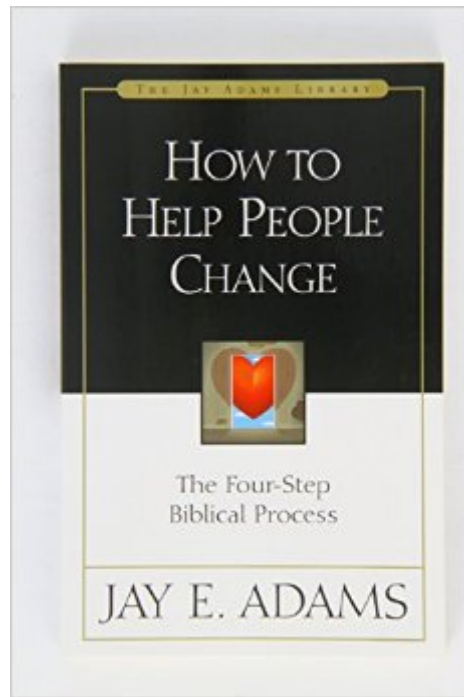


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How To Help People Change



Synopsis

While touching on many aspects of counseling, this book . . . is specifically designed to elucidate the process of counseling. I have often mentioned and illustrated that process, but not in the focused and systemic way that the four-step biblical process is set forth here. . . . This book presents a fresh perspective not only on how to counsel, but also on what measures to take at what stages of counseling. "Jay Adams, from the preface Change is the essential goal of the counseling process. And, in the author's words, "substantial change requires the alteration of the heart. How can a Christian counselor facilitate such change? The answer, of course, may be found in Scripture, specifically in 2 Timothy 3:14-17. Jay Adams is a well-known counselor who bases his whole approach on Scripture. This book provides an unparalleled opportunity to see how he discovers and applies biblical principles as well as the way in which Scripture functions as the basis for his counseling approach. This book answers two questions: "How does a counselor help people change?" and, "How does Scripture provide the source of a counselor's method?" How to Help People Change has much to say about the ongoing discussion of the relationship between theology and psychology in the enterprise of Christian counseling.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The four-step biblical process that Adams (1986) puts forth is based on sound interpretations of the Scriptures. His views are distinctively biblical and are likely to be best applied by clergy in the discharge of pastoral counseling duties. Adams four-step model of biblical counseling is troubling for

some - refreshing for others. The modern landscape of biblical counseling is filled a wide diversity of opinion in regard to the usage and integration of secular psychological principals in Christian counseling settings. While some choose to integrate, Adams thoroughly rejects the idea of integration. In his model, all that is needed for counseling is found in the pages of Scripture and anything outside the realm of Scripture should be soundly rejected. "Strangely enough, many of the most prominent defenders of biblical inerrancy and authority are the very pastors who, in biblical counseling, treat the Scriptures as an insufficient source, in need of supplementation from psychiatry and psychology. Sad to say, they implicitly deny the Scriptures' credentials for helping people change." (Adams, 1986, p.21) Adams four-step approach to biblical counseling is put forth as an attempt to counsel purely on the basis of the Scriptures ability to help people change. Adams places a high emphasis on the need for biblical teaching in counseling. He asserts that it is not possible to achieve positive change apart from the impartation of biblical truth from the counselor to the counselee. The counseling process in this system basically leads a counselee toward serious Christian disciples by way of biblical teaching in an effort to import change in the direction of Christ-likeness.

The problem with Adams' theory, as I see it, is the complete lack of scientific evidence for anything he claims. Adams rejects any integration of psychology with counseling because he believes counseling is properly the domain of the Christian counselor. Adams claims that this is because only God can achieve the goal of counseling which is the transformation of a person. Adams acknowledges that psychology may be a worthwhile pursuit, so long as it does not attempt to address counseling. While he acknowledges that secular counselors may help clients, he emphasizes that the help is temporary and insufficient. While I believe it is true that only God can transform a person, secular counseling can be effective for the duration of a person's life, which is all a non-Christian is looking for anyway. Adams makes many theologically solid statements but overall he comes across as quite arrogant and even downright dangerous. As a case in point, he stated that schizophrenia could be treated with Scripture alone. If, as Adams claims, Scripture is wholly sufficient for every counseling situation and the use of anything except Scripture is an insult to God, then why did Jesus not use Scripture when counseling the woman at the well (John 4:1-42)? Why didn't he use Scripture to rebuke the Pharisees and Scribes with the woman caught in adultery, and why didn't he spend time with that woman teaching, correcting, and discipling her with Scripture (John 8:1-11)? There were many things that Adams said that I cheered and underlined. However, I was also left with a distinctly unsettled feeling, to the point of vehement opposition to

Adams' claim that truly effective, long-term transformation could only result from the use of the Scriptures alone in counseling.

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