

START WITH A STORY: Kids: if anyone tells you you have ADHD, pay no attention.

I had ADHD in Primary School, so I started a lot of fights. I didn't finish many though.

I think I have a combination of Alzheimer's and ADD.

I can't remember what I wasn't focusing on



SCRIPTURE:

LESSON THEME: How should a Christian view ADD and ADHD

POINT OF CONTACT:

INTRODUCTION: Oppositional defiant disorder (ODD) is “a pattern of disobedient, hostile, and defiant behavior toward authority figures” (*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*). The symptoms include the following: Actively does not follow adults’ requests, angry and resentful of others, argues with adults, blames others for own mistakes, in constant trouble in school, loses temper, spiteful and seeks revenge, touchy or easily annoyed. Recommended treatment includes psychotherapy and medication. A good case of ODD might lead to IED (intermittent explosive disorder), which according to the Mayo Clinic’s web site, “is characterized by repeated episodes of aggressive, violent behavior in which you react grossly out of proportion to the situation.” We are told that people with IED “may attack others and their possessions, causing bodily injury and property damage.” Lisa Good, a child psychologist in Brisbane, Australia, says that over the past two years she diagnosed more children with ODD and conduct disorders than “autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) or anxiety” (“They’re also walking IEDs,” Courier Mail, Brisbane, Aug. 19, 2012). Looking back over our childhood’s, ODD describes a lot of our schoolmates. We were told we were rebels and juvenile delinquents, and our preachers told us to repent, and some of us did just that! If you are a sinner, you can find salvation and change, but if you are “disordered,” even the A.D.A.M. Medical Encyclopedia admits that there is no guarantee of healing, because “some respond well to treatment, while others do not.” What a foolish age we live in! God said to Israel of old, “*As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths*” (**Isaiah 3:17**).



LESSON: This morning our lesson is about **ADHD**. Recent studies have determined that ADHD affects adults too. Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder is not limited to children - 30% to 70% of kids with ADHD continue having symptoms when they grow up. In addition, people who were never diagnosed as kids may develop more obvious symptoms in adulthood, causing trouble on the job or in relationships. Many adults don’t realize they have ADHD, leaving them mystified about why their goals seem to slip out of reach.



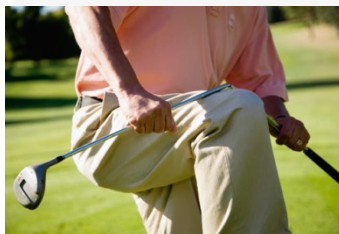
A. Signs of Adult ADHD: Running Late - ADHD in adults follows a slightly different pattern than in children. Adults may be chronically late for work or important events. Adults may realize that their tardiness is undermining their goals, but they just can't seem to be on time.



B. Signs of Adult ADHD: Risky Driving - One of the hallmarks of ADHD is difficulty keeping your mind on the

task at hand. That spells trouble for teens and adults when they're behind the wheel of a vehicle. Studies show that people with ADHD are more likely to speed, have accidents, and lose their drivers' licenses.

C. Signs of Adult ADHD: Distraction - Adults with ADHD may have trouble prioritizing, starting, and finishing tasks. They tend to be disorganized, restless, and easily distracted. Some people with ADHD have trouble concentrating while reading. The inability to stay focused and follow through on tasks can derail careers, ambitions, and relationships.



D. Signs of Adult ADHD: Outbursts - Adults with ADHD may have problems with self-control. This can lead to:

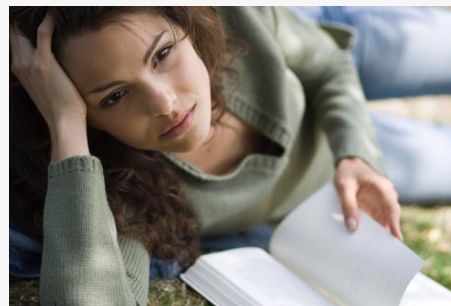
- Difficulty controlling anger
- Impulsive behaviors
- Blurting out rude or insulting thoughts

Signs of Adult ADHD: Hyperfocus - Some adults with ADHD can focus intently on things they enjoy or find interesting - the ability to hyperfocus. But they struggle to pay attention to tasks that bore them. The trouble is that many tasks necessary for success in everyday life are dull, from making a grocery list to filing documents at work. People with ADHD tend to put off boring tasks in favor of more enjoyable activities.

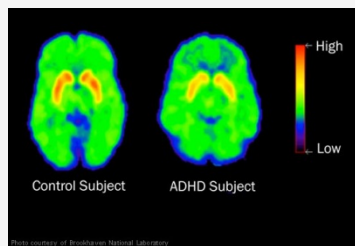


Multitasking or ADHD? - It may seem like everyone has ADHD these days, as we respond to text messages, email, calls, and fast-paced work environments. While all of this can be distracting, most people manage to focus on important responsibilities. In people with ADHD, distractions interfere with the completion of vital tasks at home and at work.

1. ADHD OR SOMETHING ELSE? - If you are often restless and have trouble concentrating, don't jump to the conclusion that you have ADHD. These symptoms are also common in other conditions. Poor concentration is a classic sign of depression. Restlessness or anxiety could indicate an overactive thyroid or anxiety disorder. ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder) and ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) are widely debated disorders. ADD tends to describe those individuals wrestling with inattention. Inattention is described as possessing some or all of the following traits: makes careless mistakes in schoolwork, work, or other activities; has difficulty sustaining attention in tasks or play activities; does not seem to listen when spoken to directly; does not follow through on instructions and fails to finish schoolwork, chores, or duties in the workplace; has difficulty organizing tasks and activities; avoids, dislikes, or is reluctant to engage in tasks that require sustained mental effort; loses things necessary for tasks or activities; is easily distracted by extraneous stimuli; is forgetful in daily activities.



ADHD, on the other hand, tends to describe those individuals wrestling not only with inattention but also with hyperactivity and impulsivity. The individual may have some of the above characteristics along with some of the following: fidgets with hands or feet or squirms while sitting; leaves the seat in situations in which remaining seated is expected; runs about or climbs excessively when such behavior is inappropriate; has difficulty playing or engaging in leisure activities quietly; is "on the go" or acts as if "driven by a motor"; talks excessively; blurts out answers before questions have been completed; has difficulty awaiting his or her turn; interrupts or intrudes on others (e.g., butts into conversations or games).



Though many believe the disorders to be over-diagnosed or misdiagnosed, they are real, medical conditions that persist into adulthood. Research has demonstrated both physical and chemical brain differences in those with ADD and ADHD. Often, medication is a helpful treatment method. Other effective treatment options include neuro-feedback or "brain training," regular exercise, and dietary changes. Also useful is teaching sufferers different coping mechanisms and adapting learning environments to better suit their needs. Biblically speaking, it is important to recognize that ADD

and ADHD have spiritual implications. The Bible speaks too many of the behavioral symptoms associated with ADD and ADHD.

2. What Causes ADHD? - In people with ADHD, brain chemicals called neurotransmitters are less active in areas of the brain that control attention. Secular researchers don't know exactly what causes this chemical imbalance, but they think genes may play a role. They think genes play a role because ADHD often runs in families. Bad behavior and poor parenting skills also run in families as well as bible familiar spirits. It may be true that rebels beget rebels. Studies have also linked ADHD to prenatal exposure to cigarettes and alcohol.

3. The medical community links ADHD with Evolution - One common characteristic that ADHD-like traits is found in the world's nomadic peoples. Researchers think that traits such as impulsive behavior, novelty-seeking, and unpredictability might help nomads track down food and other resources. So the same qualities that make it challenging to excel at a desk job may have been an advantage to nomadic ancestors.



4. Diagnosing ADHD in Adults - Many adults don't learn that they have ADHD until they get help for another problem, such as anxiety or depression. When treated at the doctor's office many things are discussed with the attending physician. Discussing poor habits, troubles at work, or marital conflicts often reveal to the attending physician who has been given follow up training by his pharmaceutical sales representative that ADHD is at fault. To confirm the diagnosis, the disorder must have been present during childhood, even if it was never diagnosed. Old report cards or talking with relatives can document childhood problems, such as poor focus and hyperactivity.



5. Testing for ADHD - During an evaluation for ADHD, some mental health professionals use neuropsychological tests. These can include timed, computer-based tests that measure attention and problem-solving skills. Neuropsychological testing is not needed to make a diagnosis. Sight recognition of symptoms is all any health care provider needs to make the evaluation of ADD or ADHD. Simply the implication of symptoms can shed light on how ADHD affects a person's daily life. It can also uncover coexisting conditions, such as learning disabilities.



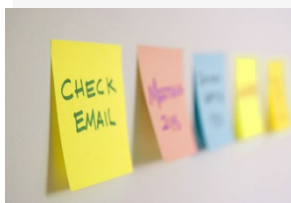
6. Complications of Adult ADHD - Coping with the symptoms of adult ADHD can be frustrating in itself. At the same time, many adults with ADHD struggle with depression, anxiety, or obsessive compulsive disorder. They're also more likely to smoke or abuse drugs. People with ADHD can limit these problems by seeking proper treatment.



7. Medications for ADHD - The most common medicines for ADHD are stimulants. It may seem ironic that people who are restless or hyperactive get help from stimulants. These drugs may sharpen concentration and curb distractibility by fine-tuning brain circuits that affect attention. If stimulants don't help enough, your doctor may prescribe an antidepressant to stabilize mood or a selective norepinephrine reuptake inhibitor, such as atomoxetine, which can help control impulsive behaviors. There have been far fewer studies of ADHD drugs in adults than in children. Studies have shown adults taking stimulants have fewer ADHD symptoms - and some people may feel they can concentrate better within about 30 minutes. Amazingly most adults with ADHD improve when they start medication, but they may continue to struggle with poor habits and low self-esteem. Therefore counseling for ADHD is recommended. Basically it is a disorder or disease that can be helped by talk; especially talk that focuses on getting organized, setting helpful routines, repairing relationships, and improving social skills. Cognitive-behavioral therapy is the main source of this help. The goal being to assist the patient in managing problems of daily life that are associated with ADHD.



8. ADHD ADULTS OUT ON THE STREETS –



A. Adult ADHD on the Job - Holding down a job can be tough for people with ADHD. They often have trouble breaking down tasks and following directions, staying organized, and making deadlines. They're also prone to tardiness and careless mistakes. In one national survey, only half of adults with ADHD were employed full time, compared to 72% of adults without the disorder. People with ADHD also tend to earn less than their peers. The places that people who have been diagnosed Adult ADHD are frequently employed and are likely to

thrive are sales, acting, the military, photography, athletic coaching, and many trade professions. ADHD is a disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act. This means employers must make adjustments to support a worker's needs.

B. Adult ADHD and Marriage - ADHD can sabotage marriage and other relationships. The condition makes it difficult to remember social commitments, birthdays, or anniversaries, finish household chores, and pay bills on time. Adults with ADHD may lose their tempers easily or engage in reckless behavior. This leads to higher rates of separation and divorce.



Diet Tips for Adults with ADHD - Some experts believe foods that provide quality brain fuel could reduce symptoms of ADHD. High-protein foods, including nuts, meat, beans, and eggs, may improve concentration. Replacing simple carbs with complex carbs, like whole-grain pasta or brown rice, can help ward off mood swings and stabilize energy levels.

9. WHAT THE SCRIPTURES SAY ABOUT THE SYPTOMS OF ADD AND ADHD - Understanding that ADD and ADHD are being diagnosed as lifelong medical conditions and knowing some of the ways they are being treated can help us better equip those with ADD and ADHD to follow godly standards. Also, knowing that the hope of the gospel and the truth that God are transforming each of us gives us grace for those who have been diagnosed and who do suffer from what the medical community defines as ADD and ADHD. No one lives a godly life easily. Recognizing our limitations—be they the general limitation of a sinful nature or a medical limitation that affects our brain or an emotional wound that affects our ability to relate—helps us be more aware of our weaknesses and more attuned to the ways in which God can show Himself strong in that area (**2 Corinthians 12:9–10**). With that in mind, let's look at what the Bible says about the behaviors associated with ADD and ADHD.

The following are biblical teachings concerning the issue of **ATTENTIVENESS**:



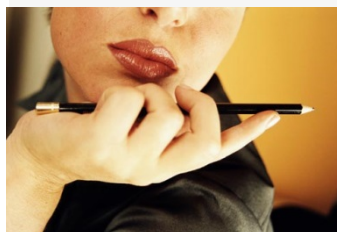
- (1.) **God understands that some tasks are hard**, yet it is good for us to be faithful with our tasks (Proverbs 6:6 - 8; Colossians 3:23).
- (2.) **God also understands that it is hard to stay focused**, yet there are rewards for staying focused (Proverbs 12:11).
- (3.) **God recognizes that it is hard to develop priorities**, yet there are rewards for making good choices (Proverbs 24:27).
- (4.) **God knows that it is hard to listen to instruction**, yet there are rewards for listening to those who are teaching (Proverbs 7:24; James 1:19).
- (5.) **God recognizes that it is hard to remember things**; that is why He tells us to develop reminders (Proverbs 6:20–21; Deuteronomy 6:6-8; 2 Peter 1:12–15).

The following are biblical teachings concerning the issue of **SELF-CONTROL**:

- (1.) **We typically do not exhibit self-control**; it is a fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:23), as well as that which we add to our faith (2 Peter 1:6).
- (2.) **The apostle Paul described bringing his body under control as a battle** (1 Corinthians 9:27).
- (3.) **The Bible encourages controlling the use of our words** (Proverbs 10:19; Matthew 12:36).
- (4.) **We are advised that control of our lives** begins with control over our minds (Proverbs 25:28; Philippians 4:8).

The following are biblical teachings concerning **IMPULSIVITY**:

- (1.) **God states that there are consequences** to being hasty (Proverbs 21:5).
- (2.) **There is value in listening** before speaking (James 1:19).
- (3.) **It is wise to listen** to a matter before answering (Proverbs 18:13).
- (4.) **Patience and longsuffering** (*holding back passion*) are signs of spiritual maturity (Galatians 5:22; James 1:2–4).



10. POSITIVES HAVE NEGATIVES - Typically, one focuses on the negative behavior without realizing that there are positive traits behind those behaviors. The daydreamer or forgetful person tends to be quite imaginative. The impulsive person tends to have a burden to get things done. The hyperactive person tends to have plenty of energy that can be turned to benefit others. It is important that such individuals be considered for what part they play in the body of Christ (**1 Corinthians 12:11–26**).

Self-control, attentiveness, and a lack of impulsivity are considered signs of wisdom and maturity. The Bible describes the Christian life as being a “one another” experience. Believers met daily in the early church (**Acts 2:46**), and we are encouraged to motivate and encourage one another (**Hebrews 10:24–25**). Rather than give people a pass on their behaviors or condemn them for their behaviors, we should help them change their behaviors. It is the role of parents and the church to help redirect the attention and energy of individuals with ADD and ADHD. Discipling individuals with ADD or ADHD can involve the following actions:



1) **Helping the individual develop a servant’s heart.** Many behaviors associated with ADD and ADHD reflect a selfish motive in life. Learning to serve others helps individuals push through unpleasant tasks and to be more patient (**Philippians 2:3–4**).

2) **Helping individuals control their own thinking.** The Bible talks of renewing the mind (**Romans 12:2; Ephesians 4:23**). God instructs us to focus on eight godly attributes in **Philippians 4:8**. Those who wrestle with fantasy can be encouraged to

think on those things that are true.

3) **Helping individuals to renew their minds** as to what God teaches about their behaviors.

4) **Helping an individual to establish structure.** “*But everything should be done decently and in order*” (**1 Corinthians 14:40**).

5) **Modeling proper behavior.** The Apostle Paul modeled godly actions for Timothy (**2 Timothy 3:10–11**). Undoubtedly, many individuals learn better by seeing than by hearing.

Equipping individuals diagnosed ADD and ADHD to live a godly life involves many factors. First, they have been enabled. Secondly, they lack character as a by-product of an increasingly characterless culture. They should not go “cold turkey” on their medications. And parents, pastors, and all who work with children and adults with ADD or ADHD should also utilize the Word of God, which is profitable for teaching, reproving, correcting, and instructing (**2 Timothy 3:16**).

TABLE 3
PROPOSED CRITERIA FOR ADHD IN ADULTS²⁶

1. Is easily distracted
2. Makes impulsive decisions
3. Has difficulty stopping activities or behaviors when they should be stopped
4. Starts projects or tasks without reading or listening to directions
5. Does not follow through on promises or commitments
6. Has trouble doing things in the proper order or sequence
7. Drives a motor vehicle much faster than others (excessive speeding); or often has difficulty engaging quietly in leisure activities
8. Has difficulty sustaining attention in tasks or recreational activities
9. Has difficulty organizing tasks and activities

ADHD=attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder.

Goodman DW. *Primary Psychiatry*. Vol 16, No 11. 2009.