

Introduction: Welcome to *Engage360*, Denver Seminary's podcast. Join us as we explore the redemptive power of the gospel and the life changing truth of Scripture at work in our culture today.

Dr. Don Payne: Hey friends, welcome back to *Engage360* from Denver Seminary. My name is Don Payne, and we're glad to have you with us. Several years ago, actually just a couple of years ago, I was doing a training session for an agency of the federal government and met a woman with this agency whose full-time job was to interview retiring employees. And I told her at the time that you have the coolest job in the world, just got to meet constantly with people who were leaving the agency for retirement and downloading everything they had learned. That was her job to capture the learning from people who had spent years with the agency, so that that learning could be folded back into the agency. And they build on that. And I thought that was such a cool thing to be able to do. And this week we have an opportunity to do something similar to that because we're honored to have some time with our friend and our colleague, Dr. Monte Hasz, who will be retiring from his faculty post in the counseling division here at Denver Seminary at the end of this current spring semester. Monte welcome.

Monte Hasz: Thank you very much. I appreciate being here.

Dr. Don Payne: I'm so glad you're here and wanted to have an opportunity to interact with you as you are transitioning into retirement. And have you reflect a bit on your time here. And so I've got just number of things, number of conversation points I want to want to have with you, but first of all, for listeners, why don't you take a minute and introduce yourself maybe for those who don't know, you tell a little bit about your background, your history at Denver Seminary, and so forth.

Monte Hasz: Okay. Well, Don, I've been at Denver Seminary in a faculty position for about 17 years now. I'm licensed as a psychologist here in Colorado and also maintain a small counseling practice on the side. My history with Denver Seminary goes way, way back cause I was a student here in the early.

Dr. Don Payne: Nineteen thirties?

Monte Hasz: Not that long. I started in 1980. Okay. Spent three years here and actually got my Mdiv. I took one counseling course was not looking at going into counseling was rather looking at church ministry and ended up making some changes along the way.

Dr. Don Payne: What changed it?

Monte Hasz: What changed yet? Kind of broadly. I like to say it's more of a narrowing of my own spiritual gifting. I'd worked in churches. I came here for my Mdiv ended up working at a church in central Illinois and just kind of fell into doing a lot of pastoral counseling. And at that time realizing first of all, for most of the people

in the church I was at, they weren't going to go to somebody who wasn't a believer and the reality is there weren't very many of those around, in other words, there weren't, it wasn't, there was a dearth of believers, but there were not a lot of believers who had good, solid biblical foundation who also did counseling. And I found that as I fell into that role a little bit, it worked. For some strange reason, God used those things and impacted people's lives and I loved it, but I also realized quickly I had no clue what I was doing. So that kind of sent me back to get my doctorate in clinical psychology.

Dr. Don Payne: Okay. I want to dive right into what is probably a thicket in a lot of ways and within the body of Christ at large, particularly those in more biblically anchored, biblically committed circles, the whole domain of counseling is a controversial question. You've just got people up and down the spectrum with different opinions on how counseling should be done in some cases, whether it's even a thing that's biblically permissible. How all of that interfaces with, or relates to biblical truth, biblical commitments? And that I know you and your colleagues in our counseling division have given a lot of thought to that over the years, wrestled with that. And we'd love to hear some of your reflections on how does, how does the practice, the discipline of counseling or therapeutic ministries relate to the set of biblical values that sometimes are put in conflict with that?

Monte Hasz: Well, I think one of the things that I go back to in terms of conceptualizing and looking at that whole area and the applicability to individuals, is a lot of the New Testament, and especially some of Paul's injunction, some of his comments at the end of some of the epistles, where he talks a lot about one another, you know. Bear one another's burdens, the connection, you know, help these women who are not getting along with each other. And I can centralize counseling for the believer as a piece of if you want to call it for some individuals, the discipleship process that we live in a world where, you know, people purposely sin because of the sin nature. We live in a broken world where people are impacted by sin. We live in a world where some people get other individuals, poor choices and sin, if you would, dumped on them. And there's a time for some individuals, they need someone more experienced to walk alongside them as they deal with all of that stuff. So it's really part of the, and I'm not saying everybody needs counseling. I want to be clear on that. But for some individuals, it becomes a piece of how they grow, how they get more solid in there and consistent in their life, how they deal with a broken world.

Dr. Don Payne: So why is it or maybe what is it about the field of counseling that creates such misgivings with a lot of believers?

Monte Hasz: Yeah, I think some of it stems back to the early days of the development of psychology or modern psychology, I would say, late 1800s, early to mid 1900s. There are a lot of theorists who are very antagonistic to anything faith-based seeing the idea of God as something that is a crutch that people have kind of made up in their minds and decided was a good way to define life. So you have a lot of theories like that. You have some applications, especially in the 1960s era that are just plain ludicrous, bordering on immoral activities and things like

that. So you've got branches within the psychology world that just antithetical to a Scripture or functioning in a biblically consistent manner.

Dr. Don Payne:

So when we one of the phrases that's often used is the integration of Scripture and counseling. And not everybody means the same thing by that. I understand, but you know, on one end of a spectrum, you have some who will use a phrase, biblical counseling. And you know, when you frame it that way, that's almost a conversation stopper because who's going to, naysay a biblical approach to counseling, but it seems like what is often meant by that phrase, biblical counseling is more of a confrontive approach where you take a biblical principle or a biblical text and confront that and just call for change. And other places along the spectrum, you have versions of integration of Scripture and counseling that, you know, some people think, well, you're still giving way here. You're fudging, you're compromising here. You're, you know, what do we mean by that? So I guess what I'm getting at Monte is how do you understand the faithful integration of biblical truth and counseling, even if it's sometimes makes use of various theories that come from other places, how do you integrate that?

Monte Hasz:

There's several different perspectives to take. First of all, you know, I would broaden out that idea of integration a little bit, from what you've said, it's not just the integration of biblical truth or taking biblical truth and finding a way to practically use it in light of counseling methodologies that are research-based and we know work, but it's biblical truth in the sense of Scripture, it's theological ideas, perspectives, conceptualizations, and its spiritual practices, or the spiritual life. I think all of those are a piece of the integrative process. When we broaden things out, there's the idea of that, again, Scripture of general revelation, God's revealed truth to the world not enough for salvation, but enough to understand, you know, his presence in the world, functioning. And I think there's also, we see in Scripture, just some basic ideas of this is how life works, God's designed it.

And so, when I'm looking at the integrative side, I'm looking at, you know, what do I know that works? If I look at research and say, I can pretty much say that if I take this approach and do this, it's going to be helpful here. And here's why I see a lot of that as just kind of broadly under the umbrella of general revelation, the idea that there is truth in the world, not enough necessarily for salvation, but there are ways that God has revealed how life works. And so we're trying to use those in a wise mindset and form from a biblical understanding and perspective.

Dr. Don Payne:

One thing I've heard a number of people say almost in pushback form is that when we're working in this arena of general revelation or what we sometimes call common grace, God's common grace for all humankind. When you're simply trying to help life work better for people, apart from any commitment they may have to Jesus Christ how have you wrestled with this pushback people will sometimes give about how you're actually helping people be more happy or life work better for them without leading them to faith in Jesus Christ? How do you reconcile that?

Monte Hasz: I would push that a little bit with the idea that we sometimes explicitly witness, if you want to call it that, explicitly express biblical truth. Other times we do it implicitly by who we are and how we live. And I want to be consistent in all of that. When I go to the grocery store, I don't necessarily think, how am I going to be a better Christian in the grocery store, but I do hope.

Dr. Don Payne: You're just looking for the best price on that.

Monte Hasz: Right. Good financial management.

Dr. Don Payne: For the sales.

Monte Hasz: Absolutely. But I hope that how I am there reflects who I am as a believer. I don't think we can take Scripture, our relationship with God and put it into a compartment. I think it infuses who we are and that as I continue to grow in my walk you know, my mindset, my attitude, my personality, all of those are influenced by it. If I go in the grocery store, you know, I want to be consistent with who I am. In the counseling room, I want to be consistent as a believer, whether I have to say something about Scripture or I don't. And I've seen people who have been massively antagonistic to anything, spiritual, start to make some significant changes. You know, I'm honest about who I am. I've been a Pastor. I worked in churches. I let people know that right off right off the bat. And I've had people say, okay, that's great, but I'm not interested in talking about spiritual things. How do I relate to that person, as a believer with somebody who doesn't? Do I quote Scripture at them, and I will, if that's appropriate, but if that's going to push them away, can I woo them into an acceptance? And I've had people after five, six sessions start to say, who have been very antagonistic say, Hey, well, you know, what do you think the Bible might say about this? Or something equivalent to that?

Dr. Don Payne: Well, if we put it in missional terms. What place does what place does it have in the mission of God to help people who may not embrace the gospel? Simply help life will work better for them, help them get along, better help their families and their relationships to work better, help them be healthy, more, more healthy, functional people. What place does that have, do you think in the mission of God?

Monte Hasz: Well, if you, look, you go back to the 1970s. There was a missions book called *What's Gone Wrong with the Harvest*. I don't know if you're familiar with that one. But he proposed the idea that evangelism was more than simply or broader than simply a person making a professed decision of faith. That's a piece of it, but he put it on, almost a Likert scale from one to 10, where one is the point of conversion. And one is where an individual says, okay, I'm moving into a faith life now. 10 is a person who is the most antagonistic, evangelism is not just moving to that. It's moving toward that. So moving from a 10, a negative 10 to a negative six, a person is becoming more receptive to gospel truth. And the part of evangelism is that concept when I'm working with individuals and I work in a way that makes them more receptive to biblical truth,

that's a piece of God's kingdom work. And, you know, Paul talks about one person waters, another person reaps, I've got to trust that God knows what he's doing in the process. And so my job is to try as much as possible to go where he leads and open up the process, knowing that he is more concerned about that individual than I ever will be. And he's got plans and he's doing what he's doing in their life. And I'm just a piece of that.

Dr. Don Payne: That is kind of freeing. Liberating, isn't it? Yeah. Yeah. I have seen that evangelism scale. I think a number of people have used some kind of a scale imagery for looking at pre evangelism work or just the things we can do that God may make use of to bring a person to himself. But that may not be quite as overt or explicit as some other classically understood evangelistic acts. And I want to shift and talk a little bit about some of the significant learnings, or maybe even changes of mind you've experienced over your career. Download us a little bit on what you've learned?

Monte Hasz: This is you're asking things that are, that can be very random and kind of scattered all over the place.

Dr. Don Payne: And you've got thirty seconds to tell us everything you've learned.

Monte Hasz: Everything I have learned. So I like say I went to Denver Seminary. I came out of here having taken a lot of Greek, which I hate to admit, I do not remember anymore. Took Hebrew, enjoyed the languages, got into more of an expository and kind of an analytical approach to Scripture, which was really great. But I got to the point where that became a little bit rote and it started losing its freshness. And so one of the things I end up doing is moving more in an experiential direction personally, and realizing that, and I want to be really clear. I'm still see the value of, you know, biblical translation, exit Jesus passages, and all that. But from my own experience, I moved from my own self. I moved it to more of an experiential place where I looked at some formational techniques and realizing that I needed to keep my foundation of a good, solid theology, a good, solid, biblical understanding, and that I could build on that to kind of deepen my own spiritual life. So along the way, I've changed a lot of my reading, my understanding of readings, things like that. I mean, that's one place to start with.

Dr. Don Payne: Okay. If you were to let a seminary student or maybe future seminary students behind the scenes of seminary life, what would you want them to see? What would you want them to know?

Monte Hasz: Depends a little bit on what you mean behind the scenes of seminary life.

Dr. Don Payne: Well, you pick, what would you love for seminary students to know about what goes on behind the scenes?

Monte Hasz: Boy, I don't know if I've ever thought about something like that.

Dr. Don Payne: Know I didn't set you up for this one. I sprung this one on you.

Monte Hasz: That you did. When I think of that from a faculty perspective, I would love for them to see the richness that goes on between different faculty members the ability to build relationships, to bring faith into their own lives in some really unique ways. In other words living out a biblical life is not only the knowledge though that's important. It is a little nuances and the pieces of our character and who we are that come out, the ability to laugh, the ability to enjoy each other's company, the ability to ponder wild and crazy ideas that may make no difference, but are just fun, delve into ideas. Yeah. I'd love to see them do that. I'd love to see them learn to loosen up a little bit.

Dr. Don Payne: Now when you say them, are you talking about your faculty colleagues or the students?

Monte Hasz: No the students. I think the faculty, some of the ones I know are loose enough already.

Dr. Don Payne: Yeah. That, that doesn't fit the stereotype. Most people have about seminary faculty. Okay.

Monte Hasz: I don't think Denver Seminary faculty fits that stereotype in a lot of ways, which is I think healthy. Yeah. But I mean, we have students who are very compulsive about grades and some things like that. I was at a time when some people need to be that way, especially if they're going to go on to, let's say a doctoral program, but beyond that, I would hope they would see me see other individuals who know how to take that serious, but also keep things balanced.

Dr. Don Payne: Has that been a shift in your own life and career? This progressive loosening up?

Monte Hasz: Oh, I think I've always been loose.

Dr. Don Payne: Well, you are from California, right?

Monte Hasz: I grew up Southern California in the 1960s. Yeah.

Dr. Don Payne: Oh, so you had to go the other way. You had to kind of get some rails to run on in your life, didn't you?

Monte Hasz: Just a little bit. Yeah. But not, not too bad. I mean, when I came to faith, it was in a conservative Baptist church. That had enough rails.

Dr. Don Payne: Okay. Oh, well, when you think about those who are, are headed for ministry in a therapeutic profession yeah. Like counseling, what do they need to be thinking about?

Monte Hasz: Come back to what I've said a couple of times already, they need to be aware of the need for a strong, theological and biblical foundation that may never be something that they explicitly talk about. But if they are going to be consistent believers in a very secular world, they need that foundation to keep themselves grounded. And they need to be aware that that will come into play in ways they've got no clue about. They just have to trust that it's going to happen. I've had so many times when I've talked with clients in the counseling room where we have not been talking explicitly anything spiritual or scriptural, and yet there will be perspectives of Scripture that I share with them. I may not say directly Bible says this, but, you know, I might look at Philippians two with Christ's emptying and talk with a married couple about, you know, what does it look like to not hold onto your rights in the marriage, but rather live in a way that recognizes the rights of the other one.

And can you trust what that process will do in you and for your marriage? You know, those things come from what I've known, what I've learned, my exposure Scripture over the years. I think somebody who is going to work in the counseling field as a believer needs to be aware of the subtle work of God. That God works in ways that we don't expect. And we have to trust that he's going to do that and be ready to be part of that, for example I've got numerous times when I've got this something that just kind of pops into my mind and I'll say something to a client and they'll get this kind of quizzical look on their face and say, you know what, you're the third person that said that to me. You know, God works through those things without us not necessarily knowing it, but we've got to get used to how to push forward with some of that tacit stuff, if you want to call it that of the spirit working within us.

Dr. Don Payne: Yeah. Well that's the surprise element. And maybe from a counselor's vantage point, that's the capacity for surprise, the capacity to see the Lord working in ways that are a bit off grid or out of our expectations and then run with that.

Monte Hasz: Yeah. And I think we also have to be aware, this is a little bit of my own theorization, but of how the Holy Spirit works. And I realized this is not a great biblical interpretation. It's more of an example. But when you look at Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus.

Dr. Don Payne: John 3.

Monte Hasz: Yeah. He talks about the spirit and compares the Holy Spirit to the wind. You don't see it, but you see the effects. I think that's the way the spirit works in our lives, that we oftentimes will see the effects, but we don't necessarily see it going on. To push it a little bit further, and again, this is total theorization. I sometimes really think that the spirit works in us in a maybe not recognizable manner initially. So if you want to break it down and get a little technical, but pretty basic, you know, we talk about right brain, left brain, and that's a lot more, there's a lot more to it than that. That's pretty simplistic way to describe neural functioning, but there is a piece of the human experience, human brain that is non-verbal, that works in a non-verbal way. I mean, sure. We've all had

the experience of can't remember something, Oh, forget about it. And then all of a sudden it pops in, where does that come from? That comes from the non-verbal processing, in the brain and crossing over. Can we theorize, does the spirit work in the non-verbal? Does the spirit work in that piece that we don't, we cannot consciously explain. And yet then we see the effects, like the wind coming out into a recognizable place, coming out to an urge and to do something.

Dr. Don Payne: Yeah. For those of us, I'm speaking for a friend here, not for myself. Okay. But for friends of mine who happened to like you know, a lot of control and definition and predictability, that's a little unsettling?

Monte Hasz: It is. And I would say.

Dr. Don Payne: So, is that a growing edge for this friend of mine that I have in mind?

Monte Hasz: Probably. I would say that God is unsettling.

Dr. Don Payne: Yeah. You think.

Monte Hasz: Now one of the things I've learned through the years, forget about trying to guess what he's going to do. I have no clue, but I need to be ready and open to recognizing it. So I might want to be structured in a counseling session. I might want to be implementing good techniques, but I've always got to leave room for the unexpected and be looking for that.

Dr. Don Payne: I love that.

Monte Hasz: Yeah. You know, it kind of reminds me a little of a quote by Elizabeth Barrett Browning that I love. And actually Eugene Peterson used it in one of his books, in the Conversations Spiritual Theology. She says Earth's crammed with heaven and every common Bush fire with God, but only those who see, take off their shoes. And then she ends it with, and the rest sit around and pluck blackberries. But it's that idea that, you know, God has infused the world, his presence is there, can we step back and keep ourselves open to looking for it?

Dr. Don Payne: And responsive to it?

Monte Hasz: Absolutely.

Dr. Don Payne: Yeah. Monte, you think about retirement moving on from Denver Seminary. What what's maybe one or two things you really hope will be part of your legacy?

Monte Hasz: Part of my legacy, a valuing of Scripture as something that gives us guidance and hope and inspiration and foundation, and a lot of those things that we've talked about I hope also that there is a legacy of spotlighting and imagination. What's

out there that's fun. What are the quirky things that we can get into sometimes that turn out to be productive. And sometimes they're just the serendipity that God has blessed us with.

Dr. Don Payne: I can appreciate that because in the years, you and I have served here together, I can say, honestly, you're a lot of fun.

Monte Hasz: Well, thank you. I appreciate that.

Dr. Don Payne: You really are. And this has been a fun conversation. We're going to draw this to a close. Monte, thanks. Thanks for spending time with us. Thanks for the, just the years of service and investment in so many lives around this place. It's been a joy.

Monte Hasz: Thank you. I appreciate being here. And this opportunity, this has really has given me a chance to reflect a little bit on where I am and where I'm going.

Dr. Don Payne: I hope it's really, really been satisfying and continues to be satisfying for you and whatever the next chapter is.

Monte Hasz: Yeah. Thank you very much.

Dr. Don Payne: Friends. This has been *Engage360* again from Denver Seminary, and we're really grateful to you for spending a little time with us. I want to express gratitude again for, to Krista Ebert, who is our sound engineer and editor, Andrea Weyand, Marissa Smith who make so much of this happen behind the scenes as well. We're grateful for them and all of you, if you'd like to communicate with us, please do so by email our address it's podcast@denverseminary.edu. We hope you'll check out our website, which is, I believe under redesign and going to be relaunched soon. So it'll be a lot of good stuff there for you, whether you're a student or a supporter or someone who's interested, or maybe, you know, somebody at Denver Seminary. So we look forward to interacting with you further. And until next time I'm Don Payne, take care.