

Counseling God's Way

II. God's Way in Counseling

Lesson 5 - God's Word in Counseling

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[Matthew 10:8](#)

Lord, as we come into the Word of God tonight, we ask You to speak to us. We seek You again, Lord, for the guidance of Your Spirit, for the teaching ministry of Your Spirit. We thank You for this great subject of Biblical counseling that You have given to us in Your Word what we need to hear, the path we need to walk, the resources we need to find. And we come humbling ourselves before You tonight, Lord, and confessing You as our wonderful counselor. We ask You again tonight to counsel us, to equip us, to warn us. Do the things that are pleasing in Your sight, Lord, in our lives, through our lives, with our lives. And give us a broader, deeper vision and a more consistent path to walk in concerning counseling as You have ordained it. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

We started out considering what counseling is in our first three units of study. We saw that the Lord is the Counselor, not man. The Lord Himself, He's the Wonderful Counselor. In our next two studies we saw that the Lord, when He counsels, He counsels unto discipleship and sanctification. He counsels to make disciples and He counsels to sanctify lives.

God's Way in Counseling

Now we're going to consider a new section in our study, moving from what counseling is, to God's way in counseling; that is, His means in counseling. Wanting to know now how the Lord gets His counsel to us. And we'll see from the Scriptures that there are four basic issues and aspects involved—God's Word, the Holy Spirit, prayer and church life.

First is God's Word in counseling. This is a strategic issue that we'll return to again and again. Because if the Lord is the counselor, we would expect us to counsel then by what He has to say to us. That's how counsel is given and expected to be received. And the Lord has said what He wants to say in His Word... "The faith once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 1:3). No deletions and no additions between the giving of it and the time the Lord returns. And what the Lord wants to counsel us in, He has given us here. And we'll find how basic and central and critical this issue is time and time and time again.

God's Word in counseling from Psalm 119:24. "Your testimonies also are my delight and my counselors."

God wants us delighting in His Word. Then as we are delighting in His Word, living in it, listening to the Lord from it, He will counsel us. That's basically how He does it, right through His Word.

Also in Psalm 119:105, "Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."

So many people seeking a word of counsel need to know where they are. Where do they stand spiritually? Well, the Word is a lamp to our feet. The light of the Word shines right down on where we stand. But it's more than just showing us where we are, it also shows us where we are to go. It's a lamp to our feet and then a light to our path. Shining down, showing us where we are with the Lord. But also leading us in the way He wants us to go. That's why we want to use it as our counsel. Receive our counsel from it. When others come to us wanting counsel, find it there in the Word. The Word will show people where they stand before Him and where He wants them to go.

Psalm 119:130 says, "The entrance of Your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple." Those who will admit that they are naïve, not wise, simpletons needing wisdom, God's Word will give it. The understanding comes by the light of the Word shining in. "The entrance of Your words gives light."

So many people seeking a word of counsel, they're motivated, they're stirred to seek that counsel because it is, as it were, they're in the dark. It is the darkness of confusion, the darkness of perplexity and sometimes the darkness of bad habits, bad attitudes, and bad relationships. Just darkness! Nothing can deal with darkness except light. Light alone is the factor that deals with darkness. Darkness cannot be chased away, screamed away, cursed away. You can't run from it. You can't beat it. You can't kick it. You can't reason with it. There's only one element that can deal with darkness and that's light. And a lot of people, what they're struggling with is some aspect of darkness. Well, the unfolding or the entrance of the Word of God gives light.

A few years ago I was praying and meditating, thinking with the Lord in this verse, which I love to do in Scriptures that are grabbing my heart, and often understanding comes in many ways as the Spirit illuminates the Word. As we chew on it, and listen, and think with the Lord. In applying it to the counseling ministry this picture came to my mind. A person quite smothered in darkness, obviously needy and burdened, coming to a friend, another Christian, one they trusted, looking for help. And the person to whom they were going knew what was needed and that was the Word of God. So that person had the Bible in their hands and they were beginning to open it to share. And because this was a visual illustration, as the Word was being opened, light was shining out of it. The light cut across that person's darkness, and wherever that shaft of light cut across, the darkness was gone. And it's just a simple little picture, but I think it's exactly how it works spiritually. The darkness in people's lives is driven out by the light of the Word.

"The entrance of your words"—or some versions translate it—"the unfolding of Your Words." You know, not really in some kind of magically zapped way, you know. I've got about three minutes, I'll counsel you. Bzzzzt! There does that take care of it? Not in that kind of a way, but in a spiritual way as it is unfolded by the Spirit of God, giving understanding and insight. It's like, ah, the light dawns; the darkness flees.

"The entrance of Your words gives light." When the Word of God enters our lives, it drives out darkness. And that's how we can use it in our counseling ministries.

Psalm 107:20, "He sent His Word and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions." This is describing people with a lack of wholeness of life. They need to be healed, that is, made whole. They need to be rescued, delivered, from their destructions, from the things that devastate their lives.

Let's see what this was about, beginning at Psalm 107:17, "Fools, because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, were afflicted." So here are people walking in the foolishness of crossing over the guidelines of the Lord and getting involved in iniquity, in sin and rebellion. And so they were afflicted. There were difficulties that developed from the transgressions, natural spiritual consequences.

What did that produce in their lives? Psalm 107:18, "Their soul abhorred all manner of food, and they drew near to the gates of death." This is one more of thousands upon thousands of illustrations that there is nothing new under the sun. Again, our culture has thought we invented eating disorders this generation. I don't like, personally, the term eating disorder. Man's always

searching for euphemisms. Nice ways to say spiritually unhealthy, ungodly destructive things. Eating disorder sounds kind of sterile and clinical and a little therapy, a little medication and it will be all cleared up. The virus will pass.

Now you may have had something in your life that someone called an eating disorder. I wouldn't be surprised. It hits many people. But it's nothing new. And it doesn't take some human clinic to come up with a way through it and out of it. God knows of these things. There's nothing new. And that's what they had. "Their soul abhorred all manner of food." Because of bad thinking, bad behaving, not proper relating to God and His truth and His ways, they ended in a spot where their soul abhorred all manner of food. And of course, that will lead you near to the gates of death. And there are those with such problems today and there were back then as well.

What did these people back then do? Verse 19 says, "Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble..." They made their appeal to God. They cried out to the Lord. And what did the Lord do? "...And He saved them out of their distresses." How did He save them? How did He rescue them? Verse 20 says, "He sent His Word and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions." He sent His Word to them. As a consequence of their difficulties and their wrong thinking, wrong living, transgressing, iniquity, bad thoughts or behaviors, bad thinking or bad behaving before God, they ended up abhorring something that God has created and given to man for good.

Anyone who abhors food, they're not thinking God's way. Food is not something to abhor, to dread, to fear, or to hate. It is something that God created that's good for man. It's for nurturing the physical life we have. And it actually even was created by God to be enjoyable. And all things that God gives can be enjoyed. And they can be sanctified by thanksgiving and prayer and the Word. So anyone who abhors food, who's afraid of it, who despises it, who shudders at the thought of it, there's some ungodly thinking going on. This thinking that food wasn't ordained by God is all messed up by the world, the flesh, or the devil.

On the other end of the scale, there are people who do not to eat—they flip it around the other way, they live to eat. And food becomes their God. Well that's bad thinking. That is an ungodly perspective on food. God didn't make food for that purpose. He made it to be received with thanksgiving and enjoyment to nurture the physical life He's given to us and to give Him thanks for it. It is to be a blessing, a resource and a pleasure. So being afraid of it or possessed by it is spiritual bondage to ungodly thinking.

What does the Lord do to make a person whole when their life is broken up like that? He sends His Word and heals them. He sends His Word and tells them the truth. He lets them reconsider what's going on by hearing how He views all of that. And anyone willing to receive that, and believe that, and stand on that, will be made whole and delivered from their destructions. That is what happened back then.

There is a dear sister who was diagnosed with an eating disorder. I would say she was in spiritual bondage to bad thinking, ungodly thinking about food. Someone ministered to her, prayed for her and shared some things from the Word and the Lord touched her life. He healed her and made her life whole, brought her mind back to wholeness and sound thinking. And food was neither something to run from nor something to live for. And she was given a great burden by the Lord for ladies that were messed up in their thinking and wrong behavior with food. Those that the world would say had eating disorders like anorexia or bulimia or chronic overeating or fearful under eating. There are all kinds of things, along the scale that you could give some kind of clinical description to, but it doesn't get at the heart of it. It just looks at the outside characteristic,

the behavior. And she started seeking the Lord, in the Word and praying for gals that had these needs in their lives.

When I first began to travel and teach on this subject, she went to the first seminar we ever did and God touched her life deeply. She started calling every week or two or three and sharing some Scriptures she had found that had helped her greatly. And she said, "Bob, please tell me if I'm flipping out here. Am I seeing food in everything in the Word of God, you know? Am I seeing the whole world through my own trial and victory?"

And I said to her, "No, I don't think you are." Every time she called, she had profound insight. The first time she called I thought it was an adolescent. I thought she was about eleven or twelve years old, a real sweet little gal with a young voice. I found out she was married and had a baby at that time, she might even have more now. Last time I saw her, the baby looked like two or three. And the last time I talked to her she had 130 or 140 some girls on her prayer list, many of which had been gloriously delivered from their destructions. And all she did was hear from the Lord, with great insight from the Holy Spirit to apply it to this bondage and confusion and just pass it on. And through this little gal the Lord was sending His Word and healing dozens upon dozens of others.

And I believe with all my heart that's exactly what God is talking about when He lets us consider counseling God's way. That's how God designed to do it. He sent His Word and healed them and delivered them from their destructions. Counsel from the Word, it's so critically true that's what we need. And it's abundantly, wonderfully available. May we seek our counsel in the Word and offer our counsel from the Word.

Now the Word in discipleship and sanctification. Why do we enter into that as our next issue of study, our next heading? Because when the Lord counsels, He counsels unto discipleship and sanctification. How does He do that? It is by the use of His Word.

Remember John 8:31-32, "If you abide in My word you are truly disciples of Mine. You'll know the truth and the truth will set you free." What truth? It is the truth of the Word of God. Living in the Word of God, we know the truth of the Word of God, and the truth of the Word of God sets us free. That happens to real disciples. If you live in My word you are really My disciples. God disciplines us by His Word and counseling is one way God produces disciples, so obviously He's going to counsel by the use of His Word. That is what disciplines people. It all fits together with one perfect mind from the Lord.

Sanctification. In John 17:17 Jesus prayed, "Sanctify them in Your truth. Your word is truth." A prayer by Jesus to the Father that lives would be sanctified by the truth of the Word of God. When God counsels, He counsels unto our sanctification.

How does God sanctify our lives? He uses the truth of His Word. Sanctification is being increasingly set apart for the use of God, the glory of God, and the purposes of God. How does God do that? He brings the truth of His Word to bear on our lives, changing our thinking, behaving, relating, and our path and He sets our lives apart to the Lord. That's what the Lord wants to do in our counseling ministries.

At this point there is a major umbrella cliché. Remember what they are? Cliché—a saying that's used so often by so many that most assume it is the last word, the summing up truth, the concluding issue. Why umbrella?—because umbrellas shelter and protect. These clichés, in the church-counseling world, offer shelter and protection for all kinds of self-centered and flesh-strengthening, humanistic counseling theories.

The umbrella cliché goes like this: "All truth is God's truth."

It has such a true ring to it, it almost sounds like why even bother to evaluate that. I mean, surely all truth is God's truth. The reasoning goes this way: God is true. God made everything, so any truth you find anywhere has its source in God. You know, bingo! I don't think so. It overlooks too many things in the Word of God. It leaps to too many assumptions. It sounds ironclad, but it's full of holes. Now there is an aspect in which the cliché is true. Anything that actually is absolutely true did source in God. But that's not how this cliché is used. Let me share with you a bit how it's used.

In the integrative world of Christian counseling, which is not only the dominating vanguard movement in the American church world, in fact, around the world among the churches, it also is not just the leading point, it is the predominating influence in the American church. It is the integrative approach. We'll take the absolute truth of the Word of God and we'll integrate into it the theories of man, like Jung and Maslow, and Freud and Adler and Eric Fromm and others like that. And we'll bring to bear all of this great truth of God and all of this great discovered truth. So we'll have revealed truth and then this great arena of discovered truth. And we're very comfortable doing that, you see, because we have this great assurance—all truth is God's truth.

There are major Biblical problems with that kind of thinking. One problem is these men who came up with these theories were dead and blind. How good is their so-called truth going to be as they're groping around guessing? Can you see Freud, "Let's see, I think man has three parts. Yes, here's the ego, the id, and oh the super ego too. Yes, that's what man is." And then if you dare say in the church, you are mixed that with the Bible? Oh yeah, because hey, all truth is God's truth. I'm sorry, I don't buy it. I heard it at seminary in Dallas in the late 1960s and I didn't know anything. But I didn't think that quite clicked. It didn't ring true really. All truth is God's truth, except that saying!

There are other problems with it too. What are you going to measure truth by? This approach just mixes that with God's Word because it looks like it is true. Hey, these guys are brilliant. They agree. And hey, it has kind of a reality to it, so let's mix it in.

There is another great problem. This approach to counseling takes the absolute, eternal, reliable, sufficient truth of God and brings it down to a level we never should have lowered it to. While at the same time, it takes the so-called discovered truth of man and elevates it to a place that it never should have achieved. And there they are, God's truth and man's truth, but it's all God's and it's all on one level table, one great smorgasbord of truth. And everyone is inviting us to the banqueting table and the banner isn't love. The banner is, all truth is God's truth and it is self-satisfying, self-serving.

And on that table there's a great spread, lavish. And praise God, look there's some Philipians there. But we dare not use it without some Freud. Matthew, sure, that's going to help. That's God's Word. Are you kidding me? But don't forget to mix it with Maslow, you know. Then you get a better counsel than either could offer on their own. This is the dominating perspective in the American church. And you probably believe me when I say this, little testimony. To challenge that in teaching and writing and interaction, causes many to look at you as though you just landed from Mars, or just fell off the turnip truck coming in from the farm. "Well, we'll have to humor this guy. He just doesn't understand."

Well I don't understand everything, but I believe the Lord has shown enough light of His Word on that umbrella cliché that, to me, it's just riddled with holes. It looks to me like God shot a machine gun at it. It has so many holes in it.

And you say, "How can you mix Matthew and Maslow? And how can you mix Freud in there with Philipians?" And they go, "Well hey, we all know all truth is God's truth." And they point to the banner and say, "Have another plateful." It's deadly.

For counseling God's way, God's Word is the truth for discipling, for sanctifying, for setting people free and for making lives whole. All truth is God's truth is a banner that waters down and compromises real truth, the truth of the Word of God. In fact, Jesus made it very clear in what He said that He was not anticipating supplemental input from Freud and Jung someday. He said, "Real disciples live in My word and they know the truth and that truth sets them free." They're not waiting for one more turn of the key to Freud so the handcuffs are off. The truth of the Word sets people free. Jesus didn't say, "Real disciples are digging for truth anywhere they can find it. And wherever they find it, it liberates them." He didn't even leave room for that. Real disciples live in My Word. They know the truth and that truth liberates them.

It is the same with the sanctification prayer. "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth" (John 17:17). The church is acting as though Jesus prayed far differently than that, you know. "Oh Father, as My disciples roam to and fro and catch the wisdom of man and mix it with the wisdom of heaven, sanctify them by any truth they find, because we all know where it came from." No way! Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. Jesus left no doubt where heaven looks for counsel, for liberation, for being set free, for being sanctified and made whole. It's the truth of the Word of God.

With that in mind, let's think together for a little while about the ability of the Word of God.

2 Timothy 3:14-15,

But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

The ability of the Word of God is one of the great themes of Scripture. The Scriptures not only have this immeasurable, heavenly capacity, the Scriptures reveal to us this capacity, this ability.

Many years ago I started a study folder called, "The Ability of the Word of God." And like most study folders that I have developed through the years, especially once I got out of school and wasn't developing folders just on what everybody told me to develop them on. But I enjoyed study even more once I was out of school. I must say I liked seminary. I went there for wrong reasons. I thought you had to go there to learn the Bible. I was a little confused there. I didn't yet know that revolutionary thought that churches were supposed to teach that to us. So I was a little bit off base. But praise God, I did want to learn the Word. That's why I was there. And I loved being at a seminary that had a heavy, heavy duty Bible emphasis; where everyone had to be an English Bible major and everyone had to take a couple years of Hebrew and three years of Greek. I do like language and it's been a blessing. Though I realized once I got out of school and stopped hearing how important it was, I realized you didn't have to know Greek to understand the Bible either. But I really enjoyed studying the Word through school, but once I got out, I enjoyed it even more. There was no one to tell me what to study, but God laying it on my heart. And this

was one of the early studies I started and I stuck at it and I still keep an eye out for verses with this theme.

It came to me one day reading, and I came across this phrase, “the Holy Scriptures, which are able....” Then somewhere else I noticed that phrase, and I thought, “Oh my goodness, I wonder how many places that appears?” Found out a lot of places in the Word of God talk about the ability of the Word of God.

Bet you'd never guess what I majored on in seminary. Christian education. You know, like I was going to go out and develop the Sunday school ministries of the world. I did it because I liked the two leading professors. I wanted to hang out with them and learn from them, which I think was wisdom. That is the way it works in the kingdom, the older disciple the younger. And lives you are touched by are far more important than the curriculum shape.

What is the Holy Scripture able to do? “...make you wise for salvation...” How?—“...through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 3:15). If it weren't for the Scriptures, we'd have no clue how to wise up unto salvation. No clue. But the Scriptures are able to make us wise for salvation. But there's more. Look at these next two verses. It even gets increasingly richer.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Right in the middle of verse 16, “All Scripture is profitable....” It's a similar kind of phrase. Scriptures which are able, the Scripture is profitable. They are able to bring a benefit, a spiritual profit. Not make you rich in dollars, but rich in heavenly treasure. Profitable for what does it say? Not for the Rolex and the Rolls Royce, but profitable for doctrine, that is, teaching. The Scriptures are able to profit our lives in teaching of the way of the Lord. And even more for reproof, the Scriptures are able to give us the benefit of knowing when we're off the way and even more, they are able to profit us for correction. That is, move us back on the way of the Lord and walking down His path to discipleship. And even more, they are profitable for instruction in righteousness. That is, teaching and training us to move right down that right path, that path of righteousness.

To what end is all of this working? Verse 17, “...that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

People seeking a word of counsel, sometimes they need to have the ability of God unleashed to make them wise unto salvation. In fact later, we'll look at counseling session guidelines. This is a high priority in counseling. Ask God if that person is saved. If they aren't, you know what their number one need is even if they've got eight others they want to talk about.

But others who are seeking help, they need to have the ability of the Word unleashed to bring the spiritual profit of teaching them, reproofing them, correcting them and instructing them. And for those that are growing and yearning and want to serve God, that's included in verse 17, “that the man of God may be complete...” Their life made whole, filled out, thoroughly equipped. How completely? It is for every good work. For every spiritual calling of ministry God has, we can be equipped right in the Word of God.

There are three Biblical theological terms in these verses: inspiration, authority and sufficiency. Inspiration—all Scripture is inspired of God. Why do we want to counsel from the Word? Because this is not religious literature, this is God speaking to man. Sure He used the prophets

and apostles and their vocabulary and their history and their understanding. But God inspired the message. He literally breathed it out through their lives, exactly what He wanted to say. That's why we want to counsel from the Word of God.

We'll talk about this later too, but I'm always, in a counseling situation, looking for that moment when we can open the Word of God and let the Wonderful Counselor start doing some counseling. That's when things really start to pop.

You know, we've got all these theories instead. Oh don't forget what Karl Rogers said, "You don't want to be too direct." So now people go to pastors and staff members and pour out their heart and trouble and sin and heartbreak, and the counselor goes, "Well, how do you feel about that?" All heaven is in spiritual cramps over it. Help that person! "Well, how do you feel about that?" "Well, I..." and they start telling you. "And I don't know what I should do. It seems like this option and that and the other..." The counselor comes up with another great round of advice. "Well what do you think you should do? Well what do you like? What works for you?" Karl Rogers, good counselor. Why counsel that way? It is because of the foolish idea that all the answers are in that person.

Jeremiah wrote, "...the way of a man is not in himself..." (Jeremiah 10:23). He can't find a path. He's dead and blind.

The Scriptures are inspired. That's one more of many, many reasons why I love to counsel with it, because it lets God talk to that person instead of me. Instead of me starting out, "Well, let me tell you what I did when I came across that." Well, who cares? Unless it's anchored in the Word of God, then tell me. "Boy, you know that happened to my uncle once. Let me tell you what he tried. It didn't work too good, but it might work better for you." I mean, flimsy, lifeless, powerless counsel. The Word of God, this is God speaking to man! We unleash that in counseling and it can be as though people are sitting at the foot of the Wonderful Counselor getting personal counsel from Him.

It is inspired and it is authoritative. When God speaks, that settles it. I mean, that's it. When God gives His teaching or doctrine that is final. When He reprovess and says that's wrong, that settles it. When He corrects and says here's the way back, there's no further word. When He instructs us how to move down that path of righteousness, that is the authority of God right there!

There's another great truth in these verses about Biblical theology and that is "sufficiency." Many, many, many so-called Christian churches no longer believe in, no longer stand on the inspiration or the authority of Scripture. That's tragic! That's like counsel from any psychologically oriented book they can find, religious or irreligious. They might mix a little religious platitude with it or not, right in the church world. That's a heartbreaker, but in many ways here's a sadder one. Many churches that still believe the Word of God is what it says, inspired and authoritative, no longer believe it is sufficient. "Oh sure, this is all from God. Oh yeah, whatever God said, that settles it. But here's the problem, He just didn't say enough." Seldom do people in churches say it quite that bluntly, but that's exactly how the church is behaving. Yes, the Lord spoke on this, that and the other, but He just didn't speak in these areas. And someone kind of shouts up, "Well have no fear, Sigmund Freud is here. What God missed Freud will collect." That's the way the church is behaving. As though there are great gaps there in what God said, but oh, we've got these wonderful godless antichrists, self-centered, humanistic geniuses. They're going to help us walk God's path.

It is not sane thinking though, spiritually speaking. It is not solid thinking. Right in this county in a large evangelical church whose pastor preached the Word all of his life, never promoted psychological thinking, but never warned about it either. One day Christian counseling clinic was conducting a seminar on campus. It was a seminar by the biggest integrative Christian counseling clinic in the entire movement. And which, by the way, is one of my heartaches, because they have been part time professors at a seminary for six or eight years, teaching pastors how to help people see their lives changed. I couldn't and shouldn't judge their heart or where they stand with God. But I know their message. I'm responsible to evaluate and it's psychological to the core. They're psychologists. And they're not trying to hide it. They're leaders in the entire American church world of integration. That's their passion. That's their goal. That's their vision. A lot of men true to the Word still there, but the leaven is there too. We don't have to guess what happens to leaven if it's not purged. I mean, the Lord's already told us what happens.

So the clinic was being conducted on the campus of this church. One of the leading men of the church, a Bible teacher there who's been in, I think, three different classes or more here, was curious what's that all about, and went to visit. He told me one day what he heard. A man stood up, actually a Dallas seminary man. When he mentioned him I knew him well when I was there in Dallas. A very gifted man. And he opened the seminar this way, a prayer almost exactly like this. Doesn't have to be *the* quote, the sense of it you'll get. "Lord, we thank You so much for Your Word. It is so tremendous. We couldn't get along without it. Oh how we appreciate it. Amen, Amen, Amen, Amen!" Then he adds, "But for the things that are missing in it, we thank You that You are revealing them in seminars like this."

I mean, how blatant can it be? What is that saying? The Word of God is not enough. What else is it saying? The wisdom of man can help this. Freud, hey, he had some ideas that can help this. Karl Jung, oh yeah, so he was demon possessed. I mean, picky, picky, you know. He had some great ideas that can help this. That's the way the church is behaving.

Of course in doing that you can turn all counseling into pathology and everybody has a disorder or a disease. And lo and behold, then you can get the American insurance industry to underwrite it as healthcare. Oh, you're off and running on a billion, multi-billion dollar industry. And even able to sign the name of the Lord to it, so Christians will flock there for help.

Now if I sound like I'm a little bit burdened, then I'm understating the case. It's a heartache! Oh what we're doing in underestimating and demeaning the Word of God.

The Word of God is sufficient. Look at these words. "That the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:17). The word sufficiency isn't used there but it screams out. The Word is enough to make us complete. What do we want to be, more than complete? Well, we certainly aren't going to be using something less than the Word. We'll be less than complete.

Yes, the Word of God is inspired. Praise God for all who still believe it. Yes, it's authoritative. Thank God for those who let the Word settle things. But brothers and sisters, the battleground in the evangelical born again Bible-believing church world today is not so much on those two points, it's on sufficiency. The American Church en masse, does not believe in the sufficiency of the Word of God. Shame on us! God forgive us! God revive us! God reform us!

Look at the ability of the Word of God, in Hebrews 4:12. Look what the Word of God can do—

For the Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

The character of the Word of God is given and then what it's able to do. The Word of God is living, powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword. It's alive! It has power in it! It's sharp.

Here's another reason I love to counsel with the Word of God. Another reason I don't have an ounce of interest anymore in the theories of man, when it comes to helping man. I just put it straight out. I have zero interest, even though in college I was deeply enamored with psychological theory. I was excited about it. I was intrigued with it. I mean, after all I read their theories and these men knew me! They knew I was at least semi-paranoid. Everything I read was me. I could have been a lifelong patient! Everything I read was me. How do these men know that? Well, they were genius. But they were quite surface and in many ways quite general too. Like today, the diagnosis of codependency, I mean, you could just almost put 98% of the population in there and say, "That's me!" Yeah, we'd like you all in there. Come, get treated.

I have no interest in any of that any more, for the Word of God is living, powerful, sharp. You know all that stuff? It's dead, weak and dull. That's the difference. The Word of God is living, powerful and sharp. All those theories are dead, weak and dull. Oh, I'm not saying it's not ingenious. I'm not saying that. And I'm not saying they never touch on anything that has any actuality at all. They touch on enough actuality to get people hooked. But their ideas and words they're not living, they're not powerful and they're not sharp.

The Word of God, what is it able to do? Pierce even to the division of soul and spirit. Oh so much counseling, brothers and sisters, has to do with letting the Word of God cut in and divide soul and spirit. That is, souliness, carnality, fleshiness, the soul, the psyche, separating psychology from Holy Spiritology. It is dividing the soul and spirit, showing the distinction between the two. It distinguishes between the soul, the mind, the emotion, the will, and personality—all human resources. What Adam passed on to us, separating that from the spirit, that place where God is willing to dwell and share His life.

It is really the difference between spirituality and carnality. The church is plagued with carnality and needs spirituality. And the Word of God is able to cut in there and sort those things out and say, "Hey that's just fleshy. That's just self life. You're just walking and thinking according to the flesh. You need to walk according to the Spirit. Set your mind on things above. Let the Word sort those things out."

It also separates joints and marrow. Sometimes that is real important in counseling, separating the joints and the marrow. In a physical body the joints and marrow are quite easy to think through. The marrow is that place inside the bones where blood is produced. And what is in the blood? Life! So the marrow that's life producing on the physical realm, the life producing place in the body. What are the joints? That's where that life comes out into action and is worked out.

Well, we are talking spiritually and these are to give us spiritual insight. In the body of Christ, in life in Christ, there is spiritual joints and spiritual marrow. There is that which is spiritual marrow and that is where life is produced. And then there are spiritual joints, where there is the out-working of life. Many Christians don't have those sorted out. And some of them are just trying their head off. You know, their whole life is joints. They are flailing and going and doing. Why doesn't this work? They know nothing about spiritual marrow, where the life comes from.

Take passages like Hebrews 12:1-2 NASB, "...run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith..." What phrases and concept there relates to spiritual joints, the outworking of life? Running the race, that's action. And the Christian life is like a race to be run. But when you talk about marrow, you are talking about life, you're talking about how you're going to be able to do this. What words in those verses point to the marrow, the life producing aspect?—"Fixing your eyes on Jesus." There's no way to run the race apart from fixing your eyes on Jesus. That's where the life comes from to pour out on the track. There are Christians just flailing away on the racetrack of the Christian life. And they are weary and getting nowhere. Their eyes are on themselves and their eyes on the other person running by them. Their eyes are on the one that fell down. They are thinking they are doing real well now. Or their eyes are on those who are running past them and they are, well why can't I run like that? You can't run the race that way. We've got to fix our eyes on Jesus. That's where the life comes from. That's the marrow.

A lot of people that are seeking a word of counsel, they need *the Word* to sort out for them the difference between marrow and joints.

In John 15:5 Jesus said,

I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit. Apart from Me you can do nothing.

There it is again, marrow and joints. What is like unto the joints, the outworking of life? Bearing much fruit and life is appearing. Ministry, service and character are available to people to be touched and blessed. But where's the marrow that produces it? Where's the life producing source there? It is abiding in Him.

There are Christian branches everywhere straining and groaning and striving that can't even birth one grape. It is because they know nothing of the marrow that produces the life that appears as fruit. How do we know the difference between these things? The Word of God is living, powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword. It gets in there and sorts these things out for us and you go, oh wow! That changes everything.

It's also a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. In ministering to someone, in counseling someone, we don't know what their thoughts are. We don't know what their motives are. We can't read their hearts. Well then how do you help them? You just minister the Word of God to them. The Word of God, because it's living, powerful, and sharp, it can get right down in there as deep as discerning the thoughts and intents. Just let God do it. Let God do it by His Word. I don't know if their motives are right. God will sure reveal that through His Word. He'll nail them on their motives if they're wrong. I don't know if they're thinking the right path here. God knows their mind. Just minister the Word to them. It will cut right in there as deep as sorting out their thoughts and motivations deep inside their heart.

The ability of the Word of God.

In Psalm 19:7, again the character of the Word, therefore what it is able to do. "The law of the LORD is perfect..." These terms, the law of the Lord, the testimony of the Lord, the statutes are all general terms for the Scripture.

God's Word is perfect, converting the soul. The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart.

The commandment of the Lord is pure, therefore enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever. The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

The Word of God, it's perfect, flawless so it can restore souls.

Oh, the excitement of the world and the church over the recovery movement! I can understand the excitement of the world. They know things are in a mess and they are trying to find something that works. What baffles me is why the church is so excited over it. We're acting like recovery was just invented this decade, and surprise, the world invented it. No, it started in the Garden of Eden and God invented it. In fact, it goes back further than that. It goes back before the foundations of the world. God had a plan to restore man to the condition he was intended to be in.

The Word of God in its flawlessness can restore souls, renew lives, revive lives, brings lives back into the condition God intends them to be. God's Word is sure, making wise the simple. It's certain, infallible so it gives wisdom to the simple.

It's right, rejoicing the heart. It's the absolutely correct way to live. That produces joy inside. It's pure, so it enlightens the eyes. No impurities. No admixtures in the Word.

It's clean. No corruption to destroy it. It endures forever. It's not faddish, here today and gone tomorrow. Thank God we have something better than left brain, right brain counseling theory. What a striving vain hope that is to change lives!

Amen!