

The Bible & Mental Health (3)

Enemies of the Mind (2)

INTRODUCTION:

A. God desires that we have peace in our lives. Paul wrote, "And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (**Philippians 4:7**).

B. But sometimes we do not have that peace in our lives. Not because of any fault in God, but because of our own fault.

C. Consider some of the ways in which we deprive ourselves of the peace God desires that we have.

DIVIDED ALLEGIANCE

A. "Dualism" is the condition of being drawn into opposite directions at the same time. As in the case of the rubber band, something eventually has to snap.

B. Jesus recognized the problem of dualism when he said, "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matthew 6:24).

C. Many people are unhappy because they simply cannot make up their minds which direction they want to go.

1. Sometimes their bodies are in church while their hearts are in the world.
2. It is a pathetic thing to see someone who is afraid to go to hell, but does not really desire to go to heaven.
3. The prophet Elijah could ask many in our generation: "How long halt ye between two opinions" (**I Kings 18:21**).
4. Remember Jesus' words to the church at Laodicea, recorded in Revelation 3:16 – So then because thou are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of my mouth."

D. James reminds us that a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways (James 1:8). James also reminds us, "Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter" (**James 3:11**).

E. Sometimes "dualism" can develop into a very severe psychosis known as schizophrenia."

1. The word comes from two roots meaning, "to split" (schizo) and "the mind" (phrenia).
2. Schizophrenia, the most common form of insanity, accounts for about twenty percent of all those hospitalized for mental illness.

F. Christians should work to fortify our minds against distractions that draw us away from God. Consider Colossians 3:2-3. Also Matthew 22:37.

SELF

A. Consider the various views regarding self.

1. The Greek philosophers emphasized, "know yourself."
2. The ascetics emphasized, "contain yourself."
3. The hedonists emphasized, "enjoy yourself."
4. Jesus' teaching is unique in that he taught true contentment could be had only by the one who "denied himself" (Luke 9:23).
5. Only revering our Creator, and keeping his commandments, will result in that "wholeness" for which we truly long (Ecclesiastes 12:13).
6. When a person dethrones God from his life and crowns himself instead, he is robbing himself of genuine contentment and happiness.

B. Self-centeredness manifests itself in a number of ways.

1. A person who is self-willed will not serve others and thus can never be truly happy.
2. When a person becomes self-righteous, his constant failures generate nothing but frustration.
3. Whenever a person develops an attitude of self-pity, he destroys his emotional tranquility. Consider the man in Psalm 73. When he observed the prosperity of the wicked, he lapsed into a state of despair.
4. Selfishness is one of the most unattractive character traits imaginable. Consider Acts 20:35.
5. Self-adulation, a person thinking of himself more highly than he ought, is also harmful (Romans 12:3). Someone has said that too many people are "self-made" individuals and are in love with their creator.

UNFORGIVING SPIRIT

A. One of the greatest enemies of peace of mind is a bitter spirit that nurses wounds (real or imagined) for months or even years, never letting go but always harboring the grievances of the past.

B. Jesus instructed us concerning how we are to resolve the issue when someone has sinned against us (Matthew 18:15-17).

1. First, we are to go to the offending party. If he listens, the matter should then be settled and we should forgive him.
2. If he refuses to listen, we are to go to him again, this time with two or three others.
3. If the offender still refuses to listen, we are to tell it to the church and then get on without lives. We accomplish nothing by letting the problem fester, constantly bringing it up to others, or always brooding about it.

C. Consider the parable of the unmerciful servant (Matthew 18:21-35).

1. One man owed his lord an enormous amount of money.
2. When he could not pay, his loving master had compassion on him and forgave the debt.
3. The forgiven man then encountered someone who owed him a small amount of money.
4. When this debtor pleaded for understanding, it was not given.
5. When the original master heard of this hateful attitude, he had the unforgiving servant thrown into prison.
6. Unless we forgive others from the heart, God will not forgive us.

D. When a person says, "I will forgive you, but I will not forget," he is simply saying, "I will not forgive you."

1. Someone has said, "When you bury the hatchet, forget where it is interred."
2. If we fail to forgive others, then we will not be able to receive the forgiveness we so desperately need.

CONCLUSION:

A. Are you letting these enemies of your mind rob you of your mental health?

1. Divided allegiance
2. Self

3. Unforgiving spirit.