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The Word Is Very Near You: A Guide To Praying With Scripture

THIS SPECIFIC BOOK, BEING READ OVER CONSECUTIVE READERS THROUGH THE CENTURIES IN SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE. IT IS PRESENTED NOW, NOT AS A TEST OF TRADITIONAL BELIEF, BUT AS A KEY TO YOUR PAST AND POTENTIAL EXPERIENCE. IT IS ONE THING TO SAY THAT PRAYER IS A CONVERSATION WITH GOD. IT IS ANOTHER TO SAY THAT GOD BEGINS THE CONVERSATION. IT IS YET A THIRD TO SAY THAT GOD IS A CONVERSATION. IN GOD LOVE EVER FLOWS BETWEEN THE FATHER AND THE SON IN THE SPIRIT. LOVE IS ANSWERED BY LOVE, AND THE CONVERSATION, THE UTTER OPPOSITE OF "ÉGOISME À DEUX," TAKES IN

A Guide to Praying with Scripture

LOVE THE ALL-EMBRACING FATHER HAS FOR THE SON, AND IN THE LOVE THE SON HAS FOR THE FATHER, IN THE ISSUING OF THE SPIRIT FROM THE FATHER AND THE SPIRIT'S RETURN IN THE LOVE OF THE SON, THERE IS EVERYTHING WE MEAN BY PRAYER—AFFIRMATION, ADORATION, SELF-OFFERING, LOVE, DESIRE, DELICITATION, AND EMPATHY FOR A WORLD TORN BY PAIN AND JOY. OUR PRAYER IS NOT MAKING CONVERSATION WITH GOD. IT IS JOINING THE CONVERSATION THAT IS

Martin L. Smith

SPRIT. THERE IS AN ETERNAL DANCE ALREADY IN FULL SWING, AND WE ARE CAUGHT UP IN TO IT. PRAYER IS ALLOWING OURSELVES TO JOIN THE DANCE AND EXPERIENCE THE MOVEMENTS, THE CONSTANT INTERPLAY, THE DANCERS OF THE TRINITY.

EXPERIENCE AND CHARM THIS FOR YOU. ALREADY THE IMAGES OF PRAYER AND GOD, WHICH ARE NOT THE STANDARD FARE PROVIDED FROM MOST PULPITS, MAY ALREADY BE WORKING SOME CHANGE IN YOUR FEELINGS. PERHAPS YOU ARE SENSING THAT PAST INHIBITIONS IN PRAYER MAY WELL HAVE BEEN LINKED WITH AN OPPRESSIVE DISCOMFORT AT BEING ASKED TO ADDRESS ALMIGHTY GOD ACROSS A



Synopsis

An introduction to the practice of prayer with Scripture, this book includes a number of themes for prayer with suggested passages for meditation. Martin Smith believes that prayer is not an act we perform, but rather is a response to God's reaching out to us. Through scriptural passages this book shows how the Bible can guide our prayer response and lead us from conversational prayer to meditative, receptive prayer with Scripture. This book is ideal for an ongoing Bible, prayer, or discernment group.

Book Information

Paperback: 214 pages

Publisher: Cowley Publications; Copyright 1989 edition (January 28, 1989)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0936384816

ISBN-13: 978-0936384818

Product Dimensions: 5.6 x 0.6 x 8.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.3 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 starsÂ See all reviewsÂ (5 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

Our adult Christian formation (Christian education in some churches) class has been using this book for a series of discussions and practice in meditative prayer. All participants seem to like the author's style of writing and to find something useful in the text. We also keep hearing that it is worth re-reading and keeping on hand to refer to again and again. The author, Martin Smith, SSJE, is an Episcopalian and superior of the Society of St. John the Evangelist. He explains in a clear and personal manner different approaches to prayer using scripture as the basis. Some in our group are used to putting Old Testament lessons into story form for the child-friendly service at our church and like the chapter on putting one's self into a Bible story (a participant at the Last Supper, a witness to the Crucifixion, the woman at the well, Martha or Mary preparing dinner for the Lord or sitting at his feet to hear him speak,etc.) Others benefit from trying to focus on a word or phrase or short sentence from the Bible as the center of a meditative prayer session. Still others tried focusing on a

symbol or image which has importance in scripture (water, tongues of fire, staff, shepherd, oil for lighting lamps, etc.) We are next going to try a group meditation. For individuals or groups seeking an enriched prayer experience, this book is recommended.

This book was recommended (and loaned) to me by my pastor, and I rapidly decided that I needed my own copy. It provides instruction on a number of different kinds of prayer that can be done using scripture that is clear, succinct and helpful, but it also provides a lot more than that. The introduction has a good discussion on the hows and whys of scriptural prayer, and the back of the book has extensive lists of scripture readings broken into topical sections so that those who are fairly new to studying the bible, can nonetheless find appropriate passages for in depth prayer on a variety of topics. Highly recommended for anyone interested in increasing the depth of their prayer life.

This is one of my favorite books on meditative prayer. Assigned by my spiritual directors program, it was a real delight to read and incorporate in my daily prayer life. The first couple of chapters are worth the price of the book. Unlike another reviewer, I did not find any "theological jargon" in the book at all! Nor is it "episcopal" (by the way, it was assigned by a catholic, and I'm methodist)! I can't help but wonder if the prior reviewer was talking about another book. The first few chapters describe our approach and connection to God in prayer, God's initiative in all prayer, our experience of God and practical examples of what that looks like, including tips on where/when and incorporating the body in prayer. The next few chapters describe (without using these theological words), the practice of lectio divina, ignatian prayer (entering the stories), and praying with icons/word pictures. Each kind is described in step-by-step fashion, followed by interviews from new practitioners so that you can get a realistic feel for what that meditative prayer practice is like. The second half of the book is basically a mini topical concordance, where various scriptures are listed by topic as an aid for choosing in prayer. I found this section less helpful, because I really didn't need it. But for those who really don't know what scriptures to start with in meditative prayer, it's a great section.

Great

This book is just more of the same theological jargon of the Episcopal church. No substance or meat. This is the view of our entire women's study group. Don't waste your time.

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