

Letter from the Editor



by KIMBERLY MONROE

Dear *JBC* readers,

If you are a counselor or pastor, you extend help to people with problems nearly every day. Knowing this, we work to make our articles practical so you can find useful information and thoughtful, biblical approaches to various life challenges. Recently, we spoke with the CCEF faculty about our mutual desire to increase the number of full-length case studies in the journal. Case studies are an effective way to learn how to conceptualize a person's struggle and how to help them.

However, case studies are hard to prepare. It is difficult to create a true composite profile of an imaginary person that stands up well to scrutiny. You want the problem to be complex enough to be true to life, yet straightforward enough to show how it can be addressed effectively. Michael Gembola, the *JBC*'s consulting editor, suggested a new way to fill this gap and volunteered to try it out. His idea was to write a case study, share it with other CCEF faculty members, and then interview them to discuss how they would approach helping the person.

Our first case study of this type appears in the Counselor's Toolbox section of this issue. Gembola interviews Darby Strickland and Mike Emler about a woman who struggles with scrupulosity. The case is set in a church context, which we hope provides relevance to our diverse readership of pastors, lay ministers, and professional counselors. To further enhance its use as a training tool for groups, Gembola provides a list of

discussion questions to use before reading the interview. We hope you will find this helpful to your ministry. Let us know what you think!

In addition to the case study, we have three featured articles and our “Book Notes” column.

In our first article, Todd Stryd offers a biblical way to help people who have experienced trauma. “The Bible is about recovery,” he says, and Psalms 129, 130, and 131 form a liturgy that helps a person work through what happened to them and begin to heal. He shows how this liturgy works with a case study and ends with the recognition that Jesus, as the fulfillment of the Psalms, is everything we need to be made whole again and recover from trauma.

Next, we have “The Empty Nest: Beauty for Ashes” by Janet Nygren. She knows firsthand about the struggles of the empty nest. She tells her story and urges counselors and churches to recognize the issues of this stage of life, because people experiencing the empty nest might not realize the role it plays in their struggles. She offers a biblical framing for this transitional phase with a perspective that is realistic and positive.

“You shall not commit adultery.” These words of the seventh commandment seem clear, but Aaron Sironi expands our view to see that they are far more than a simple prohibition. Obeying this commandment requires more than abstaining from extramarital sex. It involves the commitment of body and soul to sexual chastity, a faithful heart committed to loving care, and a willingness to cultivate contentment in the spouse God has given you. This is a must-read for those who do marriage counseling.

This issue continues our series of book reviews to help you know what is available in counseling and pastoral care. In “Book Notes,” Michael Gembola discusses nine books that address topics such as improving church culture, anxiety in teens, and miscarriage.

As a final note, you may have noticed that the *JBC* has a new cover design. The update reflects CCEF’s new logo and color scheme. We hope you like our new look.

On behalf of the *JBC* editorial team,

Kimberly Monroe

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