



An Introduction to Biblical Counselling

“Christ-centred change, enabled by the Spirit, through the ministry of the Word, in the local church”

An example from church life

Dave is a 46 year old men in your church and has arrived at something of a crisis. He is overstretched at work and his marriage is suffering. He leads a home group, but is missing meetings and his own devotional life is in bad shape. Recently he stayed late at the office and got into conversation with a female colleague. They went out for a drink and though nothing 'happened' he realised afterwards just how close he was to letting things go too far. This incident persuades him something needs to change.

One Sunday Dave gets into conversation with his friend Andy. Having explained his situation, Dave is pleased that Andy sympathises with him and agrees how hard a proper work-life balance can be. Andy describes his own difficulties and then conversation moves on. Dave is glad to have 'shared' his problem. But knows he has no new advice and no spiritual perspective on his situation

Dave arranges a drink with Brian, a church elder. Brian listens then tells Dave that since this is a serious matter with potential church discipline issues he needs to talk to their pastor.

Dave's pastor listens carefully to his story before opening the Bible with him and telling him that he needs to love his wife (Eph 5), be a good father — which means spending less time at work (Eph 6) and that he should flee temptation (1 Cor 6). He tells him to read his bible regularly and make home group a priority in his schedule.

He urges Dave to see this as a crisis point and that if he doesn't act now it will be too late.

Dave is chastened and glad for some serious direction. He determines to change.

For the next few months Dave gets his life in order and his new commitment to self-discipline seems to be working. He manages more time at home. He only misses one home group meeting and is more disciplined in getting up early to have a quiet time. He is delighted by his spiritual progress and makes a point of letting his friend Andy know how well he is doing.

Discussion

- What do you think of the way this church handled Dave's situation?
- Which of these three men counselled Dave?
- Was Brian right to refer Dave on to the pastor?
- Was the pastor right to tackle his problem?
- What do you think of the pastor's approach?
- Should pastors be willing to take on any problem, e.g.:
 - Depression Addiction Pornography
 - Anger Debt Obesity

A possible model?

A world full of problems

Sin that comes at us - suffering

Sin that comes out of us

A Christian has a new nature: we are saint/sufferer/sinner.
Bible speaks here

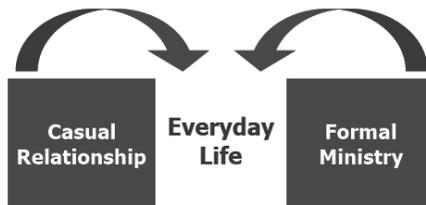
But in my/our church culture, there is often a gospel gap



Life in the gospel gap – like “Dave”

1. Fruit stapling

2, Dependence on experts and a “ministry gap”



3. Hypocrisy/performance/disaster

Back to Dave

Before long, however, the old patterns of overwork re-emerge. Dave again finds himself out for a drink with his female colleague and this time things do go too far.

Deeply ashamed, Dave cannot bring himself to return to his pastor or to speak to his friend Andy. He begins something of a double life: he continues to lead his home group and generally at church he gives the impression that all is well. In reality patterns of overwork, instances of sexual indiscretion and the general trajectory of spiritual decline are worse than ever.

A month later, the pastor catches up with Dave after a morning service and asks how things are going. Almost without thinking Dave finds himself saying that all is well. With Christian friends he maintains a pretence of respectability, in reality he feels stuck and wretched and spiritually alone.

How might Dave have been better helped?

Biblical Counselling is a ministry of the word

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Ephesians 4

What is the church?

What is church growth?

What word ministry grows the church?

The short delay

- How would you react?

Connecting the word with life

-> The analysis of folly

1. What is your situation?
2. How are you reacting?
3. What do you expect / want / believe?
4. What are the consequences that follow?

-> The breaking in of grace

5. What does God say that is relevant to you and your situation?
6. What beliefs and desires should rule you?
7. What should you therefore do in this situation?
8. What are the consequences that follow?

Six Inescapable Facts

...Frustrated by his lack of progress and dismayed at what happened with his female colleague, Dave is determined to do something. He's heard about a life counsellor at work so makes an appointment and soon they are meeting regularly.

The life counsellor helps him with time management strategies and priority setting. Things begin to improve. The life counsellor talks to him about his punishing schedule and how he denies himself 'treats'. He wonders if this might be tied with aspects of his Christian faith. Dave takes up some new hobbies, he is a happier person and better company.

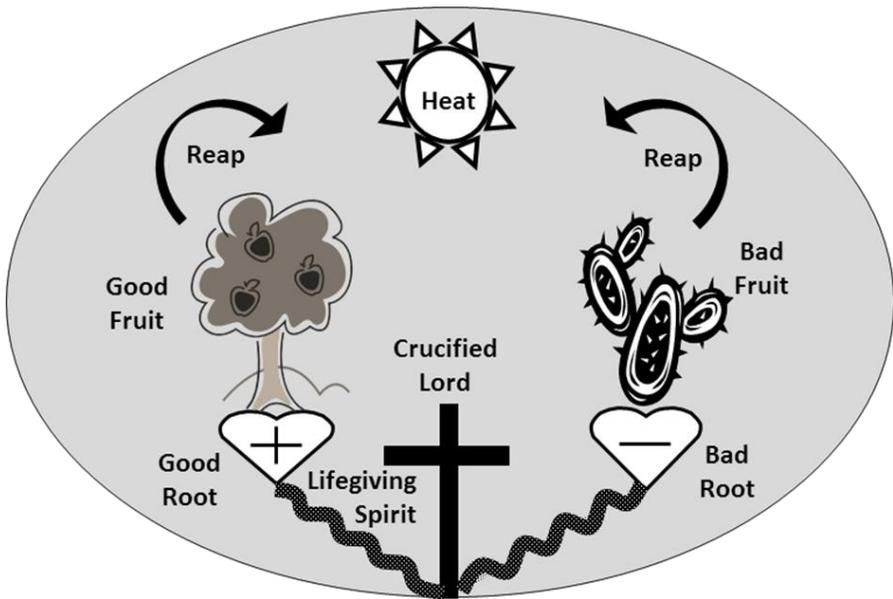
The pastor notices the improvement in Dave's life and soon restores him to home group leadership. He even begins to preach occasionally.

Later that year a member of Dave's home group mentions that he is finding life hard and feeling pretty overwhelmed.

Dave suggests he gets in touch with a life counsellor he knows...

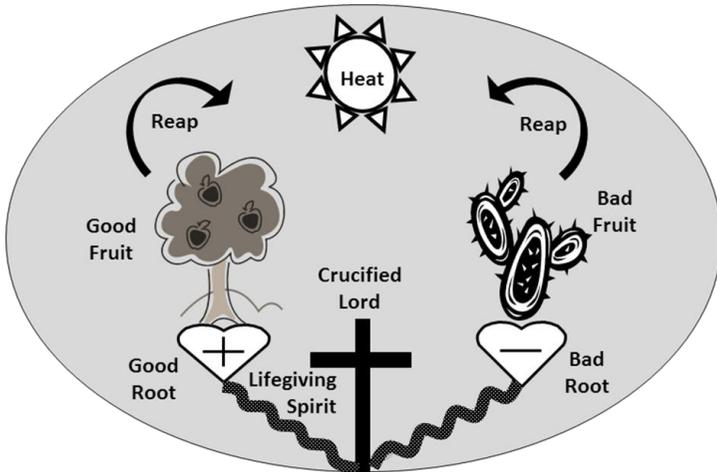
- 1. Someone in your church had a problem this week**
- 2. We have everything we need in the gospel to help that person be godly (2 Peter 1:3)**
- 3. People get counsel from friends, family members and pastors before they consult professionals**
- 4. That person either got no counsel, bad counsel or biblical, gospel centred counsel**
- 5. If they do not get meaningful help, they will go elsewhere**
- 6. Whatever help they experienced, they will now use to help others**

Three Trees¹



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How does this look for ... Dave? you?



This goes everywhere in an Ephesians 4 church

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Some concluding questions

Does this make us unhelpfully introspective?

Are we light on progressive sanctification?

Are we OK on eschatology?

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