

Letter from the Editor



by KIMBERLY MONROE

Dear *JBC* readers,

As we send this edition to the printer, the word that comes to mind to describe these articles is *practical*. My editing mentor, the late David Powlison, was committed to our content being both biblical and useful. “We do practical theology,” he would say, and I believe we have met that goal in these pages. Topics include embodied practices, how Christ’s kingship can be helpful to counselees, and how to make theological truths more concrete for people. Our Counselor’s Toolbox, which is practical by design, offers two articles: the first is about the God-given benefits of singing, and the second is a case study on trauma. And of course, our “Book Notes” column helps you to determine what books might be helpful to your ministry. Let me offer a few details about these articles.

Mike Emlet leads us off with “A Biblical Rationale for Embodied Spiritual Practices.” He poses the question: Why should biblical counselors be concerned with the body? Emlet traces the role of bodily practices from creation to consummation and offers implications for our lives and for counseling. “To be ‘spiritual,’” he says, “is not some otherworldly, disembodied experience of God, but a real flesh-and-blood existence lived in concrete ways of obedience before him.”

A flesh-and-blood existence lived in obedience is a good segue to our next article that explores how Christ’s kingship can affect our lives. An essential part of the plan of redemption centers on the coming of a

divinely appointed human king with eternal dominion over all the earth. Carly Robinson's article "Christ's Kingship and Counseling" describes the biblical revelation of this truth and makes it practical with three ways it can bless counselors and three ways it can bless counselees.

Next is an article that outright advocates for ministry to be practical. In "Ministry Made Visual and Concrete," Ed Welch addresses the concern that ministry is often weighed down with abstract, theological terms that are too hard for people to understand. In contrast, Jesus taught in everyday language, using rich metaphors and meaningful stories. Welch's goal is that we grow in speaking about God using words that are clear and concrete enough to be understood and remembered by a child. Doing so will make our words more accessible to everyone.

Singing is also accessible to nearly everyone. In our first Counselor's Toolbox, Karl Hood writes about the benefits of *personal singing*, which he defines as singing out loud by yourself. He laments that we sing less than previous generations, to our detriment. He lays out the biblical evidence that God made us to sing and posits that when we sing Christian songs, we are blessed in our bodies (through the measured breathing required) and our souls (by the truths in the words we sing). He suggests several ways to incorporate singing into your counseling ministry, especially when you might otherwise assign a breathing exercise.

Our second toolbox article is about bringing hope to those whose past trauma impacts their lives today. Using the story of a woman named Danielle, Esther Liu describes how a trauma victim can develop ways of living that cause them to feel different and isolated from other people. These patterns are resistant to change and can lead to deep discouragement and loneliness. Liu reminds us that Scripture is a story of hope, and she describes the specific passages that helped Danielle believe that the story is true for her.

"Book Notes: Volume 4" concludes the issue with six reviews. For the first time, "Book Notes" has a guest reviewer, Lauren Whitman, who commends a book from Christine Chappell for mothers who suffer from depression. Michael Gembola follows with reviews of books ranging from group-based counseling ministry to navigating partisan issues that divide churches.

The *JBC* editors are always blessed by working with the content we publish. As you read through this issue, we hope that you, too, will be encouraged by how *practical* theology can be.

On behalf of the *JBC* editorial team,

Kimberly Monroe

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