

READING GENESIS 38 THROUGH PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORIES OF GRIEF: AN ANALYSIS OF BEHAVIOUR TRIGGERED BY MULTIPLE GRIEVES

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Abstract: *Traditionally, biblical texts have been interpreted using traditional biblical approaches such as literal, allegorical and historical-critical methods. These methods do always offer a satisfying interpretation but a psychological reading of the text can offer an alternative interpretation. Today, new scientific methods such as archeology, psychology are also used to read biblical texts. This study is motivated by the quest of finding out how theories of counselling can be used to understand some behaviors of some characters in the bible hence better understanding. The researcher aims at proving that this text can be read in a psychological approach to offer more help to Christians as most of the previous studies indicate that this chapter does not offer many lessons to a Christian believer. In this article, the writer reads one of the fascinating narratives in the Bible through three psychological theories of grief namely, Bowlby's Attachment Theory, Psychoanalytic theory of counselling and Elizabeth Kubler-Ross grief cycle. The writer uses a psychological approach to bring out a better understanding of Tamar and Judah's behaviours to the modern readers. The study also seeks to use this approach to bring a renewed appreciation of the role of the human psyche or soul in the history of the Bible and its interpretation.*

Key Words: *Behaviour, Counselling, Grief, Theory, Trauma,*

Introduction

Genesis 38 has generated more frustration to many interpreters. However, we learn from Paul that "Every Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness" (2Tim 3:16). This means that God is the originator of the scripture, since it comes from Him who is reliable and all scriptures are reliable. We must therefore read

and interpret it properly. This study advances the understanding of Genesis 38 to the modern reader.

This meaning may be implicit to the modern reader who lives in a different time in history. One principle of interpreting biblical texts is reading them contextually. Reading of this periscope using a psychological approach will make the text more relevant to a modern reader. Hence, enabling them bring out certain enrichment to biblical hermeneutics. Furthermore, the text of the Bible can be better understood in terms of experience of life and norms of behavior. This psychological understanding will lead the modern reader to a particular understanding of symbols. The language of symbols makes provision for the expression in areas of religion experience that are not accessible to purely conceptual reasoning, but which have a genuine value for the expression of truth. This is the most important contribution of this study.

The gap identified is the failure to explain the improper behavior of Tamar and Judah in Genesis 38. The objective of this study therefore, is to reread Gen 38 using a psychological approach to help understand better the behavior of both Tamar and Judah. This will illuminate and propose possible reasons for their behaviors. Further this study aims in helping the modern readers to understand the text better by offering a wider spectrum for the understanding of Gen 38: 12-26. The following section is a brief analysis of Genesis 38.

An Analysis of Genesis 38

Genesis 38 serves as another example of the animosity or lack of loyalty between brothers in the Hebrew Bible (Weisberg, 2016:417). However, Fritsch, (1959:104) claims that Genesis 38 is like an alien element, suddenly and arbitrarily thrust into a record, which serves only to disturb, certainly because of the characters of Judah and Tamar. Few people would choose this chapter as a basis for teaching or preaching. According to Spackman, (2010:65) the story of Judah and Tamar, has no obvious moral to teach. Moreover, he argues that some teachers and students may be uncomfortable with the sexual elements central to the plot.

According Von Rad, (1995:204) he described Genesis 38 as "unconnected, independent and an interruption. He asserts that, "Every attentive reader can see that the story of Judah and Tamar has no connection at all with the strictly organized Joseph story at whose beginning it is now inserted, " Similarly Brueggemann, (1982:307) alleges, "This peculiar chapter stands alone, without connection to its context. It is isolated in every way and is most enigmatic". The above sections are an analysis of genesis 38 which according to many writers has generated more frustration than enthusiasm. This therefore call for an alternative reading of the same text to be more useful to the modern reader. The following section analysis three theories of grief that the writer intend to use in rereading the text under study.

An analysis of the Psychological Theories of grief

In the above section we have discovered how Genesis 38 has generated a lot of difficulties to the interpreters. In this section we look at how psychological reading of the same text can be of great help to the modern reader. Psychological and psychoanalytical studies do bring a certain enrichment to biblical exegesis in that, because of them, the texts of the Bible can be better understood in terms of experience of life and norms of behavior (Joseph, 1995:90). As is well known religion is always in a relationship of conflict or debate with the unconscious. It plays a

significant role in the proper orientation of human drives. Joseph further argues that the stages through which historical criticism passes in its methodical study of texts need to be complemented by study of the different levels of reality they display.

Psychology attempts to show the way in this respect. It lead to a multidimensional understanding of Scripture and help decode the human language of revelation. Psychology and Psychoanalysis have led in particular, to a new understanding of symbol. The language of symbol makes provision for the expression of areas of religious experience that are not accessible to purely conceptual reasoning but which have a genuine value for the expression of truth. For this reason, interdisciplinary study conducted in common by exegetes and psychologists or psychoanalysts offers particular advantages, especially when objectively grounded and confirmed by pastoral experience (Joseph, 1995:90).

Geraldine and David claims that the loss of a loved one is a universal experience. They argue that every person will experience loss and traumatic circumstances at some point in their lives. Further they claim that this experience has the potential to displace a person from their anticipated life course. Normal grief is a process that can take not less than one year and can take up two years or even more (Geraldine & David, 2008:4). The writer notes the behavior of Tamar and Judah cannot be taken at the face value and hence the use of counselling lens, which considers Biblical characters as fully formed personalities. It is vital that biblical studies be open to the creative insights of other disciplines, especially where these may cast a fresh light on problems which have proved intractable to more traditional methods

The writer is aware that some psychological approaches can contradict Christian worldview. However, it would be wrong to solely rely on secular psychology. Moreover, not every aspect of psychology is wrong, there are many helpful and positive aspects of psychology, which can help us understand biblical texts better. The researcher, therefore cautiously takes the following precautions. First, the writer approached the text as Christian Psychologist. Secondly, she acknowledges that there are many psychological theories but few are used; those that do not contradict the Christian worldview. Thirdly, the writer takes caution that when any psychology theory contradicts Christianity worldview, the writer chooses the latter. This integration of the two help to understand the text better. Several models and theories have attempted to explain the complex process of loss and grief. In the following section we explore loss, grief and mourning, traumatic death and loss.

Grief is a natural expected reaction to a loss. It is a deep or violent sorrow. It is the feeling within a person, which is universal to human experience. The depth of grief is determined by the quality of the relationship involved. For example, how much you cherished the person who died or to the thing that was lost will determine the depth of grief. Mourning is the outward expression of what one is feeling within. It is the period of time during which signs of grief are shown. Loss can be defined as being deprived of, separation, fail to keep, cease to be interested, perish, or be worse off in money or otherwise.

The word trauma describes an overwhelming event that renders one helpless and breaks out ones ordinary way of coping with life. The inability to cope makes one afraid of a similar event. Trauma is an event that is outside the range of usual human experience that would be distressing

to anyone. Traumatic loss is catastrophic and very painful because it is usually sudden and unexpected. Traumatic death or losses give no warnings, no time to say goodbye or sort out our differences, no time to adjust or begin to prepare for what is coming. It rips our world apart leaving us in profound shock. Often there are painful memories of the circumstances surrounding the death. In order for the grieved individuals to avoid the memories, they try to avoid all the things that remind them of the death and may end up shutting themselves in their homes.

The story of Judah and Tamar has been a mystery to many readers. However, reading the narrative using a different approach, the story can be understood better and lessen judgmental reading of the story. The researcher applies a psychological approach to explain the main characters behaviours. According to the writer the two characters were undergoing grief hence their behaviors. The following paragraphs explores the three main theories used in this study. ✓

Psychoanalytic Theory

The theory was founded by Sigmund Freud. He viewed human nature as basically deterministic. He claims that behaviours are determined by irrational forces, unconscious motivations, and biological and instinctual drives which determine our behavior. Freud's ideas on grief are about personal attachment. The theory stresses that grieving individuals are searching for an attachment that has been lost. He describes mourning as detachment from the loved one. Freud defines mourning as a state of melancholia suggesting that when mourning goes wrong, melancholia escalates. Melancholia is seen as a profound presentation of depression involving a complete loss of pleasure in all or almost everything. The process of mourning is viewed as a task to rebuild one's inner world by experiencing the intense pain of loss that reawakens the loving affect of the lost loved one. The death of a loved one can result in individuals losing their sense of identity (Freud, 1920). It is suggested that in grieving, the bereaved is letting go of multiple attachments that are involved in the formation of a relationship. When the loss is accepted, the ego is said to accommodate the loss enabling the bereaved to search for new attachments (Humphrey & Zimpfer, 1998; Susillo, 2005).

Elizabeth Kubler-Ross Grief Cycle

Kubler – Ross Grief Cycle model is a useful perspective for understanding our own and other people's emotional reaction to personal trauma and change, irrespective of the cause. From this model's perspective, grief is not a linear process but considered to be fluid and as a result it is believed that most people do not progress through the stages of this model in an orderly manner. Kubler-Ross gives five stages of grief cycle, which are denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance (Kubler, 1969:43).

According to Kubler – Ross Denial is the initial stage of grief cycle, where the grieved person refutes the truth and feel isolated. It helps individuals to reduce the shocking news and allows time to adjust and mobilize defenses. The next stage is characterized with anger when the person asks the questions why me and not someone else. Talitwala argues that anger comes in when denial cannot be maintained and is directed to the family, professionals, other healthy people or God. The person seems to complain incessantly about everything and it is difficult to please him or her (Talitwala, 2002:17). Bargaining is the third stage where the individual knows the inevitable truth and bargains with God for extension of time on the promise of good behavior. The fourth stage is Depression, this is when one realizes that bargaining is not working and the

inevitable is on the way or the reality of the death sinks in him or her. One get depressed that is accompanied by a deep sense of loss. Lastly, the fifth stage of Kubler Grief Cycle is acceptance where individuals accept fully that the loss is inevitable (Kubler, 1969:45-55).

Bowlby's Attachment Theory

Bowlby argues that attachments develop early in life and offer security and survival for the individuals. It is when these affectional attachments are broken or lost, that individuals experience distress and emotional disturbance such as anxiety, crying and anger (Freeman, 2005:56). These emotions are often expressed as mourning. Bowlby suggests that there are four general phases of mourning this include: numbing, yearning and searching, disorganization, reorganization. Numbing is characterized by feeling of disbelief that death has occurred. It provides the grieving person with temporally relief from the pain associated with the loss. Numbing usually last for a short period and it is typically followed by emotional outburst. Yearning and searching involves realization of the loss after the numbness begin to fade away. In this phase anger and frustration is common at this stage as the grieved person search for someone to place the blame on. Dis-organization and Re-organization involves realization of the loss and accepting the reality of the loss along with all the turmoil's it brings. This phase is characterized with gradual change as the bereaved attempt to move on with life.

An Interpretation of Genesis 38 through the three Psychological Theories

Much details of the passage have been described in the sections above therefore in this section the researcher uses a descriptive method to examine the psychological behaviours of the two main characters from the pericope. The purpose of every interpretation is to give meaning of a text into specific contexts in such a way that people are able to understand what it means and apply it to make sense in their situation. This study aims in helping the modern readers to understand the text better by offering a wider spectrum for the understanding of Gen 38: 12-26. This pericope like other biblical passages lacks information to help the reader understand the attitudes and characters of the two main actors, Judah and Tamar.

The researcher also aims at offering a fresh approach and to consider whether this study will explain these morally unacceptable behaviors and make the passage or the whole chapter better understood. The explanations are drawn from several counselling theories on grief; Freud's model of bereavement, Elizabeth Kubler-Ross grief cycle and Bowlby's attachment theory. These theories are concerned with grief as a reaction to the death of close person. In this section, we shall consider how each of these theories can shed more light on the behaviors of Judah and Tamar. The process of grief is at the heart of the actions of Judah and Tamar. In this periscope, some dilemmas on the character of Judah and Tamar remain unresolved. Why would Judah a senior Jewish Patriarch engage in such a disgraceful act? Why would Tamar trick her father in law into incest? To answer these questions, the researcher examines the pericope using a psychological perspective.

The narrative in Genesis 38:12-26 is both a theological and a psychological story. The psychological ideas are conveyed by actions and not words. Faber states that according to Freud, Science is the only way of arriving at knowledge of reality and there is therefore no other way of solving the riddle of the universe and reconciling man and suffering. He claims that religion is entirely in the framework of conception in an individual's life. Therefore, it is marked by

tension between pleasure principle and the reality principle. In this case, man prefer to follow his desires but reality forbid him to do so (Faber, 1976:16).

The Behavior of Judah and Tamar

Despite there being no precise number of days that Jews mourned the dead, we have learnt that the mourning days ranged from seven to thirty days. With this in mind, the writer based her argument on the theories of grief and concluded that Judah and Tamar grieved the loss of El, Onan (Judah's sons and Tamar's husbands) and Judah's wife. This is supported by Malkinson who states that "the passage of time has no diminishing effect on the grief parents' grief or on relinquishing attachment to the deceased". He argues that grief is a stress experience and the death of a child is an inseparable loss that can occupy the parent for a long time. It can also be a life time preoccupation for a parent. He further claims that the normal length time for grief is 2 to 3 years (Malkinson et al, 1998: 413- 416). In this section, the writer analyzes the behaviors of both Judah and Tamar. This will help to understand their actions in a better way. How might the behaviours of Judah and Tamar look if read in the light of Psychological theories of grief?

Judah's Behaviours using a Psychological Approach

According to the narrative Judah proceeded for sheep shearing immediately after mourning his wife. We also learnt that mourning period lasted between seven to thirty days. However, we noted that a normal grieving period of the loss of a loved one takes not less than one year and can take up to two years or even more depending on one's personality. In reference to this claim, it is therefore evident that Judah was still mourning multiple losses. It can therefore be concluded that his experience of grief explains his behaviours.

Judah Sexual Relation with Tamar

In Gen 38 Judah has lost his two sons Er, Onan and his wife (Gen 38:7-12) hence a clear indication that Judah had multiple losses. Sheep shearing was a festive time when sexual temptation would be sharpened by the Canaanite cult, which encouraged ritual fornication as fertility magic (Derek, 1967:188). Nevertheless, Judah went to sheep shearing immediately after the mourning period and had sex with Tamar. Sex or marriage with very close relative was forbidden (Roland, 1968:32). Further, sex between father in law and daughter in law was not allowed (Lev 18:15). If a man lied with his daughter in law both of them were to be put to death (Lev 20:12). This clearly showed that Judah's actions were immoral and contrary to the religious laws. With the assumption of grief taking up to 3 years by Malkinson, we can conclude that Judah was still in grief when he encountered with his daughter in law.

However, Kubler -Ross and Kessler argues that sex is part of grieving process. The feelings are healthy and normal and grief drive an individual to sex. They further claims that sex can reaffirm while the bonding that happens in sex can be comforting. It can also be an escape or even as self-therapy for grieving people. The grieving individuals may have a sexual relationship as a way of escape from painful realities. Grief stricken men turn to drinking, drugging, and reckless sex when it comes to dealing with their internal pain (Kubler-Ross and Kessler, 2005:121-125). In the narrative under study, Judah's life was "covered" by death incidences hence we can conclude that sex could have been one of the ways Judah would use to give himself the intensity of life again.

It can therefore be deduced that Judah was acting purely on the impulse of a moment and with no apparent second thoughts, takes the sexual offensive. Judah demonstrates what can happen when one is vulnerable and unable to make proper decision. According to Bachmann, (1964:13) grief is an emotion that involves the feeling of a person which is a tearing kind of emotion because it shuts off the person from fulfilment of hope, dreams and aspiration and this according to the researcher is exactly what Judah is going through.

Judah Surrendering his “ID” (Cord, Staff and Seal)

We observed that Tamar bargained with Judah for payment of her service (Gen 38: 16-18). Judah giving out very important documents as a pledge to enable him have an impromptu sexual relationship with a prostitute leaves many questions unanswered (Gen 38:18). There is no indication that such actions were habitual on Judah’s part. The writer observes that Judah’s behaviors and his encounter with Tamar his daughter in law was clearly not premeditated. He encountered her by chance on the normal route to sheep shearing and had nothing for payment. Furthermore, there is no documented evidence that Judah was an immoral man.

According to Freud behavior is determined by irrational forces, unconscious motivations, and biological and instinctual drives. Judah is undergoing multiple losses and hence psychologically disturbed hence he was bound to make unsound and foolish decisions. Freud claims that personality consist of three elements which work together to create complex human behaviours; he id, the ego, and the superego. Freud argued that the *id* operates on the pleasure principle which means that all ideas should be addressed instantly irrespective of the outcome. However, according to the writer bereaved persons are always said to be confused. They seems not to order their thoughts thus difficult in making sound decisions and operates mostly on the pleasure principle. The id engages in primary process thinking, which is primitive, illogical, irrational, and fantasy oriented. This form of process thinking has no comprehension of objective reality, and is selfish and wishful in nature. Judah’s behavior of surrendering his most important document can only be understood as operating on pleasure principle influenced by his state of grief.

Judah’s Act of Passing Judgment for Tamar be Burnt

After three months, Judah was told that Tamar had played harlot and was pregnant. Judah demanded that she be brought and be burnt to death (38:24). Being the patriarch of the clan, Judah was within his rights to order her to be burnt to death because technically, she had committed adultery as a result of her supposed engagement to Shelah. In the Torah the penalty for adultery was stoning, not burning (Leviticus 20:10; Deuteronomy 22:21). The sentence from a father in-law for Tamar to be burnt to death is a show of an abnormal anger.

According to Kubler-Ross grief cycle, this manifestation of anger in itself is a natural reaction to grief and loss that is almost universally experienced by all who grieve. If anger is not resolved it creates bitterness. We observed that grief can take a longer period up to two years. It is very clear that Judah have gone through traumatic death experiences of the multiple deaths. Judah thought that Tamar could be the cause of his son’s death and now pregnant out of harlotry. This harsh judgment to Tamar therefore could have been as a result of anger which is a manifestation of individuals undergoing grief. Furthermore, Judah could have found it a better opportunity to

do away with Tamar and save his son Shelah from marrying her as in accordance to levirate marriage.

Judah's Hostility towards Tamar

Judah sent Tamar back to his father's house to live as a widow and refused to give her Shelah as a husband (Gen 38:11-14). This portrayed an aspect of hostility to Tamar. According to Bachmann, (1964:17) psychological factors related to grief are guilt and hostility. They are usually expressed in action more than in words. He argues that real guilt is felt only when there is actually a connection between the events and the personal relationship to it. He further claims that people undergoing grief may manifest the feeling of hostility and anger which could be directed towards family and friends, towards God or even towards oneself. Judah went ahead to express hostility to Tamar in Gen 38:24 when he learnt that he was pregnant and wanted her burnt. This hostility expressed by Judah to Tamar can be explained as a manifestation of hostility emanating from grief and extreme fear of losing his third son.

Judah's Re-organization and Recovery phase

Judah going for sheep shearing immediately after being comforted (Gen 38:11) can be understood better in Bowlby attachment Theory. Judah at this point in time went through re-organization and recovery phase of grief where his faith in life started to be restored. He started to establish new goals and patterns of day-to-day life. According to (Freeman, 2005:58), reorganization phase takes effect once the bereaved comes to a realization of a new life after the deceased. This phase is characterized by gradual changes as the bereaved attempts to move on with life. This clearly shows that slowly Judah had started to rebuild and come to realize that life can still be positive, even after the loss and trust is slowly restored. According to Abasili (2011:562) the narrator by revealing Judah's intention to go up and shear his sheep at Timnar (Gen 38:12) signals Judah's readiness to recommence with his normal activities hence he was in the Recovery and the re-organization stage.

Judah's Acceptance of His Act

When Tamar sent Judah the signet, the cord and the staff for him to identify them, Judah acknowledged them and said, "She is more righteous than I, in as much as I did not give her to my son Shelah." (Gen 38:26). According to Kubler-Ross acceptance is final stage in her grief cycle and this is what happened to Judah who finally accepted that Tamar deserved to be treated fairly and he acknowledged his mistakes.

Tamar's Behaviours

Religious or shrine prostitution and fornication were part of the worship of the pagan Canaanite fertility gods (Genesis 38:20, 21). In those days, it was not unusual for a prostitute to sit by the roadside. Just because this type of sin was culturally acceptable does not mean that Tamar was justified in using this method to attain her goal of having a child. The behaviours of Tamar can be understood more beyond cultural beliefs. It is a peculiar narrative that Tamar could have a child in accordance with the levirate custom but her husband's family had withheld this right from her. Westermann, (1986:56) claims that the originally independent narrative deals with the change of fortune of a woman in distress and desperation. As contemporary readers, we are challenged by this story of a woman who used methods that ran counter to patriarchal control to presumably achieve patriarchal priorities (Beach, p. 290). Tamar's behaviours if examined using

Psychological approach can clearly be understood as to have undergone rejection, loneliness, pain and loss that are the characteristics of individuals going through grief. Therefore, Tamar behaviors are motivated by grief.

Tamar Suffers Loss

Tamar suffered the loss of her two husbands, mother in law and also her family ties as she was sent to live with the father as a widow (Genesis 38:11). Geraldine & David, (2008:3) observes that loss is an integral part of life and can be defined as the state of being deprived of or being without something one has had. It is a detriment or disadvantage from failure to keep, to have or get while grief is the pain and suffering experienced after loss. Tamar underwent loss, which is as a result of the multiple death experiences.

In this narrative, Tamar has experienced loss and traumatic circumstances at this point of her life which violate her personal boundaries and remove a sense of security and control. These experiences potentially displaced her from his anticipated life course. Any loss is painful but if one learns to grieve appropriately for the small losses then he or she becomes better and able to deal with greater losses through death of a loved one. The loss and removal of Tamar's sense of security and control could have been the probable reason why she had to use all means to get back her right and fill in the gap experienced by loss.

Tamar Re-organization and Recovery Phase

While Tamar was living at her father's house she learnt that his father in law was going up to Timnah to shear sheep. Shelah was grown was not been given to her, she put off the widow's garment and pretended to be a harlot (Gen 38:13-16). This behavior can be explained by Bowlby's attachment theory of the re-organization and recovery phase of grief. He argues that in this phase one's faith in life start to be restored hence establishing new goals and patterns of day-to-day life. This was an indication that Tamar planned on her way out of widowhood. This behavior clearly showed that slowly she had started to rebuild and to realize that life can still be positive. Tamar had to look for a way to join the family she had lost. She pretended to be a prostitute in hope of getting back her position in the lost family. This signals Tamar's readiness to recommence with her normal life hence we can conclude that she was in the re-organization and recovery stage. Tamar was still grieving and in this case she was not deliberately tricking Judah to hurt him but she was trying something through which she can make sense in life in order overcome her grief.

Tamar's act of Removing The Widow Hood Garment And Dress Like A Harlot

Bachmann, (1964:22) argues that grief is a result of separation to someone or something and therefore the grieving person is in endless search for identity. Tamar had lost her two husbands and a mother in law. She needed stable relationships and satisfying interactions with the people in those relationships. It can be noted that these two ingredients were missing in her life making her feel lonely and unhappy which are associated with individuals undergoing grief. This search of identity could have led her to pretend to be a prostitute to get back her right of being part of Judah's family.

Tamar took such a risk by pretending to be a prostitute in order to get out of childless widow hood to get back to Judah's family. She sought for social identity by trying to get her way back

to Judah's family than live in his father's house as a widow. It is observed that when Judah sent Tamar away she lost her social identity. This led to social confusion, low self-worth and low self-esteem that lead her to become a one-time prostitute. According to psychoanalytic theory of grief, the bereaved individuals are constantly in search of attachment which has been lost and this justifies Tamar's behaviours. The objective of the above section was to determine the unbecoming behaviours of Judah and Tamar using psychological approach. This methodology was informed by psychological theories of grief.

Conclusion

This study was motivated by a conviction that a Psychological perspective of a text can enlighten the meaning of a Biblical text. This study has demonstrated this fact. Tamar and Judah belong to a specific culture. Culture affects human reaction to death. The reactions of Tamar and Judah are understood from their cultural perspective. It influences how each reacts to the multiple deaths in their family. The period Judah mourns and the decision to undertake public activities is culturally informed.

Culture influences Judah and Tamar's expression of grief. The dressing of Tamar, her reaction to the separation of Judah's family, experience of powerlessness, appraisal of her situation and consequent decision she undertakes are all culture informed. In the end of the narrative despite her "improper" action, she is culturally vindicated. According Bufford (1981:29), the Christian Church was at the forefront of the development of modern sciences. He further argues that "all truth is God's truth, and therefore, the truths of psychology (general revelation) are neither contradictory nor contrary to revealed truth (special revelation) but are integrative in a harmonious whole" (Bufford, 1981:31).

It is therefore acceptable to use counselling theories in the environment of grief that Tamar and Judah were undergoing. Tamar like Judah has undergone serial bereavement of two husbands and a mother in law. Judah is bereaved of two sons and a wife. These losses affect human mind that triggers human behavior that is normally negative. These include and not limited to Absent-Minded Behavior, avoidance of tasks, difficulty in making decisions and easily distracted. The improper behavior of Judah and Tamar can precisely be located in these symptoms of grief. In conclusion, therefore, Tamar and Judah improper behavior were determined by the cultural influence of dealing with loss. The inappropriate behavior of sex with a harlot, anger, deception and surrender of personal identifications grief symptoms caused by prolonged grief disorder.

In section, one it was noted that Genesis 38 is one of the most fascinating stories in the Bible. The story is about broken promises, deception, immorality and incest. The chapter has generated more frustration than enthusiasm among its interpreters. Further frustration is caused by the location of the chapter in the midst of Joseph's story. This has led scholars to describe it 'unconnected' Von Rad, (1996:204) and "it stands alone" Brueggemann, (1982:307).

The objective of this paper was to establish the behavior of Tamar and Judah from a psychological approach. The actions of Judah and Tamar are diagnosed through the theories of Freud's model of Bereavement, Kubler Ross Grief cycle, Bowlby's attachment theory and other relevant theories. They identify the different stages of grief as denial, anger, bargaining,

depression, acceptance, Numbing, yearning and searching, disorganization and reorganization and also attachment.

This analysis has shed more light on the seemingly unacceptable behavior of Tamar and Judah. The study has argued that individuals who have been bereaved undergo involuntary behavior changes. Both Tamar and Judah have undergone through a multiple of bereavement experiences. Such multiple bereavement triggers irrational forces, unconscious motivations, and biological and instinctual drives. This includes anger, phobia, Anger and frustration, high-risk behaviours, mood swings and irrational behavior. Judah, for example is involved in sexual act with a prostitute because for grieving individuals' sex can comfort in Grief (Kubler Ross and Kessler, 2005:121). He condemns Tamar to be burned in grieving anger. Similarly, grief influences Tamar irrational behavior of having sex with her father in law.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study and the conclusions drawn above, the researcher wishes to make the following recommendations: God's revelation is continuous. God has bestowed every generation with new knowledge, some of which was unknown in the biblical times and to last century biblical scholars. It is the responsibility of present pastoral counsellors to faithfully interpret biblical texts using modern sciences. This should however be done responsibly choosing Christian worldview where a disagreement may arise. However, from the study we understand that prolonged grief opens the windows for understanding Judah and Tamar, Christians should be encouraged to study psychological theories of grief so that they may be able to avoid some behaviours arising from grief when grief strikes.

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