



TOTALLY SUFFICIENT

THE BIBLE & CHRISTIAN COUNSELING





Too few books emphasize the significance of “thinking about what you are thinking about.” Thankfully, Howard and Ed encourage their readers to practice critical, presuppositional thinking in evaluating contributions, including their own, to the field of counseling and psychology. *Totally Sufficient* belongs in every Christian counselor training program as a useful tool in teaching learners the importance of biblically evaluating the many competing philosophies in the field of counseling.

Judy A. Dabler, LPC
Executive Director
Center for Biblical Counseling & Education

Totally Sufficient: The Bible and Christian Counseling is an excellent review of the fundamental issues in the question of how to counsel in contemporary society. With multiple authors and the editors comment, it takes the reader from the higher level questions of this direction for helping others to the specifics of the major problems and approaches for giving counsel to others. Both scriptural citation and relevant issues make this books of readings an important guide to using God’s Word as the way to help people overcome their troubles, by God’s grace.

Andrew J. Peterson, Ph.D.
RTS/Virtual
Charlotte, NC





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GENERAL EDITORS

CHRISTIAN FOCUS

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ISBN 1-85792-960-8



Published in 2004
by
Christian Focus Publications
Geanies House, Fearn,
Ross-shire, IV20 1TW,
Great Britain

www.christianfocus.com

Cover design by Alister MacInnes

Printed and bound by
Mackay's of Chatham

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About the Editors

Edward E. Hindson is the Assistant Chancellor and Dean of the Institute of Biblical Studies at Liberty University in Virginia. He holds an M.A. degree from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School; Th.M. from Grace Theological Seminary; Th.D. from Trinity Graduate School; D.Min. from Westminster Theological Seminary; D.Phil. from the University of South Africa. He has authored numerous books, including the Gold Medallion award-winning *Knowing Jesus Study Bible*.

Howard Eyrich holds four graduate degrees: M.Div. from Faith Theological Seminary, Th.M. from Dallas Theological Seminary, M.A. from Liberty University, D.Min. from Western Seminary. He has authored or co-authored five books and contributed articles to the *Journal of Biblical Counseling*. He has lectured at various seminaries in Japan, Korea, Australia, Ukraine, and New Zealand. Dr Eyrich has also done graduate work in gerontology and written *The Christian Handbook on Aging*.



To the
pastor, elders, and members
of the
Kirk of the Hills Church
in
St Louis, Missouri,
who enabled us to
minister together
the Sufficient Word.







Foreword

This remarkable book on Christian counseling vis-a-vis psychological counseling carries an admirably accurate title: *Totally Sufficient*. Not only is its subject – the Bible – totally sufficient as a clinical tool in skillful hands for the treatment of behavioral disorders, but this compendium of twelve essays is also eminently adequate to the task which it confronts.

The first impression that reinforces reader confidence is the unquestionable credibility of the contributors themselves. A mere glance at the Table of Contents is convincing evidence that the debate is in the hands of professionals, all maximally credentialed and experienced. This is particularly comforting to those who know too well the shabby treatment customarily accorded by the mass media to almost any controversy centering on science and religion.

In comprehensive, yet penetrating, fashion and in language that is free of both psychotechnical and theological terms, here is a book that will prove to be of inestimable value to personal counselors, whether churched or unchurched, Christian or secular. Without denigrating the value of information provided by the textbooks of the social sciences, the consensus here is simply that man's truth is not always God's truth – and that the latter can only be discovered and put to productive use by practitioners who are grounded in the inerrant Word of God.

Generations who lived through the centuries preceding the recent dawning of psychology and psychiatry knew that the Scripture speaks to every area of human life. As Thomas Gray, the great poet of the eighteenth century, put it, it was Holy Writ "that taught the rustic moralist to die." It is just as efficacious, just as indispensable – and doubtless much more desperately needed – today, because it also teaches those who trust in it how to live, even under the most difficult of circumstances.

It has been my privilege to know many faithful physicians who have found the Bible to be an invaluable tool in physical



and spiritual healing. As this splendid book about the total sufficiency of Scripture in the practices of medicine and counseling becomes widely read, I expect to meet many more.

Dr James Kennedy
Pastor, Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church
Fort Lauderdale, Florida





Preface

This is a book about Christian counseling – distinctively Christian counseling. It is, in fact, a book about *biblical counseling*. It is our intent to define, explain, and clarify the issues that are at the center of the debate within Christian counseling circles about the sufficiency of Scripture. Unfortunately, this debate has often produced more heat than light!

It is our prayer that this volume will allow those who are working within the field of biblical counseling to more clearly and effectively state the case for biblical counseling from the perspective of their own disciplines. Each contributor was selected because of his interest, expertise, and commitment to a ministry that is wholly consistent with biblical truth. These contributors worked separately, not collectively; therefore, the essays reflect the individuality of each contributor. They do not necessarily agree in totality with one another on every point, yet all are in agreement about the supremacy of Scripture in biblical counseling.

For too long now, biblical counseling has been misunderstood or misrepresented as a simplistic approach to the complex problems of human nature. Pejorative labels like “Bible Bangers,” “Nothing Buttery,” “obscurantist,” and “irrelevant” have been used to criticize biblical counselors. They are generally represented as non-professionals interfering in various areas of the psychological domain, where they are said to have no business practicing their supposedly inadequate approach to counseling.

In contrast to this woeful stereotype, we have asked a team of ten professionals to discuss the issue of the sufficiency of Scripture in relation to counseling, psychology, psychiatry, medicine, biomedical research, the brain sciences, and pastoral ministry. Their observations may surprise you, as might their credentials and their expertise. This is no collection of undereducated, overzealous, misinformed pseudocounselors. These are real professionals, with great minds and great hearts, who are

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convinced the Bible still works today in speaking to the needs of real people.

It is our prayer that their essays will challenge and encourage you as you take a closer look at what biblical counseling is really all about. It is also our prayer that the essays will help sharpen the focus of the current debate over the Bible's sufficiency and produce more honest and conciliatory discussion in the future. We say that because all too often in the past, Christian biblical and psychological counselors have squared off, drawn lines, caricatured one another, and in some cases misrepresented one another – all in the name of God and the truth! Our appeal is twofold: First, that Christians who prefer the psychological model would take the time to re-examine their own biblical roots. And second, that Christians who prefer the biblical model would ask themselves if they are truly biblical in their attitude and approach.

It has been our experience in more than thirty years of counseling that most Christian counselors, regardless of their theoretical viewpoint, sincerely want to help the people they counsel. The only real debate, then, is over the question of *how*. It is with this fact in mind that we offer these essays so that each reader, regardless of his or her theoretical viewpoint, may benefit from the issues discussed and debated in this volume.

Above all, may the *light* of God's truth outshine the *heat* of individual personality, preference, or distinction. May you find in this volume a better understanding of *what* biblical counselors believe, and *why* and *how* biblical counseling works. God's sufficient grace be with us all!

Howard Eyrich, D.Min.
Ed Hindson, D.Phil.