

How the Mental Health Industry Misses the Mark

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HOST: DAVID WHEATON:

How the mental health industry misses the mark. That is the topic we'll discuss today on The Christian Worldview Radio Program where the mission is to sharpen the biblical worldview of Christians and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. I'm David Wheaton, the host. The Christian Worldview is a nonprofit, listener-supported radio ministry. Our website is TheChristianWorldview.org, and the rest of our contact information will be given throughout today's program. As always, thank you for your notes of encouragement, financial support, and lifting us up in prayer.

The statistics are staggering; one in five people in America have been diagnosed with a, quote, "mental illness." One in six people are taking powerful psychotropic medications such as antidepressants, anti-anxieties, and stimulants. Many Christians have been trapped in the vortex of the, quote, "mental health industry" as well. And here's the troubling part in the majority of the cases: Wrong diagnoses lead to wrong and harmful treatments.

Our guest today is Greg Gifford. He's the chair of the School of Biblical Studies at the Master's University and the author of the compelling new book, *Lies My Therapist Told Me: Why Christians Should Aim for More Than Just Treating Symptoms*. He will explain the important distinction between the immaterial mind and the material brain and how God's word is all-sufficient to renew the mind to think and live for God's glory. Let's get straight to the interview with Greg Gifford. Greg, thank you for coming on The Christian Worldview Radio Program today. Before we get into your book, I thought it'd be interesting to hear about your background and how God brought you to saving faith in Christ and what you do now.

GUEST: GREG GIFFORD:

Thank you for having me. It's good to be here. And the way the Lord saved me was really over a period of time. I can't go back to a Damascus moment, Acts nine, but I can see the Lord working in my high school years to draw me to Himself. And I honestly think it was through the means of church camp, as surprising as that may seem or cheesy to some, but I really do believe that through church camp, the Lord called me to Himself.

After that, I distinctly remember it was about 16 or 17 years old where all of a sudden this light switch went off and I just loved the Bible and I started to read the Bible. I read it independently; no one was telling me to. Through that, I start going to Christian Bible studies at public school, trying to focus on church and Christian friendships. If I had to put my finger on when the Lord saved me and how, I really do think it was through the means of church camp in high school.

I teach full-time at the Master's University. I primarily teach biblical counseling with a few other courses; general Bible courses that are taught here at the undergraduate level. I also have the privilege of pastoring in town at a local evangelical free church called Faith Community Church. I am also fellow with the Fortis Institute, which is how you and I know each other, where Todd is our director. And I work with

seven other fellows who produce Christian Worldview content, biblical, ethics, theological, and then even methodological content; writing, podcasts, all of that. Those spheres occupy most of my life.

HOST: DAVID WHEATON:

You were referring there to Todd Friel of Wretched Radio and TV in the Fortis Institute. He recently started this to, quote, "Create compelling media and resources that integrate biblical truth into every aspect of life." We have a link to the Fortis Institute at our website.

Let's get into your book just released, *Lies My Therapist Told Me: Why Christians Should Aim for More Than Just Treating Symptoms*. And I want to start out with a quote you have in the book by Dietrich Bonhoeffer from Germany. He said, "The psychiatrist must first search my heart, and yet he never plums its ultimate depth. The Christian brother knows when I come to him here is a sinner like myself; a godless man who wants to confess and yearns for God's forgiveness. Psychiatrist views me as if there were no God, the Christian brother views me as I am before the judging and merciful God in the cross of Jesus Christ."

And just to follow that up with a short quote from your book, "My message here is not that medication has no role in helping people; it can be beneficial to address issues of the body. What I am saying though is that our secular therapeutic approach isn't making things better. If it was, we wouldn't have an increasing number of people on psychotropics," psychotropic medications. "There's a deeper problem with our current therapeutic approach, and it's fundamentally a worldview problem." Could you give us a brief overview or thesis of your book and why you wrote it?

GUEST: GREG GIFFORD:

The thesis of the book is that the secular therapeutic is making us sicker, it's over diagnosing, it's incentivizing diagnosing of arbitrary, medical sounding mental illnesses, and the solution, as best as I could tell I've presented in the book, is that the right anthropology, our teaching and understanding of people in the scripture, it's really fundamentally down to this one phrase, "The mind versus the brain."

The basic thesis is that the secular therapeutic has confused the mind and the brain and medicalized the immaterial mind and then now medicated it. Now we see not a decrease in mental illness, but an increase in them, not a decrease in those on psychotropics, but an increase on those on psychotropics. Instead of helping, we're hurting. And we're hurting not just adults, but we're also hurting children with the overdiagnosis and misdiagnosis with these arbitrary, seemingly medical diagnoses. That's the slice that I'm really speaking to is are we understanding people accurately? And what are the implications of understanding the mind as being different from the brain?

HOST: DAVID WHEATON:

Very good. We're going to get into the difference between the mind and the brain that you bring out in your book. That's very interesting and compelling. Greg Gifford is our guest today here on The Christian Worldview, the author of *Lies My Therapist Told Me*. Greg, we hear this term all the time, mental health. We have a mental health crisis in this country; your mental health this or mental health that. When the medical psychiatric community and the broader culture talks about mental health, having a mental health crisis, what exactly do they mean?

GUEST: GREG GIFFORD:

That's the million-dollar question, David. If you take the American Psychological Association's definition and you take common, nationally recognized organizations and you say, "What is mental health?" Go to MentalHealth.gov. Look up the APA, look up the American Psychiatric Association and ask the question, "What is mental health?" You're going to see emotional, behavioral, social, how to cope, how to thrive and function in society.

And the discerning Christians should say, "But wait a minute, which of those is a medical issue?" Why are we talking about behavior, social interactions, emotions as if they were medical issues? Is this a medical issue or is this an immaterial inner person issue? And even in secular verbiage, individuals that don't believe in the Bible, don't believe in God, don't believe in Jesus, most if not all of those mental health definitions are about the immaterial component of who we are, not about materiality, meaning this is not brain disease and brain health.

You have a secular group of therapists, psychologists, psychiatrists who are actually dabbling in not medicine, not empirical, verifiable medicine, but they're dabbling in inner man, immaterial issues. The psychiatrist who is medically trained isn't practicing medicine to diagnose you and help promote, quote, unquote, "mental health," they're taking your symptoms, verbally assessing you, and then giving you a label sometimes in as quick as 17 minutes in your appointment with them. That's where the confusion has arisen. The secular therapeutic doesn't really know what mental health is. And I could argue and demonstrate in the book they don't know what the mind is, so of course there's confusion on what mental health is.

HOST: DAVID WHEATON:

He writes in the book that the American Psychological Association estimated in 2008 that one in 10 Americans were taking psychotropic medication, but as of 2021, that estimate is now one in four. 25% of the people you see walking around are taking some sort of psychotropic medication. In the forward to your book, it's written that the University of Michigan reports that antidepressants, another statistic here, for 12 to 24-year-olds is up a staggering 66% since 2016. You also quote the CDC, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately 20 million Americans between the ages of three to 17, now bring it down to more childhood ages, they're said to have quote, unquote, "a mental illness." The most common mental illnesses are seen as ADHD, anxiety, depression, and behavioral disorders. Children who are diagnosed in their childhood with anxiety and depression, according to the CDC, have, quote, "increased over time." Children can be diagnosed with a mental illness before they get to kindergarten.

Greg, there's been a huge increase in diagnoses of autism, ADHD, GAD, which is just general anxiety disorder, or GID, gender identity disorder, we hear that all that time in the news, or PTSD, all these different things. There's autism and these mental diagnosis that are coming out. Tell us about how that changed over time. You've got into it a little bit, but how did it become this society of mental diagnosis?

GUEST: GREG GIFFORD:

I think you can actually trace your way all the way back to Charles Darwin. And he introduced a theory that is antithetical to the Bible. I think it's an incoherent theory, number one. But the theory is the origin of species teaches that natural selection is how we have positively mutated, adapted, and evolved cross

species into humans. What he introduced was more of a philosophy of thought rather than empirical, verifiable science.

But what he did is he platformed materialism, and now just after Darwin comes the psychology in America and psychiatry in America. About the time of Darwin, I show in the book a gentleman named Clifford Whittingham Beers. He's a guy from Yale; graduates, goes out to the workforce, has a nervous breakdown, and then is sent to an insane asylum. And he experiences the atrocities of being in an insane asylum in the 19th, 20th century, so just at the turn of the century. He spends about three and a half years there, as I show in the book.

When he gets out, he's on a crusade to really help provide asylum reform to those that are basically stripped of their basic fundamental human rights. Clifford Whittingham Beers starts using the term mental hygiene, and he founds organizations to promote mental hygiene. His recommendation is to imitate Europe and its psychiatric hospitals where neurological and mental diseases can be studied. What he was attempting to do was provide asylum reform and genuine help for the insane. What happened is that he created a category of mental hygiene that would later be turned into mental health, and that conflation of the mind and the brain was at the center point of Beers' recommendations that we need to study mental diseases.

How did we get here? Well, Darwin platformed Beers because now Beers can say, "Let's use a medical doctor to study the mind." And you're confusing the nature of the mind already. The mind is not material. If you're understanding the mind according to the scripture, Romans 12:2, that is that the mind is immaterial. It's the seed of our cognition, our intellect, our thinking. It's immaterial. You can't touch it. Now we're talking about the immaterial mind in material ways using hygienic terminology and health terminology and medical terminology. And what I try to show you is that that couldn't have happened without Darwin. But who made it popular? Beers made it popular. Now he starts four organizations that promote mental health and mental hygiene, and then that turns into this epidemic that really starts in the late '80s, '90s, and then now we are reaping the fruit of the confusion of that.

When you begin to have an unbelieving psychiatrist who's trained in medicine that's trying to help you with your immaterial mind, as a Christian, you're not going to be helped at a fundamental level. You will receive symptom relief; or fruit swapping is what I call it in the book where you're coping and managing symptoms but you're not eradicating the problem. Or for many Christians who are going to unbelieving therapists and psychologists, what's happening is that the therapist and psychologist genuinely does not understand who they are because they do not understand the mind as the Bible talks about the mind; that you're to be renewed in your mind or the state of the mind before you are saved, the change that happens at salvation, the implications of progressive sanctification on your mind.

We've gotten all the way to the point where, as a Christian, I can go to an unbeliever for help with my mind, and yet that unbeliever has an unregenerate mind and doesn't even believe in the mind in the first place. In light of all of that confusion, of course the problem is worsening. That is, in a nutshell, the change. And for the listener who's hearing this, you have to read the book. I show you. I try to demonstrate for you. I articulate those organizations and Beers' statements. And I'm showing you through their words what happened.

HOST: DAVID WHEATON:

You're exactly right; the secular mental health industry sees the human mind as a bunch of chemical synapses firing off rather than an immaterial and eternal soul that God created. They're going to want to treat what they think are physical chemicals with pharmaceutical chemicals. Our guest today is Greg Gifford, and you can order his very compelling book, *Lies My Therapist Told Me*, for a discounted price through The Christian Worldview. It's 336 pages, hardcover, and retails for \$32.99. Our contact information to order will be given during this break. Next, we'll find out how the mind is not the brain and the brain is not the mind. I'm David Wheaton, and you are listening to The Christian Worldview Radio Program.

Our topic today is how the mental health industry Misses the mark, and Greg Gifford, author of *Lies My Therapist Told Me*, is our guest. Greg, you've mentioned just briefly a couple times about the mind not being the same as the brain. I thought this was a very compelling part of the book. You write, "According to the Bible, the mind is not the brain and the brain is not the mind. If you treat them as the same, it will hinder any genuine and lasting help you would offer to people or any help you would receive personally." Going on, "Your mind isn't stuck with so-called diseases that are incurable. Your mind can be transformed through the work of the Holy Spirit. Once you see this, your clarity and understanding people multiplies. God's word, as always, is the light to our path." I want you to explain more this issue of the mind not being the brain and the brain not being the mind and why getting this biblical concept, because it's rooted in scripture, why it's so important.

GUEST: GREG GIFFORD:

This is all I was going to write about basically was the mind and the brain, and the epidemic was ancillary, the mental health stuff was ancillary. Those are not the focus. But I was thinking more of a theology of the mind and the brain because as I studied this literature, I began to see mental disease, mental health, mental illness, and even in modern time, we will say mental illness or mental disorder, but we have no medical evidence that there is a mental issue. There is no lab CT, MRI. There's no medical work being done. And the reason why that's happening is because we've confused the mind and the brain.

As a Christian, here's what we know. First of all, God's word defines who we are. And we're looking for the Bible to be that lens through which we view not only the world but ourselves as part of that world. The Bible describes us as having a mind, and we see that in scriptures like 1 Corinthians 2:16 where we have the mind of Christ as the believer, or we see that in Romans 12:2, that you're to be transformed by the renewing of your mind, or Ephesians 4:23, that you are renewed in the spirit of your mind by the work of God as you put off and you put on the new man.

No Christian who is being just somewhat diligent to the scripture can ignore the fact that the mind is spoken of, and it's spoken of distinctly. I'm not here to make a case for the mind is being separate from your soul or separate from your spirit. I don't believe the Bible draws those delineations. What I would say is that the mind is still a distinct term, though. Grab your lexicon and start to do that work of looking up the places where Jesus says, "Love the Lord, your God, with all your strength, soul, mind. All of your capacities are for glorifying and loving the Lord."

You have that term mind, and in each of those instances, it's immaterial. It's not tangible. That means practically my mind is immaterial. I cannot touch it, I couldn't hold it, I can't study it, I can't put it under a

microscope or in a beaker. That is my mind. I know my mind is the source of my thinking. Why? Because that's what the scripture says, number one. You can read things like Hebrews 4:12, "The word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword," and it is sharp enough to divide the thoughts and intentions of the heart, the inner person. Or in Genesis 6:4, 6:5, the thoughts and intentions of their heart can also be translated as mind when we're talking about the wickedness of Noah's time. We know that your thoughts come from your immaterial person.

When I am brain-dead, my outer man dies, my mind will still be operational. And we know that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. And I will be thinking in the presence of the Lord, 2 Corinthians 5:7, so I walk by faith, not by sight. This tent is going to be put off, my outer man, but yet my inner man will continue to exist forever. As a Christian, we know that, we know that.

What then of the brain? The brain is to be considered an outer person element like a lung, like a kidney, like the organ of your heart. That brain is different from your mind; at least ontologically we know that. And we also know, as I show it in the scripture, that the authors of scripture have the wherewithal... Luke is one of the best examples where he talks about the place of the skull, which is cranium, or where we see that he opens the minds of the disciples. Jesus opens the minds of the disciples in Luke 24. Luke is jumping back and forth, and he says cranium and he says noose or inner person, mind, and he sees them as being separate. As a Christian, you cannot see your brain, the organ of your brain, which is tangible, material, observable, you cannot see the organ of your brain as being the same thing that the Bible calls your mind. They are ontologically different. That's the first stepping point. And that's easy Hermeneutics. That's easy to prove in scripture. Listeners, don't take my word; go study the scripture on this issue, and then you'll be able to see, wait; if the mind is not the same thing as the brain and the secular therapeutic is treating them as if they're the same, then what are the implications of that? And that's where the book continues to go.

HOST: DAVID WHEATON:

That is just very compelling. Greg Gifford with us today on *The Christian Worldview*. You'll hear people say all the time in the mental health industry, Greg, "Well, just like someone has a heart disease, and that needs to be treated, people can have brain problems or diseases of the brain, and therefore they need to be treated with medications as you would treat someone with their organ of their heart or their kidneys or liver." Why is that a fallacy?

GUEST: GREG GIFFORD:

Can a person have a brain disease? Absolutely. Alzheimer's, dementia, those are brain diseases. You can have neurological diseases as well, and there is a category for those. Those are called brain diseases, neurological problems. If you're not careful as a Christian, you think, yeah, mental health is treating the brain. If you start to confuse that, then you don't really know how mental health diagnoses are made. They're not made by studying the organ of the brain and observing deterioration or patterns of neurotransmitters or any empirical science. Mental disorders are diagnosed based off of symptoms, not based off of observable patterns within your brain. What does that mean then? Brain disease is an issue. And even damage to the brain, things that can come through drugs, things that can come through physical trauma, an explosion, an accident, traumatic brain injuries, sports injuries, those are all injuries to the organ of your brain.

Now, you cannot make the leap and then say, "And yes, and that's why I need medication for depression, because I have something wrong with my brain." You've just made a leap. The leap is to now see that depression is coming from your brain. Or do the same thing with ADHD or do the same thing with anxiety. The depression, anxiety, those are the top three mental illnesses. The leap is being made to, well, I'm sad, so I must have a mental illness, thus these meds are helping me, or I'm struggling to focus, thus I must have a mental disorder. That is what ADHD actually means, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. "These meds are what's going to help me."

But the discerning Christian should say, "But wait a minute. What is the problem with my brain? What is the problem with my body?" And if there is no medically verifiable way of saying, "This is indeed a brain issue," then we are talking about your mind. At least give a space to say that this could be a mind issue and not a brain issue. At least begin to say, "Well, hey, if my mind is not being renewed, then what are the implications for my mood?"

Easy example. I wish there was a pill that we could take that would make our thoughts pure. And anytime I say that, usually people are like, "Yeah." Why is there no pill to do such? Because the material pill cannot change my mind. It can't do that. Why is such a pill not created? Because it never will exist. You're never going to take a pill that changes the immaterial thoughts of your mind. Then now if you're not careful, you use brain disease about mental issues when it's not actually a brain issue, it's a mind issue, and you're medicalizing, you're medicating, but you're never going to deal with the root of the issue because you don't fundamentally understand the difference between the mind and the brain. Yes, treat brain disease, get help, see specialists, so forth, but if there's no medical evidence that this is coming from your brain, then at least be open to the fact that this is something that's coming from your mind.

HOST: DAVID WHEATON:

And you write in the book about the brain is actually part of the outer man that is decaying, that will just die someday, whereas the mind is the immaterial part of you and part of your soul, your heart, all this means that the immaterial part of you that lives forever and goes on and lives forever, it's very interesting. Hope I didn't misrepresent that, but that's what I was taking away.

GUEST: GREG GIFFORD:

It's hard for a Christian to get around that. When you read 2 Corinthians 4:16 through 18, the outer man is wasting away as the inner man is being renewed day by day. It's hard to escape that hermeneutically that your brain is deteriorating, and yet your mind is being renewed day by day, so less memory, more Christ-likeness.

HOST: DAVID WHEATON:

Just as an aside to follow up with this, and I'm not sure you address this in the book, but I often talk to my son. He's asked about, "Well, how does your heart think the thoughts of a man's heart? How is the heart intertwined with the immaterial part of us and that the heart can't think?" Or how does that work?

GUEST: GREG GIFFORD:

The question is a good one because it's actually looking through the lens of the scripture and saying, "Well, the Bible says the heart thinks, or the Bible says thoughts are coming from the heart." That's Genesis 6, that's Hebrews 4:12. Your heart has thoughts, which is fascinating.

How does that work? Because your immaterial heart, it does not correspond to your brain. When God gave us our soul, when God gave us our inner person... Some people will divide between soul and spirit. When God gave us our inner person, that is the source of our thinking and our thinking doesn't come from our body, it comes from our immaterial inner person. How does that happen? Because that's the way God designed for it to happen, and that's what the scripture says happens. As a Christian, there's no debate on where your thoughts come from. We could debate how much does your body encourage those thoughts? But there's not really any debate on where do your actual thoughts come from.

HOST: DAVID WHEATON:

Greg Gifford again with us today on *The Christian Worldview*. The book is *Lies My Therapist Told Me*. An interesting aspect of your book is you write about how you went to a psychiatrist, a secular psychiatrist just to see. You didn't lie or anything; you just went there. And you wanted to see how that would typically work. You write this. You say, "Psychiatrists are pastors who can write prescriptions. They make worldview decisions with no medical proof of their decisions, and perhaps even prescribe medicine throughout the process." Read carefully my next statement, how could there not be a mental health epidemic when we have medical doctors employing arbitrary diagnoses to, quote, "help" people while lacking any medical proof, as you've been discussing? Psychiatry is as much medical science as is a shaman practicing in their village, like witchcraft. Perhaps less so, actually, than the shaman. Tell us about your experience and what that was like going to a secular psychiatrist.

GUEST: GREG GIFFORD:

Yeah, it was part of the research and writing of the book. I wanted to experience firsthand what it was like to go to a psychiatrist. In my medical network. It had screening and multiple screenings to be able to make it through. I had to go to a cognitive behavioral therapist, complete multiple surveys. They're looking for extreme tendencies, homicidal, suicidal. And my commitment was I'm not an actor, I'm not like Matt Walsh undercover and trying to expose something, that I would just go as Greg Gifford and I would accurately describe my life and see what comes of it. I wondered would I receive a label or a medication or something like that at the end? I didn't go in saying wacky things like, "I see dead people." Or I didn't want to trap the psychiatrist where they're put in a must diagnose situation. I have a transcript of that as one of the appendices in the book.

Generally speaking, what happened is it took a while to go through the screening process; upwards of about a month, month and a half, and I was scheduled to meet with the psychiatrist in person, but the day before was notified that they had health concerns and so they wanted to meet via telehealth. A psychiatrist is a trained medical doctor. I don't know how much the listeners are familiar with this, but just think of any other medical doctor in years of experience in medical school, national and state licensing. This is a legitimate medical doctor who is not practicing medicine.

And when I met with this doctor, she was very kind. She was more like a counselor asking questions about my life, my family, my job, and she really started to hone in on pressures at work as being a huge factor in my life at that point. She would ask questions like, "How much are you sleeping?" But she didn't connect the dots to my then I think he was about one and a half year old youngest son. I wasn't sleeping well, but also had a one and a half year old. She missed some very overt facts. But in our time together, she didn't call for lab work. I didn't do any type of CT or MRI scanning. She didn't even use a stethoscope and observe any of my vital signs. This was all telehealth, so the only thing she could see is basically my sternum to the top of my head. That's all she could see. Notice what did not happen. She did not do any

type of medical science on me. Maybe I was morbidly obese, maybe my vitals were whack, maybe my cholesterol was high. She didn't know any of that. She didn't know anything about the organ of my brain.

At the end of the interview, more of I guess a consultation it felt like, she said, "Okay, well, I think you do have mild depression and signs of anxiety, so we can take two routes here. One is that you can go to a therapist or the other route is that I could give you medication." I thought to me, when I assess what would most people ask for in that moment? I wondered how many people would say, "You know what? I'd like to try therapy before I try medication." But I didn't want to lead her, so I just said, "Well, what do you recommend?" And she said, "Well, I think you should try cognitive behavioral therapy, and then if you still would like the medications, I can give them to you."

But, David, notice the arbitrary nature of what just happened. Never even saw this psychiatrist in person. She never did any medical testing on my body to include my brain. And then we end that meeting by saying, "You have mild depression and symptoms of anxiety," something like that. Now we're using these medical sounding labels from a medical doctor, but there's no medical evidence that this is actually a problem of my body to include my brain.

Then what happens is it's like, oh my goodness, think of the Christian that's there and they're confused and they're really just opening up their soul to this psychiatrist and looking for a description of who they are. Your psychiatrist, you have to be clear on this. They're medical doctors that are making worldview calls. Most of what psychiatry is doing is what pastors have historically been doing, but the difference is now that we think that psychiatrists are in some way authoritative because of their medical training when in fact they're not practicing empirical medicine. There is no hard medicine that they're practicing. The Christian has to at least be discerning, and I'm hoping skeptical because now when you receive that label, are you going to believe what that psychiatrist has said about you, even though they've done no medical testing to actually diagnose you with that seemingly medical illness?

That was my experience in general. And again, she was a kind person, it's nothing against her personally or psychiatrists personally, but I left that meeting. And that's what I told a buddy. I said, "Hey, look, they're more like pastors making worldview calls, and they can prescribe medicine." This is not medicine. This is not medical science at its finest. That's something that I think all Christians should give consideration to.

HOST: DAVID WHEATON:

What a troubling account of how the mental health industry works. And there's nothing unique about your story. It's happening every day, and far worse when powerful drugs are being administered, especially to kids. Our guest today is Greg Gifford. You can order his book, *Lies My Therapist Told Me*, for a discounted price through *The Christian Worldview*. It's 336 pages hardcover and retails for \$32.99.

Greg, you devote a large portion of the book on what God prescribes for us to have our minds renewed. And you start with really how the gospel and progressive sanctification, these kinds of things that are right there in scripture that God has designed for us to be right with Him or right with each other and so forth, be of sound mind. You say, "Don't separate so-called mental health from the role of salvation incapacitating the mind. According to the Bible, the mind is not unhealthy, it is darkened, it is futile and in need of renewal apart from salvation by Christ alone. The mind is depraved in its natural state. It's

opposed to God. It's hardened," you write. "Salvation has everything to do with the mind, that immaterial part of us."

Then you have four bullet points. You have a little chart in there. You say, "Before salvation, the mind is corrupt, futile, depraved, and hardened." Okay, the next bullet is, "At salvation, the mind is capacitated." And you can explain what that word means in a second. And then the next bullet, "During progressive sanctification," so after one has been born again, the mind is progressively transformed." There's Romans chapter 12, verse 1 and 2. And then the fourth bullet point, "At glorification, when you die, the mind is perfected for the believer."

Greg, I thought this was very interesting how the gospel and progressive sanctification is the answer to problems of our mind. Explain why that is the case, but also the case that you can be a believer. You hear about believers who go into kinds of, quote, unquote, "depression." What is taking place there?

GUEST: GREG GIFFORD:

The way that a Christian should start to consider is, okay, if you're just open to looking through the lens of scripture about your mind, the way the Bible describes the mind apart from Christ is not pretty. And those terms, blind, corrupted, darkened, deceitful, depraved, defiled, futile, hardened, sick, apart from the work of regeneration, every Christian should see that your mind is not well, it is darkened. The closest you're going to get to medical terminology is sickness in Jeremiah 17. But that is talking about sin, it's not talking about medical health. When you see who you are, then you recognize that mental health is really, it's too small, it's not enough.

I use the illustration I'm a car guy. I enjoy cars. It's like I don't need to be washed and waxed; I need a total rehab. My mind is broken, distorted, corrupted apart from Christ. And that's exactly what the gospel does. At the moment of salvation, it's not like you're just given the wash-wax job but your mind was generally okay, you're given a new mind. And that mind of Christ that is imparted to believers, that is what is unique because before, you were hardened and your mind was antithetical to Christ, but when God, the spirit, regenerates you, what He does is He actually gives you the mind of Jesus. Now, Philippians 2, you think like Jesus, verse 5.

That progression is before salvation, I'm darkened, corrupted, defiled. At salvation, the mind is capacitated, meaning given the capacities, meaning made alive, meaning born again, John 3. That's what happened to your mind. Progressive sanctification means my mind is growing in conformity to the mind of Christ. I am increasing in Christ-likeness at the level of my mind. And we mentioned 2 Corinthians 4 earlier, but verse 16, your inner man and your outer man differences that my inner man is being renewed day by day. That's progressive sanctification.

When you connect the dots to depression or to anxiety or to ADHD, there's no medical evidence for these issues and you've gone to an actual medical doctor, a general practitioner, and you've ruled out through lab work through scans that there does not seem to be anything wrong with your body, then you really need to start to focus on the mind. What are you thinking about? What are you putting your hopes in? Something constantly on the replay reel of your mind. Are you struggling with bitterness? Did circumstances disappoint you? Those are all mind issues.

Instead of just immediately assuming there's something wrong with my brain when there's no medical evidence that that's true, I need to at least shift to what's going on in my mind that could be contributing to depression or anxiety? Or you could go through the other mental illnesses. When I understand the mind biblically, then I'm going to be able to biblically assess what's being called depression and anxiety or mental illnesses. But if I don't understand the mind biblically and how the mind is changed biblically, then I'm not going to understand how to deal with the PTSDs, the ADHDs, and anxieties of the world because I have no clue who I am or what the process of change actually looks like.

HOST: DAVID WHEATON:

Greg, no doubt there are listeners tuning in today who are immersed in the mental health, quote, unquote, "therapeutic therapists," psychiatric culture, perhaps taking medications for mental health and so forth, and they're professing believers as well. And so this is probably jarring in a way. Wait now, this is very, very different than I have been told by the medical community and others. Even within the church, this is very different than I think a lot in the church would say. If you have a mental health problem, you go to see a psychologist or a psychiatrist. You need mental help. What is your advice for someone listening today who's been immersed in that culture as to the steps to get away from really treating the wrong thing, as you write about in your book?

GUEST: GREG GIFFORD:

I think first of all, I would just appeal to the person who they've been entrenched and to the secular therapeutic, and some against their own will. Some of the listeners here, their parents took them at a young age, and ever since they were in junior high, they've self-conceptualized with therapeutic terms, ADHD, depression, PTSD. And I want you to know that I don't fault you and I don't think that that's something that you are rebelliously pursuing. I think inwardly, you probably wonder is this something you're stuck with or can there be change? And what you're hearing from the therapist and the psychiatrist is, "Let's learn to cope and to manage your symptoms." And it can be hopeless, honestly. Some of you have been meeting with counselors and therapists for years, not two years, but six and seven years. And you're wondering is this what my life looks like? And I would encourage you to just be open. The skeptical, the desire for something better, it actually exists. And inwardly, I don't think anybody wants to meet with a therapist for the rest of their life and to take psychotropics the rest of their life. That's not our desire. We settle into that. We accept it over time, but we don't pursue that as what life and thriving in life looks like.

You've tried the secular therapeutic, and then I would say you're stuck and you're looking for answers, the Bible actually talks about these things in superior ways sometimes. Our vision of the Bible is very small and it's cutesy-wootsy like Sunday school kindergarten stuff, like we talk about Jonah and the big fish, but I'm struggling with depression and I really need a professional's help, and the Bible doesn't talk about that. I would actually argue contrary to that, that the Bible, it is this vast lens through which we see everything. And the Bible actually has answers to what are being called mental illnesses.

My encouragement would be the secular therapeutic, it has you stuck, and you're coping, but the Bible says that you can actually be free of those things and that you can have a peace that passes understanding, that passes what you can think about, passes your mental capacities. And that sounds really nice. It sounds really nice to not be identified by my label or it sounds really nice to not be stuck with medicine and a therapist for the rest of my life. And if you're open to it, start to explore what the Bible says. Start to read this book. Start to research biblical counseling or biblical counseling about the

topic that you are really intrigued with. And what you'll see is the Bible, it's not reductionistic, it's not just trying to pray something away and rebuke Satan and depression. No. Some of those are reductionistic means of treating complex problems. But the Bible has the complex answers to the complex problems that we face. The Bible is better. And if you're open to learning, the Bible answers those questions, not in an adequate way, but in a superior way. That's my encouragement. If you've been therapized and stuck in this therapeutic vicious cycle, just be open to what the Bible could say, and I think you will find even experientially the Bible has better answers.

HOST: DAVID WHEATON:

Amen to that, Greg. I just appreciate your ending our conversation that way, just holding the truth of God's word. It comes from God, and therefore it's all sufficient to help any of the immaterial problems of our mind and our heart that we are struggling with. Thank you so much for coming on *The Christian Worldview*, Greg, and for taking the time, the thought and the study of God's word to write this book, *Lies My Therapist Told Me*. And we just wish all of God's best and grace to you and your family.

GUEST: GREG GIFFORD:

Thank you, David.

HOST: DAVID WHEATON:

It's so true that regeneration, being born again spiritually as Jesus commanded through repentant faith in the person and the work of Christ on your behalf, and then progressive sanctification through God's ordinary means that He provides, studying His word, hearing it preached by sound teachers, prayer, fellowship in a local body of believers, this is the only true and lasting solution to be of sound mind. Listen to God's word in Romans chapter 12, verses 1 and 2. "Therefore, I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." Did you see that? There's a material part of us, our bodies that should be presented to God for a life of worship of Him. And for the Christian, our material bodies house our immaterial soul and spirit, which includes our minds which can be changed and sanctified to think and live as God intends. What good news. Be saved today and walk with Christ on the road to sanctification.

Again, you can order Greg Gifford's book, *Lies My Therapist Told Me*, for a discounted price through *The Christian Worldview*. It's 336 pages, hardcover, and retails for \$32.99. You can order at our website, over the phone, or through the mail. Our contact information to order will be given in just a moment. And for those who order The 1916 Project DVD, we still haven't received them yet, but we'll ship them right away when we get them.

Thank you for joining us today in *The Christian Worldview* and for your support of this nonprofit radio ministry. Next weekend, Pastor Joel Beeke will join us to discuss how to lead your family in light of Father's Day coming up. And the Overcomer course is approaching quickly on June 20th and 21st. Just a reminder to encourage the young adults in your life to attend. Details at our website, TheChristianWorldview.org. Let's remember that Jesus Christ and His word are the same yesterday and today and forever. Until next time, think biblically, live accordingly, and stand firm.

The mission of The Christian Worldview is to sharpen the biblical worldview of Christians and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. We hope today's broadcast encouraged you toward that end. To hear a replay of today's program, order a transcript, or find out what must I do to be saved, go to TheChristianWorldview.org or call toll-free 1-888-646-2233. The Christian Worldview is a listener-supported, nonprofit radio ministry furnished by the Overcomer Foundation. To make a donation, order resources, become a Christian Worldview partner, sign up for our weekly email or The Christian Worldview Journal monthly print publication or to contact us, go to TheChristianWorldview.org, call 1-888-646-2233, or write to Box 401, Excelsior, Minnesota. 55331. Thanks for listening to The Christian Worldview.