

# Secular and Integration Theories

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What are the differences between biblical counseling theories and the theories of secular counselors and integrationists?

Do these differences really matter?

If these differences do matter, *why* do they matter?

## Secular Counseling: John Bradshaw

God            Higher Power

“My higher power is the fruit of my subjective search for meaning, coupled with my spirituality and religious faith. ...My happiness really comes from a new self-definition: one that says you're worthy of whatever you honestly want and can create. The joy in my life right now stems from the creative risks I've taken because I've believed in myself.”<sup>1</sup>

Man            Good; Self sufficient

“core godlikeness”<sup>2</sup>

Truth           Found within; Lost during Childhood

“Co-dependency is a dis-ease of the developing self causing various degrees of deselfment. I hyphenate the word disease to indicate that co-dependency is not a medical condition. It is a loss of ease with oneself, a feeling of inner emptiness, a state of not being at home with oneself. When we look at the rules of poisonous pedagogy, it seems clear that selfhood would be a unique achievement for anyone raised with these rules.”<sup>3</sup>

Sin             Results from being sinned against; Sinners are victims of “toxic shame”

A chain reaction begins when parents sin, which causes their children shame. This leads the children's to sin, which, in turn, later places the same destructive shame on their own children, who are then powerless to refuse temptations to sin.

Change        Reclaim the damaged inner child

“Relax and focus on your breathing. ...imagine that you are walking down a long flight of stairs. ...go back through time to a street where you lived before you were seven years old. ...See a small child come out the front door. ...Tell him you are from his future. Tell him that you know better than anyone what he's been through, his suffering, his abandonment, his shame. ...Now ask him if he's willing to go home with you. ...take him by the hand and start walking away. ...see your mom and dad come out on the porch. Wave good-bye to them. ...continue walking away ...until they are completely gone. ...Embrace all your friends and allow your higher power to come into your heart. ...Now walk away and promise your child that you will meet him for five minutes each day. Pick an exact time. ...Hold your child in your hand and let him shrink to the size of your hand. Place him in your heart. ...Get a sense of communion with yourself, with your Higher Power and with all things.”<sup>4</sup>

"Of all the people you will ever know, you are the only one you will never lose."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Bradshaw (2), 273

<sup>2</sup> Bradshaw (3), chapter 6

<sup>3</sup> Bradshaw (1), 181

<sup>4</sup> Bradshaw (3), 92

<sup>5</sup> Bradshaw (1), 176-177

## Integrationism: Gary Collins

### God            The God of the Bible

“The Scriptures and our own experiences give abundant evidence that God can, and does, work through capable, sensitive counselors. Often these counselors will listen, give encouragement, challenge thinking and employ a host of other techniques that are used by both Christian counselors and by those who are nonbelievers. ...the help that comes from caring counselors is one of the best ways by which our all-powerful God brings change and healing in times of need.”<sup>6</sup>

### Man            Man is Good; Self-Esteem

The Biblical Teaching About Human Worth...affirms that... ...we possess great value and significance...we are described as "a little lower than God"...The Bible is full of evidence that shows our eternal value in the sight of God.<sup>7</sup>

Collins explains how to counsel people with “inferiority feelings and low self esteem” in the following list,

1.     *“Give Genuine Support, Acceptance, and Approval.*
2.     *Share the Biblical Perspective on Self-Esteem. (see previous quote)*
3.     *Seek to Develop Understanding and a Realistic Self-Evaluation*
4.     *Change Unhealthy Self-Talk...”<sup>8</sup>*

### Truth            The Bible and Psychology

"I am committed to the task of integration. I want it to be reflected in my work, my writing, and my teaching. ...I believe that the integration of psychology and theology is an important intellectual challenge."<sup>9</sup> "Scholarly work has shown, however, that Christians and psychologists can learn from each other, without weakening or watering down the enduring truths of God's Word."<sup>10</sup>

"the Word of God never claims to have *all* the answers to all of life's problems." (italics his)<sup>11</sup>

### Sin and Change            Require Psychology for Resolution

Collins cites quotes, commends, and agrees with Jay Adams' instruction on the topic in *More Than Redemption*. He says that Dr. Adams "correctly" explains the Bible's mandate for dealing with sin: "confession, repentance, and restitution." Then, Collins concludes the discussion with a hypothetical situation and a contrary final word: "But what about those people who seem addicted to their sinful ways---people like a young man who is hooked on pornography or a person who gets drunk, feels deep remorse, but then gets drunk again? Those people may confess their sins with genuine remorse...But if you are a counselor asking if they really think they can avoid a relapse into their repetitious sin, probably both would say no. Based on their past record, repeated sin is likely..." \*\*

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<sup>6</sup> Gary Collins (1), 25

<sup>7</sup> Gary Collins (3), 427

<sup>8</sup> Gary Collins (3), 433-436

<sup>9</sup> Gary Collins (1), 129

<sup>10</sup> Gary Collins (1), 95-97

<sup>11</sup> Gary Collins (2), 97

## Biblical Counseling

God	<p><u>The God of the Bible</u></p> <p>God has power and autonomy over all His creation. “You are worthy, our Lord and God, To receive glory and honor and power, For you have created all things...” (Rev. 4:11) As biblical counselors, We counsel for His honor. We study, pray, and prepare to bring glory to Him. Our aim is to speak the Word in a manner that pleases God. We teach counselees to change toward godliness so that the Creator will be better honored in their lives.</p>
Man	<p><u>Fallen in Sin; Can Be Redeemed through Jesus Christ + Freed from Sin's Control</u></p> <p>Man was created perfect, or, sinless. When Adam sinned, death and sin entered the world.<sup>12</sup> Every man is dead in sin<sup>13</sup> unless he is made alive with Christ by the gift of saving faith.<sup>14</sup> The soul redeemed by Jesus Christ enjoys forgiveness and is no longer a slave to sin.<sup>15</sup> How people perceive life problems and solutions is directly connected to their beliefs about man. Christians can overcome sin through the sufficient Scriptures and the power of the Holy Spirit.<sup>16,17</sup></p>
Truth	<p><u>The Bible</u></p> <p>Inspiration and Origin Scripture: Scripture emanated from within the very being of God.<sup>18</sup> The Authority of the Scriptures: Wayne Grudem wrote, “... to disbelieve or disobey any word of Scripture is to disbelieve or disobey God.”<sup>19</sup> The authority of God’s Word makes it the source for all good counsel. The Bible’s Unique Incision into the Soul: Discloses the motives of men’s hearts.<sup>20</sup> The Word of God is the essential tool for change toward godliness.<sup>21</sup> The Scriptures are the focal point of biblical counseling.</p>
Sin	<p><u>The Doctrine of Hamartiology</u></p> <p>Unbelievers are slaves to sin. Therefore counsel to the unsaved consists of evangelism. New life in Christ creates the ability for a soul to have victory over sin.<sup>22</sup> The Christian, through the power of the Scriptures<sup>23</sup> and the indwelling Spirit,<sup>24</sup> is able to overcome sin. Sanctification, or changing from sin toward righteousness, is the occupation of every believer.<sup>25</sup> The nouthetic counselor confidently teaches Christian counselees, expecting of victory over sin.</p>
Change	<p>True believers overcome sin. The change of sanctification provides assurance that one is saved.<sup>26</sup></p>

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<sup>12</sup> Genesis 3; Romans 5

<sup>13</sup> Ephesians 2:1-3

<sup>14</sup> Ephesians 2:4-10

<sup>15</sup> Romans 6:4-14

<sup>16</sup> Thiessen, part 5

<sup>17</sup> Barackman, chapter 8

<sup>18</sup> 2 Timothy 3:16

<sup>19</sup> Grudem, 73

<sup>20</sup> Hebrews 4:12-13

<sup>21</sup> Psalm 119:9-11

<sup>22</sup> Romans 6:10-12

<sup>23</sup> 1 Peter 2:1-3

<sup>24</sup> John 14:26

<sup>25</sup> Romans 8:13

<sup>26</sup> 1 John 5:3-5

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