

## Introduction

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LONG BEFORE PSYCHOLOGY was a distinct profession, pastors engaged in activities that required psychological wisdom. Pastors have struggled for the health of persons and the life of souls in ways that anticipate and resemble contemporary psychotherapies. We will show that many essential elements of psychotherapeutic care are were well understood before the modern period.

### Nine key questions await unpacking:

- How do sources of the classic pastoral tradition describe the necessary and sufficient conditions of *helping relationship*, the essential elements of the therapeutic relationship and how do these descriptions correspond with recent accounts?
- What constitutes *counsel*, what should one expect from it, and how is an apt counselor found?
- How does God's own *empathic caring* and providential guidance shape the process of human care-giving?
- Why is the *timing* of seasonable wisdom such a crucial prudential element of pastoral counsel?
- How did the classic Christian psychologists understand *the language of the body*, and its relation to the struggle for language in self-disclosure, as well as the significance of silence?
- Why are *admonition and discipline* such distinctive features of constructive behavioral change?
- Can responsible freedom be rightly nurtured without *moral guidance*?
- How do classic therapeutic understandings and procedures *anticipate contemporary psychotherapeutic assumptions* and procedures?
- Finally, what patterns recur in classic analyses of the psychological dynamics of the *will* that have been rediscovered by modern behavioral science?