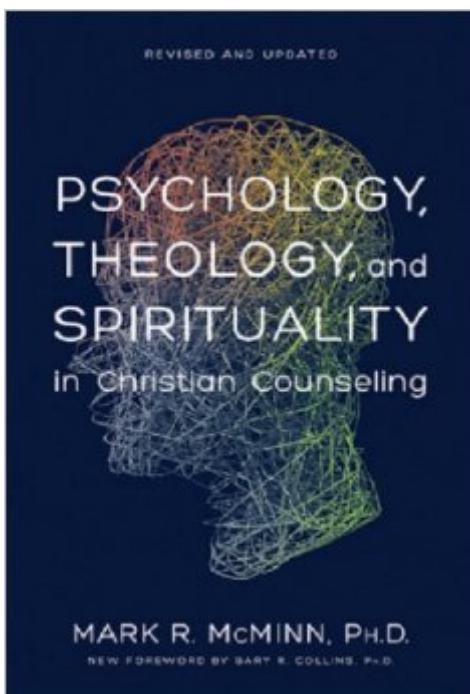


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# Psychology, Theology, And Spirituality In Christian Counseling (AACC Library)



## Synopsis

The American Association of Christian Counselors and Tyndale House Publishers are committed to ministering to the spiritual needs of people. This book is part of the professional series that offers counselors the latest techniques, theory, and general information that is vital to their work. While many books have tried to integrate theology and psychology, this book takes another step and explores the importance of the spiritual disciplines in psychotherapy, helping counselors to integrate the biblical principles of forgiveness, redemption, restitution, prayer, and worship into their counseling techniques. Since its first publication in 1996, this book has quickly become a contemporary classicâ •a go-to handbook for integrating what we know is true from the disciplines of theology and psychology and how that impacts your daily walk with God. This book will help you integrate spiritual disciplinesâ •such as prayer, Scripture reading, confessionâ •into your own life and into counseling others. Mark R. McMinn, Ph.D., is professor of psychology at Wheaton College Graduate School in Wheaton, Illinois, where he directs and teaches in the Doctor of Psychology program. A diplomate in Clinical Psychology of the American Board of Professional Psychology, McMinn has thirteen years of postdoctoral experience in counseling, psychotherapy, and psychological testing. McMinn is the author of *Making the Best of Stress: How Life's Hassles Can Form the Fruit of the Spirit*; *The Jekyll/Hyde Syndrome: Controlling Inner Conflict through Authentic Living*; *Cognitive Therapy Techniques in Christian Counseling*; and *Christians in the Crossfire* (written with James D. Foster). He and his wife, Lisa, have three daughters.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This book was written to answer an important question to many people that are in the field of counseling and some that are not. That question is "how does a counselor integrate their faith in the therapy session, a faith that includes psychology and theology?" Many people struggle with this very question. We live in a world that is seemingly growing toward a "don't bring Christ into this" mentality because we are afraid we might offend someone. Some Counselors want to help people and they know that Christ can help, yet do not know how to incorporate that into their counseling methods or approaches. These are the things that McMinn tries to address. He does this in practical ways using the spiritual disciplines, counseling examples and scripture. McMinn also explains the definitions, similarities, and differences between Psychology, Theology, and Spirituality. He writes in a way that breaks down the terms and issues in a way for the reader to understand and apply. The book is written for anyone who wishes to understand how they can truly integrate these three concepts into the therapy session. This book excels at helping the reader integrate spiritual disciplines that we as Christians should live by into the counseling session and also encourages the counselor if they are not incorporating these disciplines in their walk with the Lord, to do so. This book really seeks to teach the counselor to multitask in the three categories of Psychology, Theology, and Spirituality. He suggests that the counselor who can learn to do this effectively will be able to give their clients the very best. This is not an easy task for any Christian Counselor however, it can and will be rewarding for both the counselor and the counselee.

Through illustrations and counseling session vignettes, McMinn (1996) provides an excellent working model of how to integrate psychology, theology and spirituality in his book of the same title. He begins the book with exploring the challenges which confronts the Christian counselor who is trying to integrate the science of psychology with the teachings of faith, all the while keeping both the professional and personal life of the counselor at the center of the discussion. McMinn stresses that what happens in the personal life of the counselor is just as important as what goes on behind the doors of the counselor's office. To help the reader understand how the counselor's worldview affects counseling style, McMinn uses vignettes he labels, "What if this happened?" Through these illustrations he is able to explore such issues as the need for a third discipline, namely, spiritual formation. Other challenges are discussed by McMinn as well. For example, he points out the need for a scientific basis, an ethical standard, and challenging the dominate models of mental health. In

the second chapter McMinn (1996) offers a more "detailed map" to reaching a healthy mental state (p. 44) in contrast with that of the scientific and theological models of psychology. He suggests that spiritual and psychological health go hand in hand and include a healthy sense of self, accurate awareness of need, and healing relationships. By incorporating all three disciplines, psychological, theological and spiritual formation, a more balanced model of psychological and spiritual healing is created. The remainder of the book is dedicated to discussion on how and when a Christian counselor can utilize the basic tenants of faith in such a way that it promotes mental health in his/her clients.

**PURPOSE OF THE BOOK.** McMinn describes the purpose of his book as twofold (p. xi). First, it addresses the practical integration of psychology, theology, and spirituality in the counseling office. Second, it explores the spiritual character of Christian counselors and methods they can use to model Christ in their dealings with clients. Taken together, the book deals with the need for Christian counselors to both multitask (McMinn's term for integrating theology, psychology, and spirituality) with their clients, and pursue their own spiritual development and mature Christian worldview. The goal is to "help Christian counselors and researchers unite around certain key questions and perspectives so that our interventions become increasingly relevant and effective" (p. 6).

**THESIS OF THE BOOK.** Since 1982, the Christian counseling community witnessed evolution of the integration of psychology and theology into a movement supported with empirical studies and increasing relevance. Nevertheless, practical methods for employing integrated counseling remain scarce. Scholarly works concerning integration tend to remain focused on theory. Additionally, "intradisciplinary integration introduces a need for a third area of competence": spirituality (pp. 9-10). Spirituality is difficult to integrate because it is not a credentialed discipline, nor is it a discipline in which a counselor can credibly claim to be fully competent (p. 11). Christian counselors must be trained in spiritual disciplines---in addition to theology and counseling techniques---and should "reflect Christian character inside and outside the counseling office" (p. 14).

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