



The Illusion of Hope in Psychotherapy

Excerpted from [Counseling Must Be Based Solely on the Bible](#)

God's Word is changeless and remains as powerful and applicable to life today as it was for those living thousands of years ago. On the other hand, secular psychology and psychotherapy are relatively new approaches to address matters of life and conduct.

Even though the Bible is applicable and sufficient to deal with all aspects of life and relationships, many in the Body of Christ often choose, instead, to follow the worldly wisdom residing in the varied expressions of humanistic psychology and psychotherapy.

What aspect of psychotherapy and secular psychology is rarely communicated? In a word ... truth. This truth is known but not widely disseminated. The following reviews a small portion of what recognized authorities in the fields of psychotherapy and secular psychology say about the validity and effectiveness of their fields of expertise.

While the biblical reasons to avoid secular psychological therapy are all that are needed, it is worth noting that the very science the psychotherapists call upon does not support their practices.

- Witchdoctors and psychotherapists have common roots for their work.¹
- "Psychotherapy is most helpful to those who need it the least."²
- Psychotherapy is made up of the guesses, opinions, and unscientific theories about who man is and how he changes. It is not science.³
- Many of the almost 500 psychotherapeutic approaches available and thousands of techniques often contradict one another.⁴
- These different psychotherapeutic approaches seem to work (equal outcomes phenomenon), but they have only a mild to moderate effect. "Whether the magnitude of the psychotherapy effect is medium or small remains a moot point; no one has claimed that it is large."⁵ Dr. Martin Seligman, a past president of the American Psychological Association, says that "by and large, we produce only mild to moderate relief."⁶
- Detrimental effects do occur as a result of using psychotherapy to deal with problems of living with some very negative effects occurring with some very popular approaches.
- Psychological explanations about life and psychological solutions to life's problems are questionable at best, detrimental at worst, and spiritual counterfeits at least.
- Scientific research has already debunked the popular use of psychotherapy, but not put a stop to its proliferation. Because of the research, Alexander Astin contends that "psychotherapy should have died out. But it did not. It did not even waver. Psychotherapy had, it appeared, achieved *functional autonomy*" (emphasis his). Functional autonomy occurs when a practice continues after the circumstances which supported it are gone.⁷
- Psychotherapy is a religion in disguise that poses as science and sometimes as medicine.⁸
- The two main precursors of modern-day psychotherapy are mesmerism and Freudian psychoanalysis.⁹
- "There is no positive evidence supporting the efficacy [effectiveness] of professional psychology."¹⁰
- "Psychotherapy may be known in the future as the greatest hoax of the twentieth century."¹¹
- It has *not* been demonstrated in the plethora of research to date that educated, degreed, licensed psychotherapists do any better at assisting those in need than amateurs.

- “Evaluating the efficacy [effectiveness] of psychotherapy has led us to conclude that professional psychologists are no better psychotherapists than anyone else with minimal training—sometimes those without any training at all; the professionals are merely more expensive.”¹²
- Measurement of success in psychotherapy is whether one **feels** better, but it should be whether one **lives** better.
- The popularity of psychotherapy is not due to science but rather to politics.¹³
- Psychotherapists live off the “spontaneous remission” rate, i.e., disappearance of symptoms without formal treatment.¹⁴
- Counseling is essentially a female-friendly activity, largely loathed by men as counselees, with the women currently being the large majority of counselors and counselees.¹⁵
- Degrees, licenses, experience, and education in the field of counseling do not make the psychologizers experts on human behavior.¹⁶
- What a psychologizer says is often contrary to what numerous other psychologizers say.¹⁷
- Case histories or successful examples are *not* generally representative of what normally happens.¹⁸
- Successes claimed have less to do with the counselor’s psychological training, licenses, and experience than with factors in the client’s own life.¹⁹
- Successes claimed in counseling could easily be matched by persons not receiving psychological counseling.²⁰
- Successes in psychological counseling are often short-term.
- For every success mentioned there are many failures.
- There is definitely a harm rate for every psychological system of men.²¹
- What the psychologizer says about human relationships and problems of living is personal opinion rather than scientific fact.^{22, 23}
- Psychotherapy is not a coherent science in principle or in theory, diagnosis, or treatment.²⁴

The Lord Himself is the Christian’s source for living and for dealing with problems of living normally taken to a psychologically trained counselor. The Bible gives the only accurate understanding of why man is the way he is and how he is to change. The concerns of **how Christians are to live and change and also how to overcome the trials, tribulations, and sufferings of life are spiritual, not psychological matters.** Nevertheless Christians throughout the church look to what psychologists say about how to live, how to relate to others, and how to meet the challenges of life.

On the one hand there is enough biblical and scientific evidence to shut down the secular Psychology Industry and with it the Christian Psychology Industry. On the other hand, we are not naïve enough to believe that the overwhelming evidence supporting their demise will be heeded by the majority of Christians.²⁵ The roots and shoots of all of this psychoheresy with all of its variations and combinations comprise a massive seduction of Christianity.

FOOTNOTES

¹ E. Fuller Torrey. *Witchdoctors & Psychiatrists: The Common Roots of Psychotherapy and Its Future*. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1986.

² Personal letter from Dr. Hans Strupp, Distinguished Professor, Vanderbilt University.

³ Martin and Deidre Bobgan. *The End of “Christian Psychology.”* Santa Barbara, CA: EastGate Publishers, 1997, Chapter 2.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Chapters 7-16.

⁵ APA Commission on Psychotherapies. *Psychotherapy Research: Methodological and Efficacy Issues*. Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association, 1982.

⁶ Mary Sykes Wylie interviewing M. Seligman. “Why Is This Man Smiling?” *Psychotherapy Networker*, Vol. 27, No. 1, p. 51.

- ⁷ Alexander W. Astin, "The Functional Autonomy of Psychotherapy," *The Investigation of Psychotherapy: Commentaries and Readings*. Arnold P Goldstein and Sanford J. Dean, eds. New York: John Wiley, 1966, p. 62.
- ⁸ William Epstein, *Psychotherapy as Religion: The Civil Divine In America*, Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2006.
- ⁹ Thomas Szasz. *The Myth of Psychotherapy*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1978, Chapters II and III.
- ¹⁰ Robyn Dawes. *House of Cards: Psychotherapy Built on Myth*. New York: The Free Press/Macmillan, Inc., 1994, p. 58.
- ¹¹ Dr. Lawrence LeShan. *Association for Humanistic Psychology*, October 1984, p. 4.
- ¹² Dawes, *op. cit.*, pp. 101-102.
- ¹³ Rogers H. Wright and Nicholas A. Cummings, eds. *The Practice of Psychology: The Battle for Professionalism*. Phoenix, AZ: Zeig, Tucker & Theisen, Inc., 2001.
- ¹⁴ Hans J. Eysenck, "The Outcome Problem in Psychotherapy: What Have We Learned?" *Behavioral Research and Therapy*, Vol. 32, No. 5, 1944, p. 477.
- ¹⁵ Bobgan. *Stop Counseling! Start Ministering!* *op. cit.*, Chapter 1.
- ¹⁶ Dawes, *op. cit.*, pp. 15, 38, 52, 62, 73.
- ¹⁷ Martin and Deidre Bobgan, "Psychotherapeutic Methods of CAPS Members," *Christian Association for Psychological Studies Bulletin* 6, No. 1, 1980, p. 13.
- ¹⁸ Elizabeth F. Loftus and Melvin J. Guyer. "Who Abused Jane Doe? The Hazards of the Single Case History," Part 1. *Skeptical Inquirer*, Vol. 26, No. 3, pp. 24, 25.
- ¹⁹ Dawes, *op. cit.*, pp. 15, 38, 52, 62, 73.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*
- ²¹ Bobgan. *Stop Counseling! Start Ministering!* *op. cit.*, pp. 164-171.
- ²² Harvey Mindess. *Makers of Psychology: The Personal Factor*. New York: Insight Books, 1988.
- ²³ Linda Riebel, "Theory as Self-Portrait and the Ideal of Objectivity." *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* (Spring 1982), 91-92.
- ²⁴ Martin and Deidre Bobgan, *The Psychological Way/The Spiritual Way*. Bethany House Publishers, 1979, p. 63.
- ²⁵ Bobgan. *The End of "Christian Psychology," op. cit.*