and the “Co-Belligerent” Use of Research](#)

This post is something of a follow-up or further development upon [Biblical Counseling and Scientific Research](#). It further explains and illustrates the dangers of only using secular research that seems to agree with the researcher’s perspective (“co-belligerent” research).

Resource #8 (Free): [10 Biblical Counseling Concerns About “Bad Therapy”](#)

This is another post that addresses the pitfalls and problems of biblical counselors using “co-belligerent” research—only quoting those who agree with you. Some biblical counselors have applauded Abigail Shrier’s book *Bad Therapy* because it criticizes some approaches to secular therapy and parenting. I outline ten biblical concerns about Shrier’s book, and describe the dangers of commending this book *without* also clearly highlighting the secular worldview of the book.

Resource #9 (Free): [400+ Resources on Biblical Counseling and Psychology-Related Research](#)

Obviously, I’m just one voice. So, I’ve collated resources from hundreds of others. Why this collation? I’ve found that we often talk past each other in these complex discussions. One reason: *we have no clear, agreed-upon definitions, descriptions, or examples of our terms.*

- What do we mean by “scientific research”?
- What is “descriptive psychological research”?
- What are examples of “evidenced-based counseling intervention research”?
- What are examples of “neurological research findings”?

I’ve also found that in the biblical counseling world our *default* view is to take a critical approach toward anything that is extra-biblical—often before we even define it and before we even engage with it honestly, respectfully, and carefully. Thus, the first major purpose of this collation:

I am providing 100s of first-hand, primary sources—examples of scientific research, descriptive psychological research, evidenced-based counseling intervention research, and neurological research findings—so you can define them accurately and assess them fairly.

So now if someone says, “I’m skeptical of “evidenced-based counseling intervention research,” then we could discuss together scores of particular examples and we could specifically identify potential areas of concern...and potential areas of positive contribution. This document not only includes primary source examples of extra-biblical resources related to the care and cure of the soul. It also includes *100s of secondary sources*—a broad spectrum of perspectives on the possible negative or positive relationship of extra-biblical sources to biblical counseling. Thus, a second major purpose of this collation:
*You, the reader, can be a “wise Berean” (see Acts 17) who reads **original/primary sources**, reads a cross-section of **secondary sources** providing their perspective, and then you can become an informed and discerning reader drawing your own biblical conclusions—so you can assess everything through the lens of Scripture.*

Resources #10, 11, 12, and 13 (Free): A Blog Mini-Series on Reformed Thinking on Common Grace

This resource includes links (see below) to 4 posts I’ve crafted where I’ve simply collated quotes (in context) from several Reformed thinkers regarding “common grace” (the posts define “common grace”). In our biblical counseling world, we often tend to ignore the doctrine of common grace, or provide very limited definitions of common grace. These quotes challenge us to think through the relationship between common grace, the noetic effect of sin, and scientific research.

- [7 Reformed Theologians on “Common Grace”](#)
- [Herman Bavinck on “Common Grace,” Part 1](#)
- [Herman Bavinck on “Common Grace,” Part 2](#)
- [John Calvin on “Common Grace”](#)

Resources 14 and 15 (Free): Two Posts on Heath Lambert’s Book *Biblical Counseling and Common Grace*:

- [**Biblical Counseling and Common Grace: A Review by Dr. Nate Brooks**](#): The [London Lyceum](#) published Dr. Nate Brooks’s review of Heath Lambert’s book *Biblical Counseling and Common Grace*. You can read Dr. Brooks’s full review here: [Biblical Counseling and Common Grace: A Review by Nate Brooks](#). You can learn about Heath’s book [here](#).
- [**2 \(Very Different\) Reviews of Heath Lambert’s Book, *Biblical Counseling and Common Grace***](#): In this brief post, I share a link to Dr. Nate Brooks’s review of Heath’s book, and I share a link to Francine’s Tan’s review of Heath’s book. I then share 26 Prompting Discussion Questions to extend the conversation about Heath’s book.

Resources #16 and 17 (Free): [112 Biblical Passages on Being Embodied-Souls, Part 1. Part 2.](#)

As the titles suggests, in these two posts I collate over 100 biblical passages that can be used as a foundation for developing a biblical theology of embodied-souls. I also provide a [free eighteen-page PDF](#) of all 112 passages.

Resource #18 (Free): [Ponderings About Being a ___-Informed Biblical Counselor](#)

This post started as an 18-tweet thread on Twitter, that I then crafted into a blog post that develops biblical parameters for biblical counselors using extra-biblical research.

Resource #19 (Free): [Biblical Counseling, Neuroscience, and Descriptive Research Psychology](#)

I derived this post from chapter 2 of *Gospel-Centered Counseling: How Christ Changes Lives*. It addresses where biblical counselors stand on issues like neuroscience, descriptive research, and psychotropic medications.

Resource #20 (Free): [What Does Biblical Counseling Believe About Extra-Biblical Literature?](#)

Again, I derived this post from chapter 2 of *Gospel-Centered Counseling: How Christ Changes Lives*. This post highlights the vital question of world-view behind any approach to counseling.

Resource #21 (Free): [Anxiety and Our Physical Bodies: God's Care for Embodied-Souls](#)

I derived this post from my book, *Anxiety*. It is important to recognize that *every emotion involves a complex interaction* between body/brain and soul/mind. It is *dangerous* to assume that *all* emotional struggles can be *directly* changed by *strictly* "spiritual means." We must *remain sensitive to physical factors and organic issues* that affect people's lives. It is *wrong to place extra burdens on those who suffer emotionally* by suggesting that all they need to do is surrender to God to make all their struggles go away.

Resource #22 (Free): [4 Reasons Why I Write About Embodied-Souls](#)

Recently, someone thanked me for my posts on embodied-souls, and then asked if I would share what motivates my interest in this topic. In this post, I share *4 Reasons Why I Write About Embodied-Souls*.

Resource #23 (Free): [Jay Adams, Nouthetic Counseling, and Neuroscience](#)

Did you know that in Jay Adams's first book, *Competent to Counsel*, he discussed neuroscience and nouthetic counseling? Adams said that "*The Nervous System Corresponds to the Nouthetic Approach*." This blog post quotes Adams and ponders implications of his views on neuroscience and nouthetic counseling for our views of neuroscience and biblical counseling.

Resource #24 (Free): [Meet the Man Who Influenced the Early Nouthetic Counseling Movement: O. Hobart Mowrer](#)

If the modern biblical counseling movement is to think through if and how we might use extra-biblical resources, then it makes sense to ponder how Jay Adams engaged with secular psychology. In this post, I introduce you to O. Hobart Mowrer, a secular psychologist who Jay read and then spent six weeks studying under.

Resource #25 (Free): [6 Words Describing What Jay Adams and Nouthetic Counseling Do with Secular Psychology](#)

If we are going to discuss how biblical counselors engage with topics like the body, the embodied-soul, descriptive research, etc., then it will help to see how Jay Adams, John Bettler and David Powlison engaged with these topics at the 25th anniversary of the launch of the modern nouthetic counseling movement.

Resource #26 (Free): [How Biblical Counselors Could Engage Matthew LaPine's the Logic of the Body](#)

Matthew LaPine takes an exegetical, lexical, and church history view of the teaching of the Bible on the body and emotions. His approach differs from some traditional biblical counseling perspectives on the relationship between the body and our feelings. This post exams how biblical counselors could engage in a fair and balanced assessment with his book (and with other books not written by self-described biblical counselors).

Resources #27, 28, 29, 30, 31, and 32 (Free): [Biblical Principles for Engaging with Fellow Biblical Counselors and Non-Biblical Counselors](#)

The topics I address throughout this resource list are controversial areas of discussion within the modern biblical counseling world. When we disagree with other self-described biblical counselors, how could we handle those differences biblically? Here are three related posts on this important topic:

- [5 Biblical Counseling Principles for Addressing Disagreements Among Biblical Counselors](#)
- [6 Types of Biblical Self-Examination Questions to Ask Before Criticizing Fellow Biblical Counselors](#)
- [Are We Reasonable or Unreasonable in Our Interactions in the Biblical Counseling Movement?](#)

Of course, I'm not the first, nor the only, or even the primary person asking biblical counselors to consider how we engage with other counseling systems. Long before me, Jay Adams's colleague and good friend, John Bettler, confronted nouthetic confrontation about how nouthetic counselors confront others. In the first post below, I outline Bettler's three concerns. In the second post below, I collate sixteen questions we can ask ourselves as we engage with those who differ from us. In the third post, Nate Brooks affirms David Powlison's model of humility and charity in biblical counseling interactions.

- [3 Nouthetic Cautions about Nouthetic Critiques of Others: From John Bettler](#)
- [16 Self-Assessment Questions to Ask Ourselves as We Evaluate Other Counseling Models](#)
- [Humility and Charity in Biblical Counseling: A Guest Post by Nate Brooks on David Powlison and Eric Johnson](#)

Resources #33, 34, 35, and 36 (Free): Sufficiency of Scripture and Biblical Counseling

All of the topics outlined in this post relate back to the sufficiency of the Bible for biblical counseling. What does that mean? What does it look like? What are the implications of sufficiency for how we engage with science and research? The following posts provide foundational teachings on the sufficiency of Scripture for biblical counseling.

- [What Makes Biblical Counseling Truly Biblical, Part 1](#)
- [What Makes Biblical Counseling Truly Biblical, Part 2](#)
- [What Makes Biblical Counseling Truly Biblical, Part 3](#)
- [What Makes Biblical Counseling Truly Biblical, Part 4 \(Coming Soon\)](#)

Resources #37 and 38 (Free): Biblical Counseling Convictions About Embodied-Souls

I have been describing my approach to biblical counseling as seeking to be a *gospel-centered, theologically-saturated, relationship-focused, church history-informed, research-aware soul physician of embodied-souls*. I present these convictions in two related posts—one longer and one abbreviated.

- [6 Biblical Counseling Convictions](#)
- [6 Biblical Counseling Convictions: Shortened Version](#)

Resource #39 (Free): [Your Body, Your Suffering, and Your Pain Matter to God: Biblical Counseling and Your Body](#)

This post unites themes from all the resources collated in this document. It especially highlights the practical implications for counselors and counselees related to a biblical understanding of the body for biblical counseling.

Resources #40 and 41 (Free): Two Chapters from [Consider Your Counsel](#)

These two posts eventually became chapters in my book [Consider Your Counsel: Addressing Ten Mistakes in Our Biblical Counseling](#).

- [10 Common Mistakes in Our Biblical Counseling, #6: We Tend To View People One-Dimensionally](#)
- [10 Common Mistakes in Our Biblical Counseling, #8: We Minimize the Complexity of the Soul-Body Interconnection](#)

Resource #42 (Free): [60 Christian Books on the Body and Soul \(Embodied-Soul\)](#)

This collation of resources focuses not on articles or blog posts, and not on secular resources, but on Christian books about how God designed us body and soul (embodied-soul).

Resource #43 (Free): [A Highly Recommended Journal of Biblical Counseling Article on Common Grace, Deep Breathing, and Biblical Counseling](#)

In this article, biblical counselor Todd Stryd develops a practical theological foundation for how biblical counselors use “biological interventions” such as deep breathing exercises as one part of a comprehensive, whole-person approach to being soul physicians of embodied-souls.

Resource #44 (Free): [I’m Never More Christ-Dependent Than When I’m Doing Deep Breathing Exercises](#)

This is *my most personal* post in this collation. As the title suggests, I share about the comprehensive, whole-person, embodied-soul approach I personally take in addressing issues with anxiety, fear, and phobias. The post also provides scriptural support for physical interventions as a part of a comprehensive biblical counseling model.

Resource #45 (Free): [Of Spirituality and Ice Cubes: A Psalm and a Palm](#)

This is a shortened version of my very personal post, *I’m Never More Christ-Dependent Than When I’m Doing Deep Breathing Exercises*.

Resource #46 (Free): [6 Lessons from a Depressed Puritan Pastor](#)

I love church history. I believe there is much that we can learn about modern soul care from the great cloud of Christian witnesses who have gone before us. In this post, we learn biblical counseling lessons from Puritan pastor, Timothy Rogers—who endured two long bouts of severe depression, and then ministered to others with similar suffering.

Resource #47 (Free): [Spurgeon’s Depression...And His Body/Brain/Embodied-Soul](#)

Some today falsely proclaim an [emotional health and wealth gospel](#), suggesting that “spiritual people” don’t get overwhelmed by emotions, depression, and anxiety. Spurgeon would like to have a word with those folks. This post gives voice to Spurgeon’s own thinking and teaching about his struggles with depression and anxiety—highlighting his belief that these emotional issues are often tied to biological issues.

Resource #48 (Free): [10 Resources Addressing the Question: “Are Anxiety and Fear Sin?”](#)

This is a vital question, and one that relates very clearly to the issue of God’s design for us as embodied-souls. This post shares a spectrum of biblical answers to this important question.

Resource # 49 (Free): [Neurodiversity and Our Embodied-Souls: Ministry Insights and Applications](#)

“Neurodivergent” is a modern label used to describe individuals whose brains function differently from the majority of people. The label includes a variety of diagnoses, such as autism spectrum disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), Down syndrome, dyscalculia, dyslexia, dysgraphia, and more ([Cleveland Clinic, 2022](#)).

“Neurotypical” describes those with conventional brain development whose behavior follows societal “norms” in relation to social interaction, learning, and perception. This post explores the relationship of neurodiversity to the biblical teaching on our being embodied-souls.

Resources #50-55: 6 Books Addressing Neuroscience, Embodied-Souls, and Biblical Counseling

The first 49 resources are all free. These final 6 resources are not. However, the links below **do take you to free resources related to each book**. I’ll indicate below what specific chapters or sections of each book/booklet address a “biblical anatomy of the embodied-soul.”

- [*Soul Physicians: A Theology of Soul Care*](#): Especially see chapter 8-13, 15-17, 21-24, and 28-29 for teaching on biblical counseling for embodied souls.
- [*Gospel-Centered Counseling: How Christ Changes Lives*](#): Especially see chapters 6-7, 9-10, 12, and 14 for teaching on biblical counseling for embodied souls.
- [*Consider Your Counsel: Addressing Ten Mistakes in Our Biblical Counseling*](#): Especially see chapters 6, 7, and 8 for teaching on biblical counseling for embodied souls.
- [*Anxiety: Anatomy and Cure*](#): The entire booklet explores how to provide biblical counseling for those struggling with anxiety—using a comprehensive understanding of people as embodied souls.
- [*Scripture and Counseling: God’s Word for Life in a Broken World*](#) (Co-Editor): Especially see chapters 2-5, 8, and 9-11 for exploring how the sufficiency of Scripture relates to our being embodied souls.
- [*Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling: Changing Lives with God’s Changeless Truth*](#) (Co-Editor): 6, 7, 8, 27, and 28 for exploring how the sufficiency of Scripture relates to our being embodied souls.

Notes

¹ **James 3:13-18 and Tests of Wisdom from Above:** “Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. ¹⁴ But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. ¹⁵ Such “wisdom” does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. ¹⁶ For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. ¹⁷ But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. ¹⁸ Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.”