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CLARION REVIEW ★★★★☆ RELIGION

## Doing the Works of Jesus: Book 1: Becoming a Disciple Who Loves

**Alan Drake**
Spirit of Wisdom Publications (Nov 27, 2013)
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*Drake's book gives Christian readers the foundational knowledge and empowerment to embody Jesus's transformational love.*

*Becoming a Disciple Who Loves*, the first volume of *Doing the Works of Jesus* by Alan Drake, provides a brief but powerful answer to the question, "How do I imitate Christ's love in my own life?"

The book's organization, which is reflected well in the table of contents, is simple. Readers who want to follow Christ's example of love will find a strong call to love, the tools and disciplines needed to live a life of love, and an everyday understanding of how powerful such a life can be.

After briefly describing every Christian's call to ministry, its biblical basis, and the growth pattern that allows people to live out the call, chapter 4 ushers in the strongest part of the book—the general who-what-when-where-how of loving like Christ. The T-chart in chapter 4 provides scriptural examples of Jesus's "in church" and "outside of church" ministry, and it also gives an at-a-glance look at the weight Jesus placed on showing love outside the traditional confines of religious life.

Drake's view of faith, hope, and love as stages (rather than just parts) of the Christian life will be new to many readers. His scriptural examples from Jesus's and Abraham's lives bolster his perspective, but readers may struggle to see the three stages demarcated so noticeably in their own lives. Because of the brevity of the book and the variety of readers' life circumstances, the text leaves these personal specifics entirely up to readers (such as how to apply the information to their family or work situation). Including more real-life stories, perhaps as sidebars, would help readers see examples that they can use as models for their own experiences.

The volume title, *Becoming a Disciple Who Loves,* gives readers a sense that the book is the beginning of a process of *becoming*—beckoning readers into a new lifestyle of love. The cover image is warm and inviting and parallels the book's main topic: the love of Jesus. The writing is welcoming like the cover image, but it's not fluffy—Drake gets down to practical, empowering information right away. His logic is clear and well documented in its biblical roots. The interior typeface is well spaced and visually appealing, but indenting bullets and using a different font for block quotations of scripture would give the text a more overt visual organization. This would highlight the practical, easy-to-digest nature of the book and the intense scriptural credibility represented by the sheer volume of scripture used. Italics are overused for emphasis in both the main text and the quoted biblical passages.

Drake's book offers Christian readers foundational knowledge and empowerment that will help them embody Jesus's transformational love.

MELISSA WUSKE (February 3, 2014)

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