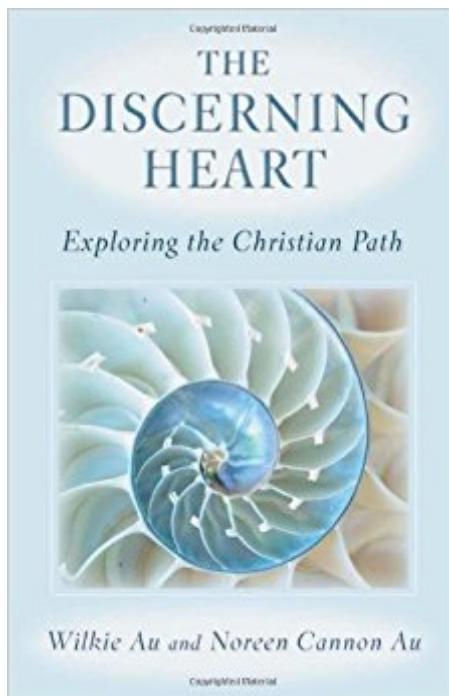


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The Discerning Heart: Exploring The Christian Path



Synopsis

Integrating the wisdom of Christian tradition and recent psychological findings on effective decision-making, this book presents a view of Christian discernment that honors the body-spirit unity of the person and the broad and mysterious ways we can be led by the spirit of God in our life-choices. Going beyond discernment skills and concrete practices, this book presents a coherent theoretical understanding of discernment that grounds the many spiritual practices used by Christians today. By providing a broad and inclusive understanding of the multiple ways God can provide guidance to individuals, this book helps individuals to honor the unique and idiosyncratic way that they receive divine guidance, as well as provides guidelines that guard against possible self-deception and personal blind-spots. While including anecdotal accounts and practical elements of Christian discernment, this book provides a conceptual understanding of discernment that will be helpful for those training to be professional ministers, pastors, priests, religious counselors, and spiritual directors. It is unique in applying Christian tradition and contemporary psychological insights to the process of discernment.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Noreen Cannon Au maintains a private practice in Jungian psychoanalysis and serves on the faculty of the C.G. Jung Institute of Los Angeles.

We chose this book for a group study at an Episcopalian Church, as it reflects a holistic approach to Christian discernment. It is broad minded, yet draws on traditional Christian roots. It presents new

ideas, but is always balanced and fair-minded, seeking to honor faith traditions, reason and critical thinking, and personal experience. The authors incorporate integrate sound spiritual wisdom with psychological and educational insights. They provide well thought out rationales and underpinnings for their main points. It is apparent the authors are used to teaching and spiritual direction; because they can write clearly about subtle nuances of the spiritual life. The book goes beyond a simple "how to", and discusses theological underpinnings of why we might want to discern the Spirit in our lives. The chapter on how our images of God influence us, is very helpful. The authors draw upon Christian classics, such as Ignatian and Von Hugel's discernment processes, as well as supplying a wealth of modern insights that emphasize similar strains of understanding. The authors introduce what will be "new material" for some people. They present a great wealth of material in a clear and meaningful way, making this a joy to read for those who are eager to grow and seeking new inspiration.. The book is for a fairly well educated Christian audience that is receptive to a broad understanding of discernment. An excellent part of the book for leaders, is that it contains questions and/or exercises as the end of some of the Chapters.

I got to read this for a class in Spiritual Companionship. It was a good wrap-up book as it consolidated many of the themes that we had discussed throughout the year in class. I found the section on dreams particularly helpful.

I bought this book for a class I am taking in Graduate School. It is phenomenal and I could hardly wait until class was over to reread it! This is an easy book to read and is chock full of wisdom. I absolutely loved the style and the ease of reading -- not heady or academic in any way. It is certainly a book I will keep on my shelf and reference for years to come.

Thanks item as described.

Read it once. Will definitely read it again. Much to be learned. Much to reflect upon. Found it very helpful and most current.

Readable. Very thorough discussion, particularly of dreams. Excellent clarification of the discernment process. Draws on much information from excellent sources.

Wilkie was a presenter at an academy for spiritual formation I attended recently, and his book was

suggested reading prior to the academy. Since I'm facing several major life decisions right now, discernment was a subject of even greater interest than usual. Wilkie and Noreen explain the process and attitude of discernment with such clarity and depth -- a hard thing to do. While it's not what I'd call an "easy" read because of the richness of the content, they do a great job of communicating aspects that could be even more difficult to wrap your head around otherwise. I liked that they had exercises at the end of each chapter to put into practice what you read. I've read it through once, and will definitely read it again. It is a book that will give you new insight with each reading.

Wilkie and Noreen Au have written a concise yet engaging, beautiful guide book for those of us who are working with our spirituality and discovering the small messages from God in our daily lives. This IS the book for those struggling with spirituality because it provides concrete practices for exploring different paths of spiritual discernment. The book, *The Discerning Heart: Exploring the Christian Path*, shares the Aus personal journey of faith, prayer and discernment. When a personal spiritual journey is shared, the sharing gently opens up the space and encourages others to share and develop their own faith journey. The authors are able to uniquely integrate Christian wisdom and psychological insights which creates the practical and effective road map and its many scenic overlooks and rest areas for viewing Christian discernment. The authors honor the integration of the body-mind-spirit unity of the person exploring his/her own spiritual discernment in connection with the active day-to-day decision-making processes. A heart-centered approach to discernment is holistic. The holistic approach harmonizes the rational intelligence of the conscious mind that can ponder and reflect and that of the heart, or the emotional intelligence. This book spoke to me in many ways, not just one. Discernment is matter of the capacity of the mind, but also the body, emotions, senses, imagination, feelings, intuition and dreams. Perhaps what is most beautiful about the book, is experiencing the Aus mutual respect and love for each other that created this book. I write this review, not necessarily as a Christian, but as stated above, a person working with spirituality and trying to keep it present in my daily life.

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