

Lecture#1

Introduction to Christian Counseling

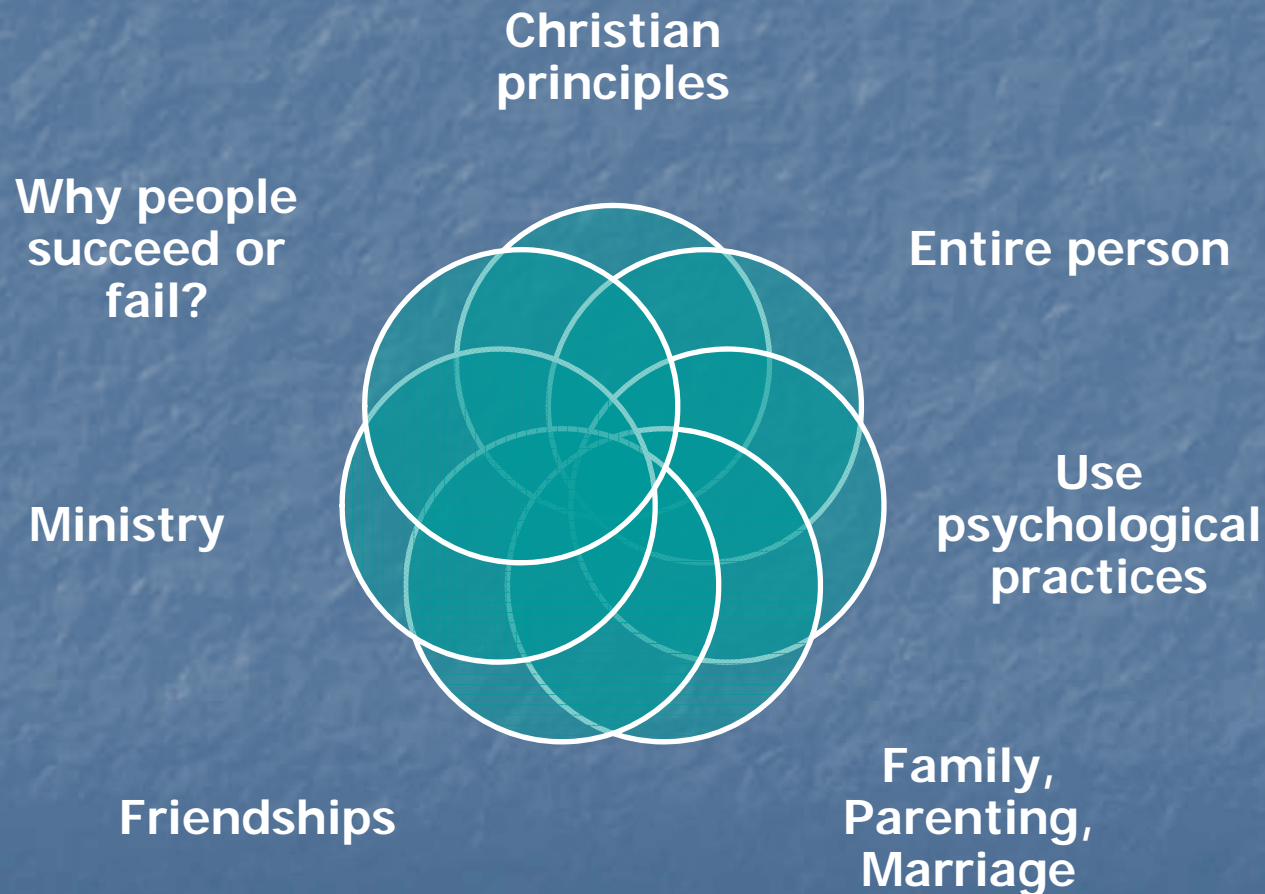
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Agape Partners International

www.agapepartners.org/coaching

Outline

- What is Christian Counseling
- Three approaches: Medical, Psychological and Biblical
- Institutional Context
- Bible and Psychology
- Types of Christian Counseling
- Ethical Standards

What We Really Know About Christian Counseling



Christian counseling: Definition

- Christian counseling is pastoral counseling which draws upon psychology and Christian teaching.
- Christian counseling is, by definition, a revelation of the life and love of Jesus Christ in helping someone change for the better. That life, that love, comes alive in the use of the Bible, and in relying upon the Holy Spirit to advance the goals and challenges of counseling.
 - *Dr. Ed Hindson*

Christian counseling: Methods

- **Listening:** stories, problems, suffering, pain
- **Supporting:** spiritual, social, psychological or physical, Environmental modification, safety, economic help
- **Insight:** common sense approach, clarification, psycho-education, confrontation, cognitive behavioral therapy
- **Praying:**
- **Agape love:** Relationship, unconditional love

Christian Counseling: Domains

- Christ centered
- Bible based
- Effective
- Safe
- Timeliness
- Equity
- Efficiency
- Patient- Focus

Christian Counseling: Biblical Foundation

- Jesus Christ is the center of all Christian counseling.
- He is the chief Corner Stone. If this statement is true, then who should know more about the human mind, personality, and behavioral change than the Lord?

Christian Counseling in the Indian Context

- Increasing family problems in Indian Christian community
- Lack of trained Christian Counselors
- Social stigma to mental health related problems
- Do not seek counselors for mental health issues
- Increasing evidence of questionable and incompetent practices
- Moral, Ethical, Legal, and Cultural challenges

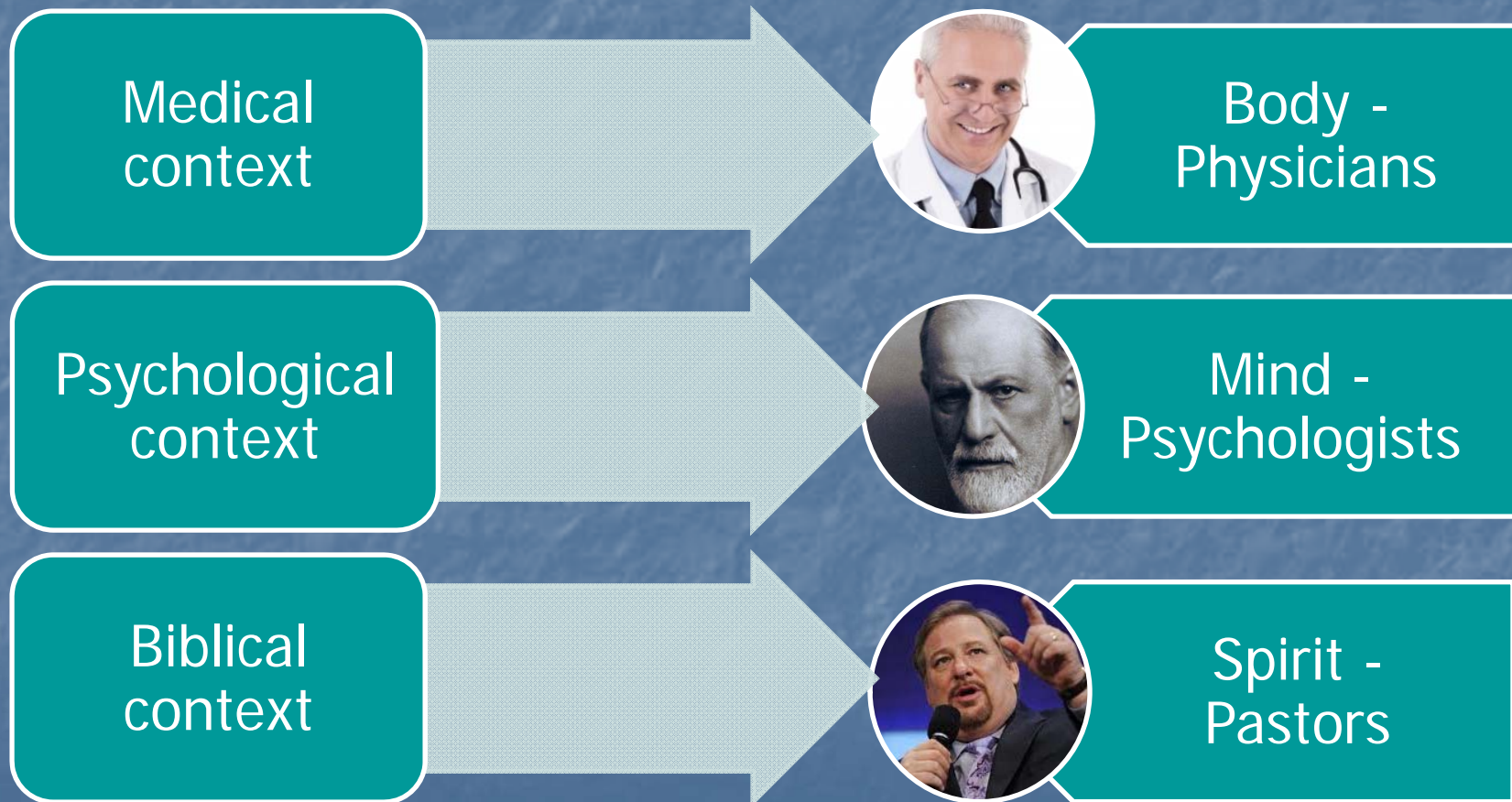
Growth of Christian Counseling

- The Christian Counseling Movement
- The Bible and Christian Theology
- Evidence based practice
- Types of Christian Counseling
- Accepted standards of counseling ministry
- Christian Counseling as a Mission

Part I.

THREE APPROACHES TO MENTAL HEALTH:

Working in Different Realms: Different Description and Prescription



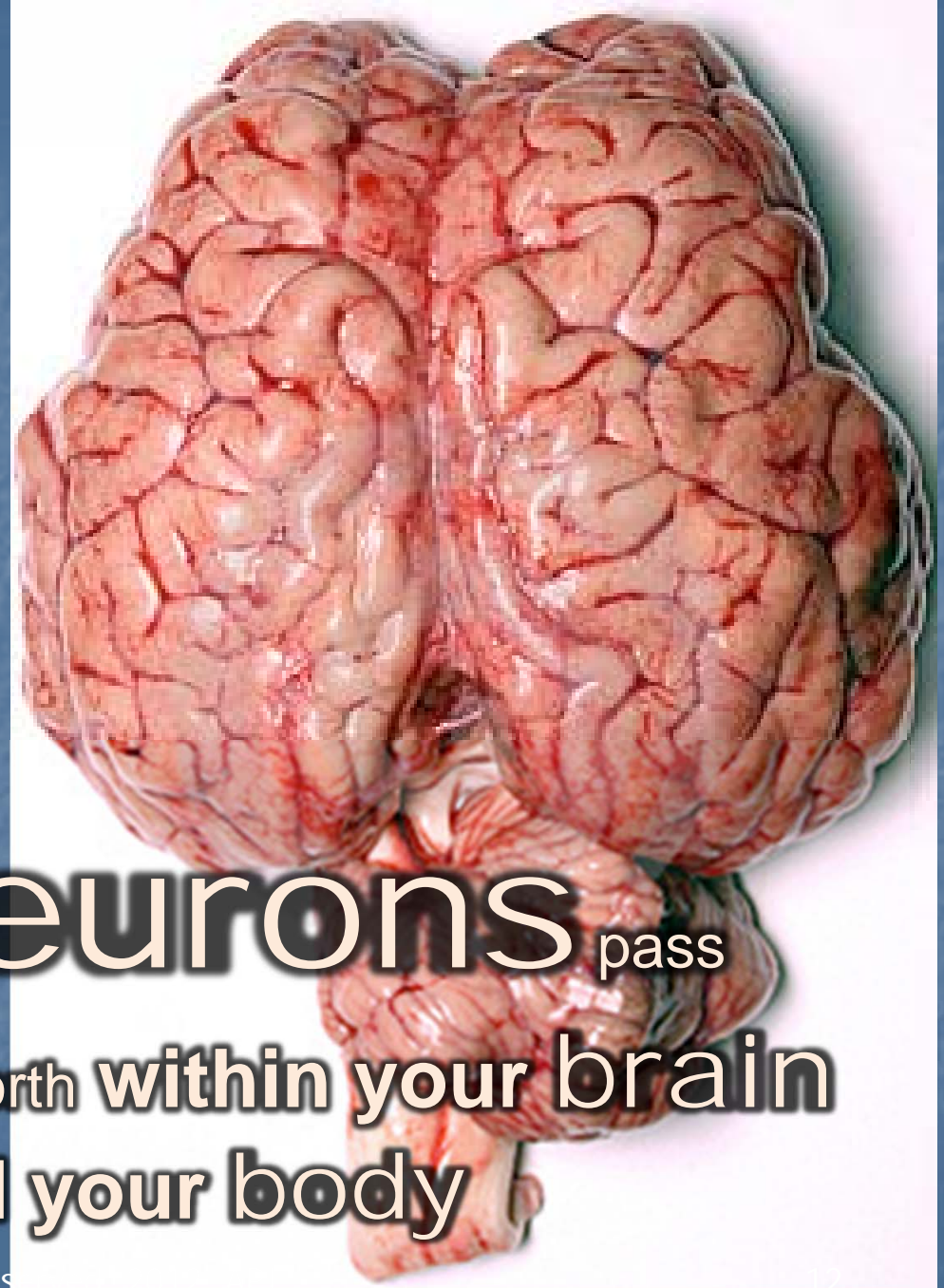
1-Medical Perspective

The Body's **COMMAND CENTER**

Weight: about 3 pounds

*Job: Controlling
everything you do*

Billions of **neurons** pass
messages back and forth **within your brain**
and **around your body**

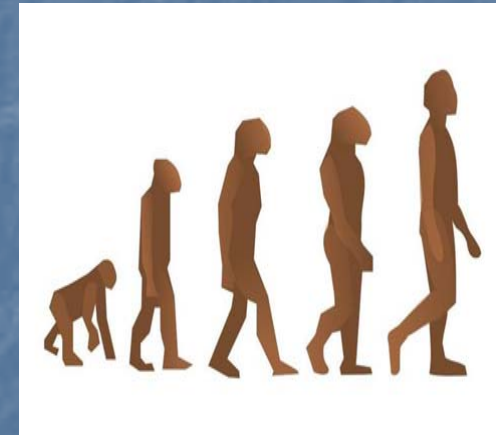


2-Psychological Perspective

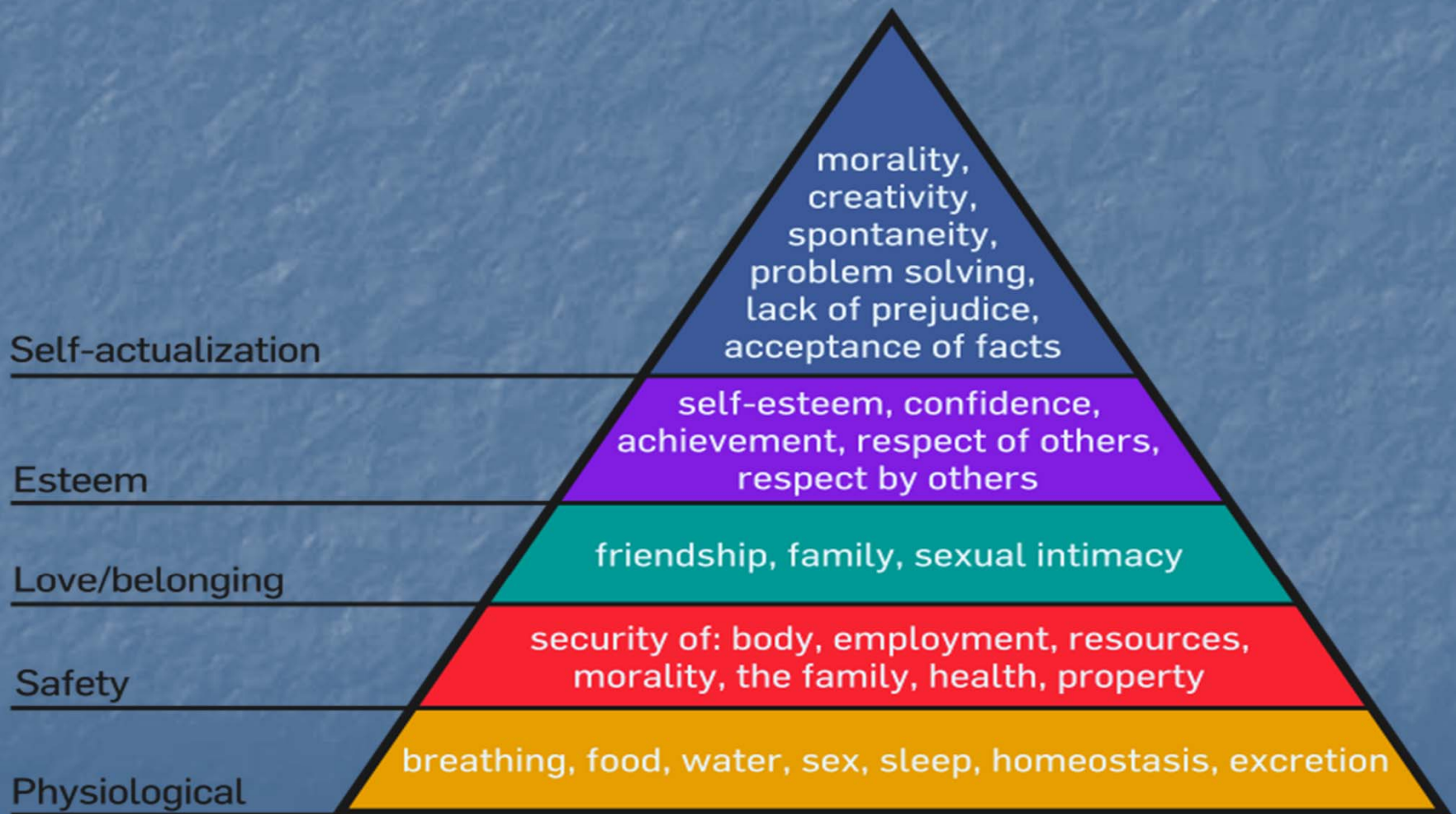
- Psychoanalytic Perspective (Freud)
- Behavioral Perspective (Skinner, 1950)
- Humanistic perspective (Carl Rogers, Abraham Maslow)
- Transpersonal – Mystic experiences
- Cognitive Perspective (Jean Piaget, Albert Bandura; 1960)

2- Psychological Perspective: *A Faulty View of Man.*

- Man is Evolved
- Man is merely an advanced animal (naturalism/materialism)
- Excuses sin and denies personal responsibility.
- The good impulses within people are easily warped by cultures
- Sick people are made by a sick culture (Maslow)



2- Psychological Perspective: Maslow's Hierarchy of needs



3- Biblical Perspective: Divine Knowledge

- A Christian must start with a Biblical foundation and build from it a Christian methodology of counseling which rests upon and is consistent with the foundation - *Statement made by Dr. Jay E. Adams*

3- Biblical Perspective: The Bible is the book on Behavior.

- It instructs us how to live
- It shows us what is acceptable behavior and unacceptable behavior
- The Bible lays the framework for interpersonal relationships.
- It gives practical advice on solving family, marital, and personal conflicts.

Christian Counseling: Biblical Perspective

- **Gen. 1:26-27** – “Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’ God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”
- **Jer. 17:9** – “The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?”

Christian counseling: What makes it “Christian”

- Christ-centered and redemptive.
- Confronts sin as the source of spiritual problems
- Aims at the heart - thinking patterns of the mind leading to behavior, emotions, and relationship
- Bible based and relies upon the Holy Spirit
- Compassionate – agape love
- Relevant and Practical- culturally-informed

Christian Counseling: Biblical context (James 5:19, 20)

- My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

Christian Counseling: Three Dimensions

- Faith – spiritual dimension
- Objective - scientific dimension
- Subjective – human experience

Part II.

THE INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT OF CHRISTIAN COUNSELING

Institutional context of counseling

- Structure
 - necessary but not sufficient
 - e.g., number of counselors per community
- Process
 - many things we do don't have proven benefit
 - e.g., whether a patient with bipolar disorder is evaluated for a substance-related disorder
- Outcome and evidence based practice
 - our ultimate responsibility but related to more than just the care we provide
 - e.g., percentage improvement over a set time period

Youths are Leaving the Church

- 83% of the youths are leaving the Baptist churches
- •71% among Evangelicals
- •63% among the Pentecostals
- •15% to 20% among Indian Christian Community

(sample survey, API, 2007)

Media Affecting Teen Behavior

- Teens exposed to sexual content on TV, are more likely to have permissive attitudes towards premarital sex.
- A recent study showed 90% of all games required injuring characters in order to win and 69% required killing characters to win
- An NIMH 2002 study showed that 90% of those who have eating disorders are between the ages of 12-25
- Currently, 47% of teenagers in high school have reported to having pre-marital relationships

Domestic Abuse

- 25% of the families have domestic violence in the Indian community
- Physical, emotional, verbal, sexual, economic/financial and spiritual as well as threats, surveillance, isolation and intimidation attacks that are against a family member
- *When there is an argument between my husband and me, it gets really messy. It escalates into an angry outburst and most times both of us get hurt. What can we do to stop this?*

Mobile Technology : computer & Internet



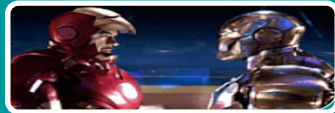
ONLINE



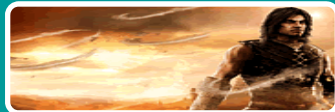
MUSIC



TV



MOVIES



VIDEO GAMES

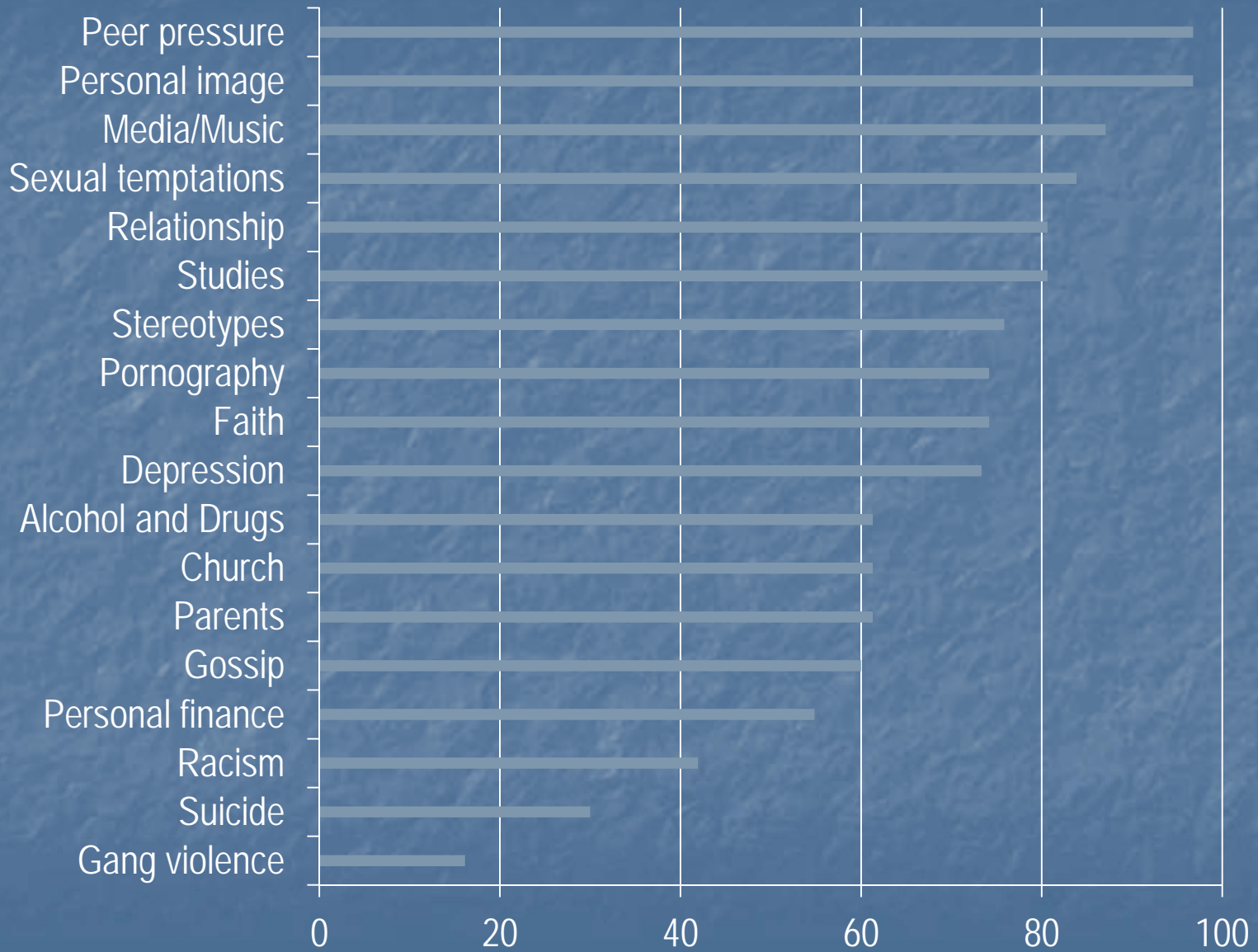


CELL PHONES



SOCIAL NETWORKING

Challenges Facing Christian Teens in US













Part III.

BIBLE AND PSYCHOLOGY

Bible and Psychology: The Four Perspectives

1. Bible against Psychology.
2. Psychology above Scripture
3. Bible and psychology as parallels
4. Bible integrate psychology

Adapted from John D. Carter

1- Bible Against Psychology

- All necessary mental health principles are contained in the Bible.
- The counselor has three essential tasks:
 - Identify the problem
 - Search for the biblical principles that are related to the problem
 - Apply the biblical principle to the situation

2-Psychology Above Bible

- The basic principles of emotional health have been discovered by psychology, and there is little or no need for the Bible.
- Human reason is considered more basic and comprehensive than revelation
- The application of these principles with the help of a therapist will lead to the resolution of emotional problems.

3-Bible and Psychology as Parallels.

- View revelation and science as two distinct and irreconcilable systems.
- A person with emotional problems would seek the help of a psychologist or psychotherapist
- The person with spiritual problems would go to a pastor.

4- The Bible Integrates Psychology

- God is the author of both revelation and reason because all truth are God's truth and thus ultimately a part of a unified or integrated whole.
- Creation and providence are stressed equal.
- All problems are, in principle, a result of the Fall but not, in fact, the result of immediate conscious acts.
- Since values are significant both for the Christian and for therapy, a genuine Christian therapy is necessary.

Psychology and Counseling

- “I do not wish to disregard science, but rather I welcome it as a useful adjunct for the purposes of illustrating, filling in generalizations with specifics, and challenging wrong human interpretations of Scripture, thereby, forcing the student to restudy the Scriptures. However, in the area of psychology, science has largely given way to humanistic philosophy and gross speculation.”

Jay Adams

Part IV.

TYPES OF CHRISTIAN COUNSELING

Types of Christian counseling

1. The Main Stream Counselors
2. Pastoral Counselors
3. Christian Professionals
4. Theoretician researchers
5. Evangelical popularizers

Garry Small

Types of Christian counseling

1- The Main Stream Counselors

- Educated as pastors with full theological training
- Later took secular training program
- Integrate secular education into their religious education
- Counselors with Clinical Pastoral Education training (CPE).
- Too liberal- ok to be imperfect

Types of Christian counseling

2-Christian/Pastoral Counselors

- Advocates Bible is the only foundation of all counseling
- Greater scriptural knowledge
- Guided by Holy Spirit
- Primarily educational and confrontational
- Point out sin and problems
- Focus on heart change, and transformation

3- Christian Professionals: Professional Christian Counselors

- Professionals have been trained and have received degrees and credentials in the secular counseling approaches
- Strong commitment to biblical evangelical theology
- Keep their roots in biblical theology
- James Dobson, Frank Minirith and Paul Meier, and Gary Collins.

4- Theoretician Researchers

- University professors with a scientific, scholarly and research approach
- Involved in the process of developing and testing theories

5-Evangelical popularizers:

- Produce useful but simplistic self help material for the lay public
- Put together marriage seminars
- Help youth leaders and troubled youth
- Help ordinary people who want to help themselves.

V.

ETHICAL STANDARDS FOR CHRISTIAN COUNSELORS

Ethical Standards for Christian Counselors

1. Do No Harm: Affirming the God-given Dignity of All Persons; No Harm or Exploitation Allowed
2. Competence in Christian Counseling: Honoring the Call to Competent Christian Counseling
3. Informed Consent in Christian Counseling
4. Confidentiality, Privacy, and Privileged Communication

AACC Code of Ethics

Ethical Issues in Christian Counseling

- Demonstrate competence, but remain alert to your limitations.
- Operate from a clearly defined theoretical framework.
- The rights of the counselee are important.
- Avoid messy dual relationships.
- Confidentiality must be absolute, unless clearly part of the informed consent process.
- Don't use techniques for which you have no training.

Counselor: Spiritual Qualifications

- Counselor qualifications are spiritual, not merely academic.
 - Counsel (confront) yourself with God's Word (Mt. 7:1-5)
 - Pray (I Tim. 2:1-8 | Thess. 5:17)
 - Work on your qualifications (I Tim. 3:1-7)
 - Live a disciplined life (I Tim. 4:7-8)
 - Watch your life and doctrine closely (I Tim. 4:16)
 - Learn how to deal with various kinds of people (I Thess. 5:14; I Tim. 5:1-2).

Common Mistakes in Counseling

1. Giving advice without listening
2. Showing a judgmental or condemning spirit
3. Talking too much
4. Giving worldly advice
5. Not suggesting homework

Summary

- The Practice of Christian Counseling
- Three approaches: Medical, Psychological and Biblical
- Institutional Context
- Bible and Psychology
- Types of Christian Counseling
- Ethical Standards

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