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September 11, 2017

Clarifying and Confessing

By Heath Lambert

I woke up on Saturday morning to discover that I was—as my grandfather used to say—swirling, and I was in the center. As I consider what is being said of me and my work, I count three different issues.

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1. The nature of the disagreement between myself and Dr. Johnson regarding c
2. The way in which I spoke about Dr. Johnson's position on one occasion.
3. My involvement in Dr. Johnson's employment status.

Let me address each of those in reverse order.

1. My involvement in Eric Johnson's employment status

I'll take the last one first because it is the easiest, and I can be very brief.

Al Mohler has more honor and integrity than any man I have ever worked for. It force, cajole, or blackmail him into anything. If I tried, he would never be intimidated. Anything like that happened between us are dishonest.

The Bible commands that confrontations about sin be personal (Matt 18:15), but that great care be taken in accusing ministers of the gospel (1 Tim 5:19) in from baseless accusations.

Anonymous and unsubstantiated claims on social media constitute slander, and those who claim to know Jesus Christ.

2. The way in which I spoke about Eric Johnson's counseling position on one o

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A year and a half ago I spoke at a biblical counseling conference and addressed counseling ministry, and how important it is for counselors to watch their life and make the point that our efforts at counseling care are only as good as our passions. Our own hearts and be changed by it.

In my talk, I sought to show how quick we are to see the flaws of a Christian pastor and our own failure to take the word of God seriously. In order to make a strong point about Christian psychology book that I suspected might induce listeners to congratulate theological superiority. My intention was to get people feeling superior about their own and then turn the tables on them by showing that we should not feel superior to them and must watch our own life and teaching.

The Christian psychologist I chose to interact with was, as is now obvious, Eric Johnson.

It was not my intention to skewer Dr. Johnson. I did not want people to think about themselves, their own sin, and their own need to cherish the Bible. I did not name him to be the issue I did not name him.

Believing the author was anonymous I engaged in a much tougher and much longer talk than I would have in a different environment. My intention was to get a room full of biblical counselors to think about themselves and then indict them. My rhetorical strategy was the same or trying to say, "You are the man!" You cannot tell this from watching a clip of the room who heard it in its entirety stuck around for an hour and a half to tell me how it was a reminder to watch their own life and doctrine.

Because I did not attach Dr. Johnson's name to my quotation of him, I believed I did not have. This last weekend has proven that to be one of the most foolish misjudgments in counseling ministry.

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That misjudgment brought people into the room that I never intended to be there into the room that did not share the same presuppositions as the folks who reg miscalculation brought Dr. Johnson, his friends, and his students into the room room.

That foolish miscalculation led me to believe I was in a cone of silence. The cor belief that it did, I said things that were harsh, unloving, and unkind. I sinned ag against those who love him.

Soon after my talk that night I received a letter from Dr. Johnson's elders. They the language I used against their friend. They were right to point out my sin. Aft and I met together with a faithful brother in Christ where I confessed my sin to I responded with a letter of repentance to Eric's elders on March 10 of last year. Since that time, Dr. Johnson and I have exchanged notes and shared two meals the way.

In the midst of this, I also expressed a desire to repent publicly for the way I spc the third party we agreed that this would be unwise. Since my quotation of Dr. J thought that only a few people knew about it, and that naming him in a stateme make things worse. We all agreed that we had sufficiently addressed the matte

In light of the last few days that calculation is now moot.

And so now I want to address anyone who was shocked and offended by the ur about Dr. Johnson. What I did was sinful, and I have no excuse. I am sorry.

Please forgive me.

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just how much I have to learn about how to care for people and how much I need truth in love.

Please pray for me.

3. The nature of the disagreement between myself and Dr. Johnson regarding

None of this means that the disagreements between biblical counseling and Christian psychology are unimportant. In fact, I think these issues are some of the most important factors less than our faithfulness to the Word of God and Jesus Christ is at stake. Biblical psychologists have staked out important ground on these issues. Dr. Johnson is in my position, and I am on the record critiquing his.

If you want a summary of the biblical counseling position you can check that out [here](#).

If you want an assessment of Christian Psychology which was reviewed by scholars on a continuum, including Christian psychologists, you can read that [here](#).

The importance of these issues leads to another problem with the way I spoke. I believe the centrality of Christ is really on the line with whether or not we believe in the resources to help troubled people. But my sin took the focus off of Christ, and people will never be. I am so ashamed of that.

But I really believe what I teach about these things. I know that Jesus Christ has forgiven you and you will too.

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