



Christian counselors and the church need to be aware of the pressures males face and be able to teach and guide them in understanding that they are created in the image of God.
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Too often, we become preoccupied with the presenting problem without assessing and addressing the person's current ability to access God's help.
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transformation

A Publication of the American Association of Christian Counselors and the Biblical Counseling & Spiritual Formation Network

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Transformation 2014 Volume 7, Issue 2

Transformation is published by the American Association of Christian Counselors Foundation.

President: Tim Clinton
BCSN Co-Director: Ron Hawkins
BCSN Co-Director: Ian Jones
Graphic Designer: Amy Cole

The American Association of Christian Counselors is chartered in Virginia and dedicated to promoting excellence and unity in Christian counseling. The purpose and objectives of AACC and the programs that it sponsors are strictly informative, educational, and affiliative.

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NURTURING COUNSELING

✧ IN YOUR CHURCH ✧

by Ian F. Jones, Ph.D., Ph.D.

An effective church counseling program is characterized by basic biblical principles and requires comprehensive planning. Some of these features will be discussed as part of a review of the book *Equipping Counselors for the Local Church*, by Robert Kelleman.

Researchers studying the effectiveness of counseling have discovered that a particular theory of counseling is less important than other factors, such as the relationship, alliance, and culture of hope cultivated by the counselor (Wampold, 2001). These factors are found, in particular, within healthy churches that provide

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a natural environment for developing effective pastoral care and counseling ministries. In his book *Equipping Counselors for the Local Church*, Robert Kellemen (2011) provides a blueprint for the nurturing and development of an effective counseling ministry.

BUILD ON THE FIRM FOUNDATION

A counseling ministry in the church needs to rest upon the firm foundation of the authority of Scripture, particularly in understanding creation, the fall, salvation, and redemption. The Bible provides the historical story of how God relates to us along with his will and purpose for our lives and our ultimate destiny. The basic doctrines of our faith provide the structure for a biblically-based counseling ministry as we are made aware of our creation in the image of God, the pervasive and corrosive nature of sin, and the overcoming power of grace. Our motivation for helping others is driven by a love of God and our neighbor and a desire to honor and serve God. Kellemen challenges the church to recognize biblical care giving as not simply helping people solve their problems but as part of an overall goal of transforming people into the image of Christ.

We have wrongly defined biblical counseling so that it is about solving problems.

We've made it a subset of discipleship focused on reactive work with persons struggling with sin. Instead, we should think of biblical counseling as synonymous with comprehensive personal discipleship. Biblical counseling is focused one-another ministry designed to fulfill the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. (Kellemen, 35)

This model eschews the separatist nature of much of modern secular counseling, which focuses on individuals or families, sometimes within larger systems, but it ignores the place, purpose, and hope all Christians have within the community of faith. In this approach, all church members are equipped to be disciple-makers (the *Informal Model* of ministry) while some members are trained in a more specialized ministry of biblical counseling (the *Formal Model*) (Kellemen, 37). The distinction is important. Not all Christians are counselors, but all Christians are called to care for one another, and Christian counseling is an integral though discrete part of church ministry. Kellemen's understanding of counseling fits well within the historical church. In the eighteenth century, for example, Alexander Gerard, Professor of Divinity at King's College, Aberdeen, clearly distinguished the ministry of counseling from other forms of pastoral care, including more general private conversations, instructions, exhortations, and visits to families and the afflicted (Gerard, 1799).

SET YOUR MISSION AND VISION

One of the unique features of Kellemen's approach to counseling is to insist that if such a ministry is to be effective it must be nurtured as an organic part of the local church. Pastors and church leaders serve and train God's people so that they, in turn, can serve and disciple other people in the body of Christ and in the larger community. Every church member matters. Every church member has a role to play. Each local church needs to assess the spiritual health of its members and identify Christ's vision and mission for their particular congregation in their current culture and community (pp. 55-56).

Christ's understanding, diagnosis, and prescription are the same. The people He engages, however, are incredibly different. This is why Jesus' interactions—His personal ministry of the Word, His way of speaking and living gospel truth in live—are unique to each. He models for us that the *message* is the same, but the *methods and means of communication* vary because of the personal and cultural differences of the specific audience. (Kellemen, 57)

Each church needs to develop a biblical mission, a theological basis for ministry that will delineate the purpose of its ministry and serve as a foundation for articulating a vision of its future state and ministry. All church members participate in the mission of the church.

And He personally gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the training of the saints in the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ, until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God's Son, growing into a mature man with a stature measured by Christ's fullness. Then we will no longer be little children, tossed by the waves and blown around by

every wind of teaching, by human cunning with cleverness in the techniques of deceit. But speaking the truth in love, let us grow in every way into Him who is the head—Christ. From Him the whole body, fitted and knit together by every supporting ligament, promotes the growth of the body for building up itself in love by the proper working of each individual part. (Eph. 4:11-16 HCSB)

SELECT COUNSELORS CAREFULLY, TRAIN COUNSELORS THOROUGHLY

Kellemen describes a four-part overall ministry training strategy for the church: envision God’s ministry, enlist God’s ministers for ministry, equip godly ministers for ministry, and empower godly ministers for ministry. This approach is also applied to the development of a counseling ministry where a comprehensive “selection, interview, and application process” is used to identify potential counselors (p. 171). Counselor training is intensive and thorough. In his survey of “twenty-four best practice churches,” Kellemen found that the average time spent meeting was one hundred hours, not including outside reading and assignments, and the average length of training was one and a half years (p. 255).

PROVIDE A CLIMATE OF GROWTH, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND ASSESSMENT

The focus of all ministry, including counseling, is transformation, becoming conformed to the image of Christ. The qualities of an effective, biblically based counseling ministry include accountability to God and others, adherence to the recognized standards of ethical and legal counseling practice, continual

growth and development as effective counselors, and constant evaluation and assessment.

It is not possible to describe fully the structure and practice of counseling in the church in this short article, but I would encourage anyone who is seriously interested in starting such a ministry to read *Equipping Counselors for your Church*. At over 400 pages, Kellemen’s book will give you a blueprint for developing a program that will contribute to the spiritual health and maturity of your church.



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BOODY IMAGE

NOT JUST A FEMALE ISSUE

by Malinda Fasol, Ph.D.

Studies on body image and mass media indicate that males feel pressured to have the ideal muscular physique as portrayed in mass media. Some experience dissatisfaction with their bodies because they do not measure up to the cultural standard. Christian counselors and the church need to be aware of the pressures males face and be able to teach and guide them in understanding that they are created in the image of God.

THE WORLD IS FULL
OF IDOLATRIES, BUT
I QUESTION IF ANY
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PRACTICED THAN THE
IDOLATRY OF OUTWARD
APPEARANCE.

– WILLIAM G BLAIKIE, 1864

The issue of distorted body image began to germinate in me at a young age. In the mid-1970s, I started to be aware of how females were depicted in commercials. I remember asking my dad why the lady in the commercial was wearing an evening gown with a long slit to sell cars, or why the man was berating the woman for eating too much when she did not even look overweight. My dad attempted to explain the power of marketing and the purpose of commercials. It still did not make sense to me. My young mind equated evening gowns with beauty pageants, not selling cars. From that moment, I became intrigued with commercials, and later the interest expanded to the depiction of females in television and movies.

Another turning point in my journey of mass media and body image was the death of Karen Carpenter in 1983. I remember the shock people had, myself included, as they learned that Carpenter, a successful and gifted singer, starved

herself to death. The news and journals were abuzz with the causes and symptoms of anorexia nervosa, a term that was new to me.

Thirty years later, the issue of distorted body image is still a concern. Males and females, young and old, feel pressured to look like the images depicted in mass media. Western culture continues to emphasize the ideal physique males and females are to attain, and members of that culture continue to believe and promote that standard of body image. Currently men are to look youthful, have well-defined biceps and abdominal muscles, as well as have a narrow waist (Pope, Phillips & Olivardia, 2000). The standard for females is well-defined muscles, ultra-thin physique, wear size sub zero, and have an ageless appearance (Elliott & Elliott, 2005). Both males and females are faced with increasing societal pressure to conform to the ideal physique and physical appearance.

In today's mass media, blurred

boundaries exist between fantasy and reality of models (Reaves, Hitchon, Park, & Yun, 2004). The images of models are perfected via airbrushing and soft focus cameras. These images are presented as realistic representations of actual people. Television, internet, and print media distribute information on how to achieve the idealized physique (Field, 2001; Piccora, 2003).

Because western culture has placed a greater emphasis on the standards of body image for females, in-depth studies have been well documented. What hasn't been well documented is body image and males, and so I expanded my interest yet again to include the depiction of the male physique in mass media.

Some studies on male body image report that exposure to muscular male models as portrayed on television and in magazines contributes to one's body dissatisfaction (Agliata, 2005; Baird & Grieve, 2006). For example, Lorenzen, Grieve, and Thomas (2004) found that college males exposed to advertisements of muscular male bodies were less satisfied with their bodies compared to college males who were exposed to images of nonmuscular models. Similarly, Agliata's study on male college students found that participants exposed to advertisements of the muscular ideal became significantly depressed, and they had higher level of body dissatisfaction than those exposed to nonmuscular advertisements (2005).

Other studies revealed that exposure to television and/or magazine advertisements of muscular male bodies did not significantly increase body dissatisfaction (Hargreaves & Tiggeman, 2004; Jones, Vigfusdottir, & Lee, 2004; Smolak & Mills, 2003). These studies found that media did not predict body dissatisfaction. Some studies concluded that although males would like to be more muscular, they were not motivated to become muscular because it was not an important goal (Labre, 2002). Despite the contradictions in the findings, the consensus among researchers is that media is a "powerful medium that promotes muscular physique" (McCabe and Ricciardelli, 2003).

With the pressure some males face to look like the images depicted in media, Christian counselors and the church need to be able to address this growing concern. They need to be keenly aware of and educated on the advancements of media and its influence in portraying the unrealistic muscular ideal. Christian counselors and the church also need to help males decipher what is a realistic and an unrealistic image of the male physique. This knowledge will help the Christian counselor and the church to teach, guide, and educate males about understanding the true meaning of body image from a biblical versus cultural worldview; meaning, they will teach them that God created them in His own image (Gen. 1:26). When He created humans, they reflected His beauty.

By understanding the biblical view of body image or beauty, Christian counselors and the church are able to help males integrate the biblical perspective into their daily living. Christian counselors can educate males on the importance of the interrelatedness of the mind and body. The body is not a separate entity to be discarded or treated with disrespect.

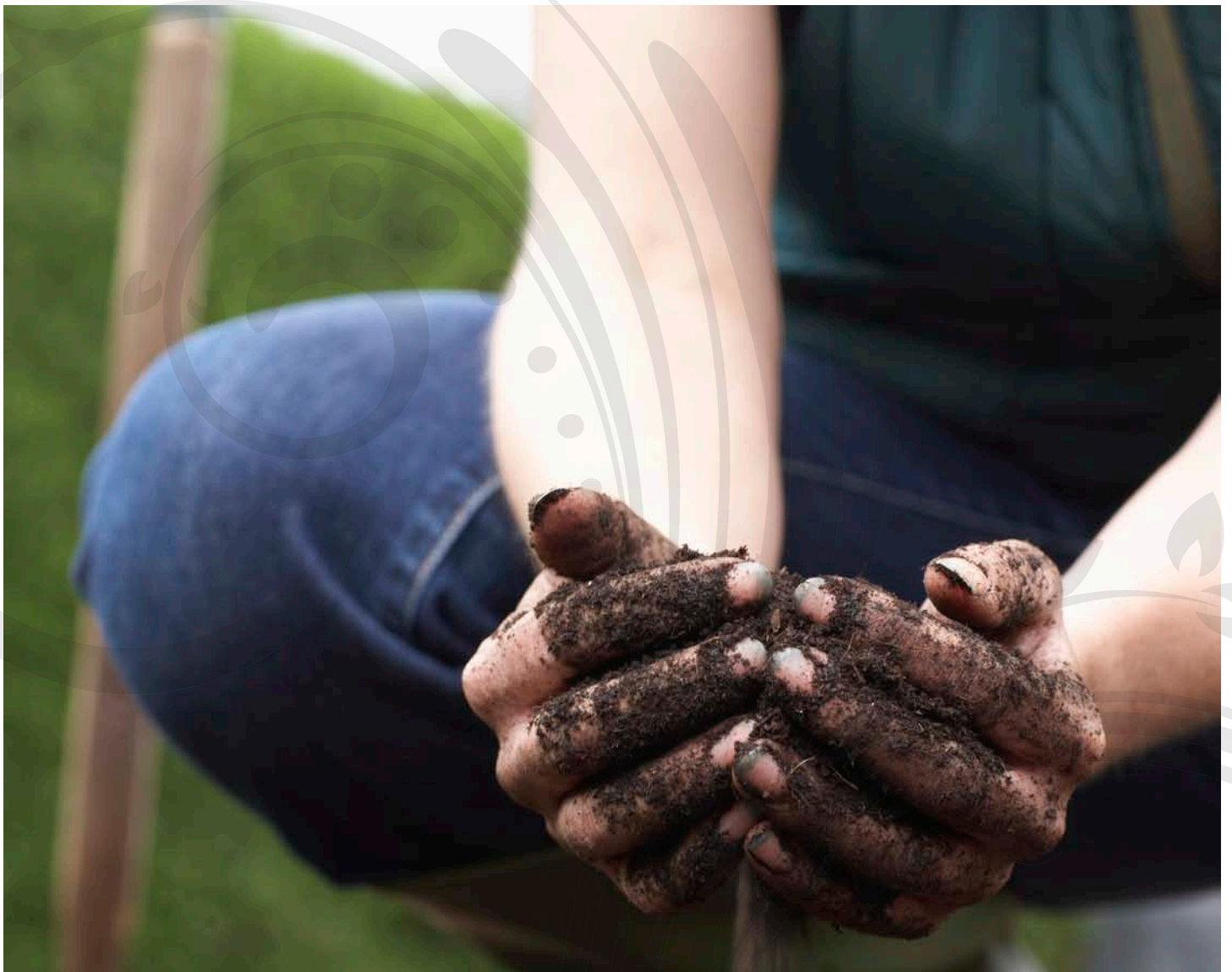
Males can learn the importance of the balance of taking care of the body without succumbing to the pressures of society. By integrating the importance of soul and body, males learn the value of maintaining a healthy perspective of beauty, which includes both inward and outward grooming.



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AN OPERATIONAL MODEL OF THE “WONDERFUL COUNSELOR”

by Harry S. Davis, M.A., LPC



JESUS PRESENTED A MODEL TO USE IN VIEWING THE PROBLEMS OF HUMANITY; HOWEVER, IT DIDN'T FOCUS ON LIFE PROBLEMS BUT ON THE **INDIVIDUALS** THEMSELVES. TOO OFTEN, WE BECOME PREOCCUPIED WITH THE PRESENTING PROBLEM WITHOUT ASSESSING AND ADDRESSING THE PERSON'S CURRENT ABILITY TO ACCESS GOD'S HELP.

“Where’s the beef?”, or in this context, “where’s Jesus’ teaching regarding the activities of the counseling profession?” At the time when the “where’s the beef” commercial was being viewed by America, I was seriously asking this question. Like the 1984 Wendy’s commercial that had a lot of bun and a little beef, the counseling field had a lot of secular theories and research with a small amount of the teachings of Jesus. From experience, I knew that God moved through my professional activities—but where did Jesus address this in the gospels? After extended Bible study and prayer, the fog lifted, and there in clear sight was the Parable of the Sower and the Soils with Jesus’ classification of three spiritual/psychological disorders of humanity and one healthy condition.

Jesus made two compelling statements regarding this parable. When asked about the meaning of this parable, Jesus said that His parables contained the secrets of the kingdom of God hidden in them (Luke 8:9-10) and that this particular parable

was critical in being able to understand all the other parables (Mark 4:13).

Soul Damaged by Sin

It is important to review the Biblical worldview of the soul. This Biblical mindset is that our soul has three faculties of mind/intellect, emotions, and will/volition, but we are damaged because of sin. In Genesis 3: 9-12, Adam’s first recorded response to God after he sinned clearly shows the damage to the three faculties of his soul.

But the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?” He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.” And he said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?” The man said, “The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.” (NIV)

Through a decision of his will/volition, Adam chose to disobey God. His thinking process was polluted with the self-deception of blame toward Eve and God Himself. The emotion of fear led him to hide from God, and his love toward both God and Eve became hardened, as demonstrated by his transferring blame to them. It is in this context of our “fallen” soul that I want to review this Parable.

Parable of the Sower and Soils

Jesus explained the parable to his disciples in private (Mark 4:15-20) and used the prevalent knowledge of agriculture to describe these kingdom principles.

The farmer sows the word. Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them. Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful. Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times what was sown. (NIV)

The objects in the parable are the farmer (God), the seed (His Word), soil along the path (people with hardened soil), the birds (Satan), rocky places (people with rocky soil), plants (faith), soil with thorns (people with thorny soil), and people with good soil. What is implied here is that an attempt was made to produce a crop with seeds (God’s word), there were many obstacles to fruit/crop (faith) production, and the absence of these obstacles creates a condition of good soil that produces a crop.

The Soils/Souls

The “soil along the path” represents people (Hardened Souls) who hear the Word, but it never penetrates into their soul and spirit because of their unreceptiveness. They dismiss it with their minds, their emotions are hardened to its message and by a decision of their will/volition, and they choose to ignore it.

The “Rocky Soil” (Rocky Souls) represents people who hear the Word and acknowledge it as truth in their mind and receive it with the emotion of joy by a decision of their will/volition. However, the Word of God is then hindered from establishing itself deep within them by something. Jesus didn’t directly identify what the rocks represented, but I believe their identity can be deduced. When these people encounter trouble or persecution, they became distressed, and the emotion of joy evaporated. My conclusion is that the rocks are a combination of painful emotions generated by the current trouble/persecution along with memories of emotional wounds that surface to block the truth from going deep.

The “seed sown among thorns” (Thorny Souls) are people who let the worries of life, the deception and preoccupation of riches, and the desires for other things distract them to the point where the Word of God is choked like garden plants overrun by weeds. The implication here is that the soil has all the conditions for “good soil” except the absence of weeds. Even though truth is acknowledged (mind) and accepted (will/volition) without hinderances (emotions), the Word must be protected and nurtured though diligence like gardeners protecting their crops from weeds.

The “good soil” represents people who accept the Word of God, understand it, and bear fruit because of their patient endurance in nurturing the Word of God in their hearts.

Comparison of the Three Unproductive Soils/Souls

The following is a breakdown of the dynamics for each condition.

- Hardened Souls are people who deny the truth, are hardened in their emotions toward the truth, and choose to rebel against it. This condition’s theme is rebelliousness.
- Rocky Souls are those who receive the truth with the will/volition, acknowledge it as truth in their minds, but emotional pain doesn’t allow it to go deep into them. This condition’s theme is emotional woundedness.
- Thorny Souls accept the truth by an act of their will, acknowledge it in their mind and don’t have emotional hinderances, but they do not practice diligence in overcoming the weeds of distraction. This condition’s theme is undisciplined.

Our clients present a diversity of problems. In addition, they have dynamics of at least one of these three unfruitful psychological/spiritual conditions described by Jesus. The dynamics of “good soil” creates a climate where they can best avail themselves of God’s truth and assistance concerning their current difficulties. Here is “the beef.” Christians have the Word of God and the Holy Spirit as the ultimate resources to help them overcome their problems, and the Parable of the Sower and Soils is the key in assessing their ability to access this Divine help. If they can’t access this Divine help to the fullest degree, shouldn’t this also be one of the major objectives of their Christian counseling experience?



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