



## Judeo-Christian Perspectives on Psychology: Human Nature, Motivation, and Change

By William R. Miller, Harold D. Delaney



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In its etymology, the word "psychology" literally means the study of the spirit or soul. Yet through much of the 20th century, psychology remained oddly divorced from spirituality and religion. While religion is an important, even central aspect of experience and identity for many people, very little has been done to incorporate this dimension of human nature into mainstream psychological theory and research. While spiritual aspects of health are familiar to many medical practitioners and in the treatment of substance use disorders, psychology as a discipline still has some catching up to do. Most mainstream psychology textbooks contain no reference to this major aspect of human life, and psychologists often maintain suspicious distance from anything religious. Similarly, some U.S. Christian groups have demonized the discipline of psychology, and actively discourage believers from seeking the services of psychologists.

The dialogue that *Judeo-Christian Perspectives on Psychology* represents is likely to be fruitful in several ways. First, a majority of the U.S. clients that most psychologists serve are religious (primarily Judeo-Christian) in some sense, whereas psychologists tend to be among the least religious of any professional or scientific group. Second, this book will enhance cooperation and collaboration between psychologists and faith-based individuals and groups. Third, it is astounding that the spiritual-religious side of human nature has been almost totally ignored within mainstream personality theory and assessment, and this volume will encourage consideration of the spiritual as another dimension in need of study, understanding, and evaluation. Fourth, the perspectives of three millennia of Judeo-Christian thought might more generally enrich the discipline of psychology, and bring some truly new areas of dialogue and study that were largely shunned by our discipline during the 20th century.

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