

Secular Psychology

The following is almost word for word of a letter I received from a friend who asked me what I thought of secular psychology. I wasn't aware that she was doing a counselling course when I said, "telling people that the answer to their problems is within them etc does not give a solid foundation to fall back on when trouble comes again. I think that a good Christian counsellor would always lead the person to look to the Lord for help knowing that the Lord will be there for their next bout of trouble". The following is her reply:

Thank you for your letter. It came at a very precise time. I had been sitting up much of the night wondering what to do about my counselling course. It's a Diploma of Counselling. I am only a quarter of the way through. Every time I go to pick up my study book it fills me with dread. In fact I haven't done a page in two months.

What bothers me is that it offers people no hope. As you mentioned, secular psychology is a case of "finding the answer within." There is no coming before Christ. And as the Counsellor you are taught to step back from the person, observe and give no advice. It's too clinical for me.

In one of my training seminars we had to watch an actual interview on TV of a man being counselled after the tragic accidental drowning of his son (3 years old) in his backyard pool. It was incredibly heart wrenching. The trouble was, in my view, that the counsellor was so distant, so removed it was chilling. And he repeated things like "You're sad because you know you'll never see that little boy again" ... "You're hurting because you'll never touch him again". It was awful to watch. I wanted to scream "No, the dead in Christ shall rise! Give your heart to God and you WILL see him and cuddle him again". That poor man, he had no hope. Oh how that grieved me, it hurt me to the core. And that is when it dawned on me, "I cannot be a worldly counsellor, I can't do it, it's not who I am in Christ".

As I was contemplating this my husband came and said he'd forgotten to give me your letter. When I read it I was glad. It confirmed what I had wanted to do in my heart. So I cancelled the course. I am seeking a Theology Course and eventually I would like to be a Christian Counsellor.

If I had counselled that poor man I would have been on my knees with him bringing him before God. It still hurts me to think of it. It was an old interview that they use for training purposes. I wonder how his life went, his marriage was struggling, did he take his own life? And that counsellor, how useless were his words and how "incredibly professional". I have often observed those with the professional edge – cool, calm, aloof, reserved, organised, precise, detached. I wanted so much to be like them and I've never been able to. I care about people. I don't want to treat them as clients or case-works. So I thought I'd failed. Even in college I struggled to be just like the "elite" ones. I couldn't, I wasn't meant to.

Strange how now, in later life, I've finally figured out that who I am is who I am supposed to be. I am good enough. I realise only God is good but I mean good enough that I don't have to strive to be aloof and detached. I'm a person who will cry with you, laugh with you and pray with you. So thanks for unknowingly helping me to make my decision. I'm actually excited now that I'm beginning the right career for me ... end of letter.

The Bible tells us in Romans 12:15 to "*mourn with those who mourn*". In 2 Cor 1:3-5 we are told of "*the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God*".

Mick Alexander
leeandmick@gmail.com
www.ChristianIssues.biz