BETTER THINKING THROUGH CHEMISTRY: A Theological Prescription

James Peterson, PhD
R.A. Hope Professor
McMaster University Divinity College
and Faculty of Health Sciences
The National Institute of Mental Health (USA) reports that 26.2% of Americans 18 and older have been formally diagnosed with a mental disorder. This included 20.9 million with mood disorders such as depression and 40 million with anxiety disorders such as panic attacks or post traumatic stress.
Psychoactive medications are often prescribed and many people self medicate with drugs such as alcohol or distractors such as cutting.
Some Pain can be Healthy

- Physical
- Guilt
- Grief
- Fear
- Anxiety
- Low mood
- Compassion
Masking pain

- May be turning off a needed warning
Seeking pain

- Gethsemane and instrumental goods
Some pain should be relieved

- Pointless pain
- Misattributed pain
- Valid pain that is overwhelming
- Barrier pain
Restore effective and affective Range

- Pharmaceuticals are usually blunt instruments
Caffeine

- Temporarily more alert
- Later deficit
- Eventual dependency
Fruit of the Spirit

- Context appropriate response through
- Perception
- Understanding
- Disposition
- Leading of the Holy Spirit
Other Enhancements

- Language memory
- Self control
- Processing speed
Four Standards defined by a Christian Perspective

- Safe
- Genuine improvement
- Increased choice
- Best use of always finite resources