

SESSION THREE: CONTRASTING AND COMPARING WITH PSYCHOLOGY

BRIEF HISTORY OF MODERN PSYCHOLOGY

Since the late 1800s, Modern Psychological Theory has gained wider and wider acceptance and more and more authority over more and more realms of human existence and has become the predominant paradigm for understanding and guiding human behavior. So much so that there is no area of life in which some aspect of Modern Psychological Theory does not hold sway.

MAIN SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT

From approximately 600 to 300 BCE, Greek philosophers such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle conjectured on topics such as pleasure, pain, knowledge, motivation, rationality, and mental illness—topics often discussed in psychology today.

Psychology was largely considered a branch of philosophy until the mid-1800s, when it developed as an independent scientific discipline in Germany and the United States.

BIOLOGICAL PSYCHOLOGY

Biological psychology as a scientific discipline emerged during the 18th and 19th centuries, when philosophers such as Descartes and James proposed physical models to explain animal and human behavior.

Behavioral neuroscience attempts to contribute to the understanding of mental disorders, believing those are rooted in organic, biological disorders.

STRUCTURALISM AND FUNCTIONALISM

The late 19th century marked the start of psychology as a scientific enterprise. Wilhelm Wundt, often considered the founder of psychology, started the first laboratory dedicated exclusively to psychological research in 1879.

Edward B. Titchener studied under Wundt and expanded upon his ideas to found the theory of structuralism.

Structuralism attempted to understand the mind as the sum of varying underlying parts, classifying mental structures much as chemists classified the elements of nature into the periodic table.

Functionalism, founded by William James as an alternative to structuralism, focused more attention on the functions of the mind and the ways in which it adapts to changing situations and environments.

PSYCHOANALYSIS

Psychodynamic theory is an approach to psychology that studies the psychological forces underlying human behavior, feelings, and emotions, as well as how they may relate to early childhood experience. This theory is especially interested in the dynamic relations between conscious and unconscious motivation, and asserts that behavior is the product of underlying conflicts over which people often have little awareness.

Psychodynamic psychology originated with Sigmund Freud in the late 19th century in Vienna, Austria. Freud suggested that psychological processes are flows of psychological energy (libido) within a complex brain.

Carl Jung expanded upon Freud's theories, introducing the concepts of the archetype, the collective unconscious, and individuation.

Jung was a student and colleague of Sigmund Freud, but their differences created a rift that was never mended. Freud was an atheist and a realist; Jung was a pantheist and drew influences from a broad spectrum of religious systems, especially Eastern religions. He developed a sophisticated theory of psychological or personality types and cognitive functions.

PAVLOV, WATSON, AND SKINNER: THE RISE OF BEHAVIORISM

Psychology changed dramatically during the early 20th-century as another school of thought known as behaviorism rose to dominance. Behaviorism was a major change from previous theoretical perspectives, rejecting the emphasis on both the conscious and unconscious mind. Instead, behaviorism sought to try and make psychology a more scientific discipline by focusing purely on observable behavior.

An American psychologist named John B. Watson—famous for his experiments with “Little Albert”—soon became one of the strongest advocates of behaviorism. Initially outlining the basic principles of this new school of thought in his 1913 paper *Psychology as the Behaviorist Views It*, Watson later went on to offer a definition in his classic book *Behaviorism* (1924), writing:

"Behaviorism...holds that the subject matter of human psychology is the behavior of the human being. Behaviorism claims that consciousness is neither a definite nor a usable concept. The behaviorist, who has been trained always as an experimentalist, holds, further, that belief in the existence of consciousness goes back to the ancient days of superstition and magic."

B.F. Skinner expanded on the work of Pavlov and Watson, resulting in his theory of “operant conditioning”. This is where the ideas and practices of controlling behavior through positive and negative reinforcements [read that “consequences”] was formalized. Over time, the combined ideas and practices of these men transformed psychology, education, industrial training and education, and much more at foundational levels.

Strict behaviorism totally rejects any idea of God or the immaterial aspect of humankind. There is no ultimate, eternal, infinite, personal God by whom we are created and to whom we are responsible. In fact, “we” are not persons, minds, or spiritual beings with bodies — we are merely brains in bodies. The mind is mere electrical functionings, or a “byproduct” of the electrical processes of the brain. Consequently, everything human is explainable by natural law.

HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGY

Humanistic psychology is a psychological perspective that rose to prominence in the mid-20th century. It draws on the philosophies of existentialism, phenomenology [the philosophical study of the structures of experience and consciousness], and Eastern philosophy. It is based on key presuppositions centered around the inherently good “inner nature” of man.

Names like Abraham Maslow (considered the founder of humanistic psychology), Carl Rogers, and Rollo May might be familiar to you. Their influence has had great impact on a great many aspects of our lives in both subtle and dynamic ways.

Abraham Maslow is one the great "hidden" influencers of contemporary thought and culture. Though his name has never achieved "household word" status, many of the concepts he developed and promoted are now all but taken for granted by the average person on the street.

My guess is that everyone here has been presented with Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Need and that it has been presented as scientific fact, yes?

You might be interested to know the history behind the its development and the results.

"Self-actualizers," in Maslow's view, are people who reach for and achieve a maximum degree of their inborn potential by

1. experiencing life vividly,
2. allowing the "true self" to emerge,
3. listening to their "inner voices,"
4. focusing on problems outside themselves,
5. making responsible life choices, and
6. consciously preparing for "peak experiences," or "mystical" inward encounters with a "larger reality."

All of these activities are directly associated with the higher "being needs" that occupy the upper levels of Maslow's pyramid-shaped "hierarchy of human need."

Maslow was aware that there was something extremely subjective about his conclusions and the methods he used to reach them.

Concerning his observations of Benedict, Wertheimer, and other notable "self-actualizers," he writes,

*"By ordinary standards of laboratory research ... this simply was not research at all. My generalizations grew out of my selection of certain kinds of people. Obviously, other judges are needed."*¹

As Maslow himself put it, "Human nature is not nearly as bad as it has been thought to be." Elsewhere he wrote, "The fact is that people are good. Give

¹ Ibid., 41.

people affection and security, and they will give affection and be secure in their feelings and behavior."

COGNITIVE AND COGNITIVE-BEHAVIORAL PSYCHOLOGY AND THERAPY

Cognitive psychology is the branch of psychology that focuses on the way people process information. It looks at how we process information we receive and how the treatment of this information leads to our responses/behaviors. In other words, cognitive psychology is interested in what is happening within our minds that links stimulus (input) and response (output).

Cognitive psychology is goal-oriented and problem-focused from the beginning.

All forms of cognitive psychology have these four characteristics:

1. A collaborative relationship between client and therapist.
2. The belief that psychological distress is largely the result of a disturbance in cognitive processes.
3. A focus on changing cognition to produce desired changes in emotions and/or behavior.
4. A time-limited, educational treatment that focuses on specific problems.

Though often grouped together, cognitive psychology can be divided into two areas: cognitive therapy (CT) and cognitive behavior therapy (CBT). CT and CBT are very similar in their theory and application. The difference is that **cognitive therapy** focuses on **eliminating psychological distress**, while **cognitive behavioral therapy** targets the **elimination of negative behavior** as well.

“6 PILLARS” OF PSYCHOLOGY

ATHEISM: There is no God;

DARWINISM: Man is an evolutionary accident, not intentionally created in the image of God;

MATERIALISM: Man is not material and immaterial; man has no “soul;”

NATURALISM: There is no supernatural, no supernatural beings, and no miracles; prayer avails nothing other than perhaps making one feel better;

NIHILISM: There is nothing beyond this life, nothing outside this existence; when you die, you die, and that's all there is—you simply cease to exist. There also is really no ultimate purpose or meaning to life, either.

HUMANISM: Human beings are fully capable of rising to the fullest of their potential without need of a transcendent being or of a faith system of any kind.

“6 PILLARS” OF BIBLICAL COUNSELING

Trinitarianism = There is one God who is Triune in nature;

Special Creationism = The Triune God intentionally and purposefully created everything out of nothing, including each and every human being who has, or ever will, live.

Dualism = Humans are both material (physical) and immaterial (soul/spirit);

Supernaturalism = There is an order of existence outside the natural universe that includes the God who created it and who interacts with, in, and, at times, outside the laws of nature;

Optimism = God sovereignly created the optimum universe for His ultimate best will to be accomplished;

Christianity = People are basically wicked by nature and cannot be reconciled to their Creator apart from the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Secular Model	Biblical Model
Atheism	Trinitarianism
Darwinism	Special-Creationism
Materialism	Dualism
Naturalism	Supernaturalism

Nihilism	Optimism
Humanism	Christianity

CLAIMS OF MODERN PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORY

I. Psychology is Scientific

Definition: Science is the systematically arranged knowledge of the material world which has been gathered in a four-step process:

- A. observation of phenomena;
- B. collection of data;
- C. creation of a hypothesis or theory by inductive reasoning;
- D. testing of the hypothesis by repeated observation and controlled experiment.²

Dr. R.R. Sears headed the Social Science Research Council which issued a report on psychoanalysis. The report stated that, "*Psychoanalysis relies upon techniques that do not admit to the repetition of observation, that have no self-evident or denotative validity, and that are tinged to an unknown degree with the observer's own suggestions.*"³

II. Psychology is Effective

The conclusion in 1972 of Charles B. Truax and Robert R. Carkhuff reexamination of research by Hans Eysneck in 1952 and in 1965 concluded:

² Robert M. Hazen and James Trefil, *Science Matters* (New York: Doubleday; 1990), p. 1

³ *Ibid.*, p. 202

“The evidence available now suggests that, on average, all methods of psychotherapy may be harmful as often helpful, with an average effect comparable to receiving no help at all.” ⁴

III. Psychology Provides High “Return-on-Investment”

A. High Cost of Psychotherapy

1. Free – Initial Consultation – 30 Minutes
2. \$150 – Individual Therapy – 45 Minutes
3. \$200 – Individual Therapy – 60 Minutes (that becomes 50 minutes)
4. \$250 – Individual Therapy – 90 Minutes
5. \$250 – Family Therapy – 60 Minutes
6. \$300 – Family Therapy – 90 Minutes
7. \$50-\$100 (per person) – Group Therapy – 60 Minutes
8. \$50 – Phone Consults, 15 Minutes
9. \$50 – E-Mail Consults, 15 Minutes
10. \$150 – Live On-Line Chat, 60 Minutes
11. \$250 – Off Site Parent Coaching, Door to Door, 3 hour Minimum
12. \$250 – Off Site Couples Coaching, Door to Door, 2 hour Minimum
13. \$200 – Off Site Individual Coaching, Door to Door, 2 hour Minimum
14. \$50 – Administrative Services (Letters, Forms, etc.) 15 minutes

B. Fees and Competence are Unrelated

C. The Social Costs of Psychology

1. Educational Costs

⁴ Charles B. Truax and Robert R. Carkhuff, *Toward Effective Counseling and Psychotherapy: Training and Practice* (Chicago: Aldine, 1972) p. 104

2. Judicial Costs
3. Family Costs
4. Eternal Costs

IV. Psychology is Reliable

Gary Collins, Christian psychologist and leader in the world of integrationism states:

“Whenever many different remedies are used for a disease, it usually means we know little about the disease...psychologists hold no definitive consensus on what constitutes mental illness”⁵

The secular psychological modalities—of which there are hundreds—chase a mythology: they seek an explanation that what is wrong with us is anything but sin against God, and a cure for the human condition that is anything but Christ.

Biblical wisdom, however, says, “the hearts of all people are full of evil, and there is folly in their hearts during their lives—then they die” (Ecclesiastes 9:3).

THE SUPER-SUFFICIENCY OF GOD’S WORD

As we’ve discussed before, the primary issue in Biblical counseling actually flows from the answers to a two-fold question: “What do you believe and who do you worship?”

The Biblical portrait of human psychology springs up naturally and powerfully from the pages of Scripture. It includes the Biblical concepts of personal freedom, human potential for reasoned thought and meaningful communication, and true moral accountability.

These concepts logically separate Biblical Psychology from the "human-as-animal" and "human-as-machine," deterministic paradigms of Freud and Skinner.

Biblical Counseling (or even “Biblical Psychology,” if you will) acknowledges the limited, fallen, and divided natures of human beings, logically separating it from the "self-as-God" paradigms of Jung and Rogers.

⁵ Gary R. Collins, *Can You Trust Psychology?* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1988) pp. 26-27

In sharp contrast to all the modern secular models of human psychology, Biblical Counseling recognizes and affirms our ongoing human need to humbly respond to our Lord's amazing grace, sacrificial redemption, and consistent guidance to and into the truth as God has revealed in His Holy Word.

DO WE BELIEVE?

2 Peter 1:2-3:

"Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence."

DYSFUNCTIONAL FAMILY

The term does not appear anywhere in Scripture. Psychologists and social workers define it this way: *"A dysfunctional family is a family in which conflict, misbehavior, and often child neglect or abuse on the part of individual parents occur continually and regularly, leading other members to accommodate such actions."*

Upon closer examination we find that, instead of "dysfunctional," what we have is a family in which the roles of husband and wife or parents and children are confused and/or out of order; communication has broken down; selfishness, self-centeredness, anger, unforgiveness, and unresolved bitterness abound; and shouting and verbal abuse have become normalized.

The family so described may also be an environment where sexual, physical, or other abuse or neglect exist as well. The Scriptures eloquently address each of these issues and provide God's answer for them all. By employing God's "diagnosis," we are able to discover and apply God's therapeutic [redemptive and restorative] remedy.

HOW ABOUT ANXIETY

The Psychology Model views anxiety as a normal response to human experience and survival that often is the result of unresolved trauma leaving the individual in a heightened physiological state of arousal in which certain experiences have the potential to reactivate the effects of the old trauma. This model also believes heredity plays a key role for many anxiety sufferers.

The Biblical Counseling Model views anxiety as an intense sense of fearfulness that what one most needs or is most entitled to will be denied them. It is a fearfulness of harmful potentialities, not actual realities.

Beneath this is a belief that God is not who He said He is and will not do what He has promised to do (Matthew 6:19-34; Philippians 4:6). This wrong belief results in a form of idolatry and greed that leave the heart always in want. "I must manage and control all of this or else I will not have what I want or need." The greatest of these perceived needs is a sense of being safe from loss or harm.

ANGER MANAGEMENT

One method used by those who follow Modern Psychological Theory in dealing with anger is to allow the counselee to vent his anger on a pillow or a punching bag.

They believe an angry person has an unconscious that is like a tank which needs to be drained. Drain the tank of its anger and the problem will be solved. Biblical counselors, on the other hand, know that anger comes from the fearful and unforgiving heart of the person and that venting that anger results in unrighteousness (James 1:19-20). God's Word tells us, "Be angry, yet do not sin."

EATING DISORDERS

In our counseling program we talk about a person's idolatrous relationship with food as "disordered eating." While they may be in bondage to a life-dominating pattern of unbelief and sinful behavior, they are not a victim of those things. If they were, where would there be any hope of freedom?

As bearers of the *imago dei*, we were designed and created by God to be in open, unashamed, and intimate fellowship with Him and with each other. Sin broke that, hung an "Out of Order" sign on it. And, since we intuitively know that something is out of order with life, apart of God our normal response is to try and fix it, to make it better somehow.

The world says about "eating disorders" that they are "any of a range of psychological disorders characterized by abnormal or disturbed eating habits. They are serious illnesses that cause severe disturbances to a person's eating behaviors."

Disordered eating is a self-destructive behavior based in belief in a series of lies about the person. On this, Scripture and psychology agree. This is also where we part company.

Psychology says, "You need CBT to help you identify and change distorted or unhelpful thinking patterns and recognize and change inaccurate beliefs."

Question: Who determines accurate and inaccurate beliefs and what are they?

The conclusion? The problems, needs, and struggles of real people—right down to the details of the how and the why—must be rationally explained by the categories the Bible uses to help us understand human life: "lusts of the flesh" (e.g., fornication, greed, gluttony, jealousy, envy); "fear of man" (e.g., need for approval of others, self-esteem, self-pity, feelings of inadequacy); "desires of the mind" (e.g., power, control, domination, success, wealth, self-righteousness); "pride," and others.

Unless and until the economy of the world is traded-out for the economy of God and His kingdom, the thinking and the behavior may be able to be temporarily modified, but the heart still believes lies and the enemy still maintains his foothold in that person's life.