

Theory paper

Psychology, Personality



----- Integrative Theory of Counseling By
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 the requirements of Theology and Spirituality in Counseling PACO 507
 Lynchburg, VA December 13, 2012 Table of Contents

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Abstract When persons seek counseling, they are often asking what they can

do to change things and wondering why their life is like it is. Counseling helps clients develop skills to cope with the dilemmas in their lives while theological reflection can help clients make meaning of these same dilemmas. Secular counseling can be a great help to non-Christian and Christian clients by simply injecting a spiritual dynamic to counseling, especially, if the counselor has the skills in assessing the appropriate amount of integrating psychological theories with Biblical and spiritual dynamics. This paper seeks to validate that, by using techniques from the psychological area in conjunction with theological truths while being cognizant of a person's core spirit, a therapist can combine all disciplines to help clients. The process has a way to hone your perspective so you can focus on what really matters. We spend time and energy investing on what's Not Important at the Expense of what's Important. Introduction The world contains a wide variety of people, who experience a wide variety of problems coming from any number of sources. Consequently, a comprehensive theory of counseling must also address the major traits that constitute our personality; thus the need for a unified or comprehensive counseling model. Hawkins (2010) believes that the development of a comprehensive theory for counseling should incorporate responsibly insights from theology, psychology, and spirituality, while giving preference to scriptural/theological truth as foundational for resolving what appear to be contradictions between scripture and psychology. Hawkins' model of counseling draws heavily on Crabb's (1977) model and on the multi-tasking model of integration of Mark McMinn (1996). The model is illustrated with five concentric circles that diagram self and the forces that shape personality. I. The Concept/theory of

Human Personality A. Definition The study of the human personality has been vast and has produced many and varied opinions, theories and hypotheses. The complexity of the human personality is the attributing factor why so many Christians are experiencing stress, despair, depression, discouragement and defeat today. Many define personality as the ability to elicit positive reactions from other people in one's typical dealings with them. Personality is a conglomerate. It is the sum total of what a person is - including his beliefs, attitudes, physical attributes, actions, thoughts and so on. Even larger than the mountain of research and statements on the human personality, is the question of what causes varying personalities? Is it nature, or is it nurture?

B. Personality Structure Delineation of Personality Structure Personality can be shaped by many environmental factors, such as family, socioeconomic status, and even biological factors. Hawkins delineates five areas, the core, soul, body, temporal systems, and supernatural systems that make up human personality. These forces work together to shape how a person develops, each impacting the individual's nature. As demonstrated by Anderson (2000), spiritual forces have a tremendous impact on personality development and cannot be excluded from the growth process. Wilson (2001) claims that we are influenced at an early age and throughout adulthood by many different systems. Many times deep wounds and deep hurts affect the restoration project in a person's life. When one believes the lies that are associated with shame, it "... contaminates all my perceptions, choices, and relationships (Wilson, 2001, pp. 18)." In addressing the core circle which deals with the image of God, sin, breath of life and human spirit, Crabb (1977) believes that the image of God in man is contained within four

capacities: personal, rational, volitional, and emotional. Crabb notes that "the primary problem with people today is misplaced dependency" (1977, p. 139). When our dependency for having our basic needs of security and significance is on anything other than the Lord God, we will have problems. Tozer (1993) puts it best "the man who has God for his treasure has all things in One." The Bible tells us that God created all things for man's pleasure and subservient to him. However, He made man for His own glory and pleasure. Whenever that order is violated, our lives become self-centered, rather than God-centered. This leads us to a very important component of the human personality — Motivation.

C. Motivation Generally speaking Motivation is what causes us to act. It involves the biological, emotional, social and cognitive forces that activate behavior. Motivation is one of the concepts Crabb uses in dealing with how problems develop. He says, "The direction which I am motivated to follow in an effort to meet my needs depends on. . . what I think will meet those needs" (Crabb, p. 117). The client is motivated to meet his needs for being loved and have a purpose for living. Backus and Chapian (2000) advocate that most of what happens in life happens because of the way we think. Wrong thinking produces wrong emotions, wrong reactions, wrong behavior, which leads to anxiety, depression, and unhappiness. They propose that our emotions are not created by what happens to us; rather, our emotions are created by what we tell ourselves about what happens to us; thus affecting our unconscious mind. Crabb describes the unconscious as, ". . . the reservoir of basic assumptions which people firmly and emotionally hold about how to meet their needs of significance and security" (p. 91). The unconscious mind is the

area of the soul that must be renewed daily as it affords Satan opportunities to implement his illusory strategies. Our interpretations can be misguided.

Anderson (2000) affirms that "Satan's first and foremost strategy is deception" (p. 23). The catalyst of true transformation is the renewing of our mind, as the Bible teaches us in Romans 12: 2 (NKJ) "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind..."

The transformation process should then lead to a higher level of Maturity. D. Human Development The concept of human development warrants an understanding of how personality and behavior develops in people.

According to Erick Erickson (1950), Life is a series of lessons and challenges which help us to grow. Erikson's psychosocial theory essentially states that each person experiences eight 'psychosocial crises' (internal conflicts linked to life's key stages) which help to define his or her growth and personality.

Erickson asserts that when a person passes unsuccessfully through a psychosocial crisis stage they develop a tendency towards one or other of the opposing forces, which then becomes a behavioral tendency, or even a mental problem. Ultimately, as one progress through the different life

stages, they acquire a higher level of maturity, which is the ultimate goal of Christian counseling. Crabb explains that Christian maturity is achieved by moving OVER to biblical consistency and pressing UP by developing an attitude of Christ like submission to the Father's will (Crabb, p. 29). "

Maturity involves two elements: (1) immediate obedience in specific situations and (2) long-range character growth" (Crabb, p. 23). He contends that the goal of Christian counselors should be to increase the maturity of clients by becoming more like God and striving to please Him in every

activity and thought. With his " Four-Step Biblical Process" Adams (1986) offers his contribution to the concept of Christian maturity. The substratum of Adams' four (4) steps is 2 Timothy 3: 14-17, which teach that All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for (1) teaching, for (2) rebuking (or convicting), for (3) correcting, and lastly (4) for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." (p. 13).

E. Individual differences As a person matures the experiences felt in life will alter his/her personality. Sometimes these changes can be good leading to normal development and growth. Conversely, experiences in life can be traumatic and hurtful leading to abnormal development and destructive behavior. Hawkins states that it is important that as counselors we understand the " shaping influences that have contributed to the development of the ideas, feelings, and choices of the client. " These influences result in individual differences and can stem from many places as a human being matures. Personality traits such as discussed in Hart 2001)'s book *The Anxiety Cure*, can influence how a person perceives events, people, and life. Writing from personal experience, Wilson (2001) believes that, " what we learn in our families shape every area of our lives. " When children grow up in hurtful homes, they do not learn the basics of healthy relationships (Wilson, 2001, p. 124). Using a cognitive behavioral approach and an emphasis on family structure, Dr. Wilson expounds that children are unable to think for themselves because of their lack of ability and reasoning capabilities.

II. Where are problems developed? A. Definition of Health The three factors to determining health, according to McMinn, are accurate awareness of self, accurate awareness of needs, and involvement in healthy

relationships. Basing self worth on the word of God is the most useful tool in bringing clients to health. There must be a goal to work toward within every counseling model. For the Christian counselor the overarching goal must be to bring the client to a place where they become the image bearer of God, as was intended in the first place. In order to achieve this goal a strategy of intervention must be implemented. Hawkins clearly defines his strategy of intervention within his grid for tracking progress. Hawkins states, “ There are areas that need to be investigated that contribute to the shaping of the self and it is these areas in which the strengths or weaknesses will be discovered. They are the areas of the Spiritual, the thoughts, the decision, the feelings, the relationships (system) and the body. ” It is within these areas that the counselor, ultimately, would seek to help the client come to a place of wholeness and closeness to God. Sandra Wilson (2001) directs hurt people to the Bible to find their source of certainty. She lists Biblical references in order to aid in development of a healthy self image based on the unconditional love of Jesus Christ. Archibald Hart (1999) says that it is helpful to practice self-talk based on truth Cloud and Townsend (2002), in *Boundaries in Marriage*, state that a person who is healthy displays certain characteristics: they are open to feedback and correction; are not defensive; take ownership of own problems, choices, feelings, attitudes, and behaviors; can see themselves and observe their behavior; value relationships; value the individuality of others; allow others to be different; respect other’s differences; and see their own need for growth. When all of these attributes are in place then an individual can live out of a place of obedience to the two greatest commandments; “ love the Lord with all your heart, mind, and soul

and love your neighbor as yourself. "(Matthew 22: 37-39) This truly is being an image bearer of God. The overarching goal as listed by Hawkins is the imitation of Christ as stated in Ephesians 5: 1. B. Definition of Illness Many theorists put faces on illnesses such as anxiety, sin, lust, neglect or depression. They are endless in the forms they take: biological, emotional and cognitive; just to name a few. Both Christian and secular psychologists agree illness is a break from the socialistic norms that are in place. Illness has many causes; as noted earlier Wilson emphasizes outside influences as well as hereditary make up, while Hart singles out personality type and drive that cause burnout. Cloud and Townsend contend illness stems from a lack of boundaries, while Backus and Chapien hold to thoughts and beliefs to which the individual agrees. In Wilson's Healing Overview and Progress Evaluation (HOPE) chart, hurting people are led through a process that identifies the key issue, applies truth to it, makes new choices and then puts them into practice. Becoming aware of thought processes makes change easier. The inability to react well to stress can be genetic. Hart explains that, " Type-A people (those that are driven, ' hot reactors,' and always in a hurry) inherit a large part of this tendency rather than develop it later in life" (p. 55). Sin is at the very heart of illness, it is Satan's intent to steal, kill, and destroy mankind and he will use every opportunity available. (John 10: 10) and as asserted by Adams, any Christian counselor that minimizes sin being at the root of all human problems is doing a disservice to his client. Sin affects every area of human life including thoughts, actions and relations. Satan is on constant watch, waiting for Christians to slip up in areas of vulnerability. III. Developing the Framework for the Cure. A. The attributes of

my theory The goal of the Christian counselor is to promote mental and spiritual growth, so that the client can draw from their faith and look to God for guidance. The most important part of change is the understanding of eternal life which completely changes reasons for existing. Shame, guilt and blame were washed away by the sacrifice that Jesus made on the cross. When this fact is ignored, much healing is denied. The whole idea of healing originates in Biblical history. Moses writes, "...for I am the Lord Who heals you" (Exodus 15: 26 (NKJ)). Acceptance, empathy and genuineness are all qualities that a counselor must use to put the client at ease in order for them to tell their story. Crabb teaches that identification of problem feelings can only happen when the client feels accepted by the counselor. In Hawkins' model of strategic intervention he clearly lays out a plan of action that leads to freedom for the entire person. He proposes each part of the self is in need of a cure and must be included in any comprehensive model of counseling. The entire person must be addressed with looking for a cure as dysfunction in one area will have an impact on other areas of the self. When addressing each part of the person, it is important for the cure to entail strategies that will be most beneficial for each area. Within the core and connected self, Backus and Chapien propose taking the client through a three step approach of locating the misbelief, removing the misbelief, and replacing the misbelief with truth in order to bring the individual back in line with their identity of being an image bearer of God. For the covered self, what Hawkins calls the soul, Hart proposes rest and relaxation to combat anxiety, stating, " There is no tool more crucial to recovery from anxiety than the ability to produce a relaxation response. " Anderson advocates that the

constrained self, which is affected by natural and supernatural forces, must be confronted with truth in order for the client to be set free from the bondage of them. He states, " Freedom from spiritual conflicts and bondage is not a power encounter; it's a truth encounter. " B. Techniques of the Therapeutic Process In the helping relationship, techniques are used to help the client reach the point of change. One approach that Christian counselors should not be without is prayer. When developing a therapeutic model of counseling one of the first steps toward success is making sure the counselee feels comfortable and safe. Crabb states, " Counseling is a relationship. Relationship interactions vary depending on the temperaments, problems, or personalities of the people involved. A counselor that can establish relationship from the very beginning will have better success in the long run. One of the common threads found throughout the resources used for this paper is the concept of truth. Wilson, Backus and Chapian, and Anderson all agree that helping the client to understand the truth and let go of misbeliefs is one of the most important steps in any therapeutic process. Hawkins' four phase process includes: (1) Listening well to the presenting story. (2) Develop with the counselee a preferred future. (3) Develop an action plan. When dealing with some common misconceptions, Anderson believes that the counselee will be able to dispel the wrong beliefs about the spiritual world that keeps him/her in darkness by moving from a Western worldview to a Biblical worldview. C. Indication of Success The accuracy and effectiveness of any theoretical assumption is best measured by a changed life. When a counselee comes into a counseling session distraught and in pain, if the counselor can see a

visible change in their countenance as they leave then they can know their methods were affective. When there is visible evidence of a destructive behavior being turned into a constructive behavior the counselor can be assured they are doing something right. True success in counseling is defined by progress not perfection. McMinn's theory states, " A more careful look suggests that spiritual and psychological health require a confident (but not inflated) sense of self, an awareness of human need, and limitations, and confiding inter personal relationships with God and others. " If the methods being incorporated within the counseling model are in line with the Word of God and bring hope for change to the counselee results will be seen. By following the leading of the Spirit first while applying Biblical techniques one can be assured success. As aforementioned, the overarching goal should be the imitation of Christ.

IV. My Theory Relationship to a Comprehensive Worldview

Each participant in the counseling process possesses a worldview, whether they realize it or not. These worldviews affect the way therapy progresses. It is important for the Christian counselor to have a comprehensive understanding of what his worldview consists of. The Biblical worldview sifts all information through the sieve of God's Word. It was not God's intent for Christians to tolerate bondage and unhealthy restraints in their lives, because what is tolerated eventually dominates. Jesus was the example on earth for us to follow even stating, "...He who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do..." (John 14: 12 (NKJ)). The freedom found in following after the example of Jesus and living out the promise of His word is the true inheritance Jesus left for all who believe on Him. This comprehensive theory covers all important

aspects of a Biblical worldview. Possessing the ability to multitask ensures that all important aspects of worldview are included. Uniting psychology, spirituality, and theology encompasses all the components of human behavior necessary to assess functioning. The theory presented here allows the Biblical worldview to emerge as dominant in order to resolve any conflicts between Scripture and psychology.

V. Conclusion

A complete counseling session would also incorporate concepts drawn from theology, psychology, and spirituality, giving weight to theology as the foundational truth from which to build as well as bring balance to the model. Proverbs 1: 2 instructs us " To know wisdom and instruction, to perceive the words of understanding". Integration of the three areas of human behavior, psychology, theology and spirituality provide a comprehensive understanding of what makes an individual function. The discipline of theology must be the basis from which Christian counselors choose which theories, techniques and processes to use.

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