

Donald S. Whitney, *Ten Questions to Diagnose Your Spiritual Health* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: NavPress, 2001), 141 pages.

A wide audience has deeply appreciated Don Whitney's books on spiritual disciplines—*Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (NavPress, 1991) and *Spiritual Disciplines Within the Church* (Moody Press, 1996)—for their spiritual depth, rich application of Christian truth, and continuity with a profound Reformed tradition of spirituality. This latest title from his pen is marked by the same characteristics. In fact, as much as I have appreciated Whitney's other two books and although it is somewhat smaller than the other two, this one appears to be even better.

Designed to evaluate the believer's spiritual health, the book consists of ten chapters that address ten searching questions, questions such as: 'Do you thirst for God?', 'Do you still grieve over sin?', 'Are you a quicker forgiver?' One question that I found to be phrased in a unique way is that of chapter 6: 'Do you delight in the Bride of Christ?' Loving God's people is an apostolic sign of regeneration (see 1 John 3:14). Whitney's way of putting the question, though, addresses this issue in a way that initially caught this reader off guard and forced him to truly think about the issue.

It is noteworthy that by far the most number of quotes—Whitney has a knack for finding ones that are apropos—come from the writings of Jonathan Edwards. The New England theologian's written legacy, whose rich spirituality is still unknown to many contemporary Evangelicals, has been put to good use by Whitney.

To illustrate the strength of this book, take chapter 4, which deals with the question, 'Are you more sensitive to God's presence?' After noting different ways of experiencing the presence of God, Whitney explores what it means to be insensitive to God's presence. He then outlines various biblico-theological meanings for the divine presence and emphasizes that 'we don't try to experience the presence of God just any way that pleases us' (p.59). What we do is '(1) seek Him through His Word, or (2) seek Him through experiences that are founded on His Word, or (3) seek Him through daily life in ways that are informed by His Word' (p.60). As Whitney rightly argues, this is very different from a mystical approach to God. 'The basis of our experience with God', he writes, 'is God-revealed truth, not our individual, idiosyncratic opinions about God' (p.61). Thus, Whitney concludes, 'when I ask if you are more sensitive to God's presence than ever before, I'm not asking if you have had mystical experiences with an atmospheric sense of the Lord's nearness. Rather I'm inquiring whether you have increasingly paused to recognize the Lord's presence where you are and to consider who it is who is present, based upon His self-revelation' (p.62). Whitney then deals with 'growing through God's desertions' and four practical ways in opening our spiritual eyes to the presence of the Lord.

This book would be excellent for both group and individual study. Highly recommended.

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