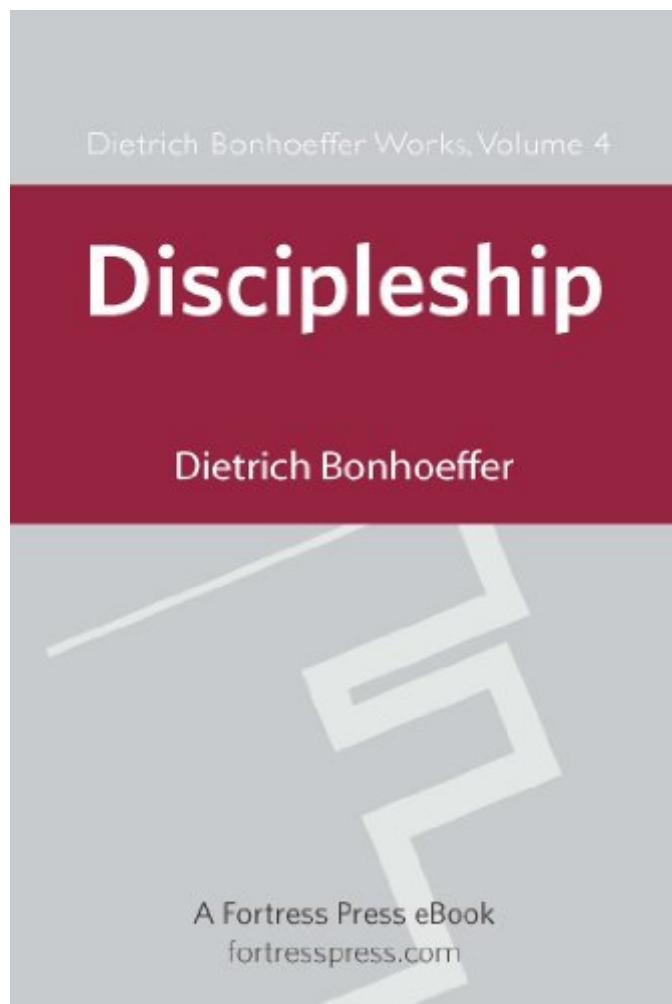


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Discipleship (Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works)



Synopsis

Freshly translated from the German critical edition, Discipleship provides a more accurate rendering of the text and extensive aids and commentary to clarify the meaning, context, and reception of this work and its attempt to resist the Nazi ideology then infecting German Christian churches.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is a book that every Christian should read. Bonhoeffer is among the twentieth centuries greatest theologians, and Discipleship (formerly titled The Cost of Discipleship in English translations) is his most popular and enduring work. In it we find the clarion call to return to simple obedience to Christ without the naivete that can so easily creep into such a call. "A paradoxical understanding of the commandments has a Christian right to it, but it must never lead to the annulment of a simple understanding of the commandments. Rather it is justified and possible only for those who have already taken simple obedience seriously at some point in their lives, and so already stand in community with Jesus, in discipleship, in expectation of the end" (80) Bonhoeffer's

rejection of "cheap grace," that "mortal enemy of our church," and the accompanying call for disciples of Christ to embrace the way of the cross stands as the central thesis of the book. Such an argument, while never in fashion, is nevertheless needed for every church in every age, and nobody makes the argument like Bonhoeffer. A brief note on this edition of the book: The Bonhoeffer Works series is a must-own collection for serious students of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. The updated translation is excellent, and though there are times when one longs for a particular turn of phrase from older translations there is little doubt that what is presented here is closer to the actual thought of the author. One place where the new translation is weaker (to my way of thinking) is its use of gender neutral language. I'm not opposed to changing the dominant masculine on ideological grounds, but there are times when a graceful or elegant turn of phrase becomes clunky or the author's meaning is obscured because of it. The introductions, afterwards, bibliography, indexes, and extensive notation apparatus are invaluable tools that enable the reader to go deeper into the text when he/she wants to without being so obtrusive that they preclude him/her from simply taking in the words of the author.

The book is excellent. I've been living in this book for nearly a year with a small group. My issue is the print quality - this is an expensive book even for a hard cover book and the ink runs with the least bit of moisture. It's almost like they printed it with an inkjet printer.

I found this book in a store and was impressed with the list of references and cross-references to Bonhoeffer's other work, the reference material influencing his thoughts and biblical passages on which he prayed. For this reason I was rather reluctant to buy it for my Kindle because I just didn't think the Kindle could easily move between all the various references, footnotes and biblical verses quoted separately. It took me a few failed attempts but I quickly caught on to how to navigate this highly footnoted text and move between its notes and the book itself. "Discipleship" is Bonhoeffer's original title of what was eventually translated from German and released in the US as "The Cost of Discipleship". I tried to read "The Cost of Discipleship" over 25 years ago but I guess I wasn't at the right spot in my Christian walk to appreciate what he was saying and gave up after the first couple dozen pages. That was then. Now I am beginning my second reading and using it more as a study guide. I highly recommend reading the biography of Bonhoeffer (see my other review) prior to reading this book. It makes the footnote and references easier to understand and enhances your understanding of what was happening at the time. It is not a requirement for understanding the message and call of "Discipleship" but it helps to understand Bonhoeffer's frame of

mind as he worked and reworked the manuscript during very turbulent years.

I went into Discipleship thinking that I would really hate it. I love the early academic theology of Bonhoeffer, and I'm really interested in Bonhoeffer studies, but I figured that a book couldn't be that interesting and ground breaking if so many evangelicals love it (and especially not if Rick Warren wrote a book about it). I was so wrong. Bonhoeffer puts forth a lot of very radical ideas here. The idea of the Church being the physical manifestation of Christ, and therefore vicariously representing Christ on earth is brilliant. Bonhoeffer completely redefines ontology and personhood. Bonhoeffer argues, "The new human being is not the single individual who has been justified and sanctified; rather, the new human being is the church-community, the body of Christ, or Christ himself." The implications of this train of thought on philosophy, theology, ontology, ethics, race issues, ecclesiology, etc. are staggering. And yet Evangelicals skip over these ideas and only talk about Bonhoeffer's concept of cheap and costly grace. While that is a great meditation on the role of grace in our lives, there's so much more to this book. Having a knowledge of Bonhoeffer's life, particularly his role in the conspiracy against Hitler, his context in Nazi Germany, and his disgust with the holocaust, is essential to fully understanding this work. According to the German editors of this volume, this work is entirely bound up in Bonhoeffer's life, inseparably so. This critical edition is essential reading. The editors do a great job of providing contextual footnotes to help the reader understand many of the concepts presented here and how they are being built on the foundation of his early academic theology. The foreword and afterword are incredibly helpful as well.

Another way to view Christianity and how it is lived. This brings challenge to your heart and critical thinking in regards to "how we do church," in our plastic bubbles and social silos, calling it spiritual. Although Bonhoeffer's writings were decades ago, the spiritual challenge is timeless as beings humans only change as much as they allow the Holy Spirit to have His way. This is explained in greater detail in the book. Enjoy the spiritual growth...Blessings!

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