



Clarion Review

Religion

Heart Refined: My Journey Toward Intimacy with God

Walt Conger

Crossbooks Publishing

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Three Stars (out of Five)

Often, people do not see the need to change their lives until they come within moments of losing them. Walt Conger is one of those people. A life-threatening medical emergency resulted in changes to both Conger's physical and spiritual life.

In October 2010, he began having body aches, tightness in his chest, and pain in his jaw. His symptoms gradually increased in intensity and he also started having shortness of breath and severe fatigue. On October 8, he was rushed to the hospital, where tests revealed an aortic dissection, an often fatal condition that occurs when the inner wall of the aorta tears and blood flows between its walls, forcing the layers to separate. In *Heart Refined*, Conger provides details about his surgery, as well as the healing and recovery periods.

His story is uplifting and conveys Conger's belief in God's grace and miraculous power. However, the narrative seems more like a diary than an attempt to actually make a point or provide insights for readers. The subject of his subtitle, *My Journey Toward Intimacy with God*, is not addressed in a direct way until the final, brief chapter, so no actual lessons he learned or pointers on how the reader can become more intimate with God are clearly given. In fact, most of the early chapters have no discernible connection with the topic of how the author's spiritual life matured after surgery. Chapters on Conger's childhood, marriage, a summer vacation, and his passion for cycling may be interesting to those who know him personally, but they do not contribute to the theme of the book.

Some strong editing assistance, particularly to correct awkward sentence structures and an excessive use of commas, would have greatly enhanced the book's readability. And Conger repeatedly thanks his friends and family, a commendable and understandable act, but one that should have been addressed in the book's acknowledgments.

Conger's testimony truly shows the wonderful love and support he received from his

friends, family, and acquaintances; and the warmth of his personality and his genuine Christian faith permeate his story. Unfortunately, readers looking to learn how to become more intimate with God will not find it here.

Jeff Friend