

MBC MEN'S STUDY: LEADERSHIP 5

Class 1: Biblical Counseling Foundations

- Before getting into the book, here is the lay out the framework for our five-month men's study class.
- **Jan 16th**: Review *Psychobabble* and look over the first two chapters of *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands* workbook. The goal of the class is to see the ungodly roots of psychology and why the Bible stands as the only material a believer should look to.
- **Feb 20th**: Lessons 3–6 from the study guide and chapters 5–8 in the reading.
- **Mar 20th**: Lessons 7–8 from the study guide and chapters 9–10 in the reading.
- **April 10th**: Lessons 9–10 from the study guide and chapters 11–12 in the reading.
- **May 1st**: Lessons 11–12 from the study guide and chapters 13–14 in the reading.

PURPOSE OF THIS CLASS

- The main purpose of this class is for each of you to be convinced in your hearts and minds that the Bible is fully sufficient and the only means by which God saves and sanctifies people in the image of Christ.
- There will be a brief and concise historical overview of how the church was inundated with psychology and how it was able to turn that around, to some degree.
- As stated last month, this is not a professional course to teach you to do something that is out of the normal workings of the church. Rather it is to better equip you to accomplish what the Lord has purposed in His Word so that the church may grow, and believers be edified.
- It is very important not to divorce what we have learned so far with what we are going to learn over the next several months. This is especially true regarding what you have learned in systematic theology.
- What you believe about man (anthropology) will come to bear heavily when you are counseling/discipling someone. How you view them as sinners will lead to what you say to them.
- Your thoughts on the purpose and place of the Bible (Bibliology) are going to be front and center.
- Sin (hamartiology), salvation (soteriology) and every other systematic will be put to use when you are meeting and talking with people. Even eschatology will be in view as you are encouraging someone that this life is not all there is, but Christ is going to bring His people home and judgment to evil doers.

REVIEW OF PSYCHOBABBLE

Chapters 1–5

- These first five chapters give us some insight into the inner workings of a professional psychiatrist.
- We learn that the gospel is not accepted (even when it bears fruit) and that those in power desire to see people in programs for their life...not actually getting better.
- “The director informed me that if I agreed to leave Christianity out of my work, he would forget about this incident. He would be happy to transfer Immanuel to a “chronic” hospital. After a few rounds of shock treatments, all this would be forgotten!”¹
 - I think this is something that we do not really understand as “outsiders” to this industry.

As challenges like Covid-19 and the reckoning on racism continue to take a toll on Americans’ mental health, it brings new urgency to the long-standing issues like the cost of accessibility of care. Spending on mental health treatment and services reached \$225 billion in 2019, according to an Open Minds Market Intelligence Report.

That number, which is up 52% since 2009, includes spending on things like therapy and prescription medications as well as stays in psychiatric or substance abuse rehabilitation facilities. In fact, depression alone is estimated to account for \$44 billion in losses to workplace productivity, according to a recent report from Tufts Medical Center and One Mind at Work.² (National Alliance of Mental Health)

- While I certainly would not say that all mental health care workers are *in it for the money*, our society is geared towards just that end. The perceived mental health issues in America is one of the largest legal businesses that exists and if you want to make some money, you just need a diagnosis.
- \$71 billion...The amount spent to treat **depressive disorders**—the costliest among mental health and substance abuse disorders. Depressive disorders were the **sixth-most-costly** health condition overall, behind diabetes mellitus (\$101.4 billion), ischemic heart disease (\$88.1 billion), low back and neck pain (\$87.6 billion), hypertension (\$83.9 billion) and injuries due to falls (\$76.3 billion).³
- The reason I bring these numbers to your attention is after reading this book, especially the first chapter, I hope you understand that many in that industry are not looking for a cure but for a steady stream of revenue.

¹ Richard Ganz, *Psychobabble*, p. 17 (Wheaton: Crossway, 1993).

² <https://www.nami.org/Press-Media/In-The-News/2021/What-you-need-to-know-about-the-cost-and-accessibility-of-mental-health-care-in-America?feed=In-the-news>

³ <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2017/03/numbers>

How long is too long to stay in “professional” therapy?

- Sure, someone stuck in their dependency may stay in therapy for a longer period of time, but if the therapist is worth their salt they'll make the health of the relationship a primary focus of treatment. Furthermore, I believe there is such a thing as *healthy dependency in therapy*. I hope the client can rely on the therapist as a stable, healthy relationship to lean on in times of need as a source of empowerment, not a power drain.⁴
- This quote from *Psychology Today* blatantly and unashamedly shows that a primary focus of therapy is for the therapist and client to have a healthy relationship and for the client to rely on them.
- Biblical counseling is the exact opposite. Our hope is that the person coming to us for help will find their *source of empowerment* from the Word of God alone.
 - Of course the counselor is there to point them in that direction, but ultimately the desire is be able to set that counselee free to live a life which is dependent on God and lived for the glory of God.
- *So how long is too long? The answer depends on whether you're seeking therapy based on **the illness model of therapy or the wellness model.***
 - *In the illness model, going to therapy is like going to your physician. People come to therapy to alleviate a disorder or symptoms and treatment lasts as long as those unpleasant symptoms exist, from a few weeks to a few years. If you are symptom free and that's all you wanted out of therapy, you're all done.*
 - *In the wellness model, going to therapy is like going to the gym. You go to make a good life better, to reach your potential, and to prevent problems in the future. There's no mandatory end date for that. Imagine someone saying they've gone to the gym regularly for ten years. What's your response: "You're done! Enough already!"? Or is it: "Good for you, I admire your perseverance and focus on wellness and prevention?"⁵*
- This doctor gives the two basic models for secular counseling...alleviate some symptoms or make a good life better by reaching your potential.
- There is nothing about the heart issues or really anything objective. If we were to go by these two outlines, everyone should be in some sort of therapy for the rest of their lives.
- Once again, I am showing you these things so that you will have an understanding of what it means when someone comes to you who has “already been to a professional.” Also, these two understandings of “mental health” are what is pushed in the world today.
- These are the mindsets and attitudes that people are bringing into the church that we must be able to not only detect but also show that there is a more excellent way.

⁴ <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/in-therapy/201403/how-long-is-too-long-in-psychotherapy>

⁵ Ibid.

History of psychology and its influence in the church

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939)

- One of the founding fathers of contemporary psychiatric thought and therapy.
- Started with neurology and used opium to try and ease patients' pain, he eventually became addicted to it himself, lost funding and decided to pursue the profitable realm of psychiatric counseling.
- Freud saw man as an instinct-ruled beast (animal) dominated by sex drive and aggression.
- Freud also believed that it was man's past events (even events he was not aware of) which governed his present actions.
- The patient would lay on the couch and say whatever came to mind...thus Freud is the father of psychoanalysis
- Freud would tell patients they were not responsible for their behavior but that something or someone else caused them to be this way
- There is no more damaging thought than this, as the Bible says, 'for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.' (Rom. 3:23) Man is held accountable for their own sin and any foundational thought that starts differently can only end with a detrimental outcome.

Carl Jung (1875-1961)

- A disciple of Freud but they split because of Jung's involvement in the spirit realm.
- He is the father of analytic psychology, where the patient is to look inside themselves through various means such as dreams, imagination, etc.
- He also pushed individuation, which describes the manner in which a thing is identified as distinguished from other things.
- This counseling technique helps the client reach one's collective unconscious.
- This is therapeutic because it helps the person become whole
- He also started the introvert vs. extrovert
- It was one of the ways to put people into categories and separating them
- This is in the church today under the guise of visualization where people are told to visualize something (usually healing) and then it will become true.

B. F. Skinner (1904-1990)

- The father of behavioral therapy with an emphasis in positive reinforcement
- Controlled people by using various techniques and repetitions to have the outcome which is desired
- Within the school, he believed that teachers needed to modify the child's behavior with positive reinforcement and sought to eliminate punishment.
- He was a humanist who thought looking out for number one was top priority

Norman Vincent Peale (1898-1993)

- A Dutch Reformed pastor (and 33-degree Free Mason) who brought Jung's visualization into mainline Christianity, and his book *The Power of Positive Thinking*
- He transformed countless church-goers to believe that they had the power within themselves to make the changes needed or wanted.
- He said, as a Christian minister "It's not necessary to be born again. You have your way to God, I have mine. I found eternal peace in a Shinto shrine ... I've been to Shinto shrines and God is everywhere. ... Christ is one of the ways! God is everywhere."
- "Peale developed a fascination with psychiatry as an answer, or partial answer, to his congregant's problems. While he was at Marble, he teamed up with a Freud-trained psychiatrist, Dr. Smiley Blanton, to begin a religious-psychiatric clinic in the church basement. They wanted to respond to the psychological needs of their congregation and especially the deep-rooted effects of the Great Depression. In 1951 this clinic was organized into the American Foundation of Religion and Psychiatry, with Peale as president and Blanton as executive director."
- Those who follow him today are Robert Schuller, Oprah, Joel Osteen, T.D. Jakes, Tony Robbins, and many more who combine the power of the mind and faith.
- There are many other men and women who have influenced today's thinking within the church that we must be aware of. Not everything that is in the church has Biblical roots and all forms of counselling must be viewed through the lens of Scripture.

*Charles Darwin (1809–1882)*⁶

- Ending where it all began. In 1859 Darwin would publish *On the Origin of Species* and the whole world would never be the same; especially the world of counseling (both Biblical and secular).
- Darwin at first shocked religious Victorian society by suggesting that animals and humans shared a common ancestry. However, his nonreligious biology appealed to the rising class of professional scientists, and by the time of his death evolutionary imagery had spread through all of science, literature, and politics.
- It would not take long, even before the end of the 19th century, for the “new” theory of evolution to come to the shores of America.
- This theory would not only be accepted among America’s theological elite at Princeton Seminary, but it would be taught as fact and disseminated throughout the churches.

Jay Adams

- After being put in charge of Pastoral Studies at Westminster Theological Seminary, Adams said “everything he could find written from a Christian perspective and found only Freudian and Rogerian dogma. He studied secular texts and sought to find useful material for the Christian counselor. “I began to conclude that I was too obtuse to understand what I was reading in those books,” he recalled later. “All the other seminaries were able to integrate these secular, pagan concepts in their curriculum, but I could not see how to do it.”⁷
- In 1965, Adams was offered the opportunity to accompany O. Hobart Mowrer for six weeks. Mowrer was a past president of the American Psychological Association and had written a book Adams had found to be provocative. In it, Mowrer, an atheist, asked the question, “Has evangelical Christianity sold its birthright for a mess of psychological pottage?”
- While Adams was grateful for the opportunity to observe Mowrer that summer, he stood far off from Mowrer’s behaviorism. “Mowrer was skilled at throwing stones through the psychologists’ windows,” Adams would later say, “but he had nothing to replace the broken glass to keep the bugs out.”
- That summer with Mowrer was eye-opening for Adams. The reason he could not make secular psychological concepts integrate with the Scriptures was because they did not integrate! As a result of this epiphany, Adams was able to set aside the current psychological dogmas and focus on what the Scriptures had to say about people and their problems.
- When *Competent to Counsel* was published in 1970, it turned the Christian counseling world upside down. In it, Adams demonstrated how the three primary secular psychological systems—those of Freud, Rogers, and Watson/Skinner—stood in opposition to the Scriptures and must be rejected by Christian counselors

⁶<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Charles-Darwin/On-the-Origin-of-Species>

⁷ <https://nouthetic.org/about/jay-adams/>

FORMS OF COUNSELING PREVELANT IN THE CHURCH

Christian Counselling

- Christians who rely—to one degree or another—on the counseling insights of secular people have been called integrationists, Christian counselors, and Christian psychologists—among other things.
- Christian counseling may include pastoral counseling, psychology, discipleship, training, therapeutic counseling, family counseling, career counseling, as well as other approaches to the helping process.
- Just as in Genesis 3, Eve added to the Word of God, verse 3 “...but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat from it *or touch it*, or you will die.’”
- She also did not believe the Word of God, He said that they would die but Satan said in verse 4 “You surely will not die!” Not only did she misrepresent God, but she did also not trust His promise.
- This is what those who try and add things to counseling (psychology, self-help, various programs, etc.) are in actuality doing. They are taking man’s thoughts and adding them to what God had said...they are turning their backs on the sufficiency of Scripture for Biblical counseling.

3 Areas Where Biblical and Christian Counselors Agree

- Both are generally conservative and our brothers and sisters in Christ.
- Both seek to care for and comfort people who are genuinely hurting.
- Both believe that psychologists can make accurate observations.

Where they disagree

- The necessity of secular counseling techniques
- The assumption that it is necessary to add secular counseling techniques to biblical ones in order to provide the best help for struggling people.
- That the Bible is a sufficient counseling resource
 - Christian counselors believe that secular counseling strategies are a necessary adjunct to the Bible.
- The differences in practice between the various forms of counseling are theological.
- “The 5 Love Languages” by Gary Chapman probably the most widely used.
- This focuses on how you need to be loved so you feel loved.
- This is classic psychology with its focus on self and not on the Lord or others.

Christian Psychology

- Because psychology has over 200 various forms, many which contradict one another, it is impossible to nail down one main method. Most psychologists simply choose one way they feel to be the best and go with it.
- Behavioral therapy
 - The study of animals to try and figure out how man works
- Cognitive analytical therapy/Cognitive behavioral therapy/Cognitive therapy
 - No moral standard, no right and wrong...just change thinking to what makes you happy
- Family therapy
- Gestalt Therapy⁸
 - Gestalt therapy is a client-centered approach to psychotherapy that helps clients focus on the present and understand what is really happening in their lives right now, rather than what they may perceive to be happening based on past experience.
 - Instead of simply talking about past situations, clients are encouraged to experience them, perhaps through re-enactment. Through the gestalt process, clients learn to become more aware of how their own negative thought patterns and behaviors are blocking true self-awareness and making them unhappy.
- Client centered, humanistic attempts to have the person 'heal' themselves
- Hypnotherapy
- Integrative approaches
- Multimodal therapy
- Neuro-linguistic programming (NLP)
- Person-centered counselling
- Psychoanalysis
- Psychodynamic Counselling
- Relationship counselling
- Solution-focused brief therapy
- Many diagnosis's that come from therapists or counselors without a Biblical foundation are not real diagnoses at all but simply describing the problem in technical terms.
- They will either give some general symptoms which we all suffer from, or they will simply say that there is something else wrong which is not quantifiable.
- The real issue is that they cannot tell you why the symptoms exist.

⁸ <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapy-types/gestalt-therapy>

- Most Christian Psychology or Christian Counsellors are “Christian” because of their ethics/morals or because they use Biblical principles.

Biblical Counselling

- For our purposes in this class, we are going to define Biblical counseling as using the Bible in wise and appropriate ways to bring God-glorifying change to God’s people. (Joel James).
- I like this definition because of its simplicity, focus and scope of intent: Simple, just use the Bible.
- Focus, to bring God-glorifying change...Scope of intent, God’s people.
- If this is our working definition, then we need to fully understand these three aspects before we begin counselling.

Firstly, simply use the Bible.

Doctrine of inspiration

- The Holy Spirit worked through the individual personalities and different styles of the human authors so that they composed and recorded God’s inspired Word to man. Inspiration extends to the very selection of the words of Scripture (2 Pet 1:20-21, 2 Tim 3:16-17).

Doctrine of inerrancy

- The Scriptures are absolutely without error in any part in the original (Ps 19:7-9; Is 30:8; Matt. 5:18, John 10:35; 17:17; 2 Tim 3:16). As a result, the Word is alive (Heb 4:12), what God uses to accomplish His purposes (Is 55:10-11), and saves souls (James 1:18; 1 Pet 1:23) and changes lives (2 Tim 3:16-17).

Interpretation of the Word

- Each passage of Scripture contains only one correct interpretation, namely that intended by the author (2 Pet 3:16). This meaning must be determined by employing the literal-grammatical-historical method of interpretation through diligent study (2 Tim 2:15) and dependence on the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 2:12; 1 John 2:27). Any legitimate application of a passage of Scripture, of which there are many, must be based on the one correct interpretation.

Sufficiency (authority) and potency of scriptures.

- The Word is completely sufficient for all of life and ministry (2 Pet 1:3) and is that which alone determines what to believe and how to live to the glory of God (Acts 17:11). It stands as absolute truth to be known and applied in every area of life. As such, Scripture is the very foundation upon which the church is built and comprises not only the content of the message that the church proclaims but also the methods by which the church operates.

Secondly, bring God-glorifying change

Biblical counseling is about sanctification.

- “...but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.” 2 Peter 3:18
- What Peter was trying to get his readers to understand is that in order to grow in their faith it takes grace and knowledge—both, of course, applied to daily living—in order to grow. And growth, as one learns more about Christ and becomes more like Him, is what sanctification is all about.
- *Growth comes about as a believer learns more of the Christian faith and is helped by God to practice it. More and more he progressively comes to walk as he should (not, in this life without failures, of course). But if one is a true believer, he grows. He will change. He can because he is a new creation. Sanctification is not “on the spot,” as one modern preacher recently said. Nor does it come about without effort: studying and prayerfully applying scriptural truth. It is the result of knowing God’s truth about putting off the old sinful ways and replacing them with new biblical ones that please God. Growth is a sign of life—in this case spiritual life. No growth—no life.*

Thirdly, Biblical counseling is meant for God’s people

- “But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.” 1 Corinthians 2:14
- If we truly believe that the natural man cannot understand the things of God then it is of the utmost importance to make sure someone is born again before Biblical counseling.
- If we attempt to use/teach Biblical principles to those who are unsaved, we are simply attempting to reform the flesh and will fall into legalism.
- The regenerate person will (though it may take time) respond to Scripture as the Holy Spirit will bring conviction upon the person.