

Sex Counseling by Biblical Counselors

Our September-October 2018 newsletter includes an article titled “Elyse Fitzpatrick: Sex Counselor,” in which we review a talk given by Fitzpatrick titled “Not in the Mood Sexual Problems in Marriage.” In her talk, Fitzpatrick, known as a godly woman, popular Christian author, and prolific conference speaker, describes her private sexual relationship with her husband. Fitzpatrick’s talk is more directly suggestive of the sex she and her husband have than others we have heard over the years.

No such talks from evangelicals existed twenty years ago, but now many biblical counselors unabashedly rush in with their sex counseling and advice, both in the private counseling room and before large audiences. Our recent book, *Biblical Counseling Reviews (BCR)*, includes critiques of the sex counseling

of four of the luminary leaders of the biblical counseling movement (BCM).

Dr. Heath Lambert

Dr. Heath Lambert is one of the best-known and highly respected leaders of the biblical counseling movement in the world. Lambert’s credits include the following:

Dr. Heath Lambert is a former Executive Director at the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors. ACBC is the largest biblical counseling organization in the world with counseling training centers and certified counselors in 29 countries.¹

Lambert now serves as the Co-Pastor at First Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Florida, and is a faculty member at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Lambert, in a three-part DVD, produced and promoted by the Institute for Biblical Counseling and Discipleship (IBCD), demonstrates (by play-acting) how to counsel a man “Jeremy,” who has a “long-standing enslavement to pornography.”²

The third play-acted session deals with the subject of “Crystal’s” [Jeremy’s wife] upcoming post-birth condition, which was said to make her unavailable for sexual intercourse for six weeks, and the impact that may have on Jeremy’s perceived dire necessity for sex possibly precipitating a return to pornography. Lambert says, “As far as sexual intimacy is concerned, why don’t you look at Song of Solomon, Chapter 2.” Lambert then reads verses 3-7 from the *English Standard Version (ESV)*.

(continued on page 3)

Rock of Ages

“It is better to trust in the Lord, than to put confidence in man.” Psalm 118:8

by Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning and Evening*

Doubtless the reader has been tried with the temptation to rely upon the things which are seen, instead of resting alone upon the invisible God. **Christians often look to man for help and counsel, and mar the noble simplicity of their reliance upon their God.** Does this evening’s portion meet the eye of a child of God anxious about temporals, then would we reason with him awhile. You trust in Jesus, and only in Jesus, for your salvation, then why are you troubled? “Because of my great care.” Is it not written, “Cast thy burden upon

the Lord?” “Be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication make known your wants unto God.” Cannot you trust God for temporals? “Ah! I wish I could.” If you cannot trust God for temporals, how dare you trust him for spirituals? Can you trust him for your soul’s redemption, and not rely upon him for a few lesser mercies? Is not God enough for thy need, or is his all-sufficiency too narrow for thy wants? Dost thou want another eye beside that of him who sees every secret thing? Is his heart faint? Is his arm weary? If so, seek another God; but if he be infinite, omnipotent, faithful, true, and all-wise, why gaddest thou abroad so much to

seek another confidence? Why dost thou rake the earth to find another foundation, when this is strong enough to bear all the weight which thou canst ever build thereon? Christian, mix not only thy wine with water, do not alloy thy gold of faith with the dross of human confidence. Wait thou only upon God, and let thine expectation be from him. Covet not Jonah’s gourd, but rest in Jonah’s God. Let the sandy foundations of terrestrial trust be the choice of fools, but do thou, like one who foresees the storm, build for thyself an abiding place upon the Rock of Ages. (Bold added.)



Letters from Our Readers.....2
Psych Notes.....4

Letters
 from  our
Readers

Dear Martin & Deidre,

I am a 20+ year manager in health care unrelated to mental health. As a layman that has followed the issues more intently now spanning three decades, the question is: Is it possible to integrate secular psychological constructs into the Christian faith? Spoiler alert: No one has yet done it successfully. The Bible itself warns of its own uniqueness and the dangers of the allure of the wisdom of man.

New York

Dear Martin & Deidre,

Your latest book, *Biblical Counseling Reviews*, is awesome! You completely expose these integrationists as frauds!

You skillfully demonstrate the “evil speaking” they elicit from people is a violation of the scriptures that you have listed in appendix D.

Oh, that there were more Christians that would listen and spread the word in order to shut down this heretical so called “Christian” counseling system!

Washington

Dear Martin & Deidre,

Thank you very much for your latest book, *Biblical Counseling Reviews*. I looked at appendix’s A, B, C and D to get an idea where you were heading, and then read the first two chapters. These psychological terms, as well as all their practices are very repulsive to me; I don’t like to hear Christians even use them.

First of all it shows that these people have, to some degree, already begun to use the humanistic gospel to replace the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. I don’t see in God’s Word any God-given right for people to pry into the private lives

of anyone; instead we read, “Indeed, we hear that some among you are disorderly (that they are passing their lives in idleness, neglectful of duty), **being busy with other people’s affairs instead of their own and doing no work**” (2 Thess. 3:11). In my opinion these people who use psychological techniques are not doing any God-approved work, but are meddling in things that are none of their business.

To make disciples of people is God’s way of changing and forming them into the person He wants them to be. Any psychological leaven or integration only contaminates and degrades all people concerned, as well as the Gospel of Christ. Jesus should be “all of life” to His people.

California

Dear Martin and Deidre,

We really appreciate your faithfulness to God and your adherence to His Word. We also appreciate your boldness in proclaiming God’s truth and your efforts to inform Christians and all who will listen about the dangers and consequences of psychotherapy. Your ministry is such a blessing to us and so many others.

We pray that God will richly bless you and your ministry as you continue His work.

Oklahoma

Dear Martin & Deidre,

I praise and thank God for your faithfulness in this most difficult and necessary ministry. Thank you for your faithfulness to our Lord, to His Word, and your dedication to exposing the heresy of “Christian” psychology. I pray and trust that you will be richly rewarded for your diligence and devotion to the Truth that is in Jesus Christ alone. I understand the path of the discerning can at times be a lonely and difficult road, so I wanted to send a brief note of encouragement. Thank God we are not alone in the fight. What great hope we have that all that is wrong will be made right!

Texas

Dear Bobgans,

As I read “Wally in a Christ centered ministry” in your book *Biblical Counseling Reviews*, I realized that every conviction of sin, every positive change in my own life came from the scriptures or from a Christ-centered preaching or writing. The past is worthless other than a lesson learned. The bad stuff is forgotten and irrelevant. Forgiving those that have wronged us makes the memory go away and no longer troubles us. We don’t have a “DeLorean” (“Back to the Future”) to go back and relive it.

Wyoming

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your most recent book: *Biblical Counseling Reviews*. As usual, your biblically accurate observations reveal the weaknesses of so-called “biblical” or “Christian” counseling. A notable impact of this book rests in the consistent revelation of the words of the most notable U.S. “biblical counselors” as compared to the unassailable truth of God’s Word. The differences between so-called “biblical counseling tenets” and God’s truth are clearly evident.

Nevada

Martin & Deidre,

Looking for a church I noticed in one I visited, the only church info in the lobby area was a sign that advertised counseling was available. It was a small sign, but to me it was more of a greeting billboard that read: This is how people change. The pastor counselor was board certified, which has a secular ring to it. Even if aspiring to be biblical, would not this very conviction preclude the emphasis on counseling to begin with?

New York

Thank you for writing to us. We read every letter, even though we are not able to answer each one personally.



Sex Counseling by Biblical Counselors *(continued from page 1)*

Lambert interprets the woman in the *Song* as saying, “I enjoy being with my husband sexually in **all the ways** that you can be,” and concludes that “**there’s all kinds of things** that married couples can do to enjoy one another in the context of sexual intimacy” (bold added).

Lambert euphemistically describes the possibilities:

You don’t have to have sexual intercourse in order to be able to be sexually fulfilled during this season of your marriage.

A little later Lambert explains:

And so, this can be a time that is really sweet for both of you. She’s going to be—she’s going to have some limitations on her physical body as to **how she can serve you in that way—but she can still serve you**. But you [“Jeremy”] are going to be **unlimited** in your ability to draw near to her to embrace her, to rub her arm, to rub her hair until she falls asleep. (Bold added.)

The word *unlimited*, as in “But you [Jeremy] are going to be unlimited,” simply means that there will be no limit to Jeremy’s “ability to draw near to her.” Though all of the above seems well-intentioned, it is ill advised and is an egregious error and sets an unbiblical example for counselors to follow, which any hardcore porn user can capitalize on.

Dr. John Street

Dr. John Street is one of the world-renowned leaders in the biblical counseling movement and serves as a professor of biblical counseling at The Master’s University and Seminary (TMU&S). TMU&S is touted as “one of the leading schools for undergraduate and graduate level training in biblical counseling.” In fact, TMU&S conducted a survey of “all the Christian counseling programs that are accredited graduate level

throughout the United States” and found that, as far as could be determined from the research, TMU&S “had the largest graduate program in the country.”

Street’s counseling session with Joe and Julie, a married couple, is available to be seen at the Biblical Counseling and Discipleship Association So. Cal (BCDASoCal, Fall 2011 Training Conference site. Joe and Julie are members at Faith Community Church and Joe is a pastor there. Julie teaches school and is pregnant. They are in counseling because they are having marital problems.

This excursion by Street into the privacy of Joe and Julie’s sexual intimacy is a reflection of worldly counseling rather than a biblical need.

The biblical counseling process calls for every problem to be laid out on the table and described in as much detail as possible during the sessions. Street and other biblical counselors consider it necessary to “**understand completely** what is going on” before giving any advice so that the counselor won’t be “a fool in God’s eyes” or give “lousy advice” (bold added).

Street probes into the subject of sex. Evidently in reference to Joe’s answers on the PDI, Street says, “You also talk about your physical relationship in marriage—**your sexual relationship**” (bold added). He then ventures into this highly sensitive area by asking, “And why did you mark that as part of the problem here?” Street is obviously fishing for details about their sex life. We cover this same subject later, in which Pastor Patten pursues a couple whose husband says, “I’m very dissatisfied with our sex life.”³ We mention this to show that such excursions into this sensitive and biblically sacred area of marriage by biblical counselors are not unusual. Street is only

doing what is standard for many and what he teaches others to do.

As we say about such needless excursions: This reveals how deeply worldly this counseling is and the extent to which psychological problem-centered counseling with its expected transparency resulting in sinful communication has been emulated and embraced by the church. As much as prying for details is expected and practiced in biblical counseling, details about a couple’s intimacy should not be shared with a third party in counseling. Nevertheless such problem-centered counseling depends on such details even in these intimate areas. However, there are ways to minister to couples without invading their bedrooms and physical intimacy through unnecessary sinful communication.

In response to Street’s question about the lack of sexual intimacy, Joe describes his frustration, which includes the following words:

Well, I think just a desire that obviously it’s probably more apparent in the man versus a woman as far as for that sexual need to be met. Where there’s that desire to be met even on a weekly basis at times, or a couple times a week.

Joe criticizes Julie, who is **pregnant and teaches school all day**, for not being available for sexual intimacy! He then says, “I want to enjoy her,” and, “She’s too tired to really enjoy any times like that.” Joe “generously” confesses that he doesn’t “have to have this all the time.”! Then he uses the Bible to justify his complaint:

It’s a biblical desire that God has given to both of us to love to have, and we want to meet that in one another, but I think just the way our lives are going in two different directions, it’s just hard to meet at

(continued on page 6)

Ψ Psych Notes

Psych Notes are selected from articles from professional journals and other publications. The ones used are chosen for their possible interest to readers, but not necessarily because this ministry recommends them.

Adequate Sleep for Brain Health

“Sleep 7 to 8 Hours a night for better brain function. Among the findings of the world’s largest sleep study—involving more than 40,000 people around the world—was the conclusion that too much or too little sleep can significantly affect your thinking skills. In the study, published in the journal *SLEEP*, volunteers participated in an online investigation that explored time spent sleeping and other health factors and tested them on a variety of cognitive activities. Not surprisingly, researchers found that sleeping seven to eight hours a night was associated with the best cognitive performance. That amount of sleep time has been recommended by health experts for many years. In the study, though, researchers found that about half of the participants sleep, on average, less than 6.3 hours per night.

“The researchers found that the brain functions most affected by sleep were reasoning and verbal abilities. Tests of these functions found that sleeping less than seven or eight hours or sleeping more than that amount can impair those brain skills. The study also found that people who sleep less than four hours a night performed as if they were nine years older. One encouraging finding was that getting just one good night’s sleep can improve your cognitive ability the next day. Researchers emphasized, however, that getting seven or eight hours of sleep every night is a critical factor for better, long-term brain health” (excerpted from *Mind, Mood & Memory*, Vol. 14, No. 12, p. 1).

“Coitus ... Promotes Health”

“The empirical evidence suggests that coitus is associated with significant psychological and physical benefits and that noncoital sexual activity is associated with significant psychological and physical harms....

“In his *Journal of Sex Medicine* article, ‘The Relative Health Benefits of Different Sexual Activities,’ Dr. Stuart Brody summarizes a number of studies stating that ‘[a] wide range of better psychological and physiological health indices are associated specifically with penile–vaginal intercourse. Other sexual activities have weaker, no, or ... inverse associations with health indices.’ Multimethod evidence points to better psychological and physiological health benefits associated with coitus but not with other sexual behaviors.

“Researchers also found differences in mental health satisfaction when comparing coitus with noncoital activities. Brody writes:

“In a large representative sample of the Swedish population, PVI (penile–vaginal intercourse) frequency was a significant predictor of both men’s and women’s greater satisfaction with their mental health. In contrast, masturbation was inversely associated with mental health satisfaction in the multivariate analyses that controlled for other sexual behavior frequencies, and partnered sexual behaviors other than PVI (penile–vaginal intercourse) were uncorrelated with mental health satisfaction.

“Differences also existed regarding intimate relationship quality: ‘noncoital sex frequency was associated with less global relationship satisfaction, and noncoital partnered orgasm frequency was associated with less love.’...

“In addition to psychological benefits, physiological benefits are also associated with coitus but not other kinds of sexual behavior. Researchers found

that, “specifically PVI but not other sexual behavior was associated with an important measure of better homeostasis, better parasympathetic tone, lower mortality risk, and better psychological function (including better relatedness).’ The research suggests ‘not only that it is specifically PVI (rather than other sexual behaviors) that is associated with optimal cardiovascular “protection” from stress, but also that the benefits are not simply due to having a partner.’ Similarly, Brody cites studies showing the benefits of coitus but not other sexual activities in reducing the likelihood of prostate cancer, breast cancer, hot flash symptoms, pre-eclampsia, low sperm count, and high blood pressure” (excerpted from Christopher Kaczor, “Coitus, But Not Other Kinds of Sexual Activity, Promotes Health,” *The Public Discourse*, 11/5/2018, <https://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2018/11/44732/>).

The Human Brain

“Christof Koch, chief scientist and president of the Allen Institute for Brain Science, says, ‘The brain is by far the most complex piece of highly excitable matter in the known universe by any measure. We don’t even understand the brain of a worm’ (*The New York Times*, Oct. 15, 2018, p. A3). The information in the brain equals that contained in 20 million separate books (George Cahill, *Science Digest*, Vol. 89, issue 3, 1981, p. 105). It has about 200 billion nerve cells with hundreds of trillions of connections called synapses. Each synapse functions like a microprocessor ‘with both memory-storage and information-processing elements’ (Cornelius Hunter, “More Switches Than the Internet,” *Darwin’s God*, Nov. 17, 2010). One synapse may contain 1,000 switches. In the cerebral cortex alone there are 125 trillion synapses, which is about how many stars would fill 1,500 Milky Way galaxies. ‘The brain’s total number of connections rivals the stars of the

(continued on page 5)

Psych Notes *(continued from page 4)*

universe in number, yet the connections follow an orderly plan' (Alan Gillen, *Body by Design*, p. 87).

"There are 100 billion glia cells which provide the biological 'batteries' for brain activity (*The Revelation of God and Nature*). The brain receives signals from 137 million light receptors in the eyes, 100,000 hearing receptors in the ears, 10,000 taste buds, 5-6 million odor detecting cells, 30,000 heat sensors on the skin, 250,000 cold sensors, and 500,000 touch sensors (adapted from Bert Thompson, *The Revelation of God and Nature*). The hearing receptors alone send up to 25,000 auditory signals per second to the brain, which interprets them as voices, thunder, music, or a million other sounds (Jackson, *The Human Body*). The brain receives 20% of all of the blood pumped from the heart. The brain produces over 50 different complex drugs needed to control our body, emotions, and thoughts. For example, endorphin, the brain's pain-killer, is three times more potent than morphine (*A Closer Look at the Evidence*)" (from "The Human Brain," *Friday Church Notes*, 10/19/2018, wayoflife.org).

"Stress Hormone"

"The stresses of everyday life may start taking a toll on the brain in relatively early middle age, new research shows. The study of more than 2,000 people, most of them in their 40s, found those with the highest levels of the stress-related hormone cortisol performed worse on tests of memory, organization, visual perception and attention.

Higher cortisol levels, measured in subjects' blood, were also found to be associated with physical changes in the brain that are often seen as precursors to Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia, according to the study published Wednesday in *Neurology*....

"The study is the largest of its kind to look at these factors and tightens the

link between cortisol, midlife stress and brain changes, says Pierre Fayad, medical director of the Nebraska Stroke Center at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, who was not involved in the new research. 'It confirms some of the previous suspicions,' he says. 'Because of its quality, it gives a lot more credibility.'

"Bruce McEwen, a neuroscientist and cortisol expert at The Rockefeller University who also was not part of the study, says he found it 'frankly remarkable.' Cortisol, he notes, is necessary for life—so it is obviously not all bad. But stress can lead people to potentially problematic behaviors such as smoking, drinking and eating unhealthy food. 'Cortisol is itself the tip of the iceberg of things that are going on in a person's life and a person's body,' he says....

"Earlier research has shown weaker-than-average performances on tests like these are associated with a higher risk of dementia decades later, and Seshadri says high stress levels in midlife might be one of many factors that contribute to dementia. Understanding that link might offer a potential opportunity to reduce risk—but she cautions research has not yet shown conclusively that lowering cortisol levels will reduce the risk of Alzheimer's.

"Other research has shown cortisol levels can be reduced with adequate sleep, exercise, socializing and relaxing mental activities such as meditation. 'There are a number of intriguing, fairly simple things that have been shown to change these levels,' Seshadri says. 'But whether they will in turn translate into better preservation of the brain is something that can only be determined in a clinical trial'" (Karen Weintraub, "'Stress Hormone' Cortisol Linked to Early Toll on Thinking Ability," *Scientific American*, 11/25/18, <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/ldquo-stress-hormone-rdquo-cortisol-linked-to-early-toll-on-thinking-ability/>).

Tomato Memory Booster

"Whether they are fresh, sun-dried or part of a delicious marinara sauce, tomatoes deserve a prominent place in your diet. That's because they contain the powerful antioxidant lycopene, which is associated with brain health, including concentration and memory skills. Interestingly, while some foods lose a little nutrient value from cooking, tomatoes can actually provide more lycopene if they are cooked in the presence of healthy fats, such as olive oil. The cooking process increases the bioavailability of lycopene, meaning higher levels of the antioxidant can be consumed and used by you. While tomatoes and other lycopene sources alone can't prevent neurodegenerative diseases, such as Alzheimer's disease and Parkinson's disease, they may help lower your risk and help you maintain brainpower" (excerpted from *Mind, Mood & Memory*, Vol. 14, No. 11, p. 5).



PsychoHeresy Awareness Letter

© Copyright

PsychoHeresy Awareness Ministries

Unless otherwise indicated, articles are written by Martin and Deidre Bobgan.

PsychoHeresy Awareness Letter is a free, bimonthly publication of PsychoHeresy Awareness Ministries, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) tax-exempt corporation registered in the State of California. If you wish to contribute to this nonprofit ministry, please make your tax-deductible donations to:

PsychoHeresy Awareness Ministries

**4137 Primavera Road
Santa Barbara, CA 93110**

805-683-0864

bobgan@pamweb.org
<http://www.pamweb.org>

Donate by PayPal at:
<http://www.pamweb.org/donate.html>

Sex Counseling by Biblical Counselors *(continued from page 3)*

that time to where this can happen on a consistent basis. And, because of that, I have a hard time getting to sleep. Sometimes we'll just go to bed and I can't get to sleep because I know I've been denied the satisfaction and she's just gone to sleep on me.

Joe then says that, as a result, "Anger sets in and just frustration at why she is unwilling to do this."

Street responds by affirming, "Okay, what you're saying is really helpful." Helpful? Perhaps as far as getting as much information as possible, which is the nouthetic method. However, the marriage bed is holy and for Joe to expose his wife in the way he does is sinful! This kind of talk in real counseling would surely make a woman feel she has been betrayed both by her husband and their counselor. Street's excursion into the privacy of Joe and Julie's sexual intimacy is a reflection of worldly counseling rather than a biblical need.

While the topic of sex is clearly dealt with in Scripture, Paul was no doubt answering general questions in 1 Corinthians 7 rather than having private sessions with couples during which they expose one another! One does not need to hear the complaints or the details to teach about marriage. Biblical counselors would do well to skip the preliminaries (the digging and prying) and teach the doctrines and principles from Scripture, thereby **trusting the Holy Spirit to do the convicting and the inner work for outer obedience.**

Dr. Jim Newheiser

The IBCD website describes Newheiser as follows:

Dr. James (Jim) Newheiser, Jr., is the Director of the Institute for Biblical Counseling and Discipleship (IBCD) and the Director of the Christian Counseling Program

at RTS [Reformed Theological Seminary] Charlotte. He is also the Associate Professor of Christian Counseling and Practical Theology at RTS Charlotte and an Adjunct Professor of Biblical Counseling at The Master's University. Furthermore, Dr. Newheiser serves as a board member at both the Biblical Counseling Coalition (BCC) and the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors (ACBC). For 25 years, Dr. Newheiser served as the Preaching Pastor at Grace Bible Church in Escondido, California before taking over the Christian Counseling Program at RTS Charlotte in 2016. He now oversees all the counseling degree options, including the 66 credit-hour MA in Christian Counseling (MACC).⁴

Newheiser is definitely one of the super-stars of the biblical counseling movement.

This kind of counseling permits a husband to verbally expose the person he is called to love and protect (Eph. 5:25-28; 1 Peter 3:7).

Jesse

In two of his biblical counseling cases, Newheiser deals with the sex lives of the couples. In the first case, Jesse confesses that his wife caused him to come for counseling.⁵ **Newheiser asks obliquely about Jesse and his wife's sex life.** Jesse confirms that they "come together" sexually "twice a month." Newheiser asks, "Is that something you're both pleased with?" Jesse responds, "I don't think she cares." "It's always like a chore I think for her and that's frustrating." Newheiser affirms, "You don't want to feel like you're a bother?" Jesse responds, "I don't want to be with someone who is like doing it begrudgingly."

Newheiser's blatant excursion into the privacy of Jesse and Sarah's sexual intimacy is unholy at least and unbiblical at worst. The marriage bed is holy and for Newheiser to pry and for Jesse to expose his wife in the way he does is seriously sinful, but Newheiser is the one who, in his authoritative role as counselor (one-up), has precipitated and therefore encouraged Jesse's unfaithful and unmerciful responses (one-down). In addition to Bible verses regarding conversation, Ephesians 5:25-29 says:

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church.

Dan and Debbie

The second recorded biblical counseling case in the IBCD series, in which Newheiser delves into the sex life of his clients, is one in which Newheiser and his wife, Caroline Newheiser, are counseling Dan and Debbie in this enacted case.⁶ The acting on the part of Dan, a professional actor, is commendable, **but the counseling primarily done by Jim is lamentable.**

Because of the human tendency to blame others, the first serious error is to counsel such a couple together. The hostility and anger voiced by Dan to "third" parties will only, under normal versus contrived counseling circumstances, drive a deeper wedge into the

(continued on page 7)

(continued from page 6)

relationship. For Dan to play the victim while exposing his wife personally is reprehensible and irresponsible. For Jim to permit such theatrics for others to follow is biblically erroneous.

The second more serious error is for Jim to follow Dan, who brought up the subject, into the marriage bed. Dan alleges that Debbie is obsessed with cleanliness in the house and that she has been withholding sex from him. Dan's description of Debbie's reluctance is not only critical but also mocking at times. Dan sarcastically says, "I'm not the one withholding sex from my wife," meaning, of course, that she is the one depriving him. Dan then jabs deeper by saying, "I'm not withholding sex because the house isn't clean." By getting into the topic of sex, Jim opens the door for Dan to sin against his wife by ridiculing her in an area which should be kept private. In doing so Dan acts as a talebearer who "reveals secrets; but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter" (Prov. 11:13).

As Jim pursues the sexual intimacy subject, he attempts to bring some balance by saying, "In Matthew 7 Jesus says, after you get the log out of your eye, then you're able to see clearly to take what's in her eye out of her eye." But Dan has been given so much freedom to insult his wife that he is not ready for correction. In fact, he overrides Jim's one-up position and says: "So what's my log? I don't demand sex or I shouldn't expect it?" Later Dan asks, "How does me wanting my wife to come upstairs—how is that wrong for me to expect that and how is it right for her to stay downstairs cleaning the house from cover to cover?" After Jim's reading and discussing James 4, Dan asks, "It's okay for me to desire to be in bed with my wife?" Then after a brief interchange, Dan says, "If her body is mine and she's not providing it [sexual intimacy]

because of some stupid ideas...that the house has to be..." This kind of counseling permits a husband to verbally expose the person he is called to love and protect (Eph. 5:25-28; 1 Peter 3:7). Just as with psychological counseling, one spouse looks to the counselor to judge the situation and thereby make the other spouse change through intimidation or guilt induction.

There are ways to minister to couples without invading their bedrooms and physical intimacy through unnecessary and unhelpful sinful communication.

In the third counseling meeting the subject of sex comes up early. Dan reports, "She didn't come upstairs to bed. If she forgave me, she would have come up right away." Jim asks, "Did it finally happen?" meaning, did they finally have sexual intimacy. Dan confirms that it did "finally happen." Dan expresses his desperate desire for sex by saying, "If it doesn't happen I go nuts." A few minutes later Dan laments, "I don't think that a husband should beg a wife to go to bed."

Our earlier criticisms of Jim's biblical violations when counseling Jesse doubly apply here with Dan and Debbie, because of the unnecessary sexual discussion and diversion. Such probing and prying into this sensitive and biblically sacred area of marriage by biblical counselors are not unusual. Jim is only doing what is standard for many counselors and probably what he teaches others to do. As we say about such needless excursions: This reveals how deeply worldly this counseling is and the extent to which psychological problem-centered counseling with its sinful conversations has been emulated and embraced by biblical counselors.

As much as probing for details is expected and practiced in biblical coun-

seling, details about a couple's sexual intimacy should not be shared with a third party or pursued by a biblical counselor. Nevertheless problem-centered counseling, such as practiced and encouraged by Jim, depends on such details, even in these intimate areas. Jim's excursion into the privacy of Dan and Debbie's sexual intimacy is a reflection of psychological counseling rather than a biblical need. There are ways to minister to couples without invading their bedrooms and physical intimacy through unnecessary and unhelpful sinful communication.

Pastor Randy Patten

Pastor Randy Patten was the Executive Director of the National Association of Nouthetic Counselors (NANC) for sixteen years. NANC is now the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors (ACBC). Patten previously "served as a senior pastor for twelve years, followed by twelve years as a pastor to pastors and consultant to churches." In addition he was "a trainer and counselor at Faith Biblical Counseling Ministries in Lafayette, IN, for over twenty-four years."⁷

Patten conducted a recorded counseling session, in which he counsels Trey and Deb, portrayed by two "ministry staff members," who are well acquainted with the kinds of problems and conversations that go on in counseling.⁸

In response to Patten asking for another issue, Trey says, "**I don't know how much you want to get into this, but I'm very dissatisfied with our sex life.**" Right on cue Patten says, "**Describe.**" Patten's word "describe" is a command for more details. As much as prying for details is expected and practiced in biblical counseling, such prying invites and even demands one spouse to complain about the other in the most personal, private areas. Nevertheless, problem-centered counseling depends on such details even in these intimate areas.

(continued on page 8)

Sex Counseling by Biblical Counselors

(continued from page 7)

Trey tells Patten that their sex life is “nonexistent.” When asked how long, Trey complains, “For a couple of years. I mean we’re lucky if it’s once a month. I think there was one point in the last couple of years we didn’t have—we had sex once in three months. And that’s very frustrating.” Here Trey is playing the victim while exposing his wife.

When asked if she agreed, Deb responds, “Yeah.” So Patten asks, “Is it because you’re not interested in her or you’re not interested in him or is one being unresponsive to the other?”

Trey responds, “I would say she is never interested in sex.”

Deb counters, “It’s hard to be emotionally intimate with somebody and that’s what matters for sex for me. I mean it’s no—I just don’t flip a switch and it’s on.”

The marriage bed is holy and for Trey to expose his wife the way he does is sinful. This kind of talk would surely make a woman feel she has been betrayed by the one person who should be protecting her. Notice that when Deb tries to bring in the idea of intimacy and how fighting harms the intimacy, she is not as rude and crude as Trey. As Trey and Deb expose each other in this area of intimacy, Patten treats it merely as data—information for future sessions.

Trey and Deb continue to blame the other and justify self. Of course Patten wants even more details. After about an hour of questions precipitating sinful communication, further expressions of Jeremiah 17:9, and some teaching, Patten says, “Based upon what you said today, I estimate that I will want to meet with you 9, maybe 11 or 13 times.” Patten is not only giving Trey and Deb an indication of how much time and work it will take for him to fix their marriage; but it also gives Trey and Deb the typical

biblical counseling “hope” in the counselor’s commitment and expertise and in the counseling process to solve their problems. He asks them to keep a log of the topics they argue about during the week.

This initial counseling session had the following evidence of the Jeremiah 17:9 syndrome: dishonoring parents, expressions of self-love, sinful speaking, mote and beam self-bias, a victim mentality, and disregard for the feelings and reputation of others. Consider how much more there will be in Patten’s proposed “9, maybe 11 or 13” additional counseling sessions.

Instead, there should be teaching, which is biblically sound, rather than self-centered contention evoked and energized through verbal and emotional expression.

Conclusion

As counselors probe for more details during marriage counseling, they are inviting, even requiring couples to expose each other in numerous ways that are not pleasing to the spouse. And, as counselors pry into the sex lives of their counselees, they diminish the beauty of God’s creation of a man and woman in a one-flesh relationship. Moreover, they inadvertently work to please the flesh, rather than teach how couples have the privilege and responsibility to reflect the oneness of Christ and the church. As complaints and lustful desires are highlighted, even for the purpose of change, God is dishonored. Instead, there should be teaching, which is biblically sound, rather than self-centered contention evoked and energized through verbal and emotional expression.

Our ongoing question to Christians and counselors, whether psychological or biblical is: Does every word, every sentence, every emotion expressed in your counseling meet the Scriptural

admonitions, prohibitions, and restrictions? If not, your counseling is, in a word, **sinful**. After examining the counseling of many leaders of the biblical counseling movement, including those reviewed in *BCR*, we conclude that those in the modern-day biblical counseling movement, following the gold standard set by Dr. Jay Adams, are in gross biblical error! We add that we have reviewed even more in the psychological counseling (psychotherapy) movement and conclude that, from all the counseling we have evaluated, **Christians should NOT be counseling practitioners or participants, unless they can prove that they are not in violation of Scripture!**

Endnotes

- 1 Dr. Heath Lambert, <https://biblical-counseling.com/about/staff/dr-heath-lambert/>.
- 2 Heath Lambert, “Counseling Care for Pornography,” IBCD Observation, 3-disc set, Institute for Biblical Counseling & Discipleship.
- 3 Martin & Deidre Bobgan. *Counseling the Hard Cases: A Critical Review*. Santa Barbara, CA: EastGate Publishers, 2016, Chapter 3, pp. 47-68.
- 4 Jim Newheiser, <https://ibcd.org/presenter/jim-newheiser/>.
- 5 Jim Newheiser, “Jesse,” IBCD Observation 12-Disc Set, Institute of Biblical Counseling & Discipleship, 2014.
- 6 Jim and Caroline Newheiser, “Dan and Debbie,” IBCD Observation 12-Disc Set, Institute of Biblical Counseling & Discipleship, 2014.
- 7 “Randy Patten, <http://biblicalcounselingcoalition.org/person/randy-patten/>.
- 8 “Biblical Counseling Observations,” Faith Biblical Counseling, Faith Baptist Church, Lafayette, Indiana, Session One.

