

Theories of Personality

INTRODUCTION

CONCEPT OF MAN

Humanism - no soul.

1. Principle 3 of Humanist Manifesto I. "Holding an organic view of life, humanists find that the traditional dualism of mind and body must be rejected."
2. Humanist Manifesto II.
 - a. We find insufficient evidence for belief in the existence of a supernatural; it is either meaningless or irrelevant to the question of survival and fulfillment of the human race.
 - b. There is no credible evidence that life survives the death of the body.
 - c. Promises of immortal salvation or fear of eternal damnation are both illusory and harmful.

Materialism - mind and body the same thing (identity theory).

Idealism.

Contention that materialism cannot really be proved. All that is sure are mental events; material causes for these events are only hypothesized, as we know that our senses can be fooled.

Dualism - mind (soul) and body. Propagated by Rene Descartes.

- a. "I think, therefore I am."
- b. "I exist," he says, "but for how long? Just as long as I am thinking; for perhaps if I should wholly cease to think, I should at the same time altogether cease to be."
- c. Descartes believed the mind could live beyond the existence of the body.

God's concept - tripartite (Spirit, soul, and body).

- a. (Gen. 2:7 KJV) 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.
- b. (1 Th 5:23 KJV) And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- c. (Heb 4:12 KJV) For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Psychology and psychiatry's major thrust has been helping an individual make appropriate changes in his soul (mind, will, and emotions) which will enable him to overcome or cope with his particular problem.

For instance, psychoanalysis has dealt primarily with the subconscious (one component of the mind), as well as helping the patient understand his feelings (a function of the emotions).

Transactional Analysis, on the contrary, has focused on a different aspect of the mind (the logical, rational, mature, thinking aspect) and has also placed strong emphasis on the will, stating that we can determine our course in life and conquer our problems.

What is the rationale behind the particular thrusts of the different therapies within the field of psychotherapy or counseling? The thrust to a large extent depends upon the particular concept of the parts of man. Just what makes up a human being? The parts, and the struggle between the parts resulting in emotional conflict, are constituents of the psychoanalytic theory, the description in transactional analysis, and the description in the Bible.

Psychoanalytic Theory and the Parts of Man

This theory holds that the important parts of man are the *superego*, *id*, and *ego*. According to this theory, the *superego* is the conscience. The *id* represents the basic drives, such as those for food and sex. The *ego* has the responsibility of weighing between the pressures of the *id* and those of the *superego* thus acting as the logical, rational, objective, reality-oriented decision maker. Anxiety may occur as a result of striving between these internal parts of man.

Transactional Analysis and the Parts of Man

Transactional Analysis holds that man consists of a parent, a child, and an adult ego state. The "parent" judges, the "child" emphasizes his feelings, and the "adult" acts logically and in a rational manner. In transactions with others, we are always acting and feeling like one of these entities.

The Bible and Man

The Bible, too, speaks of the importance of the parts of man. The Bible and secular theorists are alike in that they describe the struggles between the parts of man. For example, psychoanalysis describes a struggle between the drives in man (*id*) and his conscience (*superego*). The will must consider both, and also reality, and choose what to do. The Bible describes the struggle between carnal desires and the Holy Spirit in a Christian.

One cannot equate the Spirit in the Christian with the conscience in the psychoanalytic system because a non-Christian's conscience mainly results from early parental teachings. In a Christian, the Holy Spirit is also a major influence in the conscience. Likewise, one cannot equate the flesh with the *id* in the psychoanalytic system because the *id* by definition contains all

drives. Drives can be expressed in inappropriate or evil ways, but drives in and of themselves are not evil.

Because of similar arguments, one cannot say that the parent, adult, and child of TA are parts of the soul. The parent, adult, and child of TA are similar to the superego, ego, and id of psychoanalysis.

In psychoanalysis, neurosis at times result from the inhibitions of the id's drive for sexual aggression. Thus, in this conceptual framework, the superego might be viewed as pathological, and therapy may be viewed as weakening the conscience. In TA, emphasis is placed on the adult ego state. Here the thrust of therapy is on the will.

The Bible considers man in a whole conceptual framework. ***The thrust is on an aspect of man that psychiatry has tried in vain to avoid, namely the spiritual.***

Theologians have long debated whether man is dichotomous or trichotomous. The Bible describes the whole man as consisting of a **body, soul, and spirit**. The Bible's account of man is the most accurate ever given. It is not based on theory, but on facts. It is based on the words of the one who created man--God Himself.

Gen 2:7 NAS. ***“Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground (Hebrew word for body is basar), and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life (neshamah, meaning the human spirit), and man became a living soul (nephesh).”*** Thus God combined the body with the spirit to create the soul.

The Soul or Psyche

There is a distinction between the spirit and the soul.

(1 Th 5:23 KJV) And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(Heb 4:12 KJV) For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Three functions of the soul.

2. *The ability to choose (will)*

(Job 6:7 KJV) The things that my soul refused to touch are as my sorrowful meat.

(Job 7:15 KJV) So that my soul chooseth strangling, and death rather than my life.

3. *The intellectual or knowing aspect of the soul (the mind)*

(Psa 139:14 KJV) I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.

(Prov 19:2 KJV) Also, that the soul be without knowledge, it is not good; and he that hasteth with his feet sinneth.

4. *Emotions*

(2 Sam 5:8 KJV) And David said on that day, Whosoever getteth up to the gutter, and smiteth the Jebusites, and the lame and the blind, that are hated of David's soul, he shall be chief and captain. Wherefore they said, The blind and the lame shall not come into the house.

(Song 1:7 KJV) Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?

A distinction between the soul and spirit explains why a Christian has psychological problems. Psychological problems are either related to the power of choosing, emotions, or the mind.

A Christian's problems may be manifested through any one of the parts of the soul. He may be very emotional, and these emotions can spring from a purely psychological base rather than a spiritual. Or a Christian's problem may be manifested through his will.

The soul would be a major area of attack by Satan. For an immature Christian, Satan might attack through a carnal expression of the body, such as lust-provoking sights which the eyes behold. Satan throws mental "darts" in an attempt to establish obsessions (strongholds) and delusions in the mind of a Christian.

The Spirit or Pneuma

The spirit is the supernatural part of man given by God at birth. The term *spirit* is used to denote several functions in the Bible.

1. ***The first function of the spirit is communion with God.***
2. ***The second function of the spirit is perception and insight.*** This perception comes from deep within and is independent of mental reasoning.
3. ***A third function of the spirit is conscience.*** The conscience of a believer should be the one of the functions of the Holy Spirit. Other factors contributing to the conscience of the Christian are the early parental teachings which were mentally healthy and the early

parental teachings which were not mentally healthy (either too rigid or not strict enough). When one understands that one of three factors influencing the conscience of the Christian can be unhealthy, he can understand why Christian as well as non-Christians can have psychological problems in his conscience. The Holy Spirit's convictions are never unhealthy; neither are certain aspects of early parental teachings. However, the unhealthy aspects of early parental teachings do produce problems. For example, parents who are extremely strict, dominating, or legalistic produce a child with a conscience which is always condemning him and which he can never please.

Why Christians have emotional problems

The reasons Christians have emotional problems are many. Genetics, environment, physical health, and stress are all factors.

Genetics

Children of schizophrenic parents develop schizophrenia even when raised in a healthy home away from their parents. An explanation is that either there are genetic propensities toward schizophrenia or schizophrenia is spiritual in nature and is passed down as a generational curse. The first explanation is physical and the second one is spiritual.

If Christians have a new life and power within after the new birth, why do they continue to have mental and emotional problems? The mind is a part of the soul, not the spirit. The soul does not become new or have any change at the time of conversion; the spirit does. Only after time in the Word of God, in prayer, and in fellowship, is the mind renewed in accordance with the will of God.

Dealing with the flesh.

The old man may be dead, but we still have to deal with the immature new man.

The Law

Frustration and depression result in religious groups' trying to live by an outward law. You don't become a Christian or remain a Christian by your own power or religiosity.

If Christian counselors are to be effective, they must not only help their clients find psychological freedom, but they must realize that only Jesus can give and maintain real freedom and peace of mind. This peace of mind begins with a rebirth in one's spirit by accepting Christ and continues as Christ's influence spreads outward from the spirit to change the soul (will, mind, and emotion).

Materials based on *Christian Psychiatry*, by Frank B. Minirth. Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company. 1977.