

Personal theory paper



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

As the main goal of Christian counseling is to facilitate change in order to help clients achieve emotional wholeness and prosper in the direction of spiritual maturity, the intent of this author is to outline the development of a personal counseling theory which will assist clients in meeting that goal. This theory utilizes aspects from the disciplines of psychology and spirituality, as well as integrates biblical concepts and theology without discounting the relevance of each.

The work includes an examination of what is important for understanding human personality, such as motivation, human development, and individual differences. An investigation into where problems tend to develop is presented with conceptualizations of health and wellness, and psychological and spiritual illness. Additionally, the role of integration is discussed. Key elements of the author's theory, along with techniques which guide the therapeutic process and a demonstration of their effectiveness are considered.

Finally, the way in which the worldview of the author impacts her theory, along with her approach to integration of ideas and techniques from various authors and theories is presented. Introduction As believers in Christ, individuals are promised an abundant life (John 10: 10), peace beyond comprehension (Philippians 4: 7), never-ending unconditional love (1 Corinthians 13 : 3), and victory over the enemy (1 Corinthians 15: 57). The Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2014), defines victory as “ the overcoming of an enemy or antagonist; and achievement of mastery or success in a struggle or endeavor against odds or difficulties. There are people who continually fight the battle, yet remain defeated. Believed to be appointed of the Lord to

counsel (II Timothy 1 : 9), this author hopes to come alongside individuals and reveal the undiscovered aspects of God's love; help them realize who they are in Christ, provide the tools for living and the weapons for the battle, point them to victory, and finally, be their greatest cheerleader throughout the process.

To that end, the purpose of this writing is to provide a framework of Christian counseling which will assist clients in facilitating change in order to defeat the enemy and succeed in achieving emotional wholeness. Understanding Human Personality Personality Development and Structure Personality is a conglomeration of all beliefs, actions, temperament, and attitudes of the heart which make up the whole person. Ways in which a person uniquely reacts or responds to events in his/her life constitute the personality traits.

Crab (1977) describes the structure of the personality as consisting of the conscious and unconscious mind, the basic direction or heart of a person, the will, and the emotions; all of which work together as a unit – an indivisible whole. Hawkins (2101 a) delineates the personality as a series of concentric circles which shape the total errors; beginning with the core self, followed by the soul, the body, temporal systems (or outside influences), and finally supernatural systems.

As one works to understand each concentric circle and how each impacts the personality, the counselor will better understand the sourcing of clients' problems; inevitably helping them to take ownership of the problem and motivate them to change (Hawkins, 201 AAA). An individual's past is important in uncovering misfiles originating during childhood which may

manifest as dysfunctional behaviors in adulthood (Backup & Chapin, 2000). Additionally, in order to better understand the inner workings of resonantly, one must seek to comprehend the ways clients are motivated to make core changes.

Motivation to Change Avoiding the humanistic approach which would describe the personality as something which cannot be altered, this author remains convinced the basic personality is capable of change through the power of the Holy Spirit. Today's modern Christians have all too often embraced the secular explanation for the ills of society, going so far as to affirm sin by agreeing with an excuse such as "I was born this way." By embracing personality traits which dishonor God, sin becomes easily sugar-coated and socially acceptable.

On one hand, God is praised for His ability to transform lives and encourage conformity to His character, yet on the other hand the personality traits which do not measure up to the biblical standard are accepted as simply unique characteristics in today's post-modern society where uniqueness is celebrated and all are encouraged to just "be themselves" and live life in any way they choose. Many Christians refuse to accept a problem exists. The Psalmist writes, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalms 139: 23-24,

NJ). Dry. Larry Crab (1977) is one off number of Christian scholars who stands firm on God's Word and shares a common belief that freedom from emotional pain and distress may be found within the pages of scripture as he

states, “ Do what God expects because He already has given you everything you need to live responsibly’ (p. 140). Adams (1986) agrees with Crab’s position as he explains if everyone chose to live responsibly according to the truths found in God’s Word, there would be no need for counseling, as all problems would be solvable on the basis of His Word.

All estimate forms of counseling should be based on scripture for in its pure form therein lies no need for improvement (Adams, 1986). This author would agree the assessment of counseling theories and practices should be held to a high biblical standard. Counsel should be encouraged to please God and not adopt the aforementioned post-modern mentality which permits one to behave in whichever way feels good at the time. Such behavior can only lead to emotional turmoil. Backup and Chapin (2000) admonish if individuals are serious about pleasing God, their behavior will be the exact opposite of what is expected.

There is no need to go along with the deception brought about by the enemy which causes upheaval in the lives of those who choose to follow his lead. Freedom from the bondage which enslaves the minds of individuals can only be brought about by encountering the truth of the Word of God (Anderson, 2000). Those who do not embrace God’s Word as truth will spend their time seeking gratification of their needs rather than seeking a deeper relationship with God. Life is evaluated in terms of the rules of society and behavior is motivated to gratify self-centered needs (Cloud & Townsend, 1999). While the

Christian may encounter deception and misfiles (Anderson, 2000; Backup & Chapin, 2000), the desired choice would be to evaluate the situation within a framework based on biblical truths and exhibit behavior which is Christ-like in nature (crab, 1977). Theory of Human Development and Individual Differences “ For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb, I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made” (Psalms 139: 13-14, NIB). Every individual possesses an understanding of the world and it is by this understanding a basis for autonomy within the world is sought after and developed.

The process of development involves maturing along the Journey and cultivating good spiritual habits. Frequently, the boundaries which guide behavior are for self- preservation (Cloud & Townsend, 1999). When behavior includes positive choices and patterns of relating which embrace biblical principles, such as treating others with the love and respect with which God intended, a “ healthy, balanced interdependence” (Wilson, 2001 , p. 246) is achieved. Recognition of the importance of first becoming a complete individual is critical in order for the healthy interdependence to occur.

Completion and maturity cannot occur simply by an act of will, for individuals are unable to change in and of themselves (Cloud & Townsend, 1999).

Therefore, by allowing the power of the Holy Spirit to direct the life-shaping choices throughout the process of development, a better sense of emotional and spiritual health may be achieved: “ But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil” (Hebrews 5: 14, NJ). The job of a counselor is to assist the client in

progressing toward a healthy, mature balance of emotional and spiritual health.

Where are Problems Developed? Health and Wellness Two scriptures which come to mind when considering health and wellness include: “ My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments, for length of days and years of life and peace they will add to you” (Proverbs 3: 1-2, ESP.); and, “ The fear of the Lord adds length to life, but the years of the wicked are cut short” (Proverbs 10: 27, NIB). Problems begin when clients neglect to heed the teachings in the Word of God. Hart (1999) states “ many are falling into stress disease” (p.) and proposes the possibility exists to create tranquility in he midst of the chaos and anxiety which presents in today’s world. Changing thought processes and taking time to care for the physical body through rest, not only will benefit the mind and body, but also impacts relationships and spirituality (Hart, 1999). Likewise, Backup and Chapin (2000) posit changing thoughts will change the biochemistry of the brain; the actual chemical composition of the cells within the brain and central nervous system.

The goal of counseling would be to insure clients achieve good health; not just physically, but emotionally. And not just for themselves, but for others with whom they are involved relationally. Wilson (2001) stressed the importance of recognizing the way in which unhealed hurts affect how one responds to others; hurt people will hurt people. Illness Illness may be characterized by disorder, weakness, unsoundness, lacking strength, fragile infrastructure, abnormal functioning, harmful development, and finally, bondage or oppression of the body or mind.

Illness does not just involve the body. The state of the mind lends itself to influence the physical body. Anderson (2000) writes, “ But even modern medicine proclaims that the majority of people are sick for psychosomatic reasons” (p. 33). Counselors are primarily concerned with how illness may relate to and influence the state of the mind. Hart (1999) discusses several practical approaches to promote a state of well-being and reduce stress and anxiety: obtaining the proper amount of rest, consuming a healthy diet, getting plenty of exercise, and in some cases, taking medication.

In fact, the least of which is medication. Hart (1999) cites an Australian study listing the percentage of people successfully treated for anxiety disorders. Some treatment options included self- awareness, meditation, cognitive-behavioral therapy, relaxation, psychotherapy, and education. The relative effectiveness of the listed treatments indicated prescribed medication as having the lowest percentage at only 16%, compared to self-awareness reported as 95% effective (Hart, 1999).

The information contained in the study supports this author’s belief that “ as a man thinks within himself, so he is” (Proverbs, 23: 7). In other words, often our physical and mental state is a product of our thoughts. Psychological and spiritual illness. Wilson (2001) states, “ According to Jesus, no one is in perfect spiritual health” (p. 183). In fact, Backup and Chapin (2000) give an example of a client who spent considerable time exhibiting signs of physical illness, yet the reason for her illness was not caused by anything physiological. Her problem involved the psychological and spiritual.

Backup and Chapin (2000) go on to emphasize, “ The term anxiety covers a large number of behaviors, including cognitive activity... As well as physiological events” (p. 72). An entire chapter of *The Anxiety Cure* is devoted to the connection between anxiety and depression (Hart, 2001). Anderson (2000) describes those who suffer not just with physical sickness but with psychological conditions as a result of satanic bondage; stating when one lives in a constant state of anxiety, a person is unable to concentrate on anything other than all-consuming fear.

There remains no provision in the physical, mental, or emotional realm to focus on anything else. Similarly, Hawkins (AAA) is thorough in his explanation of concentric circles to include the supernatural realm. When counseling clients living in spiritual bondage, the words of Isaiah may be of tremendous comfort: “The Lord will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you” (Isaiah 26: 3, NJ). Counsel may be encouraged to cease sinful practices which cause the enemy to obtain a foothold in their lives.

Correspondingly, the spiritual health which may be proclaimed by some is partial and relative when measured by the absolute standard of what is seen in the Word of God (Wilson, 2001). Therefore, encouraging clients to trust in God and conform to the principles found in the Bible will produce a life less plagued by psychological and spiritual illness. Role of Integration and Multitasking As a Christian counselor, learning to integrate psychological, spiritual, and theological methods in the counseling arena is imperative.

God's Word specifically states, " Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ" (Colombians 2: 8, NJ). General revelation must be placed under the evaluative scrutiny of God's Word (Hawkins, Bibb). As Christian counselors ultimately are held accountable to the truth of God's Word, great care must be taken to rely on the Holy Spirit to guide in the process of integration in order to rightly discern the truth.

Hawkins (Bibb) discusses the probability of uncovering God's Ruth within the work of scientists and scholars when he describes " unveiled truth" as " God's truth. " The importance and role of multitasking is outlined in detail by Crab (1977) when he describes four approaches of integration: Separate but Equal (a method of keeping psychology and theology completely separate), Tossed Salad (a method of blending them together), Nothing Buttery, (the complete disregard of psychology), and Spoiling the Egyptians (the method of profiting from psychology by carefully screening concepts to insure the compatibility with Christian presuppositions).

Pall's letter to Timothy reads, " All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (II Timothy 3: 16-17, NJ). Additionally, Paul wrote to Titus, In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness, and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us. Titus, 2: 7-8, NJ) Therefore, when

seeking to evaluate clients' problems, the ability to ultimate must focus on theological truth as the cornerstone, while integrating psychology and spirituality in order to obtain a healthy balance which may best be incorporated into the treatment plan. Sourcing Problems and Structuring Effective Intervention Key Elements of Theory This theory of counseling incorporates an integrative methodology which has as its base the primary purpose to restore to clients' lives the truth of God's Word and the influence of the Holy Spirit.

Hawkins (AAA) stressed the spiritual strategy of placing emphasis on the restoration of Imago Die. Likewise, this counselor recognizes the importance of structuring a counseling model around an application of disciplines which incorporate Christian values within the core of individuals; the place where the greatest influence of the Holy Spirit takes place, where the greatest impact on cognitive behavior is felt, and the place where the characteristics of the human personality are developed and subjected to purposeful change. The Word of God states, " And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" Cohn 8: 32, NJ).

There exists a freedom in Christ unlike anything secular truths may offer. Belief in something causes actions which reflect that belief, therefore, " beliefs and misfiles are the most important factors of your mental and emotional life" (Backup & Chapin, 2000, p. 16). The goal remains to teach clients how to exchange thoughts which are deeply rooted in misfile with truths found in God's Word by combining the strengths of cognitive-behavior therapy, as well as other empirically-supported psychological disciplines, without diminishing the strengths of those disciplines.

Process and Techniques Motivating effective change can only be accomplished when the counselor is living by example; hiding the Word of God in her heart and mind. Therefore, it is paramount the counselor is free from anything which may plague the mind and cause bondage. To encourage a client to prosper in the direction of spiritual change, the counselor must first focus on the process in her own life as well. Additionally, the therapeutic relationship in counseling is critical.

Therefore, creating an atmosphere in which clients encounter an empathetic, listening ear; where they know they are accepted with the unconditional love modeled by Christ and exempt from the threat of judgment; will go far in allowing mutual trust to be established. It is only in an environment of trust that a client will open up and disclose things affecting their lives while allowing the freedom to examine thoughts in their minds in hopes of motivating change (Crab, 1977). This future counselor believes every battle is won or lost in the mind.

Going back to the biblical example of Joshua and Caleb, in one of the most heartbreaking stories of the Old Testament, the Israelites sought to enter the Promised Land and were filled with fear upon eyeing the giants of the land; "... E were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight" (Numbers 13: bib, NJ). Because of their misfile, they were unable to fulfill God's call and were made to continue to wander in the wilderness until the next generation rose with boldness to take possession of the land.

Joshua and Caleb had followed the instructions of God's Word, had meditated on it day and night, and as a result became strong and courageous. There

was no room in their minds for misfile. Their actions were a sum total of their thoughts. The deepest, driving desire of their ill, as it aligned with God's truth, allowed them to complete the task and inherit God's promise. Adams (1986) argues teaching biblical principles is critical to immediate and lasting change.

As a future counselor, this author plans to come alongside clients exhibiting the love of Christ bolstered by consistent prayer for the counsel. Joined together with hopes of being successful in encouraging them to identify incorrect assumptions, to support them as they exchange misfiles for truths, and to clarify biblical thinking – all of which will enable them to change and conform to the image of Christ (Adams, 1986; Crab, 1977). As Paul wrote to the church in Ephesus: "... Peaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head – Christ" (Ephesians 4: 15, NJ). Expectations of Effectiveness If methods used in counseling are in line with God's Word, change brought about as a result will be effective. Crab (1977) states worshipping the Lord more fully and serving Him more effectively comes about as a result of solving problems in ways which cause one to be more like the Lord, or spiritually mature. A progression toward healthy relationships will be displayed as clients work toward the goal of spiritual ND psychological maturity.

The good news is that the Lord Himself promises to guide individuals along the way. Isaiah 48: bib reads: " I am the Lord your God, who teaches you what is best for you, who directs you in the way you should go' (NIB). Crab (1977) is adamant in his statement that the Lord will never allow a situation in life in which a believer is unable to respond biblically. Similarly, Adams

(1986) explains as clients adopt pleasing God as their highest priority, changes made will have value before God and remain in effect.

As counselors enter into relationships with clients, trusting in clients' ability to make themselves vulnerable before the Lord, desiring change and adopting a conforming nature toward the character of Christ, the Lord cannot help but bless (Remain 29: 11). The Influence of Worldview on Theory View of Psychology, Theology, and Spirituality The lens which is used to process and filter this author's worldview is primarily a Christian lens. It exposes a theological biblical foundation, yet allows room for spirituality and psychology as well.

There remains a strong belief to not incorporate any teachings or practices which would prove to be out of accord with the teachings of the Word of God. Adams (1986) spoke well when he reminded the reader that long before the existence of psychology, Jesus Christ was named Wonderful Counselor. That is not to say psychology does not have a place in counseling, however, one must keep in the forefront of one's mind the "depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God... Of him, and through him, and to him, are all things" (Romans 11: 33-35, KAVA).

Understanding comes from God, including the understanding He grants in the discipline of psychology. Therefore, one must take care not to simply induce superficial change in counsel. As psychology may supply wisdom to help clients modify behavior, the Christian counselor is responsible to help clients delve deeper; employing a substantial change of the heart – a change

which is guided by the Holy Spirit (Adams, 1986). There is an inner life which is known only to God and oneself.

In order to facilitate any outward change of any significance, one must seek to probe those deep places, allowing the Holy Spirit to work through the counselor to implement the changes which the Holy Spirit has promised to effect. Anything less would be inadequate and umbilical (Adams, 1986).

Approach to Integration As Christians, we are granted the capability through the Holy Spirit to know the truth in all things: psychology, theology, and spirituality. The anointing of the Holy Spirit which dwells in the believer, teaches concerning all things.

But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him. And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. (1 John 2: 27-28) Hawkins (Bibb) described McGinnis' most effective pursuit toward psychological and spiritual health which involved three things: an accurate awareness of self, an accurate awareness of need, and healing relationships.

In combining those three, and screening psychological concepts to determine compatibility with the presuppositions held by Christianity, Christian counselors can profit from secular psychology, provided unwanted elements which oppose truths found in God's Word are discarded (Crab, 1977). Conclusion The theory presented is careful to emphasize the

importance of teaching the truth of the Word of God. By multitasking, or integrating psychological theories, as well as some aspects of spirituality, it is this author's belief that the process of substantial, biblical, effective change is attainable for clients.

The process of change must begin in the heart of the counselor and then reach out to encourage change in the hearts and lives of counsel. The emphasis must be on the word, "process." As Paul writes, may each one "press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3: 17, KAVA). The hope of this future counselor is not only will unsoundness be moved to change to effect better mental health, but also will be moved to change to embrace the hope and healing which comes from a life which glorifies God.