

Psychology, theology, and spirituality essay sample

[Religion](#), [Islam](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

1. Summary: After listing the name of the book and author, summarize the book concisely in 500 “tight” words (no more than 2 pages). Prove that you comprehend the reading by writing a no-nonsense summary. The summary is not a commentary or listing of topics, but rather a heartfelt, condensed, insightful synopsis of the longer, more elaborate book. Cite the book in text at least once per paragraph, and include page numbers for direct quotations.

Mark McMinn’s book, *Psychology, Theology, and Spirituality in Christian Counseling*, 1996, brings theology, Christian spirituality, and psychology into the counseling responsibility. Faith, true, honest, heartfelt faith is his unceasing, steady, melody. McMinn just doesn’t just focus on using Christian doctrine in therapy sessions with your clients. He spends an equal amount of time coaching and educating on the invaluable importance of spirituality in the counselors life. Christian counseling strengthens three areas of a person’s life: sense of self, an awareness of human need and limitations, and confiding interpersonal relationships with God and others. When we are right with the Lord, when we walk in the Light, we led by example.

We led by example at church, in daily living and in our profession. McMinn (1996) instructs that we need a healthy sense of self in order to overcome our obstacles (p. 47); further stating “those who pray often tend to experience more purpose in life, greater marital satisfaction, religious satisfaction, and a general sense of well-being” (p. 66). McMinn (1996) focus is on the use of healing. The goal is to produce a healthy sense of self to resolve issues of brokenness, sinful acts, and needful materialism. McMinn offers a template for both the novice and the veteran counselor when determining if and when to introduce prayer and scripture into the

therapeutic setting. “ Which forms of prayer should we use with which clients and under which circumstances (p. 79); “ In what ways should Scripture be used in counseling which clients and under which circumstances? (p. 119).”

He advises caution and discernment when confronting sin and confession. Mark McMinn accomplishes all of this in a gentle, graceful, loving smartness. The reader never feels browbeaten or coerced. He weaves his personal and professional life into his illustrations. McMinn offers realistic approaches to the problems and concerns of the client. He offers actual hypotheticals to demonstrate how to apply the techniques explored in the book. This is of tremendous assistance to all Christian therapists. *Psychology, Theology, and Spirituality in Christian Counseling* is a standard for healing. First the book discuss healing ourselves, personally and professionally; how do we “ implement (our) religious values and beliefs into the treatment of this client?” p. 8. McMinn describes this as “ the new frontier of interdisciplinary integration, p. 9” There is a detailed map on page 50 that presents clearly “ the comprehensive perspective on psychological and spiritual health...as interactive and not linear.”

This perfect example is the road map to follow and apply as one progress's through the remaining text. The body of the tome then reflects on prayer, scripture, sin, confession, forgiveness and redemption; all culminating in how can we as Christians counselors enhance our clients lives by nurturing their spiritual development, recognized God's grace and our own fallenness and brokenness; humble ourselves so that we may receive the everlasting and unconditional love and salvation that Jesus sacrificed himself for-US. In

conclusion McMinn refers to “ multitasking counselor” p. 327; it is incumbent upon the Christian counselor to concurrently weave psychology, theology, and spirituality into our restorative components of our professional relationships-with clients and peers-as well as in our personal lives. (520).

2. Concrete Responses: Be vulnerable! In at least 250 words (no more than one page), write about a personal life episode that this book triggered in your memory. Relate your story in first person, describing action and quoting exact words you remember hearing or saying. In the teaching style of Jesus, this is your own parable, case study, and confession. You will remember almost nothing you have read unless you make this critical, personal connection. When reading the book, what video memory began to play in your mind? This is your chance to tell your story and generate new ideas.

In the beginning I understood my Christin faith as an academic. I did as I was told, I read my bible, and I followed the Ten Commandments as any teenager does; when it suited me. I wasn't a horrible teenager, I was raised in a small farm community that really didn't understand someone with a vole at the end of their name, or someone who wanted to walk to the library and read rather than hang out on the steps of the malt shop/gas station. My formative years were the 1960's. There was so much conflict and rebellion and hatred. By the time I graduated and was supposed to go out and make my way I was thoroughly confused with and rebellious. Problem was I wasn't sure what I was rebelling against; the “ rebel without a clue.” But, in the end I wound up being a successful trial attorney; I even ran for Congress! I became a Master of the Universe; I was a Goddess that walked on the earth. I believed that

God already had enough on his plate, wars, famine, disease, atrocities; why should I plague Him further? After all, the Bible says: “ God bless the child that has his own”.

My hubris was off and running amok. I worked 80+ hrs. a week; bragged that I once worked 87 consecutive days and cracked up 3 secretaries. I made ridiculous amounts of money, had not one but two water front vacation homes on two separate islands, lived on 3. 9 acres of the last privately held woodlands in my city, my people had people. McMinn p. 54 speaks: “ unhealthy sense of self leads to self- absorption-I was the poster child. On page 41, McMinn nails me: “ The consequences of unbound independence are woundedness, brokenness and pain. Eventually the myth of self-sufficiency sours, and we are left staring at our neediness, confronted with the brokenness and pain...” in my jail cell.

It didn't happen overnight, but slowly I came to understand the peace, joy, grace of letting go and letting God. “ James writes, ‘ God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God...Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you, James 4: 6-10 quoted by McMinn on p. 43”. I had to acknowledge my brokenness, my self-aggrandizement, my powerlessness and the most difficult, the one I continue to struggle with, I am not in control, and God is. God has always been in control, and always will be in control and once I accepted that, the peace and beauty, the tranquility and grace that surrounded and enveloped me is the greatest most profound truth I have ever and will ever experience.

3. Reflection: What new questions arise for you in response to what you have read? Take notes as you read. Outsmart the author by asking better questions than he did. Begin with questions like, “ What troubles me about this book?” Discuss the positives and negatives about the book. Limit this section to 250 words (no more than one page).

The only thing I found troubling about the McMinn book was he fails to include any form of index. I really can't understand why that would be. I used index often when reading books, especially though provoking and textbook literature for study and reference purposes. McMinn's book is exceptional in the way he takes a wide variety and assortment of distinctively unique physiological struggles and juxtaposes them with Christian theological perspectives to gain healing and spiritual connectedness to the Holy Spirit. McMinn's is incredibly straightforward, using plain English when he discusses at length the risks of using Christianity in conjunction with various psychological therapies and disciplines. McMinn is explicit when identifying the potential risks of using Scripture, prayer, confession, and forgiveness, in the therapeutic process.

I would like to ask McMinn how he would use his techniques on three different categories of client. First would be someone not of the Christian faith, even an atheist or an agnostic. Second, would 'le enfant terrible', the teenager. And third the client who has impaired religious judgment; someone who is not to the point of a diagnosis- able illness, but who has a uniquely distorted understanding of the role Christianity comprises in our daily lives. It's all about spiritual transformation; how can we spiritual grow and

transform in our personal and professional lives to become better counselors, better human beings and better Christians. The next step is how can we as therapists assist, promote, and support our clients in their personal journey to spiritual transformation. While reading, often I found myself setting the book aside and pondering what I had read; not in the sense of “ what in the world is he talking about?” but in application to past events and configuring future usages. I also found myself writing comments in the margins, questions, feelings, and reflections. (304)

Action: What are you going to do about it? Develop action steps based on core points of the book. This section must be a description of how main ideas will affect your counseling. What professional changes will you implement and share with others? Be precise in summarizing your action steps. Present these comments in at least 200 words (no more than one page).

The core point I will set to action in my role as a professional Christian counselor will be how and when I facilitate prayer for and with my clients. Prayer and communication with God is tantamount in my daily life and therefore it is a necessity in my work. How to use prayer with the client will be contingent on the client’s diagnosis and the client’s desire and comfort level. McMinn succinctly states on page 95: “...prayer may be a perfect illustration of getting beyond our tendency to be self – focused to a state of self-forget-fullness...to help clients gain perspective and a more accurate understanding of themselves.” As a Christian, prayer is my connection with the Living God; prayer humbles us, connects us and orients us.

Prayer is healing and calming; and should be as much a multiple, daily, natural occurrence as brushing teeth and eating. I have ongoing silent discourse with the Lord throughout my day. McMinn on page 250 recommends “.....for Christian counselors to consider...each unique counseling situation be carefully evaluated in a psychologically and spiritually sensitive manner.” The second core point is forgiveness. As a Christian, forgiveness is our duty. McMinn address’s forgiveness as a Christian obligation shall be implemented by an integrative perspective, p. 256. As with prayer, forgiveness requires particular clarity; it may not be simplistic nor over intellectualized, there is a proper time, and identifiable, personal meaning. (233)

REFERENCES

McMinn, Mark R. (2011). Psychology, theology, and spirituality in Christian counseling. Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers