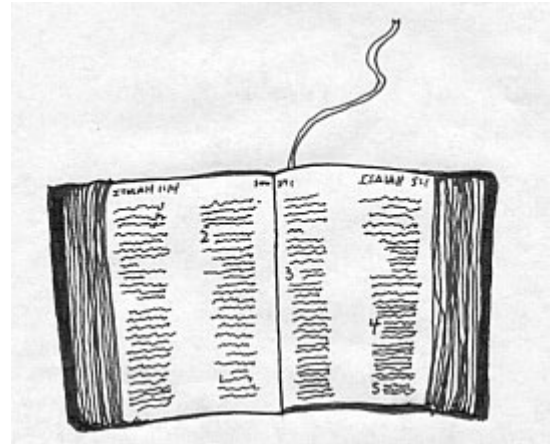


# THE DEVELOPMENT OF “MENTAL ILLNESS” AND HOW TO EXPERIENCE TRUE MENTAL HEALTH

## INTRODUCTION

“Mental illness”. What is it? What are its characteristics? How does it develop? If someone has been “diagnosed” with it, is it a “condition” they must live with the rest of their lives? Even more importantly, how do we experience deliverance from it and attain true mental health? Those are all important questions. Questions that this study is dedicated to answering. Perhaps you have been “diagnosed” with this “label” at sometime in your life, but you want deliverance from it and desire true mental health. You can be sure that GOD desires this for you as well. May the LORD, through HIS HOLY SPIRIT, use the following Biblical principles to begin to bring this liberating freedom to you . . . today!



GOD'S Word Is The  
Key To Mental Health

## I. WHAT IS “MENTAL ILLNESS”?

“Mental illness” is a catch-all phrase for many. A phrase used to describe people with serious emotional “conditions” such as manic-depression, paranoia, schizophrenia, extreme nervousness, hearing “voices”, etc. However, the term “mental illness” is really a misnomer in relationship to the above mental conditions (this is why we put it in quotes). These “conditions” are not “mental” problems, although they manifest themselves as such, but in reality are spiritual. Unless we understand this, none of us will ever experience true mental health!



A Local Psychiatric Institution

Of course there is a whole “system” that is involved in the diagnosis and “treatment” of “mental illness”. Hospitals, treatment centers, doctors, counselors and medications are all used to try to bring some measure of help. However, the individual or family that chooses to seek this kind of help, should realize that most of the professionals involved in this “system” are anti-CHRISTian and most of the methods used are anti-Biblical. Shock treatments used to erase painful memories and medications to treat symptoms and not root problems are just two.

This is why Scripture warns all of us . . .

*“Woe to the rebellious children, saith the LORD, that take counsel, but not of ME . . .”* Isaiah 30:1a

## II. WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF “MENTAL ILLNESS”?

We learn what the characteristics of “mental illness” are by studying excerpts from the lives of two men found in the Scriptures.

### A. Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon

*“The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar, and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles’ feathers, and his nails like birds’ claws.” Daniel 4:33*



**King Nebuchadnezzar In His Confused Condition**

1. Isolation – “. . . *he was driven from men . . .*”
2. Delusional, confused thinking – “. . . (he) *did eat grass as oxen . . .*”
3. Physical, unkempt appearance – “. . . *and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles’ feathers, and his nails like birds’ claws.*”

### B. Saul, King of Israel

1. Demon oppression or possession – “*But the SPIRIT of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him.*” I Samuel 16:14
2. Wrong emotions from false thinking
  - a. anger – “*And Saul was very angry, and the saying displeased him . . .*” I Samuel 18:8a
  - b. paranoia – “*And Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with him, and was departed from Saul.*” I Samuel 18:12 (see also Psalm 53:5a; Proverbs 28:1a)
  - c. depression – “*And Saul lifted up his voice and wept.*” I Samuel 24:16b

## III. HOW DOES “MENTAL ILLNESS” DEVELOP?

By studying excerpts from the life of King Saul, we learn the devastating progression that resulted in his “mental illness”.

## A. Pride



Samuel Rebuking  
King Saul

Pride is basically wanting to be the “boss” of our own life. It is the root that all other sins spring up and grow from. This is why Scriptures warns us that, *“Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.”* Proverbs 16:18

Saul first exhibited pride when he intruded into the priest’s office where only the prophet Samuel was ordained to go (see I Samuel 13:8-13).

## B. Rebellion Towards The LORD And HIS Word

Rebellion towards the LORD and HIS Word is simply wickedness and sin. The Scriptures are full of warnings concerning what results from this rebellion. Following are just several in relationship to “mental illness” . . .

*“The LORD will smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart.”* Deuteronomy 28:28

*“. . . but the LORD shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind.”* (i.e. – depression) Deuteronomy 28:65b

*“. . . but the way of the wicked (the LORD) turneth upside down.”*  
Psalm 146:9b

*“There is no peace, saith my GOD, to the wicked.”* Isaiah 57:21

Saul demonstrated this rebellion when he did not fully obey the LORD’s command to completely destroy the Amelekites (see I Samuel 15:1-23).

## C. A “Religious” Life That Is Void Of The HOLY SPIRIT

Many people desire the blessings of the spiritual life, yet seek to live in the world at the same time. Scripture clearly warns us that this is impossible (see Matthew 6:24). Indeed, GOD tells us that if we attempt to live this way, this can lead to “mental illness”!

*“A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.”* James 1:8

Saul certainly tried to practice this “double-mindedness” by attempting to worship the LORD while living in sin (see I Samuel 15:24-26).



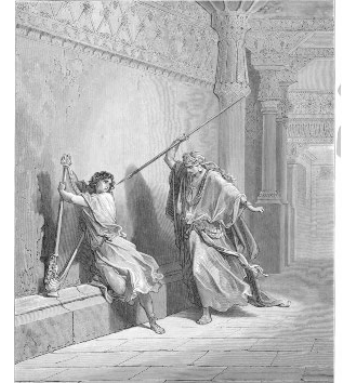
Pursuing The World  
Brings Instability

## D. Bitterness That Grew From Envy, Anger And Unforgiveness

Bitterness is that terrible “poison” that destroys so many, both the very person that is bitter and others around him (see Hebrews 12:14-15). Bitterness evolves from responding to relational conflicts in an unrighteous way, such as with envy, anger, and unforgiveness. These wicked and unhealthy emotions often then lead to various degrees of “mental illness”! This is why the LORD emphatically commands us to deal with these according to the following Scriptures . . .

*“Be ye angry and sin not. Let not the sun go down upon your wrath, neither give place to the Devil. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice, and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as GOD for CHRIST’s sake hath forgiven you.”* Ephesians 4:26-27, 31-32

Saul was overcome by bitterness, because of his anger towards and jealousy of David (see I Samuel 18:8-12).



**Saul Attempting To Murder David**

## E. Involvement With Witchcraft And The Occult



**Saul And The Witch Of Endor**

The Scriptures are clear in admonishing us to have absolutely no involvement with Satan through witchcraft or the occult! Yet this is exactly what happens with many who end up with the label, “mental illness”. Whether it be through the ungodly “mental health system” using medications, shock treatments and anti-Biblical “counseling”, or, through the devastating progression of sin that we have seen in this portion of our study.

*“There shall not be found among you anyone . . . that doeth divination, or an observer of time, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD . . . “* Deuteronomy 18:10-12a

Saul’s entrapment in witchcraft and the occult was the final step in the devastating progression that resulted in his “mental illness” (see I Samuel 28:7-19).

Note: Someone has wisely said, “All mental illness is just varying degrees of irresponsibility”. We have seen this in the life of King Saul . . .

1. He should have humbled himself when confronted with his sin instead of reacting with pride and stubbornness
2. He should have obeyed the LORD’s commands instead of rebelling against them
3. He should have sought the spiritual life instead of the worldly
4. He should have loved and forgiven David instead of hating him and wanting him dead
5. He should have resisted the temptations of witchcraft and the occult instead of succumbing to them

#### IV. HOW DO WE EXPERIENCE TRUE MENTAL HEALTH?

As noted in the beginning of this study, “mental illness” is an emotional “condition” that evolves from a spiritual problem. This makes all of us susceptible to it. Unless we understand this, none of us will ever experience true mental health! The Scriptures are very clear in giving the principles for this. By GOD’s grace may we all learn them, understand them, and apply them in our lives!

##### A. Confession Of Sin

Because “mental illness” is a spiritual problem caused by unrighteous responses to situations in our lives, the first step to true mental health is the **confession** of those unrighteous responses as sin. **Confession** in this context is simply agreeing with GOD that we have sinned.

*“If we confess our sins, HE (GOD) is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” I John 1:9*

##### B. Repentance From Sin

**Repentance** is an important ingredient of mental health. Whereas **confession** is agreeing with GOD that we have sinned, **repentance** is turning from that sin and committing oneself to living a righteous life.



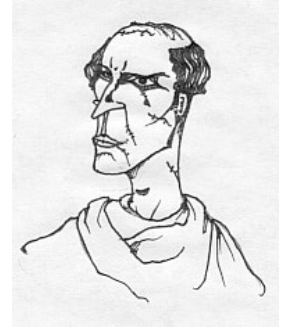
**A Repentant  
King Nebuchadnezzar**

*“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.”*

Proverbs 28:13

Note: This is what brought King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon deliverance and healing from his “mental illness”, he demonstrated complete and genuine confession and repentance (see Daniel 4:34-37). Contrast this with King Saul of Israel. He never possessed true **confession and**

**repentance** (see I Samuel 15:26), thus he never received real mental health.



## C. Make Restitution

**Restitution** is also an important part of mental health. Restitution is that act, where if we have hurt or offended someone, or have done damage to them or their property, we plead for their forgiveness and reimburse them monetarily for that damage. This brings us a **clear conscience** before GOD and our fellow man as well. This was the Apostle Paul's testimony when he said . . .

*“And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward GOD, and toward men.”* Acts 24:16

**A Clear Conscience  
Was Important To  
The Apostle Paul**

## D. Taking Responsibility For Every Aspect Of Our Life

1. For every word

*“But I (JESUS) say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgement.”*  
Matthew 12:36

2. For every deed

*“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of CHRIST, that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”* II Corinthians 5:10

3. For every thought

*“Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exaltheeth itself against the knowledge of GOD, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of CHRIST.”* II Corinthians 10:5

4. For every attitude

*“For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile.”* I Peter 3:10



**Peter The Apostle**

5. For every motive

*“I the LORD search the heart, try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.”*

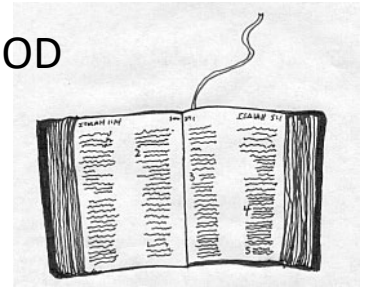
Jeremiah 17:10

The Word of GOD clearly teaches that each one of us are responsible before the LORD for every aspect of our life, and that someday we will all stand before HIM and be judged

accordingly by HIM. The more we acknowledge this and respond in a righteous way, the more true mental health we will possess!

## E. Immersing Our Soul With The Word Of GOD

Our **soul** consists of a.) our mind (what we think and believe); b.) our will (what we do and how we act); and c.) our emotions (how we feel and the attitudes we hold). Having a healthy **soul** is essential to experiencing true mental health. The key to possessing a healthy **soul** is immersing it with the Word of GOD on a regular basis. Indeed, Scripture command us to “. . . *meditate therein day and night . . .*” (see Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1:2).



**The Key To Mental Health  
Is Immersing Our Soul  
With The Word Of God**

Psalm 119 is that beautiful portion of Scripture that exalts the power of GOD’s Word to bring success, blessing and even true mental health to anyone who will apply it to their life. Following are just several verses that speak to this truth . . .

*“THY TESTIMONIES also are my delight and my counselors.”* (v.24)

*“My soul cleaveth unto the dust, quicken THOU me according to THY WORD.”* (v.25)

*“This is my comfort in my affliction, for THY WORD hath quickened me.”* (v.50)



**King David Knew  
The Power of GOD’s WORD  
To Bring Mental Health**

*“My soul fainteth for THY salvation, but I hope in THY WORD.”* (v.81)

*“Unless THY LAW had been my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction”* (v.92)

*“THOU art my hiding place and my shield, I hope in THY WORD.”* (v.114)

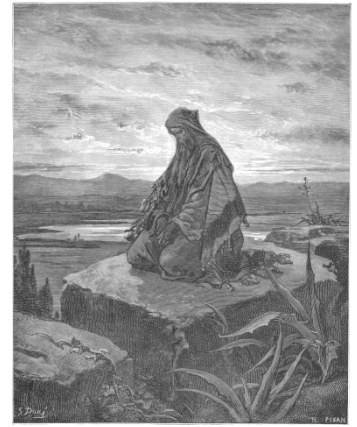
*“Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me, yet THY COMMANDMENTS are my delights.”* (v.143)

*“Great peace have they which love THY LAW, and nothing shall offend them.”* (v.165)

## V. PROMISES FROM THE WORD OF GOD FOR TRUE MENTAL HEALTH

*“But THOU, O LORD, art a shield for me, my glory, and the lifter up of mine head.”* Psalm 3:3

*“The LORD is my SHEPHERD, I shall not want. HE maketh me to lie down in green pastures, HE leadeth me beside the still waters. HE restoreth my soul . . .” Psalm 23:1-3a*



*“O LORD my GOD, I cried unto THEE, and THOU hast healed me. O LORD, THOU hast brought up my soul from the grave, THOU hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit. THOU hast turned for me my mourning into dancing, THOU hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness.” Psalm 30:2-3*

*“THOU wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on THEE, because he trusteth in THEE.” Isaiah 26:3*

**Isaiah Instructed Us  
How To Experience  
Peace Of Mind**

## **CONCLUSION**

“Mental illness”. We’ve learned what it is, it’s characteristics, and how it develops. We’ve learned that we are all susceptible to it. (We may even have been “diagnosed” as having it). However most importantly, we have learned that we can have complete deliverance and healing from it, and indeed possess true mental health . . . today! May the following testimony from GOD’s Word be all of ours now . . .

*“For GOD hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” II Timothy 1:7*

## **MY LIFE COMMITMENT**

**“Heavenly FATHER, I have learned from the study of YOUR Word, that ‘mental illness’ is a tragic and devastating reality that can afflict anyone. I now realize that unless I follow close to YOU, and diligently seek to live my life according to YOUR Word and ways, I too will suffer these consequences. However, I have also learned that as I seek to love and obey YOU and YOUR Word with all of my heart, soul and strength, I am promised and assured true mental health. I now purpose, through YOUR grace and the power of YOUR HOLY SPIRIT, to make those choices of obedience that will make this a reality in my life. I pray this in the Name of the LORD JESUS CHRIST and for HIS glory, Amen.”**

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date

\_\_\_\_\_