

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
Psalms: Living By Faith In God
CXIX. The Vast Value Of God’s Word
D. Handling Our Counseling Needs
(Psalm 119:25-32 [Daleth])

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Last Thursday, October 10, was Mental Health Day, and the need for effective counseling is great. People face increasing levels of stress but find less ability to cope with it, and secular therapists are unable to meet the need:

(1) The “Dear Annie” column recently posted a letter that reported, “I’ve found that counselors and psychologists are so busy that they either aren’t taking new clients or they only want to do so via computer . . .” (“Dear Annie,” Republican-American, October 4, 2024, p. 11B) Annie confirmed the writer’s concern, stating, “Virtual therapy has . . . boomed since the pandemic . . . but . . . it doesn’t compare to in-person . . . care,” Ibid.

(2) The stresses causing much of the mental needs are easily illustrated: (a) “Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas admitted” recently “amid the devastation caused by Hurricane Helene, that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) ‘does not have the funds to make it through the (hurricane) season’ Meanwhile, the federal government has spent millions in FEMA initiatives to encourage and facilitate illegal immigration The federal government’s failures have highlighted the quiet reshaping of FEMA into an agency meant to benefit migrants at the expense of American taxpayers.” (“A dereliction of duty,” Ibid., October 10, 2024, p. 8A) (b) Also, many voters lack confidence in polls as seen in the political cartoon in the October 5, 2024, Republican-American, p. 6A: a pollster going door-to-door asks a resident if he is confident in the accuracy of the national polls, and the resident slams his door shut as the pollster says, “Uh, I’ll put you down as undecided!” (c) In addition, many Americans think “the 2020 election was stolen,” and they “distrust the electoral system.” (Peter Smith, “Prophesizing pastors say election is a war of angels vs. demons,” Ibid., October 4, 2024, p. 3B) (d) Helen Raleigh’s story, “Woke Economists’ Kamala Endorsement Prioritized Ideology Over Reality,” in The Federalist, Sept. 27 as cited in “Quotable,” Ibid., noted, “(T)he interest payment of our national debt has surpassed government spending on national defense, Medicare, and more than ‘all the money spent this year on veterans, education, and transportation combined.’” (e) A recent editorial in the Republican-American noted that “the emergence of increasingly powerful, often deadly drugs reflects a . . . sickness in American society – the prevalent sense of dissatisfaction with life, work and relationships It’s therefore unlikely that society as currently constituted, can fill the emptiness that defines the lives of so many people” (“Opioid abuse and American dissatisfaction,” Ibid., October 11, 2024, p. 6A)

(3) However, an even greater dilemma is the inability of secular therapists and counselors to meet the rising need for effective counseling: a Time magazine article last year claimed that even as more people flock to therapy, mental health in the United States is getting worse “by multiple metrics.” (Jamie Ducharme, “Therapy Isn’t Fixing America’s Mental Health Crisis,” August 28, 2023; time.com)

Need: *So, we ask, “In an era of rising mental health needs that secular counselors cannot meet, what can we do?”*

I. Providing one’s counseling needs are not caused by PHYSICAL problems, ALL mental health problems are SPIRITUALLY BASED, and they are met by applying Scripture truths to one’s thinking and life:

- A. Isaiah 9:6 NIV, ESV that predicted the birth of Jesus Christ, the Messiah (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Isa. 9:6; Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1053), names as one of His titles “Wonderful Counselor.”
- B. Since Christ at His Second Coming in Revelation 19:11-13 KJV, NIV, ESV is called “The Word of God” personified, all Scripture, which is God inspired and is also the word of Christ, the Wonderful Counselor, that also equips the believer for every good work (2 Timothy 3:15-17), thus provides all the counseling one needs.

II. Psalm 119:25-32 shows how Scripture solves the specific problem of depression (as follows):

- A. In verse 25, the psalmist described how his “mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical life” (*nepesh*, Kittel, Biblia Hebraica, p. 1080; Robert B. Girdlestone, Syns. of the O. T., 1973, p. 56-59) “cleaves” (*dabaq*, B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 179-180) to the “dry earth, dust” (*‘apar*, Ibid., p. 779-780), and he asked God to revive him in the directives of (*ki*, Ibid., Kittel; Ibid., B. D. B., p. 453-455) God’s Word.
- B. Since Adam was formed from the “dry earth, dust” (*‘apar* again) and God breathed into him the breath of life for him to become a living soul (*nepesh* [again]) in Genesis 2:7 (Ibid., Kittel, p. 3), the psalmist in verse 25 described himself as the *opposite* of Adam’s vibrancy, that he felt like he was lifeless in deep depression!
- C. Psalm 119:26-32 then describes the process God used to solve the psalmist’s deep depression:

1. The psalmist first “recounted, rehearsed” (*sapar*, Ibid., Kittel, p. 1081; Ibid., B. D. B., p. 707-708; Piel stem = intensive) his heart’s burdens to the Lord in prayer, and when the Lord heard his prayer, God taught Him wonderful Biblical truths that the psalmist could use to address his needs, Psalm 119:26-27.
2. The psalmist’s grief and many tears that had accompanied his depressed state were quieted through the strengthening edification of God’s Word, Psalm 119:28.
3. Then, the errant thinking that had led the psalmist to end up in depression was exposed and removed by his application of the truth that Scripture taught, v. 29. [This is the heart of the healing process – facing and rejecting the errant thinking that led to the depression so that one can change his viewpoint for recovery!]
4. Consequently, the psalmist decided to adopt the truth in Scripture about the issue over which he had been deceived to his harm, aligning himself fully with the truth with resulting inner peace, Psalm 119:30. [The latter part of verse 30 literally states, “Your judgment decisions have smoothed, stilled (*shawah*, Ibid., p. 1000-1001; Piel stem = intensive) me.”]
5. The psalmist decided to cleave firmly to this truth to avoid falling back into his errant way of thinking that had produced his destructive depression, Psalm 119:31.
6. Finally, the psalmist who had described himself as cleaving to the dust in depression came to face living on the run because God had enlarged his inner man with strength and healing, Psalm 119:32.

Lesson: *Aside from physical causes, all counseling needs are met through the application of Scripture. For example, the problem of depression is solved by one’s pouring out his heart to God in prayer in requesting His Biblical solution, God’s then exposing the errant way of thinking and its resulting actions that had led to the anxious and depressed state and applying the truth needed for nurturing the inner man for blessing.*

Application: *(1) May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God’s gift of eternal life, John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11. (2) May we handle all NON-PHYSICAL counseling needs by looking to God and His insight in Scripture for all that we need for healing and blessing.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message and/or provide additional guidance . . .)

In accord with this sermon, Scripture addresses the issues of concern noted in our introduction (as follows):

(1) On the shortage of in-person professional counseling in today’s stressful world, (a) since Christ as Wonderful Counselor through Scripture provides all we need for problems of the inner man, and (b) since as one trusts in Christ for salvation (see the Application section), he is indwelt by the nurturing Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9; John 14:16-18 NIV, ESV), (c) the believer merely needs to rely on the Holy Spirit and to **expose his mind and heart** to a regular “dosage” of daily Bible **reading and its application** to meet the needs of his inner man! (Deut. 17:18-20)

(2) On the stress faced by dishonest bias in the federal government’s misapplication of FEMA money to foster illegal immigration at cost to the taxpayers, the lack of confidence in the polls due to bias in the pollsters, the lack of trust many people have in the electoral process, the irresponsible spending by elected leaders and rising dissatisfaction with life as seen in increased opioid use, (a) Jeremiah 17:5-6 warns that if we trust in man, we will be like a shrub in the desert that lives in parched places or an barren salt land. (b) However, Jeremiah 17:7-8 claims that if we trust in the Lord, we will be like a tree that is planted by water that sends out its roots to the water, that does not fear when heat comes, that does not lose its foliage, that is not anxious in drought and that always bears fruit!

(3) On the fact that secular counseling is not meeting America’s mental health needs, we cite Martin and Diedre Bobgan’s book *Psychoheresy*, 1987, p. 209 that was highly recommended by Dave Hunt of the Berean Call, J. Vernon McGee of the Thru the Bible radio ministry and Thomas Szasz, M. D., Professor of Psychiatry, State University of New York. The Bobgans claimed that the secular “psychological way is wed to evolution, which sees humanity not in a class by itself but . . . further along than the apes. But, evolution does not end here, because there is the idea that man himself is continuing to evolve. According to many theories in the humanistic and transpersonal psychologies, mankind is moving towards greater . . . potential to become divine.” In great contrast, “(t)he biblical way teaches that man is a spiritual being created in the image of God and that man cannot find his true identity apart from God. The biblical way begins and ends with the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. The biblical way not only teaches that man was created in the image of God,” but “that Christians are to approach life from a different basis from nonbelievers because of the indwelling Holy Spirit. The Bible teaches that Christians have the mind of Christ. He is their life. The presence of God indwelling them through His Holy Spirit makes all of the difference.”

May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God’s gift of eternal life. May we then handle all non-physical counseling needs through relying on God and His Word.