

**I am my DSM label
Is the Bible sufficient to address it?**

Introduction:

I. Understanding the diagnosis/label.

A. What gets people to the mental health clinic and what is mental illness?

A mental disorder is a syndrome characterized by clinically significant disturbance in an individual's cognition, emotion regulation, or behavior that reflects a dysfunction in the psychological, biological, or developmental processes underlying mental functioning. Mental disorders are usually associated with significant distress or disability in social, occupational, or other important activities (*Desk Reference to the Diagnostic Criteria from DSM-5*, American Psychiatric Association, page 4)

B. What is the DSM and in particular, what is a “disorder” (as in “Obsessive Compulsive **Disorder**”? By the way, do you remember Adrian Monk, “The defective detective?”)?

C. What are the worldview issues? Keep in mind “Lenses.”

- Key word—“monism”
- Current research

D. How should we think about the labels and what should be our concern?

II. Is the Bible sufficient to address these labels?

A. Counseling systems have a **Source of authority**.¹

1. Secular views of authority

2. Biblical counseling's source of authority:

¹ The “seven S's outline originated with Dr. David Powlison, of Westminster Theological Seminary, and has been adapted and expanded by Dr. Ernie Baker.

- Psalm 19:7
- 2 Timothy 3:16-17

The Bible, then, is the only source of tangible, eternal Truth on earth (Isa. 40:8). This understanding ensures the total sufficiency of Scripture when applied to every issue addressed therein (Psalm 19:7-14). Having embraced this view, a scientist looking at the universe recognizes that the entire creation is the handiwork of a sovereign God (John 1:3). His/her subsequent observations and explanations will be consistent with this perspective. Any observations that appear to be at odds with this declaration of the origin of creation will be reassessed in a way that does not deny the Truth of what God has clearly and unambiguously said He has done (Dr. Taylor Jones, *Think Biblically!*, page 236).

B. Counseling systems have a view of what's wrong with humans—*Sin*.

What's the problem with humans?

1. Secular views of the problem:

For example—Behaviorism--The "Sin" in behaviorism would be a person's poor conditioning. Everyone is conditioned or trained by their environment to learn how to respond (or behave). When a person is taught wrong responses in any given situation (as opposed to what the social norm for responses in those situations), they have been poorly conditioned. This is the major problem to be fixed (or the sin).²

- A big debate in the counseling world, is it nature or nurture?

2. The Biblical counseling view of what is wrong:

Image bearers—Genesis 1:26-27

Worshippers, religious by nature

The fall changes everything! Genesis 3; Romans 1:25 (We live in a fallen world, with fallen bodies, we sin and are sinned against)

"Radical Corruption," "Total Depravity"

We live out of our "hearts" (Proverbs 4:23) but the heart has been shaped by sin (Jer. 17:9).

C. Every counseling system proposes solutions—*a way of Salvation*.

1. Secular solutions

² The comments under Behaviorism's view for each point are from a graduate of our MABC (the Master of Arts in Biblical Counseling) program who also holds a graduate degree in Behavioral Counseling.

“Jungian psychotherapy is...a way of healing and a way of salvation. It has the power to cure....in addition it knows the way and has the means to lead the individual to his ‘salvation,’ to the knowledge of a fulfillment of his personality, which have always been the aim of spiritual striving....Apart from its medical aspect, Jungian psychotherapy is thus a system of education and spiritual guidance” (Jacobi, *The Psychology of C. G. Jung*).

Behaviorism’s salvation is reconditioning. This is a process of using behavioral principles to re-train a person to make correct responses to situations they have previously learned incorrect responses to.

2. Biblical counseling’s solution:

- Isa. 61:1-2a
- Titus 3:3-7
- I Cor. 6:9-11

D. Every counseling system has a view of how people change and how to help them change (methods) – **Sanctification**.

1. Secular views of change

Behaviorism’s sanctification is operant and classical conditioning. These are methods to train people how to make responses. Operant and classical conditioning is the use of reinforcement, punishment, and pairing principles to teach responses. This happens naturally in the environment and can also be used systematically to train desired responses.

2. Biblical counseling’s view of change.

- 2 Cor. 3:18
- Romans 8:28-29
- Phil 1:6

E. Every counseling system has **support systems**.

1. Secular support systems-- Institutions that teach the worldview, support groups, mental hospitals, etc.

Behaviorism has support systems as well. These are the trained professionals and schools that teach behavioral principles, as well as group therapies designed to provide support to people

2. Biblical counseling’s support system is God’s design—the local church (His incubator for growth)

- Romans 15:14
- The “one anothers.”
- Shepherding

F. Every counseling system has *servants*.

1. What is the role of the counselor/therapist?
2. How are counselors approved /trusted to handle the approach to counseling?

G. Every counseling system does “sparring” (apologetics).

Conclusion: We have a complete counseling system that addresses our counselee’s labels. He or she can develop a biblical identity!

Dr. Ernie Baker
Pastor of Counseling, First Baptist Jacksonville
Fellow, The Association of Certified Biblical Counselors
Certified Conciliator, The Institute for Christian Conciliation
Chair: On-line BA in Biblical Counseling
The Master’s University