

Mental health or illnesses in the Bible ?

Could we misunderstand behaviors and labels...

Voddie Baucham video

Elijah – depression

Daniel, Ezekiel, and John saw visions– could be labeled schizophrenia

Job – depression

Paul – murders and ptsd

Jesus – garden of Gethsemane is classic anxiety , weeping over Lazarus and then rejoicing (bipolar?)

Psalms – express depression

Presuppositions from Christians have changed–

Psychology 101- almost everyone takes this in college, and these ideas are accepted and integrated into society and the medical community.

Overdiagnosis is common place in our culture including bi-polar, anxiety, depression, add, ptsd, and the blanket label of “chemical imbalance”

Drug commercials (capitalism) have over saturated our normal thinking.

The person with the psychology degree in murder mystery movies is always the “go to” , “all knowing one”.

Destigmatization has been the new “badge” of our issues. Now we are free to be labeled, medicated and released from the responsibility of sins.

“The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.” [Ps. 34:18](#)

He was there in the good days and in the dark days too. He didn't condemn them for their questions and pain. He didn't tell them to just tough it out. He reached down to their deepest pit of suffering, and lifted them out.

He cared. He showed compassion. He offered mercy. He brought hope. He instilled purpose. He gave victory. And He still works in the same way today.

David was troubled and battled deep despair. In many of the Psalms, he writes of his anguish, loneliness, fear of the enemy, his heart-cry over sin, and the guilt he struggled with because of it. We also see his huge grief in the loss of his sons in [2 Samuel 12:15-23](#) and [18:33](#). In other places, David's honesty with his own weaknesses gives hope to us who struggle today:

Elijah was discouraged, weary, and afraid. After great spiritual victories over the prophets of Baal, this mighty man of God feared and ran for his life, far away from the threats of Jezebel. And there in the desert, he sat down and prayed, defeated and worn:

“I have had enough Lord, he said. Take my life, I am not better than my ancestors.” [1 Kings 19:4](#)

Jonah was angry and wanted to run away. After God called Jonah to go to Nineveh to preach to the people, he fled as far away as could. And after a storm at sea, being swallowed by a giant fish, and then being saved and given a second chance, he obeyed. He preached God's message to the people of Nineveh. God's mercy reached out to all people who turned to Him. But instead of rejoicing, Jonah got mad:

“Now O Lord, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live.” [Jonah 4:3](#)

And even after God reached out to Jonah again with great compassion, he responded, *“...I am angry enough to die.” [Jonah 4:9](#)*

Job suffered through great loss, devastation, and physical illness. This righteous man of God lost literally everything. So great was his suffering and tragedy that even his own wife said, *“Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die!” [Job 2:9](#)*

Though Job maintained his faithfulness to God throughout his life, he still struggled deeply through the trenches of pain:

“Why did I not perish at birth, and die as I came from the womb?” [Job 3:11](#)

“I have no peace, no quietness, I have no rest, but only turmoil.” [Job 3:26](#)

“I loathe my very life, therefore I will give free rein to my complaint and speak out in the bitterness of my soul.” [Job 10:1](#)

“Terrors overwhelm me...my life ebbs away, days of suffering grip me. Night pierces my bones, my gnawing pains never rest.” [Job 30:15-17](#)

Moses was grieved over the sin of his people. In his feelings of anger and betrayal from his own people, Moses, as a leader, was about ready to quit. He came down from his mountaintop experience with God, commandments in hand, only to find the Israelites in complete chaos and sin. His heart-cry to God on their behalf was desperate:

“But now, please forgive their sin – but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written.” [Ex. 32:32](#)

Jeremiah wrestled with great loneliness, feelings of defeat, and insecurity. Also known as the weeping prophet, Jeremiah suffered from constant rejection by the people he loved and reached out to. God had called him to preach, yet forbidden him to marry and have children. He lived alone, he ministered alone, he was poor, ridiculed, and rejected by his people. In the midst of it, he displayed great spiritual faith and strength, and yet we also see his honesty as he wrestled with despair and a great sense of failure:

“Cursed be the day I was born...why did I ever come out of the womb to see trouble and sorrow and to end my days in shame?” [Jer. 20:14,18](#)

Even Jesus Himself was deeply anguished over what lay before Him. He knew what was to come. He knew that God had called him to a journey of great suffering, he knew what must happen in order for us to live truly free. Our Savior and Lord was willing to pay the price on our behalf, but it wasn't an easy road. Isaiah prophesied that Christ would be *“a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.” [Is. 53:3](#)*

We can be assured, that in whatever we face, Jesus understands our weakness and suffering, our greatest times of temptation and despair, because he too traveled that road, yet without sin. In the garden, through the night, Jesus prayed, all alone, calling out to His Father, asking Him for another way:

“And He said to them, 'My soul is deeply grieved to the point of death; remain here and keep watch.' And He went a little beyond them, and fell to the ground and began to pray that if it were possible, the hour might pass Him by. And He was saying, 'Abba! Father! All things are possible for You; remove this cup from Me; yet not what I will, but what You will.'” [Mark 14:34-36](#)

The Bible says that so great was his anguish, that he sweat *“drops of blood.” [Luke 22:44](#)*

The terms *sociopath* and *psychopath* do not appear in the Bible. However, the Bible does mention behaviors that are characteristic of those that today are described by the nearly synonymous terms *sociopathic* and *psychopathic*.

In today's criminal and psychological literature, a sociopath or psychopath is identified as one who is characterized by extreme self-centeredness and immaturity, shallow emotions (including reduced fear, a lack of empathy and remorse, low tolerance for stress, and little response to positive motivations), cold-heartedness, superficial charm, irresponsibility, impulsivity, criminality, a parasitic lifestyle and a desire to manipulate others. A psychopath is one who compulsively performs criminally selfish acts with no apparent conscience or concern about the welfare of his victims.

The Bible identifies such sociopathic and psychopathic behavior as among the severest moral and spiritual effects of man's fall into sin. Jesus described such sins as arising from evil hearts ([Mark 7:20–23](#)). The apostle Paul identified godlessness as the root of such a deadly heart ([Romans 1:28–32](#)). The sociopathic heart produces the worst characteristics of sinful man's nature ([Romans 8:5–8](#)), the worst effects of both genetic and environmental moral degradation. Early in human history, God wiped out all but eight people because of such universally incorrigible behavior ([Genesis 6:5–13](#)). [Deuteronomy 21:18–21](#) prescribes for the Old Testament nation of Israel the legal consequence of such behavior: execution by stoning. Apparently, such behavior was considered by God to be so disruptive and damaging to the family and to society, so contrary to the character of the people that bore His name and supposedly reflected His image, as to be intolerable.

The New Testament does not offer specifics on civic dealing with these serious problems. Its teachings about morality and immorality of every kind, and its hopeful appeals and invitations to repentance, conversion, and transformed life in Christ, certainly apply to a psychopath as to any sinner. Paul, describing conduct that included sociopathic characteristics, wrote to one congregation of believers in Jesus Christ, "Such were some of you" ([1 Corinthians 6:9–11](#), emphasis added). God is able to rescue and restore to righteousness the most corrupt heart. See [Ephesians 4:24](#); [Colossians 3:1–17](#); [Romans 7](#); [Romans 8:1–17](#) and [28–30](#).