

GROW IN GRACE

NEWSLETTER

Volume 40, No.4, January 28, 2014 / Southside Baptist Church & Christian School / P.O. Box 1594 / 1028 South Water Avenue, Gallatin, TN 37066 (615) 452-5951 / **The Grow in Grace Newsletter**— a weekly Bible Study, plus news notes— designed first and foremost for members and those attending services at Southside Church... sent forth to aid one and all, (including friends far and wide who receive the Newsletter), in the experience of 2 Peter 3:18. **"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST. To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen."**

BURN OUT! Depression! Mental Illness! part 1

A growing number of evangelical pastors and Christian leaders **are in agreement that depression and suicide are usually the result of mental illness** and have little or no connection to faith, beliefs, personal choices, or behavior. In this article, we purposely leave out several names and locations because we want to search for truth apart from personalities and apart from specific people, families, and churches who have recently been in the midst of deep emotional trauma. Please measure all the quotes and comments made by the plumb line of the Word of God!

I. Pastors/Church Leaders: Mental Illness is the root cause of depression/suicide ...

*** **1.** "Depression is **not a moral flaw**, a character weakness, a lapse in faith, or an excuse. **It is an illness...**" *** **2.** " _____, pastor of _____ Baptist Church in _____, was the exception. He told his congregation he **was in treatment several months before his suicide.** _____, worship pastor at the church, said he only now understands depression **is a mental illness.**" *** **3. A Counselor of pastors** reports, "I was rock-bottom, felt that I couldn't take it anymore, and had contemplated taking my life on several occasions... **I was suffering from 'depression,' a common form of mental illness...** Only absolute perfect spirituality - without a single lapse - could ever make one immune to an emotional break-down... **It's not a sin to be emotionally ill.**" *** **4.** "During _____'s tenure at _____ Church, [it] became one of the fastest-growing churches in _____. However, he resigned as pastor... **after admitting to an affair.** _____, his wife..., filed a **domestic-violence petition** against _____ shortly after the admission, describing him as "unstable, erratic and suicidal." [He recently committed suicide.] *** **5. A different pastor who committed suicide:** "A

member of the church, described his pastor as a very caring, upbeat guy that cared for people, especially with the kids. He was a good man who inspired... and showed no signs of trouble financially or otherwise. **However, his family revealed that _____ suffered from manic depression and was on medication.** [A friend confirmed that] Pastor _____ had struggled with manic depression and had emotional issues, and had sought treatment.”

*** **Dr. Richard Land**, (a respected, conservative Southern Baptist), in an interview with The Christian Post, said of a pastor who committed suicide: "My friend was **sick**. He was the most kind, loving, humble, most genuine, loyal person I've ever met in my life and he was **sick**. He had **a sickness** and that's it. He had a sickness just like somebody who had cancer and it was a sickness that was beyond his control," he said. **"This is a diagnosable, physiological, neurological condition. It is not an emotional state. It is a physical mental illness."**

*** **Ed Stetzer**, (another respected, conservative Southern Baptist), in a special article for CNN addressed the question of Mental illness and gave **4 bullet points of action** for churches: **"Mental illness is incredibly destructive... So, what can we do as people of faith to address issues of mental illness? 1. Churches need to stop hiding mental illness. 2. The congregation should be a safe place for those who struggle. 3. We should not be afraid of medicine. ... Counseling will naturally be a part of treatment. But if we are not afraid to put a cast on a broken bone, then why are we ashamed of a balanced plan to treat mental illness that might include medication to stabilize possible chemical imbalances?** Christians get cancer, and they deal with mental illness. We've long seen the value in the medical treatment of cancer. It's time for Christians to affirm the value of medical treatment for mental illness as well. **4. We need to end the shame. Mental illness has nothing to do with you or your family's beliefs..."**

*** **ALARMING statistics about pastors:**

"Members of the clergy now suffer from obesity, hypertension, and depression at rates higher than most Americans. In the last decade, their use of antidepressants has risen, while their life expectancy has fallen..." 40% of pastors and 47% of spouses are suffering from **burnout**, frantic schedules, and/or unrealistic expectations. 45% of pastors' wives say the greatest danger to them and their family is **physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual burnout**. 45% of pastors say that they've experienced **depression or burnout** to the extent that they needed to take a leave of absence from ministry. 75% report severe stress causing anguish, worry, **bewilderment, anger, depression**, fear, and alienation. **1,500 pastors leave their ministries each month due to burnout, conflict, or moral failure.**

RESPONSE: Sadly, pastors are in the forefront of those who are failing to win the battle against depression. [**Just so you will know**— this article is not written from a

painless ‘ivory tower!’ I had many a secret but serious battle with depression and suicide in teen years; and for the last 45 years as a full time pastor I have had my own battles and tendencies— not made easier in seasons when the Church environment was, shall we just say, less than loving!]

REALITY: The evidence is strong— many pastors and denominational leaders are in agreement that, generally, **emotional/mental ‘break-downs’ are the result of the ‘sickness’ of mental illness; AND THAT** generally such ‘sick’ folks are no more responsible for these SICKNESSES than they would be for ‘catching’ the flu; **AND THAT** such sick ones should avail themselves to psychological counseling and quite possibly to prescription drugs; **AND THAT** such sick ones need an affirming, loving Church environment **where their BEHAVIOR will not be examined for any possible sin or belief connections.** [It is worthy of note that several of the pastors who have committed suicide in the last few years were going to counseling and were taking prescription drugs.]

SAD REALITY: In all that I read from the pastors and church leaders I found NO GOSPEL. I ALSO FOUND that anyone who does not ‘buy’ the teaching that depression is fundamentally only a ‘sickness’ in the same way as FLU is a sickness— such ones are basically CONSIDERED to be ignorant of the ‘truth’ of modern science and they are UNLOVING. **HOWEVER, as I continued to research I also discovered that there are growing numbers of Psychiatrists who do not agree with the pastors/church leaders!**

II. Disorders are not a “Disease”

Yes, I know that there are many psychiatrists who would agree with the pastors. Indeed, such ones have successfully sold their unproven, non-scientific theories to the pastors and the multitudes! As a result, on any given Sunday, from the pulpit to the back pew— many are relying on prescription drugs to handle life. **Nevertheless, there is a growing voice from psychiatrists** who are deeply alarmed and they are ‘blowing the whistle!’

***** Psychiatrists/Physicians admit— Disorders are not a “Disease!” ***** _

1. “No behavior or misbehavior is a disease or can be a disease. That’s not what diseases are. Diseases are malfunctions of the human body, of the heart, the liver, the kidney, the brain. **Typhoid fever is a disease. Spring fever is not a disease; it is a figure of speech, a metaphoric disease.** All mental diseases are metaphoric diseases, misrepresented as real diseases and mistaken for real diseases.” “There is no blood or other biological test to ascertain the presence or absence of a mental illness, as there is for most bodily diseases. If such a test were developed ... then the condition would cease to be a mental illness and would be classified, instead, as a symptom of a bodily disease.” — **Dr. Thomas Szasz, Professor Emeritus of Psychiatry, New York University Medical School, Syracuse**

2. “There are no objective tests in psychiatry- no X-ray, laboratory, or exam finding that says definitively that someone does or does not have a mental disorder.” “there is no definition of a mental disorder.” “It’s bull—. I mean, you just can’t define it.” — **Allen Frances, Psychiatrist and former DSM-IV Task Force Chairman**

3. “Virtually anyone at any given time can meet the criteria for bipolar disorder or ADHD. Anyone. And the problem is everyone diagnosed with even one of these ‘illnesses’ **triggers the pill dispenser.**” — **Dr. Stefan Kruszewski, Psychiatrist**

4. “Despite more than two hundred years of intensive research, **no commonly diagnosed psychiatric disorders have proven to be either genetic or biological in origin**, including schizophrenia, major depression, manic-depressive disorder, the various anxiety disorders, and childhood disorders such as attention-deficit hyperactivity. **At present there are no known biochemical imbalances in the brain of typical psychiatric patients—** until they are given psychiatric drugs.” — **Peter Breggin, Psychiatrist**

5. While “there has been no shortage of alleged biochemical explanations for psychiatric conditions... not one has been proven. **Quite the contrary.** In every instance where such an imbalance was thought to have been found, it was later proven false.” “No claim for a gene for a psychiatric condition has stood the test of time, in spite of popular misinformation.” — **Dr. Joseph Glenmullen, Harvard Medical School psychiatrist**

6. “**We do not have** an independent, valid test for ADHD, and there are no data to indicate ADHD is due to a brain malfunction.” — **Final statement of the panel from the National Institutes of Health Consensus Conference on ADHD**

7. “The way things get into the DSM is not based on blood test or brain scan or physical findings. **It’s based on descriptions of behavior.** And that’s what the whole psychiatry system is.” — **Dr Colin Ross, Psychiatrist**

8. “**Psychiatry has never been driven by science.** They have no biological or genetic basis for these illnesses and the National Institutes of Mental Health are totally committed to the pharmacological line. ... **There is a great deal of scientific evidence that stimulants cause brain damage with long-term use,** yet there is no evidence that these mental illnesses, such as ADHD, exist.” “In reality, psychiatric diagnosing is a kind of spiritual profiling that can destroy lives and frequently does.” — **Peter Breggin, Psychiatrist**

9. “**There’s no biological imbalance.** When people come to me and they say, ‘I have a biochemical imbalance,’ I say, ‘Show me your lab tests.’ There are no lab tests. So what’s the biochemical imbalance?” — **Dr. Ron Leifer, Psychiatrist**

10. “In short, the whole business of creating psychiatric categories of ‘disease,’ formalizing them with consensus, and subsequently ascribing diagnostic codes to them, which in turn leads to their use for insurance billing, is nothing but an extended racket furnishing psychiatry a pseudo-scientific aura. The

perpetrators are, of course, feeding at the public trough.”— **Dr. Thomas Dorman, internist and member of the Royal College of Physicians of the UK**

11. “No biochemical, neurological, or genetic markers have been found for Attention Deficit Disorder, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Depression, Schizophrenia, anxiety, compulsive alcohol and drug abuse, overeating, gambling or any other so-called mental illness, disease, or disorder.” — **Bruce Levine, Ph.D., psychologist and author of Commonsense Rebellion**

12. “Unlike medical diagnoses that convey a probable cause, appropriate treatment and likely prognosis, the disorders listed in DSM-IV [and ICD-10] are **terms arrived at through peer consensus.**” — **Tana Dineen Ph.D., psychologist**

13. “Psychiatry’s claim that mental illnesses are brain diseases is “a claim supposedly based on recent discoveries in neuroscience, made possible by [*brain*] *imaging techniques* for diagnosis and pharmacological agents for treatment. This is not true.” —**Dr. Thomas Szasz, Professor Emeritus of Psychiatry, New York University Medical School,**

The above sampling of quotes from psychiatrists are quite revealing— especially in the light of the dogmatic statements from highly respected preachers:

*** **Dr. Land:** "This [depression/suicide] is a diagnosable, physiological, neurological condition. It is not an emotional state. It is a physical mental illness."— *** **Dr. Stetzer:** “... if we are not afraid to put a cast on a broken bone, then why are we ashamed of a balanced plan to treat mental illness that might include medication to stabilize possible chemical imbalances? Christians get cancer, and they deal with mental illness. We’ve long seen the value in the medical treatment of cancer. It’s time for Christians to affirm the value of medical treatment for mental illness as well... **Mental illness has nothing to do with you or your family’s beliefs...**”

RESPONSE: Yes, multitudes have already ‘bought’ the counsel set forth by pastors and other Christian leaders. These pastors and Christian leaders are **promoting mere psychological theories- not science! Most tragic of all is that NOT ONE OF THEM zeroed in on the power of the gospel of Christ to give spiritual backbone to saints in the midst of deep trials. They voted for an approach laced with mind changing, life altering drugs which create more slaves, zombies, and suicides than they do positive deliverance.**

QUESTION: Is there no longer any place for a Biblical faith? Is there no longer a place for the GOSPEL of God which EMPOWERS saints to win over even the deadliest of mental/emotional/spiritual sins and demons; **and/or over** the mysterious trials of life?

III. FOR 2000+ YEARS — LONG BEFORE THE PSYCHOLOGIZERS CAME ALONG — THE GOSPEL WAS AND IS POWERFUL AND TRANSFORMING!

Charles H. Spurgeon told his students, "**Fits of depression come over the most of us.** Usually cheerful as we may be, we must at intervals be cast down. The strong are not always vigorous, the wise not always ready, the brave not always courageous, and the joyous not always happy." Yes, he rightly understood that depression is not necessarily traceable to personal sin. He wrote, "Spiritual darkness of any sort is to be avoided, and not desired." **But he also wrote,** "I note that some whom I greatly love and esteem, who are, in my judgment, among the very choicest of God's people, **nevertheless, travel most of the way to heaven by night.**" In *Lectures to my Students*, Spurgeon set forth reasons believers fall into discouragement or sadness and he offered **Biblically based hope** for those so overtaken.

[COMMENT: INDEED, in a fallen world, there are many 'SPIRITUAL NIGHTS!' **Job** had a few!! And we know that they were not rooted in any sin in his life. However, to win those battles he needed communion with God and to be teachable in the presence of God. He did not need humanistic Christian or secular counseling and/or drugs. Be it Job, or Elijah, or Jonah, or Jeremiah— the solution to depression was found in FELLOWSHIP with and in humility before God. **Cain**, who was angry and depressed— his problem WAS A SIN problem. He rejected repentance and things got worse! (Gen. 4:5-7) **The Prodigal son** had a sin problem. He repented, and things got exceedingly better, to put it mildly, Luke 15:11-24.]

Being well taught in the Word and ways of God, Spurgeon was clear that SUFFERING is a normal part of life in a fallen world: "Even under the economy of redemption it is most clear that we are to endure infirmities, otherwise there were no need of the promised Spirit to help us in them. It is of need be that we are sometimes in heaviness. Good men are promised tribulation in this world." Moreover, Spurgeon knew that one of the benefits of our various sufferings is that we "may learn sympathy with the Lord's suffering people." As we know, God moved the Apostle Paul's pen to tell us that **God "comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God."** (2 Corinthians 1:4) THEREFORE, LET US ONE AND ALL: 1. Go to God. 2. Receive comfort. 3. Become a comforter!

Spurgeon had to deal with very severe physical pain from gout. It is known that he might be WEEKS AT A TIME in bed agonizing with excruciating pain. **On one such occasion he wrote the church family he served,** "I have been brought very low... **My flesh has been tortured with pain and my spirit has been prostrate with depression.** . . . With some difficulty I write these lines in my bed, mingling them with the **groans of pain and the songs of hope.**" **NOTICE:** His testimony is encouraging and faith building. He had severe physical sufferings and he had 'dark nights of the soul' or depression/burnout. IN THE MIDST of the darkness and groaning he looked to the LORD and PRAISED HIM, regardless. **Thus, he was NEVER CONSUMED or destroyed by the pain, the depression, or the trials.**

Moreover, he did not allow these 'circumstances and situations' to become EXCUSES— not for himself nor for his students. **To the students he said,** "These infirmities may be no detriment to a man's career of special usefulness," "They may even have been imposed upon him by divine wisdom as necessary qualifications for

his peculiar course of service. **Some plants owe their medicinal qualities to the marsh in which they grow;** others to the shades in which alone they flourish."

[COMMENT: In recent times as I looked back upon the difficult, painful circumstances of my youth — to which **my responses** in those days **flung me into deep dungeons** of depression, rage, and more — those times ultimately proved to be the best training for God's calling upon my life. This reality astounds me. DON'T MISS this awesome word and poem found on Joni Eareckson Tada's website: <http://www.joniandfriends.org/radio/5-minute/drill-man/>]

LET US NOT UNDER ESTIMATE PRACTICAL HELPS! IN SPURGEON'S CASE, he needed to learn to give his physical body rest. WEEKLY: He often preached ten times a week, answered a multitude of letters, taught in the pastor training school, administered an orphanage, did personal counseling, wrote for publications, entertained guests at his home, shepherded a church plus his own family; and ministered to his bedridden wife!! Thankfully, the church finally insisted on him taking vacations. Thus, Spurgeon wisely taught his students, "**The bow cannot be always bent without fear of breaking. Repose is as needful to the mind as sleep to the body. . . Rest time is not waste time. It is economy to gather fresh strength.**"

On October 19, 1856, when Spurgeon was only 22 years old, he was preaching for the first time in the Surrey Gardens Music Hall in London. Literally thousands had gathered. Suddenly FIRE broke out. Seven people were killed and many injured. Spurgeon wrote, "**I was pressed beyond measure and out of bounds with an enormous weight of misery.** The tumult, the panic, the deaths were day and night before me, and made life a burden." AGAIN, BAD THINGS happen in a fallen world. **The crushing blows can be beyond words.** As to Spurgeon, because he was a man in Christ who would always turn to Christ for refuge, he was able to give testimony of HOPE: "**The fact that Jesus is still great, let his servants suffer as they may, piloted me back to calm reason and peace.** Should so terrible a calamity overtake any of my brethren, let them both **patiently hope and quietly wait** for the salvation of God." "**The lesson from wisdom is, be not dismayed by soul-trouble.**"

YES, the circumstances of life can be as varied as the seasons of a year. Over them or other people we generally have no control. **We have** various temperaments/personalities, as well as various physical ailments and/or limitations; along with emotional scars. **We have** consequences from our own failings. **And sometimes,** along come 'mysteries'... situations and stuff which we do not understand. **Then there is** the significant issue of the maturity of our faith. **And what of** the 'trying of our faith' which is much more precious than the 'trying' of gold!?!? **Spurgeon said,**

"Any simpleton can follow the narrow path in the light: **faith's rare wisdom enables us to march on in the dark with infallible accuracy, since she places her hand in that of her Great Guide.**" **Bottom line:** In responding to mysteries, failures, trials, troubles, tribulations, and dark nights of the soul— many are ready to excuse all manner of behaviors and point us to drugs. Their message is popular and pleases the masses— but it leaves you without hope and

deliverance. I am thankful for C. H. Spurgeon modeling the freeing power of the GOSPEL. Let us follow, as he followed the LORD! (Article, TO BE CONTINUED)

Abounding Grace to all! James www.southsidegallatin.org

SOUTHSIDE NEWS NOTES!

TUESDAYS: Come and sing with us at Gallatin Health Care nursing home. Meet at the front door at 5:30PM. Any questions contact Bradley Pennington at 615-804-3054.

***** EVERY WEDNESDAY: PRAYER SERVICE at 7:00PM! NOTE:** Jody Allen is ministering to young Children, up to about age 10 during Prayer Service. Older children, but not old enough for the Youth Group... will be with their parents in the Prayer Service.

****** YOUTH GROUP led by Byron Smith and others: Wednesdays 6-8pm**

****** LADIES BIBLE STUDIES— 2nd & 4th Thursdays, each month, 11:00am.**

NEXT ONE, 2/6/14 / Cindy Bell is teaching.

****** EVERY Saturday @ 8am: Men's Fellowship/Bible Study ******

SUNDAY SCHEDULE FOR FEBRUARY 2; 9; [16- LORD'S supper]; 23

1. 9:30am- Sunday School→ Bible Study and Small Group Fellowship

2. 10:45am- Morning Worship / Children's Church

3. Noon: Fellowship 'covered-dish' Meal together! 4. 1:00pm- Early afternoon Service, in the Fellowship Hall

SOUTHSIDE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL! *Children are like young plants in a garden— while young and tender they must be protected.* Southside Christian School works in harmony with the local Church and empowers parents! <http://www.aceministries.com/curriculum/?content=presentingACE> Call: 615-452-5951