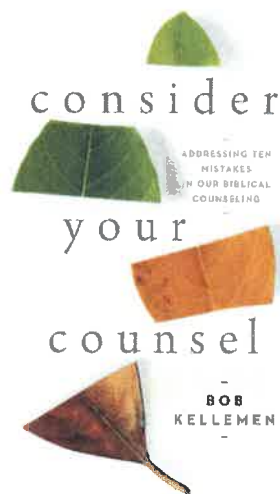


***Consider Your Counsel***  
***Addressing 10 Mistakes in Our Biblical Counseling***



**By**

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## ***Consider Your Counsel: Addressing 10 Mistakes in Our Biblical Counseling***

### **Getting Started**

1. How open are you to considering your counseling—to assessing areas where you could grow in your ministry as a biblical counselor?
2. Sometimes we can be a tad defensive when it comes to receiving feedback about our counseling. Why might this be? How could we address this biblically?

### **Progressive Sanctification As a Biblical Counselor**

1. Biblical counseling and progressive sanctification...
2. Biblical counseling and self-counsel and self-confrontation...
3. So...as a movement...
4. And...what motivated me...?

### **Addressing 10 Mistakes**

- 1. Mistake #1: We Elevate Data Collection Above Soul Connection**
- 2. Mistake #2: We Share God's Eternal Story Before Listening to People's Earthly Story**
- 3. Mistake #3: We Talk *at* Counselees Rather Than Exploring Scripture *with* Counselees**

**4. Mistake #4: We Target Sin but Diminish Suffering**

**5. Mistake #5: We Fail to Follow the Trinity's Model of Comforting Care**

**6. Mistake #6: We View People One-Dimensionally Instead of Comprehensively**

**7. Mistake #7: We Devalue Emotions Instead of Seeing Emotions as God's Idea**

**8. Mistake #8: We Minimize the Complexity of the Body-Soul Interconnection**

**9. Mistake #9: We Maximize Sin While Minimizing Grace**

**10. Mistake #10: We Confuse the Sufficiency of Scripture with the Competency of the Counselor**

## **A Biblical Counselor's Self-Assessment Tool**

### **Mistake #1: We Elevate Data Collection Above Soul Connection**

1. In our biblical counseling, would people say of us, "I feel like a soul to be heard, known, understood, and cared about?" Or would they say of us, "I feel like a specimen to be probed, dissected, examined, and diagnosed?"
2. In our biblical counseling, would people say of us, "She loves me like a tender, gentle mother? He loves me like an encouraging, comforting father?"
3. Would the people we counsel say of us, "They share Scripture and soul? They model intimacy and intensity? They relate like a family and a community?"
4. In our biblical counseling, how richly and compassionately are we empathizing with the situation and soul of our brothers and sisters in Christ?

### **Mistake #2: We Share God's Eternal Story Before Listening to People's Earthly Story**

5. In our biblical counseling, do we listen and pounce—preaching *at* people and doing so unwisely and prematurely? Or do we practice lingering listening to their whole story—taking the time to understand the person's situation and soul?
6. As biblical counselors, do we see our calling as journeying together with our counselees so that they can grasp how Christ's redemptive story intersects and invades their troubling story?
7. As biblical counselors, do we follow the model of the Holy Spirit—the Divine Counselor within us—who groans before and as he guides?
8. As biblical counselors, do we follow the model of Jesus—the Wonderful Counselor—by seeking to understand each individual and by tailoring our exploration of Scripture to their distinctive situation, story, and soul?

### **Mistake #3: We Talk *at* Counselees Rather Than Exploring Scripture *with* Counselees**

9. Is our biblical counseling more directive (counselor as expert teller), more nondirective (counselees as experts about their own life), or more collaborative (counselor and counselee guided together by God's Word)?
10. As biblical counselors, which of the following is truer of our focus?
  - a.) Teaching/Telling Scripture→Give a Person a Fish→Make a Student of Yourself
  - b.) Exploring Scripture Together→Teach a Person to Fish→Make a Disciple of Christ
11. As biblical counselors, do we practice monologue counseling, dialogue counseling, or trialogue counseling—where there are three people in our gospel conversation: the counselor, the counselee, and the Divine Counselor through God's Spirit and God's Word? Do we listen together to God's Word, discerning collaboratively how to apply truth to life?
12. As biblical counselors, how could the 2 Samuel 13 sample trialogues impact our counseling practice, our counseling process, our counselor-counselee relationship, and our counselee's life?

#### **Mistake #4: We Target Sin but Diminish Suffering**

13. Is our biblical counseling defective because it deals thoroughly with the sins we have committed, but not with the evils we have suffered?
14. As biblical counselors, do we sometimes have a one-track mind that considers the seriousness of sin but neglects the gravity of grinding affliction?
15. Do we see ourselves as *parakaletic* biblical counselors—biblical soul caregivers who comfort, encourage, and compassionately care for those facing suffering?
16. As biblical counselors, do we compassionately identify with people in pain and direct them to Christ and the body of Christ for comfort and healing hope?

#### **Mistake #5: We Fail to Follow the Trinity's Model of Comforting Care**

17. Do we counsel like God the Father? Do we sympathetically lament with others? Do others experience us as their caring advocate, as their concerned protector, as their empathetic ally?
18. Do we counsel like God the Son? Do we sorrow with others? Do we grieve with others? Are we sympathetic toward and empathetic with others? Are we deeply moved by the suffering of others?
19. Do we counsel like God the Spirit? Are we consoling, comforting, and encouraging? Do we identify and groan with others?
20. Do we counsel like the Trinity? Does the comfort of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit overflow from the Trinity to us and then spill over to our brothers and sisters?

#### **Mistake #6: We View People One-Dimensional Instead of Comprehensively**

21. As biblical counselors, do we have a “pet” perspective of people—viewing them through one primary lens instead of viewing them comprehensively?
22. Do we believe that biblical counseling should focus on the full range of human nature created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-28), comprehensively understanding counselees as *relational (spiritual, social, and self-aware), rational, volitional, emotional, and physical* beings?
23. As biblical counselors, are we growing in Christlike maturity as evidenced by the nine biblical categories in the Christlike Maturity Inventory?
24. As biblical counselors, do we seek to help our counselees grow in Christlike maturity as evidenced by the nine biblical categories in the Christlike Maturity Inventory?

#### **Mistake #7: We Devalue Emotions Instead of Seeing Emotions as God's Idea**

25. As biblical counselors, do we devalue and demean emotions, or do we see emotions as being of great value because they are God-designed aspects of the image of God?
26. How does it impact our biblical counseling when we realize that emotions were God's idea and that God specifically declares that our emotions are fearfully and wonderfully made?
27. In our biblical counseling, how well or how poorly are we using a biblical theology of our inner life? What we believe→about God and life→informs the direction we choose to pursue→and impacts our experiential/emotional response to our world.
28. In our biblical counseling, how well or how poorly are we using a practical theology of understanding our emotions as we enter, engage with, and enlighten our counselees?

### **Mistake #8: We Minimize the Complexity of the Body-Soul Interconnection**

29. As soul physicians, does our emphasis on the soul morph into a sole focus on the soul that minimizes the complex interrelationship between the body and soul? Do we remain sensitive to physical factors and organic issues that affect people's lives? Do we encourage a thorough assessment and sound treatment for any suspected physical problems?
30. As soul physicians, do we understand and apply the Bible's Creation-Fall-Redemption teaching on the complex interrelationship of the body and soul—as designed by God, depraved by sin, and saved by grace?
31. As soul physicians, do we seek to understand the impact of the body on our counselee's soul? Do we seek to understand the soul's impact on our counselee's body?
32. Like Luther, as physicians of the soul, do we avoid a materialistic worldview that assumes every issue is exclusively biologically based? And do we avoid a spiritualistic worldview that assumes every issue is exclusively soul-based?

### **Mistake #9: We Maximize Sin While Minimizing Grace**

33. Which do we emphasize as biblical counselors: sin or grace? In our concern for confronting sin, do we sometimes inadvertently become sin-sniffers, idol-spotters, and sin-maximizers? Or as we confront sin, do we consciously communicate Christ's superabounding, amazing, infinite grace?
34. As biblical counselors, are we like Paul in Romans 5:20, reminding one another that where sin abounds, grace superabounds?
35. As biblical counselors, are we like the Puritans—able to load the conscience with guilt *and* to lighten the conscience with grace? Like Luther, are we dispensers of Christ's gospel of grace?
36. As biblical counselors, are we loving ambassadors of reconciliation who seek to share that "it's horrible to sin, but it's wonderful to be forgiven"?

### **Mistake #10:**

#### **We Confuse the Sufficiency of Scripture with the Competency of the Counselor**

37. As biblical counselors, do we understand that while the Scriptures are sufficient for every soul issue, no individual counselor is competent for every soul issue?
38. As biblical counselors, are we committed to ongoing 4C growth in Christlike character, biblical content, counseling competency, and Christian community?
39. As biblical counselors, do we insist upon a comprehensive body of Christ approach where we humbly acknowledge our need for Christ and the body of Christ?
40. As biblical counselors, are we humbly willing to refer counselees to other more experienced biblical counselors? Are we humbly willing to receive additional biblical supervision and equipping?

### **Recommended Resources:**

- Kellemen, Robert. [\*Gospel-Centered Counseling\*](#). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014.
- Kellemen, Robert. [\*Gospel-Centered Family Counseling\*](#). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2020.
- Kellemen, Robert. [\*Gospel-Centered Marriage Counseling\*](#). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2020.

Kellemen, Robert. *Gospel Conversations*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015.

Kellemen, Robert & Forrey, Jeff. *Scripture and Counseling*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014.

