

Smoky Mountain Bible Institute

Social Science 103 Psychology

A good definition is given by the European Science foundation – the social sciences are those subjects which examine and explain human beings. ... The major social sciences are Anthropology, Archaeology, Economics, Geography, History, Law, Linguistics, Politics, Psychology and Sociology.

This month lets tackle Psychology and Psychiatry two things that sound really close but are quite different. Actually, let's just discuss Psychology because it is a social science and let's disambiguate it from Psychiatry. Psychiatry is actually a medical science not a social one. It seeks to diagnose, prevent and treat mental disorders and one must be a medical doctor in order to be a Psychiatrist. Psychology on the other hand is a social science so while a Psychologist is still a doctor, they are not a medical doctor.

(Psychology is the science of behavior and mind. Psychology includes the study of conscious and unconscious phenomena, as well as feeling and thought. Psychologists seek an understanding of the emergent properties the brain. As a social science it aims to understand individuals and groups. A professional practitioner or researcher is called a psychologist. Psychologists attempt to understand the role of mental functions in individual and social behavior, while also exploring the processes that underlie cognitive functions and behaviors. Psychologists explore behavior and mental processes, including perception, cognition, attention, emotion, intelligence, subjective experiences, motivation, brain function, and personality. This extends to interaction between people, such as interpersonal relationships. Psychologists also consider the unconscious mind. Exploring human behavior from a scientific prospective.) My paraphrase from Wikipedia

So how can this scientific discipline be understood from a biblical prospective. Understanding methods by which we can modify our behavior, or the behavior of others can be helpful if used in ways to help our selves or other behave in ways that promote peace, security and safety and health in our society. However, it is important to understand that behavior modification can and has been used in human history to control others against their will and cause harm to others. So how can one determine good and bad practices? Only by consulting the standard for good and evil in human history, Holy Scripture. It is not us but the creator of the universe who decides what is good and evil.

One thing that Psychology falls short on is clearly defining motivation and purpose for things that seem unexplainable. Why would a person do evil things if there is not clear benefit to the person who did the evil thing? We as Christians have an answer to that question, Sin. So, while it is clearly a good thing to use Psychology to understand motives and seek to modify our behaviors for the common good as defined by scripture and not our fluctuating definitions of good and evil. It is also important for us to understand where it falls short.

Psychology can define things like guilt, shame, regret and depression, but only the reveled word of God can deliver the true cure for these things. Contrition and Forgiveness bought and paid for by the blood of Christ on Good Friday is the only cure for what can and will eternally plague us. Interestingly enough social sciences bare this out. In every study across every age group those who attend worship regularly as defined by scripture weekly, live happier, healthier, longer, more peaceful and harmonious lives.

Now I am no fan of the prosperity gospel but If going to church has all those positive side affects....Maybe it is a good idea for both your eternal and temporal existence to make weekly church attendance a high priority. Till next month

Blessings
Pastor Portier