

Course Synthesis Paper Assignment

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Author Note

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I have no known conflict of interest to disclose.

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Introduction

The debate about the relationship between Christianity and psychology is a continuous issue, which began in the early centuries of the history of the Church (Entwistle, 2011). Attempting to find the right balance between both viewpoints is something that some Christian therapists wrestle with today. Much thought and discussion has taken place as how to maintain the inerrancy of the Word of God along with the “work” God has created in the practice of psychology. Through much study, discipline, reflection, and intentionality, Christian therapists can offer to both believers and non-believers professional counseling services that integrate psychology and Christianity, while maintaining the true essence of both viewpoints. With this in mind, effectiveness in professional counseling can take place when the Christian therapist understands that psychology and Christianity are complimentary and can be used in conjunction with each other to help alleviate issues that clients might experience in their lives. The autonomy of the client can be respected while, at the same time, presenting services that reflect one’s belief and faith, as long as it is welcomed by the client.

Analysis & Synthesis

The goal of this paper is to not only critically analyze but to also synthesize the information presented in Grudem’s (2022) *Bible Doctrine: Essential Teachings of the Christian faith* and Entwistle’s (2021) *Integrative Approaches to Psychology and Christianity (4th Edition)*. Within this section, I will reflect upon the various viewpoints discussed within both texts, while sharing how each viewpoint can be practically used within the counseling setting. Based on this content, this paper will reflect a strong Integrationist approach to counseling and will include a

treatment plan for Mr. & Mrs. Jones as a couple and as individuals and for their family as a whole and as individuals.

Systematic Theology

In *Bible Doctrine: Essential Teachings of the Christian faith*, Wayne Grudem (2022) introduced and explained to the reader about the importance of systematic theology and its parallelism with the term doctrine, which both refer to the teaching(s) of the Bible about a specific topic or subject. Doctrines, which can be either very broad or very narrow, can be very impactful upon our thinking and can be categorized as either major or minor. Studying systematic theology, as well as doctrines, is important and essential because we learn and are able to teach others about the essence of the Bible and its commandments, in order that we can live authentic, relevant, purposeful, and obedient lives as Christians and believers.

Overall, studying and engaging with systematic theology must be approached with all humility, intentionality, prayer, praise & worship, and assistance from other believers (Grudem, 1999). My goal, as a believer, is to embrace and engage with systematic theology and Biblical doctrines with these elements in mind. II Timothy 2:15 states, “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth” (NIV, 2011). This Scripture helps me to understand the importance of studying systematic theology and Biblical doctrines, which helps me to better share God’s Word correctly with both believers and unbelievers.

The Doctrine of the Word of God

II Timothy 3:16 says, “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness...” (NIV, 2011). Grudem discussed about the importance of viewing the Bible as authoritative and inerrant. He presented various Scriptural passages or writings, which referred to these writings as the words of God, and shared how these words become alive within our hearts through the work of the Holy Spirit, who gives us inner peace that the Lord, indeed, is speaking to us (Grudem, 2022). It is important to believe that God inspired men to write the Bible and that what is presented within the Bible is what God wanted us to know, practice, live, and share. This points to the authority of God’s Word, and while there are some areas of the Bible that we might not be able to explain or to understand, Grudem (2022) encouraged believers to continuously pray for understanding, wisdom, and the Holy Spirit’s guidance during those times. I am personally encouraged by John 14:26, which states, “But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you” (NIV, 2011). God’s Word, in my life, is infallible and continues to be a source of guidance, strength, and light, and I approach God’s Word with all humility and prayer. When I do not know something, I pray for the Holy Spirit to lead and guide me into all truth.

The Doctrine of God

All aspects about the Doctrine of God are examined. Grudem first explored God’s character and essence. He began by discussing the “inner sense” that people throughout the Bible have experienced concerning God’s presence. He then discussed God’s presence as notated in Scripture and as expressed and experienced in nature. Two important facts that Grudem (2022) shared were our finiteness in not being able to fully comprehend God but, on the other hand, our

ability to know things about God, as written in Scripture. He also shared in detail about God's attributes, which allude to His omnipotence, independence, etc. Grudem also discussed about the Trinity and how God provided a blueprint for the family to operate via the diversity of the Trinity, as well as an in-depth look at the six important facts about the doctrine of the Trinity.

God's role in the creation account was also explored, and Grudem discussed about modern science and Scripture, a relationship that often conflicted but, in the end, shows the power, awesomeness, and sovereignty of God (Grudem, 2022). Grudem next discussed about God's providence, which could be seen in the acts (or works) of preservation and concurrence. Ephesians 1:11 says, "In Him, we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of Him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of His will..." (NIV, 2011). Grudem also discussed about God, His purpose for prayer, and the effects of an effective prayer life, which is ultimately available to us, as believers, through Jesus Christ. Finally, Grudem discussed about God's purpose for angels, Satan, and demons and how we, as believers, should currently view Satan and demons.

Philippians 4:7 says, "And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (NIV, 2011). As it pertains to the doctrine of God, I, first, recognize that God is infinite and that I am a finite being. I will never know more than my Creator. I might not be able to fully explain this phenomenon, but I have personally experienced and still experience God in my life. He gives me joy and a peace that this world cannot take away (John 14:27; 16:22). I also experience and see God's work in nature. Like the wind, I cannot see Him, but I know that He exists and is there. One of my favorite Scriptures is Jeremiah 29:11, and I believe that God has a plan for my life and that everything happens for my good and for His ultimate plan. With this in mind, I remain humble and prayerful; knowing that

God has all authority over Satan, demons, and anything that I might face. This gives me hope, peace, and a “Blessed Assurance” that God is in control. I just simply pray and yield to Him and to His leading in my life, which is Scriptural and encouraging.

The Doctrine of Man

Before beginning his discussion about the doctrine of man, Grudem (2022) began by stating his reasons for continuing to use/refer to *man* when referring to *mankind* (as a whole) and to the male species rather than using gender-neutral terminology like *humanity/humankind*, which is based off of the terminology used in Scriptural passages (like Genesis 5:1-2; 2:22, 25) and denotes God’s original intention of the male/female role (theological significance).

Glorifying God is ultimately the major intention and purpose of life, according to Biblical text, and man was made in God’s *image*, as well as *likeness*; an aspect that Grudem referred to as meaning “similar but not identical” (Grudem, 2022). The author also spoke about how man can evolve more into God’s *image* and *likeness* due to the redeeming work in and through Christ, as well as specific attributes, which support this notion.

Grudem (2022) also discussed about another important aspect about the doctrine of man, which involves *man* as “male and female” and their equality in significance, personhood, and duties within the church. The author shared about how this role and distinction can be seen in the various roles of the Trinity and how this reflection should encourage men and women to honor and work with each other, as well as encourage family members how to work with each other (relationships) for God’s glory and purpose in roles, which are Biblically supported. He briefly shared viewpoints amongst evangelicals concerning the teaching and governing roles of men and women in the church (egalitarians and complementarians).

Finally, sin, original sin, and the ramifications of sin, including inherited guilt, affect mankind due to Adam's original sin. Grudem (2022) also presented Biblical teaching about sins' degrees of seriousness, which should encourage holiness and discourage willful and continuous sinning because we should be able to distinguish between right and wrong. What is important and crucial to remember is that Jesus became our propitiation and sacrifice for sin by His blood that He shed on the cross. Romans 3:25 says, "God presented Him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in His blood..." (NIV, 2011).

There are so many aspects to this doctrine about man that are crucial to never forget. First, we have been created in God's image. God created man first and then the female. Though of equal importance, both have different roles, and I agree with a complementarian viewpoint; however, I do acknowledge that God is able to use whomever God wants to use, as seen in the life of Deborah (female judge and prophet) in Judges 4 & 5. Overall, it is important that we do not try to change the meanings of words, like *man/mankind*, used in Scripture. We have to observe the contextual significance of the language used. We must also seek holiness and righteousness, remember the sacrifice Jesus made on the cross for us, and forsake a sinful lifestyle.

The Doctrine of Christ

Our faith is built upon the premises of Jesus' virginal birth, the atonement, and His resurrection and ascension. Grudem presented an exact and Scriptural and supportive basis for Jesus' humanity and Deity. Concerning God's wrath toward mankind, Jesus had to face His Father's anger/wrath because His Father's justice needed some kind of way to pay the penalty due to sin (Grudem, 2022). Grudem also presented a Scriptural basis for the atonement. John

3:16 states that “God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son” (NIV, 2011). If we believe on Jesus, we will be saved. Christ’s death took care of four important needs for mankind, which are as follow: sacrifice, propitiation, reconciliation, and redemption (Grudem, 2022).

Concerning Jesus’ resurrection, we can become “alive in Christ” because of this new power, which enables us to not only participate in Christian ministry but also to also live obediently as Christians (Grudem, 2022). Concerning His ascension, we are encouraged to live holy and to continue with our journey/this race so that we will be reunited and join our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in Heaven and in heavenly places with authority, as seen in John 14:3; Hebrews 12:1-2; Ephesians 6:12; & Revelations 3:21.

One of my favorite verses is John 3:17, which says, “For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him” (NIV, 2011). My faith is built upon the entire premise of Jesus’ birth, death, resurrection, and ascension. At the lowest points in my life, I am encouraged because Jesus understands our trials, pains, and temptations but did not sin (II Corinthians 5:21). He is fully God but, while in the flesh, had a human soul, as well as emotions (Grudem, 2022). Jesus understands our struggle(s) with sin but created a bridge for us to have dominion over sin and to come into right standing with God the Father through the Holy Spirit. Mankind has been redeemed. Because Jesus Christ lives, I can face tomorrow and can live; not as one without hope but as one who hopes and continues to run this race with all perseverance.

The Doctrine of the Application of Redemption

Within this doctrine, Grudem shared about common grace and about the order of salvation, as seen in the following concepts: election; the Gospel call; regeneration; conversion

(fall and repentance); justification and adoption; sanctification; perseverance; and death, the intermediate state, and glorification. He compared and contrasted God's common grace (God's total blessings for everyone that are not a part of the process of salvation) and God's saving grace (God's drawing grace toward salvation); noting that God's common grace differs regarding the results, recipients, source, and the way it maneuvers indirectly from the redemptive work of Christ (Grudem, 2022). Concerning election (Acts 13:28), Grudem gave Scriptural reasons for this concept and explored New Testament teachings about this, as well as misunderstandings and objections surrounding this concept.

As it relates to the Gospel call, we must understand the important relationship between prayer and effective evangelism and that this call involves not only our intellects and emotions but also our wills (Grudem, 2022). Through the act of regeneration, which is regarded as passive, instantaneous, and occurs before effective calling, God the Father and God the Holy Spirit powerfully make us "alive" (Grudem, 2022). Repentance, which involves comprehending intellectually; embracing Scripture about sin emotionally; and deciding personally and genuinely to renounce sin, and faith, which is the result of the actions of repentance and the choice to trust in Jesus as Savior, are two elements of conversion (Grudem, 2022).

As believers, we become justified (legal terminology) and adopted because God has imputed Jesus Christ's righteousness to us, and while we have been given this grace, we must continuously walk in the grace of God because Jesus did the work for us. It is not because of anything that we have done (Romans 3:21-22). Continuously walking in the grace of God can be reflective of sanctification, which happens to be an internal and continuous state that affects every facet of man's essence and intellect (Grudem, 2022). Philippians 2:12 discusses about

working on our salvation with not only fear but trembling, and our authentic lives as Christians are evident by continuing in the faith (Colossians 1:23). Finally, there are different ways for us to view death, which ultimately can reflect on the fallen world in which we live; a process to mold us more into Christ; to bring us into God's presence; and to glorify God (Grudem, 2022).

As a child of God, there are some things that I cannot explain. One of those surrounds the concept of election and personally feeling chosen by God. Like Grudem wrote, I am in awe of God's grace and recognize that my salvation is only because of God's grace, which encourages me to serve Him more humbly and to praise and worship Him with everything that is within me. In Matthew 22:37, Jesus replied, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind" (NIV, 2011). I renew my mind, put on Christ, and give thanks daily; walk with all humility; glorify God with everything that is within me; and guard my heart with all diligence, in order that I might stay true to my faith and to this Christian journey (Ephesians 4:23-24; Micah 6:8; I Corinthians 10:31; Proverbs 4:23). Concerning death, I am encouraged by Jeremiah 29:11, which assures me that God has a plan for my life that includes hope and a future, and by II Timothy 1:7, which reminds me that God has not given me a spirit of fear but that of power, love, and self-discipline (NIV, 2011).

The Doctrine of the Church

Grudem (2022) discussed, compared, and contrasted the "invisible church" (God's outlook on the church, in which only He sees the state of their spirits and hearts) and "the visible church" (people seen in church, without knowledge of their hearts and intentions toward God). It has been suggested that the Church has the following primary purposes: ministry to God (worship); ministry to believers (nurture); and ministry to the world (evangelism and mercy).

(Grudem, 2022). Colossians 3:16 tells us to sing and give thanks to God through spiritual songs, hymns, and songs (worship). We are to encourage one another as we mature in Christ (nurture). Furthermore, we are to become like Christ, love our neighbors as we love ourselves, and win souls for Christ through God's love and mercy (evangelism and mercy), as seen in the Great Commission in Matthew 28: 18-20. According to the author, all three aspects are equally important, and neither aspect should be neglected. We are reminded that the church has spiritual power ("divine power") or weapons that eliminate strongholds (II Corinthians 10:4). Finally, the author discussed in depth about the 12 significant doctrinal differences between Roman Catholics and Protestants, baptism, the Lord's Supper (symbolizes Christ's death, our partaking in the benefits of His death, spiritual nourishment, and unification of believers), and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which are given to equip the saints to fulfill ministry until either Christ returns or we return back to God (Grudem, 2022).

As believers, it is of utmost importance to understand the Church's importance, significance, and spiritual powers, as discussed also in Ephesians 6. We must walk in this power, must understand that God is looking at our hearts, as well as our actions, and must understand and comprehend the doctrinal truths associated with the Church in today's modern times, as well as the sacraments associated with the Church. Grudem believes that baptism is not required for salvation but is done out of obedience to Christ. Concerning gifts of the Holy Spirit, a big takeaway for me is that the Holy Spirit will greatly convict my heart if a message is honestly from God. I allow the Holy Spirit to comfort, teach, and lead me.

The Doctrine of the Future

In this section, Grudem discussed about how and when Christ will return, as well as issues about the specific details of His return. The millennium was also explored, and great detail was given about what that process looks like for Amillennialists, Postmillennialists, Classic Premillennialists, and Pretribulation Premillennialists. Grudem wrote that he supported the concept that Christ will return after the tribulation, based upon Scriptural texts. Concerning final judgement and eternal punishment, Grudem wrote that believers would be judged in order to evaluate and receive various levels of rewards and that unbelievers will receive eternal punishment (John 5:24). Grudem (2022) believes that this should morally influence the following effects: a fulfillment of an inward necessity for justice in our community; an ability to freely forgive people; a motivation to live a righteous life; and a huge motivation to evangelize. Concerning the new heavens and the new earth, the writer explored concepts pertaining to living with God in an actual place and not just a matter of the mind, as well as living with Him in His presence and in all of his glory. We shall not only worship Him but will also see His face (Revelation 22:3-4). Personally, I want to focus on living a righteous and an obedient life, so that I can hear the Lord say, "Well done, good and faithful servant!" (Matthew 25:21; NIV, 2011). My mind cannot fathom what it will feel like to live in God's presence for all eternity.

History of Integration

In *Integrative approaches to psychology and Christianity* (4th ed.), Entwistle (2021), first introduced to the reader about a debate or conversation, which predates to the early Church, and how they wrestled with accepting or rejecting Greek philosophy (secular learning). The issues appear to be the nature of their relationship, if they can co-exist, and which one is more important than the other. Entwistle shared and provided examples about issues concerning

integrating secular thinking and Christian thinking; religious thinking and COVID-19 thinking; and psychology and the Christian faith. This writer made an interesting point that both views of thinking can be done positively or negatively but yet agreed that a Christian outlook or worldview can serve as a guiding model to engage secular thinking, as well as a way to interact with all aspects of life (Entwistle, 2021). It appears that the overarching ideas that Entwistle (2021) wanted the reader to understand is that both viewpoints are actually complementary, that these thoughts will always have an element of tension, that both views are necessary, and that God's awesomeness can be seen in both Christianity (His Word) and in psychology (His work). Personally, I believe in what Entwistle has presented about integration. It must be done strategically, intentionally, and diligently. I believe that it is important to approach integrating psychology from a Christian worldview, while understanding the presuppositions, which accompany this integration, and maintaining one's Christian tenets of faith.

Worldviews

As human beings, our interaction with the world is based off of assumptions, as well as questions, that we have developed about specific people, situations, and thoughts and how we view the world (worldview). Each person is affected by his/her experiences, which can be attributed to that individual's cultural, social, and familial norms (Entwistle, 2021). The writer shared about the 3 fundamental ways worldviews can affect how we think, which are related to what occurs when opposing worldviews come across each other's paths; acknowledging how they can be inherited; and understanding the limited ability regarding objectivity in reflecting and changing our worldviews (Entwistle, 2011). The author points to the importance of developing a Christian worldview, which can be understood by recognizing who you are, where

you are going, the nature of your issue, and how can it be fixed (Entwistle, 2011). It is believed that a Christian worldview cannot be integrated without first having a Biblical and correct view of creation, the fall, and redemption, as well as consummation (Entwistle, 2011).

Personally, it is important to understand how sin has affected the world in which we live and that we have the opportunity of redemption because of Jesus Christ. Because of this, I believe in the importance of repenting, surrendering to God, and submitting to His will in my life (Romans 10:13). Developing and maintaining a Christian worldview is important as Christians, especially when integrating Christianity with psychology.

Epistemology

The author discussed about epistemology, a philosophical study about the nature or essence of knowledge (Entwistle, 2011). He reminded the reader about the effects of human culture and that we have abilities, as well as limitations. He discussed in detail about epistemic methodologies, such as the Enlightenment, Positivism, Empiricism, Modernism, and Post-modernism, and how and why each methodology developed, evolved, and affects our thinking. Our thoughts are affected by our social context, by sin, and by errant thinking. With this in mind, the writer illustrated how Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) can provide clarity into errant thinking and discussed about the need for virtues, such as studious, intellectual humility (an ability to judge self honestly and to be open to other's corrections and insights), and intellectual caution/courage/integrity/perseverance (Entwistle, 2011). The importance of logic was explored and how that relates with revelation, interpretation, and how God can teach all truth in His Word, even through use of hermeneutics and a theory of knowing, which aligns with a Christian worldview (Theocentric Unified Model of Knowing). II Timothy 3:16 says, "All Scripture is

God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness...” (NIV, 2011).

Personally, it is important to understand the importance of Scripture and to recognize the contributing role that psychology can have in understanding our thoughts and experiences, along with Christianity. Entwistle helped readers to realize that it is possible to learn from psychology, along with Christianity. God’s truth still remains, whether it is shown through Biblical texts or through the use of psychology.

The Nature of Humanity

Philosophical anthropology, which happens to be the study of the essence, motivation, and behavior of humans, is of interest to both theology and psychology (Entwistle, 2011). Built upon differing assumptions, methods, thoughts, and goals concerning the state/nature of human beings, both approach this common subject from two entirely, different viewpoints or perspectives. Psychology and theology both have an interest in *understanding* human nature and philosophical anthropology. Entwistle (2021) aims to present to the reader the notion that a “foundational assumption,” which supports the integration of Christianity and psychology, is built upon the premise that Scripture and science can teach us about man’s nature, essence, and behavior. While psychology focuses on understanding the reasons for human behavior (bio-psycho-social aspects), Christian theology focuses on understanding how humans can return back (reconcile) to God, deal with the effects of sin, and discover fulfillment in life (Entwistle, 2011). According to the writer, both sides are motivated by not only *understanding* but also by *compassion*. Both perspectives, concerning philosophical anthropology, are presented in a way to

show that while they use and have different approaches and assumptions, they are complementary and have a level of harmony.

Not only as believers but also as human beings, we have been created in God's image and likeness. We have been affected by sin and by our experiences, which affect our behavior and worldviews. The careful and intentional integration of Christianity and psychology can be beneficial in understanding our nature as human beings and what we can learn and glean from both schools of thoughts. Colossians 3:17 says, "And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him" (NIV, 2011). As a Christian, there are some aspects about human nature that I can learn more about myself from the psychological perspective while I use this information to help me better comprehend and apply this knowledge to live a better, Christian life. This information helps me to worship God even more so, as I recognize my need for Him greater.

Integration Models

The writer first began by disclosing the importance of how presuppositions can affect worldviews and perceptions of ideas and beliefs and why it is important that we are self-aware of our personal biases and presuppositions, in which we engage with any topic (Entwistle, 2011). With this perspective, Entwistle presented six models that are derived from different and general assumptions concerning the integration of theology and psychology. Those models are as follow: *Spies, Enemies, Rebuilders, Colonialists, Allies, and Neutral Parties*. While they might have similarities in the process of formulating and rejecting viewpoints, they all have different purposes and outcomes that they are trying to attain concerning psychology and theology (Entwistle, 2011). The *Spies* model (Domestic & Foreign) focuses on using any religious

information (or effects of religion) that will be beneficial, while the *Enemies* model takes an either/or viewpoint and rejects the thought of integration (Entwistle, 2011). The *Rebuilders* model desires to “rebuild” or reinvent psychology along with a Christian foundation (like Christian psychology), while the *Colonialists* model prefers to use psychological methodologies that can support their theological viewpoints (Entwistle, 2011). The *Allies* model recognizes that both psychology and theology are separate but express truth about the essence of human nature and that God is the ultimate author of truth, while the *Neutral Parties* model focuses on attaining knowledge, recognizes that both are independent, but still supports disciplinary isolationism and isolated correlationalism. The writer presented charts, which allowed the reader to better know about important elements and specifics about each model.

As with anything in life, it is important to understand the importance of how our assumptions and presuppositions affect our worldview and how we operate and move in life. I believe that if we view the world through tainted lenses, it will affect the way we engage with life, see the world, and interact with others. Where there appears to be conflict internally or externally, it is important that we turn to God’s Word and allow the Holy Spirit to lead us into all truth and reevaluate our psychological viewpoints in lieu of psychological and Scriptural data (Entwistle, 2011). John 16:13 states, “But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth” (NIV, 2011). I believe in the *Allies* model and believe that both theology/Christianity and psychology can be used for God’s glory and are under God’s sovereignty (Entwistle, 2011).

My Personal Integration

My beliefs and practices are more in alignment with the *Allies* model. I believe that God is sovereign, that there is unity in truth, and that both theology/Christianity and psychology can be used for God's glory and can even present a more holistic view of an individual, who might be dealing with emotional, psychological, and spiritual issues (Entwistle, 2011). I believe in approaching integration with all humility and intentionality. I Corinthians 10:31 says, "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God" (NIV, 2011). My overarching goal is for God to be glorified in everything that is used and implemented in helping people, who come for assistance. Christianity and psychology are both respected in my practice. Everything is done through a Christian worldview, and I believe that "all Scripture is God-breathed" and produces righteousness (II Timothy 3:16; NIV, 2011). I also respect the beliefs and faiths of those, who come to my private practice for mental health and/or spiritual assistance.

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy is my main therapeutic modality, and it is integrated with Solution-Focused, Person-Centered, Motivational Interviewing, and Narrative therapeutic methodologies. When people are open to the spiritual aspect, I allow the Holy Spirit to lead the client into all truth. Jesus told His disciples in John 14:26, "But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you" (NIV, 2011). I am just merely the vessel. Because I believe that God created psychology, as well as His inspired and infallible Word, I believe that God is able to use me to help provide clients with the psychological and/or spiritual tools, that God will meet them where they are, and that God will give them the grace to work through and resolve their issues, as they surrender to God and His process of redemption (Jeremiah 29:11; Matthew 21:22; II Corinthians 9:8). Matthew 19:26 says, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (NIV, 2011). Everything is done out of love (I John 4:19-21).

The Jones' Family

The Jones family, which consists of husband and wife, Joe and Jessica, and their children, Jim, Jana, & John, came to my private practice, Heart 2 Life 2 Love, LLC, for Christian therapy. In the intake session, they were reminded about my Integrationist approach with the Word and the methodologies used in my practice. As a whole, they stated that they were comfortable, heard about my services, and were looking forward to working with me. They shared about their strong Christian beliefs and their closeness as a family. They shared about the latest situation that they are experiencing as a family- his wife's stage 4 lung cancer diagnosis. Their interaction with each other was observed during the intake, and notes were made based upon their interaction and behavior. Due to this family's schedule, I suggested to them that they initially meet weekly for individual sessions and that they alternate every other week between family and marriage (couple) sessions and schedule additional sessions as needed.

Treatment Planning

As a rule of thumb, I prefer to work on treatment plans with the couple, with the family, and with each family member individually in their individual and specific sessions. Because I want everyone to be engaged and accountable in their therapy, we work on their goals collaboratively, and I make suggestions about a specific goal, if needed, and then ask them if they agree. They are told that I will assign them homework and that I will often ask them what they would like to work on for homework as well. They are also told that they can change their goal(s) at any time if they feel the need to do so. They have that autonomy. Within the next sections, I will speak briefly about the Jones family as a couple, as a family, and individually, including my observations from the family session and what each individual has decided to work

on. The treatment plan, which will include the initial DSM-V diagnosis, will follow after each group and individual family member.

Joe.

Joseph (“Joe,”) Jones is a 43-year-old, African American male, bi-vocational pastor, as well as part-time computer programmer. He has been married to Jessica for 20 years. He appears to present with anxiety due to his wife’s recent stage 4 lung cancer diagnosis (2 weeks prior), as evidenced by his inability to focus (staring at the wall), repeated dialogue, and apparent worry about the future (observation). Like the rest of his family, he loves the Lord. He appears to have many positive factors, such as great support from his family and his congregation, per his self-report. I had to rule out Generalized Anxiety Disorder because he does not meet all of the criteria. He appears to be experiencing an Adjustment Disorder with mixed anxiety and depressed mood. All modalities of mental health treatment will be integrated through a Christian worldview and will be observed in Joe’s treatment plan listed below. Though not noted on the treatment plan, Scripture will be given and discussed as led by the Holy Spirit throughout the sessions.

Table 1

Treatment Plan

Clinician: Gregory Wright, LCPC, NCC

Patient: Joseph (Joe) Jones, Age 43

Diagnosis (DSM-V)

F43.23 Adjustment Disorder, With mixed anxiety and depressed mood

Date & Time: 4/29/25, 9:55 AM

Problem or Concern	Measurable Treatment Goal	Treatment Interventions (Be Specific)	Expected Number of Sessions Devoted to Reaching This Goal	Measurable Means of Evaluating and Monitoring Progress Toward Treatment Goal	Aftercare Plan/ Follow-Up (Means of maintaining treatment gains) (Include titration of treatment dosage)
Adjustment, anxiety, & depression issues	<p>The client will learn and apply coping skills, in order to reduce the symptoms of anxiety and depression.</p> <p>The client will explore and identify his feelings and fears about his wife’s cancer diagnosis.</p> <p>The client will increase his private prayer time with God, in order to develop a greater peace about his wife’s medical situation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Scriptural meditation -Psycho-education -Journaling -Affirmations -Positive self-talk -Coping strategies -CBT tools -SFBT tools 	12 and then as needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Observation - BDI-II - PHQ-9 -Self-report -Journal - Verbal Scale of 1 (low)- 10 (high) for depression at the beginning of each session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Follow-up with the client once a month -Attend a men’s support group in his community weekly for extra support -Prepare family Bible study, prayer time (2x a week), and family outings (once a month) with wife and children as scheduled *No medication needed

Jessica.

Jessica Jones is a 43-year-old, African American female, real estate agent. She has been married to Joe for 20 years. She has just been diagnosed with a rare form of stage 4 lung cancer,

has been informed of a 10% survival rate, and will soon begin intense cancer treatments (nontraditional, as well as traditional). Per observation and interaction with family members, Mrs. Jones is optimistic about life (statements about beating cancer and living) and has a strong faith in God's love and sovereignty (use of Scripture to encourage (self and) family). She appears to have many positive factors, including her family and church family. However, while she appears to be very confident, it appears that she does not have a lot of support right now from her husband or children but appears to be providing them with the spiritual and emotional support. I do not feel as if she has perhaps given herself time to really process her diagnosis right now; however, she might have some anxiety because she is so focused on everyone around her. If I were to diagnose her with anything right now, I would diagnose her with an Adjustment Disorder with anxiety. I would remind her about Psalm 23. Verse 4 states, "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me" (NIV, 2011). All modalities of mental health treatment will be integrated through a Christian worldview and will be observed in Jessica's treatment plan listed below. Though not noted on the treatment plan, Scripture will be given and discussed as led by the Holy Spirit throughout the sessions.

Table 2

Treatment Plan

Clinician: Gregory Wright, LCPC, NCC

Patient: Jessica Jones, Age 43

Diagnosis (DSM-V)

F43.22 Adjustment Disorder, With anxiety

Date & Time: 4/29/25, 2:55 PM

Problem or Concern	Measurable Treatment Goal	Treatment Interventions (Be Specific)	Expected Number of Sessions Devoted to Reaching This Goal	Measurable Means of Evaluating and Monitoring Progress Toward Treatment Goal	Aftercare Plan/ Follow-Up (Means of maintaining treatment gains) (Include titration of treatment dosage)
Adjustment & anxiety issues	<p>The client will learn and apply coping skills, in order to reduce the symptoms of anxiety,</p> <p>The client will explore and identify her feelings and any fears about this cancer diagnosis.</p> <p>The client will increase her private prayer time with God, in order to develop a greater peace about her situation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Scriptural meditation -Psycho-education -Journaling -Affirmations -Positive self-talk -Coping strategies -CBT tools -SFBT tools 	12 or as needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Self-report -Observation -Journal - PHQ-9 - Verbal Scale of 1 (low)- 10 (high) for depression at the beginning of each session - BDI-II 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Follow-up with the client once a month -Attend a cancer support group in her community weekly for extra support -Engage in family Bible study, prayer time, and family outings with husband and children as scheduled *No medication needed

Joe & Jessica.

Concerning Joe & Jessica’s marriage, it has been going strong for 20 years. Jim, Jana, and John are their three children. They love the Lord, their children, their family, and their church family. Where Joe has normally been strong emotionally and spiritually, he has been

dealing with depression and anxiety since news of his wife’s cancer diagnosis 2 weeks ago. Jessica has been focused on making sure that their children are all right. They will be encouraged to put their focus back on God as a couple, to allow God to lead them and their family, and to open up to one another about their feelings and about what they desire from God and from each other. They will be reminded about Philippians 1:6, which states, “...He who began a good work in you will carry it onto completion until the day of Jesus Christ” (NIV, 2011). All modalities of mental health treatment will be integrated through a Christian worldview and will be observed in their marriage/couples treatment plan listed below. Though not noted on the treatment plan, Scripture will be given and discussed as led by the Holy Spirit throughout the sessions.

Table 3

Treatment Plan

Clinician: Gregory Wright, LCPC, NCC

Patient: Joseph (Joe) & Jessica Jones (Marriage/Couples)

Date & Time: 4/30/25, 5:55 PM

Problem or Concern	Measurable Treatment Goal	Treatment Interventions (Be Specific)	Expected Number of Sessions Devoted to Reaching This Goal	Measurable Means of Evaluating and Monitoring Progress Toward Treatment Goal	Aftercare Plan/ Follow-Up (Means of maintaining treatment gains) (Include titration of treatment dosage)
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<p>Adjustment, anxiety, & depression issues</p>	<p>The clients will journal and share with each other weekly (or as needed) their needs from each other during this time.</p> <p>The clients will read the Bible, pray, and meditate on God’s Word as a couple daily, in order to allow the Holy Spirit to speak to their hearts.</p> <p>The clients will open up to each other (daily and as needed) about their fears and feelings, in order to allow God to heal their hearts and minds.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Relationship exploration -Scriptural meditation -Psycho-education -Journaling -Scriptural meditation -Coping strategies -SFBT tools -CBT tools -Affirmations -Mindfulness 	<p>6 sessions and then as needed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Verbal Scale of 1 (low)- 10 (high) for depression at the beginning of each session -Observation -Journal -Self-report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Follow-up with the clients once a month -Attend a group for couples dealing with cancer in the community once a month -Schedule and maintain family Bible study, prayer time, and family outings with their children -Weekly date nights as a couple
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Jim.

Jim is a 19-year-old, African American college student (freshman), who happens to be an Eagle Scout and is on the Dean’s list. He is Mr. & Mrs. Jones’ oldest male child. He loves the Lord, his parents, siblings, and family. He appears to have some positive factors, like great support from his parents, siblings, family, and church family. Per my observation, he appears to be dealing with anxiety (overthinking) and depression (tears). I had to rule out Generalized Anxiety Disorder and Major Depressive Disorder because he does not meet all of the criterion. He too appears to be experiencing an Adjustment Disorder with mixed anxiety and depressed

mood. I will remind him about Romans 8:28, which states, “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose” (NIV, 2011). I will also encourage him to continue to follow Jesus (Matthew 4:19). All modalities of mental health treatment will be integrated through a Christian worldview and will be observed in Jim’s treatment plan listed below. Though not noted on the treatment plan, Scripture will be given and discussed as led by the Holy Spirit throughout the sessions.

Table 4

Treatment Plan

Clinician: Gregory Wright, LCPC, NCC

Patient: Jim Jones, Age 19

Diagnosis (DSM-V)

F43.23 Adjustment Disorder, With mixed anxiety and depressed mood

Date & Time: 4/30/25, 1:55 PM

Problem or Concern	Measurable Treatment Goal	Treatment Interventions (Be Specific)	Expected Number of Sessions Devoted to Reaching This Goal	Measurable Means of Evaluating and Monitoring Progress Toward Treatment Goal	Aftercare Plan/ Follow-Up (Means of maintaining treatment gains) (Include titration of treatment dosage)
Adjustment, anxiety, & depression issues	The client will learn and apply coping skills, in order to reduce the symptoms of anxiety & depression.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Journaling -SFBT tools -CBT tools -Thought stopping 	12 sessions and then as needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Self-report - PHQ-9 -Observation - BDI-II 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Follow-up with the client once a month -Attend a depression group in his

	<p>The client will read the Bible and pray to God for at least 30 minutes a day, in order to build up his faith and to have a deeper relationship with God.</p> <p>The client will continue to go to the gym 3x a week, in order to release feelings of anxiety and depression and to better focus on God.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Coping strategies -Psycho-education -Mindfulness -Scriptural meditation -Breathing exercises 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Verbal Scale of 1 (low)- 10 (high) for depression at the beginning of each session -Journal 	<p>community once a month</p> <p>-Engage with his family Bible study, prayer time, and family outings as directed by his parents</p> <p>*No medication needed</p>
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Jana.

Jana is a 17-year-old, African American, junior high school student. She is Mr. & Mrs. Jones' middle child and only daughter. She loves the Lord, her parents, siblings, and family. She appears to have positive factors, like great support from her parents, siblings, family, and church family. Per her mother's report, Jana is normally sweet and very peaceful; however, she shared that she came across some items in her room that were destroyed. Per my observation, she appears to be dealing with some anger (crossed arms; refusal to talk), depression (mom's self-report), and conduct issues (mom's report of destroyed items; refusal to talk). I had to rule out Generalized Anxiety Disorder and Major Depressive Disorder because she does not meet all of the criterion. She appears to be experiencing an Adjustment Disorder with mixed disturbance of emotions and conduct. I will share with her Jeremiah 29:11-12 and remind her that God has a plan for her life, for her mom's life, and for everyone's lives. I will also remind her about

Matthew 11:28 and to give her burden (feelings and emotions) to God, who will, in return, give her peace. All modalities of mental health treatment will be integrated through a Christian worldview and will be observed in Jana’s treatment plan listed below. Though not noted on the treatment plan, Scripture will be given and discussed as led by the Holy Spirit throughout the sessions.

Table 5

Treatment Plan

Clinician: Gregory Wright, LCPC, NCC

Patient: Jana Jones, Age 17

Diagnosis (DSM-V)

F43.25 Adjustment Disorder, With mixed disturbance of emotions and conduct

Date & Time: 5/01/25, 4:55 PM

Problem or Concern	Measurable Treatment Goal	Treatment Interventions (Be Specific)	Expected Number of Sessions Devoted to Reaching This Goal	Measurable Means of Evaluating and Monitoring Progress Toward Treatment Goal	Aftercare Plan/ Follow-Up (Means of maintaining treatment gains) (Include titration of treatment dosage)
Adjustment, emotional, and conduct issues	The client will learn and apply coping skills, in order to reduce the symptoms of anxiety, depression, & anger.	-Psycho-education -Coping strategies -Journaling -Affirmations	12 and then as needed	-Self-report - BDI-II -Observation - PHQ-9 -Journal	- Follow-up with the client once a month -Engage with her family Bible study, prayer time, and family outings as

	<p>The client will learn to use words positively and the arts to express her feelings, in order to alleviate urge to destroy things.</p> <p>The client will increase her prayer, Bible study, and meditation time with God daily to 30 minutes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Positive self-talk -Thought stopping -Scriptural meditation -Role play -Art therapy -SFBT/CBT tools 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Verbal Scale of 1 (low)- 10 (high) for depression at the beginning of each session 	<p>directed by his parents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Attend an emotional, support group for children of cancer patients once a month <p>*No medication needed</p>
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John.

John is a 16-year-old, African American, sophomore high school student. He is Mr. & Mrs. Jones’ youngest child and second son. Like his siblings, he loves the Lord, his parents, siblings, and family. He appears to have some positive factors, like great support from his parents, siblings, family, and church family. Per my observation, he has faith but struggles with the diagnosis and possible outcome (statement about not having enough faith; self-blame). He reported an increased use of video games from about 2 hours per day to 8-10 hours per day since learning of his mother’s health condition. I had to rule out Generalized Anxiety Disorder and Major Depressive Disorder because he does not meet all of the criterion. He appears to be experiencing an Adjustment Disorder with mixed anxiety and depressed mood. I will also share with him Jeremiah 29:11-12 and remind him that God has a plan for his life, for his mom’s life, and for everyone’s lives. All modalities of mental health treatment will be integrated through a Christian worldview and will be observed in John’s treatment plan listed below. Though not

noted on the treatment plan, Scripture will be given and discussed as led by the Holy Spirit throughout the sessions.

Table 6

Treatment Plan

Clinician: Gregory Wright, LCPC, NCC

Patient: John Jones, Age 16

Diagnosis (DSM-V)

F43.23 Adjustment Disorder, With mixed anxiety and depressed mood

Date & Time: 5/02/25, 4:55 PM

Problem or Concern	Measurable Treatment Goal	Treatment Interventions (Be Specific)	Expected Number of Sessions Devoted to Reaching This Goal	Measurable Means of Evaluating and Monitoring Progress Toward Treatment Goal	Aftercare Plan/ Follow-Up (Means of maintaining treatment gains) (Include titration of treatment dosage)
Adjustment, anxiety, & depression issues	<p>The client will learn and apply coping skills in order to reduce the symptoms of anxiety and depression.</p> <p>The client will decrease video game use to only 2 hours a day.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -SFBT tools -CBT tools -Journaling -Thought stopping -Positive self-talk -Coping strategies 	12 and then as needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BDI-II - PHQ-9 -Observation -Self-report - Verbal Scale of 1 (low)- 10 (high) for anxiety & depression at the beginning of each session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Follow-up with the client once a month for 2 months -Attend youth group at his church weekly -Engage with his family Bible study, prayer time, and family outings as

	The client will read the Bible and pray to God for at least 30 minutes a day, in order to build up his faith and to have a deeper relationship with God.	-Psycho-education -Nature walks -Art therapy		-Journal	directed by his parents *No medication needed
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Family.

As a family unit, as a couple, and as individuals, they were reminded about Romans 8:28, which states, “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose” (NIV, 2011). Everyone appears to be processing and adjusting to Mrs. Jones’ cancer diagnosis in similar but different ways. As a family unit, they were encouraged to make sure that they keep God first. They were encouraged to increase their family Bible study and prayer time. They were encouraged to journal their thoughts and to share them (as led by the Holy Spirit) with each other during their family time. They were encouraged to speak God’s Word over Mrs. Jones and their family and to offer her support. As encouraged by Mrs. Jones, the family also wanted to meditate as a family on Deuteronomy 6:5, which states, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength” (NIV, 2011).

Table 7

Treatment Plan

Clinician: Gregory Wright, LCPC, NCC

Patients: The Jones family (Husband & Wife: Joe & Jessica; Children: Jim, Jana, & John)

Date & Time: 4/28/25, 5:55 PM

Problem or Concern	Measurable Treatment Goal	Treatment Interventions (Be Specific)	Expected Number of Sessions Devoted to Reaching This Goal	Measurable Means of Evaluating and Monitoring Progress Toward Treatment Goal	Aftercare Plan/ Follow-Up (Means of maintaining treatment gains) (Include titration of treatment dosage)
<p>Adjustment, anxiety, & depression issues</p>	<p>The family will learn ways to better support Mrs. Jones & each other during this time.</p> <p>The family will express their feelings openly, honestly, and in a Christ-like way, in order to give the Lord an opportunity to heal their hearts and family.</p> <p>The family will increase their Bible study/prayer time as a family to 2x weekly and will choose Scripture weekly to meditate and discuss.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Scriptural meditation -Journaling -Positive self-talk -Cognitive Restructuring -Thought stopping -Coping strategies -Psycho-education -Affirmations -Mindfulness -Art therapy 	<p>6 sessions and then as needed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Family-report -Observation - Verbal Scale of 1 (low)- 10 (high) for anxiety and depression at the beginning of each family session -Journal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Follow-up with the family once a month -Continue with weekly, family Bible study/prayer time -Continue with family activities at least 2x a month *No medication needed

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper has been to critically analyze and synthesize the information given in Grudem's (2022) *Bible Doctrine: Essential Teachings of the Christian faith* and Entwistle's (2021) *Integrative Approaches to Psychology and Christianity (4th Edition)*. I reflected upon the various viewpoints discussed in both texts and shared how each viewpoint can be practically used within the counseling setting. Furthermore, I presented a strong Integrationist approach to counseling and included a treatment plan for Mr. & Mrs. Jones as a couple and as individuals and for their family as a whole and as individuals. The Holy Spirit has full reign in these sessions, and this integration is reflected in each session.

References

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