

Seeking to Apply God's Word to Our Lives

Psychology

Psychology is unsaved man's understanding of man's psyche or soul. In the past 30 years, psychology has established itself as a science in the medical world. With the acceptance of psychology by the medical community, many churches, Bible schools, and Christian counselors have also embraced portions, if not all, of psychology's teachings. How does the Bible compare to psychology? What does psychology have to offer a Christian? This paper will examine these two questions.

How Does the Bible Compare to Psychology?

Let's examine several biblical truths and compare them to what psychology teaches:

Teachings of the Bible

Man was created by God in His own image (Genesis 1:26-27).

Man's mind, emotion, and will are defined by his spiritual condition. Each person is either spiritually dead (Ephesians 2:1) or spiritually alive (Ephesians 2:5, Colossians 2:13).

The heart of unsaved man is deceitful and desperately sick (Jeremiah 17:9). He is filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil, envy, murder, strife, and malice (Romans 1:29). He is incapable of doing one good deed (Romans 3:10-12).

Unsaved man loves himself (2 Timothy 3:2) and esteems himself above others (Luke 18:9-14).

Although the Bible acknowledges various sicknesses and diseases (Matthew 10:7-8, Luke 4:40), God holds each person responsible for their actions regardless of health, upbringing, or circumstance (Romans 2:6, Galatians 5:19-21). God desires each person to repent from his sinful actions (Romans 2:4, 2 Corinthians 7:9-10, 2 Peter 3:9).

Psychology's False Teachings

Man is a biological being which evolved from earlier life forms.

Man's mind, emotion, and will are the product of genetic and chemical responses to the environment around him.

Mankind is basically good.

Many of mankind's behavior problems can be attributed to low self-esteem.

Mankind is victimized. Deviant behaviors are labeled as addictions, disorders, diseases, or alternate lifestyles. Often mankind is not held responsible for his actions.

Teachings of the Bible

God promises that all of life's situations work together for the Christian's good (Romans 8:28, James 1:2-4). God often uses pain and suffering to instruct and discipline (Romans 5:3-5, Hebrews 12:4-11). Christ learned obedience from His sufferings (Hebrews 5:8). He suffered as an example for us to follow (1 Peter 2:21).

Christians are able to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5). By allowing the Holy Spirit to control our mind, emotion, and will (Ephesians 5:18), we can experience love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control in every circumstance (Galatians 5:22-23).¹

Psychology's False Teachings

Pain and suffering are bad.

People are unable to control their thoughts and emotions, such as anxiety, anger, depression, and jealousy. Counseling and psychotropic drugs are often prescribed to help patients deal with their genetic, environment, and chemical imbalances.

What Does Psychology Have to Offer Christians?

There are many competing and contradictory psychological systems in the United States. Each of these systems claims to understand the inner workings of mankind's psyche, or soul. God's Word has much to say about the wisdom of natural man. The world's wisdom does not lead to a knowledge of God (1 Corinthians 1:21). The wisdom of this world is foolishness (1 Corinthians 3:19). The wisdom of the world is earthly, natural, and demonic (James 3:15). Christians are warned not be taken captive by the world's philosophies and empty deceptions (Colossians 2:8).

Conversely, the Bible is living and active, and it correctly judges the thoughts and intentions of the heart (Hebrews 4:12). It is God-breathed, and it is profitable for teaching, reproof, correcting, and training in righteousness so that believers can be complete, equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Through God's divine power and the true knowledge of Him, He has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3).

Conclusion:

The elders of TVBC believe in the sufficiency of God's Word and Christ's atoning death upon the cross.² Through the abiding work of the Holy Spirit and the living Word of God, every Christian has the ability to exult in his tribulations and overcome sin-proned lifestyles. Although most evangelical churches, Bible schools, and biblical counselors embrace portions, if not all, of psychology's teachings, we believe that psychology contradicts the Word of God.

"Seeking to Apply God's Word to Our Lives" papers represent an overview of various Bible doctrines. Each paper contains biblical truths that often set TVBC apart from other churches and religious organizations. We invite the congregation's biblically based feedback as we seek to accurately handle the Word of God.

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¹ For further discussion about the believer's relationship with the Holy Spirit, see the paper entitled, "The Spirit-Directed Life."

² For further discussion about the sufficiency of God's Word, see the paper entitled, "The Authority and Sufficiency of God's Word."