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Strategic Pastoral Counseling

4. Preface to the First Edition

The author explains why he wrote another book on pastoral counseling when hundreds already exist. He argues the subject matters because counseling is a form of proclaiming God's Word, and he introduces his practical answer to a real gap: a model called 'strategic pastoral counseling.'

Key takeaways

- Pastoral counseling is proclamation — not preaching at someone, but bringing God's Word to bear on a specific person's life and struggles.
- It is unavoidable: the average pastor spends 6-8 hours a week counseling whether trained for it or not.
- Most pastors feel unprepared — only 13% felt adequately trained; 87% wanted more.
- Pastors said existing books are too theoretical; they need practical direction on what to actually do.
- 'Strategic pastoral counseling' answers that: focused, goal-driven, capped at five sessions, centered on the person's spiritual functioning, and explicitly Christian.

- It assumes no psychology background and builds on pastors' existing care experience, keeping counseling tied to the broader pastoral role rather than a separate clinical specialty.

Passages worth keeping

“Proclamation delivers or makes real what it talks about, and it does this in the present moment and experience of the one who receives the proclamation.”

Grounds counseling in the theology of the Word, not just technique.