



Psychology, Theology, and Spirituality in Christian Counseling

Joseph Calvert

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Summary

As a believer of the Christian faith, it was very important to read this book. Mark McMinn did an impeccable job by intermingling the Christian framework with counseling. In *Psychology, Theology, and Spirituality in Counseling*, McMinn says "Religion and religious values have become a frequent topic of discussion for many counselors in recent years, and most counselors have thought a great deal about the confusion their clients face in choosing a good therapist," (McMinn, p. 4). Religion, especially the Christian belief mechanism, has been applied in theories as well as methods of counseling. Although it is frequently implemented, it also has the ability to serve as a downfall in terms of counseling. McMinn expresses within his book that counselors should create a system that is well balanced; which refers to the right time to use theology, psychology, and spirituality within a counseling session. Another concept or point that is expounded on within this book is sin. "In Christian counseling, sin can be confronted in humble and empathic ways that encourage spiritual growth more than guilt and shame," (McMinn, p. 191). The two things that are constant is sin and change. Whether that change is for better or worse, it is still a consistent concept of life. As a counselor, you must have a level of control because the problems of others can become a burden to you. It is very possible to make someone else's sins your own. When listening to the problems that someone close to you may have, there is an emotional exchange of energy that you are met with by way of verbal communication. In a counseling setting, McMinn explains that it must be comfortable in order for the client to feel at ease to share their problems with you. Therefore, the counselor must not be judgmental, must be honest, must be humble, and emotionally stable with a strong foundation established in the Christian faith. In other words, you have to be vulnerable to a certain extent. This is to ensure that you find a way to relate to the client. On the contrary, you must be mindful that manipulation is a possibility and this corresponds with sin. The book also explains how sin can possibly be the root to psychopathology. This means that sin shapes and molds our way of expressing the positive and negative events that occurs in our lives and others. "Understanding and changing the inner life of a client is more important than merely changing behavior," (McMinn, p. 191). In other words, changing the behavior of a person means nothing if the change is not genuine. This book deals with the internal configuration of the soul that will help to change the external behaviors that the client may act upon. Even though some may accept the Christian lifestyle, they may struggle with implementing its values within their lives on a daily basis. The entire book revolves around the imperfections of the human being. The only perfected being in God. Therefore, we must be aware of the shortcomings that the clients will have as they express themselves. McMinn and others have done an excellent job in helping to conclude the ins and outs of counseling in religion.

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