

Lesson 4: Comparison of Counseling Models

Introduction

Why study secular counseling models?

- Because our society is permeated with _____, not _____ that come from the field of psychology. It is helpful for us to understand the nature of those beliefs so that we can be informed witnesses to the world (Acts 17:22-31).
- Because many pastors, Christian counselors, and believers (either knowingly or unknowingly) _____ the beliefs of psychology as true. It is important for us to be able to recognize the false teachings of psychology when they are presented and discern truth from error (Acts 17:11; 1 Cor 14:29; Col 2:8; 1 Thess 5:20-21; 1 John 4:1, 6).

I. The Fundamentals of Secular Counseling (aka Secular Psychology)

See Appendix B: Comparing Various Counseling Models

II. The Fundamentals of Christian Counseling (aka Integrated Counseling)

A. Reasons given for integrated counseling

1. All truth is God's truth.
2. The Bible doesn't speak to many areas that concern psychologists.
3. They're extremely intelligent professionals who have given their lives to helping others.

B. Two views on General and Special Revelation

1. A *biblical* view of General and Special Revelation

- a. Defining terms: “general” and “special” refer to _____, whereas “revelation” refers to _____.

General Revelation - means that God has to _____ people (general/scope)
_____ (revelation/content).

This category is intended to convey how God revealed to all people something that they could not otherwise have known about Himself. Namely, that He is a merciful, all-powerful Creator, and that man is a sinful created being that stands guilty before Him. It is sufficient to condemn, but not to save (Rom 1:18–21; 2:12–16; Ps 19:1–6).

Special Revelation – God has revealed to _____ people (special/scope)
_____ (revelation/content).

This category is intended to convey how God revealed the way man can be restored to a right relationship with their Creator and experience all that he was created to be, namely, through the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is sufficient to save, but only if it (the gospel) is known and embraced (Ps 19:7–11; 2 Tim 3:16; Heb 1:1–2; 2 Pet 1:21).

- b. The nature of their _____

- 1) General revelation is authoritative because it is God’s revelation. Through this revelation God can, and does, hold people accountable for His existence, rule and authority.
- 2) Special revelation is what Scripture claims as the _____ authority.
(Ps 19:1-11; John 17:17; 2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:3)

2. The *Christian Counselor’s* view of General and Special Revelation

- a. “General” (they say) refers to _____, and “revelation” refers to _____
_____.

- 1) Christian Counselors say, “Because of general revelation, God has revealed general truths about facts in nature, which can be obtained by anyone (these facts would include things like how the brain works, how neurons work, etc.). Man, then, has the ability to discover this divine revelation outside of God’s revealed Word.”

- 2) Christian Counselors say, “Special Revelation means that God has revealed special truths in the Bible regarding _____ (the gospel of Jesus Christ).
- b. The nature of their authority – general revelation (they say) is equal to, or in some ways _____ to special revelation.

III. Biblical Counseling

A. A brief biblical defense for refusing to integrate

1. What fellowship has _____ with _____? (2 Cor 6:14-16)
2. The church has been warned about people that will _____ from the truth (1 Tim 1:3-8, 18-20; 6:20)
3. The _____ is necessary for lasting biblical change (see last week’s notes).
4. The church is responsible to counsel each other:
 - a. Pastors (Eph 4:11, 12; Luke 6:39-40)
 - b. Elders (1 Pet 5:1-4; Acts 20:17-35)
 - c. _____ Christian (Rom 15:14; 1 Thess 5:12-14; Col 3:16; Gal 6:1-3; Heb 3:12-14)
5. The church has been charged to preach the Word. (2 Tim 3:16–4:4)

B. Implications of a biblical view of counseling

1. Every believer is responsible to counsel one another using the Bible.
2. Every believer must see themselves (at a minimum) as an informal biblical counselor.
3. Every believer is responsible to grow in their ability to use the Bible accurately.

Just because the Bible is sufficient doesn’t mean the counselor is competent

APPENDIX A: MAJOR SCHOOLS OF SECULAR PSYCHOLOGY

The following five schools of psychology have a profound influence on our culture and on the thinking and behavior of millions in our society including the church. This is exactly the kind of false religion that the Bible condemns.

A. **Depth Psychology** – Sigmund Freud (1856 - 1939); Carl Jung (1875 - 1961).

Freud was an atheist, antagonistic toward the gospel. He developed his beliefs from the philosophical assumptions of Charles Darwin (1809 - 1882), Haeckel (1834 - 1919), Lamarch (1744 - 1829), and 18th century European Enlightenment thinking with its faith in the power of human reason.

Gary Almy, M.D., in his book *How Christian Is Christian Counseling?* has observed six fundamental pillars of Freud's psychoanalysis:

1. **Environmental Determinism:** Human mental and emotional difficulties are the result of improper external environmental influences. The Bible would say these difficulties are a result of sinful responses in a sinful world.
2. **Psychic Discovery:** there exists in each person a "dynamic unconscious" that determines and controls our every thought and action.
3. **Insight:** Access to the unconscious is essential and fully possible. To reach maturity, we must discover and understand the content of our unconscious to control its influence over us. The Bible would say that it is God who has the insight.
4. **The Expert:** A specially trained and experienced (and expensive) therapist is needed to assist the patient in the quest for insight. Romans 15:14 claims that we (stronger brothers) are all able.
5. **Self-Discovery:** People can solve their own problems without the help of God or any other supernatural source. The Bible makes it clear that it is God who holds the answers (Isa 9:6; Ps 73:1; Ps 121).
6. **The Pleasure Principle:** Freedom from guilt, shame, fear, anxiety, and suffering is the goal of psychotherapy. Suffering and discomfort are to be avoided at all costs — pleasure is to be pursued at all costs. The Bible tells us that pleasure is not the answer (Eccl 12:7-11) and that we are to live our lives for His glory (2 Cor 5:9 and 1 Cor 10:31).

These six foundational pillars run throughout all forms of Insight Oriented Psychotherapy.

Kernel of truth: Something does cause us to do what we do. Pain and Suffering are powerful stimuli. We do need help.

B. Behaviorism - Ivan Pavlov (1849 - 1936); John Watson (1878 - 1958); B.F Skinner (1904 - 1990)
Some general comments about B.F. Skinner (known as an atheist): Rather than analyzing dreams or searching for hidden events in the brain (Freud), he went into the lab and experimented with mice and pigeons. He said it is time to demythologize psychology. Concepts like mind, attitudes, freedom, dignity, etc. not only impede progress but also are spooky language and should be eliminated. A truly scientific approach acknowledges the existence only of what can be observed and measured, namely, behavior (something which Paul also ran into as described in 1 Corinthians 2:9). The following is a list of just some of the basic tenets of Skinner and the biblical response to his views and in some cases the kernels of truth, which exist as they often do in psychology.

Behaviorism, introduced in the U. S. by John Watson, is dramatically opposed to Freudian depth psychology. Behaviorism teaches that instead of studying a person's life history, their unconscious mind and thought processes, psychologists should only study and seeks to change observable behavior.

1. B.F. Skinner: Man is just another animal (the highest yet in existence). He simply responds to the way he was programmed or conditioned. So you train him the same way you would a dog (immediate rewards vs. long range rewards).

The Bible says: We are made in His image. God is not a dog or cat. Animals are not called to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ and cannot be persuaded by the Holy Spirit to live according to His Word.

Kernel of truth: The Bible has much to say about learning and training. In fact, one of the few things we are told to do for our children as parents, is to "train them up in the way they should go." And, though we have certainly learned to respond in certain ways due to parental training and modeling, had we not had the sinful nature in the first place, what would need to be unlearned or reprogrammed? The issues of life spring from the heart and it is the heart that needs to be regenerated, not reprogrammed.

2. B.F. Skinner: Man is the product of his environment and he is strictly determined by it. He is not free in any sense of that term. So, man cannot be held responsible when he is simply a result of the environment that he was raised in. The solution is to rearrange the environment so as to reprogram the counselee's responses through rewards and aversive controls.

The Bible says: Simply put, man is held responsible. (Rom 6:23; Luke 16)

Kernel of truth: Are we saying that man has no influence upon another man? No. The environment — sinful as it is — has much influence on man. What we are trying to cue in on is the idea of determinism. Though we are affected, the environment does not determine us. However, making changes in the environment may be useful in counseling. Reward and punishment are biblical concepts. But, if we are trained like an animal we will gravitate towards avoidance of suffering and gain of pleasure. (See Heb 11:13, 24-26 – immediate

gratification is unsatisfying). What's missing for Skinner and Christian counselors who buy into Skinner's methods is sanctification. It is our desire to grow in Christ and into His likeness as we respond when He prompts our hearts. Suffering and sacrificing of pleasure are part of the believer's sanctification.

How is it that Christians have been duped into the acceptance of this unbiblical teaching? The answer is this: when we do not think theologically, we can be duped into anything. So many people have been put into positions of counseling without any and/or enough theological training so that they have compromised perhaps without even knowing it. Many of the self-help books found in the Christian bookstore are littered with weak exegesis of scripture, (i.e., you have to love yourself before you can love others; a low self-esteem is why the child behaves poorly; Boundaries)

C. Positive Potential (humanism) - Carl Rogers (1902-1987); Erich Fromm (1900-1980); Abraham Maslow (1908-1970)

Positive Potential is also called “third force psychology” and it received its name because it rejects behaviorism (because it denies man's freedom and turns control over to the environment) and Freudianism (because it focuses too much on the individual apart from society).

1. Humanism teaches: Man is essentially good at the core and perfectible. He just needs to live up to his potential. Society and culture are the real culprits and responsible for evil. Man's environment has hindered his inner goodness from maturing and developing.

From Carl Rogers: “For myself, though I am very well aware of the incredible amount of destructive, cruel, malevolent behavior in today's world — from the threats of war to the senseless violence in the streets — I do not find that this evil is inherent in human nature.” And, “experience leads me to believe that it is cultural influences which are the major factor in our evil behaviors.”

From Erich Fromm: “The Christian interpretation of the story of man's act of disobedience as his ‘fall’ has obscured the clear meaning of the story. The biblical text does not even mention the word ‘sin’; man challenges the supreme power of God, and he is able to challenge it because he is potentially God.” *You Shall be as Gods*, p.23

From Abraham Maslow: “As far as I know we just don't have any intrinsic instincts for evil.”

The Bible says: Before Christ, man is called a child of the devil and worthy of death.

Kernel of truth: Whatever potential man has is wrapped in what Christ can do in and through those who are his children. The power of sin is broken in the life of the believer so it is true that he now can overcome. But, it is only in Christ that that can happen and only through the power of the Holy Spirit, not man's power — it is His power in us, not me.

2. Carl Rogers: Counseling should be non-directive. You just repeat back and get the counselee to come up with the answers through the goodness and potential that he has in himself. A typical Rogerian counselor would reflect back to the counselee that "You feel that such and such should be done," or, "You feel that this and that are true."

The Bible says: These words are serious mistakes because they confuse meanings and muddy the waters when trying to unravel and then give direction. Rogers has a fundamental orientation towards feelings. He thus confuses thoughts, opinions, beliefs, convictions, and attitudes with feelings. They are not feelings. This is serious error. If I say I feel inferior or stupid, what can you say to change that "feeling"? Nothing, because it is not a feeling. It is a judgment or conviction or belief. So, what should you do? Simply restate, "Why do you think you are stupid or inferior?" What reasons do you have to think that?

Bible-counseling is directive. Nouthesia implies scriptural direction — to give advice or direction, warn (Rom, 15:14; 1 Thess 5:14). Therefore, we must know the Word and develop those skills by which we may confront others (gently, in love) directly in deep concern (Gal 6:1).

Kernel of truth: Certainly, asking questions and listening to a counselee is important (Prov 18:13). However, the answers are not found inside us. They are found in Him (2 Pet 1:3,4) and His Word.

"All that was sufficient for 2,000 years is suddenly deficient." Richard Ganz, *Psychobabble*

3. Carl Rogers' view of biblical counseling: He would consider biblical counseling to be dangerous because it stresses worthlessness (though it leads to repentance on the part of the sinner) and because it makes the Christian a totally dependent person.

The Bible says: Man was made for God (Rev 4:11) and dependent upon Him (Acts 17:28). Man was created as a dependent being. Any attempt to transform him into an autonomous being, not only constitutes rebellion against the Creator, but is bound to fail. God sustains us. We could have no existence at all without Him; we are in the palm of His hand. He decreed our every heartbeat from all eternity. "In Him we live and move and exist" (Acts 17:28).

Kernel of truth: none

4. Self is the cure: Self-actualization is the goal. Abraham Maslow states, "This occurs when a person is in touch with his inner goodness. This 'inner goodness' is relative. To a self-actualized person, 'notions of right and wrong and of good and evil are often not the conventional ones. He further states,

From **Carl Rogers:** "Since man is essentially good at the core; man needs what he calls unconditional positive self-regard."

The bottom line for the Christian regarding self-concept, self-esteem, etc.: A Christian will never be satisfied within himself until he is in the proper relationship with Christ, having a clear conscience before God and men.

D. Integrity Therapy - Positive Potential - Hobart Mowrer

1. Hobart Mowrer also was not a believer in the existence of a personal God and so, does not believe in the existence of sin against. Like Rogers, Mowrer believes that man has the potential to solve problems on his own but more in the group setting. The group holds the answers and they must be shared. It is stressed that one is honest, open and willing to confess when needed (telling one's story).

The Bible says: See Positive Potential, a., The Bible says

Kernel of truth: Fellowship and confession have their place.

2. Hobart Mowrer: Man's problems stem from bad behavior (violation of one's conscience usually by wronging another person) towards others, which has lead to clashes with those others. He therefore feels a sense of guilt for his actions and so now must confess his guilt and make restitution. Bodily contact and "reaching out" to touch another is involved. The small group environment is embraced. More expression of emotion is encouraged.

The Bible says: Counselees will never achieve a peace under this counseling because they are not taught to direct their behavior towards the God they have offended and seek restitution from Him. The Integrity Group Therapy will often have people who have graduated from the group continue to hang around the edges of the group. They are still searching. They still lack something. What they lack is true forgiveness from God Himself, once and for all. They lack the radical change that the Bible calls the new birth.

Kernel of truth: It is not good for man to be alone. Let us not forsake the assembling of ourselves together. We need to provoke one another to love and good works and to encourage one another (Heb 13:24).

3. Hobart Mowrer — with Carl Rogers — the counselee does it himself with a small assist from a wall-like counselor off of whom he bounces his own ideas. With Mowrer he does it himself along with others who are doing it themselves and who will put the pressure on him to do it, and to do it yourself, their way.

The Bible says: There is no biblical mandate to alter your view of yourself other than to deny it. The right view is found in Ephesians chapter one.

Kernel of truth: In terms of change, the believer is not passively waiting around for God to change his behavior. Sanctification is seen as a two-person experience for life. God prompts our

hearts and we respond obediently. Real change occurs in the heart of the Christian, performed by God. We simply respond to that prompting.

E. New Age Philosophy - Marianne Williamson (1952 - present); Shirley MacLaine

1. Utopia can be achieved if people evolve past their present pain and into an awareness of their higher consciousness or their own god-consciousness. Fourth force psychology can hasten the evolution of all mankind to a collective god-consciousness and ensure the perfect health of everyone.
2. Higher consciousness is the key to mental health. We suffer physically and emotionally because we have not reached a state of "higher consciousness" which is attained when we contact and commune with the god within us.

Shaki Gawain: "Every time you don't trust yourself and don't follow your inner truth, you decrease your aliveness and your body will reflect this with a loss of vitality, numbness, pain, and eventually, physical disease."

Shirley MacLaine: "Somewhere way underneath me are the answers to everything that caused anxiety and confusion in the world."

3. Meditation - The means of attaining higher consciousness.

What is God? A New Age children's book: "And if you really want to pray to God, you can just close your eyes anywhere, and think about the feeling of God, that makes you part of everything and everybody. If you can feel that feeling of God, and everybody else can feel that feeling of God, then we can all become friends together, and we can really understand who God is. So, if you really want to feel God, you can close your eyes now, and listen to your breath go slowly in and out, and think how you are connected to everything, even if you are not touching everything."

People can also reach states of higher consciousness through practices such as channeling (spirits speaking to and through an individual engaged in meditation), astrology, fire walking, ouija boards, visualization, séances, or hypnosis.

Summary Observations

- A. All the major schools of psychology (not biopsychiatry) are based on atheistic/pantheistic views of God and evolutionary views of man. Positive Potential theories are based on humanism, the belief that man is essentially good and perfectible.

- B. Most counselors today do not hold strictly to one of the above schools to the exclusion of the others. Most counselors "cut and paste" or "pick and choose" a little from each school and form their own unique philosophy of counseling.
- C. Many Christian counselors accept these secular models into their philosophy of counseling. That is why they are called integrationists. For example, Bruce Narramore, in his book *You're Something Special* said, "Under the influence of humanistic psychologists like Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow, many of us Christians have begun to see our need for self-love and self-esteem. This is a good and necessary focus."
- D. A review of these models reveals that philosophical assumptions form the foundation of all psychology. The core issues of theology, anthropology, ethics, etc. at psychology's foundation lie beyond the pale of scientific inquiry. Therefore, counseling is not an application of science and medicine but an application of a philosophical worldview.

APPENDIX B: COMPARING VARIOUS COUNSELING MODELS¹

	Instinctual	Behavioral	Positive Potential	New-Age	God's Way (Biblical)
LEADER	Freud, Jung	Pavlov, Skinner, Watson	Rogers, Fromm, Maslov, Mowrer	Williamson, MacLaine	God
MAN	Driven by instincts	Conditioned animal	Intrinsically good w/ potential within	Helpless	Created by God to glorify God
PROBLEM	Internal conflict	Environmental failure	Mind blocked	Mind blocked	Fallen sinner by choice
RESPONSIBILITY	Others	Environment	Negative thinking	Limited thinking	Man
GUILT	Result of imposed standards from others	Not important (just an animal-no evils)	Not important or even rejected	Rejected – it hinders spiritual advancement	Result of sin – man is justifiably guilty
CURE	Actualize potential	Restructure environment	Release potential within yourself	Focus on feelings to find inner solution	-Repent and believe -Justification by faith in Christ -Grow by grace in Christ
COUNSELING TECHNIQUE	-Psychoanalysis -Hypnosis -Personality testing and analysis	-Manipulation of behavior -Train to respond to reward/punishment	-Reflection of thoughts/feelings -Cee provides all their answers -Positive thinking	-Help them discover inner guide/euphoria through various techniques (breathing, repeated mantras, etc.)	-Listen -Using the Word: teach, convict, correct, train -Restoration
COUNSELOR	Expert (needed forever)	Specialist	-Teacher and educator -Insight emphasized	-Teacher and educator -Insight emphasized	Mature believer (discipler/counselor)
COUNSELING FOCUS	Liberate self	Improve self	Elevate self	Release self	-Deny self -Glorify God -Love others

¹ Adapted from BCF Ministries' *Self-Confrontation Manual* (p. 74) and Dr. John Street's Course from The Master's Seminary, 2019. Merged and adapted for presentation purposes.