

**Collins, Gary**

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

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## **17. Spirituality and Counseling**

The final chapter contrasts the vague, self-focused "new spirituality" now popular among secular counselors with genuine Christian spirituality. It defines Christian spirituality as becoming Christlike and letting biblical belief permeate every part of life, then argues that Christian counselors have drifted from their soul-care roots into secular psychology and should return.

### **Key takeaways**

- The new spirituality looks inward — tapping the "power within," unity with nature, becoming gods — and rejects looking outward to Christ and Scripture as narrow.
- Christian spirituality is becoming more like Christ: it includes self-examination but goes further to Scripture, worship, self-denial, discipline, and obedience.
- Growth is a "divine cooperative program": we take responsibility to grow AND trust God to work in us — not a performance push or a passive "let go and let God."

- It rests on what Christ has done (grace, the cross, our union with Him — the branch on the vine), not on works, formulas, or twelve-step programs.
- We model our lives on how Jesus lived: obedient to the Father, dependent on the Holy Spirit, and disciplined. Freedom comes through discipline, not despite it.
- God shapes us through three means: people, circumstances, and the spiritual disciplines (prayer, worship, Bible study, fasting, service, giving).
- True spirituality is lived in ordinary daily life, not in ecstatic experiences — "living a human life in this world in union with God."
- Counselors (psychology, pastoral, and Christian) have "left the farm" of soul care for the secular "city"; the call is to bring that knowledge home and reground it in biblical roots.

## Passages worth keeping

*"He must become greater; I must become less."*

John the Baptist's words framed as the essence of Christian spirituality.

*"Christian spirituality is a process of becoming increasingly Christlike—a process that goes beyond mere self-reflection to find hope, forgiveness, redemption, and ultimate meaning in the living Christ."*

The chapter's core definition, set against vague new-age spirituality.

## How it connects

The chapter ties the counselor's own spiritual formation to the book's aim: to counsel from a Christ-centered worldview, being salt and light rather than accommodating secular psychology.

## Scripture referenced

- **John 3:30** -- "He must become greater; I must become less" — essence of spirituality.
- **John 15:1-8** -- The vine and branches — growth comes from being yielded to Christ.
- **Romans 8:29** -- Believers being conformed to Christ's likeness.
- **Philippians 2:12-13** -- Work out salvation as God works in you — the cooperative program.
- **Galatians 5:22-23** -- Fruit of the Spirit as marks of a mature counselor.
- **Leviticus 11:45** -- Be holy because God is holy — holiness at the core of spirituality.