

# ***HIDING FROM JUDGMENT***

## **Critique of *Hiding from Love*, by Dr. John Townsend**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Dr. John Townsend, author of *Hiding from Love*, is associated with the California Minirth-Meier Clinic and holds degrees in both psychology and theology. His integration (entanglement) of these two fields of study, and his frequent references to Scripture to support his psychological theories, present a unique challenge in writing a critique of his book. Many other psychology books use only passing references to Scripture out of context, and it is therefore much easier to discern and point out the flaws.

The theme of the book is man's hiding patterns. Some are what the author terms "harmful hiding." A close look at these reveals Minirth-Meier's Freudian orientation, which has been critiqued at length by other authors (Bobgan and Bobgan). These behaviors are described in terms of Freudian "defense mechanisms," using such Freudian concepts as projection, introjection, denial, and such. One of the purposes of this critique is to examine the observed behaviors in biblical terms and present biblical solutions. The authors also claim that there are "helpful hiding" patterns, times when self-protection or "setting boundaries" is appropriate. This entire concept must be challenged in light of biblical teachings. The forward to *Hiding from Love*, written by Dr. Paul Meier, claims that Townsend "compassionately reveals ways to biblically fill the developmental holes in our souls so we can overcome the sins and addictive tendencies we erroneously use to fill those vacuums." It is further claimed that the author "exposes our specific methods of self-deception that hinder us from intimate bonding and establishing biblical boundaries." Referencing Jeremiah's statement that the heart is deceitful, he interprets that deceitfulness as "hiding the truth from conscious awareness." All of this must be questioned. Has God called us to "fill the developmental holes in our souls?" Does hiding truly serve the purpose of "hindering us from intimate bonding," or does the Bible reveal other reasons? Is the heart's deceitfulness really "hiding the truth from conscious awareness?"

Early in the book, some of Townsend's basic theology, built on the presuppositions of Freud and other psychological theory, comes to light. He claims two fundamental problems of man. First, man is unfinished, "somewhat like a beautiful but damaged

home under restoration." Second, man fears what he needs. There is an assumption here that man is *damaged*, and that he is inherently good in spite of that damage. Also assumed is the motivation behind the fears and hiding patterns of man, that he fears something he needs in order to grow and be restored. To illustrate his points throughout the book, Townsend weaves a story in the beginning about a little girl (Jenny) who is forced to hide in the woods because soldiers have dragged her parents away during a time of war. The story reveals something of Townsend's basic theology, because the girl is portrayed as *innocent* in her hiding, *forced* to hide by circumstances over which she has no control. When others come to rescue her, she is afraid they are enemies rather than friends.

It is true that man is sometimes sinned against, at times violently so, and that he may react in fear. However, Townsend's basic view that man is a victim, hiding in fear from love, defies the fundamental view of Scripture that man is a sinner in rebellion against God's commands, hiding in fear of judgment. The biblical view is first portrayed in the Genesis account of Adam and Eve, then reinforced throughout Scripture. Although this is a lengthy reproduction of Scripture, the following verses ought to clearly outline the basic biblical view before we become immersed in the details of critiquing the book:

"Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as He was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden."  
Genesis 3:8

"There is no dark place, no deep shadow, where evildoers can hide. God has no need to examine men further, that they should come before Him for judgment." Job 34:22, 23

"Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from Your presence? If I go up to the heavens, You are there; if I make my bed in the depths, You are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there Your hand will guide me, Your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, 'Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,' even the darkness will not be dark to You; the night will shine like the day, for the darkness is as light to You." Psalm 139:7-12

"Woe to those who go to great depths to hide their plans from the Lord, who do their work in darkness and think, 'Who sees us? Who will know?' You turn things upside down, as if the

potter were thought to be like the clay! Shall what is formed say to Him who formed it, 'He did not make me?' Can the pot say of the potter, 'He knows nothing?'" Isaiah 29:15, 16

"My eyes are on all their ways; they are not hidden from Me, nor is their sin concealed from My eyes." Jeremiah 16:17

"'Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him?' declares the Lord. 'Do not I fill heaven and earth?' declares the Lord." Jeremiah 23:24

"But I will strip Esau bare; I will uncover his hiding places, so that he cannot conceal himself. His children, relatives and neighbors will perish, and he will be no more." Jeremiah 49:10

"Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They called to the mountains and the rocks, 'Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!'" Revelation 6:15-16

"But the LORD God called to the man, 'Where are you?' He answered, 'I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.' And he said, 'Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?' The man said, 'The woman you put here with me--she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.' Then the LORD God said to the woman, 'What is this you have done?' The woman said, 'The serpent deceived me, and I ate.'" Genesis 3:9-13

"When the people saw the thunder and lightning and heard the trumpet and saw the mountain in smoke, they trembled with fear. They stayed at a distance and said to Moses, 'Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die.' Moses said to the people, 'Do not be afraid. God has come to test you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning.'" Exodus 20:18-20

From the beginning, man has hidden in fear of judgment, because he has sinned and rebelliously violated the commands of God. However, hiding from God is truly not possible. These verses show

that as well. The encouraging news is that those who trust in the Lord and fear Him can take comfort in God's abiding presence.

Townsend's creative interpretation of Jeremiah 17:9 gives important insight into his basic orientation. That Scripture says that "the heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure (or desperately wicked)." Townsend quotes a version which translates "incurable" or "desperately wicked" as "desperately sick," and he says that "'desperately sick' refers to a wounded state, indicating our damaged condition rather than our evil nature." Researching the original Hebrew word in this passage does reveal a reference to a physical condition of pain that is hopeless, desperate, and beyond cure. However, Jeremiah uses this reference solely as a metaphor to describe the desperately hopeless *spiritual condition* of man's heart apart from the miraculous intervention of God. There is not a whisper in the text of that condition being *caused by* wounds inflicted by others. Only the hopelessness of the condition is described, not the **cause**. The reference to physical pain or wound is purely a metaphor, not to be taken literally. A literal interpretation here, reading causes into the text that are not there, would defy the entire thrust of Scripture and certainly of Jeremiah's specific ministry in proclaiming judgment on those who had refused obedience to their God. This is an excellent example of the manner in which psychologists bend Scripture to support the psychological theories they have already adopted and seemingly refuse to question. It seems that at all costs, the psychological view must be upheld, no matter how much twisting and re-interpretation is necessary in order to do so. It is as if the Bible were made of wax. Other examples abound in this book and in other psychologically oriented literature promoted by Christian therapists. This is of deep concern, and a most important consideration in seeking to apply responsible discernment to the multitude of "Christian psychology" books flooding today's market. With these basic comments in mind, we will proceed to examine the book's contents in greater detail. We will look at the fundamental issue of whether man is a victim or a sinner, Townsend's division of man into numerous undefined "parts," the four basic "needs" the author claims must be filled, and the "harmful hiding" behaviors he describes. We will explore in more depth the biblical view of man's hiding as compared with the themes of this book. In conclusion, we will look at the basic issues this book raises as to the compatibility of psychology and theology in helping people change.

## VICTIMS OR SINNERS...WHAT IS THE BOTTOM LINE?

Today's psychological literature abounds with theories, often Freudian-based, that trace sinful adult behavior to abuses suffered in childhood. Certainly the sensitive Christian must be alert to real affliction in the life of a person seeking help with life's problems, and respond with compassion, gentleness, and mercy. However, one must seriously question whether the sins of others are *more* significant, *more* the cause, than one's own sin, including sinful *responses* to being sinned against. Psychological writings are enormously deficient in giving biblical counsel on how to respond to the sins of others in a way that glorifies God and works for the good of everyone involved, including the perpetrator of the child abuse. Far too much emphasis is placed on learning to see oneself as a victim with numerous "unmet needs" or "holes in the soul" that *must* be filled before it is possible to obey God and pursue holiness. Psychological counseling holds up such selfishly motivated goals in place of the Scripture's goal to be conformed to the image of Christ and lead a life that is pleasing to Him.

This book falls right into line with other similar victim-oriented literature. Fundamental to Townsend's book is the definition of four primary "needs"--attachment, separation, resolving good and bad, and authority/adulthood. These will be explored more fully in a later section. Meanwhile, the author explains "harmful hiding styles" in terms of "injury" suffered in each of these areas. He says that if the injury is very deep, then "the defensive style will be so much a part of the person's everyday life that it seems like a part of the soul." He recommends learning about one's own "hiding styles" because they are a "road map" to developmental needs that are unfulfilled. Hiding from "separateness" is *caused*, he claims, by "enmeshment struggles, boundary failures, abuse, parental failure to encourage separation," and the like. The sense of adulthood and authority is undeveloped *due to* improper use of authority in the home--too strict, too lenient, or inconsistent. Again and again, the author places his stress on "needs" that are unmet due to the injuries inflicted by others, particularly parents. He claims that as we develop in the four areas listed, "we become like Him. The problem is that we are all injured, at some level, in the development of these aspects." Some aspects of the soul are buried because of the hurt, and "it's the redemption of these parts of the self that we are afraid of--and need--the most."

Townsend traces his victim theories to very early childhood, where "the infant builds an emotional picture of the world inside,

based primarily on how he was treated in this first year." Good attachment, he explains, leads to "emotional object constancy," or the feeling of being connected even when alone, being "rooted and grounded in love" as in Ephesians 3:17. Constant reassurance by the caregiver results in this "good attachment." God does command parents to properly care for their children, and He holds them accountable for their obedience. Good care is surely valuable in leading children to an early knowledge of Christ and godly behavior. However, it is not as *crucial* as claimed by the psychologists, because God is sovereign in His control of our lives, and His power is abundantly able to overcome any early life deficiencies in love and/or training. The author misuses Scripture here, because the love in which one is "rooted and grounded" here is the love of *Christ*, not the love of an earthly mother or father or any other human. It is vital to consider such Scriptures in proper context, looking at the purposes of the Holy Spirit rather than the godless theories of Freud or other unbelievers like him.

Going back even further, the author says that "nowhere is the evidence of the Fall more apparent than in the universal experience of emotional injury in childhood." His reasons for such injury include the lack of love from parents (their sin), the lack of ability in parents (due to the sins of *their* parents), the child's own sin, and circumstances such as sickness, death, or poverty. Here he sees the Fall primarily in terms of wounds inflicted by others, even though he incidentally includes one's own sin on the list. Going back to the Fall, what one discovers is that Adam and Eve *were not wounded*, and therefore had no one to blame. The psychologists regularly fail to acknowledge or explain the original sin of that first man and woman, or recognize that each of us has followed directly in their footsteps.

Townsend gives some occasional recognition to the role of one's own sin in the development of life-dominating problems:

"We need to remember that not only do others injure us, but we also injure ourselves by our own sinful nature. Our spiritual and emotional state is always the result of a combination of both factors."

He also says that "psychological symptoms have a 'just' and an 'unjust' component to them," as they "generally are the fruit of a combination of two types of sin: sin done **by** us, and sin done **to** us." While the author must be given credit for these brief admissions, the overall focus of his writing strongly encourages

the reader to adopt a "victim" image and give precedence to the sins of others in the development of his current life's problems.

Significant space is devoted to the Freudian concept of "transference," which "signals that an injury is making itself known" and occurs "when our feelings toward someone in the past affect our present relationships." He quotes the following to support his views:

"Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules: 'Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!' These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings. Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence."

Colossians 2:20-23

He comments that "Paul deals here with believers struggling between the old system of law and Christ's system of grace." Paul is countering a heresy in the Colossians church which taught that *eternal salvation* required, in addition to faith in Christ, secret knowledge and adherence to certain man-made regulations. A somewhat similar heresy occurs in psychotherapy, which promotes its own values and claims, either outright or more subtly, that faith in Christ is not enough. Note the warning earlier in this passage:

"See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ."

Colossians 2:8

Nevertheless, the verses quoted have nothing whatsoever to do with Freudian "transference." To connect Paul's teachings and Freud's requires a stretch of the imagination. Townsend says that:

"It was difficult for them to shrug off the shackles of rules and instead turn toward relationship. These believers were looking at their unconditional acceptance through a 'transference filter' of their past bondage."

More likely, Townsend is looking at this Scripture through the "filter" of his psychological training/bondage. His interpretation is not supported by the text or its context, but

distorts the clear teaching intended by the Holy Spirit regarding the basics of salvation.

The author goes on to explain how he believes "transference" affects the "injured" person. Those with "attachment injuries" see others as too needy and demanding. Those with "separation injuries" see others as idealized or as constantly letting them down. Those with "authority injuries" see others as critical and parental. Each of these four views describes a person who is judging the motives of another person's heart, a task that belongs to God alone (Jeremiah 17:10) and is therefore improper. The solution Townsend offers is that "the more we can separate out transference (seeing life through the filter of our past reality) from sound judgment (seeing life in its present reality), the better our relationships become." The discerning Christian must respond by asking in return: How about seeing all of life through the truth revealed by God in His Word? How about praying for wisdom and discernment, trusting God's promise (James 2:5) to give it generously? God's Word is the **one** fully reliable source of "sound judgment."

Townsend is quite critical of Christians who emphasize the individual's own sin as the source of his problems. While he does acknowledge that our own sin leads to painful consequences, he claims this principle is abused when a hurting person's anxiety, depression, and other symptoms are blamed on unconfessed sin: "Many emotional and spiritual struggles have nothing to do with someone's choices to rebel." Notice the word *nothing* in this sentence. Although a person may have been terribly sinned against, and that may hurt deeply, he goes much too far in stating that the person's struggles may have *nothing* to do with his own choice to rebel. All persons are inherently sinful. One's own rebellion and sin plays a highly significant role in the development of his struggles. While he may not have initiated the abuse done to him in childhood (or later), his *response* will be tainted by his own sinful nature. This cannot be overlooked or minimized.

The author uses a statement of our Lord to support his emphasis on injury:

"But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea." Matthew 18:6

He says that:

"Jesus is stating a principle here: We are an injured, as well as a sinful, people. Not all of our scars from the past are self-inflicted."

First of all, this passage refers to children who are still in their childhood years, not to adults who are focusing on past injuries. Secondly, Jesus directed His comments to adults who might be tempted to give improper leadership to children, not to the "adult child" who was once abused. The author hasn't properly looked at the context of the verse or its intended purpose, nor has he carefully considered the "adult child's" responsibility to *respond* to past hurts in a manner that honors God. Scripture contains much, much instruction about how God's children are to overcome evil with good:

"Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' says the Lord. On the contrary: 'If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." Romans 12:14-21

"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect." Matthew 5:43-48

"Do not say, 'I'll pay you back for this wrong!' Wait for the Lord, and He will deliver you." Proverbs 20:22

"When they hurled their insults at Him, He did not retaliate; when He suffered, He made no threats. Instead, He entrusted Himself to Him who judges justly." 1 Peter 2:23

Townsend also cites Exodus 20:4-5, where God is "punishing the children for the sins of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me." This phrasing, repeated in other passages, does pose some challenges and must be interpreted in light of other biblical teachings, such as Ezekiel 18:20, which informs us of our individual responsibility before God for our own sins. In ancient times, a household often consisted of three or four generations. The sins of the eldest would undoubtedly impact the welfare of that entire household. There is no indication, however, that the sins of a father would cause a son to sin or that the son would be punished for his father's sins. In fact, numerous Old Testament accounts show either the righteous son of a wicked father, or the wicked son of a righteous father. Townsend also notes the question raised in the account of the blind man's healing in John 9: "Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Note the answer, however: "'Neither this man nor his parents sinned,' said Jesus, 'but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life'" (verse 3). This text does not relate to child abuse or its potential influence on the adult behavior of an abuse victim.

Another issue raised by the author is that "pointing blame at the wounded person...absolves the helper of a hurting person of any responsibility." This is simply not true. At least, it is not a proper conclusion to draw from the necessity to look at one's own sinful contributions to his struggles. Properly defining one's own sin will definitely *limit* the responsibility the helper, but does not absolve him of *any* responsibility. Rather it properly sorts out and separates distinct responsibilities of the counselor and counselee. The subject of sorting counselor/counselee responsibilities is an important one that is thoroughly covered elsewhere (see the many books by Jay Adams on biblical counseling). What we must do here is note Townsend's improper conclusion and unbiblical emphasis on externally inflicted injuries.

Continuing on the subject of giving help, Townsend doesn't offer us much hope. He says that "since those injured parts of ourselves remain fixed and unfinished, they can function no better than their maturity level." Therefore, he claims, "telling people to do things with parts of themselves that are immature is futile. It will always lead to failure." **Always!??** Where, in his system, is there room for God's power to transform, renew, regenerate, and

recreate? How does he account for the strong instructions of Paul in the following passages?

"Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness." Romans 6:12-13

"You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness." Ephesians 4:22-24

"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will." Romans 12:1-2

It may help to review two passages the author cites to support his views:

"Jesus replied, 'And you experts in the law, woe to you, because you load people down with burdens they can hardly carry, and you yourselves will not lift one finger to help them.'" Luke 11:46

"If you had known what these words mean, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the innocent." Matthew 12:7

These teachings have nothing to do with Townsend's teachings or Freud's teachings. The burdens referred to in Luke are man-made regulations that go beyond God's stated laws, regulations that the Pharisees attempted to circumvent while imposing them on others without offering help. Townsend's theories imply a burden in expecting someone to obey the actual commands stated in God's Word. His teachings actually impose an unnecessary burden on counselees, by claiming that they must pursue the fulfillment of his four "needs" and undergo a lengthy "recovery" process *before* they are capable of living a godly life. The Scripture quoted from Matthew has to do with actions performed on the Sabbath, and

the Pharisees' unfounded criticisms. Townsend has lifted the phrase "condemned the innocent" out of its context to lend false support to a psychological theory of who is "innocent."

Moving right along, Townsend takes a harsh attitude toward "well-intentioned" Christians who actually believe Philippians 3:13-14 and counsel others to "forget the past." He says that Paul referred to his "redeemed past" and that he had "worked through his past so that it did not keep intruding on and confusing his present." Here is what the Scripture says, and the reader is encouraged to read the entire third chapter of Philippians to see it in full context:

"Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. All of us who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. Only let us live up to what we have already attained."  
Philippians 3:12-16

Also cited is Philippians 3:5-7, where supposedly "Paul is showing us a past filled with deficits in the area of resolving good and bad:"

"If anyone else thinks he has reason to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless." Philippians 3:4b-7

Adding in the last half of verse 4 makes it clear that Paul's *purpose* here is to instruct us to put no confidence in the flesh. He is not "resolving good and bad," but, according to verses 7-8:

"But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish that I may gain Christ."

According to Townsend, however:

"Instead of going into denial about our past, we are to heal the parts of the soul that are still locked in the past in their injured state. In a very real sense, as long as those injured parts remain unhealed we are living in the past. When those parts have been brought into the recovery process, their immature perspective can be left behind. And *that* is the point at which we can 'press on toward the goal' of a deeper maturity with God, self, and others."

For those who would take Paul's words of hope literally and "press on" as instructed, Townsend cautions that "a broken heart that can't trust isn't 'what lies behind.'" Then *what is?* Paul excludes *nothing*.

But does any of this offer genuine hope to the struggling Christian who finds it difficult to trust? Paul never claims to have undergone anything equivalent to the modern-day psychological "recovery" process to "heal" some ill-defined "parts" of his soul. He was struck by the power of God Almighty and forever changed. His words must be taken at face value, as he proclaims the "surpassing greatness" of knowing Jesus Christ. His clearly stated focus on eternity casts an entirely new perspective on the life of the abuse victim. His teachings infinitely surpass the detour promoted by modern psychologists, who teach people that they *cannot* be complete in Christ without some lengthy psychotherapeutic "healing" process. Such theories destroy hope and prolong despair, discounting and distorting the pure teachings of Scripture and the powerful work of the Holy Spirit in effecting radical change.

In the midst of his stress on injury, Townsend recognizes that "harmful hiding" doesn't actually protect the person. Instead, he claims, it leads to a constant re-experiencing of hurts and further damage to an already-wounded heart: "As isolation deepens, memories recur and reinjure the child countless times over the years." Not only does he see injury as the original *cause* of later sinful patterns, but he also sees those injuries reoccurring and continuing to be a causative factor. To support his conclusions, he cites the story told by Jesus in Luke 11:24-27, where a man is cleansed from one demon but seven more return and his final condition is even worse. He concludes that "we need to fill up our 'empty house' with unconditionally loving, honest people. Then there's no room for more damage." Once again, we have a Scripture lifted out of its context to lend apparent support to a psychological theory. Jesus is specifically

talking about literal demons, and He is answering those who accused Him of exorcising demons by the power of Satan. If the passage were to be used as a metaphor, it would make much more sense, biblically, to refer to the "put off"/"put on" teachings of Scripture. The person who is saved is filled and empowered by the Holy Spirit to "put off" the practices of the old sinful nature, then to "put on" the qualities of Christ. The "put off" must be accompanied by a godly "put on," or the individual will revert to sinful habit patterns. Here is a viable application that is consistent with Scripture. The text does not even hint at hurtful memories as being the "demons" that Jesus speaks about. It would be more appropriate to refer to the passage in Philippians 3, which Townsend discounts, to develop appropriate attitudes toward past hurtful memories.

Throughout the book, the author emphasizes the importance of dealing with the "infections that attack our inner selves." He asks, "Do we deny those infections and attempt to hide them?" More biblical questions need to be raised. How do we handle the sinful behaviors and attitudes that have developed in our lives? Do we deny the truth, or do we put them off through the power of the Holy Spirit, then put on the new self, "created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness?" Do we focus, year after year, on the hurts inflicted by others, or do we respond in a righteous manner that glorifies God and seeks the good of other persons involved? Maybe even more to the point: *Do we hide...from God's judgment?*

## **THE DIVISION OF MAN: IT DOESN'T ADD UP**

One of the fundamental errors underlying this book is the author's unbiblical division of man into "parts." He claims that "we hide parts of our soul from love." Note carefully his reasoning:

"Notice I said 'parts,' not 'part.' Just as our bodies have many different muscles and bones that can be hurt, God has created us with different aspects--parts--of our souls. These various aspects can be loved and developed. They can also be isolated and immature. Each of us is a complex arrangement of such 'parts' that together create a unique whole."

The Fall, he claims, resulted in damage to these "parts," which are never clearly defined.

Townsend goes on to speculate, in his discussion of maturing versus restoring growth, that God "helps bring those parts of the personality that are younger than the rest of the self back into sync with the whole." He says that "we need to keep maturing into the image of God in those areas in which we are undamaged." He is supposing that some "parts" of man were **not** damaged by man's fall into sin. "Restoring growth" is equated with redemption, or "God's reclaiming, by Jesus' death, what has been lost." One could conclude here that only some "part" of man is redeemed by the crucifixion, while other "parts" are without sin and thus not in need of redemption.

The Bible never teaches that some "parts" of man mature more quickly than other "parts." More seriously, Scripture assures us that man's nature is *totally* depraved since the Fall: "I know that no good thing dwells in me, that is, in my flesh" (Romans 7:18a). Redemption is a restoration of the whole man. The entire old self is put off, crucified with Christ, and the person who is saved is an entirely new creation.

Townsend also uses a term he calls "splitting," in which the person is unable to experience the "good and bad parts" of himself, or others, together. He loses access to certain aspects of his soul due to their being injured: "Though these split-off parts still exist in the soul, they are injured, undeveloped, and lost to conscious awareness." Townsend claims that this "splitting" just described is the result of the alienation that occurred at the Fall. However, he never reconciles man's sinful rebellion, clearly spelled out in Scripture, with his theories that repeatedly point to outside injury as the cause of the "split." Once again, we are faced with the unbiblical idea that there are "good" parts of man along with "bad" parts, that some part of man is inherently good apart from God's redemption on the cross. When he discusses hiding styles later in the book, he says that "all harmful hiding styles have denial at their core," and "this lie is basically that a legitimate, God-ordained part of ourselves doesn't exist."

Some psychological systems divide man into parent/adult/child or parent/child, for example, Transactional Analysis. While Townsend never stresses this particular unbiblical division, but is more abstract and doesn't number the "parts" he claims exist, he does refer to the popular "inner child" concept when speaking of the compulsion to repeat the past:

"The hurt child within them takes responsibility for the injury, rather than understanding that the lack of love had to do with the other person, not themselves."

This book places heavy emphasis on the injuries inflicted by others, as discussed earlier in this critique. That emphasis is particularly apparent as we look at the way the author divides man. He says that:

"We imprison the injured part of ourselves with our destructive memories. Those who injured us in the past become the only relationship to our hurt self."

He also claims that we select particular "shields" based on what "injured part" of the self is being protected, and who or what we are protecting ourselves from. Although claiming that the isolation of "some part of the self" from relationship is "perhaps the number one root of emotional disorders," he counsels us to "know what parts of our soul need protecting" -- the "vulnerable, fragile parts." His counsel is supported by citing Proverbs 4:23, which says "above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life." However, this proverb teaches us to "guard the heart" in order that we might not sin against God. Jesus taught that "out of the heart" comes murder, adultery, and other sin.

Scripture uses the term "heart" to refer to the *entire* nonphysical part of man, the "inmost being," as distinguished from the outward appearance. Some argue a division of the inner man between "soul" (psychological) and "spirit" (trichotomous position), while others believe the Bible teaches only a distinction between the physical and nonphysical. Scripture never does specifically teach a division of the inner man, but continually places its stress on the wholeness of man. (I refer the reader to *The Theology of Christian Counseling*, by Jay Adams, for a more complete theological discussion supporting the dichotomous view.) Certainly, the Bible never teaches the division proclaimed by Townsend, who never even clearly numbers or defines the "parts." There may be different *aspects* of the inner man, such as thoughts, emotions, motives, but these function as an integrated whole. We are whole persons before God, not a collection of spiritual "tenants in common." The Bible does use the term "inward parts," which is translated in some versions as "inmost being:"

"Surely You desire truth in the inner parts; You teach me wisdom in the inmost place." Psalm 51:6

The following is said about the original Hebrew word translated "inner parts" here:

"This noun (found twice in the O.T.) describes an object covered over, hidden, or concealed. Psalm 51:6 clearly communicates the sense of 'inward being' -- inner man covered by the body. *Tuhot* is parallel to *satum*, a 'closed up place,' and to the seat of the sin nature, denoting the residence of truth or faithfulness, referred to elsewhere as 'heart' (Psalm 15:2, 1 Samuel 12:24)." (Quoted from *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, Harris, Archer, Waltke [Moody Press].)

A related theological flaw is the concept that man is alienated within himself, that there is some kind of break with self. The author even states that the essence of man's problem as a "somewhat beautiful but damaged home under restoration" is "a break in relationship with God, self, and others." He also says we are isolated from God, self, and others. The "internal hiding styles" described later in the book are defined as "those patterns we use to hide from our painful internal feelings, thoughts, or memories." In a sense, this is a hiding of self from self. Townsend also describes a hidden sinful lifestyle, a "secret self," and describes therapeutic progress as the ability to accept oneself as both an image-bearer *and* a fallen creature.

This "break with self" radically redefined man's basic problem. (See my critique of John Bradshaw [*A Way That Seems Right*], who turns the Fall upside down!) Townsend does note man's separation from God and others, but the addition of self is faulty. The basic problem is separation from **God**; reconciliation with others should naturally follow one's reconciliation to Him through Christ. Adding to that fundamental problem, by claiming a separation of self from self, clouds the solution that God has provided in the cross.

Townsend's division of man into "parts" is a concept crucial to understanding his book. Most of his teachings rest on the assumption that this division represents a correct view of the nature of man. However, Scripture does not support such an idea. Since the book is built on an erroneous premise, it must be read with great discernment.

## "NEED" - OR GREED?

This entire book is heavily need-oriented in its understanding of the nature of man and how his basic problems are to be solved. The author describes four major "needs" which will be discussed in more detail following this introductory material: attachment, separateness, resolving good and bad, and authority/adulthood. He claims that "hiding" patterns develop when our needs are unmet, and legitimate "needs" are made bad. One of his primary purposes in describing these patterns, and recommending that the reader understand his own patterns, is to become aware of one's own spiritual and emotional needs. He says that "learning to discern your own specific tendencies in hiding can give you important insight into your growth needs." Thus his counseling goals are more focused on living to please self, under the guise of meeting "legitimate needs," rather than learning to live a life that pleases and glorifies God. Suffering is defined as "what we experience when a need or wish goes unmet." This is certainly not a full view of suffering, and that topic will be reserved for further discussion later. However, it is worth noting here the lumping together of "need" and "wish." Much of what psychologists define as "need" would be better described as "desire," or more specifically, "evil desire" or "lust" (or greed!). Nevertheless, Townsend claims that we "need safety and a sense of belonging in our three primary relationships: God, self, and others. We begin life in a terrified and disconnected state." This only touches on the fundamental need of man to be reconciled to God and delivered from His wrath. It is more consistent with the theories of unbelievers like Maslow and Adler than with the teachings of Scripture, which nowhere command or encourage the Christian to pour his energies into the pursuit of meeting such "needs" as the psychologists define. Yet Townsend goes so far as to state that the "first step toward sanctification" is in "bringing our needs to God and others." He indicates that salvation requires humility, a recognition of our desperate need for it. Salvation is indeed a legitimate need--maybe the one truly legitimate need described in this book--and yes, it does require the person to humbly recognize his need. However, it does not follow either logically or scripturally that sanctification is begun by bringing psychologically defined "needs" to the attention of God and others. Sanctification begins when one learns to deny his own so-called "needs," trusting in the Lord's provision, and seek to love and meet the needs of *others*.

It is particularly disturbing, yet important, to note the author's quotations of Scripture and of Jesus Christ's own words. These references are a sugar coating over the poisonous teachings

of ungodly men like Freud and Maslow, giving a deceptive impression that the theories promoted are consistent with Scripture when in fact they are not.

**Words of Jesus Christ.** Townsend claims that Jesus "validated our neediness," and "therefore, when we express our needs, we move toward connecting with Him and others." This is supported by citing the following passages:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 5:3

"On hearing this, Jesus said, 'It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: "I desire mercy, not sacrifice." For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.'" Matthew 9:12, 13

Regarding the last passage, Townsend claims that "Jesus' point was that we all have problems and needs to be looked at, understood, loved, and helped by Him and His resources." However, both of these Scriptures have to do with a humble admission of our **sin**. neither is a call to recognize "neediness" in the terms described by psychologists. The real need here is for repentance and salvation from the power and eternal consequences of sin.

The author also says that one reason needs are made "bad" is the "perceived omnipotence of children," who assume the responsibility for injuries committed against them. Christ is quoted again:

"He causes the sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous." Matthew 5:45b

"Perceived omnipotence," as Townsend calls it, is a result of the Fall, an event inspired by the enemy of our souls when he confidently asserted his supposed equality with God. While it is true that suffering falls on both the wicked and the righteous, the just and the unjust, one cannot jump from this Scripture to the conclusion that legitimate "needs" are "made bad." This quotation falls in the context of strong instructions to demonstrate love toward one's *enemies*, which is anything but a call to seek one's own "need" fulfillment.

Claiming that "God places great value on our needs being met," Townsend again quotes Jesus:

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing." Matthew 23:37

It is enlightening to note the somewhat chilling context of this verse. It comes near the end of many "woe's" directed to the religious leaders who rejected their Messiah. Yes, God wants to gather His people under His protective care. He wants their absolute devotion, undivided hearts, and obedience. He does meet the needs of those who genuinely turn to Him, *denying* self, turning away from selfish motivations, and offering their lives as "living sacrifices" (Romans 12:1). It is unfathomable, however, to cite the Scripture above as support for pursuing the psychological "needs" addressed in this book.

Also noted are Scriptures regarding the vital concept of abiding in Christ. It is said that "Jesus referred to our need to be close to Him," and "connection is necessary for survival." Moving into the realm of human relationships, Townsend says that we also need each other, citing the creation of Eve to be the companion of Adam. He says that "marriage is one important component" of our "need for attachment." The following verses are referenced:

"Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing." John 15:4-5

There is some important truth here. The Christian believer must indeed be connected with Christ, as the branch is connected to the vine. Without Him there is no life, no fruit produced. However, the stress in this passage is on *producing fruit* that glorifies the Father. It cannot be seen as a call to get one's own "needs" met, although God *does* meet the needs of those who seek Him, His kingdom, and His glory first. Instead, it is a high call to discipleship and productiveness in God's kingdom. The psychological teachings fail to evidence a concern for the self-denial commanded by Christ if one is to follow Him.

Townsend further notes the instruction of Jesus to become like little children. His explanation of this is that it refers to the "openness that children have in asking for their needs to be met." Giving a counseling example, he says of a client: "She

was unable to seek comfort for herself." But Jesus' teaching here is about biblical humility, laying aside ambitions of power and importance in order to serve, obey, and bring glory to God. Nowhere in this passage is a command to ask for one's own "needs" to be met. To the contrary, it is much more consistent with the text to see a teaching that one must abandon his own "rights" to have his perceived "needs" met in order to be a true disciple.

Finally, the author claims that "repair requires taking risks with our needs" and "finding safe, warm relationships in which emotional needs will be accepted and loved, not criticized and judged." The verses regarding the "poor in spirit" (Matthew 5:3-4) are quoted once again. However, the truly "poor in spirit" are those who entrust themselves and their real needs to the Lord, not those who assertively seek out "safe" relationships in which their "needs" are sure to be met. Those who are focused primarily on their own needs are quite often not so very "poor" in spirit.

**Other Scripture References.** In addition to quoting Jesus numerous times, Townsend frequently cites passages throughout the Bible to support his theories of human "need."

One chapter describes a "developmental view of self," wherein the person is born defenseless, helpless, and terrified. The "only organizer of all this chaos is the mother," according to the author, who describes three processes in the infant and uses Scripture as a foundation. First, the infant "receives an emotional picture of mother inside the heart." Townsend terms this "introjection" and claims it leads to the ability to love others empathetically, as in these verses:

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God." 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

Certainly the mother has an important, God-given responsibility in the care of her child. However, she is not the "only organizer of all this chaos" (emphasis added). Apart from God's divine intervention in bringing about salvation, the most caring, attentive mother in the world cannot bring the order that is truly needed. Furthermore, the Scripture in 2 Corinthians has *nothing* to do with the motherly care of an infant. It has to do with God's care during times of being persecuted for the sake of the gospel. That meaning greatly surpasses the psychological theories about the role of one's mother, and Townsend's exegesis of this

passage is improper. It must also be noted that God can override the effects of maternal neglect or abuse during infancy. One's life is not set in concrete by a mother's care or the lack of it. Such a viewpoint reveals Townsend's Freudian underpinnings.

Secondly, a process termed "projection" allows the infant to "place her rage onto the mother" and "prepares us for our adult aggressive tasks such as initiative, boundaries, and limit-setting." To support this theory, which employs another Freudian concept ("projection"), Townsend now sends us to the Old Testament:

"That prophet or dreamer must be put to death, because he preached rebellion against the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt and redeemed you from the land of slavery; he has tried to turn you from the way the Lord your God commanded you to follow. You must purge the evil from among you." Deuteronomy 13:5

This entire chapter of Deuteronomy warns against idolatry, rebellion, and false prophets. It takes an enormous stretch of the imagination to move from these God-given commands to the Freudian idea of placing rage onto one's mother, or "aggressive tasks." Purging out evil means purging out evil, and cannot be readily equated with the psychologists' views about protecting *self* by "setting boundaries," another important topic to be discussed later. There is a godly boldness, turning from the fear of man, that differs significantly from the assertiveness and initiative that primarily seeks protection of *self*. It is the modern psychologists who so often "turn you from the way the Lord your God commanded you to follow."

Finally, the "developmental view" concludes by stating that the infant begins to make distinctions between unlikes, thus preparing for later value judgments and discernment between good and evil. This is called "splitting." This is probably the least objectionable of the three processes. People must, of course, discern between good and evil. However, the proper way to do so is by careful study of God's Word and practice of His commands, and that is not mentioned.

Moving on to spiritual growth, the author claims that it is "stage-specific:"

"I write to you, dear children, because your sins have been forgiven on account of His name. I write to you, fathers, because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I

write to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I write to you, dear children, because you have known the Father. I write to you, fathers, because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one." 1 John 2:12-14

"In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's Word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil." Hebrews 5:12-14

The question is posed, "Have you ever known middle-aged people who can't seem to master the task of emotional intimacy?" This sort of person is said to be remaining in the "milk stage" of spiritual maturity. Certainly, there are differing levels of maturity in understanding and practicing God's Word. There are levels of authority and responsibility, as one sees from the qualifications for pastors, elders, and deacons (1 and 2 Timothy; Titus). However, the question raised reveals the psychological orientation of the author, who seems more concerned about "emotional intimacy" than whether one understands biblical teachings and does the will of God. There is a heavier focus here on the values promoted by psychology, such as sharing of feelings, than on specific obedience to God's commands--on meeting one's own perceived "needs," rather than wholeheartedly loving God and then loving others as much as self.

A passage from Ecclesiastes is cited, claiming that "isolation has disastrous consequences:"

"Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken." Ecclesiastes 4:9-11

The purpose of this book is to demonstrate the meaninglessness of life apart from God, as evidenced by its forceful conclusion:

"Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the

whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil."

Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14

There is a partial truth in the author's claims that people must be "attached" to others. Much New Testament Scripture stresses the unity among believers and the close interdependency. However, one's priorities must be ordered to put God at the top, then others, and lastly self. Psychology reorders these to place one's own needs in front, before it is possible to serve God and love others. There is much more to the passage in Ecclesiastes than simply the need for connection to other people, even though that is a significant part of the Christian's life. If that connection is not rooted in love for God, it can be just as disastrous as isolation, if not more so.

Townsend also claims that "Satan's plan is to help us get God-given, legitimate needs met in a way that will destroy us." Some of Satan's counterfeits are noted by John:

"For everything in the world--the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does--comes not from the Father but from the world."

1 John 2:16

But note the verses that precede and follow this one:

"Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

1 John 2:15

"The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever." 1 John 2:17

Unfortunately, Townsend's system encourages the "love of the world" that John says reveals a lack of God's love. Worldly desires, proclaimed by psychologists as vital "needs," are going to pass away. The passage concludes with a clear call to do the will of God, even if one's so-called "needs" are not met. The three items listed in verse 16 are even more serious than being simply counterfeit methods of meeting legitimate "needs." They represent an idolatrous exchange of the worship of God for the worship of created things, an exchange of God's truth for a lie.

Discussing the fruit of the Spirit, Townsend claims that "spiritual and emotional isolation" is the "cause of our lack of

love, joy, and gratitude." He says that spiritual fruit is the *result* of being loved, rather than something that can be chosen at will. He is correct in stating that the fruit of the Spirit is not something that one can merely choose at will. However, Galatians 5 clearly states that it is the *result* of "walking in the Spirit," **not** "being loved" as the author claims. That means being under the control of the Holy Spirit and walking in obedience to God's commands. Love, joy, peace, and other Christlike attributes result from one's proper walk with the Lord, but that can happen even in a time of persecution where it may not appear that one is loved by others as he might like to be. The author's focus is improperly placed on self again--being loved rather than giving love according to Christ's commands.

**Conclusion.** Townsend is critical of Christian fellowships where "true bonds are trivialized--or, even worse, dismissed as 'trusting man too much.'" He claims that such churches attract people who cannot "be vulnerable with their needs for connection." Stressing that we need an "environment of safe relationships" to come out of "hiding," he is critical of Christian churches "where it is often assumed that doctrinal exposure to the truths of the Bible is sufficient to ensure solutions to all problems." Quoting the words of Jesus, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life," he says that this "is one indication that knowing a person is necessary to knowing His truth." These criticisms are disturbing in that they minimize the crucial role of Scripture, but they also challenge us to look at the proper biblical place of human relationships in Christian growth and fellowship. The New Testament has an abundance of "one another" admonitions, and the life of Paul reveals a life of love and concern wherein he poured himself out for the purpose of preaching the gospel and discipling the sheep that God placed under his care. It is indeed possible to "trust man too much," and that danger must be guarded against so that no man becomes an idol to another. The New Testament, however, actually teaches a closeness in God's family that psychology tends to destroy. Psychologists charge big fees for their time, and limit their caring and "closeness," if one could even call it that, to a "professional" office setting. This is abhorrent to the new Testament model of discipleship and brother/sister relationships in the church. It should also be noted that correct discipleship of another Christian focuses attention on the Lord and the power of the Holy Spirit to effect godly change, whereas psychology focuses on the "expert" knowledge of man, the skills of the therapist, and the resources within the individual himself--thus drawing one's whole perspective away from glorifying God and subtly exalting man instead. The Word of God is truly sufficient, giving us everything we need for life and

godliness (2 Peter 1:3-4), and that includes striking the proper balance between human interdependence and reliance on God.

It has taken much space to review the multitude of references to "need" contained throughout this book. There is undoubtedly some repetition, but it serves to indicate the importance of the author's focus on "needs," and to show how his perspective differs from the Bible in a way that cannot be overlooked. To conclude, I wish to cite a couple of examples of how the author applies his "need" theories. One concerns two missionaries, one who burned out quickly on the mission field and one who endured hardship very well. The first came from a family of "emotionally detached parents," while the other grew up in a loving family. The author's conclusions here are almost too obvious to state: The "needs" of the one were not met, while the "needs" of the other were met in his family of origin. However, conclusions about causation cannot be made so lightly. Townsend fails to account for each individual's response to his circumstances, and to clearly examine each one's motives for entering ministry (and motives are only known to God in their entirety). More serious is the second example--Jesus Christ, who "was fully connected to His 'support system,' the Trinity," and thus able to endure the cross:

"Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." Hebrews 12:2

Neither this Scripture nor any other states that Jesus relied on a "support system" in the sense that this term is used by modern psychologists. Jesus was and is **God**, one with the Father, one with the Spirit. This sort of reasoning reduces the Lord to psychological terms and theories, failing to recognize His deity and His purposeful entrance into the world to fulfill His plan of salvation. Such reductionism is absurd, and certainly a serious misrepresentation of Scripture.

Having examined the fundamentals of Townsend's "need" theory, we will move on to look at each of the four categories of "need" that he claims.

## **THE "NEED" FOR ATTACHMENT**

Of the four areas of "need" advanced by the author, this is the one closest to having a biblical basis. In fact, there is a true biblical basis for stating that man has a need to be reconciled to God, and he is commanded to be reconciled to his

brothers and sisters in Christ. Nevertheless, the concept presented here must be closely examined, along with the Scriptures used to support it.

Townsend claims that "we cannot *not* bond," and that improper bonding is the "root of the addictive process." He quotes Luke here: "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Luke 12:34). This is on the right track, but it fails to go far enough in its analysis of the human heart:

"For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles. Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator--who is forever praised. Amen." Romans 1:21-25

We must replace the word "bonding" with "worship" in order to recognize the real seriousness of man's basic problem in attaching himself to the wrong objects. "Addiction" is in reality a type of idolatry. This is far more serious than simply a meeting of "legitimate needs" by the wrong means--an analysis that overlooks the depraved nature of man. Townsend does point out that many otherwise good things lead to improper attachment, and that "many committed Christians are unknowing 'sanctified addicts.'" Biblically, this is exactly what Romans 1 describes so clearly--the exchange of the worship of God for the **worship** of created things, which would be good if accepted as gifts from God rather than being substituted in His place. Townsend's argument is weak, too, in that he appears to place "attachment" to other humans, and even to self, on just about the same level as attachment to God. This ignores the fundamental exchange issue addressed in Romans 1.

Townsend clearly places attachment at the top of his tower of "needs," stating that attachment is "our deepest need" and also "the deepest part of the character of God." He supports this with familiar Scriptures:

"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16

"Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love." 1 John 4:8

Then he says that "our ability to attach is our ability to relate our spiritual and emotional needs to others." In fact, he insists that we are to learn "how to feel loved," again citing scriptural support:

"If anyone says, 'I love God,' yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen." 1 John 4:20

This verse, he says, is "declaring that our closeness to people is a measuring stick, to some extent, of our closeness to God."

There are important flaws in this analysis. As indicated previously, man does have a very real need to be reconciled to God. If there is one genuine need that dare not be overlooked, this is it. It determines man's eternal destiny. God meets that need through Christ's work on the cross. The familiar John 3:16 states the need and the answer clearly. Where the author goes astray is in his focus on *being* loved, and relating *our* "needs" to others as a primary focus. The phrase above, "to some extent," is deficient in that it overlooks Scripture's emphatic, absolute statement that the man who does not *give* love...*does not love God*. The Bible's focus is on *giving* love to others, not receiving it. In fact, without this giving of love, we are declared to be *nothing* (1 Corinthians 13:1-3). One can relate his own needs ad infinitum, yet be without a demonstration of love for others--and he therefore fails God's test of "attachment."

Townsend briefly touches on the most serious and final separation, which is hell. He speaks of the "law of entropy," wherein isolated things move toward deterioration. Here he mentions that Jesus was temporarily "cut off," separated from God on our behalf to take the punishment for our sins. There is real truth here, and a reminder that the author is a brother in Christ. Unfortunately, not enough space and significance is given to this ultimate separation, which is a much more serious issue than the psychological isolation that occupies most of the space in this and other similar books.

Besides reconciliation with God, man has responsibilities to be reconciled to others and to be deeply involved in their lives. Townsend mentions a couple of important Scriptures here:

"If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it." 1 Corinthians 12:26

"Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household." Ephesians 2:19

These represent a vital New Testament teaching about unity in the body of Christ, a teaching that is all too frequently overlooked by psychological counselors. More must be said about this matter when we examine the author's concepts about separateness. Psychological counseling operates apart from the authority of the church and its resources, as if God's power, God's Word, and God's ordained leaders were inadequate. Note this comment the author makes: "Yet the level of severity of your hiding may not warrant professional help. This is where the resources of God can clearly emerge in all their varied ways." Really? Such a statement exalts man's wisdom operating independently of God's specific biblical plan for counseling and restoring people caught in sin--and hiding from *judgment*. It undermines the New Testament teachings about unity and interdependence in the church.

One final note concerns the idea of holiness, which Townsend describes as "believers being wholly devoted to and connected to God, and detached from evil." As we move on to look at the supposed "need" for separateness, we should pause to consider the fact that holiness means being "set apart." Along with being reconciled to God and abiding in Him, it is being set apart from the world and its values. God's people are called to be holy, living *in* the world yet not being *of* the world--knowing their true citizenship is in heaven. This point should be carefully considered as we move on to look at what psychology sees as a "need" for separateness and how it differs from biblical teachings.

## **THE "NEED" FOR SEPARATENESS--BOUNDARIES, SUFFERING, WITHDRAWAL**

It is interesting to note that psychology has begun to take on certain political terminology in discussing human problems and relationships: boundaries, protection, and rights, for example. Each person becomes something like an autonomous political unit, with clear boundaries that separate him from others and "rights" that he can assert as he seeks to protect himself from attack. But is this a biblical view? What kind of separations, protections, and rights does the Bible define?

This author says that "boundaries are another way to refer to ownership, stewardship, or responsibility." Many Christians, he says, "have difficulty filtering out others' needs from their own" and are "feeling controlled by the needs and crises of others." They are "continually taking on problems that aren't theirs and neglecting their own." Their "yes" to others is not a cheerful, free choice, and they "can never be sure if some sacrificial act they are performing for someone else was done freely, or out of a sense of obligation, fear, or guilt." The author even says that God has boundaries, that He "makes positive self-statements" along with telling us what He is not: "These 'nots' are the boundaries of God." Unlike people, God doesn't speak to us in indirect, "passive-aggressive" ways.

There is some truth amidst the maze of psychological error in this important area of study. The author is correct in stating that "God has made us all stewards of certain things in our lives for which no one else can take responsibility," citing the following passage:

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him, for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad." 2 Corinthians 5:10

Correctly sorting out responsibilities, properly defining one's own sphere of responsibility, is a crucial task of every Christian and certainly of the one who seeks to give godly counsel to others. However, what makes this particularly difficult is the overlap revealed by Scripture. For example, both the one who sins, and the one who is sinned against, have a biblical obligation to initiate the process of reconciliation. If each sorts out the responsibilities correctly, the two will meet halfway. Another concern about the author's analysis is that people really **do** have obligations to others, and there are times to say "yes" in obedience to God (certainly not catering to the whims of others, however) even though one does not feel particularly cheerful. Many genuine obligations to others are not cheerful. The key here is to examine one's heart honestly before the Lord, being willing for Him to change the fear/guilt/obligation motivation into a heart that is responsive to His will. Townsend says that "you can't love someone if you don't feel free not to love them. Love entails free choice, not forced compliance." He also says you cannot love if you say yes to demands out of fear of hurting another's feelings. This is simply not correct. God *commands* love. It is not the "free choice" that psychologists imagine--not for the true child of God.

The fear of hurting another is the fear of man, rather than the proper fear of God which seeks to honor Him and therefore do whatever is for the best welfare of another. One may or may not "feel like it," but God's commands stand nonetheless. Townsend supports his statements by quoting 1 John 4:18, which teaches that "perfect love casts out fear." However, his exegesis is improper in that he fails to consider the context. This Scripture specifically refers to the fear of eternal punishment that is cast out by God's perfect love demonstrated on the cross. It has nothing to do with psychological teachings that claim "love is a choice" instead of God's clear command.

The author devotes significant space to a discussion of Galatians 6:1-5:

"Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else, for each one should carry his own load."

Commenting on the "burden" in verse 2, and the "burden" in verse 5, he indicates that the original Greek word in the former refers to a "boulder," while the latter denotes a "knapsack." He uses the good Samaritan story to illustrate what a "boulder" might be, and he goes on to say that some people take on the "knapsacks" of others but ignore their own, while others need someone to carry their "knapsacks." What is missing here is the acknowledgment that "burden" in verse 2 specifically refers to a moral fault or sin in which someone has become entangled. In this area, there is a clear scriptural call for *mutual* responsibility. Each individual is responsible before God for his own sin, and in the final analysis he alone is responsible. However, this Scripture and several others (Matthew 18:15-20, 1 Corinthians 5, Leviticus 19:17) impose a responsibility on every Christian to lovingly rebuke and restore those caught in sin. It is not an either/or proposition. It is a curious and disturbing observation that psychology minimizes responsibility for an individual developing sinful patterns such as this book describes, yet expects this helpless victim to somehow carry the full load in getting himself out of trouble. Scripture places clear responsibility on the individual for his entrance into sin, but gives a responsibility to all Christians to help the fallen brother or sister *out* of that sin. The author makes no distinction between the Christian and

the *unbeliever*. In the latter case, our responsibility is to evangelize. Judgment of the unbeliever belongs to God (1 Corinthians 5:12).

Another significant comment is that "taking responsibility for other people's feelings never works, because it deprives them of learning from the consequences of their behavior." He cites the following as support:

"But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil."  
Hebrews 5:14

This passage, taken in or out of context, has nothing to do with emotions, but with the practice of righteousness. People learn to discern between good and evil by practice of obedience to God. There are indeed many times when it is appropriate for a person to learn from the consequences of his sinful actions and not be spared. The loving Christian brother will add godly counsel and admonition to those consequences. However, psychologists frequently advise against taking responsibility for the *feelings* of others. This needs comment, because our actions toward others are to be pleasing to God and undertaken for the good of others. If another person is hurt, what we must do is examine ourselves to see if we have sinned against that person, or whether that person is sinning in his response, or both. Either way, there is a responsibility to "go and be reconciled." Typical of psychologists, this author places too much emphasis on feelings.

Several suggestions are given for the "repair" of "boundary" problems:

1. **"Ask God to help you become a truth-teller, even of negative truth.** He cites Proverbs 10:18, which says "He who conceals his hatred has lying lips, and whoever spreads slander is a fool." His interpretation is that we must admit anger to self, God, and others. However, notice the second half of this proverb. One must be extremely careful in not spreading slanderous comments, and numerous other Scriptures warn against expressing anger too quickly. The anger must be examined before God to determine whether it is righteous or unrighteous--usually the latter. There may well be a need for confession to God, asking His forgiveness. It might *not* be appropriate or necessary to "admit" one's anger to another person, although there is a clear responsibility to be reconciled. The area of ventilating anger is an important one where the psychologists go far astray in

their recommendation of ventilation, which is based on Freud, not on Scripture.

2. **"Find people who celebrate your separateness."** Townsend claims that "even God loves our no," citing the following:

"The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."  
2 Peter 3:9

That verse is taken totally out of context, and the general thrust of Scripture is ignored. God does not "love our no" when we rebel against His commandments and disobey, or reject His plan of salvation. Although He demonstrates extreme longsuffering, patience, and mercy, His displeasure with sin is a highlight of the entire Bible. The verse in 2 Peter must be read in context, speaking of the end times and God's elect coming to salvation prior to that time.

3. **"Practice disagreement."** Townsend quotes Jesus Christ here:

"Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for that is how their fathers treated the false prophets." Luke 6:26

Our Lord was not suggesting that we "practice disagreement," but commanding that we uphold His truth and seek to please God rather than man. Townsend says you will "rock some boats" when you disagree. Indeed you may--when you speak the truth of God's Word, but that is disagreement for the sake of *eternal truth*, not out of a "need" for "separateness." (You will rock more than a few boats if you dare to speak out against psychological theories and instead uphold the sufficiency of God's Word!)

4. **"Take responsibility for your mistakes."** This one cannot be faulted, but it conflicts with much of the theory in this and other psychological teachings. Also, the word "mistakes" is a euphemism for sin.

5. **"Learn to respect others' separateness."** This must be viewed with some caution, because of responsibilities to lovingly correct those brothers and sisters who fall into sin. Such respect should be shown, however, in areas where sin is not involved. See Paul's words in Romans 14 about "disputable matters." Unfortunately, much modern psychological teaching, and the popular 12-step theology, teaches us to "live and let

live" even when another is on a dangerous, sinful path of destruction.

Townsend lists numerous "psychological fruits" of "boundary" problems, such as trouble speaking one's mind, lack of direction, depression, anxiety, substance abuse, eating "disorders," panic attacks, and identity "disorders." As we shall see in examining specific behaviors later on, these patterns do not result from an unfulfilled "need" to be separate, but from sinful attributes such as the fear of man, idolatry, and living to please self.

Closely related to "boundaries" is Townsend's view of "helpful hiding" in dealing with suffering. He says that:

"Much suffering we experience is neither for God's glory nor for our good. Without some type of self-protection, we suffer in destructive ways."

He defines two basic types of pain, the physical and the emotional or spiritual. The latter, he says, "come from problems in our relatedness to God, self, or others." He goes on to divide such suffering between the "just" and the "unjust." He sees "just" suffering as unpreventable, teaching us wisdom, but "unjust" suffering is preventable, calling for justice, setting limits on evil, and responsible withdrawal. There are serious flaws in his analysis, mixed in with some comments that are biblical.

"Just" suffering, according to Townsend, is our teacher:

"For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: 'If a man will not work, he shall not eat.'" 2 Thessalonians 3:10

To some degree, this is correct, and Townsend does acknowledge the reality of God's discipline as outlined in Proverbs 3:11-12 and quoted in Hebrews 12:5-6. Every believer sins and experiences the discipline of God, designed to teach and train. However, the author is incomplete in his comments. He says that just suffering is **unpreventable**, disregarding the words of Peter:

"If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or a thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name." 1 Peter 4:15, 16

For the Christian, suffering as the consequence of one's own sin is exactly the type of pain that **is** preventable, increasingly so, as he grows in his walk with the Lord.

"Unjust" suffering is the area, however, that draws the most attention and concern. Townsend correctly identifies such pain as resulting from the Fall. However, from that point on, most of his conclusions are incorrect. He says that "though God does allow this kind of suffering, it's not always true that it's a 'blessing' or 'lesson.'" Notice how James and Peter would respond:

"Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything." James 1:2-4

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil, or fade--kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last. *In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.* These have come so that your faith--of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire--may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory, and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed." 1 Peter 1:3-7 (emphasis added)

Townsend goes on to say that "this type of suffering seems to be the result of the very high value God places on our freedom to choose love or evil." Furthermore, "God places a high premium on our being able to autonomously choose to protect ourselves, rather than to react angrily or violently." However, *man is **not** autonomous, but under the sovereign control of God.* Self-protection often does involve anger and/or violent reactions. It is trusting **God's** protection that guards against such responses. In spite of God's allowing a degree of free choice, He is highly displeased when we disobey His commands, and continued disobedience without repentance and salvation will ultimately lead to His wrath.

The author also says that God shares our sadness in being unable to prevent suffering, and that He *limited Himself* (Matthew

23:37, quoted earlier). His analysis fails to take into account the sovereignty of God, clearly taught throughout Scripture. Sovereignty is an immense and critical topic, the full scope of which is far beyond the space available in this paper. However, note just a few key verses on the issue:

"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." Ephesians 1:11

Romans 9: The reader is encouraged to read the entire chapter.

"The Lord works out everything for His own ends--even the wicked for a day of disaster." Proverbs 16:4

"In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps." Proverbs 16:9

"The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord; He directs it like a watercourse wherever He pleases." Proverbs 21:1

"His dominion is an eternal dominion; His kingdom endures from generation to generation. All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as He pleases with the powers of heaven and the people of the earth. No one can hold back His hand or say to Him: 'What have You done?'" Daniel 4:34b, 35

The verse cited in Matthew 23:37 comes at the end of a series of "woe's" pronounced by the Lord. God has created man with an ability to make choices (though much more limited than man might think!), yet He remains sovereign in His control, not "limiting Himself" as the author suggests. The analysis here tends to exalt man rather than God. Curiously, though, he notes that absolute justice is God's domain (Deuteronomy 32:35), something man is impotent to bring about even though he may frustrate himself by demanding justice on earth.

Looking at how we are to respond to "unjust" suffering, Townsend discusses "joyful suffering" versus "helpful hiding," and claims that unjust suffering is *preventable*. Biblical teachings disagree:

"Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ,

so that you may be overjoyed when His glory is revealed. If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you."  
1 Peter 4:12-14

Townsend, however, minimizes this holy call to suffering for Christ, saying that "when our ability to love is greater than our need for justice, we joyfully suffer. When our need for justice exceeds our ability to love, we responsibly withdraw." Exalting perceived "needs" even further, he claims that:

"There are times when the heart is empty or injured and has nothing to give. In these times we need justice, in the form of support away from suffering, in order to become reconnected to God and others."

This cannot be supported biblically. How would Paul have responded?

"We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed." 2 Corinthians 4:7

"For our light and momentary afflictions are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all."  
2 Corinthians 4:17

2 Corinthians 6:3-13 (recommended reading regarding Paul's hardships)

Further minimizing the call to obedience:

"If we're allowing ourselves to suffer because of fear, obligation, or guilt, we can't respond from a loving position."

In 1 John 4:18, God says, "There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment." This Scripture is taken out of context to support Townsend's position. The book of 1 John was written to give assurance of salvation, and this passage concerns the fear of eternal punishment that is cast out by God's demonstration of love on the cross. Since when must we cast off all sense of obligation or guilt when we're out of God's will? Fear of man is an improper motivation for loving actions, we can agree, but proper *fear of the Lord* is a critical motivation in pursuing godliness. But Townsend persists: "We can find ourselves in situations that are

too difficult, too painful, too destructive, too injurious," and he concludes that "in this context, withdrawal is not selfishness, but responsible stewardship." Really? Since when did Christ's call to self-denial and sacrifice require an evaluation on our part of being "too difficult" or "too painful" or a focus on our own sense of injury? This analysis is unbiblical. Yet the author quotes Proverbs 22:3 to support his points: "A prudent man sees danger and takes refuge, but the simple keep going and suffer for it." However, the danger that one must guard against has to do with occasions to sin against God. Proverbs makes this point rather clearly in a section that warns against foolishly falling into adultery:

"With persuasive words she led him astray; she seduced him with her smooth talk. All at once he followed her like an ox going to the slaughter, like a deer stepping into a noose till an arrow pierces his liver, like a bird darting into a snare, little knowing it will cost him his life. Now then, my sons, listen to me; pay attention to what I say. Do not let your heart turn to her ways or stray into her paths. Many are the victims she has brought down; her slain are a mighty throng. Her house is a highway to the grave, leading down to the chambers of death." Proverbs 7:21-27

The focus here is on seeing the danger of displeasing **God** and violating His commands, not the danger that one's perceived emotional "needs" might be damaged. The difference is crucial. One perspective focuses on pleasing God and giving Him glory, while the other focuses only on pleasing self.

Townsend goes on to claim biblical examples, of both God and man, of withdrawal and suffering:

"And I will certainly hide My face on that day because of all their wickedness in turning to other gods." Deuteronomy 31:18

"In a surge of anger I hid My face from you for a moment, but with everlasting kindness I will have compassion on you," says the Lord your Redeemer." Isaiah 54:8

"My eyes will be on the faithful in the land, that they may dwell with me; he whose walk is blameless will minister to me." Psalm 101:6

God is not withdrawing for some psychological "self-protection" (as if He needed to!), but withdrawing His blessings to warn and discipline His people who have greatly sinned against Him. That

is not an example that we can follow at our own whim, although certain situations call for the responsible exercise of church discipline *for the sake of the offender, and for the purity of the church body*, not for our own "protection." In the case of David (Psalm 101:6), the passage refers to someone who is to be his aide or assistant. Persons chosen for leadership must be appointed with great care because of their impact on the lives of others. The Scripture here is not a call to protect oneself from presumed psychological damage, and that is *not* what David was doing.

Townsend does make some good comments about limiting evil as a reason to refuse to suffer: "Better is open rebuke than hidden love" (Proverbs 27:5). Motivation here is crucial. This refusal to suffer, and willingness to rebuke, *must* arise from a loving concern *for the other person*, not some inherent "right" to protect self. The author also makes some good comments on discerning the difference between "warning the unruly" and "encouraging the fainthearted," as instructed in 1 Thessalonians 5:14. This teaching is important, and certainly requires some careful evaluations that are not always easy to make. Again, however, note the focus on the *other person's welfare*, not self-protection.

Concluding his remarks on Christian suffering, Townsend says that "perhaps you'll come to a decision to endure suffering in a Christlike way." He mentions the crucifixion of Christ as the "ultimate act of voluntary, unjust suffering," which truly it is. But for the believer, suffering for Christ is not an option. It is a command:

"Anyone who loves his father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; anyone who love his son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me; and anyone who does not take up his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for My sake will find it." Matthew 10:37-39

"Helpful hiding," or "responsible withdrawal," is also discussed as a "temporary distancing so that the heart can regroup itself to reattach." Townsend claims that "when we're under stress, or have been hurt in a relationship, we need a time of boundary repair before our soul is ready to reattach." He disagrees with those who would see withdrawal as selfish, insensitive, or unloving, claiming that protecting oneself from pain is "not the easiest thing in the world" yet "our responsibility as stewards of our souls." He distinguishes this "withdrawal" from the harmful act of "isolation."

Two types of "helpful hiding" are defined. One is "emotional," because if we felt the full impact of all emotions, memories, and thoughts at one time, we would lose touch with reality. This type of "hiding" guards against such problems as panic attacks. Townsend goes on to say that "our ability to experience emotional pain is measured by the amount and quality of love we've received over the years." Unfortunately, this does not give proper recognition to the power of God to sustain His children during trials. Following are some examples of "emotional hiding" that are claimed to be useful (it does stretch the imagination to see some of these behaviors as "hiding"):

#### Anticipation

Forgiveness, which the author claims (contrary to Scripture) is a "process and not a one-time event."

#### Humor

Patience or "delayed gratification," although these terms are not biblical equivalents, because the latter remains focused on pleasing self and the former on pleasing God.

Adjusting or "compensation," such as writing a letter rather than confronting someone in person; this is again focused on pleasing self.

Confession, which he calls a "healthy defense." However, biblically, confession is not a form of "hiding," but precisely the opposite.

Restitution, "motivated by compassion for another's suffering." This is true, but like confession, cannot be called "hiding."

"Sublimation," or temporarily focusing on something else. There are times to wait on the Lord's timing, of course, but again one's focus is to be on pleasing and glorifying Him, not self-protection or pleasing self.

Much space is devoted to a discussion of withdrawing from and then re-entering a relationship, called "relational helpful hiding." Townsend wrongly claims that "to re-enter relationship doesn't always mean we reattach with the person who hurt us." This denies the clear command of God to initiate reconciliation, and to do so *quickly*, even ahead of worship:

"Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift."  
Matthew 5:23-24

Also cited is Jesus' withdrawal from the crowd:

"After He had dismissed them, He went up on a mountainside by Himself to pray. When evening came, He was there alone."  
Matthew 14:23

This passage does not state that His purpose was self-protective, but rather He withdrew to spend essential time in prayer to the Father. That is a valid purpose in our own lives, too, on a daily basis. However, it doesn't even begin to equate with an extended withdrawal from relationships for the purpose of self-protection.

Serious exegetical errors emerge in verses quoted to support the author's position that:

"Helpful hiding involves deliberation, prayerful awareness, and conscious choice. It is a component of wisdom: 'Be sober in all things.'"

Note this verse in context, and another also cited:

"Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke, and encourage--with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. But you, keep your head in all situations ('be sober in all things'), endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry."  
2 Timothy 4:2-5

"Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, and do not share in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure." 1 Timothy 5:22

The verses in 2 Timothy concern the preaching of God's Word, and the verse in 1 Timothy comes among careful instructions regarding the ordination of elders. One must exercise sober judgment both in preaching the Word and in selection of church leadership (elders). This has **nothing -- absolutely nothing --** to do with

withdrawal from other persons because of injury to one's self. This improper, out-of-context type of quotation is typical of psychology and extremely deceptive. It is my hope that the reader will learn to consider the importance of taking the time to read Scripture passages in context when they are lifted out like this and twisted to fit a preconceived psychological perspective that is so far removed from the original text.

Townsend calls us to make careful judgment about when to confront, when to keep quiet; when to allow irresponsibility, when to prevent it; when to suffer, when to avoid suffering. "Relational helpful hiding" is defined as "learning to set appropriate limits on the irresponsibility or selfishness of others." Townsend calls for both verbal limits, a "clear way to take ownership of our souls," and physical limits such as calling for help or leaving the room. He mentions Matthew 18:15-20 in this context as a way of limiting evil against us. The basic problem in his analysis has to do with the motives of one's heart in such actions. The passage in Matthew does indeed instruct us to limit evil. However, the purpose is not one of self-protection, but the restoration of the offender to God and others in the body of Christ. It demands the very opposite of "hiding"-- a responsibility to courageously, but lovingly, confront another person caught in sin. This is not "taking ownership of our souls," because our souls clearly belong to God:

"Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20

Instead, it is responding to the call of God to deny self and serve Christ. Townsend speaks also of the fear of isolation, a "codependent trait" in which one is afraid to set limits or withdraw, fearing injury or attack, fearing confrontation of others. Biblically, this is a fear of man, which is a snare, contrasted with the reverential fear of the Lord which drives one to be a servant to God and others. Also noted by the author is a "trust-injury cycle," in which a naive person is unable to sense danger in relationships. He notes that Jesus did not entrust Himself to a man, knowing what is in man (John 2:24-25). The godly person, however, does not withdraw from relationships because of that danger. Like our Lord, he boldly reaches out to others in spite of dangers, entrusting himself to the God who is his refuge, strength, rock, and salvation.

God does not call us to "responsible withdrawal" or "self-protection" or "boundaries" as defined by self-oriented psychologists. He does call us to live in the world but not be of the world, as resident aliens whose citizenship is in heaven. He calls us to be set apart, holy as He is holy. He calls us to abandon ourselves to His care, serving Him boldly without fear of man. God's perspective differs radically from that of the psychologists, even Christian ones like Townsend. Facing possible persecution is not an option from which the believer can "responsibly withdraw," even for a season. It is a command--a requirement of discipleship.

## **THE "NEED" TO RESOLVE GOOD AND BAD**

In defining this third "need" of man, Townsend gives us a view of his basic theology. Although much of what he says is biblically based, the flaws detected here are important in understanding why many of his conclusions are not scriptural.

Many people, Townsend claims, have dreams of the "perfect" family, the "perfect" job, or some other "perfect" something, and of course, this cannot be. He describes the responses of a child who is hurt for the first time--surprise, betrayal, withdrawal, rage. He says that "we must learn to live with the tension of a fallen world, of knowing that the universe, like us, is sinful, marred, and imperfect." Since the Fall, we know both good and evil, and the contrast seems to defy acceptance. Townsend says that only God can handle the knowledge of evil without contamination. He talks of God's "Plan A" from Genesis 1:28, that man would rule and subdue the earth, and be spared that knowledge of good and evil. Furthermore, if Adam and Eve had also eaten from the tree of life, they would have lived forever and been forever isolated from God. The following passages are cited to support these conclusions:

"And the Lord God commanded the man, 'You are free to eat from any tree in the garden, but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.'" Genesis 2:16, 17

"And the Lord God said, 'The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.' So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken." Genesis 3:22, 23

One of the most serious errors of psychology is to make sweeping generalizations about the motives of men's hearts--something only God can perform accurately. Here is a psychologist who goes one step further, attributing motives to *God*. The Scripture doesn't say that God intended to spare man the knowledge of good and evil. God, being sovereign and knowing in advance both the hearts and actions of all men, knew exactly what Adam and Eve would do. Had His intentions been in accordance with Townsend's theories, He could have eliminated that tree from the garden, but He did not. He gave a command to man to be obeyed, and stated that death would be the result of his disobedience, which it was. Casting man out of the garden, away from the tree of life, fulfilled God's Word that man's disobedience would result in death. God's sovereignty is an important concept, as discussed earlier. It should be noted here that psychological teachings generally ignore that sovereignty, exalting man and his free will beyond what is taught by Scripture. Man does have free will and is responsible before God, but God remains in sovereign control, unlimited in His power.

Here is how Townsend states the dilemma created by the Fall:

"I'd like to be the ideal me--living in an ideal world. I can even imagine it. What then do I do with the badness in myself and in the world? How do I coexist with injustice? Failure? Imperfection? Disappointment?"

The "perfectionist," or "frustrated idealist," he says, has a "developmental inability to trust that good can coexist with the bad." He wants this person to *accept* both the good and bad "parts" of himself. He says "your humanness possesses both--goodness because you are created in the image of God, badness because you're a descendant of Adam and Eve and you have a sinful nature. Resolving this split is one of your most important tasks in maturing."

This presents some basic theological problems. It ignores the *total* depravity of man since the Fall, a concept not currently popular. Townsend says that "the image of God in us was only scarred; it was not completely destroyed." There is *some* truth here, in that man retains moral capacities and a recognition of God's existence through His creation (Romans 1:18-32). However, note the strong words of Scripture:

"I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh." Romans 7:18a

"Surely I was sinful at my birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me." Psalm 51:5

"The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?" Jeremiah 17:9

Paul stated, even as a believer, that in his flesh *no good thing dwells*. The depravity of man is much more serious than acknowledged by Townsend and other psychologists, affecting every aspect of man. Regeneration by the Holy Spirit is thus a much more radical and amazing transformation. Curiously, Townsend quotes this passage from Romans 7, but notes it as describing someone caught in the throes of some compulsion, who wants goodness but is lost in the badness. Paul, he says, has described (in Romans 7:15-19) the "internal conflict--the alienation--the destructive splitting between his goodness and badness." Paul does describe an internal spiritual conflict, but not a splitting of one's inherent goodness and badness. The goodness he describes is the *new nature* that exists in the believer only. The conflict he describes is not universal. It has no application to the *unbeliever*, who is spiritually dead and does *not* possess the new nature of the Christian.

One serious problem with Townsend's basic view of our dilemma is that it fails to give weight to our eternal hope of glory. Paul said:

"I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us."  
Romans 8:18

No resolution is achieved by merely "accepting" good and bad, in ourselves, in others, or in the world. The *only* hope--the *only* hope--is in that future glory. This is not an "escapist" attitude wherein one might refuse to acknowledge or solve the very real problems of earthly life. Rather it is a perspective where we have the assurance of God's ultimate victory and eternal kingdom, where there will be no more sin, no more death, no more suffering. As Christians, we know something the unbelievers do not know. We know how the battle ends, we know we are on the winning team. As such, we are motivated to fight the good fight of faith.

Townsend spends some time giving what he terms a "developmental view" of this "need" to resolve good and bad. He notes correctly that every child is born into a sinful state, "without grace, unloved, and unloving." There is "emptiness, terror, and anger in our hearts from the womb." At this point, he

says, "there is no antidote to 'badness,' because babies haven't yet received enough grace to forgive badness." It is important to note this condition of sin at birth, a fact all too frequently overlooked by psychologists. This author actually overlooks it, too, in his basic theme that man hides because he has been injured by others, rather than because of his own sin as taught by Scripture. Note Townsend's statement that a baby is unable to forgive. The real problem is that the baby, born in sin, has not yet received forgiveness.

Also concerning development, Townsend says that "perfection doesn't exclude growth" but "simply means that things are as they should be at a given stage of development." He labels this as "sinless immaturity," and distinguishes "maturing growth" from the "restoring growth" that would be needed in connection with sin. The first type of growth has to do with our "on schedule parts," the second with our "behind schedule parts." There is once again an unbiblical division of man. Also, Townsend's writings indicate that not *all* of man was damaged at the Fall, that there exist some *undamaged* "parts." This is not true to the scriptural view of man's total depravity. There are no "undamaged parts."

Townsend claims two different types of "badness." The first is actual, which he claims is "movement away from meeting our needs in God's way, and toward meeting them in Satan's counterfeit way." Nothing is said here about man's rebellion and deliberate disobedience to God's commands, which is how Scripture defines sin, "actual badness." The second category is "perceived badness," or a character trait that has been perceived by other people in unbiblical ways. It "has nothing to do with the actual sinfulness of the trait, but we begin to see that trait as 'bad.'" Examples listed include our needs, anger, will, anxiety, sadness, and exhilaration. (Some of the items listed do include actual sin. For example, the Bible teaches that anxiety is sin; see Philippians 4:6-7). Although Townsend claims that resolving these two types of "badness" is similar (accepting them as part of the self), the Bible does not support him. If a trait is truly only perceived as sinful, then proper doctrine based on Scripture is the answer. If there is actual sin, one needs repentance, confession, and biblical change empowered by the Holy Spirit. It is crucial to define and solve the problems of sin according to the Word of God.

**Solutions.** Townsend discusses "false solutions" in terms of running from the shame of one's own sin or the disappointment of another's sin, or both. (This is closer to the truth than most of the book theorizes.) An example concerns a man who was caught in

pornography. While admitting a sin problem, Townsend offers a psychological explanation:

"The picture became an entrance to a fantasy world where he could be 'bad' -- meaning, in Jeff's case, impulsive, needy, or sensual. The material became a container for all the unloved, imperfect (in the eyes of his family) parts of himself."

He goes on to say that the man resolved his "addiction" by giving up the demand to be perfect. This "addiction," he explains, was the result or symptom of his inability to integrate the good and bad "parts" of himself. As such he considers the "addiction" a fruit, while the lack of integration is the root. Such an analysis is not truly biblical. The real root is the sinful heart of man. Scripture gives a more concise definition:

"So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more. You, however, did not come to know Christ that way. Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness." Ephesians 4:17-24

Psychological explanations such as the one given gloss over the true seriousness of the problem. The need is not to "integrate" some psychologically defined "parts" of man. It is both illogical and unbiblical to solve the problem of sexual immorality by "giving up the demand to be perfect." It is the hungering and thirsting after righteousness that leads to godliness, recognizing of course that total perfection is not attained until eternity.

Moving from false solutions into biblical solutions, Townsend says that "God's solution is not perfectionism, or splitting off our badness. It is quite the opposite. It's called forgiveness." Christ's death, he says, took morality "out of the arena of law, and into the arena of love." This is contrasted with self-salvation, or legalism.

While there is truth spoken here, it is not the full picture biblically. Salvation is truly a work of God's grace and not to be earned by our own good works. God's solution to sin is indeed found in forgiveness. However, Jesus also indicated that He came to fulfill the law and that not one stroke would be left unfulfilled. Furthermore, God's grace is never to be considered a license for sin, or an excuse to adopt a tolerant attitude toward sin. Much too often, psychology omits the concepts of God's righteousness, holiness, wrath, and judgment. Without these, His mercy is watered down into nothing more than licentiousness.

Townsend displays a rather strange attitude toward salvation in his comments that we are "reattached" to God and experience "the redemption of our souls and the reconstruction of our memories of Him." It is this last phrase that is especially troublesome, as those who first come to Christ have no "memories of Him" that can be "reconstructed." Man is born alienated from God and spiritually dead, as Townsend acknowledges elsewhere (somewhat).

Confession is an important part of the biblical solution for sin. However, Townsend's views go astray. He says that "it is not, as some believe, so that we will no longer be guilty. We simply are guilty." While the reality of our guilt is well established in Scripture, we stand before God as "not guilty" because the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us. In God's eyes, we are justified fully and cleansed:

"And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."  
1 Corinthians 6:11

"God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God."  
2 Corinthians 5:21

"I delight greatly in the Lord; my soul rejoices in my God. For He has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels." Isaiah 61:10

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."  
1 John 1:9

He goes on to say that "our former legal guilt is an irrelevant issue, in terms of our being attached to God. There is no need, therefore, to confess in order to be forgiven." God promises that He will no longer remember our sins. He will not count them against us. He gives us an assurance of eternal salvation. No longer our Judge, God becomes our Father. However, confession is essential to forgiveness. Note the words of 1 John 1:9 just quoted, "if we confess...." Confession is surely a part of one's initial salvation, and it is important on an ongoing basis even though there are changes in its primary purpose and in our relationship to God. When first saved, the new believer is an enemy surrendering. When confessing later sins to God, he is a child submitting. (See Jay Adams' book, *From Forgiven to Forgiving*, for a thorough examination of biblical forgiveness.) It is vital not to overlook the significance of ongoing confession, both to God and to others. Refusal to confess *could* be an indication that conversion is not genuine, although only God can judge the heart. Townsend's stated purpose of confession is "to bring the unloved, hated, bad parts of ourselves into both the light of God's grace and the clear direction and instruction of His truth," and when that happens, our "badness is disinfected." We are brought into the light of God's grace and the clear instruction of His truth when we confess. However, notice words like "unloved" and "hated," which emphasize being sinned against, rather than one's own sin. This turns confession upside down. Also note the implications of the term "disinfected," as if "badness," or sin, were a disease of infection, which it is not. Townsend says that "our bad part is simply a problem in getting our needs met biblically." That is not the Bible's definition of sin, which is disobedience to the commands of God. There are serious flaws in Townsend's analysis of confession, reflected throughout the book in its emphasis on being sinned against as man's fundamental problem.

Following are the steps that Townsend recommends to "attach the bad to relationship:

1. Confess your lacks to God and people, because "when secret badness is revealed, it can be healed." Biblically, we are to confess our *sins* (not "lacks") to God and others, not to "be healed," but to be forgiven and cleansed.
2. Receive forgiveness. Yes!
3. Let go of the demand for the ideal. However, Jesus said that those who "hunger and thirst after righteousness" would be filled.

4. Accept "good enough" in oneself and other people. However, note Paul's words in Philippians 3:12-16. Paul did not simply "accept good enough" even though he recognized his relative imperfection on earth. He pressed on!

5. Make sadness your ally, grieving rather than holding on to lost hopes. Townsend says that "depression is the inability to process loss or rage. It's a heavy paralysis of the soul that won't allow it to finish resolving a problem. Sadness is actually the antidote to depression," and "grieving prepares us for love." Biblically, depression is a much bigger issue than indicated here, and Townsend doesn't mention that it could result from unconfessed sin, or at the other extreme, have an organic basis. "Anger turned inward" is a Freudian view not supported in Scripture. There are proper times for grief, but the Bible indicates that we do not grieve as those who have no hope (1 Thessalonians 4:13). Nowhere does the Bible indicate grieving in the manner taught by psychologists as an essential step to solving the problem of sin. Townsend quotes Ecclesiastes 3:4 and 7:4, but neither of these promotes grief in order to "process loss" or "process rage."

Townsend says that when you are accepted by grace, you will be motivated by responsibility and consequences rather than by the fear of abandonment. The term "fear of abandonment" is actually the *fear of man*, which the Bible says is a snare. The antidote to this is the proper, reverential fear of the Lord, accompanied by a compelling desire to serve Him in response to His great outpouring of love on the cross.

It is disturbing to review Townsend's comments on what he calls "sinbuster Christians," who confront sinful behavior but supposedly do not deal with the "defilement-from-within." Our Lord's comments are quoted:

"He went on: 'What comes out of a man is what makes him "unclean." For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils comes from inside and makes a man "unclean."'"  
Mark 7:20-23

True biblical confrontation of sin, however, *does* deal with the issues of the heart, much more thoroughly than psychology:

"For the Word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." Hebrews 4:12

"The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it? 'I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve.'" Jeremiah 17:9-10

Townsend says that "to end the confrontation with a 'don't be bad anymore' handslap is to repeat the mistake of the Pharisees--cupwashing." Certainly this could happen, but the author does not allow for the type of biblical, loving, confrontational counseling that clearly identifies and exposes sin while allowing the Holy Spirit to go to the real heart of the matter. It is the psychologists who fail to address heart issues when their focus is so heavily weighted on being *sinned against*, rather than man's own sinful heart.

In all of this, where is the gospel? Where does Townsend ever emphasize the most pressing need of man--to be delivered from the wrath of God and saved from eternal destruction? Where is the death of the old self, the creation of a new self in Christ? Where is the eternal perspective, available to those who are in Christ, to put the sins of others into their proper place of priority? Townsend's theology is not complete or adequate. The answers are not satisfying. The hope of the gospel is minimized, and man's fundamental need for salvation takes a place of secondary importance in Townsend's psychological "need" system.

## **THE "NEED" FOR AUTHORITY AND ADULTHOOD**

The final "developmental need" in Townsend's system is that of coming into adulthood and assuming appropriate authority roles. He lists several "authority issues," such as personal power, expertise, responsibility, appropriate submission, sexuality, and the ability to think independently. This section has a combination of good biblical teachings and Freudian, psychologically based error.

The beginning is good. The author reminds us that God is the King and ruler of the universe, leading, guiding, instructing, and correcting us (1 Chronicles 29:12, Lamentations 5:19, and Daniel 4:34-35). Originally, man was delegated authority in ruling over the earth (Psalm 8:6), but he became a slave to sin instead. The Christian has been set free from the bondage of sin (Romans 6:18).

Those who belong to God will someday be judges (1 Corinthians 6:2-3). So far, so good.

From there, serious problems arise and Townsend's Freudian orientation, though not named as such, reveals itself. He describes the development of a child as beginning with identification with the same-sex parent, followed by "urges to replace the same-sex parent" which "threaten the child with guilt." However, "these desires are repressed." These ungodly theories, attributing both sexual and homicidal impulses to young children, were invented by a man (Sigmund Freud) who rejected the gospel, and they are based on Greek mythology, not scientific fact, and *certainly not biblical teachings*. Such absurdities do not belong within the same pages as biblical truth about the nature and development of man.

Looking at the teenage child, Townsend says he must begin "to 'own' the values he's developing and live with their natural consequences." Also, he claims, there must be "pushes away" during these years so that the maturing person won't later be susceptible to cult or other authoritarian leaders, manipulative friends, and such. The Bible does call us to be discerning and to test what we hear by the Word of God. However, Townsend's analysis doesn't acknowledge the importance of absolute submission to God's authority. While the teenager may be learning to think and discern, it violates Scripture to suggest that he ought to develop an attitude of rebellion: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right" (Ephesians 6:1). Man is already naturally rebellious. It is proper submission, accompanied by biblical discernment, that must be learned as the person matures. "Owning values" and living with their "natural consequences" is a questionable teaching, because it is crucial that values be based on the commands of God, not the whims or opinions of man.

An example presented in this chapter is of a boy who was never disciplined at home. He became defiant and rebellious, unable to submit appropriately to authority. Townsend compares this to the situation described in Judges 17:6 ("everyone did what was right in his own eyes") and says that the boy "had no authority model to internalize." This is an inaccurate, psychological explanation for the inherently sinful, rebellious nature of man that will run its course without disciplinary intervention, by parents and/or God. Scripture never teaches us to "internalize" an authority "model," but rather to fear and obey God.

Another psychological distortion occurs when Townsend says that "rule-bound people who have a controlling edge to them can be identified by the same traits as the Pharisees: they would rather be right than loving." They attract "hurting, self-condemning people who are *unconsciously* looking for someone who will agree with their critical internal parent" (emphasis added). This is again Freudian--terms like "critical internal parent" (Freud's "superego"), the Freudian "unconscious," and sweeping generalizations of motives even though God alone can make such judgments using the Holy Spirit and His Word. All of this fails to point to the sinful heart of both groups--those who are self-righteous and legalistic, and those who are overly focused on self.

Regarding adulthood, the author tells us that "resolving the problem of feeling like a frightened or enraged child in a grown-up world is a crucial developmental task." He calls this "repairing adulthood" and offers recommendations that do include some biblical truth:

1. Ask questions of those in authority.
2. Submit to proper authority, in government and church (Romans 13:1, Hebrews 13:17). Authority is based on position rather than personality, and it has parameters.
3. Take an inventory of your convictions, and don't run to a particular person or commentary to find out what you believe. Be like the Bereans (Acts 17:11).
4. Address adults as adults rather than as parents.
5. Develop your talents according to God's blueprints, rather than the wishes of parents.
6. Make sexuality a good thing.
7. See guilt as a sign of growth, rethinking and challenging the traditions of elders in order to obey God rather than man.

There are some valid observations here, although the idea of "repairing" adulthood is a fuzzy, questionable, and not-very-helpful concept. The first three suggestions are excellent. The fourth requires some comment, because Scripture instructs us to honor older members of the church (1 Timothy 5:1-2), and to treat them somewhat differently than younger, same-age members. Development of talents and spiritual gifts according to God's calling is important, of course. However, that doesn't mean that parental wishes ought always be ignored. This must be weighed carefully in each case, depending on such criteria as the parents' commitment to the Lord. Sexuality is indeed a good thing, but biblical commandments here are essential. Sexuality outside of marriage is *not* a good thing, contrary to much popular belief and

practice. Rethinking traditions can indeed be valuable when Scripture is the standard and the purpose is truly to obey and honor God. Overall, this is probably one of the better sections of the book (these seven recommendations).

What is particularly troublesome about this chapter, as a whole, is calling authority and adulthood a "need." Man is fundamentally in rebellion against God, and it is submission to God-ordained authority, not assertion of authority, that is the basic learning problem. Man must learn to be God's child--dependent on Him, trusting His wisdom, serving Him, founding identity wholly in Him. Man's problem lies more in assuming authority that is not his, as happened when Eve and then Adam bit into the forbidden fruit, rather than in failing to assume authority. One way or another, man grabs control of his life and fails to be God's *child* who must obey.

## **VARIATIONS ON A FREUDIAN THEME**

In each of the four "need" areas, Townsend defines several different "hiding styles." These patterns are divided into two different categories. First is an "internal" hiding, generally a type of hiding within oneself. Here, in particular, are variations on the Freudian theme of "defense mechanisms," and we encounter terms like "projection" and "introjection" and other Freudian categories. Second, there is "relational" hiding, which concerns hiding patterns in relationship to other people. In all cases, there are broad generalizations about motives of the heart, a common psychological practice that is highly questionable because only God can make such judgments (Jeremiah 17:10). The fear of man is frequently observed in these behaviors, as is a sinful focus on self along with various forms of idolatry. Four sections will follow, covering each of the "need" areas and its accompanying "hiding patterns."

## **"HIDING PATTERNS" -- HIDING FROM ATTACHMENT**

Causes, Symptoms, and Fears. The author claims that the person's "need" for "attachment," or his "yes" muscle, has been injured, resulting in a fear of relationship and the inability to trust God and others. Along with this are fears that his "needs" will:

1. Overwhelm him and/or alienate other people.
2. Cause others to hate or hurt him.
3. Cause his own emotional annihilation.

Focus on external injury as the cause of sinful behavior is not a biblically correct analysis. Assuming that the motives are as stated, this type of "hiding" reveals a fear of man and sinful focus on self. Note some biblical warnings about this attitude:

"Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord will be kept safe." Proverbs 29:25

### Internal Hiding Styles

1. *Projection ("log and speck")*: The author defines "projection" (a Freudian term) as "the emotional act of expelling, or throwing out, intolerable parts of ourselves onto others." Citing the "log" and "speck" of Matthew 7:1-5, "projection" is "when we expel our bad parts onto others," and then "we see them as having the log that's actually blinding us." Also quoted is James 1:13-14, wherein "the 'badness' projected here is our own innate tendency to deny our creatureliness and desire what God never intended for us to have." It is true that man tends to see himself in a biased manner, focusing more easily on the sins of others than on his own sins. However, Scripture does not indicate a "projection" of one's own *particular* sins onto others. While one may judge his own specific sin more harshly when observed in the lives of others, he could also be observing real sin in the life of another, but failing to deal biblically with his own sins *before* attempting to confront/restore the other party. The interpretation of James 1:13-14 (as given by Townsend) is a good description of covetousness, forbidden by the tenth of the Ten Commandments. That Scripture, however, teaches that temptation does not come from God but from the evil desires within our own hearts. It teaches that God does not tempt us to sin. That is not the same as a Freudian "projection" of our sinful qualities onto others.

The author's recommended step of taking responsibility for one's own "log" first, before correcting the "speck" of another, is biblical.

2. *Introjection ("emotional picture")*: Again using a Freudian concept, the author claims that "in introjection, we place traits of other significant people onto ourselves." He goes on to say that this may be either positive or negative. However, in describing a "harmful hiding" pattern, this style is the placing of the wrong traits of others onto oneself. What he describes is simply the imitation of others, and that is unnecessarily complicated by the introduction of a Freudian "defense mechanism." People do imitate others. The Bible warns about not keeping bad

company (1 Corinthians 15:33, Proverbs 22:24-25), but also teaches about being conformed to the image of Christ. Also, older members of the church are to instruct younger members. The author recommends, correctly, the discernment of our own and others' harmful (actually sinful) traits. It would be wise to add to this that we are to seek conformity to the image of Christ, rather than other sinful humans.

3. *Splitting ("black and white")*: Townsend properly notes that "the Fall created a fundamental split in the universe, when we were separated from God, and each other, by sin." The antidote to this is reconciliation. However, he goes on to describe a split *with self*, saying that "splitting protects us from having to remember and reexperience traumatic events that would be too destructive to handle at the time." He claims "multiple personalities" as an example and says that it takes years of work to integrate. He says that one's "bonding ability" is split from one's "aggressive parts." As noted earlier, we have an unbiblical division of man into "parts" that the author never clearly defines. He says that "we fear that our hatred toward our neediness will destroy those injured weak parts."

The real problem is man's separation from God, and the biblical solution is reconciliation with Him, not a reconciliation with self. (It appears that "integration" has taken precedence over *salvation*.) There is also a secondary problem of separation from others, and God commands reconciliation here. However, the solution begins with one's reconciliation to God.

4. *Devaluation ("sour grapes")*: This is a perceived omnipotence in which one believes he can exist without others. He pretends that caring people do not exist and/or that a relationship was not really important.

This pattern reveals man's sinful desire to exalt himself, a pattern that began with Adam and Eve (even earlier with Satan). There is also lying, and a sinful self-focus that ignores God's requirement to love others regardless of their response. The author recommends that we humbly recognize our mutual needs for each other. This is true, but it should be qualified with the biblical teaching to esteem others ahead of self (Philippians 2:3).

5. *Hostility*: This person is "using anger to provide the illusion of power" and protect himself from further hurt. There is again a sinful fear of man and self-focus, along with many biblical teachings about putting off unrighteous anger and putting

on gentleness and compassion. The author recommends giving up anger as an illusion of power and safety, allowing sadness and weakness in oneself. However, he fails to note the need for repentance, confession, and forgiveness for sinful attitudes and actions.

### Relational Hiding Styles

1. *Detached ("lone ranger")*: This person is isolated and has no deep relationships, believing he does not belong in any relational setting. The author recommends seeking people who will accept this "detached style" and help develop intimacy. Biblically, this person exhibits a fear of man, a sinful focus on self, and a lack of love (1 Corinthians 13:1-8). The focus must be turned away from self toward the Lord, seeking to give rather than to receive. The author's solution is too self-centered and thus not biblical.

2. *Avoidant ("hermit")*: This person longs for love and belonging, but is too fearful to develop relationships and therefore extremely isolated. Once again, there is a fear of man and sinful self-focus. The author's recommendation, to seek "safe" relationships and acceptance from others, is unbiblical because it isn't focused on God and His strong commands to fear Him and demonstrate love to others.

3. *Caretaking ("rescuer")*: The author claims that "often, people who have unmet attachment needs will take responsibility for the emotional needs of others," and "in that way, they are nurturing parts of themselves in others, the way they would like to be loved but are afraid to admit to." To his credit, Townsend correctly notes that codependency has given real sacrificial love a "black eye." He recommends checking out one's motives in helping others. Does the desire to help arise out of fear or a cheerful heart? Will it truly help the other, or promote further sin and irresponsibility? While these comments are good, he nevertheless fails to recognize the heretical assumptions behind the whole "codependent" movement (a serious problem beyond the scope of this particular writing), and claims that "codependency" is a true problem. He uses the Freudian term "projection" again, claiming that one's own needs are "projected" onto others. He recommends distinguishing between our own and others' needs for love. Biblically, one must examine the motives of the heart, and determine to obey God, doing what **He** requires in the lives of others, and what is best for that other person's welfare. Focus needs to be drawn away from self.

4. *Hostile Distancer ("porcupine")*: This individual displays "chronic anger and distrust," and according to the author, he "projects his own negative feelings onto others, causing him to feel persecuted and attacked by others." As an example, "Saul projected his paranoia onto David" (1 Samuel 18:7-9).

Biblically, this reveals a fear of man and sinful, self-focused, unrighteous anger--not some Freudian "projection." Looking at the Scripture indicated, Saul is extremely jealous of David's victory and the praise he receives from the people. Nothing is indicated in the text of a "projection" of his "paranoia" onto David. This psychological interpretation is unnecessary and inaccurate.

Townsend recommends taking responsibility for one's own negative feelings and allowing one's own "needy parts" to surface. He fails to note the need to repent for unrighteous anger, and his solution is self-focused in its stress on "needy parts."

5. *Passive-Aggressive*: This person is angry but doesn't admit his rage, expressing it indirectly instead. He resents the control of others.

This pattern once again reveals a fear of man, unrighteous anger that calls for repentance, and rebellion. The author recommends direct confrontation and "appropriate expression" of anger, but fails to note the difference between righteous and unrighteous anger as defined biblically, and also fails to call for an examination of motives in confrontation. The Bible calls for loving confrontation, in gentleness and humility, when another person needs help to overcome sin--but nowhere does Scripture call for "appropriate expression" of anger unless it is righteous anger that can be expressed without sin. Righteous anger does *not* include seeking one's own vengeance or retaliation.

6. *Anti-Social*: This person exploits others, seeing love and acceptance as weakness. The author rightly recommends seeing how one's behavior hurts others, and being open to truthful confrontation. However, he wrongly views the cause as external injury: "They generally have never experienced true empathy." Instead, one must recognize this pattern, along with the others, as stemming from man's sinful rebellion against God's commands.

7. *Addictive-Compulsive*: Here a substance or activity is substituted for people. More seriously, but not noted by the author, this behavior is idolatry, substituting a substance or activity in place of God. Townsend recommends taking loneliness

to God and others, and while there is some truth here, it is once again too focused on serving and pleasing self.

## **"HIDING PATTERNS" -- HIDING FROM SEPARATENESS**

Causes, Symptoms, Fears. Townsend claims that the "need" for separateness is damaged when one's sense of boundaries and personal responsibility is confused, when the "'no' muscle" is damaged. This causes the person to say no to taking biblical responsibility for himself, or yes to taking unbiblical responsibility for others. It may also cause him to attempt to make others responsible for him. There is a fear of isolation and abandonment if the person becomes separate. The "need for separateness" is defined as the need to become "a person with will, boundaries, and an accurate sense of responsibility."

Biblically, there is a fear of man, which must be overcome by the fear of the Lord, and a focus on self. Responsibilities do need to be sorted out properly, but that must be done using the standards of God's Word. All too often, psychologists ignore legitimate responsibilities in the lives of others, such as confronting and lovingly restoring the person entangled in sin. Another error is the tendency, as demonstrated in this book, to shift blame to the sins of others as the cause of behavior in adult life, rather than properly recognizing the contribution of one's own sinful responses.

### Internal Hiding Styles

1. *Projection:* This Freudian term is again inappropriate and unbiblical. In this instance, the person "projects" aggressive characteristics onto others and is terrified of aloneness. The author says to "become friends with our own hostility." That advice counteracts scriptural teachings regarding hostility and anger. Biblical solutions are found in teachings such as Romans 12:14-21, showing us how to overcome evil with good, and verses such as Philippians 2:3, where we are instructed to esteem others ahead of self. Proverbs contains a great many warnings and teachings about hostility that need to be heeded, as opposed to becoming "friends" with that hostility.

2. *Emotional Picture:* This person fantasizes a close relationship with endless nurturing. The real relationship is thus disappointing. The author uses again the Freudian term "introjection," saying that the person takes on another's characteristics of closeness. Biblically, there is an extreme

focus on self here, and a requirement to seek the Lord and love others as much as one already loves self.

3. *Black and White (Splitting)*: This person separates caring "parts" from the "parts" that have "appropriate anger" and "set boundaries." The person is unable to speak truth in love due to fear of losing the relationship. Again, we have an unbiblical division of man into "parts," and the recurring theme of fearing man and focusing on self. Fear of the Lord, and love for Him and others, is what makes possible "speaking the truth in love."

4. *Perceived Omnipotence*: This person believes he can keep others happy and doesn't face the fact that others may leave him at any time. The author counsels this person to "recognize freedom of others to leave" and to "allow them to choose to suffer." Biblically, there is a fear of man, focus on self, and pride. The author's counsel fails to acknowledge our responsibility to be reconciled with others (Matthew 5:23-24) and to restore others who are caught in sin. Of course, this must be done with godly motives that are focused on the welfare of others and the honor of God, rather than selfish ambition.

5. *Self-Attacking*: This person is angry at others, but cannot "own" that anger and thus directs at it himself. Townsend says that "what the self-attacker needs is a safe, relational context in which he'll be able to aim at the correct target, without fear of retaliation." This is wrong and unbiblical. The person must repent and confess unrighteous anger to the Lord, and *not* seek vengeance, but rather leave it to God! (Romans 12:19-20; Proverbs 20:22).

6. *Safe Target (Displacement)*: Afraid to confront others directly, this person directs his anger at someone else who is "less threatening." Townsend says that "the biblical norm for confronting others is privately, humbly, and face to face, if at all possible. The displacer is terrified of the imagined or actual consequences of such an encounter." This person fears man rather than God (again!). Private, humble confrontation is indeed a biblical teaching, one that should have been noted by the author in the previous (self-attacking) pattern. Motives are crucial here. "Relief" is inappropriate--confrontation must be made only for the sake of the offender, not one's own vengeance or "rights."

7. *Undoing*: Calling this an "emotional legalism," the author describes a pattern of attempting to "undo" or repair some destructive action toward another. He suggests that this person must "accept the justified anger and hurt of others." This is not

entirely correct. Biblically, the person must repent, confess his sin to God and others who have been harmed, and make restitution where necessary. The author ignores here the possibility of biblical restitution, which sometimes is required by God.

8. *Regression*: Returning to an earlier stage of maturity, this person fears that being an adult will bring isolation. He seeks the nurturing love of others through his "neediness." The author distinguishes this "defensive" regression from what he calls "authentic regression," where the person finds a "safe relationship" in which to "acknowledge injury." Once again is the fear of man. Biblically, there also appears to be a failure to trust in the Lord, who promises to meet the needs of His children when they seek first His kingdom. The "authentic" regression is not really so "authentic," as it much too easily can involve shifting blame, gossip, and slander, rather than godly counsel on how to respond to being sinned against.

### Relational Hiding Styles

1. *Caretaking*: This person gives love out of an improper motivation--to receive it in return. He controls others, encouraging dependence so as to guarantee himself a built-in relationship. This is sinful, because the person doesn't esteem others ahead of self. There is not a proper consideration for the welfare of others. It is a type of exploitation. However, one must be cautious here and not throw out the responsibility of proper care giving in the body of Christ.

2. *Dependence*: This person fears being abandoned if he makes his own choices. Others may be drawn to this person out of obligation and guilt rather than love. First, the dependent person is relying on man rather than God, and fearing man instead of God. Second, those drawn to him do have some biblical obligations. Obligation and love are not mutually exclusive. However, the helper does need to examine his own motives and be certain he is acting according to God's Word and for the welfare of the other person rather than self.

3. *Victim*: This pattern involves extreme blame-shifting, and has been common to man ever since Adam and Eve's sin in the Garden. However, the author describes it as a "chronic style of relating that denies autonomy, choices, power, and responsibility of the victim." This person sees his unhappiness and circumstances as being the fault of others (something which, incidentally, is encouraged rather than biblically confronted by this and other psychologically oriented books!). He looks for others to take

responsibility to "repair" his "injuries." He may keep himself in a position of moral superiority over the perpetrator, avoiding the sin in his own heart. All of this describes a genuine problem, one that applies to every sinful human to one degree or another. Responsibilities need to be sorted out correctly according to Scripture, acknowledging the role of the individual's own sin, the power and responsibilities of God, and the responsibilities of the church to help this individual. It is also important for this person (and all persons) to develop a genuine love for others and a willingness to give help rather than always receiving it.

4. *Manipulation:* This person uses others to avoid responsibility. He may coerce, not respect "boundaries," borrow money, or ask others to bail him out. The author advises that this person learn self-control and to delay gratification. The pattern described is indeed sinful, and extremely self-focused. This person needs to become focused on serving the Lord and love for others. Self-control is a fruit of the Spirit and so is patience. These qualities are not merely learned, but are a natural, direct result of walking in obedience to the Lord and being under the control of the Holy Spirit.

5. *Chaotic:* This person is impulsive, disorganized, and lacks direction. He draws close to others in a dependent manner but fails to maintain the relationship. The author counsels that he "find safe, structured relationships." The Bible counsels that he find direction in God's Word, along with conviction, correction, and disciplined training in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16-17). He needs proper discipleship within a Bible-believing church and submission to God-ordained authorities in the church, workplace, home, and elsewhere.

6. *Passive-Aggressive:* This angry, hostile person expresses his aggression indirectly, supposedly punishing others and avoiding responsibility for his hostile feelings. The author counsels taking responsibility for those aggressive feelings. The Bible goes much, much further:

"Get rid of all bitterness, rage, and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." Ephesians 4:31-32

7. *Histrionics:* This person displays dependence, seductiveness, and contempt for the opposite sex, with multiple failed relationships. He fears autonomy and protects against loneliness. Biblically, this demonstrates a fear of man, focus on self,

failure to love others biblically (even hatred), and quite possibly sexual immorality, along with a failure to acknowledge and live by Scripture's view of male/female relationships. All of this must be handled by repentance, confession to God and others harmed, with appropriate biblical "put-on" behaviors.

8. *Addictive-Compulsive*: This person uses a substance in place of relationships and expression of rage. The author says to "take resentment and powerlessness to God and others." This is true, but it is important to do so in repentance, acknowledging one's sinful rebellion and disobedience. Appropriate biblical behaviors must be "put on."

All of these behaviors demonstrate an extreme fear of man and a focus on self. In all of the "hiding styles," the author makes sweeping generalizations of motives, often from a Freudian orientation. A major weakness evident in this particular section of "hiding styles" is the failure to biblically sort out and acknowledge responsibilities in the lives of others, particularly one's brothers and sisters in Christ.

## **"HIDING PATTERNS" -- HIDING FROM GOOD AND BAD SELVES**

Causes, Symptoms, and Fears. Townsend claims that we have a "need" to accept the "bad parts" of self, in order to bring those "parts" to a place of forgiveness. When the "forgiveness muscle" is injured, "imperfections remain unconnected to God, self, and others." The "bad parts" remain broken and unforgiven. The "forgiveness muscle," Townsend claims, is injured by perfectionistic environments, over-positive environments, relationships that overstress the "excellent" parts of self, and idealistic denial. The fear is that one's badness will annihilate his goodness. The Bible never defines any "need" to accept the "bad parts" of self, but rather:

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

1 John 1:9

We are not called to self-acceptance in the area of sin, but repentance, confession, and a request for God's forgiveness and cleansing. There is an innate tendency for man to see himself in a biased, overly positive manner and to develop sinful pride. This is not *caused* by "perfectionistic environments." The answer to what is being described here is in the cross--repentance, confession of sin, and a growing walk with the Lord

(sanctification). It should also be noted here that an unbiblical division of man ("good parts" and "bad parts") is being taught.

### Internal Hiding Styles

1. *Projection*: These persons "reject those characteristics of themselves that they consider imperfect and unconsciously place them on others. This places an unbiblical focus on the non-existent Freudian "unconscious," minimizing responsibility for sin. Man does more readily see and speak about the sins of others, rather than his own sin, but it is destructive to see an "unconscious" process at work, or to assume that it is always one's own sins that are being seen in others. It could very well be real sin, and quite possibly a *different* sin, in the lives of others that is focused on in lieu of confronting oneself honestly before God.

2. *Introjection*: This person sees himself as all-good or all-bad. The author says he "splits off" a significant part of his soul. Biblically, this describes pride (in either case) and a sinful focus on self. The fear of man is also likely to be involved, as in almost all of these "hiding" patterns.

3. *Splitting*: This individual keeps the "good" and "bad" parts of himself apart, not having experienced enough grace to be assured that they won't lose attachment if the "bad" parts are exposed. He may have a "secret" self. This is very similar to the former pattern (introjection), again revealing pride and fear of man. In both cases, the author recommends seeking "safe" relationships where good and bad are accepted. This ignores a whole host of Scriptures calling us to admonish, rebuke, and correct *in love*, and to examine our hearts before God. Such a recommendation also encourages more focus on self--meeting the "needs" of self and protection of self.

4. *Perceived Omnipotence (do-it-all)*: This person falsely believes that he can hide his "badness" (actually sin) and that such hiding will eliminate it. The author correctly notes that this belief is false. He says that Christians eliminate their "shameful" parts through willpower, discipline, self-denial, trying harder, and looking at the positive. All of this is striving in the flesh rather than abiding in Christ, His power, His Word. Some of these are not necessarily wrong. Discipline, self-denial, effort, and hope are all useful and important for the believer who relies on the power of God to enable him. Townsend also recognizes "omnipotent promises" made in place of depending

on God and His people. He correctly notes that sin can only be handled through relationship with Christ and His people.

5. *Idealization/Devaluation ("peak-to-pits")*: Others are seen first as wonderful, then horrible. There is a swing from idealization to disillusionment. This is idolatry. The author says to accept mediocrity in self and others, but the biblical solution is to return to the worship of God, turning from the worship of either self or others.

6. *Reaction Formation ("soap box")*: Person develops a passion against his own hidden sin, referred to by Townsend as the "bad" part of himself. It is correctly noted by Townsend that one must take responsibility for this concealed sin. Also important are repentance, confession, and restitution where applicable--not more self-acceptance.

### Relational Hiding Styles

1. *Perfectionist*: This person has harsh, critical expectations of self and is an "emotional legalist." Citing James, he says we need to "fall from the high wire of perfectionism into the safety net of grace:"

"For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it." James 2:10

This Scripture confirms that we indeed are guilty of breaking the whole law. It does *not* point toward self-acceptance. However, the Scripture does point to salvation by grace, in spite of our unworthiness and having broken the entire law. There is likely to be pride at the root of such harsh expectations. This person is partly on the right road by recognizing his depravity (more than the author concedes), but must come to the cross for forgiveness and cleansing, giving thanks to God for paying the penalty for his sin.

2. *Admiration Addict*: This "superstar," fearful of exposure, draws attention to his strengths and conceals his perceived weaknesses. This definition is too generous in not using the word *sin* (rather than weakness) and in prefacing weaknesses with "perceived," because all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. There is pride here, and possibly incorrect doctrine such as existed among the Galatians--believing one's salvation could be earned by works.

3. *Pollyanna*: This person's hope is naive, idealistic, unrealistic, and unbiblical. He is surprised by the results of the Fall, and may become bitter over the contrast between an idealized childhood and his marred adulthood. The answer is to be found in the Word of God, recognizing the reality of one's own and others' sins. That *must* be done in order to even receive salvation. At the same time, his hope needs to be founded on God's biblical promises for both this world and eternity.

4. *Romantic*: This person fears routineness, looks only at the good, and must have constant romantic involvement. Biblically, this must be replaced by love of God and loving others as much as one already loves self. This person is clearly not seeking first the kingdom of God, but rather is self-focused.

5. *All-or-Nothing*: Relationships are impossible because this person sees only the good, or only the bad, in self as well as in others. God's truth is needed here: an honest recognition of sin and depravity, as well as acceptance of the gospel and God's promise of cleansing.

6. *Addictions*: The author says that "these habits keep us from the shame of experiencing our perceived bad parts." There is idolatry here, along with pride and fear of man.

Townsend says that we shouldn't hide our imperfections, because that leads to self-deception, nor should we deny that goodness resides in us. He says that:

"Of course, being created in God's image does not cancel out or override our sin nature--only Christ's death on the cross pays the penalty for our sin and makes new life possible. But the image of God is always within us, however tarnished."

He goes on to speak of David's "self-hatred" after committing adultery with Bathsheba, which is supposedly what led him to take it out on others by committing murder. Later, he claims, David "accepted himself in a new way despite his sin." Quoting theologian David Keyes:

"Self-acceptance and repentance are not in conflict, but are dependent on each other. This high level of honesty before God seems for a moment to risk our psychological safety, but brings with it the deeper peace that only integrity with God can yield."

This whole analysis is highly flawed. David did not hate himself after his adultery. He loved himself far too much to risk exposure and proved that by committing a murder to conceal his sin and escape the consequences. Repentance did not lead to "self-acceptance," but to confession and acceptance of the consequences as determined by God. Conclusions such as those noted above can only be arrived at by twisting Scripture to fit one's psychological presuppositions. Reading the account of Isaiah's call from God ought to dispel any "self-acceptance" theories as far as Scripture is concerned:

"In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: 'Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.' At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. 'Woe to me!' I cried. 'I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.' Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. With it he touched my mouth and said, 'See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.'" Isaiah 6:1-7

Isaiah saw himself honestly before God. He didn't accept himself...he was *undone!* The glorious good news, however, is that God cleansed him and then called him to a powerful ministry with words that still teach us today. There is no need to turn this good news upside down and suggest that the same results can be obtained by the acceptance of self.

## **"HIDING PATTERNS" -- HIDING FROM ADULTHOOD AND AUTHORITY**

Causes, Symptoms, Fears. This person's "authority muscle" has been injured by improper use of authority in the home. He is afraid of being criticized or attacked for taking adult authority over his life. He seeks approval and is afraid of displeasing parental figures. According to Townsend, he hides from either the aggressive or sexual parts of himself, demonstrating unhealthy aggression or sexual behaviors. Townsend defines an adult as "someone who can take adult responsibility over his aggression and sexuality."

This generally ignores the biblical fact that man is in rebellion against God and His authority. Townsend mentions a fear of submitting to biblical authority without noting this fundamental rebelliousness. As with the other "hiding patterns," a fear of man is evident. It is also not clearly noted that in relationship to God, each of us is a child (His child), remaining in submission throughout life, even though in relationship to other people we mature and take leadership.

### Internal Hiding Styles

1. *Repression ("shoving underneath")*: This person supposedly attempts to remove intolerable thoughts and feelings from consciousness. He may become sexually inhibited, for example. The logic in this is not apparent, because such deliberate removal from consciousness is in itself a conscious, responsible action. Townsend recommends acceptance of one's own aggressive and sexual parts, but fails to distinguish righteous and unrighteous anger or to acknowledge deceitful, evil desires that require repentance.

2. *Soapbox*: This person develops a reaction that is opposite to the injured part of his soul. He may become overly compliant in response to punitiveness, for example. Fear of man emerges here again. There is a need to examine one's heart for unconfessed sinful anger, bitterness, and such, replacing the extreme compliance, for example, with proper biblical submission accompanied by a refusal to compromise God's standards.

3. *Undoing*: Here the person shows an artificial love toward others, hoping his rebelliousness won't be held against him. Behavior is characterized by the fantasy that mistakes can be erased and the fear that there isn't enough forgiveness. Townsend recommends feeling legitimate anger, but doesn't establish biblical standards for righteous anger, which are *much* different from psychological standards emphasizing self and one's own "rights." The Bible warns against flattery and deception, particularly in Proverbs.

4. *Intellectualization*: In this pattern, the person retreats to logical thinking to protect against emotions that might cause him to do or say something offensive. Townsend mentions, correctly, that in the Old Testament "heart" incorporates both the "head" (popularly equated with intellect) and "heart" (equated with emotion). He claims that "the intellectualizer is fearful of that kind of integration of the soul." His analysis, however, requires some comment. It is at times proper, and loving, to withhold expression of emotion, and to use one's mind (which is being

renewed according to Romans 12:2) to respond in a manner that pleases God. What is wrong is to substitute intellectual analysis and knowledge for actual obedience to God's commands--for example, the faith without works described in James, or the teacher who practices what he preaches against (Romans 2:17-24). Townsend exalts emotion and its expression in a manner never justified by Scripture. He is correct in stating that the heart, biblically, includes both mind and emotions (and even more), but he fails to use that information to draw the proper conclusions.

5. *Guilt Style*: Townsend defines guilt as being "generally anger turned inward," and guilt feelings as "self-condemning emotions that cause us to criticize ourselves for real or perceived wrongdoing." He contrasts this with the godly sorrow of 1 Corinthians 7:9 & 11, which he says is "authentic remorse for being unloving toward another." Along with godly sorrow, his recommendations include turning anger at the appropriate object (whoever or whatever that is).

The above definition of guilt is biblically deficient, because guilt is a transgression of God's laws, not "anger turned inward." Notice also that both real *and* perceived wrongdoing (sin) may be the cause of guilt feelings and self-criticism. Townsend fails to note all of what the passage in Corinthians has to say. Worldly sorrow is a sorrow over consequences (getting caught) as opposed to the godly sorrow over *offending God*. There is a glimmer of truth in his words about authentic remorse for being unloving, but it is incomplete. Worldly sorrow is self-focused. Godly sorrow is God-focused.

6. *Rationalization/Excusing*: This person, afraid of disappointing another, makes excuses instead of giving the real reasons. He is "fearful of taking responsibility for his seemingly dangerous traits." The Bible calls this lying. (One wonders why the psychologists are so reluctant to employ simple, biblical terms such as sin, lying, and numerous others!) Also involved, from what is described, is once again the fear of man.

7. *Somatization*: This person develops physical symptoms with no medical basis, which "keeps the focus off the spiritual and relational issue." Townsend says that "God meant the heart and the body to be integrated in a mysterious and complex fashion." He cites David's physical afflictions in Psalm 32:3-4 as an example of somatization.

The body and the heart do indeed interact in a mysterious, complex fashion. Sin may result in physical disorders. Physical

affliction may become an occasion and temptation for sin. The interaction is complex and must be noted by the biblical counselor. However, when sin leads to physical symptoms, those symptoms may very well be real and painful. They may be God's method of discipline (not always), or they may be a natural consequence of sin (cirrhosis of the liver resulting from drunkenness).

This section talks about authority and adulthood. In that context, Townsend says to set appropriate limits on the authority of others, rather than develop physical symptoms. He doesn't mention the necessity of confronting the other person in love (if authority is truly being abused), or learning proper submission. Again, he fails to acknowledge man's fundamental rebellion. Also, David's afflictions described in Psalm 32 resulted from *real sin* (adultery and murder) and had nothing whatsoever to do with anyone's abuse of authority.

### Relational Hiding Styles

1. *Approval-Seeking Child*: This person is frightened of breaking rules and often needs a "parent" to approve his decisions. Townsend claims he has been in a "one-down" position with adults all of his life. This behavior is compared with Israel's desire for a king, but it should be noted that they substituted that human authority for *God's* authority. Townsend also says this person is fearful of taking responsibility for his own decisions and answering to God for them. He cites Matthew 23:8-10, where Jesus instructs us not to call anyone on earth "father." He also cites Jesus' saying He will "divide households," and recommends that we "obediently rebel" when human rules break with God's rules.

There are some valid observations here, more than in some of the other patterns, but not a full biblical analysis. His recommendation to answer only to God and biblical authorities is a good one. Biblically, the problem with this behavior is the idolatry, setting another person in place of God. That is much more the problem than the fact of submission to others, which is at times appropriate. The comment about "obedient rebellion" when human and divine rules clash is very consistent with scriptural teachings to please God rather than man. It should be noted that our Lord's coming to "divide households" is specifically regarding the *gospel message*, and should never be construed to minimize other required relationships of submission.

2. *Controlling Parent:* This person becomes "parental" in relationships with others. Townsend says he has "internalized a critical, harsh parental value system, and he has lost access to his spontaneous, adolescent parts," with a tendency to be judgmental. This analysis is highly Freudian and again promotes an unbiblical division of man. The Bible reveals this type of attitude to be prideful and warns against it:

"Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers--not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock." 1 Peter 5:2-3

3. *Rebellious Child:* Townsend believes this pattern is preferable to the first two, because this individual questions and challenges whether authority is truly legitimate. He cannot, however, experience authority as being constructive or believe that he can be an adult and yet be under authority. Townsend says that:

"Rebellion is not freedom, because it is simply a reaction to control. It is not being an adult. When the rebel learns to meet needs to be in control of his life, and not react in hostility or defensiveness, he then becomes an adult."

The passage in Philippians 2:6-11 is cited, noting that the servanthood of Jesus did not prevent His being an adult.

Scripture does call us to be like the Bereans (Acts 17), testing the words of every man against the Word of God. It also teaches biblical submission, first to God's absolute authority, and then to man's delegated authority when not in direct conflict with Scripture. While Townsend's comments on this pattern contain some truth, he doesn't give a strong enough recognition to man's fundamental rebellion and the fact that *God*, not man, is in sovereign control.

4. *Obsessive-Compulsive:* More comfortable with tasks than with relationships, this person uses organization to feel in control of his life, frightened of making risky decisions and taking charge over his life. Biblically, this is a form of idolatry. Such a person needs to acknowledge *God's* sovereign control and submit to the authority of the Lord and His Word. His fear of man, along with other fears, needs to be replaced with a reverential fear of the Lord.

5. *Addictive/Compulsive*: This is considered by the author to be a disguised form of rebellion, a way for "rebellious parts" to emerge. It is rebellion, and it is also idolatry. Rebellion needs to be replaced with repentance, confession of sin (including unrighteous anger), and submission to God.

## **HIDING...FROM WHAT?**

Townsend correctly traces hiding behavior back to Adam and Eve, although his analysis of their motives is questionable. Referring to Genesis 3:7-10, he states that they both hid "from God's restoring, forgiving, healing love." They "mistakenly saw God as someone who would hurt and not heal them." So they hid." But why? And from *what*?

The author speaks of Scripture's "roots and fruits" principle, saying that "results always point to causes. Children are a good example." The "fruit" is a symptom which points to a "root," or cause. For biblical support, he cites Matthew 7:17-18, but note the more complete context:

"Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them. Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?" Then I will tell them plainly, "I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!" Matthew 7:15-23

This passage lends no real support to Townsend's victim-oriented theories about hiding. Instead, it issues a strong warning about false prophets, wolves in sheep's clothing who fail to bear good fruit. Jesus also spoke these stinging words to the Pharisees:

"Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit. You brook of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. The good man brings good things out of the

good stored up in him, and the evil man bring evil things out of the evil stored up in him." Matthew 12:33-35

The Bible repeatedly points to the sinful heart of man as the "root" which bears rotten "fruit" such as the behavior of hiding from God's judgment. Townsend has missed this, replacing biblical truth with his own "six critical stages" in the development of harmful hiding:

1. Our needs go unmet.
2. We experience injury to our souls.
3. We make legitimate needs bad.
4. We deny our own needs.
5. We develop false solutions.
6. We produce bad fruit, such as depression, marital tension, and "addictive" behaviors.

Townsend recommends that you "search your own heart and begin exploring which legitimate spiritual and emotional needs have been called bad by yourself and others." He says that it's easier to pretend you have no needs than to admit to having "bad" needs. Unfortunately, he gives no emphasis to man's fundamental need to be delivered from the wrath of God and the eternal consequences of sin.

One chapter in the book is devoted to looking at the results of harmful hiding. One is isolation, because harmful hiding patterns "never stop with simply protecting us from evil or danger; they isolate us from what we need to grow." Also, "we resent or fear what we need." Another result is loss of freedom and responsibility. "Helpful hiding" results from deliberate conscious choice, while "harmful hiding" is "reactive, automatic, and often unconscious." Shame "is a sense of 'badness' about ourselves that urges us to withdraw further from relationship," and also results when we deny the existence of our needs in order to protect ourselves from further injury. Townsend distinguishes here between humiliation, "the result of experiencing our badness outside of relationship," and humility, which, "on the other hand, is experiencing our badness within the confines of love." Finally, harmful hiding drives us to live in the past: "The past becomes the present." While some of these results may actually occur (people do become isolated, do experience shame, and do develop sinful patterns that reoccur) Townsend's discussion is focused on external injury and unfulfilled needs, rather than one's own sin, as the motivation for hiding.

All of this hiding has a cost. Here's how Townsend sees it:

"The person who spends a lifetime trying to stay perfectly safe misses out on the healing and relationships that God has provided."

This is selfishly oriented and counts only the cost to the person who hides. Nothing is said about the cost to God's kingdom. That person could be *giving* love as commanded by God and bringing the good news of the gospel to the lost. Townsend sees it instead in terms of *taking* love. Defensive people, he claims, are isolated and "there isn't enough of them accessible to be loved" (emphasis added).

How does a person come out of hiding? Having stressed the knowledge of our hiding patterns, Townsend says that this isn't enough. "Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies" (1 Corinthians 8:1). In his final chapter, there is a basically good section that discusses two incomplete solutions. The first is "truth without love," or confrontation without relationship. This may lead to external compliance but increased hiding, or open resentment and loss of relationship. The second is "grace minus truth," or relationship without confrontation. This leads quickly to license, irresponsibility, blaming, helplessness, apathy, and a "cheap grace" wherein forgiveness is confused with licentiousness. Looking at the matter biblically, we must agree that both of these approaches are in error:

"Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in his way you will fulfill the law of Christ." Galatians 6:1-2

However...Townsend claims that the church has typically been seen as "truth only," while psychotherapy has been viewed as "grace only," or the "ear tickling" noted in 2 Timothy 4:3-4, providing "permission for people to be self-indulgent." (It truly is "ear tickling!") The "truth only," he says, causes guilty concealment, while the "grace only" causes irresponsible openness. We might agree with him that these extremes do not necessarily represent either the church or psychotherapy completely. Nevertheless, this analysis is incomplete in its contrast of biblical with psychological approaches to counseling. For one thing, a genuinely truthful approach is the most loving, because love rejoices in the truth (1 Corinthians 13:6), and it is the truth of Jesus Christ that sets people free from the bondage of sin. The counselor who is truly committed to God's truth is the one who demonstrates the greatest love, even though that truth may be

difficult and some persons may harden their hearts in response. Beyond that, the foundations of the church differ radically from the foundations of psychotherapy. The church is founded on the truth of God's Word, which has given us *everything* we need for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3-4). Psychotherapy, even when baptized with Scriptures as in this book, is founded on the "counsel of the ungodly" (Psalm 1:1), using theories invented by men (Freud, Jung, Adler, Ellis, Maslow, Skinner, and more) who rejected the gospel and sought to create an alternative means of solving life's problems. According to the Bible, such men are darkened in their understanding and the futility of their thinking, separated from God (Ephesians 4:18). Townsend hasn't fully addressed the issues that separate biblical from psychological approaches to counseling issues--including the issue of hiding that is his theme.

Townsend says that Hebrews 12:1 "calls us out of hiding," but look more closely at the context:

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood." Hebrews 12:1-4

That Scripture surely does call us out of hiding, but it also nails the real cause of that hiding: "the sin that so easily entangles!"

Moving beyond hiding, Townsend says that:

"As we are restored, repaired, and matured, we are to help others find the same help we have found. This is the essence of the Great Commission, to make disciples of all nations."

Yes, making disciples of all nations is the Great Commission, but this sounds more like a promotion of the psychological ideas of Townsend and others: "the same help we have found." What help? The psychologists, whose theories and methods are so often exalted above the Word of God and the sufficiency of Jesus Christ? *Or the*

*Gospel, the truth?* Townsend seems to have added to the Great Commission!

To conclude, we must look at the biblical view of hiding. God's Word is certainly not silent on this issue. At the beginning, we saw many references showing that man hides from God's judgment, because of his sin. The flip side of this is that God offers His mercy to those who risk exposure:

"He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy." Proverbs 28:13

"Come near to God and He will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded." James 4:8

Job, a man that God Himself called "righteous," refused to hide from God:

"Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him; I will surely defend my ways to his face. Indeed, this will turn out for my deliverance, for no godless man would dare come before him! Listen carefully to my words; let your ears take in what I say. Now that I have prepared my case, I know I will be vindicated. Can anyone bring charges against me? If so, I will be silent and die. Only grant me these two things, O God, and then I will not hide from you: Withdraw your hand far from me, and stop frightening me with your terrors. Then summon me and I will answer, or let me speak, and you reply. How many wrongs and sins have I committed? Show me my offense and my sin." Job 13:15-23

Here is a man who refused to hide from God.

In the final judgment, sinful hiding is particularly graphic:

"Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They called to the mountains and the rocks, 'Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?'" Revelation 6:15-17

Who indeed? Those who have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb!

Another significant concept is that *God* hides His face from sinful man:

"'On that day I will become angry with them and forsake them; I will hide my face from them, and they will be destroyed. Many disasters and difficulties will come upon them, and on that day they will ask, "Have not these disasters come upon us because our God is not with us?" And I will certainly hide my face on that day because of all their wickedness in turning to other gods.'" Deuteronomy 31:17-18

Nevertheless, He promises restoration:

"'I will display my glory among the nations, and all the nations will see the punishment I inflict and the hand I lay upon them. From that day forward the house of Israel will know that I am the LORD their God. And the nations will know that the people of Israel went into exile for their sin, because they were unfaithful to me. So I hid my face from them and handed them over to their enemies, and they all fell by the sword. I dealt with them according to their uncleanness and their offenses, and I hid my face from them.' Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: 'I will now bring Jacob back from captivity and will have compassion on all the people of Israel, and I will be zealous for my holy name. They will forget their shame and all the unfaithfulness they showed toward me when they lived in safety in their land with no one to make them afraid. When I have brought them back from the nations and have gathered them from the countries of their enemies, I will show myself holy through them in the sight of many nations. Then they will know that I am the LORD their God, for though I sent them into exile among the nations, I will gather them to their own land, not leaving any behind. I will no longer hide my face from them, for I will pour out my Spirit on the house of Israel, declares the Sovereign LORD.'" Ezekiel 39:21-29

Note: Other references to God's hiding His face include Deuteronomy 31:20; Psalm 30:7; Isaiah 1:15, 59:2, 64:7, 57:17; Jeremiah 33:15; Micah 3:4.

Does the Bible ever speak of the "helpful hiding" promoted by Townsend? No, it never teaches the self-protective attitude of modern psychologists. The only "helpful hiding" that emerges in the Bible is of a much different nature. Numerous Old Testament accounts show godly people hiding from physical, life-threatening

danger, in order that *God's* purposes might prevail. Some of these include:

Exodus 2 (Moses hidden as a baby)  
Joshua 2 (Rahab's hiding of God's spies)  
2 Kings 11 (Joash hidden during the reign of Athaliah)  
1 Samuel 20 (David hiding from Saul, who wanted to kill him)  
Judges 9:5 (Jotham hides to escape being murdered by Abimelech)

Other accounts show futile attempts at hiding by enemies of God (such as Joshua 10:16-26) as well as attempts to hide personal sin (Achan's theft in Joshua 7).

Throughout His Word, God calls His children to speak openly of His faithfulness, not hiding the truth:

"I do not hide Your righteousness in my heart; I speak of Your faithfulness and salvation. I do not conceal Your love and Your truth from the great assembly." Psalm 40:10

"We will not hide them from their children; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, His power, and the wonders He has done." Psalm 78:4

"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven." Matthew 5:14-16

He also calls the righteous to hide *in Him*, rather than *from Him*. Even Townsend says that "our redemption is accomplished as we hide *in* God rather than hide *from* Him. It is God's love that comes looking for us in our secret hideouts." The words of the Psalmist and of Isaiah point this out so well:

"Keep me as the apple of Your eye; hide me in the shadow of Your wings." Psalm 17:8 (see also Psalm 91, 27:5, 31:20, 32:7, and 143:9)

"It will be a shelter and shade from the heat of the day, and a refuge and hiding place from the storm and rain." Isaiah 4:6 (referring to the "Branch of the Lord," Jesus Christ)

"I will wait for the Lord, who is hiding His face from the house of Jacob. I will put my trust in Him." Isaiah 8:17

"I delight greatly in the Lord; my soul rejoices in my God. For He has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness." Isaiah 61:10a

In coming to the biblical view that man hides from *judgment*, judgment that is deserved because of his sin, we must note the futility of his attempts:

"Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil." Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

"The look on their faces testifies against them; they parade their sin like Sodom; they do not hide it. Woe to them! They have brought disaster upon themselves." Isaiah 3:9

"Woe to those who go to great depths to hide their plans from the Lord, who do their work in darkness and think, 'Who sees us? Who will know?' You turn things upside down, as if the potter were thought to be like the clay! Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, 'He did not make me'? Can the pot say of the potter, 'He knows nothing'?"  
Isaiah 29:15-16

"Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God."  
1 Corinthians 4:6

"Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him to whom we must give account." Hebrews 4:13

Note also: Psalm 38:9, 69:5, 139:15; Jeremiah 16:17, 23:24, 49:10; Proverbs 27:5; Isaiah 26:30, 28:14-19, 40:27-31; Job 34:21-22; Hosea 5:3; Amos 9:3, 6:10; Matthew 10:26-27; Mark 4:22; Luke 8:17, 12:1.

Finally, Jesus Christ Himself calls us out of our hiding by His example:

"I offered My back to those who beat Me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide My face from mocking and spitting. Because the Sovereign Lord helps Me, I will not be disgraced. Therefore have I set My face like flint, and I know I will not be put to shame." Isaiah 50:6-7

The Christian is not called to protect self or to seek fulfillment of numerous psychological needs, but rather to be conformed to the image of Christ. He is called to emerge from his sinful patterns of hiding from God's judgment, receiving His mercy and walking forward in boldness and confidence to proclaim the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ!