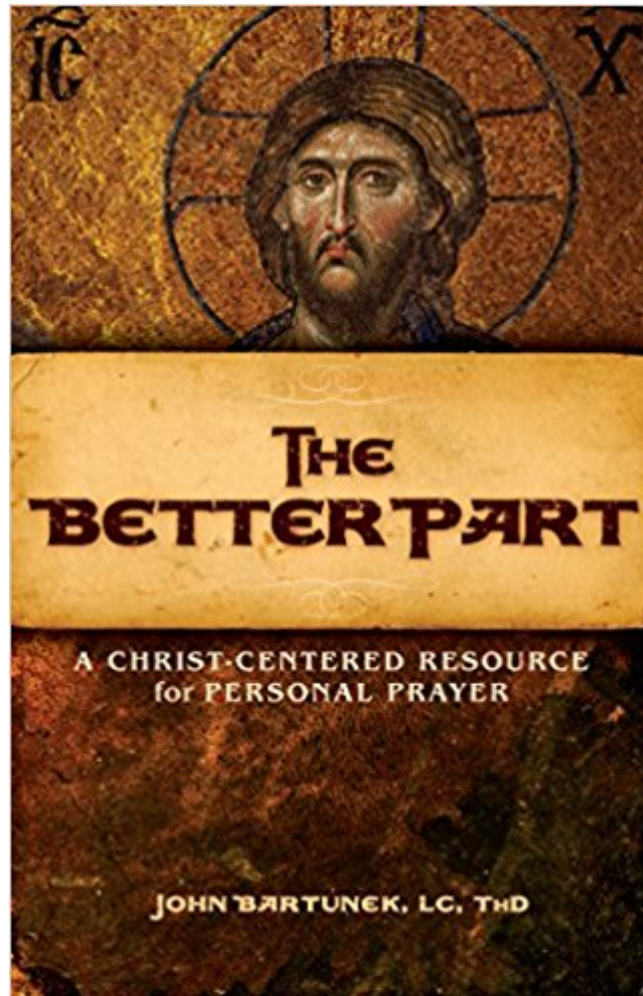




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The Better Part: A Christ-Centered Resource For Personal Prayer



Synopsis

This book should be declared a national treasure! We lead tremendously busy lives, with 1,001 things to do. Even so, every saint and renowned spiritual director through the ages has said the same thing: If we desire to become saints, we must spend time daily in meditation. With this book (which is in its fourth printing!), Father Bartunek has created an extensive, Christ-centered resource to serve as a daily meditation companion. Part I is an incredibly practical explanation of Christian meditation (along with a cheat-sheet!). Part II contains material to use during your meditations. The resource is a Bible study on the four Gospels, a survey of saints' writings, a guide to prayer, and a fresh introduction to Jesus rolled into one. The Better Part enables us to read, meditate, absorb, and apply the Gospels to our lives. It serves as a catalyst to personalize times of prayer, enabling us to follow the Holy Spirit's lead along the path of holiness. The portable resource has a ribbon to mark your place and contains detailed indices to help you meditate either on the liturgical seasons or the virtues you feel most in need of developing. All four Gospels are included inside the resource, divided into 303 sections, with each section divided into six parts: 1. the Gospel text, 2. Christ the Lord, 3. Christ the Teacher, 4. Christ the Friend, 5. Christ in My Life, and 6. questions for small group discussion. There are quotes from saints and popes at the beginning of each section and references to the Catechism following the discussion questions. Each section is about 4 pages long, totaling 1024 pages.

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Customer Reviews

The path to holiness is not a primrose path. It is a daily battle, a daily carrying of the cross. Prayer,

especially in the form of intimate daily conversations with Christ is sadly one of the most neglected weapons available to us in this battle. The Better Part equips Christians with the resources they need to, "set of into the deep" to enter into a personal, intimate conversation with Christ. Father Bartunek Begins his book with a short prayer primer, an exposition of the basics of Christian prayer that is worth the price of the book by itself. The rest of the book contains guided meditations on the Gospels with a liberal sprinkling of quotes from the Doctors and Fathers of the Church. The book contains the entire text of all four Gospels taken from the Jerusalem Bible (an excellent and very approachable translation). Each unit is meant as a stepping off point. While reading and reflecting on each unit would be of great benefit to anyone, using them as a starting point for your own conversation with Christ is the ultimate goal. These meditations are not of the fluffy, vague, feel-good variety that has sadly become too common these days. Father Bartunek offers deep and meaningful meditations from four aspects of our relationship with Christ: Christ the Lord, Christ the Teacher, Christ the Friend, and Christ in my life. By using the principles of concentration, consideration, conversation and commitment, each meditation should lead one to an experience of Christ's presence and a firm, concrete commitment to better imitate him. The price of the book is not cheap, but neither is the book itself. The paper and binding is of the highest quality, meant to stand up to daily handling for years.

This is a book of what is called structured meditation. Even more, I believe it is written in the style of what is called "Lectio Divina." Over and above all the other benefits you will find within, it is a book to help us to pray--to pray well--to pray with Sacred Scripture. It is easily summarized by citing St. Gregory the Great, that the objective of this practice is "to know the heart of God through the word of God." If you have never done it, this book is a great place to start. About this type of prayer, Pope Benedict XVI, mentioned it in his September 16, 2005 address, saying, "I would like in particular to recall and recommend the ancient tradition of Lectio Divina: the diligent reading of Sacred Scripture accompanied by prayer brings about that intimate dialogue in which the person reading hears God who is speaking, and in praying, responds to him with trusting openness of heart (cf. Dei Verbum, n. 25). If it is effectively promoted, this practice will bring to the Church--I am convinced of it--a new spiritual springtime." Later, writing about St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, Pope Benedict said, "Ambrose ... learned to study and comment on the Bible from the works of Origen, the undisputed master of the school of Alexandria. In this way, Ambrose brought to the Latin environment the practice of meditating on Scriptures initiated by Origen, beginning the practice of "lectio divina" in the West.

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