



CURING THE HEART





Dr. Howard Eyrich serves on the Pastoral Staff at Briarwood Presbyterian Church. He has not only developed, but put into practice, the model of Biblical Counseling which is developed for you in this book. Our Lord has used him successively to minister to many people in our congregation and community, to train others and to multiply biblical counseling through the transferable model that you will find on the following pages. The blessing of this ministry is evident, not only in the lives of the people that it touches, but also in the many lay people that he has trained to assist in the counseling ministry at Briarwood.

Dr. Harry L. Reeder, III, Sr. Pastor, Briarwood Presbyterian Church Birmingham, Alabama

Curing the Heart: A Model for Biblical Counseling joins the still small literature of the growing Biblical Counseling movement. From the authors' broad experience it uniquely and most importantly provides actual guidance for the Christian who is called to counsel. This guidance is born of the conviction that the work of Christ and Scripture are sufficient to godly change. This is an important contribution and should be read and studied accordingly.

Gary Almy, M.D., Author, *How Christian is Christian Counseling?*

Eyrich and Hines' new *Curing the Heart: A Model for Biblical Counseling* is outstanding!

Their multidimensional approach focuses on several facets of counseling that help the counselor be fully equipped to deal with every kind of problem situation. Get one for yourself and one for everyone you know who is interested in counseling people God's way.

Dr. Ed Hindson, Assistant Chancellor, Liberty University, Lynchburg, Virginia

As a student pastor, the *Curing the Heart* model of Biblical counseling changed the course of my ministry. It equipped me with the biblical knowledge and tools to minister to those in distress, debt and discontent.

Rev. John Battle, Alpine, Alabama





CURING THE HEART

A MODEL FOR BIBLICAL COUNSELING

**HOWARD EYRICH
&
WILLIAM HINES**



MENTOR





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DEDICATION

We would like to dedicate this book to our students and counselees. They have blessed us in our interchanges with them. Our students have been our encouragement as they have absorbed the content we have taught and then multiplied our efforts as they have taught and counseled others. Our counselees have encouraged us in two ways. First, by the change in their lives that has glorified God and brought them peace. Second, by causing us to constantly re-examine our own lives before God as we expose them to the Word of God. May the reading and use of this book bring the same blessings to you as you reach out to teach and counsel others.





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Howard Eyrich

I am indebted to many for their mentoring of me through the years. Dr. Howard Eyrich has not only allowed me to know him as a Mentor and colleague but as a friend. My brother and fellow counselor, Mark Hines, first opened up the Scriptures to me through his changed life and prayerful dedication to not leaving me behind in the great adventure of knowing Christ. Francis Schaeffer taught me to think within a biblical framework, and S. Lewis Johnson and Louis Berkhof helped me learn to order my thinking theologically. My wife, Kathy, and children, Michelle, Kristin, Austin, Elise and Anna, live within the laboratory of life with me in such a way as to challenge me to live what I teach and to see the reality of God’s mercy when I fail to do so. My fellow Board members at the International Association of Biblical Counselors are a source of encouragement through their unwavering commitment to biblical counseling and Sue Hulett, colleague and friend, provides a constant





exhibition of the true heart of a counselor for Christ. Finally, I want to thank Brad and Julie Beauchamp, Steve and Marlene Crist and Bill and Laura Waybourn for continually holding me up in prayer and providing a source of accountability for our ministry. May God be honored!

Bill Hines, Summer 2002

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Finally, we want to thank Malcolm Maclean and Martin Maclean at Christian Focus Publications for their vision and patience and the whole staff at Christian Focus and Mentor Publications for bringing the project to fruition.





INTRODUCTION

The Puritans used to speak of the curing of souls. They believed that with the Bible rightly applied one could take a person successfully through the process of sanctification in a way that pleases God and brings peace to the soul. This book is dedicated to the idea that the Bible contains all that is needed for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:2-4) and that it is the only rule of faith and obedience. Upon that foundation we have put together a paradigm for thinking through the implications of such a perspective, the people who are qualified to carry on the ministry of counseling and a model for the counseling session. This third aspect of the book deserves some qualification. The model presented is biblical in that each item presented is presented with Scriptural support and an apologetic for its inclusion in the model. We want to stress, however, that it is *a* model. The Bible does not lay out such a precise model and we do not want to give the impression that there is just one way to carry on a counseling session. We have, however, found it invaluable to give our students this model as they begin this fascinating ministry and have found it gives them greater confidence as they have a systematic way of approaching the session and greater patience to allow the counselee's story to unfold.





SECTION ONE

THE NEED FOR A
BIBLICAL APPROACH





CHAPTER 1

WHAT DO THE HEAVENS DECLARE?

If one listens to the voices of popular culture it seems there is a return to spirituality. One popular talk show host talks of getting in touch with your spirit, while another speaks of getting to know God through nature. But is man able to truly know God by getting “in touch” with himself or exploring the wonders of nature?

The various aspects of creation are spoken of in theology as general revelation, that is, the revelation of God in a general way, a way that every human should understand. Dr. B. A. Demerest describes general revelation as:

That divine disclosure to all persons at all times and all places by which one comes to know that God is, and what he is like. While not imparting saving truths such as the Trinity, incarnation, or atonement, general revelation mediates the conviction that God exists and that he is self-sufficient, transcendent, immanent, eternal, powerful, wise, good, and righteous. General, or natural revelation may be divided into two categories: (1) internal, the innate sense of deity and conscience, and (2) external, nature and providential history.¹

Dr. Wayne Grudem succinctly defines general revelation this way:

The knowledge of God’s existence, character, and moral law which comes through creation to all humanity.²

¹ *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, Walter Elwell, ed., Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1984.

² *Systematic Theology* Wayne Grudem, Zondervan Publishing, Grand Rapids, MI 1994, p.120.



Examples of general revelation

Examples of the workings of general revelation from Scripture include Acts 14:17 where God is said to have given witness of Himself by providing rains and food even to those who have rebelled against Him.

Romans 1:18-21 is often quoted in regard to general revelation since it includes the testimony that God is revealed in His wrath as one who actively punishes the suppression of the truth that He has made evident, and within man as a God who has actually placed the knowledge of Himself within the creature (innate sense), and in history and providence through the display of His power and nature to the extent that man is without excuse.

Following the argument all the way through Romans 1:18-32 the biblical counselor gains much insight pertaining to what happens in the person who rejects God. We see right away that there is no such thing as an isolated sin that only affects the person for the moment, for with each sin comes an active suppression of the knowledge of God by the sinner (vv. 18-19). Since man does, in some sense, know God (v. 21) yet rebels against such knowledge, God's wrath is revealed to the end that the sinner experiences greater hardening of heart and greater conformity to the world system that creates its own gods (which makes man the ultimate authority). This is further accomplished with the approval of the inner man that has become hardened to the true knowledge of God because of his suppression of the truth revealed. The biblical counselor should emphasize that this digression within the human heart often has the approval of the heart of man because man is allowed to believe what he is insistent on believing (see vv. 24, 28, 32).

Psalm 19:1-4 contains another definitive declaration of the general revelation of God:

The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line has gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.



WHAT DO THE HEAVENS DECLARE?

The creation speaks to us of knowledge of the Creator. It brings a sense of wonder to our hearts yet raises more questions than it answers. For instance, we may realize there must be an intelligent designer behind the design but we don't know His name or whether we can know Him. We may see that He is a Creator given to beauty yet we don't know why the same universe that gives us a beautiful sunrise or cool breeze also brings drought or earthquake. We observe that parts of the creation die or experience pain yet we do not know why.

Responding to general revelation

These and other such questions are responded to in a variety of ways. Some respond by saying God is unknowable. Others believe God is a God of beauty and love yet not able to deal effectively with pain and suffering. Others determine to worship creation itself. It is easy to see how simply observing creation does not give the kind of definition man needs to determine who God is. As R. C. Sproul notes:

One of the most important advantages the Bible gives us is that it provides information that is not available anywhere else... But with all the skills of knowledge that we have at our disposal in this world, there is no one who can speak to us from a transcendent perspective...

and later:

... the world's best geographer cannot show us the way to God, and the world's best psychiatrist cannot give us a final answer to the problem of our guilt.³

In the arena of helping people in our present time the argument is the same when we examine the dilemma of hurting people. Disciplines such as psychology, sociology, history and medicine are, at best, able only to make general observations.

³ *Knowing Scripture* by R. C. Sproul, InterVarsity Press, 1977, pp. 23-24.



They cannot answer the *why* of the human condition. For example, modern medicine can tell us that an appendix has burst and must be removed so that the patient will not die but it cannot tell us ultimately why the body deteriorates. Sociology and psychology may observe and catalog human behaviors but they cannot tell us the workings or condition of the human heart out of which such responses flow (Proverbs 4:23; Matthew 12:34; Luke 6:45). When they try to explain the *why* of human behavior their guess is no better than the untrained or unlearned because they are, in the final analysis, simply making observations based on general revelation. This is not to say that their observations are simplistic. At times they are very complex and creative. It is to say, however, that they are limited because they lack the knowledge of what is behind creation and the meaning of life within the creation. Theirs is the same assumption pointed out by theologian Herman Bavinck: "By nature we consider ourselves and our abilities, the world and its treasures, enough for our salvation."⁴ For there to be understanding of the creation it must come from the Creator who designed it with purpose. It is He who must tell us what His purpose is if we are to understand. Only the Creator could answer the question posed by the young boy who gazed at the night sky and asked, "Where does space end, and what is on the other side of the end?"

So what do the heavens declare? They declare the wonder of a Creator with great power (Romans 1:18-32). They declare something of the moral law and character of God (Romans 2:14-15) and they also point us to the need for a word from that Creator if we are to know the why – the meaning – of what we are observing. That word must come from the God who transcends His creation because every observer is part of the creation itself and is, therefore, finite and does not have the knowledge necessary to understand and speak to the heart of man.

⁴ *Our Reasonable Faith* by Herman Bavinck, Baker Book House, 1977, p.61.