



Biblical Stories for Psychotherapy and Counseling: A Sourcebook

Kalman Kaplan, Matthew Schwartz

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Integrate Biblical spirituality into psychotherapy and examine centuries-old answers to modern psychological questions!

The Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Hospitals now mandates taking spiritual assessments of all patients. This book is devoted to helping therapists employ Biblical spirituality in the actual treatment program. *Biblical Stories for Psychotherapy and Counseling: A Sourcebook* organizes the wisdom of the Old Testament into episodes that can shed light on specific psychological issues. From the familiar to the obscure, these stories can help us better understand self-esteem, loyalty and obligations, decision making, temptation, anger, morality, various disorders, family dynamics, support systems, developmental issues, recovery issues, aging, suicidal behavior, and more.

From the authors: “As brilliant and as penetrating as Freud's insights are, they are limited in the sense that Freud relied heavily on Greek myth and literature for his models and ideas. His view of man was in many ways that of the Greeks—a view that concentrated on the pathological underside of man and on the bedrock of his developmental problems. The Greeks could never really shake the sense of doom, the foreboding and the fatalism that led so many great figures in Greek literature and in real life Greek history to depression and, in a surprising number of cases, to suicide. In contrast, the focus of the Bible is far more optimistic; depression can be successfully dealt with, and suicide is a sad error that should be—and usually can be—avoided. It encourages people to hope and teaches that day-to-day human effort has a purpose and meaning and that heroism is not a fair or useful aim for man to set for himself. The Bible offers the hope of filling every moment of human life with greater meaning and feeling.

“New solutions to mental health problems are always welcome. Ours is a new approach, yet a very old one. We present stories that offer a vast treasure of knowledge and wisdom about the way people think and act, and why they do so. The stories are drawn from the Hebrew Bible, a compendium whose latest books are already twenty-four hundred or so years old. Yet, through all those centuries, the basic story of man's searching and yearning has changed little. We shall concentrate on the psychological meaning of these narratives and what they tell us about how their characters dealt with challenges of family, handicap, depression, and more.”

You'll also find information drawn from modern clinical research that parallels the Biblical narratives. The wisdom gained from these ancient stories is applied to help people gain self-understanding and deal with their own situations today. For psychotherapists, these Biblical foundation stories can be used as a basis for integrating spirituality into psychotherapy. The story of Moses, who overcame a speech problem, can be applied to the problems of a Midwestern college student, and the account of David and Goliath can help a businessman overcome his fears of “lack of macho.”

A small sample of the Bible stories—and their clinical implications—that you'll find in this volume:

- the foundation of self-esteem: Saul
- the courage to emigrate: Abraham
- assuming responsibility for one's self: Lot's wife

- focusing on one's main aim: Sarah and Hagar
- dealing with commandments: Abraham and Isaac
- dealing with temptations: Adam and Eve
- drunkenness and disrespect: Noah
- reciprocity between generations: Naomi and Ruth
- amoral intellectualism: Balaam
- aging: Ecclesiastes
- dealing with disability: Moses and Aaron
- abandonment: David
- protected regression: Jonah

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