Annotated Bibliography

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Worthington, E. L., Rueger, S. Y., Davis, E. B., & Wortham, J. (2019). “Mere” Christian Forgiveness: An Ecumenical Christian Conceptualization of Forgiveness through the Lens of Stress-And-Coping Theory. *Religions*, *10*(1), 44.

<https://doi.org/10.3390/rel10010044>

In this article, the authors put forth a non-denominational paragon of Christian forgiveness that underscores the essential elements held by a significant portion of Christian traditions. Instead of utilizing a theological lens to describe and develop this paragon, the authors mainly used a psychological lens. To better understand a Christian view of forgiveness, the stress-and-coping theory was used. The authors identified four types of forgiveness, i.e., organizational-societal forgiveness, divine forgiveness, individual-to-individual forgiveness, and self-forgiveness, described a Christian conceptualization of each type of forgiveness, and discussed the stress-and-coping theory from a psychological perspective.

This study adeptly describes the essential elements of “mere” Christian forgiveness and uses a psychological perspective that is in tune with non-sectarian Christian beliefs to describe Christian forgiveness. It is useful to those seeking to understand how Christianity and psychology impact forgiveness, and its use of the stress-and-coping theory is ideal because this theory has the most empirical support.

Frise, N. R., & McMinn, M. R. (2010). Forgiveness and reconciliation: The differing perspectives of psychologists and Christian theologians. *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, *38*(2), 83-90.

<https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1148&context=gscp_fac>

In this article, the authors highlight how forgiveness and reconciliation are normally seen as separate constructs among psychologists. The authors examine the extent to which the secularized and privatized view of forgiveness goes against religious views of forgiveness held by religious leaders and clients. Two surveys are reported in this study. The first looked at the opinions of Christian theologians and academic psychologists regarding the difference between reconciliation and forgiveness. The second looked at the opinions of Christian theologians and expert psychologists with published books on forgiveness. Both assessments revealed that psychologists are better at distinguishing between reconciliation and forgiveness than Christian theologians.

This study accomplishes what it set out to do: it examines whether reconciliation and forgiveness are viewed as distinct or related entities among Christian theologians and expert psychologists. The findings from the two studies were well presented, making it easy for the reader to understand how these parallel fields view forgiveness.

McMinn, M. R., Ruiz, J. N., Marx, D., Wright, J. B., & Gilbert, N. B. (2006). Professional psychology and the doctrines of sin and grace: Christian leaders' perspectives. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, *37*(3), 295.

<https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1179&context=gscp_fac>

This article poses an important question: what should professional psychologists do when clients bring up issues around sin and forgiveness? The authors highlighted how, for some psychologists, sin and forgiveness seems like a quelling religious relic that cannot fit into modern psychology. To understand why sin and forgiveness are vitally important for Christian clients, the authors suggested viewing sin from the lens of the Christian faith together with the doctrine of grace. One hundred and seventy-one subjects participated in the study, and two methods of data collection were used to determine what Christian leaders wanted psychologists to understand about sin and forgiveness.

This study helps readers understand what clients wish psychologists knew about sin and forgiveness. It is beneficial for psychologists as it behooves them to learn the languages of forgiveness and understand ideologies expressed by religious clients.

McCullough, M. E., & Worthington, Jr, E. L. (1999). Religion and the forgiving personality. *Journal of personality*, *67*(6), 1141-1164.

<http://local.psy.miami.edu/faculty/mmccullough/Papers/religion_forgiving_personality.pdf>

This article explores the tie that binds forgiveness and religion by examining how the two are empirically linked and how they are linked in Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. It begins by outlining the importance of forgiveness within these three monotheistic religions. It examines current research on forgiveness and religion and evaluates how these concepts affect human functioning. It examines some methodological and substantive explanations of forgiveness and religion. And it closes by discussing how forgiveness facilitates health and well-being.

This article is beneficial for readers as it recognizes that forgiveness has a dual nature (it is social-psychological and spiritual), making it difficult for individuals to capture the essence of forgiveness. The empirical findings cited throughout this article effectively demonstrate that forgiveness is deep-seated in religion and spirituality and suggests that understanding forgiveness helps individuals understand personality and religion better.

Krause, N., & Ellison, C. G. (2003). Forgiveness by God, forgiveness of others, and psychological well–being in late life. *Journal for the scientific study of religion*, *42*(1), 77-93.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3046863/>

This study uses data from a survey of older adults to investigate the relationships among psychological well-being, forgiveness by others, and forgiveness by God. For starters, the results indicate that forgiving others improves psychological well-being, and these salutary outcomes are greater compared to those linked to forgiveness by God. Secondly, the data suggests that how older adults forgive each other is crucial: older individuals who require those who have wronged them to perform acts of repentance have a higher chance of experiencing psychological distress compared to older adults who forgive unconditionally. Third, the results suggest that forgiveness by God is a part of this process because older individuals who seek forgiveness from God are less likely to expect those who have wronged them to perform contrition acts.

This study’s findings are presented in a three-section table, making it easy for readers to understand the relationships between psychological well-being, forgiveness by others, and forgiveness by God. These findings are beneficial for both learners and researchers as they contribute to the knowledge base on forgiveness and well-being.

Morgan, T. R. (2017). Perspectives of Secular Counselors Regarding Christian Counseling Forgiveness Therapy. *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*.

<https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=5493&context=dissertations>

Using forgiveness therapy as a framework, this study describes the understandings, experiences, and thoughts of forgiveness from the perspectives of secular therapists. This study uses research questions to examine whether secular therapists share the same concepts of forgiveness as Christian counselors. One-on-one interviews were conducted and recorded via Zoom, and ten themes were generated from the data, including the same approach used to address different types of anger; perceptions of anger; working with client trauma; different theoretical orientations; mindfulness; views on reconciliation; need to assess/address client anger; acceptance and moving forward; participants’ lives and their personal resiliency, and various meanings of forgiveness. The findings from this study suggest that secular therapists do not believe forgiveness is required to address anger.

This study is useful for counselors as it will help them better understand forgiveness and counseling theories and techniques that address anger from the viewpoint of secular therapists. Information from this study can be used to educate therapists, and help counselors understand various counseling approaches.

Głaz, S. (2019). The Relationship of Forgiveness and Values with Meaning in Life of Polish Students. *Journal of religion and health*, *58*(5), 1886-1907.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-019-00860-4>

This article shows how forgiveness, meaning of life, and terminal values affect the lives of Polish scholars who view themselves as faithful Christians. The study enlisted 368 students aged between 19 and 23 years who were pursuing higher education at the Jesuit University. The researchers used three tools in the study: the purpose in life test, the forgiveness scale, and the Rokeach value survey. The findings indicate that forgiveness and terminal values add meaning to the students’ lives.

The findings of this study are presented in four tables, making it easy for readers to understand the results. The study also uses figures to show how forgiveness, terminal values, and meaning in life are related, which not only adds to the article’s visual appeal but helps readers understand the correlation between these values.

Bush, P. L. (2013). The Human and the Divine-Factors that Mediate Forgiveness Through Sacred Relationships.

<https://doi.org/10.1037/a0025803>

This article explores different pieces of literature on forgiveness and how forgiveness can contribute to adult learning. The authors provide an overview of the link between spirituality and transformative learning. They discuss literature on forgiveness and establish that the two themes that illustrate how religiosity and spirituality impact forgiveness are “relationship with the sacred” and “mediating factors towards forgiveness.” The study shows that as spiritual approaches, meditation and prayer are effective in reconciling the negative feelings brought about by an offense(s).

This study is beneficial as it helps readers understand the relationship between religion, spirituality, and forgiveness. It expertly shows how religion and spirituality facilitate forgiveness and improve positive psychological change.

Veenstra, G. (1992). Psychological concepts of forgiveness. *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*.

<https://psycnet.apa.org/record/1992-42753-001>

In this article, the authors emphasize that trusting, excusing, pardoning, overlooking, releasing, and condoning are ways that individuals psychologically use forgiveness. The authors use the relationship-reconciliation framework to compare these concepts and to assess what each concept means and how it contributes to interpersonal behavior. This study demonstrates that each concept can be applied to particular types of conflict and quickens the reconciliation process. The authors not only highlight and explain common misconceptions that result in false reconciliation; they also discuss how these concepts can be therapeutically applied.

This study uses a psychological approach to explain common distortions of forgiveness. It also suggests that Christianity provides a more comprehensive sense of forgiveness that is lacking in other theories. This article is useful for therapists as it discusses psychological concepts of forgiveness and highlights how Christian views of forgiveness can be integrated into the psychological field.

Macaskill, A. (2005). Defining forgiveness: Christian clergy and general population perspectives. *Journal of personality*, *73*(5), 1237-1266.

<http://shura.shu.ac.uk/127/1/fulltext.pdf>

This study draws on Christian sources to investigate the meaning of forgiveness. The authors compare social science and general population definitions of forgiveness to arrive at a common meaning of the term. The study enlisted 209 Roman and Anglican clergy and 159 individuals from the general population, who were required to complete postal questionnaires about forgiveness. Findings indicated that clergy and members of the general population considered forgiveness and reconciliation as necessary, although these conceptualizations have no consensus within psychology. The study also found that clergy believe that forgiveness has no limits and penitence is not necessary, whereas the general populace believes that forgiveness has limits and that repentance is required.

This study presents varying views on forgiveness, and this can be beneficial to the reader as it introduces new ways of seeing certain aspects around forgiveness.