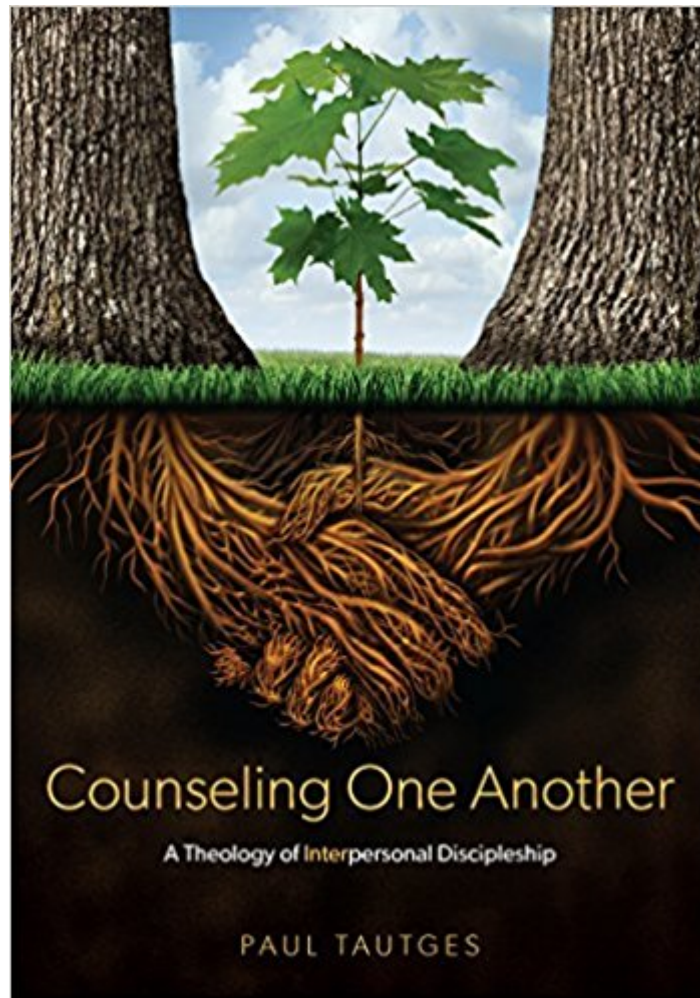




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Counseling One Another



Synopsis

A vibrant ministry of counseling is sorely needed in the church today: a ministry in which believers in Christ demonstrate biblical love to one another within a gospel-centered, truth-driven, and grace-dispensing church environment. Solidly rooted in the belief that the Scriptures are sufficient for every soul-related struggle in life, and fully committed to the truth that the Holy Spirit is competent to accomplish the work of sanctification, this paradigm-shifting book will challenge every believer to be a part of the process of discipleship in the lives of their brothers and sisters in Christ. *Counseling One Another* biblically presents, and thoroughly defends, our responsibility to work together towards God's goal to conform each of us to the image of His Son - a goal that will not be reached apart from a targeted form of biblical discipleship, most often referred to as counseling. All Christians will find *Counseling One Another* useful as they make progress in the life of sanctification and as they discuss issues with their friends, children, spouses, and fellow believers, providing them with a biblical framework for life and one-another ministry in the body of Christ.

Book Information

Paperback: 195 pages

Publisher: Shepherd Press (February 29, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1633420949

ISBN-13: 978-1633420946

Product Dimensions: 5.9 x 0.5 x 8.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 7.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.8 out of 5 stars 27 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #607,296 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #281 in [Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Christian Living > Counseling](#) #416 in [Books > Religion & Spirituality > Religious Studies > Counseling](#) #967 in [Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Ministry & Evangelism > Counseling & Recovery](#)

Customer Reviews

This book gets it right! Comprehensive and convincing, *Counseling One Another* shows how true biblical counseling and preaching fit hand-in-glove. Those who preach, teach or counsel regularly are sure to benefit greatly from this helpful resource. --Dr. John MacArthur
Paul Tautges is fast becoming one of the major names in biblical counseling and pastoral ministry. His *Counseling One*

Another's blog and his blog posts and book lists at the Biblical Counseling Coalition are much sought-after resources. They are on the cutting edge of what the church needs today to advance God's work in our broken world. --Bob Kelleman, Executive Director of the Biblical Counseling Coalition
Counseling One Another addresses a serious deficiency in the discipleship ministry within the church. It advocates a radical departure from the status quo and a return to an authentic personal ministry of the Word among Christians through discipleship-counseling. It effectively lays the theological foundation for Christians regaining the New Testament priority of addressing personal soul troubles with biblical counsel. --John D. Street, Chair, Graduate Program in Biblical Counseling, The Master's College and Seminary

Dr. Paul Tautges serves as senior pastor of Cornerstone Community Church in suburban Cleveland, Ohio. Previously, he served as a pastor in Wisconsin for twenty-two years. He is the husband of Karen and father of ten. Paul is also an adjunct professor of biblical counseling and a conference speaker. Paul serves as the series editor for the LifeLine Mini-Books, and is the author of eight books including *Comfort Those Who Grieve*, *Discipline of Mercy*, and *Brass Heavens*. Paul is also a teaching fellow with ACBC (formerly NANC).

Good book! Highly recommend

I wish I knew what this book was supposed to achieve. I've tried to think of an audience or a situation for whom it would be helpful and I can't think of one. This is particularly frustrating as I wholeheartedly share the author's fundamental concerns about counseling in the church, which include the common relegation of Scripture and real discipleship behind secular psychology, felt needs and the pursuit of a humanistic self-esteem. Judging by both the title and sub-title I had imagined that this book would address the need, opportunity and challenge for Christians to be counseling each other, but they are incidental to what is essentially a diatribe against sub-Biblical counseling methods. In his desire to create an enemy to spend the book attacking, Tautges recognises that he must first create a clear working definition of Christian counseling. He does that early on when he says, "counseling will be presented as a targeted form of discipleship, an intensely focused and personal one-another ministry aimed at the serious development of serious disciples." Except then he gives David Powlison's definition of counseling as "intentionally helpful conversations." But then he

immediately decides that a much longer and different definition is in order: "The definition that I will develop and defend throughout this book is as follows: Biblical counseling is an intensely focused and personal aspect of the discipleship process, whereby believers come alongside one another for three main purposes: first, to help the other person to consistently apply Scriptural theology to his or her life in order to experience victory over sin through obedience to Christ; second, by warning their spiritual friend, in love, of the consequences of sinful actions; and third, by leading that brother or sister to make consistent progress in the ongoing process of biblical change in order that he or she, too, may become a spiritually reproductive disciple-maker."

In seeking to add clarity Tautges then states, "we must consciously use the terms 'counseling' and 'discipleship' interchangeably" except he quickly contradicts that by saying, "discipleship is at the very core of counseling."

That's like saying we must use the terms 'apple' and 'apple' interchangeably. Maybe one day he'll ask me for an apple and I'll oblige by handing him what's left after I've finished mine. And that's where he lost me, because his long, working definition of counseling is so narrow and misleading - as to be scarcely useful. It reduces a counseling to only one thing: the correction of a tolerance of sin in the life of the believer. If he'd only stuck with his initial definition or Powlison's and then written from that, but unfortunately the book really is a defense of his longer definition. He seems to miss the details involved in many other counseling situations, such as:

- Working through grief
- Dealing with abuse
- Repairing a marriage broken by adultery
- Living with AD(H)
- Disputes
- Addiction

Scripture obviously speaks to ALL of those things and must form the basis of counseling on EVERYTHING, but Tautges is either being simplistic in thinking all you need are the Biblical headlines (e.g. forgive, trust in God, love, worship God only) or in denial that such matters need help via counseling at all. Part of the art of Christian counseling is the application of godly wisdom to people in various situations - wisdom that doesn't come via neatly packaged Biblical quotes but uses the principles within Scripture to provide actionable advice in various situations. Of particular concern, for example, is Tautges' claim that "Instead of settling for the lesser hope of being

a lifelong recovering alcoholic, the Bible enthusiastically offers the drunkard full deliverance from his or her sinful habit and a completely new life in Christ. Is Tautges really unaware of the chemical elements of addiction? Does he believe nicotine is addictive or would he anticipate a simple deliverance from cigarette smoking too? And what of depression that isn't based on sadness but is similarly to do with a malfunction of the brain. Are such people simply to be told to cheer up because God is with them? But having created his straw man, Tautges then spends most of the book dropping napalm on that and a variety of other views that he disagrees with. Even youth work: "The most effective model for youth discipleship is not the modern paradigm of the youth group, which all too often becomes nothing more than a larger gathering of immature fools." At that point I almost had to laugh because it was clear by then that this was his modus operandi: form a singular generalization, build a straw man with it, and then mercilessly napalm it. No hint of nuance, no thought that perhaps churches try to combine youth work other methods of discipleship. Why does he do that? A look at Tautges' blog would seem to indicate he doesn't really believe what he's saying here. One blog post of his is entitled, "Regular exercise helps fight depression." In it are zero Bible quotes because, well, the Bible doesn't say that regular exercise helps fight depression but it's true. Which gives the lie to Tautges' assertion that the words of God are the only thing you need to be of non-medical use in ALL counseling situations. Later in referencing the parable of the two builders, Tautges points out that some people get it wrong when they say the rock on which the house of our life is to be built is Christ, whereas he knows that it's really obedience to Christ. Except he's very obviously wrong, because the rock is a static thing onto which the house is to be built, so the rock is either Christ or perhaps the words of Christ, and building on the rock is obedience to the words of Christ. As a piece of writing, I was left longing for more editorial input. Phrases like, "Please allow me to provide a brief, yet related, aside," prefacing most quotes with, "[quoted author]" is correct when he says "and the mountain of quotes underneath which the readability of the book - especially the first half - is crushed. The need to treat the Bible as God's infallible Word in a counseling context is very real, and under great threat as the Bible seems to be valued less and less by Christians. The need for

Christians to be counseling each other rather than merely standing back and hoping a professional intervenes in difficult situations is a worthy cause to write about. But even though I feel like I am on Tautges' team in this area, I didn't feel like the book was something that helped confirm those beliefs, nor provide me with a useful tool with which to challenge those who disagree. It is just too adversarial in tone. Which takes me back to my original concern: why and who is the book for? Not in a theoretical sense of who can be seen through the scope on Tautges' theological rifle, but who is supposed to read it? While I doffed my cap to Tautges' background in pastoral work and counseling, I found myself wishing he'd written a very different book. One that would engage with the people Tautges targets, rather than eviscerate them in front of a friendly audience who could happily make do with a single blog on confirming for them what they...we...already know. [I was provided with a free copy of the book for the purposes of submitting a review.]

Why did this book interest me? The first thing that I have to mention about this book is the cover. I do not normally talk about that feature of the book but this one really drew me in. The design of the cover illustrates what the book is about in a compelling way. The title is good but the subtitle gripped me: A Theology of Interpersonal Discipleship. I have always thought of counseling in the professional sense but had not really considered it from a discipleship standpoint. What does this book accomplish? This book sets the stage for a discussion of discipleship through the medium of counseling one another. At first you might say that the command to make disciples does not include counseling. You would be right if by counseling you mean psychology or psychiatry. But Dr. Tautges firmly convinced me that biblical counseling is indeed a necessary part of discipleship. This book walks you through the why, the what, and the how of biblical counseling. The need is clearly seen, the motivation is passionately shown, and the means are convincingly demonstrated in the reading of this book. What did I take away from this book? After reading this book, I now see the importance of biblical counseling in the life of every believer both as counselor and counseled. Biblical counseling should not be practiced only by people in an office but by every Christian who is actively discipling as a means of bringing the one being disciplined into more Christ-likeness. The counsel is of course rooted in the sufficiency of scripture and conducted in the context of the local church. Dr. Tautges brilliantly weaves these themes together in this comprehensive treatment of biblical counseling. Thank you Dr. Tautges and Shepherd Press for this timely gift to the church. Who should

read this? It might sound cliché but I think every believer would benefit from this book. Certainly anyone involved in ministry and discipleship should read this valuable resource. I pray that this book will receive much exposure and in doing so will benefit the church for the glory of God. Disclaimer: I received this book from Shepherd Press via Cross Focused Reviews in exchange for my unbiased opinion.

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