



The Beautiful Work of Learning to Pray: 31 Lessons

James C. Howell

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Prayer is not easy, yet learning to pray can be learned. *The Beautiful Work of Learning to Pray* is a brief but probing guide into the life of prayer. James Howell examines the many barriers to prayer (such as our busyness, how uncomfortable with silence we are, our doubts and fears) and invites the reader to take a fresh approach to the devotional life.

Each lesson begins with a scripture passage and the author draws comfortably and appropriately from a rich array of other sources (Annie Dillard, St. Augustine, Henri Nowen, Kathy Mattea, Madeleine L'Engle, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, St. Francis, Oscar Romero, and the movie *Good Will Hunting* are a sampling.) The author's own engaging writing style, including his ability to illumine his ideas with the shared wisdom of others, is a major strength of this book.

While each "lesson" is only two book pages long, the author draws from a deep well of wisdom about prayer. Howell leads the reader through the "subjects" of prayer (e.g. praise, confession, giving thanks), and digs deeply into theological issues such as whether prayer works, prayer and suffering, and forgiveness. According to the author, "In the end, prayer draws us into community with others-- out of our "curved in" lives and into the world in service."

The Beautiful Work of Learning to Pray will be helpful to the novice in spiritual life as well as long-time Christians who are striving for a more profound relationship with God. Includes Study Guide, List of Sources, and Scripture Index.

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