



Mental Health and Gospel Care

Our Purpose: Why would a church take a Sunday on focus on mental health? It may seem a bit odd to you or maybe a bit out of place. I want you to assure you of something. Our goal for today is to learn how we might better love God and love of neighbor as ourselves in the context of mental health issues. We also want to bring clarity and a biblical perspective to a difficult topic.

I. Talking Wisely About Mental Health Struggles

II. Both Psychology and Theology address mental health issues from different perspectives.

III. Key Questions of pastoral theologians regarding mental health concerns

- How do we understand normal, right or wrong?
- How do we understand motivations?
- How do we understand self and instincts?
- How do we understand feeling and disorderly affections?
- How do we assess and address disorderly or irrational thought patterns?

IV. Listen to the Perspective of how people often address mental health. Listen to the way that people describe the experience of depression. Listen to their descriptions of motivation, self, feelings and affections.

V. How do theologians talk about mental health concerns? Listen to the similarities in scope and concern.

VI. What is the opportunity for church in the current focus on mental health in our culture? If the church ignores this conversation, several negative consequences will be strengthened. *

1. The stigma related to mental illness will be reinforced.
2. An excellent tool we all should have in the church – authentic and healthy relationships – will be negated.
3. The discussion of mental illness will continue to grow more professional and secular.
4. People will live as if God has little concern about their emotions, at least the unpleasant ones.
5. We will miss an important opportunity to disciple people on how to engage with sin and suffering in this world.

* Source: Brad Hambrick “Toward a Christian Perspective on Mental Illness”

Conclusion:

There was a shift in the last century from addressing mental health as a pastoral concern of the church to viewing it as something that is best treated outside the church. An explosion of psychiatry, psychology and physiological treatments left the church on the sidelines when thinking about how to best help those with mental health concerns. In recent years, more churches are seeking to address these issues wisely and this pleases the Lord. In future sessions today, we are going to discuss how to wisely apply principles from God’s word to effectively help the hurting that God brings our way.