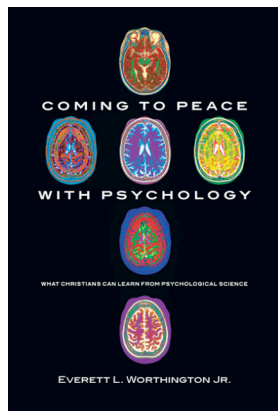


BOOK EXCERPT



Coming to Peace with Psychology: What Christians Can Learn from Psychological Science

300 pages, paperback, 978-0-8308-3882-0, \$24

Available September 2010



Everett L. Worthington Jr. (Ph.D., University of Missouri) is professor of psychology at Virginia Commonwealth University. He is a licensed clinical psychologist and former

Time for a Truce

This is a love story. It is about falling in love, being together in love at the end of time, but mostly about living and growing together in love. Like Romeo and Juliet, the lovers are star-crossed. Christians are from one house. Scientists from another. Often the members of each household try to keep these two apart. Sometimes there are even dagger fights, though the weapons are words and ideas.

Within the science-religion relationship, psychological science has had the least attention accorded it even though scientific advances have unleashed great potential for understanding people. Among the sciences in today's world, I think that psychological science has the most potential to help people see God most clearly.

—from the introduction

Though we often think we understand human nature, when we actually study it, it surprises us. Armed with a rich history of interpersonal interaction throughout our lives, with the wisdom of the ages transmitted in history and literature, and with a careful reading of Scripture and of theologians' reflections on Scripture, we still often cannot predict accurately how people will act. We need to put it to a controlled, psychological, scientific test.

Using psychological science also tells us about creation and human nature above and beyond the considerable knowledge we already have. In making the many decisions we must consider in life, we are wise to look to all the sources of information and wisdom we have at our disposal—and this includes both Scripture and psychological science. We ignore either of these sources at our peril.

—from chapter one, “Interesting Things About People”

The two cities of science and theology—or in our case, psychological science and Christian theology—are interrelated. Psychological science can be a valid avenue to learning more about God and knowing God better, but it needs to be used properly.

—from chapter two, “A Tale of Two Cities”

Living within our skins, we are wired to be skeptical of psychological science. But we also are wired by culture to respect science. While our culture can also push us to distrust of religion, we often find communities of Christian believers who share our Christian worldview and support those beliefs, values and practices. The various strands of our religious and psychological contexts suggest that we need a way to keep Christianity and psychological science in conversation.

—from chapter four, “Why You Might Not Believe What You Don't Already Believe”

Media Contact | For more information and to schedule an interview with our featured author contact: Krista Carnet, broadcast publicity, at 800.843.4587 ext. 4013 or kkcarnet@ivpress.com
Heather Mascarello, print publicity, at 800.843.4587 ext. 4012 or hmascarello@ivpress.com
Adrianna Wright, online publicity, at 800.843.4587 ext. 4096 or awright@ivpress.com
Visit ivpress.com/media

BOOK EXCERPT

executive director of the Templeton Foundation's A Campaign for Forgiveness Research.

Worthington has published more than two hundred articles and papers on forgiveness, marriage and family, psychotherapy, and virtue in a wide variety of journals and magazines. He was the founding editor of *Marriage and Family: A Christian Journal* and sits on the editorial boards of several professional journals. He has appeared on *Good Morning America*, CNN and *The 700 Club* and has been featured in award-winning documentary movies on forgiveness such as *The Power of Forgiveness* and *The Big Question*. He is the author of seventeen books, including *Handbook of Forgiveness*, *Hope-Focused Marriage Counseling* and *Forgiving and Reconciling*.

Both Jesus and the disciples healed others. If I truly believed that Scripture alone is sufficient for all physical healing, then I probably would never consult a physician. Today, when we are ill, most of us pray, and we also consult a physician.

Furthermore, revelation is progressive. Theology changes. Church practices in the twenty-first century are not the same as they were in the eighteenth. Similarly, science grows and refines knowledge. . . . Science can also inform theology, church practices, and individual faith and piety.

Humans bear the divine image. This suggests that we can learn about the image of God in terms of both its structure and the essential relational quality through the study of humans. Psychological science is one way of conducting this study.

—**from chapter five, “The Methods of Disciplines”**

There is no final conflict between God and human nature. However, the disciplines of psychological science and theology can come into conflict due to human sinfulness. Conflict can be minimized in several ways, though. When we pursue the end of knowing God better, both psychological science and theology can contribute. If we follow each other's lead while maintaining a firm disciplinary frame, we can learn from each other. Even when we seem to be at odds on an issue, if we stay in close relationship we can usually work it out.

—**from chapter seven, “Understanding the Relational Partners”**

Psychological science is part of the human participation in God's redemption of nature. Psychological science can be part of our noble calling by God to participate in God's redemption, and I believe it is as valid as preaching, discipleship, teaching, being an elder or deacon, articulating theology, witnessing, or doing any other work for the glory of God.

—**from chapter eight, “Dealing with Some Challenges”**

Psychological science is itself a tool to interpret Scripture, physical creation, spiritual development and spiritual behavior. It has not traditionally been used to aid spiritual life—at least not often until recent decades. It is often through developing or using new tools that progress comes. Psychological science has developed specialized tools, and it continues to add new ones. These new tools and methods can not only help psychology progress but also advance our knowledge about God.

—**from chapter nine, “Psychological Science Provides a New Tool”**

Psychological science doesn't replace scriptural truth. On the contrary, it enhances the truth and reveals more about what can be expected in applying scriptural truth today.

—**from chapter fourteen, “Psychological Science Helps Us Understand Virtuous Living”**