

I. Introduction.

- A. To what extent is information outside the Bible necessary or helpful in counseling?
- B. Distinguish between general revelation and common grace. Rom. 1:18ff Ps. 19:1-6
 - 1. What is the purpose of general revelation?
 - 2. What some integrationists call general revelation involves flawed interpretations and solutions formed by an idolatrous unbelieving worldview. Eph. 4:18 1 Cor. 2:14
 - 3. Common grace is the good kindness of God which He shows to all people regardless of whether they have experienced the salvation that comes through Christ alone.
 - 4. Only God's Word can meet humankind's ultimate need by bringing salvation and offering perfect wisdom. Psalm 19:7ff Rom. 10:17 James 1:18 1 Pet. 1:23-24
 - 5. Interventions of secular psychology can sometimes alleviate symptoms, but cannot address spiritual causes.

II. Common grace wisdom for the public and private ministries of the Word.

- A. We train preachers to use techniques not explicitly taught in Scripture in order to convey the Word to people. 2 Tim. 4:1ff 2:15
 - 1. The Bible doesn't explicitly tell us how to study the Bible in order to prepare a sermon.
 - 2. The Bible doesn't explicitly tell us how to create a sermon from what we learned through our study – purpose, structure, illustrations, etc. Mt. 6:25ff
 - 3. The Bible doesn't explicitly tell us about effective sermon delivery. Neh. 8:4
 - 4. Most homiletics textbooks and courses draw from extrabiblical sources for the purpose of helping the preacher to become more skilled and effective.
 - 5. Extrabiblical or common grace insights should never become the message. Gal. 1:10f
- B. In the same way – we use certain common grace skills as biblical counselors which can help us to more effectively communicate the message. Ps. 119:105
- C. Just as there are preachers who have tremendous gifts of communication but a weak message, there are counselors who good communicators but weak in using the Word.
- D. Just as there are doctrinally sound preachers who are ineffective because of lack of skill there are biblical counselors who are ineffective due to a lack of common grace skill.

III. What are some specific ways common grace skills can be helpful to a biblical counselor?

- A. Listening skills – Biblical counseling books – Prov. 18:13 20:5
 - 1. OARS
 - a. Open-ended questions.
 - b. Affirming
 - c. Reflective listening.
 - d. Summarizing.

2. SOLVER (Wayne Mack *Introduction to Biblical Counseling* p. 181).
 - a. Squared shoulders.
 - b. Open stance.
 - c. Lean forward.
 - d. Vocal quality.
 - e. Eye contact.
 - f. Relational posture.

B. Connecting with a counselee and understanding any weaknesses. Rom. 15:1ff 1 Cor. 13:11

C. Counselors may be helped by observations/descriptions by secular research.

1. When is someone a suicide risk? SLAP
2. Patterns of abuse.
3. Stages of grief.
4. Postpartum depression.

D. We may benefit in our understanding of counselees who have been given a certain diagnosis (PTSD, OCD, bi-polar, addiction, etc.).

1. Must we be clinically informed, or trauma informed?
2. There are situations in which common grace observations or descriptions can be useful in understanding a counselee.

E. Can common grace interventions/treatments ever help our counselees?

1. Sometimes symptoms can be alleviated through extrabiblical common grace interventions.
2. We need to be humble regarding medical issues.
3. The Bible teaches that we should understand how nature and nurture affect people.

IV. What can possibly go wrong when we seek to use common grace knowledge and interventions in our counseling??

A. Our counseling system must be derived from Scripture not secular sources.

B. The closer a common grace technique comes to addressing issues specifically dealt with in the Bible the more likely that the errors of their worldview will affect their counsel. Eph. 4:18 Rom. 1:18-23

C. Often extrabiblical common grace becomes the “big book” and the wisdom of Scripture is neglected. Mark 7:8

D. Example: The Duluth Power wheel.

V. Conclusion:

A. We must be humble and charitable.

B. Powlison’s priorities.

1. Build a faithful system of soul care from Scripture.
2. Refute the errors of false idolatrous systems.
3. Learn what we can from defective models.

C. A personal testimony.