

Christian Psychopathology

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Psychopathology is the study of the diseases of the soul. There is a difference between modern psychopathology and Christian psychopathology. Modern psychopathology reduces human beings to mere organisms without help or connection from a higher power. In modern psychopathology, the state of the human condition is detached from God and the man hangs on a thread helpless like other organisms. On the other hand, Christian psychopathology treats humans as personal agents made in the image of God. In this dispensation, the human condition is closely related to connections with God. Humans make spiritual and ethical decisions in life that have implications for psychopathology. Eric Johnson highlights three main ideas on Christian psychopathology including sin, suffering and biopsychosocial damage.

Sin

Eric Johnson indicates that sin is central to psychopathology because it compromises God's glory. God created a perfect universe that was not riddled with sin or evil. The deception of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden brought sin to the human race thus withdrawing the Glory of God. The nature of man was compromised as a result and with it disappeared human perfection. This gave room for the emergence of different diseases of the soul. Human behavior changed and vices like anger and jealousy set in. This is witnessed when Cain felt jealous of his brother Abel, acted on his negative feelings, and murdered his brother. Many forms of human crimes involving murder can be connected to psychological issues (Littlewood, 2018). The imperfection of man following the infamous fall has given room for various vices that have forever dented the psyche of society.

The Apostle Paul in the book of Romans 7:15-20 describes the human dilemma in relation to sin. Paul claims that he does not understand what he does and that despite his earnest attempts to do the right thing, he ends up doing what he hates. Paul claims that his flesh is under the control of sin therefore not even his best intentions can overcome the constant urge that the sinful flesh brings. Paul makes it clear that the source of his problems is sin. This makes perfect sense in relation to Christian psychopathology (Daalen, 2012). Humans suffer mainly because of their sinful nature which is not within their control. This differs from the most modern analyses of psychopathology that tend to cite factors like parents, culture, and trauma among others as the main explanations for psychopathology. In principle, God defines psychopathology not with many terms but one simple term – sin.

Suffering

Suffering has a deep connection to psychopathology because it denotes strong negative emotions and pain. The Bible equates human suffering to sin. Accounts of suffering in the Bible can be mostly equated to human sin. There are many circumstances where those who were opposed to God's will were subjected to suffering while those who were obedient did not face extreme circumstances (King & Whitney, 2015). For instance, the consequences faced by Israelites for delayed entry into the promised land were largely equated to their inability to follow God's instructions without complaining. Their constant sinking into idolatry and other forms of sin led to prolonged suffering in the wilderness. Most of them were condemned to death in the wilderness and never had a chance to witness the promised land (Daalen, 2012). On a similar note, Christian Psychopathology explains that strong negative emotions and pain are greatly connected to sin. This offers a Christian perspective through which we can explain sin and seek a reason to convince suffering individuals that something in their lives could be amiss.

However, not all human suffering can be directly equated to sin. Some forms of suffering have no connection to sin whatsoever. Sometimes suffering comes to humans as a form of test on their resilience. The story of Job provides evidence of this fact. The job was a righteous man before God yet great suffering befell him. Job lost his wealth, family, and health in a short while and sank into deep pain and suffering. His life was wrecked and he questioned why God had presented such great suffering to him. However, from my understanding of the story of Job, I believe that his suffering was not a result of any wrong he committed (Innamorati et al., 2019). Job's suffering was a test that God had to put him through to prove his resilience and teach generations the benefits of steadfastness in believing him.

In Job chapter 1, Satan seeks permission to take away Job's wealth, children, and health. He hopes that Job will turn on God upon sinking in such great suffering. However, Job is not swayed by the circumstances of his life and he proclaims in Job 19:25 that he knows his redeemer lives and that he shall stand on the latter for his aid even if worms destroy his body, he shall see God. Diseases of the soul can as well be a result of tests and temptations that humans undergo regularly. There should be a Christian realization that this suffering is not permanent and that restoration shall come at some point. Job is restored after enduring great pain and staying steadfast in his belief (Francis et al., 2015). Ultimately, Jesus endures great suffering but overcomes death and resurrects to give humans the ultimate promise – resurrection.

Christian psychopathology sees suffering as a means through which humans can gain wisdom and spiritual maturity. Experiencing both sides of life is essential in developing one's character for the betterment of their Christian journey. Job leaves his suffering a more informed and wise man who understands the operations of God and his influence on humans. The restoration of his wealth and health further asserts the benefits of his endurance hence providing

Christians with a lesson on patience and steadfastness in the faith. The diseases of the soul that we face are not necessarily earnest of destruction in our lives but merely avenues through which we must learn, develop resilience, and remain on the path of spiritual clarity (Francis et al., 2015). People receive suffering at different levels hence providing an explanation for various levels of psychological problems. The entire equation of suffering to sin does not however display the entire situation of human suffering. Human experiences however greatly connected with sin are related to daily activities that we all undergo. Our social experience in the environment we lie in has a great underlying on how sin affects how mental health.

Biopsychosocial Damage

All the mental issues that humans face have a connection with the social, biological, and psychological environment of the individuals (Littlewood, 2018). For instance, some children are born with brain defects that expose them to mental problems like autism. Other people are severely damaged by their social environments such as poverty, and drug abuse among others hence sinking into mental issues. Christian psychopathology must take into consideration the biopsychosocial nature of individuals before they make verdicts about their psychological state. Human beings have incapacities of various kinds that prevent them from fulfilling physical psychological or spiritual duties. Only God is omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent, yet these abilities are not available to humans. These deficiencies give room for extreme psychological issues that impact humans. The Apostle Paul reveals the state of human incapacity in his letter to the Corinthians by accepting to be labeled as weak. When we approach our lives from a point of weakness, we provide the most concrete explanation for the state. Sin is created by humans rather than God. God abhors sin and punishes it severely if it is not repented by humans (Littlewood, 2018).

In conclusion, Eric Johnson correctly depicts the state of Christian psychotherapy by equating it to the fall, sin, human suffering, and biopsychosocial factors. Christians explain human suffering on the basis of its origin in the garden of Eden when humans disobeyed God. Sin is therefore the root cause of all psychopathology problems. Therefore, addressing psychopathology is only efficient if the impact of sin and the Fall is incorporated into the process. Moreover, I believe that biopsychosocial aspects can help provide further information on mental issues among humans by providing the psychological, social, and biological context.

References

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