

The Bible & Mental Health: An Introduction

1 John 4:4

INTRODUCTION:

A. Four questions:

1. Do Christians have problems? Yes!
2. Why do Christians have problems?
3. What can problems do to Christians?
4. What can Christians do about their problems?
 - a. Ignore them.
 - b. Run from them.
 - c. Confront them.
 - d. Overcome them.

B. Scriptures

1. **1 John 4:4** – “. . . Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.”
2. **1 Peter 5:7** – “Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.”
3. **Matthew 22:37** – “. . . You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.”
4. **2 Peter 1:4** – “By these He has given us very great and precious promises, so that through them you may share in the divine nature, escaping the corruption that is in the world because of evil desires.”
5. **John 16:33** – “These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”
6. **1 Corinthians 10:13** – “No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to humanity. God is faithful and He will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation He will also provide a way of escape, so that you are able to bear it.”
7. **2 Corinthians 4:16-18** – “Therefore we do not give up; even though our outer person is being destroyed, our inner person is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our momentary light affliction is producing for us an absolutely incomparable eternal weight of glory. ¹⁸ So we do not focus on what is seen, but on what is unseen; for what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.”
8. **2 Timothy 1:7-8** - “God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”
9. **Philippians 4:8** – “Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure,

whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy -- meditate on these things.”

C. Mark 5:1-20

1. v. 15 – “Was clothed and **in his right mind.**”
 - a. When the poor demoniac found Jesus, he reclaimed his sanity.
 - b. He acquired rightness of mind and tranquility of soul.
 - c. A timeless principle here: There is soundness of mind in being with the Son of God.
2. People have long associated mental illness with:
 - a. Demon possession.
 - b. Meanness.
 - c. “Beat the devil out of him”
 - d. Williamsburg, VA - Colonial hospital . . . Torture meanness out of a person.

D. The prodigal son messed up and was messed up until “He came to himself.”

1. Began to make changes in his thought processes.
2. Changes in his thought processes brought about changes in his life.
3. Changes in his life brought about a new and better person.

MENTAL HEALTH . . . MENTAL ILLNESS

A. Mental illness is one of the major health problems of today’s society.

1. At least one-half of all those occupying beds in our hospitals are there for no organic reason, but because they have emotional problems.
2. Dr. S. I. McMillen says, “Medical science recognizes that emotions such as fear, sorrow, envy, resentment, and hatred are responsible for the majority of our sicknesses. Estimates vary from 60 percent to nearly 100 percent.”
3. Mental illness costs Americans at least 193 Billion dollars each year in lost earnings.
4. Be careful how one uses labels for people.
 - a. Inappropriate.
 - b. Could be wrong.
 - c. Hurt feelings.
 - d. Name-calling can have consequences.
 1. Make angry
 2. Hurt feelings
 3. Destroy friendships and relationships . . . alienate family members and friends.
 - e. Violate the golden rule. Matthew 7:12

B. Psychologists suggests that, mentally speaking, people fall into three general classes.

1. Those considered **NORMAL.**

- a. These are average folks.
 - b. They have daily problems.
 - c. They have bills to pay.
 - d. They get tired.
 - e. Sometimes they get angry.
 - f. They may be lonely or frustrated.
 - g. They carry on their daily routine with a degree of regularity.
 - h. They have ups and downs.
 - i. They have happy times and some not-so-happy times.
 - j. All of this is just a part of being human.
2. Some are considered **NEUROTIC**.
- a. A neurotic person:
 1. Has not lost touch with reality.
 2. Does not have to be confined to an institution.
 3. Is not a major threat to others.
 4. Is able to live in society and work among others.
 - b. The neurotic's problem is that he is a bit bizarre in his behavior.
 1. He manifests certain types of conduct that are rather easily recognized as being not quite normal.
 2. Usually neuroses are characterized by anxiety.
 3. The neurotic person may suffer panic attacks triggered by things that do not bother normal people (being in a small space, or in a high place, etc.)
 4. He may be a hypochondriac, frequently imaging that he is seriously ill.
 5. Neuroses express themselves in many different ways and the emotional turbulence may even manifest itself in physical symptoms.
3. Those that are considered to be **PSYCHOTIC**.
- a. The psychotic is a person who has an emotional disorder that is so severe that often he requires custodial care.
 - b. The psychotic person has lost touch with reality.
 - c. He may completely withdraw from society and fail to respond to folks around him.
 - d. He may be subject to delusions or have hallucinations.
 - e. In any case, he tends to live in a world of his own.

THE CAUSES OF EMOTIONAL DISTURBANCE. What are some of the causes of neuroses, or the more serious psychoses?

A. **Sometimes the root of these difficulties is organic, hormonal, chemical, etc.**

1. Things which can precipitate physical alterations in the brain that manifest themselves in emotional trauma.

- a. Genetic defects
 - b. Degenerative changes accompanying advanced age
 - c. The use of alcohol and other drugs.
2. Those thus afflicted obviously need the assistance of professional medical personnel, and no sensitive person would want to deny them the sort of proper care and treatment they genuinely require.
- B. Many of our strictly emotional difficulties are self-induced: They are, in fact, spiritual problems that have gone unresolved in sensitive people.
1. They have escalated to a state where the conscience is so tormented that they cannot enjoy a happy life.
 2. They have become a misery to themselves and to those around them.
 3. They are not in need of a materialistic psychologist educated at the feet of Freud, James, and Dewey, nor do they require to be stuffed full of drugs.
 4. They need to come to grips with God’s Word . . . Their answers, their solutions are there.
 5. Note: Drug treatment seems to be the quick-fix panacea these days for almost every problem imaginable—from hyperactivity, to attention deficiency, to nervousness, etc. Eventually there will be a high price to pay for this trend.
- B. Human sin extracts a terrible emotional toll on the perpetrator. Consider the following factors:
1. **Sin SEPARATES** from a Being of absolute purity . . . God.
 - a. **Isaiah 59:1-2** – “Behold, the LORD’s hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.”
 - b. No one can truly know the happiness for which he was designed when he is estranged from His Creator.
 2. **Sin SADDENS**. The Prodigal Son was in a state of deep melancholy until he “came to himself” and re-established a positive relationship with his father. Luke 15:11
 3. **Sin SCARS**
 - a. One may intellectually know that he has been forgiven of his evil, yet carry the burden of his conduct for years.
 - b. Long after his conversion, Paul still referred to himself as the “chief of sinners.” 1 Timothy 1:15
 - c. One’s wickedness can certainly curtail his influence for a long, long time.
 4. **Sin SOURS**
 - a. Carrying the burden of wrongdoing frequently makes a person negative and critical.
 - b. There is a form of human behavior known as “misdirected hostility.”

1. This reflects the circumstance where one is bothered with his own guilt, but he takes it out on everyone else.
2. Walks around with that proverbial “chip” on his shoulder.
3. It’s like the little boy who kicks the cat because he was scolded for tracking up mom’s waxed floor.

5. **Sin SICKENS**

- a. An afflicted conscience can result in ulcers, heart problems, increased blood pressures, etc.
- b. A soul tormented with guilt may become heir to emotional problems.

6. **Sin SEARS**

- a. Left to go its ungodly course, sin can harden the heart.
- b. In **Ephesians 4:19**, Paul spoke of those whose consciences were “branded/seared . . . as with a hot iron.”

C. Satan wants to mess with the minds of God’s people. **Enemies of the Mind:**

1. Guilt
2. Worry
3. Divided Allegiance
4. Self (Self-willed)
5. Unforgiving Spirit
6. Perfectionism
7. Pessimism
8. Anger
9. Depression

CONCLUSION:

- A. Church members have emotional problems just like others in society.
- B. **Spiritual problems have spiritual solutions!**
- C. The Bible is the best textbook on psychology in the world. The Bible not only diagnoses the weaknesses of humanity, it also sets forth the principles which inoculate against the maladies of the mind.
- D. Spiritual health and mental health
 1. Spiritual health is more important than physical health . . . Great to have a good supply of both
 2. Spiritual health is more important than mental health . . . Great to have a good supply of both.
 3. Poor spiritual health can cause one to lose his soul.
- E. **God’s Plan for Man’s Salvation**

DEPRESSION

Depression is a serious medical condition that affects approximately 12 million U.S. adults. Depression is described by the American Psychiatric Association as a "mood disorder," and one of the most common symptoms is a constant feeling of sadness.

Depression can make you lose interest in the things you love or drain you of your normal level of energy. It can affect your appetite and your sleeping habits — and create feelings of hopelessness and worthlessness. These feelings may make you feel as though you will never be free from your symptoms — and don't even have the energy to try

SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION

- Depressed mood most of the day, nearly every day.
- Lack of interest or pleasure in activities.
- Change in weight or appetite.
- Sleeping more or having trouble sleeping.
- Agitation
- Loss of energy
- Feeling worthless or guilty for no reason
- Difficulty in concentrating
- Thoughts of death or suicide

Depression includes some of the following characteristics:

- Feeling sad, blue, or down
- Feeling unworthy
- Feeling guilty
- Feeling helpless
- Loss of energy
- Feeling restless
- Feeling irritable
- Feeling lethargic
- Fatigue
- Increased sleep or decreased sleep
- Insomnia or awakening during the night
- Awakening earlier or later than normal
- Loss of interest in hobbies, activities
- Loss of interest in sex
- Decreased ability to concentrate

- Decreased ability to remember
- Increase or decrease of appetite
- Increase or decrease in weight
- Thoughts of death
- Thoughts of suicide

Also, physical symptoms such as chronic pain or a lingering illness can sometimes signal a depression.

Similar to other illnesses, such as heart problems, asthma, or diabetes, depression can become severe and disabling.

Symptoms in children Ages 6-12

- Somatic (generalized bodily)
- Complaints
- School difficulties
- Negative self-statements
- Fatigue
- Boredom/apathy
- Eating disturbance
- Lack of motivation
- Decreased concentration
- Anxiety/worry

Symptoms in children Ages 12-18

- Suicidal thoughts
- Hopelessness
- Social isolation
- Drug/alcohol use
- Sexual acting out
- Overeating and oversleeping
- Rage

OVERCOMING WORRY

- 1. Things that have already happened.**
- 2. Things that we have no control over, that will likely never happen.**
- 3. Things that are in the future, and we don't know they will happen.**

4. Things that are in the present, that we can do something about.