

Collins, Gary

The Biblical Basis of Christian Counseling for People Helpers: Relating the Basic Teachings of
Scripture to People's Problems (Pilgrimage Growth Guide)

5. What Makes Counseling Christian?

The opening chapter of a book on building Christian counseling on a biblical foundation. Using Martin Luther's lifelong depression as a case study, Collins argues that how a counselor diagnoses and treats a problem reveals the counselor's underlying worldview. The chapter defines worldview, shows why it matters for counseling, and previews the book's plan to lay out a Christian theological worldview for counselors.

Key takeaways

- Everyone—counselor and counselee—carries a worldview: a set of assumptions about God, the universe, knowledge, right and wrong, and human nature. Most people never examine theirs.
- The same troubled person (like Luther) gets diagnosed very differently depending on the helper's worldview—medical, stress-based, psychoanalytic, systems, or spiritual.
- Counselors often 'borrow the method without the philosophy,' but non-Christian assumptions buried in psychology can quietly reshape a Christian's values and practice.

- A good worldview is plausible, coherent, answers most questions, and works in real life. Test one with five checks: use reason, weigh experience, check with others, look at the evidence, and try it out.
- Counseling can only be called Christian if it is built on a clearly understood Christian worldview—which means counselors need a working grasp of theology, not just psychology.
- Christian counseling defined: a Spirit-guided servant of Christ using God-given skills to help others toward wholeness, competence, stability, and spiritual maturity.

Passages worth keeping

“It is not the books written in direct defense of Materialism that make the modern man a materialist; it is the materialistic assumptions in all other books.”

C. S. Lewis—the danger is not open opposition but hidden assumptions, the chapter's core warning about absorbing anti-Christian ideas unawares.

How it connects

The chapter's method—examine your hidden assumptions before helping others—echoes Jesus' warning about the plank in your own eye (Matthew 7:3-5): a counselor must see clearly before guiding another.

Scripture referenced

- **Proverbs 27:17** -- Cited for testing beliefs against others to avoid 'groupthink' error—'as iron sharpens iron.'