



In Search of Goodness

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The recent spate of books and articles reflecting on the question of evil might make one forget that the question of just what constitutes goodness is no less urgent or perplexing. Everyone wants to think of him- or herself as good. But what does a good life look like? And how do people become good? Are there multiple, competing possibilities for what counts as a good life, all equally worthy? Or, is there a unified and transcendent conception of the good that should guide our judgment of the possibilities? What does a good life look like when it is guided by God? How is a good life involved with the lives of others? And, finally, how good is good enough?

These questions are the focus of *In Search of Goodness*, the product of a year-long conversation about goodness. The eight essays in this volume challenge the dichotomies that usually govern how goodness has been discussed in the past: altruism versus egoism; reason versus emotion; or moral choice versus moral character. Instead, the contributors seek to expand the terms of the discussion by coming at goodness from a variety of perspectives: psychological, philosophic, literary, religious, and political. In each case, they emphasize the lived realities and particulars of moral phenomena, taking up examples and illustrations from life, literature, and film. From Achilles and Billy Budd, to Oskar Schindler and Shel Silverstein's *The Giving Tree*, to Iris Murdoch and the citizens of Flagstaff, Arizona, readers will find a wealth of thought-provoking insights to help them better understand this most basic, but complex, element of human life and happiness.

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