

Sharing Scripture and Soul

Five Biblical Portraits of the Biblical Counselor



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Promoting Personal Change Centered on the Person of Christ
—Ephesians 4:15

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***Promoting Personal Change Centered on the Person of Christ
Through the Personal Ministry of the Word***

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Presentation Focus

We all know that God calls us to: a.) speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15), b.) make our love abound in knowledge and depth of insight (Philippians 1:9-11), and c.) share not only the Gospel but our very own souls (1 Thessalonians 2:8).

Yet...sometimes biblical counselors are stereotyped as unloving truth tellers. In 1 Thessalonians 2, Paul paints for us five portraits of biblical counselors who *share both Scripture and soul.*

Embedding these five biblical images into our relationships with those to whom we minister will not only change how people perceive biblical counseling, but more importantly, will increase the effectiveness of our biblical counseling ministry, and nurture a culture of biblical care and counseling in our churches.

Sharing Scripture and Soul: Five Biblical Portraits of the Biblical Counselor

1 Thessalonians 2

The Big Picture: Are We Just the UPS Delivery Guy?

The Big Question: Does the Bible teach that only the message matters, or that the messenger's character/motivation and the messenger's relationship to the hearer also matter greatly?

The Big Idea: We nurture a culture of biblical care and counseling in the church when the Word of God is shared with the love of a father, mother, brother, child; and shared with the respect of a mentor!

The Vital Background: Paul's History and Relationship with the Thessalonians

- **The False Prophets and Charlatans of Paul's Day**
- **The False Accusations Levied against Paul (1 Thessalonians 2:2-3, 5-6)**
- **Paul's Purpose and Portraits in 1 Thessalonians 2**
 - ✓ Paul writes to affirm his ministry as from God and to affirm the nature of all ministry from God by modeling five portraits of "truthing in love" (Ephesians 4:15; Psalm 15:2; Galatians 4:16; Philippians 1:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 2:8).

1. **Portrait Number One: The Love of a Defending Brother—"I've Got Your Back, Bro!"** (1 Thessalonians 1:4; 2:1-17)

a. **We Are Family: 1:4**

- ✓ Could my counselee/parishioner/spiritual friend say this of me? "I experience you as a beloved brother embracing me as a fellow/equal member of God's forever family by grace."

b. **A Band of Brothers Daring Boldly and Giving Sacrificially: 2:1-6, 9**

- ✓ Could my counselee/parishioner/spiritual friend say this of me? "I experience you as a band of brothers, as a teammate who fights for me and agonizes on my behalf?"

2. Portrait Number Two: The Love of a Cherishing Mother—“I Long for You with Nourishing and Cherishing Affection” (1 Thessalonians 2:7-8)

a. A Nursing Mother: 2:7

- ✓ Could my counselee/parishioner/spiritual friend say this of me? “I experience you as a nursing mother nourishing me with tender, cherishing love.”

b. An Affectionate, Generous Mother: 2:8

- ✓ Could my counselee/parishioner/spiritual friend say this of me? “I experience you as an affectionate, generous mother giving me your very own soul because I am dearly loved by you.”

3. Portrait Number Three: The Love of a Shepherding Father—“I Love You Individually and Uniquely with Guiding Love” (1 Thessalonians 2:10-12)

a. A Focused Father: 2:10-11

- ✓ Could my counselee/parishioner/spiritual friend say this of me? “I experience you as a father focused on me with individual pastoral attention.”

b. A Wise Father: 2:12

- ✓ Could my counselee/parishioner/spiritual friend say this of me? “I experience you as a wise and caring father shepherding me with exactly what I uniquely need at the specific moment—encouragement, consolation, or guidance.”

4. Portrait Number Four: The Love of a Longing Orphan—“I Love You as an Orphaned Child Bereaved of His Parents” (1 Thessalonians 2:17-18)

a. A Grieving Orphan: 2:17a

- ✓ Could my counselee/parishioner/spiritual friend say this of me? “I experience you as longing for me so much that when we are apart you grieve like an orphan.”

b. An Attached Child: 2:17b-18

- ✓ Could my counselee/parishioner/spiritual friend say this of me? “I experience you as desperately longing for deep connection with me.”

5. Portrait Number Five: The Respect of a Proud King/Mentor—“I Respect You and Am Proud of You” (1 Thessalonians 2:19-20)

a. A King/General/President Granting a Spiritual Medal of Honor: 2:19

- ✓ Could my counselee/parishioner/spiritual friend say this of me? “I experience you as a mentor so proud of who I am in Christ that you give me a spiritual medal of honor.”

b. A Mentor Saying, “You Are My Pride and Joy!”: 2:20

- ✓ Could my counselee/parishioner/spiritual friend say this of me? “I experience you as a mentor so proud of who I am in Christ that I am your pride and joy.”

The Five Big Portraits: The Messenger of the Message Is Important! We’re Not Just the UPS Delivery Guy! We are a Brother, Mother, Father, Child, and Mentor!

The Big Question: Could my counselee/parishioner/spiritual friend say this of me? “I experience you as a defending brother, cherishing mother, shepherding father, longing child, and proud mentor.” How would these five images change my counseling? How would they change the care-culture of our church? Which of these five images do I need to add to my ministry? How could I begin to relate more like these portraits?

The One Big Purpose: It’s not all about us. It’s all about Him. As we *live truth in love* (Ephesians 4:15) by *reflecting Christ and sharing Christ* (1 Thessalonians 2:1-20) it is all for the glory of His gospel of grace (1 Thessalonians 2:2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 12)!