



Grace for the Afflicted: A Clinical and Biblical Perspective on Mental Illness

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“A Must-Read for Every Pastor, Ministry Leader, and Concerned Christian”

Why has the church struggled in ministering to those with mental illnesses?

Each day men and women diagnosed with mental disorders are told they need to pray more and turn from their sin. Mental illness is equated with demonic possession, weak faith, and generational sin. As both a church leader and a professor of psychology and behavioral sciences, Matthew S. Stanford has seen far too many mentally ill brothers and sisters damaged by well-meaning believers who respond to them out of fear or misinformation rather than grace.

“I wholeheartedly recommend *Grace for the Afflicted* for any pastor or church leader who is looking for a reliable resource on understanding mental illness and treatment from a biblical perspective. Dr. Matthew Stanford’s extensive background as a neurobiologist is shaped by his vibrant and personal faith in God as our wounded healer who has compassion on his children who suffer.”

— Kay Warren

“Matt’s deep commitment to the gospel, coupled with his preparation as a scholar-practitioner, makes him a trusted voice to me and so many others.”

— Ed Stetzer, executive director, Billy Graham Center for Evangelism, Billy Graham Distinguished Endowed Chair for Church, Mission, and Evangelism, Wheaton College

“When responding to mental illness, our churches often start from a place of ignorance, faulty assumptions, or simple hopelessness. Matthew Stanford uses his knowledge and experience to battle all three. As a fellow believer that the Christian community has much to offer people affected by mental health challenges, I applaud and recommend this book, which offers much-needed education, sound biblical thought, and practical ways to help. It’s a must-read for every pastor, ministry leader, and concerned Christian who wants to be informed, wise, sensible, and truly helpful.”

— Amy Simpson, author of *Troubled Minds*

“Jesus began his ministry by blessing the ‘poor in spirit’ (Mt 5:3), and none are better qualified for that designation than people with mental disorders. Yet they remain profoundly stigmatized to this day, even in the church. There is a tremendous need, therefore, for books like this one. An accessible overview of mental disorders written for the church, it offers a welcome dose of scientifically informed common sense, undergirded with



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sound, biblically based wisdom. It deserves a wide circulation and will make an excellent gift for friends, family members, and ministers looking for a sympathetic Christian guide to this complex area.”

– **Eric L. Johnson**, Lawrence and Charlotte Hoover Professor of Pastoral Care, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

“Having been a pastor for almost four decades and having an undergraduate degree in psychology has created a personal interest in both theology and psychology for many years. I’m well aware of the deep division between these two disciplines. That being said, Dr. Matthew Stanford does a masterful job of showing the truth in how these two seemingly divided groups can find a common and honest intersection. Skillfully done, Dr. Stanford shows how Scripture applies to real life and speaks truth about deep psychological issues. It’s written in a way that is understandable and applicable. I believe this book will minister to many in the days ahead. ”

– **Frank S. Page**, president and CEO, Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention

“*Grace for the Afflicted* offers the church an account of mental illnesses from a medical and biblical perspective. Stanford speaks a word of hope and grace to those who bear the burden of mental illnesses – patients and families alike. He examines illnesses not often covered in such studies: from traumatic brain injuries caused by accidents, violence, and strokes to personality disorders and dementia. A highly significant addition to the pastor’s bookshelf.”

– **Kathryn Greene-McCreight**, Christ Church, New Haven, CT, author of *Darkness Is My Only Companion*