

# Example of article review on the use of prayer and scripture in cognitive-behavior...

[Religion](#), [Bible](#)



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## **Summary**

This paper intends to provide a literature review of the article, Use of Prayer and Scripture in Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy, by Siang-Yang Tan published in the Journal of Psychology and Christianity in 2007. This article introduces Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT) as one of the most effective empirically supported treatments that is used for treating psychological disorders. Tan goes on to cite researchers who have found out that CBT has evolved over the generations into what he terms as; Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), Dialectical Behavior Therapy, and Mindfulness and Acceptance-based Therapies. According to Tan, this third wave-generation CBT is more flexible in incorporating spiritual and religious ideas. Tan writes about implicit and explicit integration approaches that allow the participants to delve into spiritual and religious matters directly or indirectly. This third generation CBT offers a broader therapeutic range by accommodating both implicit and explicit approaches.

The article further unfolds to give insight on the application of prayers and scriptures for therapeutic effects. Tan writes on the seven biblical features of

Christian based CBT. He goes on to mention the use of special prayers especially in inner healing, however, he warns that prayer and scriptures may not be really appropriate for severely disturbed or psychotic clients. Tan asserts that the key features to Biblical CBT include using Biblical truth, obtaining consent from the client and paying keen attention to past events in one's life as they largely affect an individual's current development. Finally, Tan discusses the use of scriptures in counseling. He provides a case study showing the application of scriptures with one of his clients, from which we can conclude that scripture can be helpful in cognitive restructuring.

## **Reflection**

Being a deeply religious person, I found most of my beliefs conforming to what Tan was discussing in his article. I found his Christian CBT techniques quite appealing and useful, mainly because it accommodates clients who prefer to either engage in implicit or explicit therapeutic approaches of CBT. The seven key features of the Biblical Christian approach to CBT proved to be quite useful, as the steps ensure one follows the right direction into application of CBT within Biblical frameworks. Tan has also gone to great lengths to guide us on how to use Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy that has been overlooked by many mainstream practitioners traditionally.

Nevertheless, Tan's work inspired me a great deal, mainly on his focus of incorporating prayer and scriptures in a therapeutic context.

Despite Tan's belief that prayer and confession plays a powerful and effective means of healing, I tend to disagree with some of his sentiment towards prayer. Tan states that the use of prayer has to be guided by the

Holy Spirit, which in my opinion can be a subjective phenomenon even within Christians themselves. According to Tan, these prayers are what result to the inner healing. I tend to imagine that different people have different concepts of the Holy Spirit depending on the dogma and teachings of every Christian church. This will therefore present a grey area in Tan`s guide towards accomplishing an appropriate Biblical CBT.

Tan`s teaching on the concept of inner healing is perhaps another area that seemed fairly contradicting to me. Inner healing according to Tan will manifest upon contemplative prayer. However, he further explains of contemplative prayer rooting from deep Eastern mysticism such as the Zen Buddhism which is known to incorporate stern meditative and contemplative religious practices (Tan, 2007 p104). I find it rather absurd to thus have a Biblical CBT, which seems to have borrowed some techniques from other religions. I am not advocating against the biblical CBT in any way, nevertheless, I think it should not be considered purely Christian as it has many aspects in its approach borrowed from other religions and culture. A good example to this is the ' Mindfulness and acceptance based CBT.

## **Application**

Cognitive Restructuring of dysfunctional or irrational thinking can be more deeply conducted in Christian CBT with the appropriate use of scripture, and not just rational or empirical analysis and disputation, (Tan, 2007 p108).

According to this statement, I think Christian CBT would best apply in tackling cases of depression, especially those arising out of lost hope and zeal for life. The therapist would first have to follow the seven key steps to

beginning a Biblical approach to CBT, upon which (s)he would engage the client in the preferred approach (Implicit or explicit). This consensus would be reached after the therapist has engaged the client in small talk and questions which show the client`s beliefs and attitude toward religion. The therapist would then engage in contemplative prayer inspired by the Holy Spirit, to invoke inner healing, and thereafter engage in reading of scriptures to comfort and change the thinking of the client.

Biblical scriptures are a rich source of messages of hope and comfort that would play an important role in encouraging the depressed client to face life with a brighter approach. By citing how Christ offered to carry all our burdens, the therapist can use this to show the client how easy it is to live a carefree` life with all burdens left to Christ on the cross. The counseling session can then end with a prayer from the therapist praying for inner healing of the client, and for the client`s burden to be uplifted.

## **REFERENCES**

Tan, Siang-Yang. " Use of Scripture and Prayer in Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy." *Journal of Christianity and Psychology*, 2007: 101-111.