

The Bible & Mental Health (4)

Enemies of the Mind (3)

INTRODUCTION:

A. There are numerous modes of "wrong-thinking" that are harmful to our peace of mind.

PERFECTIONISM

A. Some people cannot be happy with anything short of perfection – either in themselves or others. They simply cannot tolerate "weakness" in anyone.

B. Anyone who is seriously trying to serve God strives for perfection.

1. The Lord desires that we aim for the highest mark – Matthew 5:48.
2. But realistically, we must realize none of us will reach a state of permanent perfection while here on earth. We must be mindful that God knows we are "but flesh" (Psalm 78:39).

C. There are no perfect people.

1. You do not have a perfect spouse (nor are you a perfect spouse).
2. Your children are not flawless.
3. You will not find perfect leaders in the church. Though elders are to be "without reproach" or "blameless" (I Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6), those descriptions are used only in a relative sense.
4. No preacher is perfect.
5. If a person is not bothered by his own weaknesses, there will never be an effort to grow.
6. The apostle Paul was mindful of his own struggles (Romans 7:15ff; I Corinthians 9:27).

D. Try to improve.

1. Work on your character.
2. But do not be such a perfectionist that you cannot lead a happy life.
3. Don't make yourself and everyone around you miserable with overly demanding and unrealistic expectations.

E. We must recognize that people are at varying levels of maturity.

1. Some have stronger personalities, hence, firmer character.
2. Some have better background advantages.

PESSIMISM

A. W.C. Fields once said: "Start each day with a smile and get it over with." Someone else said, "Man comes into this world wet, hungry, and crying; and it's all downhill from there". How tragic it is to go through life in the "kickative" mood.

B. The term "pessimism" derives from a Latin term meaning, "the worst." T his concept generally expresses itself in two forms.

1. Philosophical pessimism (generally characteristic of atheism). Believes the world is so plagued with pain and evil that life is really not worth living.
2. Psychological pessimism. The view that one's life is of such little value that nothing positive is accomplished. This pessimist feels he is no good, has little or no talent or beneficial influence.

C. The Christian life is in opposition to pessimism. Life is wonderful because:

1. We are creatures made in the very image of God (Genesis 1:26).
2. Though man has sinned, a redemptive system has been made available through the sacrifice of Christ.

1. D. The example of Christ is perhaps the best argument against the pessimistic view of life.

1. Consider Hebrews 12:2 – "who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross."
2. Also consider Romans 8:18 along with Philippians 4:4.

ANGER

A. One of the most dangers of all human emotions is anger. Anger can be a killer, both physically and emotionally.

B. It is not always sinful to be angry.

1. God is angry with the wicked every day (Psalm 7:11).
2. Jesus was angry on occasion (Mark 3:5). Yet Jesus never committed a sin (I Peter 2:22).
3. Paul wrote, "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:" (Ephesians 4:26).

C. The Greeks had different words for various sorts of anger.

1. "Thumos" suggests an anger that comes on suddenly but subsides rather quickly.
2. "Orge" is less spontaneous but abides longer.
3. Barclay wrote, "The anger which is selfish, passionate, undisciplined, and uncontrolled is a sinful, useless, and hurtful thing which must be banished from the Christian life".

D. The ancient Greeks believed anger was a source of many evils. The Hebrew Old Testament also stresses the danger of uncontrolled anger.

1. Proverbs 16:32 – "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty".
2. Proverbs 22:24 – "Make no friendship with an angry man".
3. Proverbs 19:19 – "A man of great wrath shall suffer punishment".
4. Proverbs 25:28 – "He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls".

E. Several of the physical reactions that take place when a person gets angry.

1. Breathing rate increases.
2. Pupils dilate.
3. Muscles tighten.
4. Heart rate increases
5. Blood sugar level and blood pressure rise.
6. Digestion is slowed.

CONCLUSION:

1. In order to enjoy peace of mind, we must learn to avoid perfectionism, pessimism, and anger.