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2. Listen
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I. The Principles of Gospel Counselling Conversations

1. The Call to Biblical Counselling

Example of Counselling Gone Bad

- And they sat with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his suffering was very great. (Job 2:13)
- After the LORD had spoken these words to Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite: "My anger burns against you and against your two friends, for you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has. (Job 42:7).

Key Movements in Gospel Conversations

1. **Prepare**-clothe your heart in Christ's heart, undergird all steps with prayer



1 = upward movement towards Christ

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2. **Listen**-know, understand and enter the person's world to incarnate Christ's love



2 = downward movement towards the person

3. **Reveal** – identify sin, bring in God's grace and truth

4. **Support**- to apply God's truth for heart and behaviour change



3 & 4 = upward movement towards Christ

The call to counsel one another in the Body

- But **exhort one another every day**, as long as it is called “today,” **that none of you may be hardened** by the deceitfulness of sin. (**Heb 3:13**)
- And let us consider how to **stir up one another** to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but **encouraging one another**, and all the more as you see **the Day drawing near**. (Heb 10:24-25)

3 Areas to Work on and Grow in

1. **Preparing** your heart—Becoming Christ’s Ambassador, understanding the dynamics involved in counselling
2. **Entering** another person’s world—Listening and Asking good questions
3. **Embracing** God’s grace and truth for change—Applying God’s Word

Framework and Context for Counselling Conversations

- Biblical Lenses for engaging our world
- The church as a discipleship community
- Listening presence
- How to walk with someone in suffering
- Mentoring Relationships

Why Applying Biblical Truth to Bring Change Is Important in Our Counselling

- God insists that self-centered people learn love—not coping skills, not self-actualization, not meeting felt needs, not techniques of managing emotions or thought life, not fulfilling personal goals.
- He insists that we learn love by being loved, by learning Jesus: “In this is love ... that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:10). **On the last day**, every knee bows to God’s “values.”
 - Powlison, David. 2021. [*The Pastor as Counselor: The Call for Soul Care.*](#) Wheaton, IL: Crossway.

True Healing comes from the voice and presence of Our Great Shepherd

Our Lord Jesus

But **our Pastor's voice heals** us: "My sheep hear my voice" (John 10:27). Don't you have the same kinds of problems as those you minister to, and aren't our differences matters of degree, not kind? Aren't you part of the same ongoing healing? **Real ministry** engages **the same personal and interpersonal problems that the psychotherapies address—but more deeply**. It **pursues hidden moral cancers that we all share**, whether our symptoms are florid or mild. And **any healing is our healing, one and all**.

- Powlison, David. 2021. [*The Pastor as Counselor: The Call for Soul Care*](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway.

2. The Goal of Biblical Counselling

Defective Counselling Goals

- Change how I feel.
- Change my circumstances.
- Vindicate me.
- Give me a formula.

• Powlison, David. 2021. [*The Pastor as Counselor: The Call for Soul Care*](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway.

The Biblical Lenses for Answers to our Counselling Questions

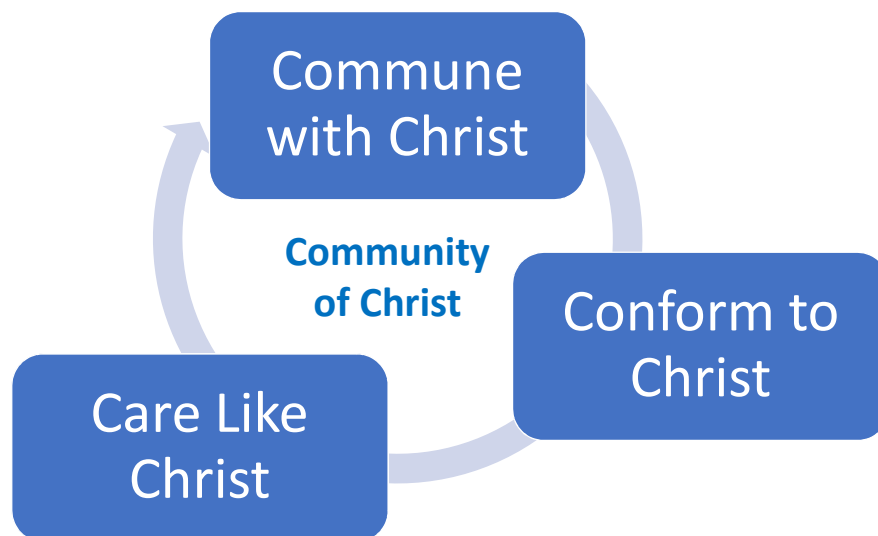
1. **The WORD:** Where to find wisdom?- Truth to set me free
2. **The Trinity:** Who is God, the ultimate community and reality from all eternity?
–Become a worshipper from an idolater
3. **Creation:** Who am I? – My being, identity, significance and purpose
4. **The Fall:** What's my problem?- Dead in Sin, corrupted at the core of my being
5. **The Cross:** What's my solution?-Saved and Changed by Christ
6. **Consummation:** What's my hope?-Spurred by heaven's glory
7. **The Church:** Who's my community?-No longer travelling alone
8. **Our Sanctification:** What's God's goal for me?-Become like Christ.

Adapted from Kellemen, Robert W.. Gospel-Centered Counseling (Equipping Biblical Counselors) (p. 290-93). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

Sanctification—the Biblical Counselling



4C's of Discipleship as Counselling Goals and Empowerment



3. Biblical Counselling As a Community Project

Our Walk is a Community Project

“Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.” (Eph 4:15-16)

Counseling → understanding and applying biblical truth in the context of loving relationships.

The church becomes a place to belong and become, to walk in good works God has prepared for us in advance. (Eph 2:10)

The Church as God's Unique Community for Counselling

“You serve a congregation of potential members of the pastoral care team. Furthermore, every person whom you successfully counsel becomes in some way a better counselor of others.”

- Powlison, David. 2021. [*The Pastor as Counselor: The Call for Soul Care*](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and **God of all comfort**, who **comforts us** in all our affliction, so that we may be able to **comfort those who are in any affliction**, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. (2Co 1:3-4)

4. A Counsellor As Christ Ambassador

Counsellors are Ambassadors in Christ's Body.

- “Who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.” (2 Cor 1:4)
- Our ability to help others is not based ourselves but our going through suffering face-to-face with Christ.
- So we don't point people to ourselves but to Christ, our ultimate Comforter.
- God calls us to this as the body of Christ. “There should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it” (1 Cor. 12:25 – 26).
- Suffering happens “to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead.” (2 Cor 1:9)
- Healing happens as we jointly support one another in suffering by pointing to Christ

Kellemen, Robert W.. Gospel-Centered Counseling (Equipping Biblical Counselors) (p. 175). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

As Christ's Ambassador

We represent

- His Truth
- His Character
- His Method

in our role as his prophets, priests and kings bearing His image.

4 Elements of a loving counselling conversation

- Enter the person's world
- Embody Christ by putting on His humility and loving virtues
- Empathize by identifying with the suffering
- Embrace God's agenda for change

Understanding the role of a counsellor

- Image bearers cannot be analyzed, dissected, examined, or studied. They can only be known, experienced, and loved.
 - we need to listen well to **people's situational data** (what is happening around them and to them), and we need to listen well to **people's soul data** (what is happening in them) as they respond to what is happening to them).
 - We are not solution focused; we are soul-u-tion focused (focus on the heart).
 - Grace connection is the mind-set of personal involvement with a deep commitment to another person's maturity, evidenced by incarnational participation in their suffering. **It is a heart commitment to love another person.** It is not a technique to be mastered, but a way of life to be nurtured by personal communion with Christ — who embodies grace connecting.
- Kellemen, Robert W.. Gospel Conversations (Equipping Biblical Counselors) (p. 59, 135). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

Counsellors Listen Like a Skilled Musician with a Trained Ear

- Like a skilled musician, you develop a trained ear. In every detail of every person's story, you learn to hear the music of these unmentioned realities. You help others hear what is actually playing. A relevant, honest pastoral conversation teaches another person how to listen and then how to join the song. Need I say more? No one else is listening to what you hear. No one else is saying what you have to say. No one else is singing what you believe. No one else is giving to others what you have been given that you might freely give. Every person who "needs counseling" actually needs your unique message.

• Powlison, David. 2021. [*The Pastor as Counselor: The Call for Soul Care*](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway.

Listen Attentively and Biblically

- To Probe and Examine the heart biblically to expose sin so people see the truth about their wandering hearts
- To Point to the greater truth of Christ's amazing grace, that it's horrible to sin but wonderful to be forgiven.
- To Confront lovingly and wisely

Adapted from Kellemen, Robert W.. *Gospel Conversations (Equipping Biblical Counselors)* (p. 234). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

5. Understanding Our Human Heart

Understanding How our heart works

- I pursue (volitional action) what I perceive (rational direction) to be pleasing (relational motivation).
- What I believe (rational direction) about what satisfies my longings for relationship (relational motivation) provides the direction that I choose to pursue (volitional action) and determines my response (emotional reaction) to my inner and outer world.
- I do (volitional) what I determine/decide (rational) I delight in (relational).


“We are motivated by what we believe will satisfy the deepest thirsts in our soul.”

Kellemen, Robert W.. Gospel-Centered Counseling (Equipping Biblical Counselors) (p. 109). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

Understanding the Condition of our heart

- **Eph 2:1** And you were dead in the trespasses and sins
- Eph 2:2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—
- Eph 2:3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.
- Eph 4:17 Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds.
- Eph 4:18 They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart.
- Eph 4:19 They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.
- Eph 4:31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

The Fallen heart condition from Eph 2 &4

- **Relationally**—Sons of disobedience (2.1), alienated from the life of God (4:18), hardness of heart (4.18), given to sensuality.
 - **Rationally**—futility of the mind, darkened in understanding
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- **Volitionally**—walk as the Gentiles do (4:17), practice every kind of impurity (4:19), following the world and the prince of the air (2:2) live in ungoverned passions of our flesh, carrying out desires of the body and mind
 - **Emotionally**—filled with negative mood states of bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and malice. (4:31)

Dynamics of Our Spiritual Battles

- Sin is what you do when your heart is not satisfied with God. No one sins out of duty. We sin because it holds out some promise of happiness. That promise enslaves us until we believe that God is more to be desired than life itself (Ps. 63:3). Which means that the power of sin's promise is broken by the power of God's. All that God promises to be for us in Jesus stands over against what sin promises to be for us without him.

• Kellemen, Robert W.. Gospel-Centered Counseling (Equipping Biblical Counselors) (p. 94). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

Counselling in view of our fallen condition

- So in our fallen world, there is a battle for our affection and attention, for our love and loyalty.
- we help one another with soul-u-tions (change at the heart level) by helping one another to grasp who God is and encouraging one another to respond like Christ.
- To know that God is good even when life is bad.
- To know God is in control, there is hope.
- To be exposed regularly to the holy and loving heart of God to ignite love for God which is the only right and effective relational motivation for Christian living.
- To affirm our identity as one loved by God. This identity will sustain us through temptations and sufferings.

Adapted from Kellemen, Robert W.. Gospel-Centered Counseling (Equipping Biblical Counselors) (p. 71). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

Understanding the Role of a Biblical Counsellor

“What we think about God is the most important things about us.” A.W. Tozer

- So what comes to mind when you think about God? He loves you.
- Satan seeks to crop the holy love of God out of the picture.
- Our role is to crop Christ and his holy love back into the picture.

What sort of weapons can demolish demonic reasoning? Truth. The Word. The Truth about who Christ is and who we are in and to Christ.

- Kellemen, Robert W.. Gospel-Centered Counseling (Equipping Biblical Counselors) (p. 90). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

6. The Gospel of our Salvation as Good News for our Fallen Hearts

The Gospel as Means to the goal of counselling— Our Sanctification

“**Sanctification** is the grace-motivated and grace-empowered art of applying our justification, reconciliation, regeneration, and redemption so that our inner life increasingly reflects the inner life of Christ (relationally, rationally, volitionally, and emotionally) as we put off the old dead person we once were and put on the new person we already are in Christ (relationally, rationally, volitionally, and emotionally).”

- Kellemen, Robert W.. Gospel Conversations (Equipping Biblical Counselors) (p. 301). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

The Gospel as Healing Balm for Our Soul—Hence Biblical Counselling As Gospel Conversations

- **Justification:** “To your sin and condemnation, the gospel says, ‘Not guilty! **Forgiven!**’ ”
- **Reconciliation:** “To your lostness and aloneness, the gospel says, ‘You are accepted. Adopted. You are family — sons and daughters. **Welcome home!**’ ”
- **Regeneration:** “To your fallenness and heart of stone, the gospel says, ‘You’re a **new creation** in Christ. Saints!’ ”
- **Redemption:** “To your enslavement to sin and defeat at the hands of the world, the flesh, and the Devil, the gospel says, ‘You are more than **conquerors** through Christ. Victors!’ ”

Salvation and Suffering: “To your deep grief, the gospel says, ‘Mourning does not have the final word. **Healing** does. **Joy** does.’

- Kellemen, Robert W.. Gospel-Centered Counseling (Equipping Biblical Counselors) (p. 190). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

Counseling's Sanctification Goals—Overcoming Sin & Suffering through A Heart Renewed and Transformed in Christ

Applying the Gospel to all 4 HEART CHAMBERS

1. **Relationally (Affections)** -From Spiritual Idolaters and Adulterers to Gospel-Adorned Brides and God's beloved Children.

2. **Rationally (Mind-sets)** -From Now-focused, Proud Self-reliant legalist/Condemned Defeatist to Humble Hope-filled Grace Narrators

Resulting in:

3. **Volitionally (Pathways/Purposes)** -From Enslaved Self-Seekers to Empowered Kingdom Servants and Builders

4. **Emotionally (Mood States)** -From Ungoverned Users and Angry/ Fearful Reactors to Love and Joy-Filled Responder (towards others) and Worshipers (towards God)

By Putting off Sin-Stained Filthy Rags and Putting On Blood-Bought Gospel Robes

Seeing God's Truth from the Creation, Fall, Redemption Biblical Lenses

- 4 Robes of Creation
- 4 Rags for the Fall
- 4 Gowns of Redemption

From Kellemen, Robert W.. *Gospel-Centered Counseling* (Equipping Biblical Counselors) (p. 151). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

A. From the Robe of Righteousness to the Rag of Condemnation to the Gown of Justification

- Creation: God designed us to rest in him without shame in our original righteousness leading to a peaceful relationship of wholeness and shalom with him.
- Fall: Sin condemned our conscience as rightfully guilty and deserving penalty.
- Redemption: Salvation provides **justification**, declaring us **not guilty** because Christ has paid our penalty.

B. From the Robe of Communion to the Rag of Separation to the Gown of Reconciliation

- Creation: God designed us to relate like him and to him.
- Fall: Sin created a chasm between us and God, separating us from Him.
- Redemption: Salvation provides **reconciliation**, **adopting us** into our Father's forever family.

C. From the Robe of Reflection to the Rag of Corruption to the Gown of Regeneration

- Creation: God designed us to reflect him through our marvelously fashioned capacities of personhood.
- Fall: Sin corrupted our capacities to reflect God by invading our being , polluting us with a perverse nature and fallen personality.
- Redemption: Salvation provides a **new birth, regenerating** our nature so we can live out our new life in Christ.

D. From the Robe of Dominion to the Rag of Captivity to the Gown of Redemption

- Creation: God designed us to representatively rule for him and like him as under-shepherds.
- Fall: Sin chained us in captivity to its power.
- Redemption: Salvation provides **redemption**, granting us **freedom and victory** over sin's captivity

It is about Replacing our tendency to focus on NOW with our Future Hope

- Rev 1:3 Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.
- Rev 22:7 “And behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.”

7. The Unique Place of Prayer in Biblical Counselling

The Uniqueness of Prayer in Biblical Counselling

Another unique aspect of how Believers approach Counseling: *We pray with and for those we counsel*

- You pray for people before you sit down to talk.
- You pray inwardly while you are talking.
- You pray with people as an appropriate aspect of the conversation.
- You pray for a word of grace, a word of truth, a word of wisdom to be given at the right moment.
- You pray for people after you say goodbye.

