

Thinking Biblically About OCD

Introduction: Matthew 6, Philippians 4, and Luke 12

Definition: Obsessive compulsive disorder is an anxiety disorder. Individuals who are identified with the problem are bothered with thoughts that they cannot dispel or obsessions.

A. Obsessions:

1. Their obsessive thoughts include fear of contamination and dirt.
2. Need for order and symmetry.
3. Need for hoarding and saving.
4. Unacceptable sexual content.
5. Doubt that an important task was done.
6. Fear of blasphemous or sacrilegious thoughts. Fear of causing injury or damage to others. Fear of unlucky numbers.

B. Compulsions: This fearful thinking results in behaviors that are called compulsions. The individual believes that the behavior must be done to either avert disaster or to gain relief from the obsessive thinking. These behaviors include:

1. Washing and cleaning.
2. Putting things in the right order.
3. Hoarding or “collecting” things.
4. Checking to see if things are right.

The obsessions are not logical and the compulsions consume life.

C. Who is affected?

1. OCD affects approximately two to three percent of the US population.
2. It appears generally around the age of 10 or 21.
3. People will go for years before talking to anyone about it because, generally, the details will be embarrassing, awful, or trivial.
4. OCD now has a spectrum, and it includes somatoform disorders, eating disorders, and impulse control disorders.
5. 10% of what the average primary care physician sees in the office. Caring for them may cost up to 8 billion dollars a year.

D. Popular Examples: Monk, Howard Hughes.

E. OCD and Me.

1. The garage door.
2. Practicing medicine requires a little obsessive compulsiveness!
3. Dealing with intrusive thoughts.

F. Current Medical Care.

1. Jeffrey Schwartz: Brain Lock
2. PET Scans, MRI's, and brain function.
3. Cognitive behavior therapy and medication.

G. Seeing OCD through the Lens of Scripture.

1. What role does a disordered brain have in this process?
2. How do we counsel individuals that may not go away?
3. How does knowing about pathology help the struggler?

H. How can thinking Biblically help?

1. Identify the thinking for what it is.

- a. Rational or irrational?
 - b. True or untrue? Philippians 4:8
 2. Identify the physical and spiritual cause for the thinking.
 - a. Romans 5:12 and our broken brain.
 - b. Accurately describe the thinking and behavior biblically: temptation, worry fear, avoiding Biblical responsibilities, non-religious legalism.
 3. Pursuing better choices. Romans 6:16, Galatians 5:16-26.
 4. The value of perseverance! Galatians 6:7-9.
- I. Important questions for Christians who are in this situation.**
1. How did you train your heart? 2 Peter 3:14
 2. How will you train your heart? 2 Peter 1:1-8
 3. How willing are you to depend on God's grace acting in your life to power the change? Ephesians 2:1-10
 4. Good news. God graciously empowers all change He requires! Ephesians 1:18-23

