



What is Biblical Counseling?

Evangelism

Discipleship

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Biblical Counseling

In recent decades we have seen an increasing intolerance for biblical truth and an increasing emphasis on secular treatment for mankind's troubles. The world of Psychology has flourished and has greatly influenced the church.

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Psychology

Trichotomous View of Man

The body is to be treated by the physician, the spirit by the pastor, and the soul by the psychologist.

Clyde Narramore

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Psychology

Dr. Clyde M. Narramore is the author of more than 100 books and booklets, including the best sellers *The Psychology of Counseling*, *The Encyclopedia of Psychological Problems*, and *This Way to Happiness*.^[1] He was the founding president of the first international non-profit [Christian counseling](#) and training organization, the Narramore Christian Foundation. In 1954 he and his wife, [Ruth Narramore](#), began a daily radio broadcast called *Psychology for Living*,^[2] which was eventually aired on over 300 radio stations across the United States and abroad.^[3] Sensing a need to offer advanced training in psychology shaped by a Christian worldview, in 1970 Dr. Narramore became the founding president of the [Rosemead School of Psychology](#), now affiliated with [Biola University](#).

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Basics of Christian Counseling

Introduction to Christian Counseling

1 Thessalonians 5:23

²³ Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 4:12

¹² For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

1 Corinthians 15:44

⁴⁴ it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

Trichotomy – Scripture Used

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1 Thessalonians 5:23

²³ Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

...not a scientific enumeration of the constituent parts of human nature, but a comprehensive sketch of that nature in its chief relations; compare Mark 12:30—"thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength"—where none would think of finding proof of a fourfold division of human nature. Strong

Trichotomy – An Explanation

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Hebrews 4:12

¹² For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Here the trichotomist insists, since the soul can be “divided” from the spirit, is evidence that they are two separate and distinct ontological entities. But this is to ignore the fact that “soul” and “spirit” are both genitives governed by the participle “dividing.” The verse is saying that the Word of God “divides” the soul, *even* the spirit. But it does not say that the Word of God divides *between* soul and spirit... or divides the soul *from* the spirit. The verse no more intends this than it intends, when it goes on to say that the Word is the judge of *thoughts* and of *intentions* of the heart (again, two genitives governed by the noun “judge”), that thoughts and intents are ontologically distinct things. Clearly, intents are simply one kind of thought. What the verse is actually saying is that the Word of God is able to penetrate into the deepest recesses of a man’s spirit and judge his very thoughts, even the secret intentions of his heart.
Reymond

Trichotomy – An Explanation

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1 Corinthians 15:44

⁴⁴ it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

Here the trichotomist urges that to assert that there is no difference between “soul” and “spirit” is to assert that there is no distinction between the preresurrection body and the resurrection body. But precisely because it is evident that there is a difference between these two bodies, he continues, it is equally clear that there is an ontological distinction between soul and spirit.

I would note, however, that the implied subject of both verbs (“sown,” “raised”) is the *same* subject, the body, and that the same word σώμα, *sōma*, is used in both instances, suggesting that it is the *same* body numerically that is sown and raised. If the two words really intended totally distinct ontological entities, then the body that is raised is not the same body that is sown. Paul doubtless intended simply to say that the “soulish body,” that is, the body whose attributes fit it for life in this *natural* world during this age, will be so transformed that, as the “spiritual body,” it will fit the life which the person who is associated with the risen Christ will live in the *supernatural* New Earth situation. Reymond

Trichotomy – An Explanation

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- (a) That of the Gnostics, who held that the πνεῦμα (spirit) is part of the divine essence, and therefore incapable of sin.
- (b) That of the Apollinarians, who taught that Christ's humanity embraced only σῶμα (body) and ψυχή (soul), while his divine nature furnished the πνεῦμα (spirit).
- (c) That of the Semi-Pelagians, who excepted the human πνεῦμα (spirit) from the dominion of original sin.
- (d) That of Placeus, who held that only the πνεῦμα (spirit) was directly created by God (see our section on Theories of Imputation).
- (e) That of Julius Müller, who held that the ψυχή (soul) comes to us from Adam, but that our πνεῦμα (spirit) was corrupted in a previous state of being.
- (f) That of the Annihilationists, who hold that man at his creation had a divine element breathed into him, which he lost by sin, and which he recovers only in regeneration; so that only when he has this πνεῦμα (spirit) restored by virtue of his union with Christ does man become immortal, death being to the sinner a complete extinction of being.

Trichotomy — Associated False Teaching

Strong

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Biblical View of Mankind

Dichotomous View of Man

Man is composed of two distinct parts: body and soul/spirit

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Dichotomous View

Probably the most widely held view throughout most of the history of Christian thought has been the view that the human is composed of two elements, a material aspect (the body) and an immaterial component (the soul or spirit). Dichotomism was commonly held from the earliest period of Christian thought. Following the Council of Constantinople in 381, however, it grew in popularity to the point where it was virtually the universal belief of the church.

Erickson

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Dichotomous View

Man has a two-fold nature,—on the one hand material, on the other hand immaterial. He consists of body, and of spirit, or soul. That there are two, and only two, elements in man's being, is a fact to which consciousness testifies. This testimony is confirmed by Scripture, in which the prevailing representation of man's constitution is that of dichotomy.

Strong

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Dichotomous View

The Record of Man's Creation

Genesis 2:7

⁷ Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. (soul)

Ecclesiastes 12:7

⁷ then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it.

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Dichotomous View

The interchangeable use of the terms 'soul' and 'spirit.'

Gen. 41:8—"his spirit was troubled"; *cf.* Ps. 42:6—"my soul is cast down within me." John 12:27—"Now is my soul troubled"; *cf.* 13:21—"he was troubled in the spirit." Mat. 20:28—"to give his life (ψυχὴν - soul) a ransom for many"; *cf.* 27:50—"yielded up his spirit (πνεῦμα)." Heb. 12:23—"spirits of just men made perfect"; *cf.* Rev. 6:9—"I saw underneath the altar the souls of them that had been slain for the word of God." In these passages "spirit" and "soul" seem to be used interchangeably.

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Dichotomous View

The interchangeable use of the terms 'soul' and 'spirit.'

Genesis 41:8

⁸ Now in the morning his spirit was troubled, so he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all its wise men. And Pharaoh told them his dreams, but there was no one who could interpret them to Pharaoh.

Psalm 42:6

⁶ O my God, my soul is in despair within me; Therefore I remember You from the land of the Jordan And the peaks of Hermon, from Mount Mizar.

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Dichotomous View

The interchangeable use of the terms 'soul' and 'spirit.'

John 12:27

²⁷ "Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour.

John 13:21

²¹ When Jesus had said this, He became troubled in spirit, and testified and said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, that one of you will betray Me."

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Dichotomous View

The interchangeable use of the terms 'soul' and 'spirit.'

Matthew 20:28

²⁸ just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life (soul) a ransom for many.”

Matthew 27:50

⁵⁰ And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit.

Hebrews 12:23

²³ to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect,

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Dichotomous View

The mention of body and soul (or spirit) as together constituting the whole man.

Matthew 10:28

²⁸ “Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

1 Corinthians 5:3

³ For I, on my part, though absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged him who has so committed this, as though I were present.

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Dichotomous View

Moreover both “soul” and “spirit” are used to designate the immaterial element of the dead

1 Peter 3:19

¹⁹ in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison,

Hebrews 12:23

²³ to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect.

Revelation 6:9

⁹ When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained;

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Dichotomous View

At Death, Scripture Says Either That the “Soul” Departs or the “Spirit” Departs.

Genesis 35:18

¹⁸ It came about as her soul was departing (for she died), that she named him Ben-oni; but his father called him Benjamin.

Luke 12:20

²⁰ “But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?’

Psalms 31:5

⁵ Into Your hand I commit my spirit; You have ransomed me, O LORD, God of truth.

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Those who advocate trichotomy face a difficult problem defining clearly just what the difference is between the soul and the spirit (from their perspective). If Scripture gave clear support to the idea that our spirit is the part of us that directly relates to God in worship and prayer, while our soul includes our intellect (thinking), our emotions (feeling), and our will (deciding), then trichotomists would have a strong case. However, Scripture appears not to allow such a distinction to be made. Grudem

The “spirit” and emotions. Acts 17:16; Jn 13:21; Prov 17:22

The “spirit” and thinking. Mk 2:8; Rom 8:16; 1 Cor 2:11

Our “souls” and worship. Ps. 25:1, 62:1, 103:1

Dichotomy – A Biblical Defense

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God commands us to love him with all our souls.

Mark 12:30

³⁰ and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’

Dichotomy – A Biblical Defense

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There are sins of the spirit as well as the flesh.

2 Corinthians 7:1

¹ Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Dichotomy – A Biblical Defense

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Fleshly lusts war against the soul.

1 Peter 2:11

¹¹ Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.

Dichotomy – A Biblical Defense

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Soul is used of God.

Isaiah 42:1

¹ "Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one in whom My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations.

Hebrews 10:38

³⁸ BUT MY RIGHTEOUS ONE SHALL LIVE BY FAITH; AND IF HE SHRINKS BACK, MY SOUL HAS NO PLEASURE IN HIM.

Dichotomy – A Biblical Defense

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Psychology – the study of the soul.

The basis of modern psychology can be summarized in several commonly-held ideas that have their roots in early Freudian humanism. These are the very same ideas many Christians are zealously attempting to synthesize with biblical truth:

Human nature is basically good

People have the answers to their problems inside them

Individuals' problems are the result of what someone else has done to them

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Psychology – the study of the soul.

The key to understanding and correcting a person's attitudes and actions lies somewhere in that person's past

Human problems can be purely psychological in nature – unrelated to any spiritual or physical condition

Deep-seated problems can be solved only by professional counselors using therapy

Scripture, prayer, and the Holy Spirit are inadequate and simplistic resources for solving certain types of problems

MacArthur, *Introduction to Biblical Counseling*, p. 8-9

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CBC Distinctive

The Sufficiency of Scripture

We believe that God has provided us in the Scripture with everything necessary to nurture and sustain spiritual life. That means we are committed to teaching and to counseling directly and exclusively from the Word of God. We do not believe that secular psychology has any legitimate role in the sanctification of the believer.

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2 Peter 1:3–4

3 seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

4 For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

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The Value and Power of the Word of God

1 Corinthians 3:19

¹⁹ For the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God. For it is written, “He is the one who catches the wise in their craftiness”;

Hebrews 4:12

¹² For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

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The Value and Power of the Word of God

Colossians 2:1–3

¹ For I want you to know how great a struggle I have on your behalf and for those who are at Laodicea, and for all those who have not personally seen my face,

² that their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, and attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself,

³ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

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The Call to Counsel

God calls every Christian to counsel some people, somewhere, at some time, about something, but he does not call him to counsel every person, under every situation, at all times about everything.” Jay Adams, *Ready to Restore*, p. 1

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The Call to Counsel

Romans 15:14

¹⁴ And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able also to **admonish one another**.

Galatians 6:1–2

¹ Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.

² Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.

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The Call to Counsel

Hebrews 3:13

¹³ But **encourage one another** day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

1 Thessalonians 4:18

¹⁸ Therefore **comfort one** another with these words.

1 Thessalonians 5:11

¹¹ Therefore **encourage one another** and **build up one another**, just as you also are doing.

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Biblical Counseling

The Call to Counsel

1 Thessalonians 5:14

¹⁴ We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone.

James 5:16

¹⁶ Therefore, **confess your sins to one another**, and **pray for one another** so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

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Keep in Mind

Most Christian counseling does not take place in an office. It takes place in day-to-day situations. It can be one spouse to another, parents to children, friend to friend, etc.

Christian counseling is more than one Christian talking to another about the issues of life. Unfortunately many Christians give advice that is not biblical.

Christian counseling is based on a Christian using the Word of God, in its proper context, and appropriately applying it to real life situations.

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Biblical Counseling

Requirements for Biblical Counselors

Your greatest asset in Biblical Counseling is NOT your life experience. It is your love for God and His Word

Your love for God should translate into a love for others

Biblical Counseling demands accurate theology

Accurate Theology is the result of diligent study

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Requirements for Biblical Counselors

Your Personal Testimony – a bad example:

Matthew 23:1–3

1 Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and to His disciples,

2 saying: “The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses;

3 therefore all that they tell you, do and observe, but do not do according to their deeds; for they say things and do not do them.

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Requirements for Biblical Counselors

Your Personal Testimony – a good example:

2 Corinthians 5:17

¹⁷ Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

Galatians 2:20

²⁰ "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

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Requirements for Biblical Counselors

Your Personal Testimony – a good example:

Philippians 3:17

¹⁷ Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk **according to the pattern you have in us**.

Philippians 4:9

⁹ The things you have **learned and received and heard and seen in me**, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

1 Corinthians 11:1

¹ **Be imitators of me**, just as I also am of Christ.

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Requirements for Biblical Counselors

Biblical Knowledge

Psalm 119:97–105

97 O how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day.

98 Your commandments make me wiser than my enemies, For they are ever mine.

99 I have more insight than all my teachers, For Your testimonies are my meditation.

100 I understand more than the aged, Because I have observed Your precepts.

101 I have restrained my feet from every evil way, That I may keep Your word.

102 I have not turned aside from Your ordinances, For You Yourself have taught me.

103 How sweet are Your words to my taste! Yes, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

104 From Your precepts I get understanding; Therefore I hate every false way.

105 Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.