

Hidden Treasure: Biblical Higher Power Spirituality for Inner Peace and Strength

Peter Aiello

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Hidden Treasure stands to enhance faith journeys amongst Catholic, and conservative, Christian audiences.

Peter Aiello's *Hidden Treasure: Biblical Higher Power Spirituality for Inner Peace and Strength* is a work of Christian apologetics that offers some insight into traditional Christian teachings.

Hidden Treasure argues that there is a strong difference between current Christian practice and the practices found in the Bible. It pushes back against practices that are not biblical, arguing that the truest faith expressions of the Bible were lost due to the passage of time and to human failings. Two thousand years of Christian writing and history, it argues, can be a barrier to understanding true expression of faith.

As a corrective, it describes a "biblical spirituality," which largely involves taking a more literal and fundamentalist approach to reading the Bible. In the process, the book covers a standard range of theological topics, including original sin, Christian freedom, the church, and the sacraments, with varying degrees of success.

Along the way, the book also lightly traces the author's own spiritual development. Such sections are by far the most interesting parts of the book. Aiello describes his experiences growing up in a Catholic home, where he learned to question some of the traditional church leadership and teaching. He also offers a glimpse of a moving spiritual moment on a San Francisco street. These explorations of how the author came to understand his own faith expressions are presented as an evangelical tool for finding the right way to God.

Second-person perspective helps make the text approachable. Ideas are presented clearly, following a predictable pattern: human failing, biblical solution, and more general biblical spirituality corrective. Commentaries, reference works, and the Bible itself are all drawn from to discuss important issues, though sometimes these approaches are too simplistic. Clunky prose and convoluted arguments sometimes inhibit the text.

The book uses a wide range of papal encyclicals that add useful context to its arguments, expanding its ideas and moving it beyond a personal faith testimony. Elements of Eastern spirituality are also explored, which helps open up the work to other audiences.

Hidden Treasures uses the Holy Spirit as its main actor, instead of God or Jesus—a deviation from most trinitarian approaches. This leads to unresolved tension between the traditions that the book criticizes and the traditions it depends upon.

Hidden Treasure stands to help with the exploration and enhancement of faith journeys amongst Catholic, and conservative, Christian audiences.

JEREMIAH ROOD (March 14, 2017)

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