

Collins, Gary

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

11. Christ and Counseling

This chapter turns from the human problem of sin to God's solution: Jesus Christ. It explains who Christ is (fully God and fully man) and what He has done (died, rose, and now intercedes), then applies His saving work to counseling through three images — reconciliation, justification, and redemption. The core question it presses on both counselor and counselee is 'What do we do with Jesus Christ?'

Key takeaways

- The 'messiah complex' — trying to rescue people from their problems — burns counselors out. Only the real Messiah can deliver anyone; Christ was crucified, not the counselor.
- Jesus is both fully God (the exact representation of the Father, eternal, one God in three Persons) and fully human (hungry, tired, tempted, suffering, dying) — yet without sin. Only such a person could stand in for us.
- The cross and the empty tomb are both central: Christ died in our place to pay for sin, and rose to defeat death and guarantee eternal life. He now intercedes for us in heaven.

- Reconciliation (an image from relationships): like the prodigal's father, God takes the initiative and restores broken relationship — giving peace with God, with others, within ourselves, and a 'ministry of reconciliation' to pass on.
- Justification (an image from the courtroom): though guilty, believers are declared legally righteous because Christ paid the penalty. This frees people from guilt and self-condemnation.
- Redemption (an image from the marketplace/slave market): 'redeem' means to buy back. We cannot buy our own freedom from sin; Christ ransomed us with His blood.
- Sharing Christ with a counselee is ethical guidance, not manipulation — as long as no one is pressured. It offers healing no secular therapy can give.
- Salvation is a free gift that must be accepted in this life; the Bible gives no hint of a second chance after death.

Passages worth keeping

“In order to save us in such a way as to satisfy himself, God through Christ substituted himself for us. Divine love triumphed over divine wrath by divine self-sacrifice.”

Stott's summary of what the cross accomplished — the chapter's theological anchor.

“Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so.”

Karl Barth's reported answer on the essence of Christianity — the chapter's closing point that the core is simple.

How it connects

The three images (reconciliation, justification, redemption) reframe heavy theology as everyday pictures a counselor can actually use, tying the gospel directly to the strained relationships, guilt, and bondage that bring people to counseling.

Scripture referenced

- **John 3:16** -- God sent His Son to pay for sin and give eternal life
- **Hebrews 4:15** -- Christ tempted as we are, so He identifies with our struggles
- **1 Corinthians 15:17** -- without the resurrection, faith is futile and we remain in sin
- **Luke 15:11-32** -- the prodigal son as the picture of reconciliation
- **Romans 3:23-26** -- we are justified — declared righteous — through Christ's payment
- **1 Peter 1:18-19** -- redeemed not with silver or gold but with Christ's blood