**#11 – Is Psychology Okay?**

**Psychology** is the study of human behavior.

**Psychiatry** is study of mental disorders.

Secular therapy seeks to be neutral or values-free.

Goal: produce well-adjusted happy people based on whatever values are important to counselees.

Self at center of reality instead of God.

“follow your heart”; “be all you can be”; “you deserve a break today”; “look out for number one”

**I. Four Horseman of the Psychological Apocalypse**

* *Sigmund Freud – Carl Jung – B. F. Skinner – Carl Rogers*

**II. Modern Psychology and Christianity**

Integrationist [syncretistic] model of Christian Counseling. “Moralistic therapeutic deism.”

Biblical Counseling movement: Fruit of Spirit Gal. 5:22-23); mortifying flesh (Rom. 8:13).

Sin is not relevant category in secularized society. Avoid personal blame and responsibility. Victims.

Therapy is designed to minimize suffering and increase happiness. But God uses suffering as a means of sanctifying us (Phil. 3:10-11; Rom. 8:16-17; 1 Pet. 4:12-13; Col. 1:24; 2 Cor. 12:9-10).

**III. What is Biblical Counseling?**

1 Thessalonians 5:14 provides a good metric:

“And we urge you, brethren, Especially those who are spiritual (Gal 6:1; cf. Eph 4:25)

(1) admonish the unruly, Confront personal responsibility for sin.

(2) encourage the fainthearted, Relieve spiritual suffering due to trials & tribulations.

(3) help the weak, Strengthen those who are immature in their faith.

be patient with all men.” Recognize change can take time.

Humans composed of body and soul. Sometimes body and soul interact (Psa. 32:3-4; 2 Cor. 4:16).

**Principles of Biblical Counseling** (David Powlison)

1) *God* *is* *at* *the* *Center* *of* *Counseling*.

2) *Centrality* *of* *Scripture*.

3) *Sin* *is* *the* *Problem*.

4) *The* *Gospel* *is* *the* *answer*.

5) *Change* *is* *progressive* *sanctification*.

6) *Situational* *difficulties are not the cause of problems*.

7) *Counseling* *is* *Pastoral* *Care*.

**IV. Some Popular Psychological Categories**

1. **Low Self-worth/ self-esteem**
2. **Learn to Love Yourself**

No command to love yourself. See 2 Tim. 3:1-4; Matt. 22:37, 39:

“I hate myself” is often code for “I have failed.” My pride is hurt.

1. **Forgiving Yourself**

No command to forgive yourself.

God forgives sinners and forgiven sinners are called to forgive one another.

God > sinners forgiven sinners >< forgiven sinners

**V. Mental Illness**

The secular Bible of mental illness: *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders*

Two views of mental illness in secular psychology:

* *Psychodynamic* – Treated by psychotherapy
* *Bio*-*chemical* – Treated by psychotropic medication

Sometimes the DSM characterizes disorders as a medical conditions that Scripture defines as sin.

* Sexual perversions
* Pyromania (unable to resist the urge to set things on fire)
* Kleptomania (unable to resist the urge to steal)
* Alcoholism – Bible calls drunkenness (1 Cor. 5:11; 6:10)

**VI. Chemical Imbalance and Depression**

**Resources:**

Books:

* RichardGanz*, PsychoBabble: The Failure of Modern Psychology and the Biblical Alternative*
* HeathLambert*, A Theology of Biblical Counseling*
* PaulDavidTripp*, Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands*
* MichaelR*.* Emlet*, Descriptions and Prescriptions: A Biblical Perspective on Psychiatric Diagnoses &* *Medications.*

Websites:

* Association of Certified Biblical Counselors (ACBC): [www.biblicalcounseling.com](http://www.biblicalcounseling.com)
* Christian Counseling & Education Foundation (CCEF): [www.ccef.org](http://www.ccef.org)

Articles:

* “A Decisive Blow to Blow to the Serotonin Hypothesis of Depression” [www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/side-effects/202207/decisive-blow-the-serotonin-hypothesis-depression](http://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/side-effects/202207/decisive-blow-the-serotonin-hypothesis-depression)