

Psychology

A Christian Perspective

High School Edition



Dr. Tim Rice

Psychology: A Christian Perspective.
High School Edition.

by Dr. Tim
(Timothy S. Rice, D. Min., LPC)

Psychology: A Christian Perspective. High School Edition.

Published by
Rocking R Ventures, Inc.
104 Goss Street
Epworth, GA 30541
www.rockingrventures.com
www.homeschoolpsych.com

ISBN: 978-0-9815587-2-1

Copyright © 2011 Timothy S. Rice, All Rights Reserved

Cover Photo © Tina Rice

Contents

| | |
|---|-----|
| Introduction | 1 |
| Chapter 1 What is Psychology? | 5 |
| Chapter 2 A Christian Worldview | 15 |
| Chapter 3 Psychology's History and Worldview | 23 |
| Chapter 4 The Brain and Nervous System | 35 |
| Chapter 5 Sensation and Perception | 51 |
| Chapter 6 Motivation and Emotion | 67 |
| Chapter 7 Learning and Memory | 77 |
| Chapter 8 Human Development | 95 |
| Chapter 9 Consciousness | 111 |
| Chapter 10 Thinking, Language, and Intelligence | 129 |
| Chapter 11 Personality | 141 |
| Chapter 12 Abnormal Psychology | 155 |
| Chapter 13 Treatment | 173 |
| Chapter 14 Social Psychology | 185 |
| Chapter 15 Research Methods | 203 |
| Index | 217 |
| References | 243 |

Introduction

Whatever you think about psychology and its effect on Christian students, the time to deal with it is now.

Do you think the study of psychology is tantamount to declaring the Bible inadequate? Do you believe that God created psychology when He created Mankind in His own image? Have you ever given it much thought?

Some Christians think that psychology is an important discipline, that it is consistent with a Christian worldview, and that it is an acceptable field of study and career choice. Other Christians see psychology as an idolatrous and ungodly rival religion. Some Christians think that God created psychology when He created Mankind. Others describe psychology as psychobabble, psycho-heresy, and the most deadly form of modernism to ever confront the Church.

Whatever you think about psychology, the time to deal with it is now because many Christian students go to college to become psychologists, counselors, or social workers. Most colleges (even Christian colleges) require students to at least take an introductory psychology class. Although there are many Christian professors, psychology departments are home to some of the more anti-Christian intellectuals on college campuses. In fact, psychology professors tend to have high levels of agnosticism and atheism and may attack the Christian worldview as unscientific, irrational, prudish, exploitative, controlling, inhibitive, oppressive, and naïve. Many psychology professors also believe that Christianity is incompatible with sound mental health, that it contributes to human suffering, and that the intelligent believer will eventually abandon their faith.

The material taught in any introductory psychology course will challenge a student's beliefs. Christian students are not usually well-prepared to recognize and refute modern psychology's core philosophical assumptions: naturalism, behaviorism, humanism, evolutionism, empiricism, moral relativism, and reductionism. Those core assumptions are embedded, sometimes very subtly, in modern psychology's theories and schools of thought, and they are presented under the banner of "science." Assumptions that are wholly inconsistent with a Christian worldview are thoroughly embedded in most psychology courses, even at some Christian colleges. Students need to recognize and be able to refute the anti-Christian and anti-scientific philosophies embedded in modern psychology. Failure to recognize those assumptions may lead Christian students to inadvertently compromise their Christian worldview.

If it is true that many Christian students walk away from their faith after the first year of college, and if that has anything to do with the teaching in college, it may be, at least in part, because of the subtle worldview challenges embedded in psychological theories. By simply forewarning and preparing students in advance, they are better able to resist believing false assumptions.

The time to deal with psychology is now because Darwinian evolution is the “new” psychology. Freudian psychology, behaviorists, humanists, and cognitive psychology are yesterday’s news. Today, neuro-biology and evolution are psychology’s main theories. Darwin anticipated evolution’s impact on psychology in 1859 when he wrote:

“In the distant future I see open fields for far more important research. Psychology will be based on a new foundation, that of the necessary acquirement of each mental power and capacity by gradation. Light will be thrown on the origin of man and his history (Darwin, 1859).”

According to Darwin, all mental activity, even what we think of as our God-likeness, is ultimately nothing more than a “capacity” that humans acquired, bit by bit, through variation and natural selection. Darwinian evolution, when applied to human psychology, reduces our consciousness, our morality, our capacity to make decisions and judgments, religious experience, love, empathy, altruism, hate, greed, dreams, and everything else that makes us human to nothing more than a bunch of neurons doing their thing.

Psychology, more so than biology, is where the theory of evolution has the most difficulty. There are no cogent evolutionary explanations for our “higher” capacities, our God-likeness. It is the author’s opinion that evolution’s death knell will not come from cellular biology, it will come from psychology. The fight against evolution is not likely to be won with arguments of sub-cellular irreducible complexity. It is winnable in the arena of the incomprehensible complexity of the human mind.

It is also important to deal with psychology because people are hurting. Christians have long been at the forefront of meeting the world’s physical needs with food, blankets, and shelter. But are we at the forefront of meeting the world’s psychological needs? Too often secular community mental health centers serve more hurting people than they can handle, while Christians debate whether nouthetic or Christian counseling or “just praying harder” is the answer. That is not right. Correcting the problem begins by re-claiming psychology for Christ.

The goal for our study of psychology, just like the study of biology, theology, history, and every other discipline, is to understand God’s creation and, in the words of Johannes Kepler, to “*think God’s thoughts after him.*” Instead of surrendering psychology or falling away in the face of the world’s beliefs and teaching, we have a duty to put forth reasoned explanations for our worldview in every discipline, including psychology.

That is the goal for *Psychology: A Christian Perspective*. There are many excellent works that explain a Christian worldview, and there are dozens of excellent introductory psychology texts. But there are very few introductory psychology texts that present psychology's content from a Christian perspective and none, to the author's knowledge, intended for Christian high school students.

I believe that the study of the soul, the mind, and behavior are right and proper for Christians and that Christian students should bring their worldview and become part of the future intellectual leadership in Christian psychology.

Let's get started!

Chapter 1

What is Psychology?

In This Chapter

- The Psyche
- What is Psychology?
- Psychology's Influence
- A Christian Approach to Psychology
- Psychology's Goals
- Psychology's Fields of Study
- Psychology's Approaches

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ (Colossians 2:8).

Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind (Matthew 22:37).

What does it mean to have dominion over God's creation? What does it mean to love the Lord your God with all your heart? What does it mean to love the Lord with all your mind? What was Jesus talking about when He spoke of your heart? What is the nature of your heart? What is the nature of your "mind?" Does loving the Lord with your mind include a duty to humbly investigate God's creation? Does the duty to humbly investigate God's creation extend to His grandest creation: Mankind? Does that duty extend to Mankind's mind? If so, one could argue that Christians have a duty to study psychology. If Christ is Lord of all, He is Lord of theology, education, biology, and psychology.

What does the word psychology mean to you? What do you think psychologists study? Many people think that psychology means mind control and manipulation. Some think psychology is synonymous with psychiatry or psychotherapy. The word psychology, in much the same way as the words religion, philosophy, and politics, has different (and sometimes contradictory) meanings to different people.

The word psychology means different things to Christians, too. Psychology is one of the most controversial and divisive academic subjects among Christians today. Many Christians see psychology as a harmless academic discipline, not at all inconsistent with a Christian worldview. To them, psychology has a place alongside biology, chemistry, and physics in high school

studies. However, many Christians have serious objections to psychology and claim that psychology is a dangerous, idolatrous, and ungodly rival religion, and that the study of psychology is tantamount to declaring the Bible inadequate.

The Psyche. Psychology is the study of the "psyche." In the Greek language the word "psyche" meant "soul" and "mind." Psyche is the common root of the words "spirit" and "soul." The concepts of the soul and mind are absent from most modern definitions of psychology. As we will see in the next chapter, modern psychology's naturalistic worldview does not allow for the existence of a soul or a mind (in any meaningful sense), much less

their scientific study. A Christian worldview not only recognizes the existence of the soul and mind; it welcomes the application of scientific methods to their study.

Your college psychology text book will not be called *Psychology: The Study of the Brain, Behavior, Heart, Soul, and Mind*.

What is Psychology? Over time psychology has been defined differently.

- The scientific study of human affect, behaviors, and cognitions.
- The scientific study of human life and human nature.
- The science of the brain and behavior.
- The scientific study of the human heart and mind.
- A body of knowledge for understanding, measuring, assessing, and possibly changing people's emotions, thoughts, perceptions, and behaviors.
- The emotional and behavioral characteristics of an individual or group.
- Actions or arguments used to manipulate or influence others.
- A branch of philosophy that studies the soul, the mind, and the relationship of the soul and mind to the functions of the body.
- A system for describing human personality.
- A system for describing emotional and behavioral disorders and strategies for their treatment.

A Christian approach to psychology recognizes that Mankind is uniquely created in the image of God. By studying God's natural revelation, guided by special revelation, we can seek understanding of how we are both like the animals and how we are unique in our God-likeness.

Most introductory psychology texts define psychology as the scientific study of the brain and behavior. *The American Heritage Dictionary* defines psychology as "the science that deals with mental processes and behavior" and "the branch of philosophy that studies the soul, the mind, and the relationship of the mind to the

functions of the body." For our purposes, psychology is ***the scientific study of the ABCs – affect (emotions), behavior, and cognition (mental processes)***. As such, psychology and the Bible bring different perspectives and levels of understanding to some of the same subject matter. Of all the sciences, psychology comes closest to the issues the Bible addresses. Psychology and the Bible both deal with human nature, the human condition, and even human salvation. And of all the sciences, psychology has had the greatest influence in the culture, academia, and the church.

Psychology in the Culture. Modern society is fascinated with all things psychological. Each year Americans buy millions of books about self-help, addiction, recovery, relationships, parenting, spiritual growth, and emotional and mental health. ***Popular psychology***, promoted by seminar speakers, columnists, and celebrities, suggests techniques (that may or may not be scientifically tested) designed to improve psychological health and well-being (and maybe get rich too!). Millions of Americans seek mental health services every year. Psychology influences business, advertising, social work, nursing, engineering, and any other career path you might pursue.

Psychology in Academia. Nowhere is the extent of psychology's influence more evident than in academia. Most medical schools, liberal arts colleges, seminaries, and teachers' colleges require students to have some exposure to psychology. Psychology is one of the most popular undergraduate majors, even at Christian colleges and universities. Enrollment in psychology courses outpaces other scientific disciplines, and many high schools now offer an introductory psychology course.

Psychology's Extent. The extent of psychology's influence in the culture, academia, and the church is remarkable for its "young" age. Psychology's influence is a compelling reason for Christian students to study and understand modern psychology.

Psychology in the Church. The extent of psychology is not limited to the culture and academia. The influence of psychological theories about learning and child development, parenting practices, moral development, personality and self-

esteem, problems of living and more is widespread in the Christian church. Psychological insights influence sermons across the country, and some pastors leave the pulpit for jobs in pastoral counseling or social work. Self-help books about recovery, addiction, relationships, parenting, and weight loss make up the bulk of the new Christian book titles. Sometimes these books are based on psychological theories that are fundamentally inconsistent with a Christian worldview. You need to recognize when worldview assumptions are "Christianized" by sprinkling in a few Bible verses and mentioning Jesus. You must evaluate psychology at the worldview level (even when it is wrapped in Christian language) or you risk accepting ideas that are foundationally inconsistent with your Christian worldview.

A Christian Approach to Psychology. It is essential that Christians studying psychology respect the inspiration and authority of the Bible. We must maintain a commitment to the authority and inspiration of the Bible and not underestimate the corrupting, distorting, and destructive influence of sin on human thinking. We need to remember that God is Truth and that ultimately there will be no conflict between true psychology and a Christian worldview. Christians studying and working in psychology must be faithful to Scripture, not compromise their Christian worldview assumptions, and must understand modern psychology's historical roots, philosophical assumptions, and empirical methods.

Our study of psychology must be more than a curiosity to discover something new and interesting about people. Christians studying and working in psychology must increase the body of evidence that supports a Christian worldview and effectively communicate that it is logical, internally consistent, and meaningful. We must see a spiritual purpose to our study. When a non-Christian recognizes that he has accepted as truth (by faith) psychology's philosophical assumptions, he may be closer to accepting God's Truth (by a saving faith). Christians studying psychology have, among their classmates and professors, a ripe mission field indeed.

We should humbly answer those who attack Christianity on psychological grounds with a sound apologia. We must provide a solid defense for our own assumptions. We cannot arrogantly claim that we have all the answers or that we can "prove" our positions. We must be willing to hold contradictory beliefs until better data or clearer revelation reveals that there is no genuine contradiction.

Do not study psychology without the full armor of God; the belt of truth, breastplate of righteousness in place, feet fitted with readiness, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God (Ephesians 6:10-18).

We must remember that all learning is, at least in part, the work of the Holy Spirit and that only the Holy Spirit can reveal God's ultimate Truth. As the Holy Spirit guides us, we become more Christ-like, which in turn, affects our scholarship. We must resist theological hubris by claiming that our theological beliefs are

superior to, or automatically "truer," than psychological findings. To do so makes a mockery of the unifying nature of God's full revelation. Christians studying and working in psychology can also help reduce the Church's misunderstanding and fear of psychology and help remove the stigma of seeking help for emotional problems. Christians studying psychology must have excellent preparation in theology, biblical interpretation, and the principles of Christian discipleship. You must understand the rich history of Christian psychology stretching from the early Church. Though most Christians who study psychology understand that the Bible ought to influence their scholarship, too many Christians know far more about psychology than they do about their own religious traditions.

Christians in psychology must prevent modern psychology's worldview assumptions from corrupting their view of the nature of God, Mankind, knowledge, right and wrong, and the causes and cures for abnormal thoughts, feelings, and behavior, while lovingly correcting those already corrupted. We must wrestle with freedom vs. determinism vs. responsibility vs. heredity vs. environment and the concept of the self. We must produce rigorous scholarship and research to develop a body of authentically Christian psychological data. We need not bracket our faith to study psychology and we need not defend Christ from research. We can then apply psychology's methods to topics dear to Christian ministry. For example:

- What variables account for the failures and successes of Christian ministries?
- What factors contribute to the large percentage of dropouts among second generation Christians?
- Can research support the beneficial effects of prayer and meditation?
- Can research into the nature and causes of anger help fathers and mothers avoid provoking their children?
- Can psychology devise tests for assessing spiritual maturity for leadership positions in the church?
- Can psychology devise tests that help determine if missionaries are prepared for the struggles of foreign missions?
- What is the optimal size for small group Bible studies?
- What is the most effective treatment for cultic brainwashing?
- What is the relationship of the spiritual disciplines to physical health?
- What styles of parenting are most likely to produce Christian character traits in children?

- How can we improve training for Christian workers?
- Can Christians in psychology contribute to our understanding of terrorism, gang violence, holocausts and genocide, drug abuse, post-traumatic stress, divorce, abortion, prejudice, and for dealing with abnormal thoughts, feelings, and behaviors? If so, how?

The list of useful research questions is endless, but in addition to exemplary scholarship, Christians in every field must strive to live exemplary lives. Our goal is to have the “mind” of Christ, so we must reclaim psychology for Christ. Many Christians believe that there is a “cultural commission,” similar to the Great Commission that requires Christians to “reclaim” the culture, education, and by extension, psychology. The Church risks marginalization if Christians ignore their responsibility to reclaim the whole culture (including psychology). The early Church showed God’s way to be so much better, that even the pagans recognized it. Should we do any less with psychology? Christians who study psychology join others in physics, biology, history, the arts, sociology, and many other fields seeking a deeper understanding of all of God’s creation.

Biology class can provide a good model for our approach to psychology. Modern biology teaches evolution as settled fact. When you take a biology class, you must deal with the evolutionary assumptions. Psychology professors increasingly teach evolutionary psychology as fact. As we study psychology, we must also distinguish fact from philosophy and assumptions at the worldview level.

The Bottom Line. Beginning with Charles Darwin’s *Origin of Species*, all sciences, including psychology, underwent a transformation. Scientific data was interpreted in ways that excluded supernatural beliefs and assumptions. Psychology, once the study of the soul, became the study of the brain and behavior. Darwinian macro-evolution imposed itself on the Christian understanding of life (biology) and then tried to exclude anything Christian. Darwinian macro-evolution is now imposing itself on the Christian understanding of Man (psychology) and is trying to exclude anything Christian. But evolution, as a theory of the ultimate cause of all life, does not define biology. Likewise, evolution nor the atheism and humanism of many of its modern founders defines psychology.

No one can approach biology or psychology objectively. Our approach is subjective, subject to our worldview and to distortions of a fallen world on our understanding. But that does not mean that there is no objective psychology or biology. Though the evolutionary presuppositions of modern psychology are diametrically opposed to a Christian worldview, we need not fear or avoid the entire discipline because of them. We must, as we do with biology and every other academic discipline, recognize and refute evolutionary (and other anti-Christian) assumptions.

The humble investigation of all of God's creation is part of what it means to love God with one's mind. Christian students have a duty to explore all of God's creation, and that duty to explore extends to His grandest creation; you and your mind.

Psychology's Purpose. There are four main purposes for psychological research.

- Psychologists observe and describe psychological phenomena.
- Psychologists test theories and hypotheses explaining the phenomena.
- Psychologists attempt to identify the factors that influence our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.
- Psychologists develop and implement techniques to predict and change thoughts, feelings, and behavior.

Psychology's Variety. In introductory "survey" classes like this one, students get an overview of psychology's topics. In advanced classes, students focus on a particular topic in more depth. Many psychologists, in their careers or research, focus on a particular topic or subfield. The American Psychological Association recognizes over 50 subfields, called divisions.

- **Cognitive psychologists** study the mental processes involved in sensation and perception, learning and memory, decision-making, and problem solving.
- **Physiological psychologists** (also called **neuroscientists**) study the brain, how nerve cells communicate and transmit information, and the role of genetics in psychology.
- **Personality psychologists** study the unique characteristics of people. Some personality psychologists use tests to measure and compare people according to personality characteristics.
- **Developmental psychologists** study changes in behavior and mental processes across the life span.
- **Counseling, clinical, and community psychologists** study the causes of mental and behavioral disorders and devise techniques to help people recover from those problems. Counseling psychologists differ from psychiatrists, who are medical doctors who specialize in treating people with mental disorders.
- **Educational psychologists** develop strategies to improve teaching and learning.
- **School psychologists** test and diagnose learning and academic problems and provide early intervention and crisis intervention services.
- **Social psychologists** study the way that people interact with other people and in groups.

As you will see in later chapters, there are five main approaches to psychology. The main approaches, also known as "schools" of psychology (also called schools of thought), make worldview assumptions about the nature of Mankind. In this book, we will look at each in detail.

- The **biological school of thought** views mental processes and behaviors in terms of biological structures and electro-chemical processes.
- The **behavioral school of thought** emphasizes the relationship between environmental influences and behavior.
- The **cognitive school of thought** emphasizes the influence of cognitive processes like perception, problem solving.
- The **psycho-analytic school of thought** emphasizes unconscious processes.
- The **humanistic school of thought** emphasizes innate goodness and potential and the influence of feelings and needs on thoughts and behaviors.

In Chapter 3 we will explore the history and characteristics of each of psychology's major schools of thought. In the remaining chapters, we will examine each topic from the worldview perspective of the major schools and compare that perspective with a Christian worldview. In Chapter 2, we turn next to describing a Christian worldview.

Chapter Summary.

Psychology is one of the most controversial and divisive academic subjects among Christians today. Many Christians think that psychology is harmless and has a place alongside biology, chemistry, and physics in high school studies. Many Christians claim that psychology is a dangerous, idolatrous, and ungodly rival religion. If Christ is Lord of all, He is Lord of theology, education, biology, and psychology.

Psychology is the scientific study of human affect, behavior, and cognition. Its theories influence the culture, academia, and the Church. Christians studying and working in psychology must be faithful to Scripture, not compromise their Christian worldview assumptions, and must understand modern psychology's history, worldview assumptions, and methods.

Evolution, atheism, and humanism are common threads in psychology, but they do not define the discipline. Christians need not fear or avoid the entire discipline. We must, as we do with biology and other academic disciplines, recognize and respond to anti-Christian assumptions and claiming psychology for Christ.

The main purposes for psychological research include:

- Observing and describing psychological phenomena.
- Creating and testing hypotheses to explain the observations.
- Discovering the factors that influence mental processes.
- Developing techniques to predict, improve, or otherwise change behavior, thoughts, learning, and emotions.

When psychologists focus on a particular aspect of study or practice, they enter one of psychology's subfields.

- Cognitive psychologists study mental processes.
- Physiological psychologists (also called neuroscientists) study the brain and nervous system.
- Personality psychologists study the unique characteristics of people.
- Developmental psychologists study changes in behavior and mental processes across the life span.
- Counseling psychologists study the causes of and the cures for mental and behavioral disorders.
- Educational psychologists study teaching and learning.
- School psychologists test and diagnose learning and academic problems.
- Social psychologists study the ways people interact with other people and in groups.

There are five main approaches to psychology also known as "schools." Each makes worldview assumptions about the nature of Mankind.

- The biological approach emphasizes biological structures and electro-chemical processes.
- The behavioral approach emphasizes the relationship between environmental influences and behavior.
- The cognitive approach emphasizes thought processes.
- The psycho-analytic approach emphasizes unconscious processes.
- The humanistic approach emphasizes the belief in Mankind's innate goodness and potential.

For Review.

1. Define psychology in your own words.
2. Describe reasons that psychology is controversial among Christians today.
3. Explain and provide examples of psychology's influence in the culture and in the Christian Church.
4. Why does the author of the text say that "psychology is not a harmless academic discipline nor is it inherently anti-Christian?"
5. Describe the impact of Darwin's theory of evolution on the study of psychology.
6. Name and describe five of psychology subfields.
7. What advice does the text offer about a Christian approach to psychology?
8. The text named four things psychologists do. Identify and describe them.
9. The text named five main approaches to psychology. Identify and describe them.
10. Describe three helping careers Christians might pursue and the ways that psychology influences those careers.

Chapter 2

A Christian Worldview

In This Chapter

- What is a Worldview?
- What is a Christian Worldview?
- What Do You Believe About God?
- What is the Nature of Mankind?
- How Can We Know Things With Certainty?
- Are There Moral Absolutes?
- What Are the Causes of and Cures for Abnormal Thoughts, Feelings, and Behaviors?

Weltanschauung. Sigmund Freud, the father of psychiatry, defined weltanschauung as an intellectual construction which gives a unified solution of all the problems of our existence... a comprehensive hypothesis in which no question is left open and in which everything in which we are interested finds a place. Freud's own weltanschauung was wholly inconsistent with a Christian weltanschauung.

This book is about psychology vis-à-vis a Christian worldview. It is about how psychology and your worldview relate. This chapter delves into some specifics about a Christian worldview.

When psychologists ask questions about the human mind, they are asking about an incomprehensibly complex system. Even simple mental processes involve the complex interactions of millions of neurons spread across the brain. The more complicated mental processes like “thoughts” or “feelings” involve complex interactions between the brain, the body, and the outside world. We think of thoughts and feelings as though they were distinct mental processes, but they are

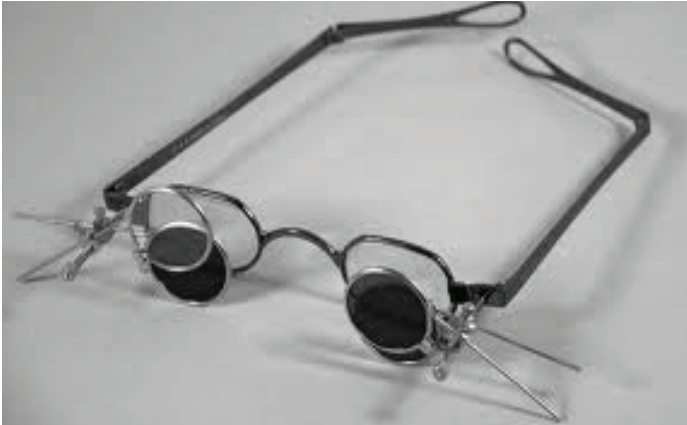
not. Our genetic makeup and the environment also influence our mental life. By necessity, introductory psychology texts describe complexity with broad strokes on only a few issues.

One's worldview is also a complex system. It is a system of core attitudes, beliefs, and values. This text does not claim to define “the” Christian worldview. It does, however, claim to describe “a” Christian worldview. By necessity, this text describes a narrow slice of “the” Christian worldview, hopefully in terms on which all Christians can agree.

Everyone has a worldview. Christians, Muslims, atheists, agnostics, and every other faith has a worldview. Each of us holds core foundational beliefs or convictions through which we perceive and understand the world. Those foundational beliefs define your worldview. A worldview is, as the word suggests, a way of looking at the world. Your worldview is the conceptual framework that you use to give meaning to the world.

Schema. Psychological theories define a “schema” as a mental structure used to organize and understand the world around us. You probably won't hear psychology professors use the word “worldview,” but they will speak of schemas.

Your worldview is made of your core beliefs and your most fundamental assumptions about the world. You may not



Multi-lensed glasses are a way to think about your worldview. Glasses however, are passive. Your worldview is an active and changeable part of you. You should actively think “Christianly” about psychology.

think about your worldview very often, but it includes your answers to the really big questions of life. All human intellectual activities, including scientific research and theories, happen in a worldview context and are guided by one’s worldview. Ultimately, truth is only discernible from error at the worldview level. In second Corinthians, the Apostle Paul instructs us to submit every thought to the obedience of Christ. That means intentionally examining everything you learn in light of your worldview.

A Christian Worldview is a Biblical Worldview. The Christian worldview begins with the biblical account of God, creation, the fall, and redemption. The biblical account of where we came from, our nature, and how we should live is “*the*” Christian worldview. Your worldview includes your beliefs about dating, divorce, music, gifts of the Holy Spirit and other issues. Those are important issues, but our interest is in five questions where a Christian worldview and modern psychology’s underlying assumptions definitely intersect.

1. What do you believe about God?
2. What is the nature of Mankind?
3. How can we know things with certainty?
4. Are there moral absolutes?
5. What are the causes of and the cures for abnormal thoughts, feelings, and behaviors?

1. What do you believe about God? God exists or He does not. Either He created you and the universe or not. The most basic piece of your worldview includes whether you believe God exists, what you believe about His nature, and the extent to which He influences your life. The Christian worldview is that there is one true triune God who is personal, loving, just, infinite, self-revealing, all-powerful, all-knowing, ever-present, self-existent, sovereign, eternal, and active in the world today.

2. What is the nature of Mankind? Your beliefs about the nature of Mankind are fundamental to your worldview and to your study of psychology.

And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. (Genesis 2:7 KJV)

Are we the creation of a purposeful and relational God, or the product of evolutionary

forces? Or both? Are we born “good?” Do we have a mind that is greater than the sum of our brain activity? Do we have a soul that survives the death of the body?

Your worldview of the nature of Mankind builds on your beliefs about God and the accuracy of the Bible. A Christian view of Mankind, or **biblical anthropology**, describes us as the purposeful creation of God, made in His image and likeness, and as sinners in rebellion against Him by nature and by choice. We were made from the dust of the earth and are part of the natural order. As such, we have much in common with the animals. We are born, we grow old, and our bodies eventually die. However, like God, we are spiritual beings. Unlike the animals, we have moral discernment, freedom to choose, and responsibility for our behavior. We experience guilt, grace, and love. We are relational beings. We have consciousness, a mind, and a soul.

Monism, Dualism, or Tripartite. Christians for centuries have debated whether we are one, two, or three-part beings. As we will see in Chapter 3, modern naturalistic psychology is united in its worldview. In that monistic worldview, all mental life is nothing more than complex brain activity. There is no mind or soul.

Christians believe that Mankind is material, made from the dust of the earth. We also believe that we are something more. The Bible is clear that there is something about us that makes us distinct from the animals. But what is the nature of our God-likeness?

God created us to be in a relationship with Him. **Dualism**, the traditional Christian belief, is that because God is spiritual (non-material), we must also have a non-material nature in order to have that relationship. Dualists believe that our brains and our minds are distinct in essence, but operate in interaction. Some Christians have a **trichotomous** worldview, which describes Mankind in terms of body, mind, and soul. A **Christian monist**, as opposed to a naturalistic monist, sees us as one in essence, as embodied souls in an irreducible unity of mind, body, and soul.

3. How can we know things with certainty? How do you know? How do you know that what you know is true? How do we know anything with certainty? **Epistemology** is the study of the nature, sources, and limits of knowledge. Is science the only valid path to knowledge? Is the scientific method the only way we can know anything with certainty? Is the Bible

We are more than products of conditioning, unmet needs, chemical imbalances, and traumas. We are not autonomous, but we are more than the sum of our parts, and more than complex machines in closed cause-and-effect systems.

a valid source of psychological information? Is the Bible the only valid source of information about our nature?

When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken (Deuteronomy 18:22). Christians studying psychology must be willing to put their worldview to empirical tests and be willing to view psychological science under the light of the Bible. God's Truth will survive experimental confirmation.

Is "all truth God's Truth?"
Can naturalistic psychology contribute anything to a Christian understanding of the care for abnormal thoughts, feelings, and behaviors?

A Christian worldview is that Truth, objective and independent Truth, absolutely exists. According to a Christian worldview, God reveals Himself in His creation (nature), the Bible, and supremely in His Son. The Bible is accurate in all its teachings and the universe operates in accordance with orderly natural laws that we can study and understand. Because the world is orderly and predictable, the methods of science are an appropriate way to discover truths about the world. Mankind was given dominion over the earth, and dominion includes a duty to explore and understand creation.

Faith/Science Conflict? Many people believe that a Christian worldview and science are inherently in conflict. Many believe that the Bible has no place in science and that science is the Bible's enemy. In other words, they believe that there is a **faith/science dichotomy**. Some historians have made the case that the Church (especially the Catholic church) fought every new scientific idea. Though it is true that through history the Church disputed many major scientific discoveries, it is not correct that the Christian church is necessarily "anti-science." In fact, science (and by extension, psychology) was born of the Christian worldview.

A Christian worldview sees God as immutable, sees the world as orderly and rational, and believes that we can and should seek to understand creation. The historical Christian approach to science (though not without exception) was that faith and science were complementary. The fathers of modern science, many of whom were Christians, were not surprised to discover, on the basis of reason, truths about the universe. They saw science as one tool to explore creation, to discover how God operates in natural processes, and to understand what it means to be human. Descartes, Bacon, Newton, and Galileo explored God's creation and then tested their ideas with scientific methods.



Christians today should not be surprised or conflicted to discover truths through science and reason and should reject the idea that a Christian worldview and science are enemies.

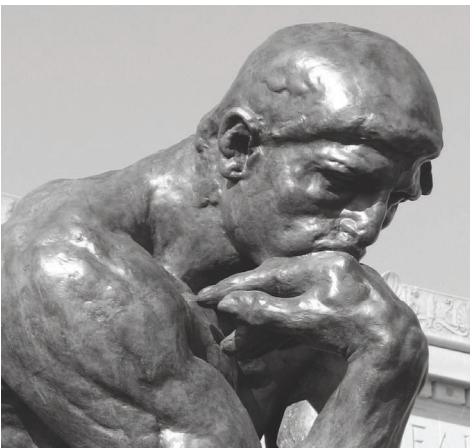
Truth is not merely a personal preference. It is objective and absolute and can be diligently searched out.

Likewise, psychologists should not be surprised or conflicted that some questions are beyond the scope of their methods.

To dichotomize “science” from “faith” destroys true science and marginalizes true faith. This text presumes that true psychology and Christianity are complimentary.

Natural and Special Revelation. A Christian worldview believes that God reveals things to us in two ways: general or natural revelation and special revelation. **Natural revelation** refers to truths revealed through the world. We can learn truth by observing creation, by scientific experiments, by logic, and by the study of history (that is, any technique apart from reading the Bible or the working of the Holy Spirit). **Special revelation** refers to biblical details about God’s character, His purpose, our nature, His plan for us, and our relationship with Him. Special revelation refers to God’s works in history and the work of the Holy Spirit in humanity. A Christian approach to the study of psychology rests on a worldview that God reveals truths through both special and natural revelation.

God’s natural and special revelation have “convergent validity;” they are parts of an overarching and non-contradictory whole. Understanding that natural and special revelation are ultimately all-encompassing and completely harmonious, Christians can be in awe of what has been revealed while seeking to discover what has not. It is science’s purpose to better understand natural revelation. It is psychology’s purpose to better understand natural revelation as it relates to the brain and behavior. If Truth is a unified whole and there is no inherent faith/science dichotomy, true science and true faith must agree. If Truth is a unified whole, natural revelation cannot contradict special revelation. The appearance of a contradiction is only an appearance. In terms of psychology, the appearance of a contradiction is the result of bad research, bad interpretation, or bad theology.



The role of natural revelation in the study of Mankind troubles many Christians. The role of special revelation in psychology troubles many psychologists. Some Christians believe that there is nothing modern psychology can contribute to our understanding of Mankind. In other words, because God created us, only the Bible can explain us. This text presumes that because special and natural revelation cannot ultimately conflict, valid psychological data will ultimately fit with “the” Christian worldview. A Christian approach to psychology must recognize the value of all of

God's revelation, special and natural. Special revelation provides a context or framework in which science can clarify and illuminate biblical truths. The error of Christians who limit God's communicative power about the nature of Mankind exclusively to the Bible is similar to the error of modern psychologists who discount the Bible's psychological insights.

A Christian worldview includes the understanding of the effect of sin on our behavior and our thinking (called the *noetic effect of sin*). So, by extension, what we know (about psychology and theology) is limited and impaired by sin (Romans 8:20-21; 1 Corinthians 13:12). Our personal bias and depravity should cause us to maintain a sense of humility and hold our conclusions tentatively.

4. Are there moral absolutes? What do you believe about the nature of right and wrong? Is there such thing as moral absolutes? Are there absolute rules governing human behavior and consequences for violating those rules? A Christian worldview recognizes moral absolutes described in the Bible and lived by Jesus Christ.

5. What are the causes of and the cures for abnormal thoughts, feelings, and behaviors? Your worldview about the causes of and the cures for abnormal thoughts, feelings, and behavior includes whether you believe that pain, suffering, and guilt have meaning and purpose or that they are unfortunate circumstances to be avoided at all costs. A Christian worldview holds that through pain we are refined and made more Christ-like. The Christian worldview believes that redemption and restoration makes us "whole" but that "wholeness" does not necessarily equal ease and comfort. Christians disagree about whether extra-biblical techniques (e.g., medication) are ever proper approaches to caring for abnormal thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. A Christian worldview emphasizes sin as the primary, if not exclusive, cause of abnormal thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Modern psychology attributes it to anything but sin. A Christian worldview sees guilt, pain, and suffering as tools God uses to conform us to Christ's image. Jesus himself was a "man of sorrows." It is noteworthy that many in Christendom share modern psychology's view that emotional pain must be avoided at all costs. In fact, a "feel good" gospel has much in common with modern self psychology (see Ch. 3).

Stop Reading. Do not keep reading until you are clear about your Christian worldview. Remember, the Christian worldview is Truth, but we can not prove it with science. It is important to remember that everyone's worldview is a matter of faith and no one's worldview is ultimately a matter of science. The foundational beliefs of a Christian worldview, of an atheist's worldview, and of a psychology professor's worldview are matters of faith and philosophy and not of data and science. In the next chapter we will explore psychology's history by examining its philosophies and assumptions.

Chapter Summary.

Everyone has core beliefs and assumptions – a worldview. All psychological research and theorizing happen in a worldview context. Ultimately, truth is only discernible from error at the worldview level.

The Christian worldview begins with the biblical account of God, creation, the fall, and redemption. A Christian worldview and modern psychology intersect around five questions.

- What Do You Believe About God? This is the most basic piece of one’s worldview.
- What is the nature of Man? Are we the creation of a purposeful God, or the product of evolutionary forces? Are we born “good?” Do we have a mind that is greater than the sum of our brain activity? Do we have a soul that survives the death of the body?
- How can we know things with certainty? A Christian worldview is that Truth absolutely exists. God reveals Himself in His creation and through the Bible. Many people believe there is a faith/science dichotomy when in fact, science (and by extension, psychology) was born of the Christian worldview. Because special and natural revelation cannot ultimately conflict, valid psychological data will ultimately fit a Christian worldview.
- Are there moral absolutes? A Christian worldview recognizes moral absolutes that are described in the Bible and were lived by Jesus Christ.
- What are the causes of and the cures for abnormal thoughts, feelings, and behaviors? A Christian worldview emphasizes sin as at least one cause of mental and emotional pain; modern psychology attributes it to anything but sin. A Christian worldview holds that through pain we are refined and made more Christ-like.

For Review.

1. What is a worldview?
2. What is epistemology?
3. What is natural revelation? What is special revelation?
4. What do you believe about God?
5. What do you believe about the nature of Mankind?
6. What do you believe about moral absolutes?
7. What do you think causes abnormal thoughts, feelings, and behaviors?
8. Describe a monistic, dualistic, and tripartite view of human nature.
9. Describe the faith/science dichotomy. Do you believe there is a dichotomy between science and a Christian worldview? Explain your answer.
10. How have your thoughts and opinions about psychology and worldviews changed?

Chapter 3

Psychology's History and Worldviews

In This Chapter

- Naturalism
- New Ways of Knowing
- Rationalism
- Empiricism
- Phrenology
- Psychology as a Science
- Charles Darwin and Evolutionary Psychology
- Neuro-biology
- Behavioral Genetics
- Behaviorism
- Sigmund Freud
- Cognitive Perspective
- Humanism
- Moral Absolutes

Is psychology old or is it new? It is both. Psychology is a very young science and a very old topic. Throughout history people have thought deeply about psychology's topics. Poets, theologians, and philosophers wrote about the mind centuries before psychology became a "science." Most histories of psychology date its beginning to 1879 with Wilhelm Wundt's psychological laboratory in Germany, but Wundt did not discover or invent psychology. Prior to Wundt, mental processes had not been systematically studied with scientific methods, but they had been studied extensively. Psychology is new in terms of the application of scientific methods to the study of the human mind. Psychology is

also new in terms of the worldview assumptions of its modern fathers and major schools of thought. This chapter traces modern psychology's history through its worldview assumptions and schools of thought.

Naturalism is the worldview assumption that defines the difference between the old and new psychology. Worldviews are built on beliefs about first things. A Christian worldview begins with the belief that God exists and He created the universe and all life. Naturalism begins with the belief that something (anything) besides God is responsible. Why do we think, feel, and behave the way we do? In the Christian worldview, the Bible provides those answers. Biblical anthropology, also called the doctrine of Man, describes a view of Mankind in light of God's biblical revelation. Early scientific psychologists offered naturalistic alternatives to biblical descriptions of Mankind. Freudian, behavioral, cognitive, humanistic, and evolutionary theories all have roots in naturalism. As a Christian student, you must approach every discipline, including psychology, from the vantage

point of faith, refusing to replace your theistic assumptions with naturalism.

A key point is that psychology was not discovered, invented, or created in the 19th century; it only became modern and scientific.

Chapter Summary.

The human nervous system is the most complex and coordinated structure in the known universe and a wonder of God's creation. The study of the brain and the nervous system is called neuro-psychology, neuro-anatomy, and neuro-biology.

The human nervous system consists of two sub-systems; the central nervous system (CNS) and the peripheral nervous system (PNS). The central nervous system consists of the brain and the spinal cord. The peripheral nervous system consists of those nerves outside of the brain and the spinal cord.

The neuron is the basic building block of the nervous system. Neurons communicate with each other via specialized extensions called dendrites and axons. At rest, a neuron has a slightly negative electrical charge. When it becomes sufficiently positively charged, a "spark" of electricity moves down the axon. Between neurons, neurotransmission occurs when a neuron releases neurotransmitters into the synaptic cleft where they are received by neighboring neurons. Psychotropic medications operate by affecting neurotransmission.

The peripheral nervous system (PNS) controls voluntary and involuntary muscle movement, sensory information, and automatic functions of the body. The PNS is made up of two main subsystems: the somatic and autonomic systems. The somatic system controls voluntary muscle movement. The autonomic system controls automatic body functions. The autonomic nervous system is further subdivided into the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems which act as opposites. The sympathetic system creates an excited state and the parasympathetic system restores the body to a state of rest and relaxation.

Understanding of the structure and function of the brain came by studying the effects of brain injuries, lesions, psychosurgery, brain stimulation, and brain-imaging. Phrenology, a 19th century pseudo-science, proposed that mental functions were linked to specific areas of the brain. Phineas Gage's accident demonstrated the connection between the brain and personality. Cortical maps are graphic illustrations of the localization of brain functioning.

Brain imaging technologies provide a way for psychologists to see and measure brain activity. The electroencephalograph (EEG) records electrical voltage produced when neurons fire. The computer axial tomography (CAT scan) produces a three-dimensional x-ray of the brain. Positron emission tomography (PET scan) produces real-time three-dimensional images of blood flow, oxygen use, drug activity, and glucose metabolism. Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) uses powerful magnetic fields and radio waves to create detailed images of the brain.

The brain is shielded by the skull, cushioned and nourished in cerebrospinal fluid, and protected from toxins by the blood-brain barrier. The brain consists of three major divisions: the forebrain, midbrain, and hindbrain. The forebrain makes up about two-thirds of the brain's size and includes the cerebral cortex, thalamus, hypothalamus, amygdala, and hippocampus. The hindbrain sits under the cerebral cortex at the base of the skull and is comprised of the cerebellum, pons, and medulla. The midbrain is a small area that sits between the forebrain and the hindbrain and forms a major part of the brainstem.

The cerebral cortex is the outer layer of the forebrain under the skull and forehead containing the majority of the brain's neurons. The cerebral cortex is divided into hemispheres, lobes, cortexes, and areas. The longitudinal sulcus divides the cerebral cortex into the left and right hemispheres, connected to each other by a dense bundle of nerve fibers called the corpus callosum. Each hemisphere is further divided into lobes, named for the parts of the skull under which they are located, and into cortexes and "areas" named for their functions.

The cerebellum, the second largest structure in the brain, is a walnut-shaped structure at the base of the brain involved in movement, co-ordination, balance, and motor-related memory. The brain stem supports basic functions of life such as breathing, heart rate and blood pressure.

Brain plasticity refers to the lifelong process of creating, pruning, and reorganizing neural connections.

The endocrine system is a collection of glands that work with the nervous system to control growth and development, mood, metabolism, and reproduction. The limbic system plays an important role in forming memories, the experience of emotion, and our sense of smell.

For Review.

1. Identify the major divisions of the nervous system.
2. What are the major structures of the neuron?
3. Name the three types of neurons and describe their function.
4. Describe neurotransmission, both within the neuron and between neurons.
5. Name and describe the three subsystems of the peripheral nervous system.
6. Respond to the following statement from a Christian worldview perspective. *“All mental experience is nothing more than brain activity.”*
7. Describe important historical discoveries about the structure and function of the brain.
8. Discuss the case of Phineas Gage as an example of how brain injuries led to knowledge about brain function.
9. Describe the psycho-surgery known as the frontal lobotomy.
10. Name and describe five brain-imaging techniques.
11. Identify and describe the midbrain, forebrain, and hindbrain.
12. Identify 4 lobes of the cerebral cortex.
13. Describe hemispheric specialization.
14. Describe brain lateralization.
15. Describe “the god spot” from a naturalistic perspective and from a Christian perspective.

Chapter 5

Sensation and Perception

In This Chapter

- Sensation
- Coding Sensations
- Sensory Thresholds and Adaptation
- The Visual System
- Color Vision
- The Auditory System
- The Olfactory System
- The Gustatory System
- The Cutaneous System
- The Proprioception, Kinesthetic, and Vestibular Systems
- Perception
- Figure-ground Relationship
- Gestalt
- Perceptual Selectivity
- Stimulus and Personal Factors in Perception
- Extrasensory Perception and Paranormal Psychology

Wondrous. Take just a moment to look at something. It could be the scene outside of your window or simply the words on this page. As you “see” an object, light bounces off the object, enters the eye, and is focused on your retina. Receptor cells in the retina convert the light into neural signals that activate neighboring cells, which transmit millions of electrochemical messages, in an instant, to your brain. That is wondrous.

In your brain, separate specialized structures process information about color, form, motion, and depth, and then in ways psychologists only partially understand, combine that information to form a consciously perceived image that is instantly compared to images previously stored in your memory.

The whole process is like taking a house apart, molecule by molecule, and transporting it somewhere else where millions of specialized workers put it back together again. That this happens instantly, effortlessly, and continuously is better than cool; it is truly wondrous.

The processes through which we sense the world around us are very complex. The beauty and wonder of God’s creation is for us to enjoy, but in order for us to enjoy it, it must first pass through our senses. Philosophers and scientists wonder at the marvel of the processes by which we experience and understand the physical world. In this chapter we review the basic processes through which sensory organs convert physical energy into nerve impulses and through which the brain interprets and understands those impulses.

Sensation and Perception. A sense is a system that transmits to the brain, information about the world outside of the brain. A sense converts characteristics of the physical world into nervous system activity. Sensations

Chapter 6

Motivation and Emotion

In This Chapter

- Motivation?
- Instincts
- Drive Reduction Theory
- Arousal Theory
- Incentive Theory
- Abraham Maslow
- Social Motivation
- Freudian Psycho-dynamic Perspective
- Emotions
- Categorizing Emotions
- Theories of Emotion
- Stress

Why do we do the things that we do? Why do we feel the ways we feel? What is motivation and what are emotions?

Motivation and emotions are closely related, and sometimes it is hard to distinguish between them. Combined, motivation and emotions drive and define how we respond to every situation we encounter.

The Bible is far from silent about motivation and emotions. In a Christian worldview, our chief motivation is to glorify God. God and our relationship to Him is pivotal to everything, especially our motivation and emotions. Modern psychology's theories do not reference God.

Motivation. Motivation is defined as an inner state and a process that arouses, directs, maintains, and terminates behavior. Motivation is a force that starts and keeps you moving toward goals and leads you to do everything from getting up in the morning to studying psychology and to choosing a spouse. Motivation is said to be *intrinsic*, a force from within, or *extrinsic*, a force from outside of us.

Worldview Check. Evolutionary psychologists explain human motivation in the same ways that evolutionary biologists explain human anatomy and physiology, but it goes much further. Evolutionary *biologists* explain human anatomy in terms of adaptive physical structures that became progressively more complex over time. Evolutionary *psychologists* explain motivation and emotion in terms of adaptive mental structures that have become progressively more complex over time. Every human motivation and emotion exists because it served an adaptive function that increased the chances of survival and reproduction. Love, art, faith, sacrifice, determination, envy, anger, and more, from a naturalistic psychology perspective, are not transcendent, supernatural, or even special. They are illusions – ways of understanding and interpreting innate patterns of behaviors and mental processes that themselves are no more than biochemical processes which exist solely to help us pass along our genes to the next generation.

Modern psychology's main theories of motivation come from the biological, behavioral, and humanistic perspectives. The biological perspective produced theories explaining motivation in terms of instincts, drives, and needs. The behavioral perspective explained motivation in terms of external forces, rewards, and consequences.

Chapter 8

Human Development

In This Chapter

- Human Development
- Worldview Perspectives
- Prenatal Development
- The Newborn
- Piaget’s Theory of Cognitive Development
- Freudian Psycho-sexual Perspective
- Psycho-social Perspective
- Moral Development
- Attachment Theories of Human Development
- Parenting Styles
- Adolescent Development
- Adult Development
- Aging
- Dying

Developmental psychology is the study of the lifelong process of change. From the miracles of conception and birth until death, we are constantly changing. Early in our lives the change is dramatic, but throughout our lives, the way that we think, feel, behave, and relate with others continually changes. Developmental psychologists study the stages of our physical, sexual, cognitive, emotional, moral, and social development, and the genetic and environmental factors that influence them.

Theories of human development provide psychologists with an

organizing framework for describing, explaining, and predicting developmental changes. Developmental theories describe our physical, sexual, cognitive, emotional, moral, and social growth and change. Developmental theories also provide guidance for appropriately interacting with people at different developmental levels.

Some developmental theories describe human development in terms of continuity. **Continuous development** refers to the gradual and ongoing unfolding, or maturation, of inborn characteristics. Some theories suggest we develop discontinuously, through a progressive series of distinct steps or **stages**. Some development theories suggest that human development is influenced most by genetic factors. Freud thought unconscious sexual forces drove development. Others suggested that environmental influence plays a greater role. How much of who we are is determined by our genes? Is human development affected more by our genetic makeup or environmental influences? Most psychologists today believe that it is both – that we continuously develop, but we also move through stages, and that genetics and the environment are inextricably connected.

A Christian view of human development begins with the belief that God knit us together in our mother’s wombs and He has a plan for our “development.” A Christian worldview also recognizes that we are born corrupted by sin

Chapter 11

Personality

In This Chapter

- What is Personality?
- Personality Theories
- Freudian Psycho-dynamic Perspective
- Neo-Freudian Perspective
- Behavioral Perspective
- Trait Theories
- Biologic Perspective
- Cognitive Perspective
- Cognitive-behavioral Perspective
- Humanistic Perspective
- Assessing Personality

What is personality? In everyday language, we say that someone who is outgoing and charming has “a lot of personality.” If we do not get along with someone, we say we have a “personality clash.” A person who is seen as unusual may be described as “a real personality.” Someone seen as uninteresting is said to have “no personality.” An important or prominent person is said to be “a personality.” Some people are even said to have multiple personalities.

In what ways are you “like” your friends and family? How are your moods, preferences, sensitivities, and emotions similar to those of the people

around you? How are they different? What are your attitudes, what do you think about, and how do you relate to other people? At your core, who are you and what “kind” of person are you? All of these are questions about personality. These are also questions about worldview, and they are the types of questions that personality psychologists try to answer.

Of the topics in psychology we’ve explored thus far, none comes closer to the heart of the Bible’s message of “what is Man?” than personality psychology. Philosophers throughout history and psychologists from modern psychology’s beginning have tried to describe and explain personality. Though they may contain truths about personality, those descriptions and explanations are, at the worldview level, inconsistent with the Bible’s message.

A theory of personality that is consistent with a Christian worldview must recognize Mankind’s sinful nature; it must acknowledge that our personality changes following our “new birth” in Christ; and it must recognize that

Personality. There is no universally accepted definition of personality. It is generally defined as a relatively stable pattern of psychological characteristics called traits. Traits are enduring and consistent patterns of thoughts, feelings, attitudes and behaviors. Shyness is a trait. Peaceful, envious, long-suffering, covetous, kind, prideful, and self-controlled are traits.

only through the supernatural influence of the Holy Spirit can we have a “right” personality. The theories discussed in this chapter do not acknowledge these truths.

Chapter 12

Abnormal Psychology

In This Chapter

- What is Abnormal?
- What is Mental Illness?
- What Causes Abnormal Thoughts and Feelings?
- Behaviorist Perspective
- Cognitive Perspective
- Psycho-dynamic Perspective
- Evolutionary Perspective
- The Medical Model
- Classifying Mental Illnesses
- Prevalence
- Social-Cognitive-Behavioral Approach
- Classification of Mental Illness

For many people, abnormal or *clinical* psychology is what psychology is about. Learning about the abnormal is often what attracts students to the study of psychology, but few topics in psychology are as controversial among Christians as abnormal psychology.

Some topics that psychologists study are more worldview-dependent than others. Topics like the nervous system and sensory processes are far from the “core” of our humanity and are not the focus of the Bible’s message. Others, like personality, development, and consciousness define us. Few topics in psychology come closer to the “core” aspects of the human condition –

our sin nature, salvation, restoration, and sanctification, than “abnormal” psychology. One’s perspective on sin, personal responsibility, and moral absolutes has huge implications on one’s view of the causes of abnormal thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. As you might predict, the gravity of the subject matter contributes to disagreements among Christians about the nature and causes of abnormal thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. For the Christian studying psychology, the nature and importance of these issues require great caution. For the Christian who plans to serve God in a career in mental health care, an in-depth and Holy Spirit-informed Christian worldview is crucial.

Some of the key worldview questions with which Christians who are psychologists, pastoral counselors, and theologians wrestle are:

- Is the experience of abnormal thoughts, feelings, and behaviors a mental illness?
- Are mental disorders best understood as the result of disunity with God, chemical imbalances, brain illness, trauma and life experiences, or some combination?
- Are mental disorders best treated from a spiritual or a medical perspective?
- Can the techniques developed by modern psychology contribute to a Christian approach to counseling?

Chapter 13

Treatment

In This Chapter

- Historical Approaches to Treatment
- Lobotomy and Electroconvulsive Therapy
- Psychopharmacology
- Deinstitutionalization
- Therapy
- Freudian Psycho-therapy
- Behavior Therapy
- Cognitive Therapy
- Humanistic Therapy
- Family Therapy
- Spiritual Treatments
- Christian Counseling
- Anti-psychology
- Biblical Counseling
- Integration
- Popular Psychology

In the previous chapter, we examined the worldview issues that shaped the various theories about the causes of abnormal thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. This chapter examines various models of treatment for people with psychological problems, with an emphasis on the link between the model and its underlying worldview assumptions. Your worldview about what causes abnormal thoughts, feelings, and behaviors greatly influences your beliefs about treatment.

If your worldview belief is that abnormal thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are the result of *sin; unconscious psychic conflicts; trauma and abuse; demonic influences; biological malfunctions; chemical*

imbalances in the brain; bad parenting; blocked self-actualization; or a combination of causes, your beliefs about treatment will reflect that worldview. Every approach to caring for people with abnormal thoughts, feelings, and behaviors brings with it underlying beliefs about the cause of the conditions. You will be taught a number of approaches to treatment in college. Please do not forget that understanding an approach to a treatment and accepting its underlying explanation of the cause of the problem are different. You can do one without the other.

Historical Approaches to Treatment. Throughout history there have been a number of widely varying treatments for psychological disorders. Both physical illnesses and abnormal thoughts and behaviors

were understood in terms of religion or magic. Shamans cast healing spells, offered sacrifices, and cast out evil spirits. Some cultures practiced **trephination**, a primitive type of brain surgery.

Benjamin Rush (1745-1813) is known as the father of American psychiatry. Rush believed that mental diseases were caused by irritation of the blood vessels in the brain. His treatment methods included inducing seizures, blood-letting, ice baths, and doses of a number of different chemical compounds.

For Review.

1. Describe some of the historical approaches to treating abnormal thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, including the worldview assumptions underlying the approach.
2. Describe how attitudes toward the mentally ill changed in the 19th century.
3. Describe the history of lobotomy and electroconvulsive therapy.
4. Describe the discovery of thorazine and the pharmacological revolution.
5. Describe the classification of psychiatric medications.
6. Explain the phrase “chemical imbalance of the brain.”
7. Describe psychopharmacology.
8. Describe the de-institutionalization of the mentally ill.
9. Describe the unintended consequences of de-institutionalization.
10. Define therapy.
11. Describe Freudian psycho-therapy.
12. Describe behavior therapy.
13. Describe cognitive therapies.
14. Describe humanistic therapy.
15. Describe family therapy.
16. Describe “spiritual” treatments.
17. Describe Christian anti-psychology.
18. Describe “integration.”
19. Describe biblical counseling.
20. Describe popular psychology.

Chapter 14

Social Psychology

In This Chapter

- Social Influences on Communication
- Social Influences on Cognition
- Social Influence on Feelings
- Social Influences on Behavior
- Social Influence of Groups

In Luke 10:30-37 Jesus tells the parable of the *Good Samaritan*. In the parable, Jesus tells us of one man's social interactions with a robber, a priest, a Levite, and a "good" Samaritan. Social psychologists are interested in such stories. In 1973 social psychologists **John Darley** and **Daniel Batson** at Princeton Theological Seminary put subjects to the test in a fascinating experimental recreation of the parable of the Good Samaritan. They wanted to know what factors influenced

helping behavior or **altruism** – actions we take to help other people. In their experiment, Darley and Batson recruited seminary students to be subjects in what was supposedly a study on religious education. They divided the subjects into two groups; one group was asked to prepare a sermon based on the story of the Good Samaritan. The second group was asked to prepare a presentation about seminary jobs. In an alley along the way to deliver their presentations, the subjects would encounter a man; slumped over, coughing, and groaning in obvious distress. The real purpose of the experiment was to find out whether thinking about helping increased helping behavior. Would the subjects who had been thinking about the moral imperatives communicated in the parable of the Good Samaritan be more likely to offer assistance to someone in need than subjects who were thinking about more "earthly" matters? Darley and Batson also wondered if **hurriedness** affected helping behavior. To find out, when the subjects arrived at the appointed time and place to deliver their message, they were told that the location for the presentation had been changed at the last minute. The researchers assigned the subjects in the two groups (seminary jobs presentation group / Good Samaritan sermon group) into one of three conditions:

- In the **high pressure** condition, subjects were told that they were late and had hurry to the new location.
- In the **moderate pressure** condition, subjects were told that they had just enough time to get to the new location.
- In the **low pressure** condition, subjects were told that they were early and could take their time going to the new location.

What do you think happened? What tendencies did the subjects display, what factors influenced their responses, and what general conclusions can we draw from the results? These are the types of questions social psychologists ask.

Chapter 15

Research Methods

In This Chapter

- The Empirical Method
- Research Terms
- Hypothesis
- Standardization and Replication
- Variables
- Independent and Dependent Variables
- Reliability and Validity
- Representative Sample
- Experimental and Control Group
- Confounding Variables
- Random Selection and Random Assignment
- Bias
- Research Designs
- Interpreting Research
- Correlation
- Descriptive Statistics
- Measures of Central Tendency
- Measures of Variability
- Inferential Statistics
- The Limits of Research Methods in Psychology
- Ethics in Research with Humans and Animals

The Christian worldview and true science cannot ultimately conflict – there is no inherent faith/science dichotomy. Science developed in the context of worldview beliefs about God’s orderliness and Man’s dominion. Modern science, properly understood, is consistent with a Christian worldview.

You learned earlier that many of the founders of modern psychology wanted it to be a “hard” science like physics and chemistry, so they adopted controlled empirical (scientific) methods for their research and limited their study to the “physics” of mental life. Many of psychology’s important interests (e.g. emotions, personality, and cognitions) were thought to be outside of the realm of scientific study because they could not be observed directly, measured, or controlled. How do you measure a thought? How do you quantify

emotions? A common criticism, therefore, of early modern psychology was that it was sterile and meaningless.

Today there is little about the mind that has not been subject to some kind of “scientific” investigation. Controlled empirical investigation is, however, still better-suited to disciplines like chemistry and physics than psychology, sociology, and anthropology. Also, some of psychology’s subfields (e.g. neuropsychology and sensory psychology) are better-suited to controlled empirical investigation than others (e.g. personality and consciousness). A common criticism of psychology today is that it is not a “real” science – that modern psychologists’ methods are not “scientific” methods.

Students should understand the limits of science and should be able to distinguish quality research from “junk” science. Often psychologists

Index

A

- abnormal psychology 30, 77, 155–174
 - abnormal thoughts, feelings, and behaviors 9, 16, 18, 20, 120, 155–158, 173, 177, 180–181
 - behaviorial perspective 158
 - biological perspective 158
 - chemical imbalance 38, 155, 158, 176. *See also* medical model, biological perspective
 - classifying mental illnesses 159
 - cognitive perspective 158
 - dementia paralytica 157
 - drapetomania 157
 - insanity 158
 - medical model. *See* biological perspective
 - mental illness 16, 18, 20, 26, 28, 120, 155–158, 170, 174–175, 177–178, 181
 - adjustment disorders 169
 - anxiety disorders 166
 - agoraphobia 166
 - compulsions 167
 - obsessions 167
 - obsessive-compulsive disorder 167
 - panic 166
 - phobia 166
 - post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) 9, 167
 - social phobia 166
 - cognitive disorders 163
 - amnesic disorders 163
 - delirium 163
 - dementia 163
 - disorders diagnosed in infancy, childhood, or adolescence
 - asperger syndrome 161
 - attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) 161–162
 - autism 161
 - conduct disorder 162
 - down syndrome 160
 - dyslexia 161
 - feeding and eating disorders 162
 - learning disorders 161
 - mental retardation 160
 - motor skills disorders 161
 - oppositional defiant disorder (ODD) 162
 - pervasive developmental disorders 161
 - pica 162
 - reactive-attachment disorder 162
 - rumination disorder 162
 - separation anxiety disorder 162
 - tic disorders 162
 - tourette’s disorder 162
 - dissociative disorders 167
 - dissociative amnesia 167
 - dissociative fugue 167

Bibliography

Chapter 1 – What is Psychology?

- Astin, A. 1993. *What matters in college?* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Bobgan, M. & Bobgan, D. (1979). *The Psychological Way/The Spiritual Way*. Minneapolis, MN: Bethany Fellowship.
- Bobgan, M. & Bobgan, D. (1987). *Psychoheresy: The psychological seduction of Christianity*. Santa Barbara: Eastgate Publishers.
- Carter, J. D. (1977). Secular and sacred models of psychology and religion. *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, (5), 197-208.
- Collins, G. R (1975). Popular Christian Psychologies: Some Reflections. In Fleck, J. R., & Carter, J. D. (Eds.), (1981). *Psychology and Christianity: Integrative Readings*. Nashville: Abingdon.
- Collins, G. R. (1975). The Pulpit and the Couch. In Fleck, J. R., & Carter, John D., (1981). *Psychology and Christianity: Integrative Readings*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon.
- Colson, Charles and Percy, Nancy. (1999). *How Now Shall We Live?* Wheaton, IL: Tyndale.
- Darwin, Charles (1859), *The Origin of Species*. Chapter 14 Recapitulation and Conclusion. Accessed 7/7/2011 online at <http://www.literature.org/authors/darwin-charles/the-origin-of-species/chapter-14.html>
- Faw, Harold W. (1995). *Psychology in Christian Perspective: An Analysis of Key Issues*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.
- Fleck, J. R. & Carter, J. D. (1981). *Psychology and Christianity: Integrative Readings*. Nashville: Abingdon.
- Ganz, R. (1993). *PsychoBabble: The Failure of Modern Psychology and the Biblical Alternative*. Wheaton: Crossway.
- Jeeves, M. A. (1976). *Psychology and Christianity: The View Both Ways*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press.
- Johnson, E. L. & Jones, S. L. (2000). Finding One Truth in Four Views. In Johnson, E. L. & Jones, S. L. (Eds.) (2000) *Psychology & Christianity: with Contributions by Gary R. Collins, David G. Myers, David Powlison, Robert C. Roberts*. Downers Grover: InterVarsity.
- Myers, David G. (1996). On Professing Psychological Science and Christian Faith. *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, (15), 143-149.
- Myers, David G. and Jeeves, Malcom A. (2003). *New York: Psychology Through the Eyes of Faith*. HarperCollins.
- Narramore, Bruce (1985). The Concept of Responsibility in Psychopathology and Psychotherapy. *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, (13), 91-96.
- Rice, Timothy S. (2008). Homeschool Psych: Preparing Christian Homeschool Students for Psychology 101. Epworth, GA: Rocking R Ventures.
- Slife, B. D. & Whoolery, M. (2006). Are Psychology's Main Methods Biased Against the Worldview of Many Religious People? *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 34(3), 217-231.
- The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (4th ed.)*. (2006). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Veith, G. E. (1998). Educational Victory: How Christians Can Reclaim the Culture. *World Magazine*, (13)24.
- Watters, W. (1987). Christianity & Mental Health [Electronic version]. *The Humanist*, November/December, 5-11.

Chapter 2 – A Christian Worldview

- Aristotle. (ca. 350 BC). *De anima* (J. A. Smith, Trans.). Accessed 7/7/2011 online at <http://psychclassics.yorku.ca/Aristotle/De-anima/index.htm>.
- Blamires, Harry. *Recovering the Christian Mind: Meeting the Challenge of Secularism*. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1988.
- Clark, R. E. D. (1953). The Spheres of Revelation and Science. What Are Their Limitations in Relation to

Psychology: A Christian Perspective High School Edition

Timothy S. Rice, D.Min LPC

Whatever you think about psychology and its effect on Christian students, the time to deal with it is now. Almost everyone who goes to college today will take an introductory psychology class. Psychology departments are home to some of the most anti-Christian intellectuals on campus. The psychology professor is unlikely to share a Christian worldview – he or she will probably ridicule Christianity as unscientific, irrational, prudish, controlling, inhibitive, oppressive, and naïve.

Christian students are often not prepared to recognize and refute modern psychology’s core philosophical assumptions: naturalism, behaviorism, humanism, evolutionism, empiricism, moral relativism, and reductionism embedded, sometimes very subtly, in modern psychology’s theories and schools of thought and presented under the banner of “science.” Failure to recognize those assumptions may lead Christian students to compromise their Christian worldview.

There are very few introductory texts that present psychology’s content from a Christian perspective and none, to the author’s knowledge, intended for Christian high school students. Psychology: A Christian Perspective: High School Edition is the text Christian students need to clearly understand psychology in the context of a Christian worldview.

FROM PSYCHOLOGY: A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE: HIGH SCHOOL EDITION. *“I believe that the study of the soul, the mind, and behavior are right and proper for Christians and that Christian students should bring their worldview and become part of the future intellectual leadership in Christian psychology.”* – Dr. Tim

Key Features

- IN DEPTH INFORMATION ON PSYCHOLOGY’S HISTORY AND WORLDVIEW, THE BRAIN AND NERVOUS SYSTEM, MOTIVATION, EMOTION, DEVELOPMENT, LEARNING AND MEMORY, SENSATION AND PERCEPTION, ABNORMAL PSYCHOLOGY, SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY, TREATMENT AND MUCH MORE
- HIGHLIGHTED CONTENT BOXES
- “WORLDVIEW CHECK” COMMENTARIES
- HELPFUL CHAPTER SUMMARIES AND QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW
- COMPLETE INDEX
- COMPREHENSIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY ORGANIZED BY CHAPTER



About the Author. Dr. Tim holds a Doctorate of Ministry in Family Counseling from Amridge University. He spent 15 years working in a public sector mental health center. He and his wife Tina have home-schooled their four children for a total of 17 years. Katie and Melissa are in college. Abigail and Daniel are still at home. Dr. Tim is the author of *Homeschool Psych: Preparing Christian Homeschool Students for Psychology 101*.

Psychology: A Christian Perspective provides a framework in which our children can study the wonders of the soul, the mind, the brain, and behavior from the perspective of a Christian worldview.



Rocking R Ventures Inc.