

# ***Does Mental Illness Exist?***

***By Dr. Edward Watke Jr.***

## **I. Mental Illness -- Becomes a New Theory**

### **A. Historical aspects**

1. Historically, illness was referred to as a bodily disorder.
2. Altered bodily structure constituted illness.

### **B. A new criterion for determining illness came on the scene.**

When man began to label illness on the basis of observing behavior a new criterion was adopted without any scientific justification for designating illness. The concept of functional illness evolved when man began to label disease on the basis of bodily function rather than on the basis of organic structure.

### **C. Champion of the Movement -- Jean Martin Charcot**

He lived from 1825-1893, is regarded as the champion of the concept of mental illness. Prior to Charcot, physical illness and poor behavior were considered the cause of man's problems. Charcot shifted in his interest of studying neuro-pathology. Charcot came to view the hysterics as suffering from some kind of non-physical mental disease.

### **D. Study of Non-Physical Aspects of Psychic Phenomenon**

Up until the time of Freud and Charcot, only the physiochemical explanation was accepted as belonging to the area of medicine. Medical science until then dealt only with physical organisms. Because of the intense desire of Freud and Charcot, they pushed for a scientific discipline that studied the non-physical aspects of psychic phenomenon.

These men, Freud and Charcot, began to make inroads into the medical profession. Illness had previously been described as a physiochemical disorder of the body which eventually manifested itself in the form of a disability.

### **E. Psychology and Psychiatry rest upon the laurels of medical science.**

1. It is regarded as a legitimate science.
2. If medical science, then chemical and physical disorders are: discovered, observed, and verified to be actual disorders.
3. But, in psychology and psychiatry, symptoms are observed and remedies are suggested on a "faith basis."

## **II. What About the Human Mind?**

### **A. The human mind is more than matter.**

1. The atheistic, secularistic, evolutionist who is a counselor considers the mind to be only matter.

2. The mind is more than the brain cells that began to deteriorate at the moment of birth. In hell the rich man lifted up his eyes and remembered, even though his body was in the grave and was deteriorating, his mind was operating.

The mind, then, is more than the sum total of its material and component parts. The mind is immaterial and cannot be observed by the normal procedure of scientific investigation. The scientific community is limited in their investigation of the mind. Much of what is taught about the mind is fiction, based on godless ideologies.

3. They are limited to natural material observation.

They can only record the chemical and electrical impulses. They can only decide what is normal or abnormal according to their ideas.

## **B. The mind is the innermost nature of an individual.**

1. Truth about the material aspects of the mind is found ONLY in the Bible.
2. The mind as described in Scripture refers to the inner-most nature of an individual.
3. It is the whole attitude and habit of a man inwardly constituted as being capable of: That is, all the aspects below are controlled, influenced from the center of control -- the mind. The following makes up what the Bible means by the heart.
  - thoughts and reasoning,
  - emotions and imaginations
  - conscience and will.
4. The New Testament Greek word is **nous**, which implies the use of the mind or attitude.
  - Rom. 1:28 \_\_\_\_\_
  - I Cor. 1:10 \_\_\_\_\_
  - Phil. 1:7 \_\_\_\_\_
5. Man is what he is in his heart. What he thinks in his heart is what he is mentally. (Prov. 23:7; Isa 23:6; Matt 12:33-35; Rom. 12:2; 8:5-8; Psa. 51:6)

## **C. The origin of man's problems**

1. Problems begin in our thinking center, not in our emotional center.
2. Because of this, there is no such thing as emotional problems, as such. There are emotional responses seen in the life from sin -- in thoughts and in actions.
3. Emotions are like smoke detectors. Emotions are aroused because we do have a problem.
4. Man's problems come from his heart. (Matt. 15:17-20; 12:33-35)

5. If man's problems are emotional, there is nothing we can do about them, but if they are thinking problems, they can be dealt with by thinking properly. Then it is a matter of applying truth -- God's truth -- His Word.
6. Actions or behavior basically flows out of our thinking. Thoughts are the seed bed of our actions in most cases.

### **III. What About Bizarre Behavior?**

#### **A. The source can be legal and illegal drugs.**

1. Psychotropic drugs such as Thorazine, Loxitane and Elavil may produce pseudo-parkinson's disease and involuntary eye moment, etc. They effect mental activity.
2. Non-perscribed drugs such as LSD may cause erratic behavior.
3. It is a known fact that truck drivers use Benzedrine, better known as "bennies" to keep themselves awake. (The side effect of these drugs has included hallucinogenic effects.
4. Alcoholics have suffered from delirium tremors and hallucinations.

#### **B. Another source can be guilt.**

1. The violation of one's conscience may produce guilt, and this guilt may take a variety of forms.
  - a. In extreme cases people have washed their hands daily, repeatedly, trying to alleviate their hearts from guilt over something they have never dealt with.
  - b. Abnormal ritualistic behavior is often a result of guilt.
  - c. Some have bathed many times a day trying to wash the inner man of the tyranny of the inner guilt.
  - d. At times it may be evidenced in a persecution complex, or many abnormal fears, or the feeling that someone is constantly watching them.
2. The above listed responses are often mechanisms to escape reality, to escape accountability of sin. The guilt is alleviated when the offender confesses his wrong, and claims God's cleansing.

#### **C. Still another source may be camouflaging.**

1. Camouflaging is revealed in Scripture. (I Sam. 21: 10-15)
2. Some counselees will camouflage or fake it in order to escape reality and having to accept personal responsibility for sinful practice and failure.

#### **D. Demon possession can bring about bizarre behavior.**

1. People who are under the control of a demon may display unusual behavior.
2. Demonic activity may be characterized by:
  - a. supernatural knowledge
  - b. intellectual power

- c. supernatural physical strength
- e. and moral depravity.

Under attack, the person may project a personality entirely different from his own.

**Principles we need to consider:**

1. Bizarre behavior does not mean the person is mentally or emotionally disturbed.
2. We must treat non-organic problems as sin problems!
  - a. Consider that problems are not the result of mental illness,
  - b. nor are people’s problems the result of “emotional” illness,
  - c. nor are these problems psychological problems -- but basically are sin problems.
3. When sin is dealt with, confession, repentance, and restoration has taken place, then emotions will “level out.”
4. There are physical problems, (illnesses, etc.) that can affect behavior; these can be proven in the laboratory and specifically dealt with. But we need to look for proof, that is, be sure it is truly a physical problem and that the counselee needs medical attention.

**Note Comparisons of Following Models as We Know Them Today:**

**Medical model**

Flu ----->	(person (s))	illness is medical, physical not his fault, we excuse behavior, needs treatment by a professional
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**Mental illness model**

Schizophrenia ----->	(person (s))	Illness is consider to be mental, bringing physical and external results. supposedly not his fault, they excuse behavior. Needs treatment of a professional, they say.
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**Biblical model**

Sinful thoughts, actions ----->	(persons (s))	<p><b>Moral issue:</b> internal due to sin, personally responsible, no excuse, many act irresponsibly <u>Treatment:</u> confession of sin, Biblical change!</p>
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