

## **“GOD’S WORD vs MAN’S WORD”**

### **Questions & Answers**

**By Pastor Steven J. Cole**

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All Scriptures are from the New King James Version of the Bible.

## God's Word vs Man's Word

### INTRODUCTION

#### QUESTIONS & ANSWERS:

"During the past 15 to 20 [+] years a dramatic shift has taken place in American Christianity: Psychology has flooded into the church. Christian psychologists are now the ones many Christians primarily look to for guidance in the Christian life. Christian psychologists write many of the best-selling books and dominate much of Christian radio. Many pastors use psychological terms and concepts in their sermons.

"When anything new floods into the church, it needs to be evaluated in the light of Scripture, our only infallible guide for faith and practice. Many Christians are confused about "Christian" psychology: Should it be gladly embraced, used cautiously, or rejected outright? What follows are some common questions I've encountered and answers based upon God's Word as I've wrestled with this issue."

**Pastor Steven J. Cole**

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The Most Excellent Way is a "discipleship ministry!" We are a "Bible-based" ministry — more than "faith-based" (which can apply to faith in any philosophy or religion, cult or occult practice, or no god). If God didn't say it, we don't believe it! If the Bible does not validate our words, we are false prophets. In ministry, we rely on the sufficiency of the written Word and the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ.

- **ROMANS 1:16-17** — **For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. <sup>17</sup>For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith.**
- **ROMANS 10:17** — **So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.**

The Bible is called the Word of God because the writers of its several books were God's instruments in communicating His will to men. It is His "word," because He speaks to us in its sacred pages. Whatever the inspired writers declare to be true and binding upon us, God

declares to be true and binding. This Word is infallible, because it was written under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and therefore is free from all error of fact or doctrine or precept. All saving knowledge is obtained from the Word of God — it is an indispensable means of salvation, and is effective by the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit:

- **JOHN 17:17** — [Jesus prayed to the Father:] **“Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.**
- **2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17** — **All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.**
- **1 PETER 1:23** — **... having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, ...**

Since 1986, we have strived to remain faithful to the Word of God. But it hasn't been easy.

- **2 TIMOTHY 3:1-9** — **Perilous Times and Perilous Men**  
But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come:  
<sup>2</sup>For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, <sup>3</sup>unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, <sup>4</sup>traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, <sup>5</sup>having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!

These times are perilous for individuals seeking solutions for their problems because truth has become relative — there are no absolutes about what is right or wrong, good or bad. Ministering with Biblical truth is being replaced more and more with psychological counseling. The subtle integration of the man's and the world's (the prince of this world) philosophies has created much confusion for many of us who seek to be faithful to the Word of God.

Pastor Cole's Questions & Answers have application for The Most Excellent Way. We pray all who seek to minister and teach in Jesus' Name, will be diligent in knowing the authentic Word of God so they will be able to easily identify the enemy's counterfeits. May we each seek to bring honor and glory to God by surrendering to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

- **PSALMS 19:14** — **Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer.**



1. **Why can't we use the best insights of psychology along with the Bible? Isn't all truth God's truth?**
  - A. This goes right to the heart of the matter which is: **"Is the Bible sufficient for dealing with our deepest psychological and emotional needs or not?"**
  - B. We need to look at the Bible's claims. Second Peter 1:3 states that through His power, God "has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge" of Christ. He goes on to specify that this gift consists of God's "precious and magnificent promises," which, of course, are contained in His Word. Furthermore, 2 Timothy 3:16-17 states, **"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."**
  - C. These claims are comprehensive — that God's Word is sufficient for life and godliness, for equipping us for every good work. Surely, "everything pertaining to life and godliness" includes our emotional or psychological well-being. Since people with severe psychological problems are not "equipped for every good work," we must conclude that Scripture claims to be sufficient for bringing healing to the whole person.
  - D. **The list of the fruit of the Spirit ("love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control," Galatians 5:22-23) describes an emotionally balanced, psychologically stable person. If God's Word and Spirit can produce this, why do we need to turn to worldly psychology?**
  - E. "But," some counter, "the Bible isn't comprehensive. It doesn't tell us in detail how to deal with many of the complex problems people struggle with. As long as psychology is in line with Scripture, why not use it?" Perhaps this can be answered by answering [the next] question:

**2. We use modern medicine — why not use modern psychology?**

## 2. We use modern medicine — why not use modern psychology?

A. The answer is that the Bible doesn't claim to be sufficient for dealing with medical problems — it does claim to be sufficient for dealing with problems of the soul (psyche, in Greek). How can we determine which psychological "truths" are true? If we answer, "Whatever works," we're on thin ice, since many false religious and spiritual techniques produce results. Scripture is the only basis for determining absolute truth:

- **JOHN 17:17 — Jesus said: Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.**

**TRUTH = Harmony with God's reality!**

B. There are currently over 500 brand-name psychotherapies on the market, with the number expanding yearly. They come at problems from many varied angles, but one thing is common to them all: They start with a biblically defective view of the nature of man, namely, that man is basically good and able to solve his problems apart from God. If you start from the wrong base, you can't build a system that complements Scripture. If you mix dirt and water, you get mud.

C. **The Bible warns us against turning to the world's "wisdom," since it is opposed to God's wisdom:**

- **PSALM 1:1-2 — Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, or sits in the seat of the scornful; But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night.**
- **ISAIAH 5:8-11 — "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD.**  
<sup>9</sup> "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.  
<sup>10</sup> "For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, And do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the sower And bread to the eater,  
<sup>11</sup> "So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it."
- **JEREMIAH 2:13 — "For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn themselves cisterns — broken cisterns that can hold no water."**

- **1 CORINTHIANS 1:18-31** — For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.  
<sup>19</sup> For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,  
And bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent."  
<sup>20</sup> Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?  
<sup>21</sup> For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.  
<sup>22</sup> For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom;  
<sup>23</sup> but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness,  
<sup>24</sup> but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.  
<sup>25</sup> Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.  
<sup>26</sup> For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.  
<sup>27</sup> But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty;  
<sup>28</sup> and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are,  
<sup>29</sup> that no flesh should glory in His presence.  
<sup>30</sup> But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God — and righteousness and sanctification and redemption —  
<sup>31</sup> that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the LORD."

**D. As Christians, we are to depend solely on God and His Word as our support and wisdom in the trials of life:**

- **PSALMS 119:7-11** — I will praise You with uprightness of heart,  
When I learn Your righteous judgments.  
<sup>8</sup> I will keep Your statutes; Oh, do not forsake me utterly!  
<sup>9</sup> How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word.  
<sup>10</sup> With my whole heart I have sought You;  
Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments!  
<sup>11</sup> Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You.
- **PSALMS 32:5-11** — I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden.  
I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,"  
And You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah  
<sup>6</sup> For this cause everyone who is godly shall pray to You

In a time when You may be found;

Surely in a flood of great waters They shall not come near him.

<sup>7</sup> You are my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble;  
You shall surround me with songs of deliverance. Selah

<sup>8</sup> I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;  
I will guide you with My eye.

<sup>9</sup> Do not be like the horse or like the mule, Which have no understanding,  
Which must be harnessed with bit and bridle, Else they will not come near you.

<sup>10</sup> Many sorrows shall be to the wicked;  
But he who trusts in the LORD, mercy shall surround him.

<sup>11</sup> Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous;  
And shout for joy, all you upright in heart!

- **PSALMS 119** (see also)

**E. ... so that He alone gets the glory:**

- **PSALMS 32:8-9** — I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;  
I will guide you with My eye.  
<sup>9</sup> Do not be like the horse or like the mule, Which have no understanding,  
Which must be harnessed with bit and bridle, Else they will not come near you.
- **ISAIAH 42:8** — I am the LORD, that is My name; and My glory I will not give to another,  
Nor My praise to carved images.

F. Serious problems have plagued the human race since we fell into sin. If a relationship with the living God and His Word was not adequate for coping with these problems, but we needed the insights of modern psychology to resolve them, then God has left people without sufficient answers for the past 2,000 years, until Freud and company came along to save the day. This is preposterous!

G. The God who went to such expense to save us from sin would not abandon us to the world's ways to find answers to our deepest problems:

- **ROMANS 8:31-36** — **What then shall we say to these things?  
If God is for us, who can be against us?**  
<sup>32</sup> **He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all,  
how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?**  
<sup>33</sup> **Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.**  
<sup>34</sup> **Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen,  
who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.**  
<sup>35</sup> **Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress,  
or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?**

While some problems may be new to our times (anorexia, mid-life crisis, etc.), and thus are not specifically addressed in Scripture, the principles in God's Word are

sufficient to deal with the underlying causes of these problems.

There is no "new" problem for which Christ is not sufficient:

- **COLOSSIANS 2:4-10**

<sup>4</sup> Now this I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words.

<sup>5</sup> For though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.

<sup>6</sup> As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him,

<sup>7</sup> rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.

<sup>8</sup> Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.

<sup>9</sup> For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;

<sup>10</sup> and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.

- **COLOSSIANS 3:1-4** — If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.

<sup>2</sup> Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

<sup>3</sup> For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

<sup>4</sup> When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

H. The danger for modern Christians is that "Christian" psychologists read their psychological biases into Scripture and then cite Scripture as supporting and teaching these "truths." One flagrant example: In *Worry-Free Living*, [Thomas Nelson, 1989] Frank Minirth, Paul Meier, and Don Hawkins, **operate on the psychological premise that a lack of self-worth is the basis of most psychological problems** (p. 140). **This is not biblically sound. The Bible clearly and repeatedly states that sin is the basis of most problems.**

But, the authors seek to illustrate this false psychological premise by claiming that the ten spies who brought back a negative report to Moses suffered from a negative self-concept, whereas the two spies who brought back the good report had proper self-esteem (p. 136)! They tell us that the reason that David could defeat Goliath, but Saul was a coward, was that David had good self-esteem, whereas Saul did not (p. 139)! **This psychologizing of the Bible perverts its intended meaning (the Bible clearly attributes these varying responses due to the faith, or lack thereof, of the men) and leads the unsuspecting astray.**





### 3. **Won't I be a better Christian if I resolve some of my inner conflicts through the insights of psychology?**

A. In His inscrutable sovereignty, God allows trials, some mild, some severe, into every life. Some people have horrible childhoods — physical, sexual, and verbal abuse — that cause deep emotional problems. **The question is where does a person turn for healing? God's Word repeatedly claims that God Himself is our healer, sufficient to bind up our wounds and make us whole through trusting in Him:**

- **PSALMS 147:1-11**

Praise the LORD! For it is good to sing praises to our God;  
For it is pleasant, and praise is beautiful.

<sup>2</sup>The LORD builds up Jerusalem; He gathers together the outcasts of Israel.

<sup>3</sup>**He heals the brokenhearted And binds up their wounds.**

<sup>4</sup>He counts the number of the stars; He calls them all by name.

<sup>5</sup>**Great is our Lord, and mighty in power; His understanding is infinite.**

<sup>6</sup>**The LORD lifts up the humble; He casts the wicked down to the ground.**

<sup>7</sup>Sing to the LORD with thanksgiving; Sing praises on the harp to our God,

<sup>8</sup>Who covers the heavens with clouds, Who prepares rain for the earth,  
Who makes grass to grow on the mountains.

<sup>9</sup>He gives to the beast its food, And to the young ravens that cry.

<sup>10</sup>He does not delight in the strength of the horse;  
He takes no pleasure in the legs of a man.

<sup>11</sup>**The LORD takes pleasure in those who fear Him, In those who hope in His mercy.**

B. **God's perfect and complete provision for our needs is the death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ. We are warned not to be taken captive by the world's philosophies and principles, but to walk in the fullness of Christ, our all in all:**

- **COLOSSIANS 2:6-10** — As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, <sup>7</sup>rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.

<sup>8</sup>**Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.**

<sup>9</sup>For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;

<sup>10</sup>and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.

- **COLOSSIANS 3:1-4** — **Not Carnality but Christ**

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.

<sup>2</sup>Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

<sup>3</sup>For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

<sup>4</sup>When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

When we learn to rely fully on Jesus Christ as our source of strength and healing, He gets the glory due to Him as the only True God. When we rely on worldly psychology for *part or all of our healing* (if it can, indeed, provide such), psychology gets the glory.

**C. This is not to say that walking with the Lord provides miraculous, easy, instant emotional healing. Many passages show the struggles and difficulty of the Christian walk:**

- **2 CORINTHIANS 1:9** — Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead,
- **2 CORINTHIANS 4:7-11** — **Cast Down but Unconquered**  
But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.  
<sup>8</sup> **We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; <sup>9</sup> persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed** —  
<sup>10</sup> always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.  
<sup>11</sup> For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.
- **2 Corinthians 11:23-28** — Are they ministers of Christ? — I speak as a fool —  
I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often.  
<sup>24</sup> From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one.  
<sup>25</sup> Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep;  
<sup>26</sup> in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;  
<sup>27</sup> in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness —  
<sup>28</sup> besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.
- **2 CORINTHIANS 12:7-10** — **The Thorn in the Flesh**  
And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure.  
<sup>8</sup> Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me.  
<sup>9</sup> **And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.**  
<sup>10</sup> Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

- D. The Christian life is pictured as warfare, and war is never easy! But God wants each of us to learn that He is the all-sufficient One who knows us and can meet our deepest needs. We don't need the insights of worldly men to grow up in Christ.



**4. I have trouble relating to God as a loving Father because my biological father was abusive. Can't psychology help me work through the repressed pain from my childhood?**

- A. No one has had a perfect earthly father. Evil, abusive fathers have been around since sin entered the world. God has given us all we need in His Word to come to know and love Him as our Heavenly Father. We may have to identify wrong ideas we have adopted due to our upbringing and change these concepts and attitudes to conform to God's truth.
- B. But God's Word is adequate to make us whole persons in Christ. It alone reveals God as He is and the human heart as it is.
- C. TMEW: Our Heavenly Father is greater. The invincibility of God in protecting those who trust in Him is attested throughout the Bible. And nowhere else is that power more clear than toward those whom God has promised to save. The following are a sample of biblical affirmations on God's love and protection:
- **2 CHRONICLES 14:11** — LORD, it is nothing for You to help, whether with many or with those who have no power.
  - **PSALM 54:4** — Behold, God is my helper; the LORD is with those who uphold my life.
  - **PSALM 60:12** — Through God we will do valiantly.
  - **PSALM 118:8** — It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man.
  - **ROMANS 8:38-39** — For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
  - **JUDE 24-25** — Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to God our Savior, who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen.
  - **GALATIANS 4:6-7** — And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.
  - **1 JOHN 4:15-16** — Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. GOD IS LOVE, AND HE WHO ABIDES IN LOVE ABIDES IN GOD, AND GOD IN HIM.



**5. Don't I need healthy self-esteem to be able to serve the Lord?  
Don't I need to love myself properly so that I can love God and  
others properly?**

- A. Again, we must go to Scripture, not to psychology, to find the answer. **Can you find a single verse that says that you need to build your self-esteem?** Many distort the command, "*Love your neighbor as yourself*" (Matthew 22:39), to fit the current psychological "wisdom." They say, "The Bible commands us to love ourselves." Some even go so far as to say that we cannot love God and others until we first learn to love ourselves. Thus they turn people toward a futile search for self-love.
- B. If you study the verse in its context, it is clear that Jesus says there are two commands, not three: Love God and love your neighbor. The standard for loving your neighbor is how you do in fact already love yourself! Jesus assumes that we each love ourselves so much that if we just love our neighbor that much, we have obeyed the command. Paul also assumes that each person loves himself (Ephesians 5:28-29) and uses this as the standard by which men must love their wives. Even those with poor "self-esteem" love themselves too much, because they are consumed with self. They aren't sacrificing themselves for God and others.

The mark of Biblical love is self-sacrifice, not self-esteem:

- **EPHESIANS 5:25-27** — Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,  
<sup>26</sup> that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,  
<sup>27</sup> that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.
  - **JOHN 13:34** — Jesus said: "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another."
  - **JOHN 15:13** — Jesus said: "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends."
  - **1 JOHN 3:16** — By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.
- C. Not only does the Bible not encourage self-love — it strongly warns against it! Self-love heads the list of terrible sins that marks the end times:
- **2 TIMOTHY 3:1-9** — But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come:  
<sup>2</sup>For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,  
<sup>3</sup> unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good,  
<sup>4</sup> traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,

<sup>5</sup> having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!

<sup>6</sup> For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts,

<sup>7</sup> always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

<sup>8</sup> Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith;

<sup>9</sup> but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs also was.

D. The first requirement if we want to be followers of Jesus is to deny ourselves, not affirm ourselves — in fact this is to be the **daily** experience of **all** disciples:

- **MARK 8:34-38** — When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.

<sup>35</sup> For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it.

<sup>36</sup> For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?

<sup>37</sup> Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?

<sup>38</sup> For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels." (Luke 9:23 — "daily")

E. Many verses in the Bible tell us to humble ourselves and not to think too highly of ourselves — but none tell us to focus on how wonderful or worthy we are (because we're not worthy — grace is for the unworthy):

- **JAMES 4:6-10** — But He gives more grace. Therefore He says:

"God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

<sup>7</sup> Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

<sup>8</sup> Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.

Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

<sup>9</sup> Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom.

<sup>10</sup> Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

- **1 PETER 5:5-7** — Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

<sup>6</sup> Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time,

<sup>7</sup> casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

- **ROMANS 12:3** — For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.

G. We are commanded to esteem others more highly than ourselves:

- **PHILIPPIANS 2:3-4** — Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

H. **The problem with building your self-esteem is that the focus is wrong. Jesus said that if you seek to save your life, you'll lose it, but if you lose your life for His sake and the gospel's, you will save it.** If you say no to your own self-focus and live for Jesus and others (the two great commandments), God graciously gives you the fulfillment you need. But if you seek fulfillment or self-esteem, you will come up empty in the end.

- **MARK 8:34-38** — When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, **"Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.**

<sup>35</sup> **For whoever desires to save his life will lose it,**

**but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it.**

<sup>36</sup> For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?

<sup>37</sup> Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"



**6. What about my children's self-esteem? Don't they need to feel good about themselves so they will be well-adjusted?**

- A. We should show biblical, self-sacrificing love toward our children, as we are commanded to do toward all people (even our enemies — Matthew 5:44!).
- B. We should seek to build our children in Christ by using speech that encourages and builds them up, not speech that belittles and tears them down:
- **EPHESIANS 4:29** — Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.
  - **COLOSSIANS 3:8** — But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth.
- C. We should be tender and compassionate toward our children, modeling the gracious love of our Savior:
- **EPHESIANS 4:32 & 5:2** — And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you. Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. <sup>5:2</sup> And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.
- D. We should esteem our children more highly than we do ourselves:
- **PHILIPPIANS 2:3-4** — Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.
- But the goal of such behavior is not to "build their self-esteem," but rather to model Christ and encourage our kids to be like Him.
- E. As our children see us denying self to please our Lord, they will want to follow and serve Him by laying down their lives out of love for Him and for others.
- F. If our focus is to help our kids "build their self-esteem," we are encouraging the inborn selfishness that dominates every fallen human heart.
- G. If our focus is to show Christ-like love to our children and to model a life of service motivated by His grace, they will learn to love and serve Him, too.





## 7. If God loves me, why do I have so much pain and suffering? Doesn't God want me to be happy?

A. Perhaps we should distinguish between happiness and joy. God wants you to be filled with His joy, peace, and hope in every situation, but often such qualities shine the most in the midst of trials and pain:

- **JOHN 16:20-22** — Jesus said: “Most assuredly, I say to you that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; and you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy. <sup>21</sup>A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. <sup>22</sup>Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you.”
- **JOHN 16:33** — Jesus said: “These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”
- **2 CORINTHIANS 4:7-11** — **Cast Down but Unconquered**  
But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.  
<sup>8</sup> We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed;  
we are perplexed, but not in despair;  
<sup>9</sup> persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed —  
<sup>10</sup> always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.  
<sup>11</sup> For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.
- **2 CORINTHIANS 6:3-10** — We give no offense in anything, that our ministry may not be blamed.  
<sup>4</sup> But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God:  
in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses,  
<sup>5</sup> in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings;  
<sup>6</sup> by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness,  
by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love,  
<sup>7</sup> by the word of truth, by the power of God,  
by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,  
<sup>8</sup> by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true;  
<sup>9</sup> as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live;  
as chastened, and yet not killed;  
<sup>10</sup> as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich;  
as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.
- **2 CORINTHIANS 12:7 -10** — **Thorn in the Flesh** (see above)

**B. God's goal for us is not primarily that we be happy, but that we be holy:**

- **ROMANS 8:28-29** — And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. <sup>29</sup>For whom He foreknew, **He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son**, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.
- **HEBREWS 12:3-11** — For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.  
<sup>4</sup> You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin.  
<sup>5</sup> And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons:  
"My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD,  
Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him;  
<sup>6</sup> For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives."  
<sup>7</sup> If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons;  
for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?  
<sup>8</sup> But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers,  
then you are illegitimate and not sons.  
<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect.  
Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live?  
<sup>10</sup> For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them,  
but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness.  
<sup>11</sup> Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful;  
nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness  
to those who have been trained by it.

**C. Even Jesus learned obedience through the things He suffered — much more so must we!**

- **HEBREWS 5:8** — ... though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.

When we learn to submit to God's sovereign hand through the trials we experience, to trust Him and look to Him as our strength and hope in those trials, we grow in holiness and abound in His joy, peace, and hope:

- **1 PETER 5:6-11** — <sup>6</sup>Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, <sup>7</sup>casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.  
<sup>8</sup> Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. <sup>9</sup> Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.  
<sup>10</sup> But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.  
<sup>11</sup> To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.
- **ROMANS 15:13** — *Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.* ♥

**8. What can I do when Bible study, prayer, and obedience don't work?**

**It didn't work in terms of bringing me relief from the pain from my childhood.**

**If psychology helps resolve this pain, why not use it?**

A. **FIRST**, your focus is wrong. The goal of the Christian life is not to be free from pain, but to become like Jesus. **SECOND**, I must challenge whether you truly followed God's Word or not. **To say that you followed God's Word, but that it "didn't work" is to accuse God of false promises.**

B. To turn from that Word to the supposed wisdom of godless men is to abandon the living God for empty cisterns that hold no water:

- **JEREMIAH 2:13** — **"For My people have committed two evils:  
They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters,  
And hewn themselves cisterns — broken cisterns that can hold no water."**

On the contrary, let God be found true, though every man be found a liar:

C. Let me ask, if following Satan brought you inner relief, would you do it? I hope not! Yet many Christians abandon God's truth and turn to the self-centered approach of psychology because it offers relief from their inner pain.

D. The problem is not that God's Word has been tried and failed, but that it hasn't been followed completely. We need to take every thought captive to obedience to Christ:

- **2 CORINTHIANS 10:5** — ... **casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ ...**

E. **We must examine ourselves and judge wrong attitudes, thoughts, and motives by God's truth:**

- **2 CORINTHIANS 13:5** — **Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? — unless indeed you are disqualified.**

- **1 CORINTHIANS 11:28-30** — **But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep.**

- **1 JOHN 1:5-10** — **This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.**

<sup>6</sup>If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, ▶

we lie and do not practice the truth.

<sup>7</sup> But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

<sup>8</sup> If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

<sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

<sup>10</sup> If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

F. We are to seek God with all our hearts and not lean on our own or the world's understanding:

- **PROVERBS 3:5-7** — Trust in the LORD with all your heart,  
And lean not on your own understanding;  
<sup>6</sup> In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.  
<sup>7</sup> Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and depart from evil.
- **ISAIAH 55:6-7** — Seek the LORD while He may be found,  
Call upon Him while He is near.  
Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts;  
Let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him;  
And to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.
- **PSALMS 63 — Joy in the Fellowship of God**  
O God, You are my God; early will I seek You; my soul thirsts for You;  
My flesh longs for You In a dry and thirsty land where there is no water.  
<sup>2</sup> So I have looked for You in the sanctuary, to see Your power and Your glory.  
<sup>3</sup> Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, My lips shall praise You.  
<sup>4</sup> Thus I will bless You while I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name.  
<sup>5</sup> My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness,  
And my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips.  
<sup>6</sup> When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches.  
<sup>7</sup> Because You have been my help,  
Therefore in the shadow of Your wings I will rejoice.  
<sup>8</sup> My soul follows close behind You; our right hand upholds me.  
<sup>9</sup> But those who seek my life, to destroy it,  
Shall go into the lower parts of the earth.  
<sup>10</sup> They shall fall by the sword; They shall be a portion for jackals.  
<sup>11</sup> But the king shall rejoice in God; Everyone who swears by Him shall glory;  
But the mouth of those who speak lies shall be stopped.



**G. We are to seek first His kingdom and righteousness, not the things the world seeks. No one who has done this can say, "It didn't work!"**

- **MATTHEW 6:19-33** — Jesus said:  
"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth,  
where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal;  
<sup>20</sup> but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven,  
where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.  
<sup>21</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.  
<sup>22</sup> The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good,  
your whole body will be full of light.  
<sup>23</sup> But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness.  
If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!  
<sup>24</sup> No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other,  
or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other.  
You cannot serve God and mammon.  
<sup>25</sup> Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life,  
what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on.  
Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?  
<sup>26</sup> Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns;  
yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?  
<sup>27</sup> Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?  
<sup>28</sup> So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field,  
how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; <sup>29</sup> and yet I say to you that even  
Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.  
<sup>30</sup> Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow  
is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?  
<sup>31</sup> Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?'  
or 'What shall we wear?' <sup>32</sup> For after all these things the Gentiles seek.  
For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.  
<sup>33</sup> **But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,  
and all these things shall be added to you."**

**No one who has done this can say, "It didn't work!"**



## 9. But don't certain complicated psychological problems require the expertise of a professional therapist?

A. Who made you and understands every hidden motive and thought of your heart: a therapist or the living God?

- **PSALM 139 – God's Perfect Knowledge of Man**

O LORD, You have searched me and known me.

<sup>2</sup>You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off.

<sup>3</sup>You comprehend my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways.

<sup>4</sup>For there is not a word on my tongue, but behold, O LORD, You know it altogether.

<sup>5</sup>You have hedged me behind and before, and laid Your hand upon me.

<sup>6</sup>Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain it.

<sup>7</sup>Where can I go from Your Spirit?

Or where can I flee from Your presence?

<sup>8</sup>If I ascend into heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there.

<sup>9</sup>If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,

<sup>10</sup>Even there Your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me.

<sup>11</sup>If I say, "Surely the darkness shall fall on me," Even the night shall be light about me;

<sup>12</sup>Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You, but the night shines as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to You.

<sup>13</sup>For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb.

<sup>14</sup>I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well.

<sup>15</sup>My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.

<sup>16</sup>Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them.

<sup>17</sup>How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them!

<sup>18</sup>If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand; when I awake, I am still with You.

<sup>19</sup>Oh, that You would slay the wicked, O God! Depart from me, therefore, you bloodthirsty men.

<sup>20</sup>For they speak against You wickedly; Your enemies take Your name in vain.

<sup>21</sup>Do I not hate them, O LORD, who hate You? And do I not loathe those who rise up against You?

<sup>22</sup>I hate them with perfect hatred; I count them my enemies.

<sup>23</sup>Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties;

<sup>24</sup>And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.

B. We can't even understand our own hearts completely, because we are blinded by sin:

- **JEREMIAH 17:9-10** — "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; Who can know it? I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings."

C. Only God knows us thoroughly and only in His Word does He tell us how we must live to experience His blessing. Specifically His Word warns us against walking in the counsel of the wicked and promises that if we delight in His law, we will be blessed:

- **PSALM 1** —

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,

Nor stands in the path of sinners,

Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;

<sup>2</sup> But his delight is in the law of the LORD,

And in His law he meditates day and night.

<sup>3</sup> He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water,

That brings forth its fruit in its season,

Whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.

<sup>4</sup> The ungodly are not so,

But are like the chaff which the wind drives away.

<sup>5</sup> Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment,

Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

<sup>6</sup> For the LORD knows the way of the righteous,

But the way of the ungodly shall perish.

Why are believers turning to therapists trained in the ways of Freud, Jung, Rogers, Maslow, Skinner, and other scoffers rather than to godly men and women who rely solely upon God and His Word? In whom do you trust?



**10. What about the popular 12-Step programs? The 12 Steps sound like biblical principles.**

- A. Remember, Satan is a deceiver. The best counterfeits look like the real thing, but they are false substitutes.
- B. The problem with the 12-Step programs is that they subtly replace trust in the living God and His Word with trust in the 12 Steps. These programs repeatedly say things like, "The 12 Steps work. Trust in the 12 Steps."
- C. Furthermore, they are generic — they "work" no matter whether you make your "Higher Power" Jesus Christ, Buddha, or a candle on your shelf. This trivializes faith in the living Lord who alone is God, because if the system works no matter who you fit in the slot, then clearly the power is not in God, but in the system.

The Bible repeatedly warns against trusting in anything or anyone other than the one true God. To do so is the essence of idolatry. The 12-Step programs do not teach a person to trust in God in the biblical sense. Instead, people transfer their "addictions" to the 12-Step program.

Also, the 12-Step programs become a substitute for biblical spirituality. They replace biblical terms with psychological ones:

- Drunkenness is called alcoholism, a disease;
- Enslavement to sin is called addiction;
- Sin is called sickness or disease;
- Repentance becomes recovery.

**This is not a small quibble. Words express truth or error. The biblical terms are important.**

- **We don't repent of sickness—we recover.**
- **We don't recover from sin — we repent.**





## 11. What about feelings? I've heard that "feelings aren't right or wrong; feelings just are." Is this biblical?

A. It needs to be qualified. The statement is often a reaction to people who have denied feelings. For example, some Christians are angry people, but since they think anger is sin, and they don't want to face their own sin, they say (often with clenched teeth), "I'm not angry." Or, since they think Christians are to be happy, they deny depression. But obviously, these are not biblically sound ways of dealing with these emotions. We are to be people of the truth: (

- **EPHESIANS 4:25** — Therefore, putting away lying, "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another.

B. But neither is it biblical to say that emotions are totally neutral. The Bible recognizes that some anger is not sinful ...

- **EPHESIANS 4:26** — "Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath ...
- **MARK 3:5** — And when [Jesus] had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts ...

The Bible also labels much anger as sin that needs to be put away:

- **EPHESIANS 4:32** — And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.
- **MATTHEW 5:22** — Jesus said: "But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire."

C. It is not sin to be sad, depressed, or grieved when we are in the midst of a trial:

- **MATTHEW 26:38** — Then [Jesus] said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me."
- **JOHN 11:35** — **Jesus wept.**
- **HEBREWS 12:11** — Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.
- **ROMANS 12:15b** — ... and weep with those who weep.

D. But some depression is due to sin that needs to be confronted:

- **GENESIS 4:6-7** — So the LORD said to Cain,  
“Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen?  
If you do well, will you not be accepted?  
And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door.  
And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.”

E. Sometimes depression is due to a combination of factors: emotional, spiritual and physical exhaustion coupled with wrong thinking (read the story of Elijah, 1 Kings 17-19, especially, 19:4, 9-14):

- **1 KINGS 19:4** — But he himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he prayed that he might die, and said, “It is enough! Now, LORD, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!”
- **1 KINGS 19:9-14** — And there he went into a cave, and spent the night in that place; and behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and He said to him,  
“What are you doing here, Elijah?”  
<sup>10</sup> So he said, “I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life.”  
<sup>11</sup> (God's Revelation to Elijah:)  
Then He said, “Go out, and stand on the mountain before the LORD.”  
And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake;  
<sup>12</sup> and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice.  
<sup>13</sup> So it was, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave.  
Suddenly a voice came to him, and said, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”  
<sup>14</sup> And he said, “I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; because the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life.”

F. **To be consistently lacking in joy, peace and hope is not God’s will for the believer:** (Ps. 5:11; Rom. 15:13; Phil. 4:4; 1 Thess. 5:16).

- **PSALM 5:11** — But let all those rejoice who put their trust in You;  
Let them ever shout for joy, because You defend them;  
Let those also who love Your name be joyful in You.
- **ROMANS 15:13** — Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

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- **PHILIPPIANS 4:4** — Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!
- **1 THESSALONIANS 5:16** — Rejoice always!

Thus emotions are a lot like the warning lights on the dashboard of your car. They signal that something is wrong under the hood. When they come on, you need to take time to pull over and figure out what's wrong, so that you don't burn out the engine. When you are troubled by negative emotions, it's time to stop and seek the Lord and His Word as to the root problem, so that it can be corrected.



## 12. What about counseling? Are you saying, then, that counseling is wrong or not needed?

- A. Not at all! I'm only saying that much of the counseling that has flooded into American Christianity through psychology is contrary to God's Word of Truth.
- B. The Bible is clear that we often need the wise counsel of others, especially those who are mature in the faith:
- **ROMANS 15:14** — Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.
  - **GALATIANS 6:1**— Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.
  - **PROVERBS 24:6** — For by wise counsel you will wage your own war, and in a multitude of counselors there is safety.
- C. We dare not be independent Christians, living apart from the body of Christ of which we are members. We desperately need one another, just as my hand needs my arm and the rest of my body to function:
- **1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-31** — For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.  
<sup>13</sup> For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body — whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free — and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.  
<sup>14</sup> For in fact the body is not one member but many.  
<sup>15</sup> If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body?  
<sup>16</sup> And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body?  
<sup>17</sup> If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing?  
If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling?  
<sup>18</sup> But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased.  
<sup>19</sup> And if they were all one member, where would the body be?  
<sup>20</sup> But now indeed there are many members, yet one body.  
<sup>21</sup> And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you."  
<sup>22</sup> No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary.  
<sup>23</sup> And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable,
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## **The Most Excellent Way** ~ *Being God-Dependent*

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on these we bestow greater honor; and our unrepresentable parts have greater modesty,  
<sup>24</sup> but our representable parts have no need.

But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it,  
<sup>25</sup> that there should be no schism in the body,

but that the members should have the same care for one another.

<sup>26</sup> And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it;  
or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.

<sup>27</sup> Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.

<sup>28</sup> And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets,  
third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations,  
varieties of tongues.

<sup>29</sup> Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles?

<sup>30</sup> Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?

<sup>31</sup> **But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way.**

D. Those who are strong need to patiently admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, and help the weak:

- **1 THESSALONIANS 5:14-15** — **Now we exhort you, brethren,**  
warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak,  
be patient with all.  
See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone,  
but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all.

E. **Thus we need counsel; but make sure that it's BIBLICAL counsel, because:**

- **PROVERBS 21:30** — There is no wisdom and no understanding  
and no counsel against the Lord.
- **PROVERBS 28:26** — He who trusts in his own heart is a fool,  
but he who walks wisely will be delivered.

