

# Counterfeit Approaches to Inner Healing

by David A. Huston

*This paper is presented to refute some of the approaches to inner healing being used today which are based on psychological theory and have no biblical authorization.*

*Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him.*

**Colossians 2:8-10**

THE FULNESS OF THE POWER TO HEAL is found in Jesus Christ alone. Yet many today are looking elsewhere for inward healing. The basis of most of these competitors of Christ is psychological theory. A theory is an underlying principle believed or assumed to be true which forms a basis for action. Most psychotherapists operate according to a set of theories which have been assembled over the past 100 years. These theories have a superficial appearance of legitimacy, but when examined closely, it is easy to see that they are all flawed and absolutely inadequate. In other words, they fail to explain why people think and act the way they do and what needs to be done about it.

Only God knows why people do what they do. Only He sees the heart perfectly. And only He has the power to heal it. Psychological theories are actually nothing more than human guessing. This is easily established by the fact that there is such a vast array of psychological theories, most of which contradict one another. This being the case, I believe we have a legitimate basis for questioning, which, if any, are correct to any degree?

Christians should understand that psychology is philosophy. It is therefore one of the things the Bible says will cheat us. In addition, psychology is empty deceit, because it promises what it cannot deliver, and a tradition of men (rather than a revelation of God), because it is accepted by millions without evaluation.

Moreover, it is founded on the basic principles of the world, not the principles of God's Word. Christians will never find completeness in a psychotherapist's office; we are complete only in Jesus Christ.

Many of the competitors of the biblical approach to inner healing are cleverly disguised in Christian terminology. Always remember that healing comes by the touch of Jesus Christ, not by any kind of healing technique. The issue in ministering to wounded people is purely one of how a person comes into contact with Jesus. It is not what a person does, or has done to him, that brings inward healing; it is whether he exposes his wounds to the Healer.

There is no shortage of counterfeit approaches to inner healing circulating today in the form of books, preachers, and seminars. I felt it necessary to identify several of the most prominent approaches so that the reader can avoid them. Each one is founded in psychological theories that contradict the truth of the Bible. The approach I describe in this book is not related in any way to any of the following. Please avoid these approaches.

- 1. The Forgive Yourself Approach:** Matthew 6:14 says, "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. Not one verse in the Word of God instructs us to forgive ourselves. For forgiveness to take place, there must be an actual trespass. We trespass against God and other people, and others trespass against us, but we do not trespass against ourselves. This means that we need God's forgiveness and the forgiveness of others, and we need to forgive those who trespass against us, but we do not need to forgive ourselves. Forgiveness is a relational dynamic and can only take place within the context of relationship. We not only do not have the authority to forgive ourselves, but there is no basis for us forgiving ourselves. In truth, the Forgive Yourself Approach is a substitute for repentance, forgiving other people, and God removing condemnation.
- 2. The Forgive God Approach:** Psalms 18:30 says, "As for God, His way is perfect. God has never trespassed against anyone, even though many in their carnal thinking believe He has. The idea that any man needs to forgive God is a capitulation to carnal thinking and an insult to the God of all grace, for it implies that God needs our forgiveness. This approach is actually a substitute for repentance. It makes man the victim of God and removes the need to be honest about what is really wrong. It is rationalizing wrong behavior by blaming God.
- 3. The Self-love Approach:** Matthew 16:24 says, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. There is no place in the Word of God where anyone is encouraged to love himself.

Self love is assumed in the Scriptures as the natural condition of fallen man. This is why the Bible tells us, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:39). In other words, we are to love others in the same way we are already loving ourselves. Furthermore, the Bible warns that in the last days, men will be lovers of themselves (2 Timothy 3:2). This passage is speaking in a disparaging way of the attitudes that will be prevalent among believers in the last days. It is certainly not encouraging us to love ourselves. The Self-love Approach is a justification for continuing in self-centered, self-indulgent behavior and remaining unconcerned about the needs of those around us. It is a substitute for facing up to one's own selfishness and submitting to the cross.

4. **The Self-Esteem Approach:** Isaiah 40:17 states that the value of man is less than nothing and worthless. Yet, God says, "If you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure" (Exodus 19:5). Human value only exists within the context of relationship with God and obedience to His will. The Self-Esteem Approach to healing attempts to produce spiritual health by persuading us we have great, if not eternal, value. Paul admonished believers to "if lowliness of mind...esteem others better than himself" (Philippians 2:3). The Self-Esteem Approach is based on the false philosophical idea that the human soul is divine and therefore inherently immortal and valuable. The fruit of this approach is pride and selfishness, not lowliness of mind.
5. **The Temperaments Approach:** Romans 12:2 says, "Be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Throughout the New Testament, we are continually admonished that we do not have to remain the way we are. The Temperaments Approach is a deterministic philosophy that enables people to justify and rationalize their un-Christian attitudes and behaviors. By categorizing people according to the four temperaments, it provides people with the classic "God made me this way" excuse. Statements such as "I'm bossy because I'm choleric, or I'm withdrawn because I'm melancholy" are nothing but rationalizations for poor behavior. The truth is, everyone of us can change into the likeness of Jesus by the power of the Word and Spirit of God.
6. **The Positive Thinking Approach:** James 2:20 says, "But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? In the Bible faith is action springing from a faith-filled heart. The Positive Thinking Approach promotes a false intellectual faith. It is the mind over matter approach that deifies the human will and promises that we can think our way into healing. The roots of this approach are in ancient Gnosticism and it finds its modern expression in the Christian Science movement. According to the Bible,

healing and growth come to us by the grace of God as we act in faith, the heart, mind, and body working together to appropriate the promises of God.

7. **The Visualization Approach:** Hebrews 12:2 says that we should be looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. It does not say that we should be looking into our minds to create our own reality by means of imaging. The Visualization Approach attributes God-like creative power to the human mind and proposes that rather than learn to live with reality, we can simply create a new reality. The following quote sums up the anti-Christian bias of this approach: "Above all visualize what will bring *you* joy. Not what another wants you to do, or what you think you *should* want" (Arizona Networking News, Spring 1989, p.15). Rather than looking into our minds for healing, Christians are to look by faith unto Jesus Christ, the only true Healer.
8. **The Heal the Inner Child Approach:** 1 Corinthians 13:11 says, "When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. Rather than healing a supposed inner child living within us, what the Bible says is that we need to grow out of our immature attitudes and behaviors and become Christ-like in every area of our lives. Ephesians 4:15 says that we should grow up in all things into Him who is the head. The Heal the Inner Child Approach is nothing but an excuse for remaining immature. It promotes looking within rather than looking toward God.
9. **The Victimization Approach:** 1 Corinthians 10:13 says, "No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man. While no one could say that all human beings suffer equally, it is nevertheless true that all suffer. All have sinned and all have been sinned against. The problems we face are more the result of how we deal with our suffering. We cannot control what happens to us, but we can control what happens in us. The Victimization Approach is the glorification of victimization. It is the classic blaming someone else excuse for poor attitudes and behaviors. This is not to suggest that there are not plenty of true victims around. But this approach uses victimization as an excuse for not facing up to one's own failures and shortcomings.
10. **The Express Your Anger Approach:** Proverbs 29:11 says, "A fool vents all his feelings, but a wise man holds them back. Anyone who recommends that you just let your emotions go is not giving your sound spiritual advice. There are proper godly ways to express anger, but blowing your top is not one of them. In the extreme, the Express Your Anger Approach includes primal screaming, hitting objects, and yelling profanities as a means to getting

free from inner pain. But these approaches are exactly the opposite of the self-control, self-denial, and the meek and quiet spirit commended in the Bible.

11. **The Self-help Books and Seminars Approach:** Psalms 118:8 says, "It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man. The Bible tells us that it is the holy Scriptures that are able to make us wise unto salvation through faith in Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 3:15). Those who turn to the profusion of self-help books and seminars are seeking to save themselves through intellectual stimulation and carnal motivation. All such materials are merely ineffective substitutes for the Word of Life. They provide convenient excuses to people who are avoiding relationship with God.
  
12. **The Integrating Psychology With the Word Approach:** Psalms 33:4 says, "For the word of the LORD is right, and all His work is done in truth." To mix psychology with the Word is to dress the snake up in lamb skins and welcome him into the garden of Eden. This approach arrogantly presumes that God's wisdom is incomplete and needs man's speculations to make it effective. It is the Word of God alone, however, that is quick and powerful, that is spirit and life, that is the power of God unto salvation. Those who sprinkle psychological theory into the ministry of the Word are making the Word of no effect by their philosophies and traditions.
  
13. **The Psychological Terminology in Preaching and Teaching "**  
**Approach:** 1 Corinthians 2:2 says, "For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Those preachers who are using psychological terms in their preaching are giving stark evidence that they don't believe God really knows what He's doing. They are preaching another gospel."

Two other approaches to inner healing are not false in and of themselves, but they become false when isolated from the larger context of spiritual growth. The first is the Instant Holy Ghost Fix-It-All Approach. This is the idea that when a person receives the gift of the Holy Ghost, that's it, he has been made whole. This idea negates the whole concept of spiritual growth. Philippians 2:12 says, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure. When a person receives the Holy Ghost, God begins working in him to produce growth. But we must keep in mind that growth is a process. It is not instantaneous. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would guide us into all truth (John 16:13). This includes the truth about ourselves and our need for growth. Some grow faster than others, but all require time. No one gets all truth overnight.

To promote the idea that perfection is acquired in one experience with God is likening the Holy Ghost to fairy dust or a magic wand. While it is true that miraculous steps of growth can take place in a single prayer meeting or with a single move of God (and I am in no way discounting those things), it is unbiblical to suggest that this is the only or primary means by which God operates. Rather than encouraging people to look to the big meeting or the exceptional event, ” they should be taught that healing and growth generally take place over time.

A second similar approach is the “Just Pray and Fast and Get in the Word” Approach. This is when people are told that they just need to get closer to God or study His Word. This is what might be called the “All you need is God” Approach. Again, I am not intending to discount these prayer and Bible study, for they are essential elements of every believer’s walk with God. But when they are isolated from the larger context of relationships within the body of Christ, this approach often results in discouragement rather than spiritual progress. The truth is, we all need God *and* His body. James 5:16 says, “Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. It is important that believers understand the need for body relationships in healing and growth. Encouraging faithfulness in prayer, fasting, and Bible study is good, but must be part of the larger process described in God’s plan for our lives.

### **Additional Resources:**

If you are interested in more detailed information about the biblical deficiencies of psychological theories and practices, I suggest the follow resources.

1. *The Couch and the Cross* by J. R. Ensey. This excellent book can be obtained from the author at [www.AdvanceMinistries.org](http://www.AdvanceMinistries.org).
2. Visit the psychoheresy awareness website at [www.psychoheresy-aware.org](http://www.psychoheresy-aware.org). ~~You will find an abundance of~~ books and articles on this subject.

**This paper is excerpted from the book *The Sons of Oil* by David A. Huston, available at [www.RoshPinnah.com](http://www.RoshPinnah.com).**

Note to the reader:

If you would like to comment on the contents of this paper, please contact us through our website at [www.GloriousChurch.com](http://www.GloriousChurch.com). We welcome and appreciate all honest comments, questions, and criticisms.

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Rosh Pinnah means Chief Cornerstone in Hebrew.