



Foreword



Some books are classics because they are endearing stories or uplifting essays—they make us feel good.



John White's *Daring to Draw Near* is a classic because it makes us face ourselves—and often we won't feel good at all about our answers to the questions that he provokes us to ask about our spiritual lives. In the end, however, we discover that we are very glad indeed that we asked them!

One example will suffice. In the chapter helping us to observe Hannah at prayer in 1 Samuel 1:1-18, White writes, "If I knew how to make you tremble and quake in [God's] presence I would." That is not the usual way that people invite us to encounter God these days. The tendency in our culture is to turn God into a cozy comforter or bosom buddy, not One Whom we might fear.



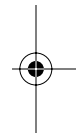


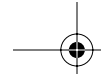
White doesn't leave us in fear though. Instead, by encouraging us to relearn the eternal God's mighty sovereignty and awe-full preeminence he enables us to find a sounder basis for our prayer than in some wimpy notion of a cuddly Trinity. Part of our problem, White shows, is that we have confused genuine intimacy with a counterfeit familiarity.

This is but one illustration of many I could cite. It simply happened to be the section of his book that I most needed this week. Other days will be blessed with other critical perceptions gained from eavesdropping with White on different biblical characters as they pray.

That is another reason why *Daring to Draw Near* is a great choice for this series of IVP Classics being reprinted to celebrate the publisher's sixtieth anniversary. Classics endure because we keep going back to them again and again. White's book inspires such rereading not because it gives us easy lessons on prayer but because we learn so much beyond prayer, for the sake of prayer.

We detect better skills for reading scriptural texts, and meanwhile we catch new insights into biblical accounts and accoutrements, such as the story of David dancing before the Ark of the Covenant. We discover our hidden fears and our subtle pride, our sullen angers and our haughty competitiveness. We face our temptations to despair in times of suffering, and we value afresh our own smallness enfolded in God's mysterious purposes for the cosmos. We deepen our intercessions because our trust in the character of God is intensified and expanded.





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We are especially called by this book to a passionate concern for those who do not know God at all or well. In this age of various spiritualities focused on self-improvement and empowerment and based on a person's own feelings and self-deceptions, John White cares ardently that such flimsy grounds for life be replaced with the firmer basis of a bigger God than ourselves and our devisings.

This book will endure because it asks perennial questions, but even more because it points to the God Who is the Answer and Who will ever remain steadfastly gracious and faithful throughout eternity.



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