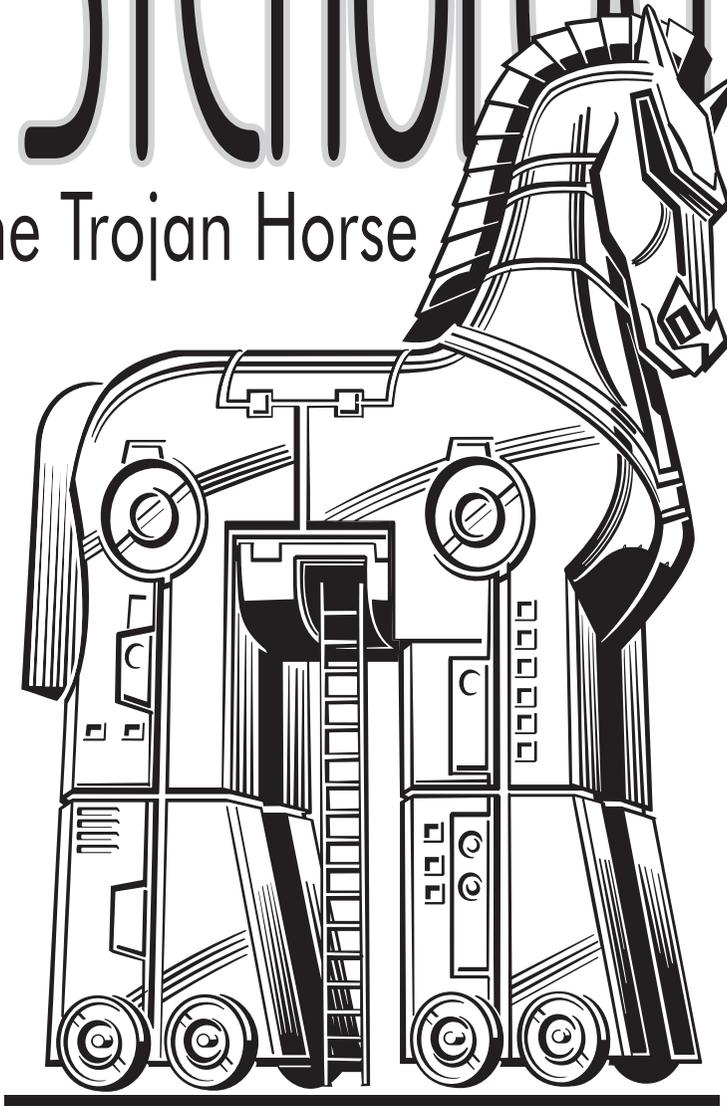


PSYCHOLOGY

The Trojan Horse



by Gil Rugh

Psychology: The Trojan Horse

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

Over three thousand years ago, the Greeks and the inhabitants of Troy fought the Trojan War. The most significant and interesting feature of this war was not that the Greeks eventually conquered Troy. What was significant was *how* they conquered the city. To fool the people of Troy, the Greeks built a wooden horse and presented it to them as a gift. Hiding inside the horse, however, were several Greek soldiers. When the people of Troy pulled the wooden horse into the city, they had no idea that this *gift* was soon to be their destruction. During the night, the soldiers in the wooden horse came out and let the Greek army into the city. They then sacked and burned Troy. Destruction came from an enemy invited into the camp.

In a real sense, the Evangelical Church today has opened its gates to a Trojan horse. This Trojan horse is not a literal wooden horse but the teachings of modern psychology. Beyond doubt, one of the greatest issues facing the Church of Jesus Christ today is the integration of modern psychology with the Bible. As one medical doctor stated, "No greater issue faces the modern, true Church than this Trojan horse of psychology. It has a stranglehold that will not be easily loosened."¹ This statement has proven true. In fact, I do not believe psychology will loosen its grip on the Church any time soon.

Psychology has so infiltrated the Evangelical Church that taking a stand for the purity of the Word of God often brings division among Evangelicals. The few voices who speak out against integrating psychology with the Bible are often criticized. They are accused of being unloving and divisive. The focus has become their

personalities rather than whether they are doctrinally correct or not. As a result, there has been a blurring of the true doctrinal issues.

On the other hand, many Christian psychologists have become so popular that to criticize their teaching is almost like attacking the Bible. Undoubtedly, most Christian psychologists are well-intentioned people with a desire to help others. Good intentions, however, are not the issue. Nowhere in the Bible do we find God accepting of people with good intentions who put aside the clear teaching of the Word. Much damage can be done with good intentions. *Therefore, intentions, sincerity and earnestness are not the issues in this debate. The issue is whether today's Christian psychologists are mixing men's ideas with the Bible.* When I analyze the doctrine of these men, I am convinced they are promoting doctrine that is contrary to the Bible and are addressing man's spiritual problems from an unbiblical viewpoint.

C H A P T E R O N E

Sanctification Abandoned by the Church

One night, as I was driving back to Lincoln from Kansas City, I was listening to a well-known Christian psychology program on the radio. On this program, a lady called and told how the Lord was using her. However, she was also a little discouraged because she did not have much Christian support. I was thinking to myself, surely with a little encouragement from the Word they could help and edify her. By the time the two Christian counselors were done with her, however, they had her convinced she belonged in a clinic. They told her she had underlying difficulties that required professional counseling. I could not believe what I heard. What also struck me was that these men, Christian counselors, were not instructing people from Scripture, instead they primarily were using theories of psychology.

On another occasion, I heard two other popular Christian psychologists on the radio discussing the importance of Christian young people pursuing education in psychology. They said young people needed to learn psychology, because if they did not, who would be around to help people with their problems in the future? Oddly, when I grew up, young people were often encouraged to learn their Bibles so they could help people. Why this change? The problem is that the Church has abandoned the doctrine of sanctification (the

process of growing as a Christian) and has given it over to the psychologists and psychiatrists. Dr. Ed Payne wisely observes:

Psychologists who are Christians are not primarily at fault. Church leaders must bear the guilt of the invasion of psychology into the Church. These are the people who are ordained of God to guard the minds of their sheep. Instead, they have invited wolves into the fold.²

There was a day when pastors saw themselves as the ones trained to deal with people's spiritual problems. But many Church leaders have handed this area over to the *professionals* trained in psychology.

In some ways, Christian psychologists have become unofficial authorities in the Church. For example, James Dobson's *Focus on the Family* and Frank Minirth and Paul Meier's *Minirth and Meier Clinic* are two of the most listened to programs in Christian radio today. Many Christians look to these men and other Christian psychologists for answers on Christian living. But how many people who listen to Christian psychologists know the theological background and training of these men? How many know what churches they belong to or if they are qualified to be elders? I have examined the doctrine of some of these men. Many would not be qualified to preach or be elders in some churches. Yet since these men have the title "Christian psychologist," believers accept them as authorities on Christian living. Many believers live on the words of these men. Yet how many know what they are teaching or if what they say agrees with Scripture? The Bible calls us to be discerning and to "examine everything carefully" (1 Thes. 5:21). We should be alarmed when someone's authority comes from psychological rather than theological training.

This turning over of sanctification to the Christian psychologists is also evident in Christian literature. When I go to Christian bookstores looking for books on Christian living written by Bible teachers, I find very few. When I look in the Christian living section, however, I see many books written by psychologists and psychiatrists. Why has this happened? Christians now perceive the psychologists and psychiatrists as the experts for help in living. These days, few people consider going to Bible teachers to learn how to grow in their Christian walk. I know of one Bible college that charged

\$50 for a person to talk with someone trained in psychology. No charge existed, however, if a person at this school wanted to talk with a Bible teacher. What does this say? It says if someone wants spiritual direction they can go to a Bible teacher, but if they want real help they need to pay money and go to a Christian psychologist. The Church has, indeed, handed over sanctification to the psychologists.

Mixing Truth with Error

Since most Christian psychologists quote Scripture, many think their teachings must be biblical. Use of Scripture, however, is not always an accurate indicator that someone is theologically sound. The cults use much Scripture. Most of us have had an encounter with a Mormon or Jehovah Witness who ran us ragged through our Bibles. That does not mean they are correct, however, simply because they quote the Bible. Although they use Scripture, they mix human ideas with it. The result is a perversion of God's Word. Most Christians clearly see this with the cults, but they do not as readily see this with psychology. Yet Christian psychologists are also guilty of diluting the Bible with ideas from secular psychology.

According to 1 Peter 2:2, Christians are to "long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation." The "pure milk of the word" causes Christians to grow. When the milk of the Word is diluted with men's ideas, however, it loses any effectiveness for developing growth. If someone took a gallon of pure milk, for example, and added a drop of cyanide poison, what would the result be? The result would not be 99.9% pure milk. The result would be poisoned milk. One of Satan's greatest tactics is to combine error with truth. That is why Christians need to be discerning of people who use the Bible but also say we need to use the findings of men as well. Today's Christian psychologists often use the Bible, but they also add men's ideas to it. When the ideas of men are added to the Bible, however, the "pure milk of the word" becomes polluted.

Can Psychology be Christian?

Is there such a thing as "Christian psychology?" Many Christians believe there is a brand of psychology that is distinctly "Chris-

tian.” Christian psychology, however, does not even exist. If someone were to check a standard text book on psychology, they would see that there is no category of psychology that is “Christian.” As Jim Owen has stated:

The term *Christian psychology* is a misnomer. There are Christians who are trained psychologists but there is no discipline as such that can be designated Christian psychology, contrasted with, say, secular psychology . . . it is a mistake to speak of “Christian psychology” as if it were substantively different than humanistic psychology.³

Modern psychology is rooted in the teachings of such godless men as Sigmund Freud, Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers. A professor at Yale once wrote a book on Sigmund Freud called, *The Godless Jew*. The author used this title because Freud called himself the godless Jew who founded psychotherapy. Certainly, not all Christian psychologists openly identify with Freud. Still, in using psychology, they are looking to the teachings of a man who, by his own admission, was a “godless Jew.”⁴

The founders of modern psychology were outspoken critics of Christianity. They wanted to provide a man-centered alternative to the Bible for dealing with man’s problems. Remarkably, Christians have become absorbed with a system that is inherently anti-Christian. What Paul told the Colossians is equally applicable to the Church today:

See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ (Col. 2:8).

The Church is to avoid the philosophies and deceptions of men, not embrace them. When will the Church see the seriousness of this issue? Satan has been effective in deluding the Church into thinking we need to mix men’s ideas with the Word of God. In 1 Timothy 3:15, Paul called the Church of the living God “the pillar and support of the truth.” The Church exists in the world to promote the truth of God’s Word. But now the Church has taken His Word and has added the ideas of men to it.

Is All Truth God's Truth?

Some Christians wonder what could be wrong with taking information from psychology and using it to help people with their problems. After all, if truth is truth, why not use it? Thus the statement, "All truth is God's truth," is often used in this debate. By this statement, some mean that wherever truth is found, in any area, we should be willing to use and benefit from it. This truth can supposedly be applied to Christian growth. But is this legitimate? Certainly, we have learned things not found in the Bible. For example, we did not learn to add and subtract from the Bible. It is not true, however, that experiential truth can be compared with the truth revealed in God's Word. The Bible alone provides hope for the soul. Only revealed biblical truth addresses the issues of sin, salvation, and Christian living. Jesus prayed, "Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth" (John 17:17). Christian growth takes place in the realm of biblical truth. Though truth may be found in other areas such as math and science, they are of no value in promoting sanctification. Likewise, what truth there may be in psychology does not with validity address man's relationship to God. Only the Bible can sufficiently do this.

Theological schools have also been guilty of trying to use psychology in spiritual matters. In the past, conservative seminaries normally hired their faculty based on their theological training. Now some seminaries will hire men trained in psychology even when they have no formal theological training. Why would conservative schools hire men whose training is primarily in psychology? After all, no seminary would hire professors who only had degrees in mathematics. Why? Although truth exists in mathematics, mathematics does not contribute to our understanding of sin, salvation, and Christian growth. Many today, however, accept the idea that psychology gives helpful insights into the nature of man and sin. However, psychology has even less validity than mathematics when it comes to life and godliness.

Sin or Disease?

Modern psychology has greatly affected our society's view of sin. Today, sin is no longer considered sin but a "problem" or a "disease." This type of thinking can be seen in the following example:

When District of Columbia Mayor Marian Barry tearfully announced that he had ‘weaknesses’ and entered a Florida treatment program last week, he and his aides were also launching a political and legal strategy to portray his addiction problems as a disease—something beyond his control and thus politically less damaging.⁵

Years ago, when I went to college in Philadelphia, I would walk by people who had passed out because they had been drinking. My natural reaction was to say “There’s a drunk.” Today, however, drunkenness and other sins are considered diseases. A disease is something a person cannot control and is not responsible for.⁶ It was not long ago, however, when many of the excesses now labeled as diseases and addictions were considered moral behavior problems.⁷

The Source of Sin

One day I saw a commercial in which a man was promoting his clinic to help those who were alcoholics. This man, a former alcoholic himself, claimed that when he was young his parents taught him that alcoholism was a sin. With training, however, he came to understand that alcoholism was a disease. Unfortunately, Christians have bought into that type of thinking. The Bible is clear, however, that sinful behavior is directly traceable to men’s evil hearts:

For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts and fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man (Mark 7:21–23; emphasis mine).

Now the *deeds of the flesh* are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envyings, drunkenness, carousings, and things like these (Gal. 5:19–21; emphasis mine).

When a person is involved in sinful behavior, the cause is a sinful and depraved heart. If we tell a person involved in such behavior that he has a disease, we are excusing him from being responsible for his actions. One researcher at the University of Cali-

fornia at Santa Barbara concluded that the disease model being promoted today excuses responsibility and “indoctrinates them (the addicted) with the idea that they are helpless and sick.”⁸

People have asked me if I believe in addictions. Certainly addictions exist, but people have addictions because sin is addictive. Jesus said, “Everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin” (John 8:34). Therefore, many people are addicted to alcohol, immorality, gambling and many other vices. But the Bible calls all these things “sin.”

C H A P T E R T W O

God's Way of Dealing With Sin

The world refuses to understand the concept of sin. It also does not accept what God's Word has to say on this issue. As a result, the world's methods for dealing with sin will never bring about true biblical righteousness. But believers should not be confused on this issue. Our answers for dealing with sin are found in the Word of God.

The Bible claims to be absolutely sufficient for instructing us in life and godliness. The Church does not have to turn to the theories of psychology. Second Timothy 3:16,17 states:

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

If the Bible can make us "adequate" and "equipped for every good work," why do we need to add the wisdom of men? Psalm 19:7 tells us, "The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul." If the "law of the Lord" is perfect for my soul, why do I need to look for answers elsewhere? Peter says, "His divine power has granted to us *everything* pertaining to life and godliness through the true knowledge of Him" (2 Pet. 1:3; emphasis mine.) If the Word of God is true (and it is) we will find all the truth we need for our Christian walk in the pages of Scripture. The Bible has the answers!

The Romans 6 Way

How then does a person deal with sin? Psychology has its theories, but Romans 6 makes clear God's way. In this passage, the apostle Paul clearly shows the freedom from sin that salvation in Christ brings to the believer.

The Power of Sin Is Broken

- Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin (Rom. 6:3-7).

Believers are identified with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection. A radical spiritual transformation has taken place. As a result, we are now able to “walk in newness of life.” The baggage of our unsaved life was left behind at the cross. If when we became saved, we were still in bondage to sin, we would not be walking in newness of life. But our old self was crucified so that we no longer have to be “slaves of sin.” The “old self” is everything we were in Adam—sinful, depraved beings. That “old self” was crucified with Christ. In other words, all that we were in Adam, including all the depravity associated with our old self, was nailed to the cross. That is how God dealt with sin in our lives.

When God says that our old self “was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with,” this does not mean our old self was destroyed in the sense of becoming nonexistent. The meaning is that the power of sin was broken or made powerless. The word for “done away with” (*katargeo*) means “to render powerless.” This word is used in Hebrews 2:14, where it says that Christ, through His death, “might *render powerless* him who had the power of death, that is the devil” (emphasis mine). We know that Satan has not ceased to exist, but his power over believers has been bro-

ken. Therefore, the control that our old man once had over us has been done away with. We could say our addiction to sin has been broken. Because of our identification with Christ, we are no longer under its power. We no longer are “slaves to sin” but we are “freed from sin.”

This truth does not mean believers are perfect, “For we all stumble in many ways” (James 3:2). But now *we do not have to sin*. As unbelievers we were slaves to sin and that was all we could do. Now we are freed from its power. Whenever we sin we are running back to and obeying a master who no longer has control over us. We would consider foolish someone who had been legally freed from a cruel and oppressive master yet still insisted on obeying that old master. We would say, “You don't belong to that old master. Quit obeying him. If you obey him it is not because you have to, it is because you are foolishly choosing to do so.” The same principle is true for believers. Believers have been delivered from the slavery of sin. When we sin, it is not because we have to, it is because we choose to.

I am concerned when believers claim they are still in bondage to sin. I have heard people say, “I am a Christian, but I am still an alcoholic.” Or “I am saved, but I am also a practicing homosexual.” This type of thinking is not biblical. First Corinthians 6:9–10 states:

Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

A man in our church once wanted to give testimony that he was a saved homosexual. I explained to him that if Christ truly saved him he could not be a practicing homosexual because homosexuals cannot enter God's kingdom. When a person becomes a believer, he is no longer characterized by a particular sin.

After listing the types of people who would not inherit the kingdom, Paul said, “And such *were* some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor. 6:11; emphasis mine). The Corinthians, to whom Paul wrote, *used* to be charac-

terized by those sins. Because of God's work in their lives, however, they no longer were those things. As 2 Corinthians 5:17 states, "Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come." That old, sinful lifestyle is in the past for the believer. Christians may sin, but sin will not characterize their lifestyle.

Dead to Sin—Alive to God

- Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. . . . Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus (Rom. 6:8–11).

When we were in Adam we were alive to sin. But now we have died with Christ. That death is final and is just as real, spiritually, as His death. Therefore, when we trusted Christ we died to sin. Now we are called to live in light of that reality. That is God's provision. At the cross, Christ delivered us from sin's power. Therefore, when we are tempted to sin, we can resist because we are dead to its control. If a temptation toward adultery, homosexuality, bulimia, anger, or any other sin arises, we are to call to mind that we are dead to those things and alive to God. Paul also said in Colossians, "Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry" (Col. 3:5). Being dead to those things means we are to have nothing to do with them.

What, then, is the answer for the man who does not treat his family right or gets drunk? Stop the sinful, selfish behavior. It can be done right away. Multiple counseling sessions to determine the motivation for these acts are not needed. People who blame their behavior on anything other than themselves are looking to excuse their sin.

Digging Up the Past

Much of modern psychological counseling involves digging up the past to find out why people act the way they do. But do we have to delve into the past to be able to solve our problems? I heard a popular Bible teacher say that it is necessary to go back to one's

childhood to find answers for the present. That approach, however, is not biblical. I know of people who have grown children who will not speak to their own parents because some Christian counselor revealed to them that their problems were the result of the treatment they supposedly got from their parents.

On the other hand, when the Bible takes people to the past, it takes them to the cross, not to their childhood. The cross is where the answer for sin is found. Some people want to discuss how awful their childhood was. They want to blame their problems on bad parents and bad circumstances. We certainly do not want to make light of those who experienced true child abuse. Yet going back to our childhood and blaming parents for the way we are now is not the answer. Surely, many people have had awful, wretched childhoods. After all, sinful descendants of Adam raised us. Yet the solution is not digging in the garbage piles of our past—the answer is at the cross. At the cross, there is more than just salvation from hell; there is the power to overcome the past. We are given a new start on life. No matter how awful our past was, the rich resources of Christ allow us to forgive any wrongs done to us. Sometimes people will carry bitterness toward someone who harmed them. But as we are forgiven by God, we are now able to forgive those who have harmed us.

The Counseling Model

Psychological counseling often involves ongoing meetings with a counselor. As a result, helping people is often treated as a process. The Church has also bought into the idea that to help people we must personally meet with them in a professional counseling format. This professional counseling model, however, is flawed. Certainly, there is nothing wrong with counseling people from Scripture. At times we need to meet with other believers and show them from God's Word what they need to do (see Gal. 6:1). However, the professional counseling format of ongoing meetings with a counselor is not taken from the Bible. The biblical pattern for spiritual growth is submitting to the Word of God and obeying it. The Church should not adopt the world's model of professional counseling to deal with people's problems. Why should dealing with sin be a process if the crucifixion of Christ took care of the sin issue? When we talk to people, we need to show them from Scripture why they are

in sin and what God expects them to do. They are then to obey God's Word by immediately ceasing their sin. Yet often, people want time in dealing with sin because they cherish it and do not want to quit. The Puritans called these types of sins "bosom sins"—those sins that we cherish and tightly grip. The only sins we have problems with, however, are the ones we choose to be involved in. According to the Bible, however, no sin is so controlling that the believer cannot do anything about it. If there were, Romans 6 either is wrong or does not apply to that person.

Once a lady who had been to several psychiatrists and psychologists from all over the country came to see me. She had received many hours of counseling and was given medication. She asked me how long I could meet with her. When I told her an hour, she then instructed me to cancel all my appointments for the day because that was how long it would take to discuss her problems. I told her we would start with an hour. She then went on to tell me her problems. After ten minutes of listening to her, I stopped and told her I knew what her problem was. "You are consumed with yourself," I said. "All you have talked about is how bad off you are." Her husband, who was also there exclaimed, "It's about time somebody told her that." This woman did not need continual counseling to reaffirm that she had a right to be consumed with herself. She needed to know that as a Christian, her focus was to be on serving God and others (see Phil. 2:3-4). If she were a believer, the Holy Spirit would enable her to do that. It was her responsibility to obey God's Word. It is interesting that in all her meetings with Christian psychologists, no one told her what was expected of her according to the Bible. I found out later that when this woman went for counseling at the Christian psychology clinics, her cost was about \$5,000 a week. If a pastor offered counseling for that price, he would be considered a huckster. Yet someone can charge that type of fee if he is a "Christian psychologist."

Categorizing Sin

The world has been categorizing sin for years. Now the Church has also adopted this approach. Some churches have self-help groups for alcoholics, wife abusers and others. Implied is that every sin is unique and must be dealt with in a special way. But where in the Bible is any sin ever dealt with on that basis? We have fallen into the

trap that there are sins that are especially complicated. I have had people say to me, "Where in the Bible does it address bulimia?" Or "How can the Bible help someone who is anorexic if it does not even address this disease?" But in His Word, God does not establish a different pattern for dealing with each sin. There is not one plan for bulimia and another plan for adultery. He deals with all sin the same way. The Church should not complicate the issue by categorizing sin the way the world does.

Sometimes people will justify the use of psychology because they believe the problems of today are more severe and call for more in-depth treatment than what the Bible can offer. What they fail to understand is that today's sins are not new to us. For example, the Roman women invented forced vomiting after eating. Drunkenness and immorality were issues back then too. Corinth was a city known for vast immorality. The people in those days were just as sinful as people are today. Yet Paul told the Christians of that time "to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice to God" (Rom. 12:1). Christians then did not have the teachings of Freud or other psychologists to help them, but they were still responsible to God for living holy lives. Were they lacking anything? The answer is obviously no. They had all they needed for godly living; they had God's resources. If psychology is so important for living, how have Christians lived without it for all these years?

Even when I was still in seminary, I remember being told that when people were involved in complicated behavior we should direct them to professional counseling. The implication was that God's Word is good for the not-so-tough problems, but when more severe problems arise then we must turn to the professional counselor. Yet if the Bible cannot deal with the severest of problems, it is not a sufficient Scripture. If the Bible cannot deal with sin, what good is it? Somehow the Church has come to believe that using the Bible alone in spiritual matters is simplistic. Yet Paul said the Gospel "is the power of God for salvation" (Rom. 1:16). That salvation includes freedom from the power of sin.

We have invented many categories for sin, but the Bible treats it all the same way. Either the Bible is sufficient for dealing with sin or it is not. Some may believe that the Bible alone is not adequate to deal with every sin, but in doing so they deny the very purpose of the Bible and the Gospel—to liberate man from his fallen, sinful condition.

Do not Let Sin Reign

- Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace (Rom. 6:12–14).

Because of his identification with Christ, the believer should not allow sin to control him. While the unbeliever is never commanded to stop sinning because he is a slave to sin, the believer does not have to obey the lusts of the body. The believer still struggles with the flesh (see Rom. 7:14–25), but because of his new life in Christ he can say, “Though I have temptation, I do not have to sin. My body will be used as an instrument for righteousness.”

Our bodies belong to God. We are to use them to accomplish His purposes. Since we are now God’s property, we have no right to use our bodies for anything other than righteousness.

- But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness (Rom. 6:17,18).

Notice that believers “were slaves to sin” but now they have become “slaves of righteousness.” To claim sin can still enslave a believer is to deny the heart of the Gospel.

- For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. . . . But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life (Rom. 6:20,22).

We used to be slaves to sin. But now, since we are enslaved to God, we can live sanctified lives. It is that simple! The Christian, now freed from sin, can live for God. By God’s power he can say: “I am not going to be a drunk”; “I am not going to be an alcoholic”; “I am going to be a good father and husband.” Someone may say, “But you don’t know how much I struggle with this certain problem.” I may not know. But I do know that God’s Word is true and the Spirit

of God can make you live right. The issue is whether we are willing to let go of our sin. Often, we develop an attachment to sin, and if we can excuse it, we feel comfortable in continuing with it. But sin no longer has control over us. When we died with Christ, He broke its power. We are now to do righteousness.

Romans 6 gives us the foundation for Christian living. It is the once and for all death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. When a person believes in Christ he becomes a new person and sin's authority is taken away. As believers, we are to live in light of that truth. What then is the answer for homosexuality, bulimia, adultery or any other sin? Romans 6 is the answer. It is abominable that some in the Church can throw out Romans 6 and tell Christians they need the help of professionals trained in psychology.

C O N C L U S I O N

The battle for the truth goes on. It is tempting to give up because standing for the truth often means conflict. Yet the Church is called to be “the pillar and support of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15). As believers we are to stand for the truth. What then should be our response to the infiltration of psychology into the Church?

Be Aware

Paul warned Timothy that days would come when people would not want to follow sound doctrine:

I solemnly charge you . . . preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths (2 Tim. 4:14).

Paul tells us that taking a stand for the purity of the Word is not always easy. People will not always want to hear the truth. Instead, they will find teachers who will tell them what they want to hear.

Contend for the Faith

Taking a stand on an issue like this is often difficult. Sometimes we may wonder if the pain and division are worth it. We must

be careful, however, that we remain faithful to the truth. As Jude said:

Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3).

The word for “contend earnestly” in the Greek is *agonizo*, which means “to agonize.” Jude has called Christians to enter strenuous and difficult struggles for the true faith. The reason for this is, “For certain persons have crept in unnoticed” (Jude 4). Contending earnestly for the faith is necessary because there are people in the Church who will promote false doctrine.

Come to the Word of God

What is the place of psychology in Christianity? Psychology does not belong in Christianity and has nothing to add to salvation and living the Christian life. Instead it destroys the basis of our help. The Church, therefore, must abandon any attempt to integrate psychology with the Bible.

The solution to the psychology issue is this: Come to the Word of God and obey it! As newborn babes we are to “long for the pure milk of the word” (1 Pet. 2:2). We have His Word and His Spirit. Praise God that He has given us all we need.

N O T E S

- 1 Martin and Deidre Bobgan, (Ed Payne), *Prophets of Psychoheresy I*, EastGate Publishers, Santa Barbara, 1989, p.14.
- 2 Ibid, p.14.
- 3 Jim Owen, *Christian Psychology's War on God's Word*, EastGate Publishers, Santa Barbara, 1993, pp. 12-13.
- 4 For more on the relationship between Christian psychology and Freud see *Prophets of Psychoheresy I* by Martin and Deidre Bobgan (EastGate), pp. 223-334.
- 5 Art Levine, "America's Addiction to Addictions," *U.S. News*, Feb. 5, 1990, p. 62.
- 6 Jim Owen discusses this changing of terminology that psychology has brought us, "Let me list a few of these substitute words. *Disease* is one of the most common. It replaces the ideas of a sin nature and being in bondage to lust. *Addiction* is another replacement word. People don't lust anymore, or give themselves over to lusting continually as described in Ephesians 4:19. No—now they are addicted (implying thereby haplessness as well as helplessness). . . . *Dysfunctional* is another word substitute for *sin*" (*Christian Psychology's War on God's Word*, p. 13).
- 7 Art Levine makes the comment, "Most medical experts today view alcoholism and drug addiction as chronic diseases with biological, and perhaps genetic, underpinnings. But it was not that long ago that even these excesses were seen as evidence of moral turpitude rather than medical conditions." ("America's Addiction to Addictions," *U.S. News*, Feb. 5, 1990.)
- 8 Herbert Fingarette made this comment in Art Levine's article, "America's Addiction to Addictions," p. 62.

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