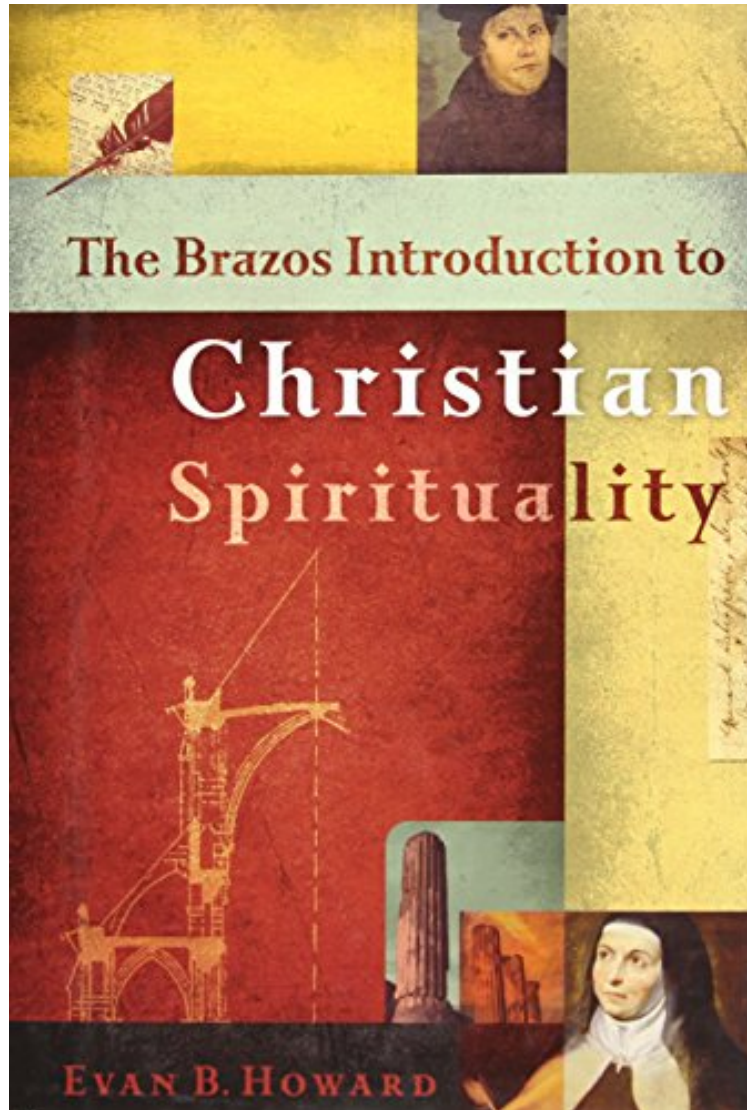


(Read ebook) The Brazos Introduction to Christian Spirituality

The Brazos Introduction to Christian Spirituality

Evan B. Howard

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Evan B. Howard : The Brazos Introduction to Christian Spirituality before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Brazos Introduction to Christian Spirituality:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. We are not after solutions but GodBy CustomerI first encountered Evan Howard in Four Views on Christian Spirituality, where he served as the evangelical contributor. In The Brazos Introduction to Christian Spirituality he proves himself a master of not only evangelical spirituality but also Catholic

and Orthodoxy spirituality. Indeed, one of the things I most appreciate about this work is its ecumenical spirit and irenic approach. It is comprehensive in both breadth and depth. And I appreciate the authors recognition that we are not after solutions but we are after God. If the more than 400, large pages aren't enough for you, the Looking Further section following each chapter is a treasure trove of recommended resources to be mined. And the Practicing Christian Spirituality exercises accompanying each chapter is intended to ensure the text would be not merely illuminating or interesting but transforming. In response to one these exercises I penned these words: What does it feel like to love someone deeply? A significant other? Your children? What does it look like? You know them? Really know them. And you want to spend time with them. Laughing with them. Crying with them. Caring for them, deeply. Helping with anything they need. Showering them with gifts they don't need. Protecting them. Forgiving them. And always assuming the best, of course. Sort of like loving and caring for ourselves. What would it mean to love your neighbors like that? Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen (The Book of Common Prayer). I connected with Howard via social media and even had a phone conversation with him. He's willing to lead to facilitate an online study of the book if enough people are interested. Yes, it's that important. So please help spread the word! I do have two minor gripes with the book. First, I would like to see more emphasis on the ordinary means of grace, the word and sacraments, catechesis, and confirmation. Second, though I treat my books with tender loving care, already after one reading the binding has broken down and pages are falling out. Finally, to illustrate the breadth and depth of this must-read, here are the section headings, which are not included in a Look Inside:

1. Introducing Christian Spirituality What Is Christian Spirituality? Distinguishing Terms Forms of Christian Spirituality Trends in Christian Spirituality The Foundations of Christian Spirituality Christian Spirituality's Big Issues
2. Exploring Christian Spirituality The Study of Christian Spirituality as Inter-Disciplinary Exploration Personal Experience: Living Faith, Hearing Truth Holy Scripture: Mediating Faith, Speaking Truth Informal Relationships: Discovering Perspectives and Models Close at Hand Christian History: Discovering Perspectives and Models at a Distance Theology and Philosophy: Unified Viewpoints Related to Traditional Communities The Human Sciences: Insights and Specificity
3. Human Experience Understanding Experience Embodied Soul/Mind/Self/Spirit The Operations and Systems of Human Experience The Process and Stages of Human Experience The Web of Relationships The Depth Dimension of Human Experience Developing and Unique
4. The God of Christian Spirituality Introducing the Christian God Self-Existent Trinity The One Who Transcends and Is Present in Time and Space The One Who Is Actively Present The Operations of God: The Ways of Analogy and Experience Names and Images of God The One With Whom We Struggle The One Who Transcends: The Way of Negation and Apophatic Spirituality
5. Christian Experience The Greatness of Human Experience The Tragedy of Human Experience The Restoration of Human Experience
6. The Divine-Human Relationship What Is a Relationship? What Do We See When We Look at the Divine-Human Relationship? A Wide Range of Diversity Fundamental Patterns of Relationship with God
7. Christian Transformation Introducing Christian Transformation The Character of Christian Transformation The Length of Christian Transformation The Breadth of Christian Transformation The Depth of Christian Transformation
8. Christian Spiritual Formation Introducing Christian Spiritual Formation Basic Principles of Christian Spiritual Formation The Contexts and Agents of Christian Spiritual Formation The Aims of Christian Spiritual Formation The Task of Christian Spiritual Formation The Means of Christian Spiritual Formation
9. The Life of Prayer Introducing Christian Prayer The Ways of Christian Prayer The Dynamics of Christian Prayer The Effects of Prayer A Life of Prayer
10. The Life of Care The Character of Christian Care The Elements and Contexts of Christian Care The Dynamics of Christian Care The Ways of Christian Care A Life of Care
11. Christian Discernment What Is Christian Discernment? Preparation for Discernment Recognizing the Presence and Action of God Discerning the Next Step: God's Will and the Movement to Action The Life of Discernment
12. The Renewal of Christian Spirituality The Language of Christian Renewal Foundations of the Renewal of Christian Spirituality A Select History of Christian Renewal The Breadth of Christian Renewal The Dynamics of Christian Renewal The Renewal of Christian Spirituality: Looking Forward

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. In its ecumenical and historical exploration of the faith, ...By Elizabeth Zarubin In its ecumenical and historical exploration of the faith, this book is an invitation to inch closer to the same God who has spoken through all of history in various ways through various movements and individuals. I feel Evan speaks from his heart, spirit, mind and will, and so I am engaged on the same levels. The book reads as if written from passionate processing of hundreds of diverse and historical writers. It is not just academic though it is supremely scholarly; it is not just for the mind, but for the soul. This is one of the few books I've read where to open it is to be invited to marvel at and savor a holy God.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The Brazos Intro to Christian Spirituality By Michael Burdziak Evan Howard's Introduction to Christian Spirituality makes a strong contribution to the many offerings in this field. By including Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant perspectives, Howard's ecumenical approach provides a comprehensive tool for educating those with limited understanding in this area. His reflective exercises, included at the end of each chapter, provide readers opportunities to connect themes

from the Christian tradition with their own developing spiritualities. I highly recommended this introductory work to educators and to those seeking greater understanding of the importance of spirituality for faith development.

Evan Howard provides a solid and comprehensive overview of spiritual formation in the Protestant, Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox traditions in *The Brazos Introduction to Christian Spirituality*. In short, Howard desires to answer the following question for readers: "What does relationship with God look like for Christians?" The book is interdisciplinary in its approach, drawing from fields such as theology and psychology. What makes this book especially accessible are its chapter outlines and objectives, sidebars, focus boxes, charts, pictures, cartoons, chapter summaries and questions, and glossary, all of which present the material in an easily digestible format for the curious layperson.

"Howard has managed to produce a systematic and accessible survey while maintaining a lively and distinctive authorial voice--a remarkable achievement. . . . The result is perhaps the most robustly ecumenical treatment of Christian spirituality by any single author to date. . . . Howard's thoroughly researched and cogently written volume successfully bridges the gulf between the academic study of spirituality and the practical work of spiritual formation." Arthur Holder, *Spiritus: A Journal of Christian Spirituality* From the Inside Flap "Here is a rich quilt work of biblical, theological, and philosophical reflection on the rich dynamics of the with-God life. Howard's book arguably is the most comprehensive treatment of spirituality from an evangelical perspective in the English language."--Bruce Demarest, *Denver Seminary* From the Introduction I tend to be a "big picture" kind of guy. My students tell me that they get the most out of my teaching when I show how a number of different things fit together. And while I constantly face the dangers of a distorting totalization, I find that my preoccupation with big pictures often helps students see things in a new light. I hope to accomplish something of the same in this text. So, in order to make this book illuminating, I have incorporated a couple of elements characteristic of my own study and teaching of Christian spirituality. First, this text draws from a variety of different resources. . . . The study of Christian spirituality--as an exploration of the relationship between God and human persons--necessarily involves both theological categories (requiring biblical, dogmatic, and historical study) and categories from the human sciences (requiring psychological and sociological study). Furthermore, the exploration of Christian spirituality involves both formal academic research and informal personal experience. Prayer, for example, has been explored not only by the saints and mystics of history, but also by medical researchers, cognitive psychologists, anthropologists, and philosophers of religion, as well as by people like you and me. What insights might these diverse resources bring to our understanding of Christian prayer? My aim is not to provide a comprehensive coverage of any single discipline . . . but rather to point to the key questions, figures, and ideas that shed light on the general survey of Christian spirituality and to illustrate how an interdisciplinary approach to Christian spirituality might look. Second, this text provides a survey of Christian spirituality within a single coherent framework (the "big picture"). My goal is to give some insight concerning how various traditions, practices, and perspectives can be comprehended as a whole. To this end the text will develop, though not defend, a way of looking at the God-human relationship that helps make sense of a number of details regarding the spiritual life. The chapters are designed to present this framework piece by piece and then to apply this framework to the practical dimensions of Christian spirituality as the book progresses. For this reason the book moves from the more difficult material to the easier, progressing from method to theology to dynamics to practice. From the Back Cover Christian spirituality is in vogue in the postmodern twenty-first century. Both colleges and seminaries now offer courses--even advanced degrees--on spiritual formation and spiritual disciplines; for this reason, a straightforward, comprehensive textbook is needed. Enter *The Brazos Introduction to Christian Spirituality*. This book offers a broad-minded approach that covers Protestant, Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox traditions. In addition, it is interdisciplinary in its approach, drawing from fields such as theology and psychology. This informative, illuminating, interesting, and ecumenical book is especially accessible given its many user-friendly features: chapter outlines provide a general orientation to the flow of the chapter chapter objectives explain the tasks readers should be able to perform upon completing the chapter sidebars summarize materials in the text or provide brief quotes from primary sources focus boxes offer portraits of historical figures and movements or essays on key issues in Christian spirituality charts, pictures, and cartoons provide helpful visual illustrations and highlight key information a glossary defines unfamiliar terms or terms that are used distinctively in the text exercises near the end of each chapter ("Practicing Christian Spirituality") allow personal application of the material presented chapter summaries offer a helpful overview of the chapter's content questions for consideration prompt readers to tease out the key points of the chapter a list of works titled "Looking Further" helps readers identify resources for further exploration "With a unique format and comprehensive approach, *The Brazos Introduction to Christian Spirituality* is an essential read for all who seek to experience Christian faith and practice in its fullness."--Richard J. Foster, author of *Celebration of Discipline and Streams of Living Water* "Evan Howard has provided us with a clear and comprehensive overview of Christian spirituality. He pays attention to the breadth of Christian spirituality in a way that is fair and at the same time does not leave the reader merely overwhelmed with options. The book is masterfully organized and readers will appreciate the

sidebars with charts, summaries, case studies, and a comprehensive glossary. The intention of the book is to provide an overview of Christian spirituality, but the volume contains the elements necessary for a comprehensive program of Christian formation."--James C. Wilhoit, Wheaton College; author of *Spiritual Formation as if the Church Mattered*"Evan Howard has written a truly foundational work on Christian spirituality. To answer the question: 'What does relationship with God look like for Christians?' Howard moves systematically through the basic issues that undergird the study and practice of Christian spirituality, illustrating each topic from the breadth of the Christian spiritual tradition. This book will be in the hands of my students as soon as possible!"--Elizabeth Liebert, San Francisco Theological Seminary"Here is a textbook that makes a new kind of course possible. Even better, it offers the church's wisdom about what makes transformed lives possible. May it turn our seminaries and sanctuaries into schools for conversion and give substance to the next Great Awakening."--Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, author of *Free to Be Bound and New Monasticism*