

My personal theory of the role and purpose of counseling is itself derived from scriptural principles. While the principles I use as the foundation of my overall theory of counseling can be seen in action many times in scripture, they are never more clear than in the account of Israel's famous request for a human king (1 Samuel 8). In this passage, the people had a choice – continue following God as their king, or establish a human king. As they faced this choice, God did not direct Samuel to stop the people from making the wrong choice. Instead, God gave Samuel the responsibility to “protest . . . and shew them the manner of the king that shall reign over them” (1 Samuel 8:9), and then to help them implement their choice by anointing a king. Samuel went on to reveal to Israel the consequences which would come if they chose a human king. Samuel as the prophet of God was not responsible for the choices people made. Instead, he was responsible to be a ‘watchman’ who helped the people see what choices were available and the consequences of those choices. As a counselor, I believe it is my responsibility to do like Samuel did, specifically: 1) to help people see what options are available; 2) to help people see the positive and negative consequences of the available options; and 3) to assist when needed with the implementation of those options. The counseling process often is faced with assisting clients after they have chosen an option without realizing or with disregard to the consequences of that option. In these cases, clients must be assisted in recognizing that they have options in how they will handle the consequences they now face, and assist them in implementing *these* choices.

My personal theory of counseling harmonizes very well with the concepts found within several counseling theories, and these principles are interwoven throughout my counseling practice. I wholeheartedly agree with Reality Therapy on the concept of individual responsibility (Ezekiel 18:20; 1 Corinthians 5:10). While involved in a counseling relationship, I agree with Person Centered Theory that unconditional positive regard (Romans 5:8; 1 Peter 2:17), empathy (Romans 12:15), and congruence (Matthew 7:3-5; Galatians 6:1) are essential factors in assisting clients to make progress. When it comes to applying concepts of technique, I lean heavily on the core tenets of REBT.

In harmony with REBT, I understand the Bible to teach that regardless of what individuals are faced with, they have choice in how to cognitively process the situation and therefore act. Many of Jesus' parables revealed that an individual's thoughts guided their actions. He stated that the ‘rich fool’ “thought within himself” and then took actions which revealed his trust in self over God (Luke 12:16-21, KJV). In one of the most famous parables Jesus told, the ‘one-talent man’ erred because his thoughts about the master's expectations led to a paralyzing fear. In the parable the master rebuked and punished this servant because he should have thought about the master's expectations and chosen to act in a different way (Matthew 25:24-27). Jesus, Himself, faced death upon the cross, willingly, because of what He focused upon (Hebrews 12:2). Within counseling, I attempt to assist clients to reframe their circumstances so that they have a rational view of the present, past, and options for the future.

Due to: 1) my foundational theory of the purpose and basic function of counseling; and 2) my utilization of counseling theories and techniques which are congruent with my faith and understanding of scripture, my faith and counseling can be easily integrated together. I see the two realms not as competitors, but as two voices in such beautiful harmony they function as one.