

## **What is Biblical Counseling? (Part 1 Continued)**

IBCD Series; Coast Community Church; Pastor Earl Miles; 2-9-20

### **Review**

- The church is sufficient for dealing with people's problems. (Romans 15:13-14)
- This is because the Bible is sufficient for dealing with people's problems. (2 Timothy 3:14-17)
- This is because the Spirit is sufficient for dealing with people's problems. (John 15:5, 26)
- Last week we watched the first half of Part 1: What is Biblical Counseling?
- There are ways to listen on your own and catch up or listen to each session again if you would like to. If you don't remember, just ask me how.

### **Focus of Part 1**

*Why shouldn't Christians look to secular psychology and psychiatry for answers to their problems?*

### **Highlights**

#### *First Half*

1. Psychology can be helpful in observing human nature and describing behavior. But there is a difference between description and prescription.
2. Psychology presents itself as a medical science, but it really is a competing religious theory and worldview.
3. Many of the prominent psychologists have been anti-God.
4. Psychology seeks to treat 'soul' problems just like religion does.

5. There are many contradictory psychological approaches.
  6. Psychology operates on the basis of unscriptural presuppositions.
  7. There really are diseases of the brain that require medical attention, but psychology tries to address things that are spiritual in nature and the result of sinful souls not sick minds.
- How are theology and psychology similar?

*Psychology and theology both deal with the same fundamental issues of meaning and value. They approach them from widely different perspectives, however.*

- How has western society's approach to theology and psychology shifted over the past 100 years?

*Over the past 100 years secular humanism has come to dominate western society where once Christian ethics served as the moral basis. Where once people with problems like family or depression sought the help of a minister, now most seek the help of a psychologist or doctor. This cultural shift has also affected the church, where secular psychology is widely accepted and often even taught.*

- What is one major problem with assuming that psychology is a science in the same way that medicine is?

*One major problem with considering psychology scientific is that there are over 250 different approaches to psychology. Many of these approaches are contradictory.*

### **The Video: Disc 1 Session 1 (23:50 - end)**

- What are some of the unbiblical presuppositions of modern psychology?**

*Answers may include: a faulty view of man, a denial of personal responsibility for sin, lack of fixed moral values and no place for God.*

## **1. A faulty view of man.**

- Man is only an advanced animal: naturalism/materialism. *Gen 1:26-27*
- Man is basically good, or at worst a blank slate. *Rom 3:10-18, 23; Ps 51:5*
- Man is autonomous: able to solve his problems without God's help. *John 15:5; 2 Tim 3:2*

*Why is secular psychology powerless to bring about meaningful change?*

*Because secular psychology begins with a faulty view of who man is as created in God's image and morally responsible to Him, it cannot properly diagnose the fundamental problem: sin. Without addressing the problem of sin, meaningful, God-glorifying change can never take place.*

Secular psychology is powerless to bring about meaningful change. *Jer 17:9; Rom 8:5-8*

## **2. Excuses sin and denies personal responsibility.**

- Blame shifting: parents, teachers, society, etc. *1 John 1:8-10; Js 1:13-15; Ps 32:3ff*
- The medical model: calling sin sickness. "Mental illness"
- Is there such a thing as "mental illness"?
- Biology is the hot topic in psychology right now.

## **3. No fixed moral values: relativism. 2 Tim 3:16-17**

- Non-directive counseling (Rogers). *Prov 14:12; Col 1:28; Js 5:19-20*
- Sinful behaviors and desires legitimized.
- Promotion of "socially acceptable" behaviors: gratification of carnal appetites, ventilation, etc.

- Often attempts to relieve God-given guilt by destroying conscience.  
*How is the biblical view of guilt fundamentally different than that of secular psychology?*

*Secular psychology views guilt as a bad thing that people need to rid themselves of by throwing off the beliefs and ideas that make them feel bad. The Bible teaches that guilt is a tool which is meant to make us aware of our sin and drive us to seek the Lord through repentance.*

#### **4. No place for God.**

‘Freud is said to have opened his practice on Easter Sunday. Skinner was named the Humanist of the Year; and Humanist of the Year is not a person who loves humanity, but it’s a person who is a secular humanist, excluding God from his worldview. The change we need is a spiritual change, and in their world view, we’re just a body with a brain. The change we need is in relation to God, that’s where transformation takes place. And God is left out of their system.’ - Newheiser

*Sometimes positive change does appear to take place in those seeking help through secular psychology. What is often the lingering problem even if this does occur?*

*Studies show that 2/3 of people tend to get better over time whether or not they seek any kind of help. On the surface it looks like if a person “gets better” or solves their problem success has been achieved. However, what often has happened in these cases is that people have exchanged one idol for another. The change that is sought through biblical counseling is that people would repent of their sin, be reconciled to God and grow in holiness. If this has not happened, then meaningful change from a biblical perspective has not taken place.*

What about those cases in which people seem to get better?

1. Often symptoms (i.e. bizarre behavior) go away with or without treatment.

2. The most serious (spiritual) problems remain. *Luke 11:24-26*

## **Highlights**

### *Second Half*

1. Psychology sometimes undermines personal responsibility for sin by blaming 'nurture' (the culture and our experiences and relationships).
2. Psychology sometimes undermines personal responsibility for sin by blaming 'nature' (our physical make-up, genetics, brain chemistry or medical problems).
3. Psychology undermines personal responsibility for sin by calling sin a kind of 'mental illness.'
4. Our society tends to give every bad behavior a label which fosters a victim mentality and provides an excuse for sin.
5. There are real physical brain illnesses like schizophrenia and Alzheimer's that should be understood and have appropriate medical treatment.
6. Our society has seen a tremendous increase in prescription medications for various types of mental illness.
7. Psychology has no moral absolutes, so often telling people what to do and what is right and wrong is forbidden.
8. Guilt is often seen as part of the problem rather than a warning that can lead to addressing the real problem.