Therapeutic Expedition
Equipping the Christian Counselor for the Journey

JOHN C. THOMAS & LISA SOSIN
## Contents

Acknowledgments vii  
Preface ix  

### Section 1  
The Heart of the Helping Process  
1. The Foundation of Helping 4  
2. The Fundamentals of Helping 39  
3. The Hazards of Helping 67  
4. The Person of the Counselor 82  

### Section 2  
Basic Helping Skills  
5. Basic Skills: Creating a Connection 123  
6. Basic Skills: Exploring the Problem 161  
7. Basic Skills: Giving Feedback 185  
8. Basic Skills: Terminating the Counseling 232  

### Section 3  
The Helping Process  
9. Managing the Counseling Session 264  
10. Conducting an Assessment 324  
11. Case Conceptualization and Treatment Planning 357  
12. Strategies for Bringing About Changes 384  
13. General Helping Strategies 415  
14. Spiritual Strategies 435  
15. Professional Issues in Counseling 456  

References 482  
Appendixes 523  
Author Index 610  
Subject Index 619  
Scripture Index 633
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>Video Vignettes Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preface</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section 1 Introduction</strong></td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1: The Foundation of Helping</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2: The Fundamentals of Helping</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3: The Hazards of Helping</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4: The Person of the Counselor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section 2 Introduction</strong></td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5: Basic Skills: Creating a Connection</td>
<td>Attending Skills Setting Up the Room Empathy/Reflection Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6: Basic Skills: Exploring the Problem</td>
<td>Questioning Paraphrasing Clarification Summaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7: Basic Skills: Giving Feedback</td>
<td>Feedback Interpretation Confrontation Self-Disclosure Immediacy Silence Pacing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Basic Skills: Terminating the Counseling</td>
<td>How to End Therapy How to Make a Referral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section 3 Introduction</strong></td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9: Managing the Counseling Session</td>
<td>Ethical Introduction Goal-Setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10: Conducting an Assessment</td>
<td>Bio Assessment Psycho Assessment Social Assessment Spiritual Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11: Case Conceptualization and Treatment Planning</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12: Strategies for Bringing About Changes</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13: General Helping Strategies</td>
<td>Recommending Homework The Use of Metaphor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14: Spiritual Strategies</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15: Professional Issues in Counseling</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The video vignettes are available at http://www.bhpublishinggroup.com/therapeuticexpedition.
Tackling the arduous project of writing a professional textbook is not possible without being taught, helped, influenced, inspired, advised, and assisted by others. Those who have crossed our paths in the years since we entered into the counseling field are too numerous to mention individually, though all have contributed in some way. Collectively we would like to thank each of the professors, counselors, supervisors, and researchers who have helped us shape our opinions into a serviceable form. We would also like to express our grateful thanks to the many counselees who have all contributed in ways both small and large to the content of this textbook. Like many, we have learned—and continue to learn—the most from those whom we have sought to help.

We are especially indebted to the leadership of the Center for Counseling and Family Studies department of Liberty University. Thank you, Dr. Ron Hawkins, for your gracious spirit and mentoring in both shaping the primary author’s training and supporting the project. We also are grateful to Dr. Scott Hawkins, Dr. Victor Hinson, and Dr. Denise Daniel for their endorsement of the project. We have been heartened by the support we have received from our university. Our colleagues were also an excellent source of encouragement and advice.

Several people contributed to shaping the manuscript and reviewing it for reference accuracy. Greg Mears, Brandon Moore, Anna Moore, Chuck Rodgers, Denise Thomas, Johnny Baker, Kristen Sherett, and Jesse Loftus provided invaluable help by checking the citations and references. Denise Thomas reviewed portions of the manuscript, was a writer of the scripts for the DVD, and performed as one of the counselors in the vignettes. She skillfully handled so many aspects of the project that it would not exist without her.

We consider ourselves to be very fortunate authors to have B&H as our publisher. We are grateful that they believed in us. We express sincere love
to Jim Baird and Dean Richardson for the countless hours they poured into this project.

I (John) would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to my wife and best friend, Denise, whose contributions to this work are indescribable. Thank you, Denise, for doing all you do, so much of which goes unnoticed. Our children, Katie and Stephen—both the joy of my life—inspired me to continue. Even my two dogs provided unconditional love when writer’s block interfered with progress on the manuscript. And thanks to my dear friends Don and Lorie Marsh and the members of our Sunday school class, Transitions, for providing a safe sanctuary to share personal concerns, for their prayerful intercessions, and encouraging words and touches. They are indeed the world’s best cheering squad! To God be all the glory.

I (Lisa) consider it a great honor and privilege to join Dr. John C. Thomas in this invaluable project. I have found his commitment to excellence in the field of soul care, his desire to glorify and rightly represent God, and his devotion to this work a testimony to who he is as a person. Thank you, John, for inviting me to share in this project. I have learned so much. I also thank the King of all counselors for continuing to “make the path straight” during this journey. And I am indebted to David, Tim, and Josh for their love and support in all that I am and do. To friends and family, who are always present with grace and truth abounding, you give life on the fallen planet a tinge of glory. Thank you, all!
Our objective in this preface is threefold. First, we want to put our work in context and orient you to the heart of the book. The book has been birthed through our experience, representing over 50 years of counseling with a wide variety of problems and populations. This work is the byproduct of our labors of culling material from a wealth of information that will be relevant to your learning. It is both theological and psychological in orientation. Second, we want to give you an overview of the structure of the book. It is a forest perspective rather than an examination of the individual trees that comprises the landscape of this text. Third, we want to highlight a number of special features we have incorporated in this text, designed to enhance your learning. While learning is a byproduct of a person’s effort, how the material is presented can either maximize or hinder the process. We trust that our approach will lead to your ability to master this material; we simply ask for you to give your best effort.

THE BACKGROUND AND HEART OF THE TEXTBOOK

When we talk with students about the reasons that led them to choosing the helping profession, we typically hear comments like, “I want to help others” or “I feel called and gifted to work with wounded people.” The words vary, but the meaning is similar; people are drawn to the helping profession because they want to help others. Therefore, one of the most important courses in a counselor-training program is one that teaches the basic counseling skills and therapeutic interventions. In a helping-skills course students learn the core skills of the helping process. A helping-skills course should be a practice-oriented, hands-on experience in which students have the opportunity to see the skills performed and then practice performing those skills themselves. The goal is to equip students with the basic tools to conduct interviews, build a helping relationship with their counselees, understand the counselees’ problems, plan treatments, and
employ effective strategies. These skills form the foundation of the entire helping process.

Such a course requires a quality textbook. A number of well-respected textbooks provide excellent training in basic counseling skills. For example we have found highly useful information in Cormier and Cormier (1985), Egan (2007), Sommers-Flanagan and Sommers-Flanagan (2003), Young (2010), Ivey and Ivey (2003), to name a few. Because of our Christian faith, however, we prefer to use quality textbooks that have a solid and clear biblical worldview; one that integrates psychological principles and theological truth. Although the books mentioned give students solid training in the helping skills, none presents a biblical worldview approach to the skills of the helping profession.

We anchor our consideration of helping to a biblical worldview. We are unabashedly believers in the inerrancy and inspiration of Scripture. We are simply captured by the Word of God. While some would consider such a belief nonacademic or foolish, we gladly and proudly wear that label. After all the Bible says God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise and the weak things of the world to shame the things that are strong (1 Cor 1:27, NASB). We position our views on the platform of biblical truth. The philosophy on which counseling is built matters greatly. For this reason we contend that a biblical worldview aptly anchors the counseling techniques and skills in God.

The Therapeutic Expedition: Equipping the Christian Counselor for the Journey has been developed on the premise that the study of helping skills is essential for everyone seeking a career in counseling. It does not matter whether the career unfolds in the arena of a state-funded agency, private nonprofit, private practice, school system, or church. It does matter that the person is prepared to work with counselees challenged by the marks of a broken and fallen world.

The aim of this text is to help today’s students become effective counselors in an ever-changing world. We are continually bombarded by a pace of life that is faster than ever before, an economic forecast that is gloomier, diseases that are deadly and resistant to modern medicine, and the ever-present fear of terrorism. People value choice, independence, autonomy, and a version of tolerance. Such values are not necessarily good, of course, because they can lead to self-protection, sinful choices and behavior, the embracing of things once deemed wrong, an attack on what has traditionally been viewed as right, and greater antagonism toward believers. Today’s world is increasingly moving away from the Judeo-Christian God. As a result, people are more physically threatened and more psychologi-
cally unhealthy. Not surprisingly counselees are bringing to us a greater degree of pathology and are bearing many more problems than those who came to our offices decades ago. As you enter the profession, you must be well equipped to embattle the brokenness in people’s lives.

OVERVIEW OF THE TEXT

We have created this book to help prepare you to be an effective helper. It is a practitioner’s book that initiates your learning journey in the study of the counseling relationship and techniques that promote change. You might be enrolled in an undergraduate or graduate counseling program in a Christian college or university. Perhaps you are getting your education in pastoral counseling through a seminary. Regardless of the setting or your desired role in the helping profession, The Therapeutic Expedition includes selected topics to meet the needs of instructors and professors teaching a course in this area.

When writing a textbook of this sort each chapter becomes an artificial compartmentalization of one aspect of the world. Of course one text cannot adequately address all the factors, skills, and strategies of helping. Entire texts could be written, and have been written on many of this textbook’s topics. Yet we have chosen to make this work as comprehensive as possible without being unwieldy in length. We have focused primarily on foundational counseling skills and basic spiritual strategies.

This book is unique in both format and content. We have divided the text into three sections that overview the helping journey. Section 1 (“The Heart of the Helping Process”; chaps. 1–4) provides the foundation and overview of the helping journey. Chapter 1 (“The Foundation of Helping”) examines the foundation of the journey, which we root in a biblical worldview. While we advocate a bio-psycho-social-spiritual approach to helping, the most critical aspect is grounding our approach in the Scriptures. We attempt to relate the skills and techniques of helping to worldview topics. In chapter 2 (“The Fundamentals of Helping”) we explore the counseling process as a whole. The chapter addresses such key issues as the value, definition, and effectiveness of counseling. We also delineate how counseling is both an art and a science and discuss how your intentions are integral to the helping process. We conclude that chapter by acquainting you with the role of technique in counseling. In chapter 3 (“The Hazards of Helping”) we examine the risks associated with making the therapeutic journey. Unfortunately the journey of counseling is not risk free; it poses threats to both the counselor and the counselee. We conclude this section in chapter 4 (“The Person of the Counselor”) with a discussion
of the primary instrument in helping, namely, you. The Holy Spirit is an energizing factor in helping counselees change, and the Holy Spirit works through the knowledge, words, and behavior of the counselor. The greater the counselor’s awareness of the strengths and possibilities he possesses the more effective he can be in the work of counseling. We believe that this is an absolutely critical chapter in your development.

Section 2 (“Basic Helping Skills”; chaps. 5–8) equips you with all the fundamental skills of helping. These chapters are clearly a focal point of interest, because ultimately counselor competence means being equipped to help people. These skills help you relate to the counselee, explore the counselee’s concerns, and facilitate the dialogue. In chapter 5 (“Basic Skills: Creating a Connection”) we describe one of the most important aspects of the counseling enterprise, the helping relationship. In this chapter we delve into those skills that facilitate a therapeutic bond and relationship between the helper and the counselee. In chapter 6 (“Basic Skills: Exploring the Problem”) we introduce you to the universally accepted skills of helping. We discuss how to ask questions, paraphrase, clarify, and summarize. Chapter 7 (“Basic Skills: Giving Feedback”) highlights those skills that move the counseling process forward. This chapter equips you in the use of giving feedback, interpretations, and confrontation. We guide you in the appropriate use of self-disclosure and silence. Then we discuss how to deal with issues as they arise in the counseling relationship and how to pace the session. The last chapter in Section 2 teaches you how to end the counseling process. Chapter 8 (“Terminating the Counseling”) overviews the importance of appropriately terminating counseling. We cover such issues as the function of termination, types of termination, how to make a referral, and techniques and interventions that effectively end the helping relationship.

The final section (“The Helping Process”) is comprised of seven chapters that help you apply your counselor skills to the tasks of helping (chaps. 9–15). In chapter 9 (“Managing the Counseling Session”) we seek to equip you with the how-tos of each session. First, we present a model for your work, known as the AIM model. We then provide an overview of how a counseling session is sequenced and discuss the importance of giving an ethical introduction in your first counseling session. Chapter 10 (“Conducting an Assessment”) is an overview of the importance of assessment and gives you basic assessment techniques to collect counselee information. Chapter 11 (“Case Conceptualization and Treatment Planning”) teaches you how to make sense of the information you gather from your counselee. This chapter helps you gain a clearer understanding of what is happening
with the counselee. Chapter 12 (“Strategies for Bringing About Changes”) is organized around questions associated with change. If you do not understand how people change and what people need to change, you will flounder in your counseling work. In chapter 13 (“General Helping Strategies”) we provide techniques that are broader in scope than the techniques covered in previous chapters. These techniques are relevant and profitable to incorporate into the counseling enterprise and will greatly assist you in making the most of your counseling time. These include such techniques as humor, metaphor, and homework. Chapter 14 (“Spiritual Strategies”) suggests a range of techniques that specifically target a counselee’s spiritual dimension. These techniques could be conceptualized across many orientations, but spiritual change is their focus. We end the text with important information related to becoming a professional counselor. Chapter 15 (“Professional Issues in Counseling”) addresses the fact that we are engaging in activities that involve ministry but that are also linked to a professional field. We look at professionalism, ethics and legal issues, diversity, and your development as a counselor.

A number of practical items are included in the appendixes. These include the American Counseling Association Code of Ethics (2005) and the American Association of Christian Counselors Code of Ethics (2001), sample forms that can be used in your counseling work, and an assortment of handout-like materials that you may find useful in your therapeutic work.

**SPECIAL FEATURES**

Teaching and learning the skills of helping may be likened to a journey. In his book on helping, Young (2005) wrote, “An overarching metaphor is . . . that learning the art of helping is a journey with a beginning but no real end point. Those who embark on the quest find it to be a lifelong process of discovery rather than a destination” (p. v). In keeping with this thought we chose to approach this text from the process of a therapeutic journey—whether you are teaching counseling skills, supervising novice counselors, or learning the art of helping, you find yourself on a journey. This book is but one vehicle for taking that journey.

This textbook is intended to help counselors-in-training acquire and refine a repertoire of effective helping skills. Providing a theoretical rationale for the helping skills and strategies is limited since such material is covered in counseling theory textbooks.

One special feature of this textbook is its emphasis on practical application of the skills and techniques. To give you the greatest opportunity to
learn, each chapter begins with chapter objectives and a brief outline of the chapter, and the content of each chapter includes figures and tables with the technique guidelines spelled out, and chapter activities. The chapter activities serve as the workbook component of the text. Your professor might want you to complete the activities in a Word document that can be submitted as an assignment, or he might simply have you review them yourself. In addition a PDF version of the questions is available at the Web site. Professors might choose to have students print the workbook and write out their answers as proof of doing original work.

Another special emphasis in this text is the focus on the psychological, interpersonal, and theological sides of the helping enterprise. We do not intend to minimize the saliency of the biological approaches to helping. Our focus is to equip counselors of all kinds with the necessary skills to meet counselees where they are rather than to account for those issues that are not under the purview of a counselor.

Along with the activities, we have created video vignettes to illustrate the effective use of certain skills. The video vignettes are designed to interface with the material from selected chapters and to work conjointly with the chapter activities. We recommend that after you have studied the chapter you watch the video vignettes associated with that chapter. (The video vignettes are available at http://www.bhpublishinggroup.com/therapeuticexpedition.)

Even though this book has a clinical orientation, we have chosen to use the term counselee rather than client or patient to denote the one we are helping. Terms like client and patient are typically associated with a stronger mental-health focus as opposed to counselee, which has broader appeal.

Creating this textbook has been a long journey for us. We hope that it will provide meaningful and practical guidance to you as you attempt to learn the skills and processes that are effective with hurting people. The therapeutic expedition is a journey that traverses difficult terrain and exposes undeveloped territory. We wish you the best as we embark on this therapeutic journey.

John C. Thomas, Ph.D., Ph.D.
Lisa Sosin, Ph.D.
A good counselor is like a seasoned guide who artfully and skillfully leads lost, wayward, confused, frightened, or disheartened travelers (counselees) on a transformational journey to the place they (counselees) want to go. They have a destination in mind, a challenge to master, a dream to fulfill, and it is calling them to take up their gear and get on the trail. Many are weary, if not broken, void of hope, lost in darkness and perplexity. Some are bewildered and disheartened, travailing the same worn paths that have led them only to destruction. Others are hungry physically, mentally, emotionally, and/or spiritually; lost on a sea of relations with whom they are unable to connect. They have used up their reservoir of resources trying to cross a seemingly tumultuous and endlessly expansive terrain. They know that they need help, yet they are ambivalent about embarking, keenly aware that the expedition will be costly and that they will be like sojourners in unfamiliar lands. Some fear that it is a journey so threatening and arduous that stepping on the trail is like stepping into the abyss. Yet they know they must step off, and as a result of their courage and humility they have called on you to lead the way. This book is about equipping you for their journey.

The first section of the text contains four important chaps. In chap. 1 we focus on critical foundations by exploring the significant relationship between a counselor’s worldview and his helping. The focus is on the importance of worldview, the components of worldview in general, and a biblical view specifically, and the connection between one’s worldview and his skills and techniques.

Chap. 2, “The Fundamentals of Helping,” addresses the value and effectiveness of helping. An explanation of counseling as both a science and art is provided as well as a discussion on the importance of counselors working from an explicit model. The chap. closes with an exploration of
counselor intention and the noteworthy place of technique in the counseling process.

The counseling journey has risks. For that reason chap. 3 addresses the hazards of helping that can befall both the counselee and counselor. A special focal point of this chap. is helping you learn how to appraise and avoid the hazards.

Chap. 4 spotlights the person of the counselor. Counselor characteristics, development, and attitudes that affect the counseling process are presented. Highlighted is how the counselor becomes the person God has called him to be as a representative of Himself in the therapeutic relationship.

Thinking again about counseling as an expedition, I (Lisa) recall my days of leading young people on self-discovery journeys. Each youth had a mission in mind: to conquer their fears, to push through their limits, to recognize their strengths. I and the group of explorers were working as one to reach their goal: the last mile, the opposite side of the lake, the other end of the mountain. This was their chosen event, this was their goal, and this was what they wanted to do. They needed a knowledgeable guide, but it was their expedition, their hard efforts, their character-growth opportunity.

I recall awakening in the mornings on Lake Michigan, preparing gear with the only hint of day the slight edge of scarlet cutting across the still-blackened sky. With stars receding I lifted up each element of the coming day to the One who keeps the paths straight, to the One without whom nothing of lasting value could emerge from the passage. The three days before me meant leading a group of insecure fourteen-year-olds, girls and boys, biking for miles and miles and miles along the Michigan shoreline. We traversed hiking trails, taking up canoes against the battering of winds, the torrents of rain, the harshness of sun, and whatever other wild mysteries awaited us from within and without. These were three days of pushing through, three days of providing comfort, direction, protection, encouragement, boundaries, parameters, guidance, food, drink, fun, and bug repellent. My job was to “shepherd” them and God’s job to bring forth the fruit. Some made it through the passage—the motivated, committed, and hardworking ones. Others dropped by the wayside here and there, picked up by the van appointed for those who could no longer travail. They were not yet ready, willing, or able.

You and your counselees are on a similar expedition. We pray that as you study how to guide others successfully, you will abide as close to the one true Guide as possible. As you do, He will guide you, and through you
Section 1: The Heart of the Helping Process

He will do great and wonderful things that you could not have asked for or imagined. May your days of leading others be as filled with joy and awe as ours have been.
“Psychological, social, and political revolutions have not been able to transform the heart of darkness that lies deep in the breast of every human being. Amid a flood of self-fulfillment, there is an epidemic of depression, suicide, personal emptiness, and escapism. . . . So obviously the problem is a spiritual one. And so must be the cure” (Dallas Willard, 1988, p. viii).

“I observed everything going on under the sun, and really, it is all meaningless—like chasing the wind. What is wrong cannot be made right. What is missing cannot be recovered” (Eccl 1:14–15, NLT).

“And these are but the outer fringes of his [God’s] works; how faint the whisper we hear of him! Who then can understand the thunder of his power?” (Job 26:14, NIV).

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES
» To highlight the importance of worldview to helping
» To delineate the key components of worldview
» To elucidate the importance of having an accurate worldview
» To explain the components of a biblical worldview
» To connect worldview to skills and techniques
Russ grew up in a Christian home, with parents who came from a strong faith tradition. Around 10 years of age, Russ found that a department store catalog offered opportunities to see women in their underwear, lingerie, and bathing suits. From his first look he was hooked. It didn’t take long before Russ saw his first pornographic magazine when a neighbor boy took one from his father’s stash. The pornography was taken to a new level when Russ discovered masturbation. These activities stayed with Russ through high school and into Bible school. While in Bible college Russ met a beautiful young freshman, Carol—the daughter of missionaries—who he thought offered the promise of control over his sexual urges.

After graduation Russ and Carol married and set off on their honeymoon. To his amazement, the wedding night failed to live up to his expectations. Soon Russ was masturbating to fantasy images of girls he had met and ones he saw on TV. Knowing that his position on a church staff could be jeopardized by buying pornography, Russ avoided it until he discovered it on the Internet. Through the Internet Russ’s acting out progressed rapidly.

After the birth of their first child Russ developed a close relationship with a girl, Beth, in the youth group. Beth had not talked to her father in years since he was arrested for sexually abusing Beth and her sister. Russ provided a much-needed male role model in Beth’s life. He met with her often, offering counseling and encouragement. When Beth went off to a Christian college, they stayed in touch. When she returned home for Christmas, she met Russ at his office where they talked for hours. Russ never believed he was capable of being sexual with her, but he did. Their
The Heart of the Helping Process

sexual encounters happened regularly over the holidays and continued into the spring semester. When he could arrange it, they would meet halfway at a motel where they would have sex. Just before the spring semester ended, Beth paid Russ a visit to report that she was pregnant with their child. Instantly Russ knew his world had collapsed. Nothing would ever be the same. Carol learned of the pregnancy and moved out. Russ resigned from his job as youth pastor as the entire church community learned of the affair.

Jennifer was a 40-year-old wife and mother. She and her college sweetheart, Ben, had been married 16 years and had a wonderful relationship; the kind of relationship that many women envied. Jennifer and Ben worked with young married couples in church, taught premarital courses for the pastor, and were active members of the church choir. Their three children were beautiful and sweet, ranging from 13 to 6 years of age. One weekend, following a choir rehearsal for their church Easter cantata Ben and their oldest girl were traveling to a piano concert while Jennifer and the two children went in an opposite direction for their middle son’s swimming event. Jennifer enjoyed watching her children compete in their sports and musical activities and would often get lost in the experience as she reminisced about her own swimming competitions; a swimming career that left her highly decorated. While lost in the nostalgia of her past successes, her cell phone rang. Nothing could have prepared her for the news that her husband and oldest daughter had been killed by a drunk driver while driving to the concert. In one split moment Jennifer lost her lifelong companion and friend and one daughter.

Sam is an 11-year-old, fifth-grader who has been diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) by his pediatrician. Recently Sam has been misbehaving to the point where neither his mother nor his teacher could handle him. Sam’s mother had raised him with little help from her former boyfriend, who broke up with her when he learned she was pregnant. With stretched finances and lack of support, Sam’s mother was at her wits’ end. She was bothered by her ranting and raging while at home, but felt that she could not control him anymore. She knew it was not good for Sam to see her being frequently abused by her new live-in boyfriend, but Sam had to get control of his behavior if she was to survive.

Cases like Russ, Jennifer, and Sam are a few of the types of counselees you will encounter through your counseling. They each pose their own challenges because their backgrounds, personalities, circumstances, presenting problem(s), resources, and goals make them unique. Thus, counselors need a wide range of knowledge, skills, and abilities if they are to
provide effective help. A recipe approach to counseling does not work. What works with one counselee and problem might be disastrous with another (Corey, 2005). The greater your ability to conceptualize cases and the more tools you possess in your “helping bag,” the greater the likelihood that desired change will occur in the counselee’s life. The bottom line is that effective counselors need a strong base of counseling skills that can be adapted as necessary to meet the needs of counselees.

We have orchestrated this textbook to outfit you with the requisite gear to lead counselees of all shapes and sizes. It is not a textbook about counseling, but a manual on how to counsel. It is a skills-oriented resource that provides a boot camp experience in the helping skills. Throughout the textbook and in the chap. activities, you will be oriented to and drilled in the knowledge, skills, and strategies that will equip you to help counselees like Russ, Jennifer, and Sam. The Therapeutic Expedition is about helping people make their personal journey of change and healing. Simply put, our task in this textbook is helping you to help people.

We have chosen to begin the instructional journey by laying the foundation on which you can develop a repertoire of helping skills and strategies. Your personal worldview lays the foundation and orients you on how to counsel. To that end, this chap. describes aspects of a worldview. The accuracy of a worldview is measured by how closely it aligns with biblical truth. Also your worldview interfaces with helping skills and techniques. We will look beneath the surface of what is done in counseling to why it is done. Thus we will view the components of a worldview in general before seeing what constitutes a biblical worldview.

THE HELPING HOUSE

In addition to our major metaphor of the therapeutic expedition, we will employ other metaphors throughout the book. The metaphor of a house nicely depicts the role that worldview plays in our counseling skills and strategies (see Figure 1.1).

All buildings are designed and constructed with a particular purpose in mind. A house serves a purpose very different from an office building, for example. Both buildings might be aesthetically pleasing, but the design, construction materials, occupancy, and use of the space differ dramatically. Houses are primarily designed and built to provide sanctuary from the elements, a dwelling, and a place that connects us to a particular location (e.g., “I live at 1985 Hudson Street”). Our helping house captures who each one of us is as a counselor because the house is designed to serve the purpose of helping people.
Foundations are not the focal point of the house; in fact great care is often devoted to disguising them (by masonry brick work and landscaping, e.g.). Foundations simply do not contribute to the architectural aesthetics of a building. Yet without a suitable foundation the building will be unsafe, and its architectural merits will rapidly fade. The foundation is not designed to capture an observer’s attention. Rarely, if ever, is it a key factor in choosing a home to purchase. To the architect and builder, however, the foundation is a matter of high importance because it bears the load of the entire structure. A proper foundation can mean the difference between a stable structure and one with constant problems and high maintenance. Thus architects and contractors know that the most crucial element in building a house is the foundation. It is the platform on which the entire structure is built. The soil, topography of the property, depth of the footings, quality of material and construction, size, and shape of the foundation are key variables that impact the entire structure.

Your worldview is like the foundation of a house. It is the platform on which you build your life. And it is the foundation on which you construct your helping efforts. Every counseling theory, model, conceptualization skill, and therapeutic intervention is intricately related to your worldview; that is, your worldview is the foundation on which everything that occurs in counseling is built.

Reflect on the three cases that were described at the beginning of this chap. How would most traditionally trained counselors approach each counselee? In the case of Russ, a helping professional might use Motivational Interviewing, known as MI (Miller & Rollnick, 2002), and cogni-
tive-behavioral therapy, known as CBT (Beck, 1976; Burns, 1999), and encourage 12-step recovery meetings (Carnes, 2001) to address his sexual addiction. Likely the counseling goal would be to stop compulsive sexual behavior. Russ’s behavior would probably be seen as a problem because it is causing significant distress for him and those closest to him. Many traditional forms of counseling seem to use a “violation of personal standards” as the basis of determining the appropriateness or inappropriateness—or “rightness” or “wrongness”—of a behavior. In spite of the subjective basis of morality, many such programs still encourage 12-step meetings as part of the treatment plan. If so, it is possible that the counselor would embrace the value of spirituality in recovery. By participating in a 12-step program, the hope would be that Russ will connect to a higher power of his choosing to fill the spiritual vacuum of his life.

In contrast biblically grounded counselors realize that their own life needs to be Spirit-filled and that their counseling theory, model, and theology must be informed by biblical truth. A counselor whose worldview is shaped by biblical truth might also use MI (Motivational Interviewing), CBT (Cognitive-Behavior Therapy), and 12-step meetings to help Russ.¹ A biblical worldview has less impact on the counseling approach than on what is believed about how people function and what is critical to helping them. For the biblically oriented counselor the overarching therapeutic goal would be to do more than stop compulsive sexual behavior, though that would be a first priority. Ultimately the goal would be to see Russ restored and reconciled to God through Christ Jesus. The counselor would hold that Russ needs to find his identity in Jesus Christ. Whereas many sexual addiction treatment approaches advocate the incorporation of spirituality, a biblical worldview would clearly define it. Spirituality would not be subjectively determined and measured according to what “feels right” or to a “higher power of one’s own choosing.” Specifically spirituality would be defined according to biblical truth and the Higher Power regarded as God. Thus a biblical worldview provides focus and clarity to what constitutes true spirituality and the “higher power.” Spirituality is by biblical truth, not determined by a counselee’s notion.

Moreover, Russ’s behavior is viewed as sinful because it conflicts with God’s standards. Yet at the same time Russ’s behavior would also be considered redeemable because of the unmatchless grace of God (cf. McMinn, Ruiz, Marx, Wright, & Gilbert, 2006). If MI or CBT are employed, they

¹ Informed consent would be necessary to incorporate a biblical approach to Russ’s counseling. (This note is particularly critical for counselors who are Christians and work in secular settings.)
would be used to help Russ find the right motivations for change (which would include honoring Christ) and go beneath the surface of his sexual compulsiveness to issues of intimacy with God and others. If cognitive therapy is used to dispute Russ’s “irrational” core beliefs, the counselor would counter faulty beliefs by Scripture.

So, a biblical worldview does not so much change the nature of the edifice. Rather, it provides clear blueprints for how the edifice should be shaped, provides definition to the appearance of the house, and direction for how the house should be used. In comparison with other worldviews a biblical worldview provides specific content to and clarity for the counselor on how counseling is to unfold.

Clearly we are making some sweeping generalizations with how both traditional and biblically grounded counseling approaches might be implemented. Our main point is not what is or is not included or how various components of the treatment plan are delivered. Rather our point is that the counselor’s worldview influences many of these decisions.

THE NUTS AND BOLTS OF A WORLDVIEW

Guides must be experts at map reading. They must know how to navigate the terrain and find the right path toward their destination. An inaccurate or poorly defined map could be disastrous, resulting in injury or death. Guides want a map they can read and one they can rely on.

Just as an expedition guide needs a map to help him arrive at a destination he has never been to before, everyone needs a map to provide direction for life. Many people go through life with no clarity of where they are going and why. The map they follow is of their own making. Few of us would ever follow a map constructed by someone who has never charted the territory. Yet that is exactly what many people do in many areas of life. They construct their own map based on what “feels” right to them; it is intangible and subjective, built in accord with their own values and beliefs.

We believe, however, that centuries ago God gave us a map, the Bible, to objectify the process and clearly mark the trail. God’s Word helps us understand the terrain of life and gives us a clear picture of what life is about. Since God is the Creator of life, He knows the territory; He and He alone is in a position to lay out the map.

The map for life and for counseling is one’s worldview. So our concern in this section is to delineate the nature of a worldview. A clear worldview is one in which you are both self-aware and intentional in its construction. For us an accurate worldview is one that is most compatible with the map—the Bible. When you have a worldview that is biblically based and
when you are aware of how it influences your helping efforts, you have the foundational gear to guide a counselee on a healing journey. Our intent is not to limit an understanding of truth to only the Bible, however. Truth can be discovered through God’s general revelation of nature (i.e., science) and through the working of the Holy Spirit. We want to spotlight, however, the Bible as the basis of truth. We begin this process by discussing the importance of a worldview.

**The Importance of a Worldview**

Suppose an expedition guide chooses to “feel” his way through the wilderness rather than follow a map. A well-trained guide might be able to trust his instincts to guide his passengers to their destination. In essence the guide is actually relying on an internal map to feel his way through the wilderness. A tangible map clearly provides orientation and direction, but for a well-trained guide it might only confirm what the guide knows intuitively.

Each one of us has an internal map that consciously or unconsciously provides direction to life. Typically we do not consciously think about our map; we rely on our instincts and intuition to navigate the terrain of life. Our internal map contains the assumptions, beliefs, and principles on which we build our lives. This map reflects what philosophers and theologians refer to as “worldview.” Being conscious of and understanding one’s worldview is essential to making wise decisions—both personal and professional decisions. Clinically speaking counselors can harm a counselee (see chap. 3, “The Hazards of Helping”) when unaware of the worldview that supports their helping efforts.

The reason one’s worldview carries so much power is that it is the attempt to answer key questions about life. Where did I come from? Why am I here? What is my purpose in life? What can I know, and how do I know it? How certain can I be about life? What happens when I die? These questions are some of those answered by a person’s worldview. The English word *worldview* is derived from the translation of the German word *Weltanschauung*. While that word is a mouthful if you don’t speak German, it refers to the essence of living. A worldview is the essence of living because it is a life map, a means of organizing all of life.

Many philosophers, theologians, and other theorists have sought to more concretely define worldview. Nash (1992) defines it as “a set of beliefs about the most important issues in life . . . a conceptual scheme by which we consciously or unconsciously place or fit everything we believe and by which we interpret and judge reality” (p. 16). In his book *The Universe*
Next Door, Sire (2009) referred to it as each person’s belief in what is “reality real.” He defined worldview as

a commitment, a fundamental orientation of the heart, that can be expressed as a story or in a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true or entirely false) that we hold (consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic constitution of reality, and that provides the foundation on which we live and move and have our being (p. 20).

Sire rightly sees worldview as rooted in the heart; he places it as the foundation on which the scaffolding of our presuppositions are built. In an essay on worldview Olthuis (1989) provides a comprehensive definition of a worldview, but he adds that a worldview may be so “internalized that is goes largely unquestioned” (p. 29). Olthuis adds, “It is the integrative and interpretative framework by which order and disorder are judged; it is the standard by which reality is managed and pursued; it is the set of hinges on which all our everyday thinking and doing turns” (ibid.).

A worldview is intensely practical because it is each person’s theory about the world. It is the big picture that directs daily decisions and actions (Colson & Pearcey, 1999, p. 14) because it provides an interpretive framework to make sense of the data of life and of the world (Geisler & Watkins, 2003). In fact it is the philosophical structure that permeates our entire consciousness. You cannot help but perceive and interpret the world through the lens of your worldview. Even the words of this page and text are being filtered by your worldview. A worldview will control the way you think, make judgments, and decide what is right and wrong. In short it is the navigational map from which each person makes his journey through life.

The content of one’s worldview is in the form of presuppositions and suppositions that are philosophical, psychological, and theological in nature. Presumptions are beliefs that each person presumes are true in the absence of evidence from other sources to verify them. Inherent in the idea of belief is the assumption that we hold reality. To phrase it another way, “I am as certain about my belief being real as I am about the chair on which I’m sitting.”

At the core of a person’s worldview is a set of beliefs about human beings, the world, and God (Bufford, 2007). These beliefs rest on what we believe to be the truth about these core categories. For you to say that God exists and that He loves you is to express a mental assertion of what you believe to be true. Thus a belief is not in and of itself truth; rather a belief is only an assumption of what is true (see Figure 1.2).
While we hold that there is absolute truth, no one person possesses it absolutely. We can apprehend large portions of truth, but once we ponder what is true, we begin to distort the true essence of the truth. The worldview you possess is not truth, but it contains truth. Each person’s aim needs to be having as much truth as possible in order to live as effectively as possible. The more conscious and intentional we are in the formation of a worldview the more likely it will support the stress of life.

Your worldview is foundational to your life; you simply cannot exist without one. A worldview is as much a part of being human as our beating hearts; just as our heart gives life to our physical body, our worldview gives life to our nonphysical being. If you are constructing a foundation for a building, you want to know what material you need. So we provide a materials list in the next section.

The Raw Material of a Worldview

Philosophically a worldview is constructed out of four raw materials or subject matters (see Table 1.1). The subject matters encompass broad philosophical (including psychological and theological) concepts that speak to questions central to living: (a) cosmology, which includes physics and metaphysics, (b) epistemology, (c) teleology, and (d) axiology. These philosophical terms are actually very practical. Together these subjects encompass the full spectrum of reality. Cosmology includes such issues as the origin and nature of the universe, life, and mankind. It includes such subjects as physics (i.e., the physical world) and metaphysics (i.e., what is beyond the physical world). Cosmology seeks to answer the question “Where did I come from?” Evolution and creationism have been at odds for more than a century and the debate will continue. The reason for the debate is that cosmology also raises the question, “Is there a God?” To address the question of our origin, we must raise the question of the existence of a God.
Table 1.1

Four Components of a Worldview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Worldview Component</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Key Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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| Cosmology           | Totality of Reality; Physical and Nonphysical Reality | • Where did I come from?  
                        |                                             | • Is there a God?             |
| Teleology           | • Purpose                                  | • Why am I here?                   |
|                     | • Meaning                                  | • Where am I going?                |
| Epistemology        | • Knowledge                                | • What can I know for sure?        |
|                     | • Truth                                    | • How can I know it?               |
| Axiology            | • Morality                                 | • Why do I do what I do?           |
|                     | • Values                                   | • How do I live?                   |
issues in our world today that hang on the question of whether it is right or wrong, such as abortion, euthanasia, capital punishment, homosexuality, sex outside of marriage, to name a few hot topics. All those issues find their way into the counselor’s office. Traditional theorists believe that a counselor should not impose his values on a counselee, and we agree. But while imposing one’s values is inappropriate, the influence of a counselor’s values is inevitable. One simply cannot be value-neutral. Many theorists take the nonimposition principle further by arguing that the counselee must decide for herself whether it is right. Based on our view of epistemology and axiology, we do not believe a person’s moral judgment is the best standard for deciding what is right in moral issues. No one ever says that a person needs to decide if raping another is right for himself; that would be absurd. Hurting another person is wrong. But how do people arrive at that belief that it is wrong to do something if it harms another? The question of what is the standard of morality brings us to the center of axiology.

Cosmology, teleology, epistemology, and axiology are the four raw materials that comprise the foundational walls of your helping house. Each of these subject matters identifies operating systems that are highly interdependent and interactive with one another. Much as a foundation needs to be tied together, so must the components of a worldview relate. Every worldview—whether naturalism, postmodernism, Buddhism, materialism, biblical Christianity, or some other worldview—attempts to give answers to those four major questions: “Where did I come from?” “Why am I here/where am I going?” “What can I know for sure?” “Why do I do what I do/how do I live?”

The importance of realizing the scope and depth of a worldview is to highlight how central it is in how you and your counselee see the world and life. A key question levied about a person’s worldview, especially when it is a biblical worldview, is whether anyone can possibly know if it is accurate or true (i.e., epistemology). We will address that in the next section.

Each person’s internal map is shaped by a number of life experiences, all of which are relative and subjective sources of “truth.” A tangible map does exist to form and shape our internal map with absolute truth; that map is the Bible. The psalmist wrote, “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path” (119:105, NIV). God’s Word provides truth for our worldview. If a person views the Bible as life’s tangible map, she can build her life on truth rather than distortions and lies. We will come back to this point later.
The Accuracy of a Worldview

When using a map to find a destination, we make the assumption that the creators of the map accurately depicted the territory. Many have had the experience of following their GPS to find a particular location only to realize that it did not get them to where they wanted to be. They accurately followed the promptings of the woman’s voice on the GPS, but something was awry in the programming that unwittingly led them to the wrong place. Much as a poorly constructed map or impoverished GPS will not get you where you want to go, a poorly constructed worldview will lead you in places you do not want to go and will prevent you from getting places where you need to be.

The question is not if you have a worldview, but what is the quality of its content? The content of your worldview will determine the way you counsel. Thus distorted content in your worldview will lead to inconsistent and incoherent helping. Just as poor material in concrete will weaken a structure, nontruth in a worldview will weaken the way you live and the way you counsel. The key question then is how accurate is the substance of your worldview?

As mentioned earlier, no one can be 100 percent accurate; our worldviews have distortions of the truth, they omit some truths, and they have outright lies in them. No worldview is completely true, and yet no worldview is completely inaccurate either. Nuggets of truth and lies abound in everyone. Virtually all writers convey truth; how much truth is the key question. Truth does not require that it comes from the Bible or Christian writers. One of my (John’s) apologetics professors said, “Truth is truth, no matter who perceives it” (Dr. Gary Habermas, personal communication, April 15, 1984). Though many people do not like to consider the possibility that they might be wrong, a wise person asks, “How accurate is my worldview?” The bottom line is whether your worldview is grounded in truth. The more our worldviews align with absolute truth, the better off we will be.

The issue of determining the accuracy of our worldview raises two important challenges. One significant challenge is honestly exploring, examining, and questioning your assumptions and presuppositions to determine their accuracy. To accomplish the first challenge you must rise to the second challenge. You cannot determine if your worldview is accurate unless you have a valid and reliable measure of truth. It will not matter how much time you devote to self-examination if you are using falsehoods as your measure. You simply cannot gauge the accuracy of your worldview without an exact measure or standard; that is, without a true and reliable mea-
The Foundation of Helping

suring device. Thus a standard of truth that will most accurately measure your worldview needs to be intentionally pursued and chosen.

The challenge of examining one’s worldview naturally leads to two central worldview questions: “Does a true measure of truth exist?” “If so, where can I find it?” From our point of view the most important issue in worldview is the standard by which truth is measured. Broadly speaking one of three standards is used to determine the accuracy of one’s worldview. For many people, self is used as the standard of truth. If something feels right or seems true to self then it is deemed true and right. Yet self as a measure is subjective because each person decides for himself what is truth. This is known as relativism.

Another standard is society, which could be referred to as “the court of public opinion.” The populace decides what truth is, thus what is common (the norm) is the determining factor. What is true is determined by others more than by oneself. Truth, then, is relative. Truth is determined by commonly held beliefs, though each person’s individual “truth” may differ. In both the self as standard and society as standard, truth does not exist so much in reality as it exists in one’s subjective mind.

A third standard for truth is a religious source. Some would advocate that Buddha, Confucius, Islam’s Qur’an, or the Bible is the basis of truth. In contrast to self and society as standards of truth, this measure is objective because the source does not change nor is it capricious. A Christian worldview uses Scripture as a reference for truth claims (Bufford, 2007). It is our contention that the Bible stands apart from all other religious sources. We believe that the Bible is the true source of truth because God exists (presupposition 1) and has revealed absolute truth in the form of Scripture (presuppositions 2 and 3). From this we will examine the presuppositions of what constitutes the content of a biblical worldview.

The existence of God (presupposition 1).

Cosmology and metaphysics raise the question of whether God exists. All worldviews include beliefs about the existence of a god or God. Worldviews deal with the questions, Does God exist? What is the nature of God? Some worldviews question whether God exists and if He does what is He like, how can we know Him, and what does He want from us? In contrast with an atheistic worldview, which denies the existence of God, a biblical worldview affirms the existence of a creator God. Viktor Frankl (1959),

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2 An apologetic for the inerrancy of Scripture is beyond the scope of this book. Students are encouraged to read the following: N. L. Geisler (1980), Inerrancy (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan) and R. P. Lightner (1997), A Biblical Case for Total Inerrancy: How Jesus Viewed the Old Testament (Kregel Academic & Professional).
world-renowned psychiatrist and survivor of Auschwitz and three Nazi death camps, believed awareness of God, whether conscious or uncon- scious, is universal.

Table 1.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Biblical Worldview Presuppositions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presupposition 5: Fallen Creation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presupposition 4: Biblically Based Anthropology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presupposition 3: Existence of Revelation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presupposition 2: Existence of Absolute Truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presupposition 1: Existence of God</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

A biblical worldview assumes, at the most basic level that (a) God exists, (b) God is eternal, (c) God is immutable, (d) God is sovereign, (e) God is creator, (f) God is immanent, and (g) God is relational. We have formed seven key aspects of God’s nature into an acrostic **C**REATES (see Table 1.3) to help you remember the points.

Table 1.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C = Creator of everything</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R = Relational in the Godhead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E = Eternal, without beginning and end</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A = Abiding because He is immutable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T = Transcendent because He is outside and above all that is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E = Ever-present because He is immanent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S = Sovereign ruler of all</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

First, God is **Creator** (“C”) (Ps 19:1; Acts 17:26). God created everything ex nihilo, that is, out of nothing. He literally spoke the world into existence (Gen 1:3,6,9,14,20,24,26). According to Scripture, God affirmed the goodness of physical reality (Gen 1:31). Because God designed the world with natural order, there is regularity and the ability to learn about it from science. The belief that God is Creator intricately and intimately ties Him into His creation. From this belief proceed meaning and purpose.

God is a **Relational** (“R”) Being who created mankind (see presupposition 4) to be in relationship with Himself and with others. God consists
of three distinct persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), while being one indivisible God (Gen 1:26–27; Matt 28:18–19). God is a social Trinity who enters into relationship with His creation, humanity. In fact Jesus is referred to as “God with us” (Isa 7:14; Matt 1:23). God is a dynamic living entity whose sovereignty does not mitigate His sociability toward His creation. As such, He is the God of love (Rom 5:8; 1 John 4:8–10).

Next, God is **Eternal** (“E”). First, God exists; He is eternal and infinite. Nothing is more central to a worldview than the existence of God. God is transcendent and His presence is everywhere (Jer 23:24). In every level of reality He exists fully and completely. His existence is such that He cannot be comprehended by human concepts and ideas (Erickson, 2001). God has no beginning and no end. He has not evolved; He has always existed. He is the “I am that I am” (Exod 3:14). God is self-existent and eternal.

God also is **Abiding** (“A”). God does not change; He is immutable (Mal 3:6). As James 1:17 says, there is no variableness with God. Simply put, God cannot grow, improve, or become better or worse.

The next two characteristics of God deal with His relationship with His creation. First, God is **Transcendent** (“T”), that is, He is above and beyond everything including the world (2 Chr 2:6; Pss 97:9; 18:5; 139:7–12; Isa 66:1; Jer 23:24; Eph 4:6; Heb 4:13). The belief in God’s transcendency separates a biblical worldview from a number of other worldviews, such as pantheism. “Transcendent” means that God is not the world; He is beyond it. The prophet Isaiah said, “‘For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,’ declares the Lord. ‘As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts’” (Isa 55:8–9, NIV). God is limitless in time, power, and energy. He is able to do all things (Ps 115:3; Matt 19:26; Luke 1:37).

God is also **Ever-present** (“E”), that is, He possesses what theologians refer to as immanence, which means that God is present and active in creation. He is at work in and through natural processes (Erickson, 2001). Immanence literally means, “to be within” or “near” in relation to God’s standard (Geisler & Watkins, 2003). God exists in creation as the Sustainer of the universe (Job 33:4; Ps 65:9–13; Col 1:17), and He is always present with His creation (Jer 23:23–24; Luke 17:20–21; Col 1:27; 1 John 5:11–12), though He is not part of it (pantheism) and is distinct from it. To hold to God’s transcendence and deny His immanence is to arrive at deism, but to affirm his immanence and deny His transcendence is to advocate pantheism, both of which are wrong (Erickson, 2001; Geisler & Watkins, 2003).
God is **Sovereign** ("S") (Isa 6:1–5; 55:8–9). The universe, and in fact all that is, is governed by God’s laws, which ensure balance, harmony, and unity (e.g., physics, metaphysics, and cosmology). Specifically, a biblical worldview asserts that God created all that exists, is sovereign over all (Gen 1–2; 1 Tim 4:4–5), and that He exists outside and above it all. Moreover, as the sovereign God He is one but the one and only God. Moses proclaimed, “Hear, O Israel: the **LORD** our God is one **LORD**” (Deut 6:4, KJV). As Sire (2009) writes, “So God is the one prime existent, the one prime reality and . . . the one source of all other reality” (p. 28).

When we seek to understand the nature and scope of God, we do so from a finite perspective. Getting a sense of the character of God is essential to developing an accurate understanding of humanity. A belief in the existence of God relates to counseling skills and techniques in and through the person of the counselor. The existence of God affects the helping relationship in ways that mirror the relationship of the counselor to the counselee and in the reality that God exists for both the counselor and the counselee. For instance, just as God exists outside our system—as well as existing within—so too the counselor exists outside of the counselee’s world.

**The existence of absolute truth (presupposition 2).**

Philosophers have long pondered whether knowledge about the world and of things of the world is possible. As noted earlier, epistemology deals with questions about the nature, scope, and limits of knowledge and truth. Can one know anything? Does truth exist? If so, is truth absolute or relative? What are the proper roles of reason and sense experience in knowing? The answers to these questions are critical to the formation of a worldview.

A biblical worldview assumes that absolute truth exists and that it is independent of one’s denial or affirmation of it. In fact, truth is the cornerstone of a biblically based worldview (John 14:6). Moreover, a biblical worldview asserts that God is the author of all truth (Ps. 31:5b; John 14:6; 16:13; 17:3, 17; 1 John 5:20). In contrast to God, the author and epitome of truth, Satan is the father of lies. Since God is the author of all things and since He cannot change, then truth is immutable as well (cf. Mal 3:6; Rom 11:36).

From a biblical worldview perspective, reason, revelation, and scientific method all play a valid role in the search for truth, allotting a congruence between Scripture and psychology (Carter & Narramore, 1979; Entwistle, 2004a). This being the case, then all truth is objective, absolute, and “knowable” in both creation and in the Word of God. In short, “all truth is God’s truth.” The law of gravity is God’s truth just as is the reality that we
are born sinners. Because of the unity of truth and the fact that truth exists in multiple places, there are a number of means to which to come to truth. Clearly the Bible speaks to issues that one cannot find by other means. Only through the Bible can one come to understand how much God loves the world.

Closely connected to the question of truth are questions related to morality. Do moral laws exist, and if so on what basis do they exist? Is morality relative or is it universal? These are questions related to axiology and are generally associated with the issue of truth. The Bible directly speaks to issues of morality. Defining what is sin and providing clarity to what is right and wrong are clearly communicated in God’s Word.

The presupposition of absolute truth and moral law rivals postmodern relativism. Groothuis (2000) contends that postmodernism disregards the existence of a discoverable truth. Truth equates to what one believes (relativism) or to what works (pragmatism). However, for one to know anything, truth must exist and truth must be stable. Truth is not a byproduct of perception; it exists in reality. For example since science is about the pursuit and discovery of knowledge, it assumes that there are objective truths in the world that can be discovered and proven. If absolute truth does not exist, it would be impossible to do science.

The belief in the existence of absolute truth strongly connects with the use of counseling skills and techniques. Professional counselors talk about the importance of doing evidence-based treatments (Leong, 2008; Woody, Detweiler-Bedell, Teachman, & O’Hearn, 2004). Wise counselors employ those approaches and techniques that research has indicated produce the best results. When mainstream counselors seek to build their approach on evidence-based treatments, they are advocating that counselors employ strategies that are based on “truth.” The rationale is that one should use only techniques that have proved to be effective through scientific inquiry. In a world that questions truth, being urged to adhere to research findings is interesting. For Christians, the idea that strategies should be built on truth is not a foreign concept. Christians committed to honoring God’s Word realize that while evidence-based treatments are worthy of being utilized, philosophical underpinnings of one’s entire approach should also be evidence-based, that is, based on truth.

Christian counselors must not only deliberate about the types of approaches and techniques they use in light of the research; they should also note how those approaches and techniques mesh with a biblical worldview. In our view nothing is more important than establishing a scaffolding of evidence-based truth from God’s Word. While apologetics can
Section 1: The Heart of the Helping Process

demonstrate through reason that the Bible is true, that is not within the scope of this project. We simply make the supposition that the Bible is true, that truth can be known, and that truth culled from the Scriptures is relevant to the way we counsel.

The existence of revelation (presupposition 3).

Entwistle (2004a) observed that truth is revealed in two “books”: “God’s truths are revealed in the book of God’s word (scripture) and the book of God’s work (creation)” (p. 229). From the book of God’s Word two broad truths are evident: God spoke and God created. The epistemology of a biblical worldview begins with the presupposition that the Scriptures are inspired, inerrant, and authoritative (cf. John 17:17; 2 Tim 3:16–17). Being guided by the Holy Spirit, the authors penned the original manuscripts; thus the Bible perfectly records God’s heart in each word (cf. 2 Pet 1:20–22). Therefore the Bible is one’s final authority. For counselors, it is the standard against which all philosophies and techniques are measured (Shields & Bredfeldt, 2001).

Also God’s Word is instructive on matters that pertain to life, and His Word is foundational to our growth (2 Tim 3:16–17). Extrapolating from this truth, Adams (1986) claims that 2 Tim 3:16–17 teaches that the Bible is all-sufficient, thus making psychology unnecessary. Commenting on this claim Jones and Butman (1991) assert that 2 Tim 3:16–17 simply teaches that Scripture is useful or profitable for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness. Although the Bible is inspired and instructional, it is not “all-sufficient” as the only source of truth (Entwistle, 2004a). It is God who is all-sufficient (Jones & Butman, 1991). One should not confuse the God who spoke the Word with the spoken word. To what the Scriptures speak to we should hold as authoritative and true; but we should not make the Bible speak to things it does not address. Yet as written revelation it is the platform of truth. In sum, the Bible is the epistemological base for all worldview components. Since the Bible is the base for our worldview, it is sufficient.

The second “book” or basis of epistemology is creation (Entwistle, 2004a). God’s creation is a natural form of revelation; it reveals His design of the universe. Physical laws exist because an intelligent God customized a universe that reflects divine order. There is predictability in the world because God ordered it; thus science is possible because we do not live in a random or chaotic world.

Yet, we must recognize that the Scriptures, science, and illumination are filtered through human perception and interpretation, which are highly
fallible processes. While absolute truth exists, no one holds it absolutely! We must validate our perceptions of truth rather than arrogantly asserting that we possess it.

In applying this to the helping profession it is important to consider whether a counseling issue, goal, or technique has any connection with biblical truth. Shields and Bredfeldt (2001) recommend that the counselor evaluate everything as to whether it is directly supported by and theologically consistent with Scripture. Does the Bible directly address the concept or issue? Is there a direct or doubtful conflict with Scripture? The Christian counselor must follow biblical directives if God is to intervene in counselee situations.

Goals are but one significant aspect of the change process that has biblical relevance; they deal with the direction of change (Adams, 1986). Does what the counselor seeks to help the counselee do mesh with biblical principles? Does the counselee’s desired outcome seek symptom relief or transformation? We will discuss goals in more detail in chap. 9 (“Managing the Counseling Session”).

Unlike goals, techniques are often biblically neutral. Techniques typically neither clash nor confirm biblical truth. For example the techniques of attending, paraphrasing, reflective listening, and empty chair are but a few of the helping strategies that are biblically neutral. They are not drawn from Scripture, but neither do they move people away from God. A technique does not have to be in Scripture for it to be valid, but it cannot be in conflict with Scripture either. The purpose behind using the technique is generally far more critical than the technique itself.

**Biblically based anthropology (presupposition 4).**

Without doubt a person’s belief about the nature of humanity is central to his personal and professional ideology. Lewis and Demarest (1996) hold that one’s beliefs on the nature of mankind influences inquiries regarding the origin of the soul and whether mankind is inherently good or evil. This presupposition is so critical that we will flesh it out in four tenets.

**Anthropological tenet 1: The origin of mankind.** The two competing worldviews on the issue of mankind’s origin are evolution and creation. In contrast to the widespread evolutionary paradigm, Scripture reveals that mankind was created in the image of God.

The foundation of an anthropology is that mankind is made in God’s image, the imago Dei (Gen 1:26–28; 2:7; 9:6; Job 34:14–15; Eccl 12:7; Col 3:10). God Himself formed mankind out of the dust of the earth and breathed into his nostrils, making him a living soul. Lints (1993) states,
“The imago Dei provides a theological bridge between peoples of apparently different cultures and times, even different places in redemptive history” (p. 313). Being created in God’s image forms a bond that unites human beings and reflects their uniqueness in creation.

**Anthropological tenet 2: The nature of mankind.** The psalmist wrote, “What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?” (Ps 8:4, NIV). Understanding the nature of humanity as being created in God’s image is no small task. We are beautifully and wonderfully made, yet complex.

Eight corollaries stem from our being made in God’s image. First, because we are created beings, life is sacred. Every counselee who walks in your office bears God’s image, and as such reflects His glory. You are not treating a diagnosis; rather you are helping a God-image bearer.

Second, being created in the image of God is the basis of human dignity (Gen 9:6). One reason we seek to do no harm and benefit our counselees is that each person is an image-bearer. If a person were to defame a statute of a king, it would be as if he had defamed the king himself. Likewise when we harm an image-bearer, we are marring God as He is represented in human form.

Third, because of our creation in God’s image, each human being has inherent value. The psalmist said that we are made slightly lower than the heavenly beings (Ps 8:5, NIV). In fact being made in God’s image is what gives us value. If we are only the byproduct of evolution, we have no value other than what one deems you have. A biblical worldview acknowledges that human value is rooted in our design and our Designer. You will encounter counselees whose problems you will find appalling. Yet even those counselees have inherent value because they bear God’s image. Behavior and motivations can be deplorable, but each person’s essence has immeasurable value.

Fourth, because we are made in God’s image we are spiritual beings whose hearts are dead without Christ. Each person’s heart has been formed by his experiences and choices he has made. How a person interprets reality, reacts to situations, and behaves ultimately flows out of the heart. Paul wrote, “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Rom 12:2, NIV). Transformation of the heart is man’s most basic need.

Further just as God is relational, so are we. A biblical worldview that is rooted in creation includes a belief that we are relational beings. Thus because we bear God’s image, each person has an inherent need to be in relationship. Out of perfect community with one another, the Godhead (God
the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit) created the human race also to live together in community. Therefore God invites people to be part of divine and human relationships (Icenogle, 1994). The Bible illustrates this reality in the creation account. Following the forming of Adam, God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him” (Gen 2:18, NIV). People are wounded in relationships, and they need to be healed in relationships with their fellowman and with God. You are a representative of God to your counselees, and your ability to establish a helping relationship with them will determine your effectiveness (see chap. 5, “Basic Skills: Creating a Connection”).

Sixth, being created in God’s image is the basis of our meaning. Because we are made by God and for God’s good pleasure, we have inherent meaning. Frankl (1959) noted that much of modern neurosis, discontent, and anxiety can be attributed to the will to find meaning. He believed that meaning could be found in every moment of living. Though Frankl discussed three means of finding meaning, he did not speak to the fact that meaning derives from the fact that we are made by our Creator. Our meaning flows from Him and through Him. The human race is not the result of a random act of nature. Rather we are the masterpiece of a loving Creator who fashioned us according to His divine plan. Only through a relationship with God can mankind find true meaning and purpose. This is not meaning or purpose in the existential sense (cf. Bugental, 1965; Yalom, 1980), that is, relativistic and subjectively self-derived, but rather an objectively based meaning and purpose derived as a result of being in relationship with God. Warren (2002) states that the Creator Himself reveals our purpose. As Solomon noted, “Life in the world has significance only when man remembers his Creator” (cf. Eccl 12:1, NIV). From a biblical teleological point of view, the meaning of human existence cannot be established without a reference point outside of man. God gives meaning to His creation; without God mankind can only look to self for meaning and purpose. Without God’s true meaning and purpose, mankind is enslaved to a void that he cannot fill. Only God can fill the void and provide meaning in place of meaningless. Thus the first point of a biblical anthropology is that human beings are created in God’s image and so they have inherent meaning.

Seventh, being created in God’s image includes the gift of free choice. Into the fabric of human existence is woven the principle of free choice tied to responsibility. Evil, and the resulting pain and suffering, became a part of human existence when man chose to exchange the truth of God for a lie, worshipping the creature or creation instead of the Creator (Rom 1). To
have true free will man must possess the faculties to enable him to choose between good and evil. Though mankind is capable of choosing since the Fall, the curse of sin produces wrong motivations and choices. We are wholly unable to do what is pleasing to God. We are no longer capable of distinguishing good from evil in that the former has become corrupted and the latter predominates. The Fall has so blinded us that we prefer evil, though few of us would constitute what we are doing as such. The problem is not an inability to exercise our wills, but a total inability to will good (i.e., holy volition). Human choices are made as expressions of the heart. The distressing situations people are in flow out of their choices or those of others. Willard (2002) expresses it well when he says, “The spiritual place within us from which outlook, choices, and actions come has been formed by a world away from God. Now it must be transformed” (p. 14).

Eighth, the image of God that everyone bears is a distorted and twisted image; man is inherently sinful (Gen 3). For that reason Francis Schaeffer called us “glorious ruins” (cited in Winter, 2008). Through Adam and Eve’s choice to rebel against God’s authority (see Gen 3), the human heart of everyone is infected with this rebellious malady of distrusting God, manifested in disobedience to his laws (i.e., sin). Whereas God’s creation was good (Gen 1–2), man’s “creation” was sin (Gen 3).

Sin is both a trait and a state. “Trait sin” is our sin nature; we are inherently sinful and born spiritually dead (cf. Rom 6–8). Every aspect of humanity is fallen, that is, each part of our soul is corrupt. Sin is fused into our genetics. As a result our physiology, cognitions, emotions, and actions are distorted in ways that are peculiar to themselves, yet without destroying our imageness. Sin has physical, cognitive, emotional, social, and spiritual consequences, and at times these consequences are particularly severe (Rom 1:18–19). Through life, each one becomes more damaged by sin so that each one may be more or less maladaptive or dysfunctional. From our infancy we engage in sinful choices, a manifestation of “State sin,” that is, the experience of sinning. State sin speaks to the act and acts of sinning.3 Sinful acts include such behaviors and inner states as lying and the desire to deceive, adultery and lust, stealing and envy or greed, murder and hate, to name a few. A biblical worldview first puts the emphasis on the trait of sin, dealing with a person’s spiritual deadness and separation from God. Then the acts of sin or being in a state of sinning are addressed.

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3 McMinn, Ruiz, Marx, Wright, and Gilbert (2006) use the term “state sin” to describe the human condition of sin (our trait sin) and “act sin” (our state sin) to describe the act of sinning.
Anthropological tenet 3: The need of mankind. One of the most significant anthropological tenets of a biblical worldview is the fact that God has provided a remedy for mankind’s trait sin and state sin. Following man’s birthing of sin that corrupted and damned himself and creation, God initiated a plan of redemption to (a) provide a fulfillment of God’s purposes for relationship with His creation (Lints, 1993) and (b) to reconcile mankind back to Himself. Sin caused separation from God, but redemption brings us back into a relationship with Him. Just as sin entered into the world by one man, restoration and righteousness are also by one man, Jesus Christ (Rom 5:12). Motivated by His great love for His creatures, God made it possible for man to again be in relationship with Him. “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16, NIV). As a demonstration of God’s unfathomable grace, Christ became that one man who offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice to redeem fallen mankind. Because of Christ’s death and resurrection He can offer redemption to mankind, but salvation is applied only to those who place their trust in Him (Rom 3:25; 5:10,18; Col 1:20–22; Heb 9:26–28; 1 Pet 1:3).

Redemption saves mankind from the consequences of the Fall, but it also imparts the capacity to live a spiritual and abundant life (John 10:10). God has a twofold purpose in redemption: to relieve the believer of the burden and weight of sin and to compel him toward a fuller life.

Reconciliation with God has a powerful connection with reconciliation between people (Icenogle, 1994). Through faith in Jesus Christ we can be in relationship with God, and begin to enjoy the balance, harmony, and unity the life of a disciple cultivates. “Thereafter, faith is a keeping open of the soul, so that Christ can come in with the blessing and take possession and fill all. Accordingly, faith becomes the most fervent and unbroken communion betwixt the soul in which Christ obtains His place and Christ Himself, who by the silent, effectual blessing of the Spirit is enthroned in the heart ” (Murray, 1984, p. 88). The counseling relationship provides an ideal place for such cultivation of communion to take place.

As McMinn (1996) wrote, “Understanding sin gives meaning to redemption” (p. 266). Also the converse is true; understanding redemption gives meaning to sin. No matter how maladjusted, wounded, lost, or evil your counselees seem, they are redeemable. We are capable of any sin under the “right” circumstances, but also nothing is beyond the penetrating power of God’s redemptive grace; He specializes in the impossible (Luke 1:37). The final authority is neither psychology nor theology but Christ Himself. The integration of theology and psychology is analogous
to the operation of the body of Christ in that both are vital and necessary members of that body, independent yet dependent on one another, but in subjection to the head of the body, who is Christ (1 Cor 11:3).

Jesus was not interested in bringing about change in humanity through social institutions or other outer forms of man’s existence. Instead, He sought to bring about change from the inside out. He focused on changing people’s ideas, beliefs, feelings, habits of choice, and distortions of reality and truth. In our thoughts God first begins to unlock the truths of Christ’s words by the work of the Holy Spirit, providing the basis for choosing to become more closely realigned with God and his ways (Willard, 2002). By God’s grace and good will we are able to be freed from our enslavement to sin and its consequences, as well as the confines of the flesh.

The Bible is filled with promises for those who place their hope in God (Pss 31:24; 71:5). The Scriptures place a great emphasis on the importance of hope for human coping. Perhaps one of the most powerful verses that reflect the mind of God in relation to this matter is Jer 29:11, ‘‘For I know the plans I have for you,’’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future’’ (NIV).

Anthropological tenet 4: The motivation of mankind. The basic motivation for the nonbeliever is the desire to search after the truth (Rom 1:16–20). This existential vacuum is God-shaped. For the believer the motivation is to become holy (cf. Lev 19:2; Gal 2:20; Eph 1:3–4); and this requires self-denial (Gal 2:20–21; Eph 4:20–24). Self-denial properly aligns us with God, and it also gives us the proper attitude toward others. We are to view others as image-bearers of God. Self-denial toward God is expressed by commitment to His will. Such commitment properly understood and acted on helps us bear adversity, knowing it is God at work in our lives doing what is good for us according to His good intention and kind will (Phil 2:12–13).

Biblical anthropology has implications for counseling in general and for the use of skills and techniques in particular. First, these tenets illuminate the nature of the counselor-counselee relationship. Because we are created in God’s image, we engage in an incarnational relationship with our counselees. And because spirituality emanates from God, each counselee encounter is a spiritual one. Each counselee who walks into your office came of his own free will. A counselee might say that he was coerced into counseling, but he chose to come to avoid more adverse consequences. Your responsibility as counselor is not to get the counselee to do what is right; the counselee must decide what he will do. Effective counselors know how to interact with counselees so they can tip the balance in favor of what
The Foundation of Helping

seems to be the wisest or most prudent decision. Do not attempt to make decisions for any counselee; this violates this aspect of mankind’s creation. Your use of skills and techniques must be employed in ways that respect the freedom of the counselee. Coercion by a counselor is uncalled for.

Many counseling theorists warn against the counselor using influence to coerce counselees to do what the counselor thinks best (Ivey & Ivey, 2003; Miller & Rollnick, 2002; Young, 2010). In fact when incorporating spiritual interventions (see chap. 14, “Spiritual Strategies”), you must be ethically responsible by being aware of your own emotions, opinions, attitudes, values, beliefs, and behavior; avoiding countertransference and the development of a dual relationship (AACC 2004 [see Appendix B]; Richards & Bergins, 2005).

Counselees bring their brokenness into your office. You will work with people who have made sinful choices and/or who have been wounded by other people’s sinful choices. Your counseling skills and techniques must account for people’s brokenness, defenses, self-protection, insecurities, vulnerabilities, and limitations. Much as Adam and Eve’s sin led them into hiding and blaming, counselees will require skillful questions in a safe environment to come out from behind their defensive and self-protective “fig leaves.” Getting to the truth and root of a problem is not an easy task. Counselees will distort, delete relevant information, and overgeneralize.

In a spirit of love and acceptance, recognize the impact that both trait sin and state sin have on a person spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and physically. McMinn and Campbell (2007) define sin as disobedience that warps one’s personal identity, needs, wants, and relationships. People often experience turmoil when they recognize that what they desire is inconsistent with God’s truth and with what is right. Jones and Butman (1991) refer to this experience as compound and conflicting motivations.

The counselor must model what a redemptive relationship with Christ is like (McMinn, 1996). Thoughtfully integrating a biblical worldview and sound psychological principles is necessary because people who seek counseling suffer in meaningful ways and need to be cared for as persons; not just treated as a set of symptoms (Sperry & Shafranske, 2005). Through experiencing the counselor’s love, grace, and mercy and being related to as a person, the counselee gets a sense what it is like to be rightly related to Christ. Each counselee must be approached with grace. The counseling relationship can help draw the counselee into an experience of grace, thereby paving the way for self-reflection, confession, and repentance. This encourages the counselee to recognize his or her need for God’s deliverance (McMinn, 1996).
**A fallen creation (presupposition 5).**

The Scriptures not only elaborate on the problem and hope for mankind; they also address the fact that the world is fallen. Biblical truth communicates the fact that creation has been corrupted. Because of sin, humans, God’s image-bearers, are corrupted and so is His entire creation (Eccl 1:15; Rom 1:18–32; 8:20–22). Because of the sin of disobedience, an antagonistic relationship commenced between mankind and his environment. Rather than being the benevolent steward of creation, people tend to further disturb his environment even as the environment extends its own corruption to man.

Because the physical world is fallen, science will never be the perfect means of knowing truth or knowing God. Pain, suffering, and stress will be constant companions to mankind’s existence. What is broken in this world cannot be repaired through human agency. God is sovereign over His creation and will one day restore it (Exod 15:18; Deut 32:39; 1 Chr 29:11–12; Job 9:12; 12:10; Pss 22:28; 33:11; 115:3; 135:6; Rev 19:16).

The presuppositions that we have presented reveal that mankind’s basic problem and dilemma is a spiritual one. Thus psychological strategies and interventions alone are in a sense treating the symptoms of the problem rather than the problem itself. Of course counseling can bring relief and can support counselees in meeting their temporal goals, but without a spiritual perspective, it is relativistic and devoid of spiritual depth. Psychology alone can only bring temporary and transient relief and may tend merely to supplant symptoms. Without the implementation of a biblical worldview that addresses the totality of mankind’s issues, counseling efforts are merely palliative. Failing to integrate biblical truth into a psychological understanding of humanity and into the counseling approach leaves the doors open wide to an erroneous understanding of man and to erroneous approaches, concepts, and treatments in counseling.

Your worldview is the meaningful “center” to what you will do in your counseling. For example, your worldview will influence the target or purpose of counseling. What you believe is your purpose as a professional helper will dramatically shape how you work with counselees. Counseling skills and techniques are nothing more than the arrows you use to hit the target you have identified. If your target is off, your choice of techniques will ultimately prove ineffective. And, if you have the right target in sight but you choose the wrong arrow, your purpose will not be met.
**Summary**

The most important foundation for counseling is the counselor’s worldview and the counselee’s worldview. The counselor and counselee each brings a personal worldview into the helping relationship (see Table 1.4). The counselor’s worldview consciously or unconsciously informs the counselor on how to counsel. The counselee’s worldview influences life goals, suffering, therapeutic goals, and more. At times the worldviews of the counselor and counselee match famously. Far too often, however, there is a mismatch between the two.

In addition to the level of congruence between the counselor and the counselee’s worldviews is the level of congruence between the counselor’s worldview and the map—the Bible (see figure 1.3). Because we believe the Bible is truth, whether it is explicitly evident in the session or implicitly present as a backdrop to the counselor’s work, the foundation of the counselor’s skills and techniques is strong and stable.

**THE ULTIMATE GUIDE: THE ROLE OF CHRIST IN COUNSELING**

Setting a standard for Christian professional counseling, the American Association of Christian Counselors (AACC) Code of Ethics (see Appendix B) lists Jesus Christ as its first foundation: “Jesus Christ – and His revelation in both the OT and NT of the Bible – is the pre-eminent model for Christian counseling practices, ethics, and care giving activities” (p. 4).

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**Table 1.4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Worldview Component</th>
<th>Biblical Worldview Content</th>
<th>Relationship to Helping Skills and Techniques</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cosmology</td>
<td>Existence of God</td>
<td>• Gen 1 and 2</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Existence of God gives provision of</td>
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<td>incarnational relationship (John 1:1–18;</td>
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<td>15:1–5)</td>
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<td>• Connects with skills and techniques in</td>
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<td>the “person of the counselor”; who is</td>
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<td>transcendent “above” the counselee, yet</td>
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<td>fully present and active</td>
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Table 1.4 (cont.)

*Relationship of Worldview Components and Biblical Worldview to Helping Skills*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Worldview Component</th>
<th>Biblical Worldview Content</th>
<th>Relationship to Helping Skills and Techniques</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Epistemology</td>
<td>Existence of Absolute Truth</td>
<td>• Truth is anchor for the soul (Heb 6:19); it exists both implicitly and explicitly in the counseling relationship</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Right and wrong way to engage skills and techniques (e.g., there is a knowable means of building rapport)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Social justice issues with counselees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Epistemology</td>
<td>Existence of Specific Revelation – Scripture (2 Tim 3:16–17; Heb 4:12)</td>
<td>• Counselor is rooted in Scripture; implicitly brought to counseling because of the nature of truth</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Cognitive-behavioral strategies find “rationality” in Scripture because truth exists</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Counselor reveals self – skill of self-disclosure</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Cosmology • Epistemology</td>
<td>Existence of General Revelation – Creation (Gen 1–2)</td>
<td>• Benefit from social science research; empirical based findings</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• The role of the environment in assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Epistemology</td>
<td>Anthropology: Mankind Created in God’s Image (Gen 1–2)</td>
<td>• Counseling relationship is an incarnational relationship</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Spiritually attached to God; counselor relates spiritually as well as socially to counselee</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Multiculturalism – both genders and all races derived from God</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Cosmology • Teleology</td>
<td>Anthropology: Mankind Has Value (Ps 8:9)</td>
<td>• Treat counselee ethically (e.g., informed consent)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Offer respect, seek to do no harm, accept, and love your counselees</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Counselees deserve being attended to through the use of attending skills</td>
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<td>• The value of people sets the stage for termination skills to end counseling relationship</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Cosmology • Teleology</td>
<td>Anthropology: Mankind Is a Spiritual Being</td>
<td>• Spirituality is added to the bio-psycho-social assessment and treatment plan</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Spirituality is at the heart of the person, not just a component of the person.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Counseling relationship is also a spiritual relationship</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Techniques must address spirituality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Worldview Component</td>
<td>Biblical Worldview Content</td>
<td>Relationship to Helping Skills and Techniques</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Cosmology Teleology Axiology | Anthropology: Mankind Has Free Will | • Informed consent  
• Agenda setting  
• Collaboration  
• Consider motivation of counselee  
• Responsible to them, not for them  
• The counselee has freedom to make choices; the Holy Spirit can work in them to accomplish God's will |
| Cosmology Teleology Axiology | Anthropology: Mankind Is a Relational Being | • Importance of incarnational relationship  
• Assess social supports  
• Assess social skills  
• Born and formed through attachment  
• Avoid creating dependency  
• Intervene systematically; use social strategies |
| Cosmology Teleology Axiology | Anthropology: Mankind Is Fallen and Sinful | • Need for change  
• A problem with evil; demonic influences and incorporation of evil into every piece of fabric of this world  
• Bio-psycho-social-spiritual weaknesses  
• Counselee sinfulness and flesh impact effectiveness of counseling  
• Depraved without Christ  
• Need accountability; basis for ethical guidelines to govern and regulate professional behavior  
• Understand and appreciate the power of pathology  
• Ability to self-deceive; sin / flesh create blindness to one's deficits and strengths  
• Fear requires creating a safe haven  
• We relate through woundedness  
• Counselor woundedness (baggage) can hamper the counseling; have self-awareness  
• Both the counselor and counselee can be harmed through helping; have self-awareness  
• Counselees need supervision and consultation to examine their own hearts  
• Goals will not typically be godly  
• Bring truth to tension between their current state of brokenness and where they can be in Christ  
• Employ techniques that target different domains that are affected by sin / weakness; holistic  
• Generational context |
Table 1.4 (cont.)

**Relationship of Worldview Components and Biblical Worldview to Helping Skills**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Worldview Component</th>
<th>Biblical Worldview Content</th>
<th>Relationship to Helping Skills and Techniques</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Cosmology Teleology | Anthropology: Mankind Can Be Redeemed | • Vision for what counselee can become  
• Counselor needs to have hope and be patient; trusting God to work. Luke 1:37, nothing is impossible with God  
• Skills and techniques springboard from redemption; help counselee find healing through the pain  
• Goals can be structured to bring about growth, not just healing  
• Sin and redemption create a need for confession and repentance  
• Employ strategies that target each aspect of the fallen person in order to redeem it |
| Cosmology Teleology | Creation Is Fallen (Rom 8:22) | • Science is not perfect, thus it is not true truth  
• Environment is corrupted; must structure therapeutic environment to optimize change  
• Some things cannot be changed; must help counselee cope (Eccl 1:15)  
• The counselee and counselor can be harmed through helping |

Figure 1.3: Counselor and Counselee Worldviews in Relationship to the Bible
The starting place for learning how to counsel is to look to the ultimate Guide, Jesus Christ. He is “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). He is life because He is God. And Jesus is the way because He is the doorway to God (John 10:7), the “ultimate Guide” to bring restoration to and connection with God.

Jesus Christ is also the truth (cf. Jer 42:5; Rev 3:7,14; 6:10). According to Bryant and Krause (1998), the word “truth” refers to the opposite of falsehood; truth is when a stated proposition matches factual reality. The opposite of this was what merely “seemed” to be a certain way, only an appearance. Appearances might change, but truth does not. Jesus Christ is the definitive and perfect Word expressing who God is; He is true, pure, and a reflection of the facts. He does not change nor is He merely an image of truth; He is the truth.

Jesus is also the life. He provides the ultimately longing for every heart, namely, satisfaction and contentment in life. Christ’s life-giving Spirit gives life to the dead (cf. Deut 30:20; Josh 3:10; Ps 36:9; Jer 10:10; John 1:4; 5:25–29; 10:10; 11:23–26; Col 3:4; 1 John 1:1–3; 5:20).

Through Him we provide incarnational guidance to our counselees. From Christ, the living Word (John 1:1–18), we develop a worldview that becomes the basis of the way we approach life and the foundation for doing the work of counseling. From our worldview our skills and strategies are conceptualized, internalized, and energized.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Most people are drawn to the field of counseling to help people with their suffering. The Bible addresses the questions of the origin and meaning of the universe; provides an explanatory framework for understanding the origin of mankind, the meaning of mankind, the problem and hope for mankind, and the problem with the world. The Bible is a complete and comprehensive source of knowing how to approach life and how to work with counselees. Without doubt the Bible is a necessary component to your counseling gear. It will ground you and orient you to the ultimate Guide for your therapeutic journey.

So often counselors who are Christians enter the helping profession with multiple worldviews (consciously or unconsciously) and await the dynamics of the relationship to unfold before deciding which worldview to use as the underpinning of the counseling process (Trozer, personal communication, October 16, 2009). It is critical that you adopt a biblical worldview to guide your work.
While the Bible is a necessary element in your counseling work, the wise counselor knows how to cull from the psychological world the knowledge that will augment the helping process. This does not mean that the Bible is insufficient; it means that psychology offers specific content that informs counselors how best to intervene. Ministers develop their sermons from the Scriptures. They know how to make use of sermon helps such as commentaries, Bible dictionaries, and other resources. Most ministers, however, learned how to preach by reading homiletic books, books that help ministers know how to develop and deliver sermons. Such books teach ministers principles of persuasive speaking and even make use of learning theories. The use of such books does not negate the prominence of Scripture in the sermon; instead it augments the minister’s knowledge, ability, and skills in preaching. Likewise, using counseling textbooks to prepare yourself in how to counsel does not diminish the role the Bible plays in the helping process.

The crux of the issue is that being technically proficient in the practice of helping is not sufficient nor is having techniques that have been found to be correlated with successful outcomes. Both technical proficiency and evidenced-based strategies are important, but of greater concern is the worldview from which we operate. The benefit of counseling that is biblically based is that life issues are confronted with open acknowledgment of a Creator, His values, His perspective, and His ability to redeem and restore.

**CHAPTER 1 ACTIVITIES**

Directions: Prayerfully and carefully complete the following questions/activities related to the content of this chap.

1. In this chap. we learned that distorted content in our worldview can lead to inconsistent and incoherent helping. Therefore a key question we must ponder is how accurate is the substance of our worldview? As a means of exploring your worldview, define in your own words the terms cosmology, teleology, epistemology, and axiology (which are the four raw materials that comprise the foundational walls of your “helping house”) and answer (about yourself) the questions related to them (depicted in the chart below).
As helpers representing the Lord Jesus Christ it is our utmost responsibility to be sure our worldview aligns with biblical truth. Does yours?

2. An accurate view of God is at the heart of what we do as counselors. Use the acrostic below to define in your own words these attributes of God and then discuss how they relate to your own experience and knowledge of God:

- **C** = *Creator* of everything
- **R** = *Relational* in the Godhead
- **E** = *Eternal*, without beginning and end
- **A** = *Abiding* because He is immutable
- **T** = *Transcendent* because He is outside and above all that is
- **E** = *Ever-present* because He is immanent
- **S** = *Sovereign* ruler of all

How could remaining aware of these attributes of our heavenly Father influence your work as a counselor? What is your plan for abiding in Him and allowing Him to be your ultimate Guide?

3. What does the following statement mean: When mainstream counselors seek to build their approach on evidence-based treatments, they are advocating that counselors employ strategies that are based on “truth”?

4. According to this chap. what are some questions we can ask ourselves to determine if particular counseling strategies and techniques are congruent with biblical teachings?

5. Elaborate on the following statement by adding at least two more sentences to it:

“The human race is not the result of a random act of nature. Rather we are the masterpiece of a loving Creator who fashioned us according to
His divine plan. It is only through a relationship with God that mankind can find true meaning and purpose.”

6. What did Francis Schaeffer mean when he referred to man as “glorious ruins”?

7. What is the difference between state sin and trait sin? As McMinn (1996) wrote, “Understanding sin gives meaning to redemption” (p. 266). What does this statement mean?

8. How can the counselor model what a “redemptive relationship with Christ” (McMinn, 1996) is?

9. Write a brief letter to your future counselees (not one you will actually send) that describes your worldview and discusses your commitment to live your life, including your work as a counselor, rooted and grounded in the Christian worldview.

Recommended Reading


These authors provide an evangelical overview of the prominent worldviews: deism, pantheism, panentheism, finite godism, polytheism, atheism, and theism.


Sire’s work is an excellent resource on the worldviews: Christian theism, deism, naturalism, nihilism, existentialism, Eastern pantheistic monism, the New Age, and postmodernism. He does an excellent job in describing each worldview and comparing it with the biblical worldview.