

RESEARCH IN NURSING – A BIBLICAL APPROACH

Is research relevant? There are other areas that seem to give more direct challenges to us as Christian nurses. But some research in nursing has been powerful to change situations for patients, where they were not receiving what they needed and where they were not being valued as the Bible teaches us.

So what? Well, the research methods on the table are some of the ways you might want to investigate if you're doing a piece of research, or a module. They all have a claim about what is most real, which influences what they look for and how they find it. As Christians we need to be aware of these, because we can't accept, for example, that culture is behind all our beliefs, because Jesus has told us that He is the way and the truth and the life. This is not to say that culture isn't important to consider in research, or that you have to develop a completely new method to investigate it. But you *can* point out in your work that you do not accept the underlying philosophy, and state the error involved. Psalm 19:7b says that God's Word is trustworthy and makes the simple wise. We can be confident in using scripture as an anchor in our research methods.

The table that follows, whilst by no means conclusive, is an attempt to help you think about the underlying philosophy behind a number of popular research methods and contains a few suggestions as to where the challenges for us as Christians might lie in each methodology.

For Discussion

- 1. Why not get together with some of your Christian classmates and try to pick out examples of the underlying philosophy in each type of research method, and then look at some of the suggested Bible verses and grapple with a Christian critique of each philosophy.**
- 2. In what circumstances would you be prepared to use each approach, or are there any that you think are not compatible with Christianity?**
- 3. How would you point out your reservations with each approach sensitively but with integrity in an essay?**

Research method	Focus	Underlying philosophy	God's Word
Psychoanalytical	Unconscious processes driving our behaviour	<p>The unconscious rules - not us!</p> <p>Our unconscious is at the heart of us. Problems arise when it struggles to express itself against the pressures of culture and civilisation</p>	<p>Responsibility Romans 1:18-25</p> <p><i>Wrong ideas of God give rise to sinful behaviour. The wrong ideas come because people close their eyes to God's truth and prefer a lie. We were like this until God changed us.</i></p>
Existential	Individual experience	<p>Despair is the best way</p> <p>Reality is only what we experience. Questioning the meaning of life leads you to realise that all that is certain is death, and so you despair. This despair is said to be excellent because you have realised the truth.</p>	<p>Hope in Christ 1 Peter 1:3</p> <p><i>Jesus overcame death and conquered the power of sin. He has provided the way for us to have a relationship with God, now this has been achieved. This leads to eternal life and is a great reason to rejoice!</i></p>
Statistical	Patterns and associations not happening by chance	<p>It's not proved unless it's <0.05</p> <p>To be proved to exist, a phenomenon must be measured and calculated against the possibility that it might be there by chance. Objective science is the only way to truth, and as such God's truth is seen to be myth.</p>	<p>God reveals Himself in Jesus His Son. His Word tells us where to find Him John 1:18</p> <p><i>There isn't much point looking to prove God exists in places where He has told us He will not be. Jesus is fully God and so we can look to Him. Also, there is considerable historical evidence for the New Testament documents and no scholar has ever denied Jesus' existence.</i></p>
Social/Cultural	How norms of conduct and social practices are established in relationships and cultures	<p>No universal truth - culture is at the core of our beliefs and behaviours</p> <p>Cultural norms and relationships generate the values and beliefs we hold. Christian values are seen to be a 'Western' approach.</p>	<p>I am the way and the truth and the life - John 14:6</p> <p><i>Jesus states that He is the universal truth we all need. Nearly all moral codes take their starting point from the Ten Commandments.</i></p>