

Mid-term paper

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I chose to do my paper on the book titled "You and me forever marriage in light of eternity." The author used notes from A.W. Tozer and Erwin W. Lutzer. As well as his own life experience and the Bible to bring his view across. Francis Chan is an American protestant author teacher and preacher. Mr. Chan begins the first chapter of his book with the title "Marriage Isn't that Great" (Chan, 2014) Francis Chan claims marriage not to be as important as your relationship to Christ. Although it will require a person to be of faith to read this book there are some truths that can be applied in theory and in clinical practice.

Mr. Chans book considers marriage from eternity. The author believes "...your current marriage plays a part in God's eternal plan." (Chan, 2014) He continues by warning his readers that this is no ordinary book on marriage. He also makes certain that his book is not a step-by-step book or formula to follow that will result in your marriage changing. Instead, he encourages the reader to stare at God's face. A recurrent theme throughout this book, stare at God's face as one would to one, they are deeply in love with. Mr. Chan encourages the reader to be in love with God. The author recommends reading the bible and pausing for a few minutes to see God in specific scripture he cites in his book.

The author's solution is to fall so deeply in love with God he would be everything you desire. Even desire God more than your marriage. In doing this one will paint an "attractive picture of marriage that it causes people to long for the coming marriage with Jesus " (Chan, page56) Author believes it is in being in this state one truly will have the best marriage. Mr. Chan claims that once your focus is centered on God then your marriage and children will be affected by this. Author is aware that although one may raise their children to fear God and have been a good example for them. Children will choose and sometimes they may not choose

to serve God. Author is content that he has given his children an example of how one should live for God. Mr. Chan believes Loving God will affect everything you do.

Francis Chan's book offers a different perspective than the theories and modalities from our textbook in that the author follows a spiritual approach to marriage. Although there are different perspectives, spirituality can be incorporated using the theories and techniques offered in the textbook. Bowen family systems, "Bowen, one of the pioneers in the field of family therapy and counseling, contends that the mental health of an individual is strongly influenced by one's family of origin." (Capuzzi & Stauffer, 2015) One of several techniques that Bowen uses is a genogram with the purpose of the family as well as the clinician visualize the patterns that exist from generation to generation. Clinicians that are not Christian understand that there are addictions, diseases, and maladaptive behaviors that repeat throughout generations. Having knowledge of the patterns that exist in a family system can help to improve relationships within the family unit.

Spirituality can be integrated in the theorist technique by using a genogram. A Genogram can be used with a family to explore spirituality and how this has had an effect throughout their generations. "When it is used with the express purpose of identifying spiritual and religious issues, the spiritual genogram presents therapist with a tool for approaching a subject that is sometimes difficult to address and provides clients an opportunity to see ways that their family's religious and spiritual issues continue to affect them." (Marterella & Brock, 2008)

Another way to integrate faith in theory is by using another technique known as an ecomap. "A spiritual ecomap may include things like family of origin, people within the faith community, spiritual leaders, and traditions or rituals. This tool can be used to identify sources of strength, resources or any relationship that affects the family spiritually." (Marterella & Brock, 2008) The ecomap as mentioned previously is a tool to help highlight or help a family become aware of what people or things are having an influence in their lives. In this assessment one can use this as an opportunity to build on the effects that spirituality has had on the family. In exploring this can be helpful so that the family can be aware that finding balance in spirituality is important and can affect the family. "To be self-differentiated, one needs to have the ability to remain one's own person under the pressure of group influences, especially in the face of the intense influences of family life." (Capuzzi & Stauffer, 2015)

Integration of faith and theory is possible but may not be appropriate for all theories. "Satir's model of therapy overtly emphasized health, spirit, and human potential as primary to the healing process." (Marterella & Brock, 2008) In this modality Satir understands the importance of incorporating spirituality as one of the primaries to the healing process. Bowen does not incorporate spirituality, however in looking back at a family's genealogy one cannot deny that spirituality may have had an influence of some kind.

While Francis Chan is not implying that the reader is perfect, he gives the impression that all you need is faith in God for things to be better in marriage. Given the reality that we are on earth we are subject to disease, mental illness and being imperfect beings. We will need to work out marriage and family and this may mean seeking help in addition to our faith in God.

While believing in God and cultivating a relationship with Him is a good practice that will yield fruit. If one seeks to have a marriage restored the reality is that there is some work that the individual must do. Seeking help from a counselor and following a few steps that will help in their mental health is something that requires work on their part. God is a revealer, and he can reveal things to his children. Once it is revealed there is some clinical work that needs to be done to get to the root cause of conflict within marriages. Once an individual can get to the root cause of things, change can begin for present and future generations to come.

The tenets in Mr. Chan's book would be appropriate to use only when the client is of Christian faith. It would be important to know if the client is mature in their faith. I believe for Christians this book can be a bit difficult to swallow if you are not in a certain level in your faith. The author's view of "Marriage Isn't that Great" can be offensive for someone that is not mature in their faith. The author encourages the reader to cultivate their relationship with God first. Once your relationship with God is consistent then it will overflow into your marriage. In other words when you seek to love God your perspective on life changes when He is at the center.

I would not recommend this book to a client that does is not of Christian faith. It would not be appropriate knowing that my client does not practice faith. Also knowing that the author speaks of marriage as if it is not a priority given that the book is for married couples can be confusing to my client that is not of faith. The book can be misleading if one is not aware of the message the author seeks to convey.

I believe the work from both authors has broadened my perspective and understanding of the family system. When one part of that system is affected the whole system is affected. The text was helpful in that it helped one understand certain behaviors as some being generational. As a clinician it is important to look at the big picture within a family. Sort of like connecting the dots. The different assessment tools were helpful in gaining a better understanding of the family dynamics. The clinician's perspective of the family in person and the perspective once you see it on paper makes it a lot easier to see what is going on within the family. In reading the book by Mr. Chan I understand that there must be a balance of your spiritual perspective in everything. As Christians we must be careful that we do not over-spiritualize things. I did enjoy the book and I agree with much of what the author has to say. I have seen families destroyed because they have over-spiritualized things.

The challenge of the book is that one must fully be committed to Christ to accept this book for their marriage. For a couple that may be seeking a set of steps on how to change their marriage this book is not for them. I believe this can present a challenge to the reader. There is no formula for improving your marriage. There is no one-size-fits-all in marriage; this may throw someone off who might be looking for this kind of help. The author's recommendation is to develop a relationship with Christ, and he will change everything. While there is truth in this, I believe marriage couples need some more guidance.

The strength that I see in this book as it pertains to clinical practice, I would say he encourages being marriage to one person. He also goes over the roles in marriage. In society today the family is broken due to individuals not fulfilling their role in the family unit. Individuals understanding their role in marriage is important.

A weakness I found as it pertains to clinical practice is the fact that he mentioned "Marriage isn't that Great". This sends a negative message clinically. Marriage is important. He gives the reader an understanding clinically that his approach is a one size fits all. In counseling we understand that this does not exist the one size fits all. Every person is different, and every marriage is joined by two different worlds that decide to come together. Every approach in counseling will be different depending on the couple.

Another weakness that I found in this book as it pertains to clinical practice would be that there are no step-by-step formula. Clients will need a step by step formula it would not be enough to work through when there is infidelity or anger management. If a couple is going through infidelity, it would be important to speak to the couple and explore trust issues. This would require techniques that need to be put in place to build trust once again. I did not find this in this book. Instead, the message that can be received is love God more than your spouse and everything will fall into line. If you are a believer, you understand what he is trying to say. For an unbeliever this will not seem appropriate. The impression that can be perceived by an unbeliever can be one of not doing anything to work out the relationship.

Francis Chan would better serve believers in the faith versus a person that has no belief in God. Clinically after reading this book, I have gained an understanding that it is important for a couple to share in the same faith. When a couple shares in the same faith there is harmony. Both are living with the same goals in mind. "Marriage relationships that are not harmonious may impact the larger family, producing ripple effects that impair the overall functioning of that family." (Capuzzi & Stauffer, 2015) If the marriage relationship is not in harmony the family will follow suit. Making it challenging as a clinician to work with the family.

References

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