

**10. Provide a biblical description of the dichotomist view of mankind. Explain the counseling implications of this doctrine with regard to the inner and outer man.**

**I. Breakdown the Question**

- A. Define and provide a biblical basis for the ‘dichotomist’ view of mankind?
- B. What about the ‘*monistic*’ or ‘*trichotomist*’ view of mankind?
- C. What are the counseling implications of this doctrine with regard to the inner and outer man?

**II. Define and provide a biblical basis for the ‘dichotomist’ view of mankind.**

**A. Definition**

1. The dichotomist view of mankind is the view that man is made of two parts, one being a physical body, and the other being the soul. This view holds the position that the ‘soul’ would encapsulate the individual’s spirit as well, rather than attempting to separate it out.
2. Lambert, “The word *dichotomy* comes from Greek and means, literally, to cut in two. This literal meaning is not ideal, since human beings are not designed to have the two aspects of their nature be cut at all. Rather, they were designed to stay together. Still, insofar as the language points to the two-sided nature of a person, it is useful.”<sup>1</sup>
3. Grudem, “How many parts are there to man? Everyone agrees that we have physical bodies. Most people (both Christians and non-Christians) sense that they also have an immaterial part—a ‘soul’ that will live on after their bodies die.”<sup>2</sup>

**B. The biblical basis for the ‘dichotomist’ view of mankind.**

1. Biblical basis for mankind having a physical body.
  - a. Adams, “When the Bible teaches that Adam was made ‘out of the dust of the ground’ (**Gen. 2:7**), it is firmly attesting man’s material nature. From the beginning, there was an identification, harmony and continuity with this world. Man is earthy, from the earth. The very name, ‘Adam,’ means ‘red (clay),’ emphasizing this fact.”<sup>3</sup>
2. The biblical basis for mankind having a soul.
  - a. Many terms are used in the bible to indicate the existence and importance of an inner man. Some of these include the soul, spirit, mind, will, heart, etc. These various descriptors, for the sake of the dichotomist view of mankind, all fall under the term soul.
3. Lambert, “When God explains what it is that makes up a human being, he says that we have both a body and a soul. In Genesis 2:7 the Bible records, “Then

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<sup>1</sup> Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 192 footnote.

<sup>2</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 472.

<sup>3</sup> Jay Adam, *A Theology of Christian Counseling*, 105.

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the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.”<sup>4</sup>

4. Lambert, “When God made the first person, he paired the physical with the spiritual, and the combination created a living person. The spiritual aspect of humanity is described as God’s own breath, which God has given to no other creature in his world.”<sup>5</sup>
5. Lambert, “A person’s dual qualities of body and soul are made clear in Matthew 10:28 where Jesus admonishes, “Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.”<sup>6</sup>
6. Verses
  - a. Job 34:14-15; Eccl 12:7; 1 Cor 7:34; 2 Cor 5:5

### III. What about the ‘*monistic*’ or ‘*trichotomist*’ view of mankind?

- A. Grudem, “Some people believe that in addition to the ‘body’ and ‘soul’ we have a third part, a ‘spirit’ that most directly relates to God. The view that man is made of three parts (body, soul, and spirit) is called trichotomy. Though this has been a common view in popular evangelical Bible teaching, there are few scholarly defenses of it today.”<sup>7</sup>
  1. Grudem, “Others have said that ‘spirit’ is not a separate part of man, but simply another term for ‘soul,’ and that both terms are used interchangeably in Scripture to talk about the immaterial part of man, the apart that lives on after our bodies die. The view that man is made up of two parts (body and soul/spirit) is called *dichotomy*.”<sup>8</sup>
- B. Lambert, “This is why I am not persuaded by the view that human beings, instead of being a union of body and soul, are actually a body, a soul, *and* spirit. This view, known as trichotomy, does not seem to understand that the Bible can use different terms to speak of the same thing. In fact, one of the passages that, to me, poses the most difficulty for this position is one of the texts proponents of trichotomy commonly use to defend their position (Heb 4:12). Trichotomists believe that this passage teaches that the soul is something different from the spirit because they are divisible by the Word of God. If we are going to create separate roles for the spirit and the soul because of this passage, then we also must make a separate role for the heart, which is also mentioned in this verse.”<sup>9</sup>
- C. Adams, “The debate about how many elements unite to form a complete human being, however, is important to counselors; to them, it is not a hairsplitting issue. Many practical differences result from the two distinct views that are held. The entire stance of Clyde Narramore, for instance, is built upon trichotomy, when he says that the body is to be treated by the physician, the spirit by the pastor, and the soul by the psychologist. That a

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<sup>4</sup> Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 191.

<sup>5</sup> Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 191.

<sup>6</sup> Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 191.

<sup>7</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 472.

<sup>8</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 472.

<sup>9</sup> Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 196.

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human being can be so readily segmented and parceled out is debatable (even were the triplex view correct). But there is no such emphasis in the Scriptures.”<sup>10</sup>

### D. What about *monism*?

1. Grudem, “Outside the realm of evangelical thought we find yet another view, the idea that man cannot exist at all apart from a physical body, and therefore there can be no separate existence for any ‘soul’ after the body dies (although this view can all for the resurrection of the whole person at some future time). The view that man is only one element, and that his body is the person, is called monism.”<sup>11</sup>

### IV. What are the counseling implications of this doctrine with regard to the inner and outer man?

- A. When God created all of mankind, he made us both with a physical body and a soul. Even a basic searching of the Scripture will leave little doubt that God sincerely cares for how we manage our bodies, and that he also cares for how we manage our souls.

1. **1 Corinthians 6:15-20** *Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, “The two will become one flesh.” But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.*

- a. Lambert, “Paul is emphasizing the teaching on sexuality in this passage, grounding his instruction against sexual immorality in a theology of the body. He affirms that our physical bodies are members of Christ (1 Cor 6:15), that sexual immorality is wrong because it is a sin against our physical bodies (1 Cor 6:18), that our physical body is a tempt of the Spirit (1 Cor 6:19), and that we must glorify God with our bodies because they are not our own but have been purchased by Jesus Christ.”<sup>12</sup>

- B. The outward actions of an individual, or the outer man, directly reflect the true nature of the heart condition of the individual, or the inner man.

1. Adams, “Man’s essential earthiness must be kept in mind at all times when counseling. All attacks upon the material creation (as such), all excuses by counselees resting upon the ground of the materiality of their human body, as some claim in order to relieve themselves of their present God-given responsibilities; he functions best in it because he was designed to function as a material being.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Jay Adams, *A Theology of Christian Counseling*, 110.

<sup>11</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 472-473.

<sup>12</sup> Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 193-194.

<sup>13</sup> Jay Adams, *A Theology of Christian Counseling*, 106.

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2. **James 2:18** *But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.*
  3. **Matt 7:15-20** *Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes or figs from thistles? So, every healthy tree bears good fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.*
    - a. **Matt 12:33-35**
  4. Lambert, “. . . God has designed human beings to be guided by their souls. God created people to work in such a way that their souls initiate the activity of their bodies. This is a clear teaching of Scripture in places like Proverbs 4:23: ‘Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.’ Solomon conveys great importance to the heart in this passage. He urges us to protect it with great care because everything we do—all of the activity of our life—flows from the heart.”<sup>14</sup>
    - a. **2 Cor 5:6-9** *So we are always of good courage We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him.*
    - b. **Col 1:9-10** *And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.*
  5. **Ephesians 4:22-24** *to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.*
- C. Our physical bodies can influence and affect our souls as well. This is a two-way street.
1. A counselee that is suffering from a life circumstance or physical ailment can find hope and comfort in this doctrine.
    - a. **2 Cor 4:16** *So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.*

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<sup>14</sup> Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 197.

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- b. “Counseling problems can be physical, spiritual, or combinations of the two. The complex interaction of body and soul, combined with our limited knowledge as human beings, may make it complicated or even impossible to identify a singular genesis of a given problem as physical, spiritual, or both. This leads to a second implication that biblical counselors must utilize and cooperate with competent medical professionals as they counsel troubled people.”<sup>15</sup>

### V. Further Resources

#### A. ACBC Approved Reading

1. **Jay E. Adams, *A Theology of Christian Counseling: More Than Redemption, The Jay Adams Library* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), 97-118.**
2. **Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling: The Doctrinal Foundations of Counseling Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 191-204.**
3. **John M. Frame, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Christian Belief* (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2013), 797-802.**
4. Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *Basic Theology* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1986), 195-200.
5. John MacArthur, ed., *Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Bible Truth* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2017), 416-423.
6. Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 3rd ed (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 475-493.
7. Paul P. Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1989), 304-307.
8. Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology, Complete ed* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 2018), 192-196.

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<sup>15</sup> Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 201.