

General Topics :: Mix of Christian principles with psychology

Mix of Christian principles with psychology - posted by habakkuk3 (), on: 2005/12/7 7:49

I spent a considerable amount of time in psychotherapy before I came back to Jesus and the Holy Spirit has been dealing with my heart on some of these beliefs that were once unconscious and now I'm beginning to see them. Thank God for the convicting power of His Spirit which cuts through all the junk and gets to the sin...

I've mentioned something called "psychoheresy" a few times and the Holy Spirit has led me to a couple of books that I have recently purchased. The book is entitled "Psychoheresy" by Martin and Deidre Bobgan and was released in 1987. (The second book is entitled Psychoheresy II.)

"We have chosen the term psychoheresy because what describe is a psychological heresy. It is a heresy because it is a departure from the fundamental truth of the Gospel."

This quotation from the book describes the foundation of it. I'm certain that if you look at your local Christian radio's program guide you will find at least a few Christian programs by renowned psychologists. Psychoheresy is a mixing of the psychological with the scripture. Most of the time you will see scripture twisted to comport with the psychological bent of the psychologist.

So what has happened in the church, is that we often view God as our servant. We wouldn't put it so bluntly but the focus in many churches is on having a "happy and successful" life. There's no dying to self and no self-denial but one where the church centers around how we can have a better life and what's in it for me.

I would encourage you to read the book if the Holy Spirit is showing you that this may be in your heart. Much of the church has been fed this type of theology for the last 30 years but it has spread like wildfire over the last 15 years.

Here's a couple of quotes from the beginning of the book.

J. Vernon McGee said

Quote:
-----This is a book that should have been written ten years ago, and the message should be gotten to every conservative pastor in this nation today. It has a very important message for this hour.

Leonard Ravenhill said

Quote:
-----This psychoheresy is a menace and threatening to become a plague in the pulpit. Your trumpet voice is needed against what I think is nothing less than heresy.

I included the quotes since these two preachers are on SI but I didn't know they had endorsed the book until after I had purchased it.

Re: Mix of Christian principles with psychology - posted by habakkuk3 (), on: 2005/12/7 8:36

I don't read the local paper much any more because the Lord won't allow it. I did however see this article today in our local paper, the Washington Post entitled "Help From Above In Times of Trouble, Growing Numbers of People Take Comfort in Faith-Based Therapy." This is a very serious problem in America today and I pray the Holy Spirit will give you discernment if you happen to read this.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/12/02/AR2005120202287.html>

Re: Mix of Christian principles with psychology, on: 2005/12/7 14:42

From the article.

Quote:
-----More to the point, she added, there is a widespread perception that mainstream psychologists and psychiatrists are hostile to religion. Freud famously described religion as an "obsessional neurosis."

Another influential psychologist, Albert Ellis, wrote that "devout, orthodox, or dogmatic religion (or what might be called religiosity) is significantly correlated with emotional disturbance. . . . The . . . devoutly religious person tends to be inflexible, closed, intolerant, and unchanging."

Anyone engaging with a psychologist, has to know they are not going to deal with your sin. God does that...

But, there are a lot of things they can deal with better than many a Christian who has not gone through with God on the point the client is ready to tackle.

Referring to the above quote, psychologists were traditionally taught that 'religion' was an avoidance device, and so a) it suited the agnostic, atheist or evolutionist down to the ground to be able to refuse a believer treatment on those grounds and b) it is not news that emotional needs move people towards inflexibility, as they try to create a false security (by being religious), round themselves.... this is a spontaneous reaction which most people don't realise they are doing - and churches are full of people who have done this, when really, they need 'permission to be needy' *in church*... (!)

Quote:
-----I pray the Holy Spirit will give you discernment

Would you care to elaborate on what you hoped readers would discern?

Re: psychoheresy - posted by habakkuk3 (), on: 2005/12/7 15:30

Sure Dorcas, I'm still reading the book but I'll answer your question.

The mix or the "amalgamania" (as referenced in the book) of Biblical principles and psychology is a very dangerous mix and is pervasive throughout the U.S.

J. Vernon McGee said "So-called Christian psychology is secular psychology clothed in pious platitudes and religious rhetoric." What the authors say is that psychology is not really a science but rather a religion. (There's an extensive historical basis for this.)

Psychology primarily focuses on self-fulfillment while a true walk with Christ requires self-denial. The two things are polar opposites.

Since we were taught in the American culture "to be all you can be" and this is embraced in psychology, it takes some discernment in the Spirit to recognize this in our hearts. The mixing of the two things has directly lead to many problems in the church. In my opinion, it's directly lead to a church that is trying to find itself, rather than to find Jesus. It's lead the church into self-indulgence, rather than cross carrying. The problem is much more prevalent now than when the book was initially published in 1987.

Here's another quote from the book that may help provide some understanding. **"Rather than looking at life through the lens of the Bible, he looks at the Bible through the lens of psychology."**

The reason I'm reading this particular book is to have a better understanding of psychoheresy and make sure that this mix is not in my heart given my extensive background in many of the various techniques. There are a number of other books on this topic but this is the one I was led to read.

I pray that helps.

Re: psychoheresy, on: 2005/12/7 15:59

Thanks for your answer. I too pray you find what you're looking for.

But, having been a serious sceptic against psychology myself, I (some years ago) decided to look at the Bible to see how God deals with people to draw them to Himself, and I found that the principles which work in psychology, are all already in the Bible.

(I'll be interested to hear whether any of your reading matter has examined the this aspect of God's dealings with us.)

Now, I say that advisedly, because I am very uncompromising - probably having been brought up with rank compromise - and am not now prepared to think of psychology as irredeemable - because the root of word - like we very carefully analyse with words which are in the Bible - is perfectly harmless..... only what's it's come to represent in terms of compromise with truth, compromise with God, compromise with souls, compromise with the best interests of the individual (and so on) has given it a bad name. And that bad name was well-deserved.

That said, the actual dynamics of helping a person face genuine difficulties without harming them irrevocably, is being practised in modern branches of psychology, successfully, where the aim is to preserve life.... remove pressures....

I should make clear, I am not suggesting that a Christian who goes to a psychologist should now stop praying, stop believing, and hand their soul over to the psychologist! I'm sure some people are in such need of support - have been so beaten up by their experience of life - that they just want someone to take over and 'do it all' for them - which, if the psychologist has any usefulness at all, is the very last thing which will happen. But, Christians are like this, and it is only as we are caused (by God) to face the truth about our needs, that He can gently lead us towards answers - and these are not all punitive. It is not *all* self-denial.....

Re: - posted by habakkuk3 (), on: 2005/12/7 20:08

You're welcome Dorcas.

Will share some thoughts once I go through the book. My view before I read the book was that psychology was a form of religion and this book is articulating it much better than I could and confirming it. When mixing Christian principles with psychology, one ends up trusting in something other than Jesus. Jesus is the one that is breaking sin in my life, not my own strength nor some particular form of psychology.

I could read a self-help book in my pagan days and a Christian self-help book now and they would be nearly identical, except the Christian book would most likely twist the scriptures a bit. Don't you believe there's something wrong with that?

The question we often ask ourselves in our fellowship when we're in a trial the question is raised "Is Jesus enough?" So when I'm tired and frustrated and depressed or whatever the issue is do I run to Jesus or do I run to the doctor and ask him to medicate me? Do I run to the credit card because I have no money?

I don't believe the Christian life is all about self-denial but rather following Jesus. As I do that I have to bring everything to him. There's almost no self-denial among those who say they're born again in the Western world. They spent their money the same way, have the same entertainment needs, and have a slightly higher rate of divorce than the pagan. So there's obviously something wrong with the church and this appears to me to be one component.

Luk 9:23 And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

I'm not trying to debate your particular views but merely articulating my own. Sorry I was only going to write a couple of sentences but got carried away. :-)