

VARIOUS SCRIPTURES

POTENTIAL PITFALLS OF GOSPEL-CENTERED COUNSELING

Five potential pitfalls of gospel-centered counseling:

I. Misunderstanding God's chief end in the gospel

II. Assuming the gospel is all that is needed in counseling

III. Rushing too quickly to the gospel for comfort

IV. Drawing unbiblical implications from the gospel

V. Teaching the indicatives of the gospel to the neglect of its imperatives

QUOTATIONS

1. "The gospel is not just one piece of good news that fits into my life somewhere among all the bad...the gospel makes genuinely good news out of every other aspect of my life, including my severest trials. The good news about my trials is that God is forcing them to bow to His gospel purposes and do good unto me by improving my character and making me more conformed to the image of Christ."¹ - Milton Vincent
2. "There's nothing that works tenderness more, nor preserves tenderness more than the glorious mercy of God in Jesus Christ. Those heart-blood-bowel mercies of God in Christ, O those tender bowels of God's mercies and compassions in Christ are those that both work and preserve tenderness of heart. And the more any man or woman converses in the meditation of those mercies, in laboring to dive into those mercies, the more they will get tenderness and preserve the tenderness of their heart."² – Jeremiah Burroughs
3. "We must use our Lord's gospel, and our Lord's people, and our Lord's talents, for our Lord, and for him alone."³ – Charles H. Spurgeon
4. "We know that, for every case of spiritual sickness, we have an infallible cure; we need not say to any man, 'We have no good news from God for you.' We believe that there is a way of getting at all hearts. There is a joint in every sinner's harness, though he be an Ahab, and we may draw the bow hopefully, praying the Lord to direct the arrow through it. If I believe in God, nothing can be too hard or too heavy for us. If I believe only in myself, I feel that a hardened sinner may refuse to listen to my reasoning, and may not be moved by affectionate address; but if I believe in the Holy Ghost, I feel that he can win a hearing, and carry conviction to the conscience. We believe, brethren, in the power of truth. We do not expect truth to be loved by all mankind; we do not expect the gospel to become popular amongst the great and the learned, for we remember that word of the apostle, 'Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called'; but we do not believe that the gospel has become decrepit through old age. When the foolish wise men of this generation sneer at the old gospel, they render an unconscious homage to its power. We do not believe that our grand castle and defence has tottered and fallen to the ground, because men say it is so. We recollect Rabshakeh, and how he reviled the Lord, and how, nevertheless it happened to the king of Assyria even as the Lord said, 'He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor cast a bank against it. By the way that he came, by the same shall he return.' We have seen enough philosophies go back 'to the vile dust from whence they sprang', to know that the whole species of them is of the order of Jonah's gourd. We, therefore, in confidence wait, and in patience bide our time. We are sure of victory ere long."⁴ – Charles H. Spurgeon

¹ Milton Vincent, *A Gospel Primer for Christians* (Bemidji, MN: Focus Publishing, 2008), 31-32.

² Jeremiah Burroughs, *Gospel Fear* (Ligonier, PA: Soli Deo Gloria, 1991), 148-149.

³ Spurgeon, *An All-Round Ministry*, 208.

⁴ Charles H. Spurgeon, *An All-Round Ministry* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2018), 13-14.

5. "God is love. But the supreme object of that love is himself. And because he loves himself supremely he cannot suffer what belongs to the integrity of his character and glory to be compromised or curtailed. That is the reason for the propitiation. God appeases his own holy wrath in the cross of Christ in order that the purpose of his love to lost men may be accomplished in accordance with and to the vindication of all the perfections that constitute his glory."⁵ — John Murray
6. "The first objective ground of gracious affections, is the transcendently excellent and amiable nature of divine things as they are themselves; and not any conceived relation they bear to self, or self-interest. I say, that the supremely excellent nature of divine things, is the first, or primary and original objective foundation of the spiritual affections of true saints."⁶ — Jonathan Edwards
7. "Every attribute of God, when contemplated by faith, will make the heart sing. Every doctrine of the Gospel, when truly apprehended, will call forth gladness and praise."⁷ — Arthur Pink
8. "Sorrow for sin should be so great as to swallow up all other sorrow...We are to find as much bitterness in weeping for sin as ever we found sweetness in committing it."⁸ — Thomas Watson
9. "Bring thy lust to the gospel, not for relief, but for further conviction of its guilt: look on him whom thou hast pierced, and be in bitterness. Say to thy soul, 'What have I done? What love, what mercy, what blood, what grace, have I despised and trampled on! Is this the return I make to the Father for his love, to the Son for his blood, to the Holy Ghost for his grace? Do I thus requite the Lord? Have I defiled the heart that Christ died to wash, which the blessed Spirit hath chosen to dwell in? And can I keep myself out of the dust? What can I say to the dear Lord Jesus? How shall I hold up my head with any boldness before him? Do I account communion with him of so little value, that for this vile lust's sake, I have scarce left him any room in my heart? How shall I escape, if I neglect so great salvation? In the mean time, what shall I say to the Lord? Love, mercy, grace, goodness, peace, joy, consolation; I have despised them all, and esteemed them as a thing of nought, that I might harbour a lust in my heart."⁹ — John Owen
10. "By faith fill thy soul with a due consideration of that provision which is laid up in Jesus Christ; for this end and purpose that all thy lusts, this very lust wherewith thou art entangled, may be mortified by faith."¹⁰ — John Owen

⁵ John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1955), 32.

⁶ Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 1* (Carlisle, PA, The Banner of Truth Trust, 1974), 235.

⁷ Arthur W. Pink, *Profiting from the Word* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1970), 105.

⁸ Thomas Watson, *The Doctrine of Repentance* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1987), 24.

⁹ John Owen, *The Mortification of Sin* (Scotland: Christian Focus, 1996), 122.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 162.

11. "Watching against sinful thoughts, resisting of sinful thoughts, lamenting and weeping over sinful thoughts, carries with it the sweetest and strongest evidence of the truth and power of grace, and of the sincerity of your hearts, and is the readiest and the surest way to be rid of them."¹¹ — Thomas Brooks
12. "We are complicated sinners. Sometimes we take two steps forward and three steps back. We need time. Be patient with yourself."¹² — Dane C. Ortlund
13. "Do you want to be responsible for Jesus committing fornication? For you to commit sexual immorality is—by virtue of your union with Christ—to cause Christ, in some sense, to do so likewise."¹³ — Dane C. Ortlund



¹¹ Thomas Brooks, *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1968), 137.

¹² Dane Ortlund, *Deeper: Real Change for Real Sinners* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021), 18.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 60.