

Letter from the Editor



by KIMBERLY MONROE

Dear *JBC* readers,

What role does the *JBC* play in your ministry? How do you use it? We just returned from CCEF's national conference where we had the pleasure of meeting some of you and asking you questions like these. Here are some of the answers people shared with us. Some churches and counseling centers read selected articles in a study group and then discuss how to apply them to their counseling and pastoral care duties. Others assign articles to students in their college or seminary classes as part of the counseling curriculum. And of course, others read for their own ministry purposes. This variety of applications is encouraging to us. The late David Powlison, senior editor of the *JBC* for many years, defined our genre as *practical* theology, and these different uses of the *JBC* speak to its practical value. We trust you will find this new issue fits into this tradition as well.

The volume begins with Darby Strickland's "Trauma and Relational Hypervigilance." In this article, she describes a type of hypervigilance that can develop after a relational trauma occurs. Someone who has been betrayed or deeply hurt by another person might respond with a heightened and pervasive watchfulness that seeks to assess if those around them might cause further pain. With their trust in others broken, they are always on alert and usually exhausted from the effort. Building trust and making progress will be difficult, so Strickland provides an approach that will help you know where to start.

Todd Stryd then gives you a place to begin with someone who is grieving. At some point, we will all experience grief. It is one of the terrible guarantees of the fall. Since it is so common, you would think we would know how to respond to such losses—but we often don't. There are many reasons for this, including culture, family dynamics, and individual personalities. Scripture, however, steps in to help. Using the book of Lamentations, Stryd works to answer the question: Am I doing this right? He shows us how godly grief is expressed and distinguishes it from how the world grieves.

Our next article is written by a chaplain in the US Army. He works with men and women who are experiencing difficulties as a result of their military service. In "Not Everything Is PTSD," Matthew McCraney alerts us to the fact that family, friends, and helpers often have beliefs about those returning from combat that are both untrue and unhelpful. He discusses four ways these service members suffer and urges us to adopt a more nuanced view of how to understand, bless, and minister to them.

Our "Counselor's Toolbox" also offers a way for counselors to help people who struggle with past hurts. In "How to Talk with God," Ed Welch breaks Psalm 22 into four parts and guides the reader through a study that will bless anyone, but especially those who are less experienced at bringing their cares to God. This is a good addition to anyone's toolbox, so we designed the layout to be easily printed or photocopied.

In the last issue, Michael Gembola introduced his new column "Book Notes." We are delighted to now offer Volume 2. In it, Gembola reviews thirteen books to help acquaint you with those that are worth noting in a field overflowing with resources. New to this issue, he has set the reviews up in categories so you can more easily find what you are looking for. Some topics covered include LGBT issues, mental illness, long-term caregiving, and loneliness.

We also have an in-depth review of a book on sex. Aaron Sironi offers his thoughts on *Faithful: A Theology of Sex* by Beth Felker Jones. As an experienced marriage counselor, Sironi explains how this book can help both counselors and couples grasp God's good plan for sex. Jones covers many topics, but perhaps one of the most interesting is that she

debunks the idea that sex is only for pleasure and procreation. This alone makes it worth the read!

That is our lineup for this issue. My question to you is this: How will *you* use these articles? If you like, let us know. We love to hear from our readers.

On behalf of the *JBC* editorial team,

Kimberly Monroe

The Journal of Biblical Counseling

(ISSN: 1063-2166) is published by:

Christian Counseling & Educational Foundation

1803 East Willow Grove Avenue

Glenside, PA 19038

www.ccef.org

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