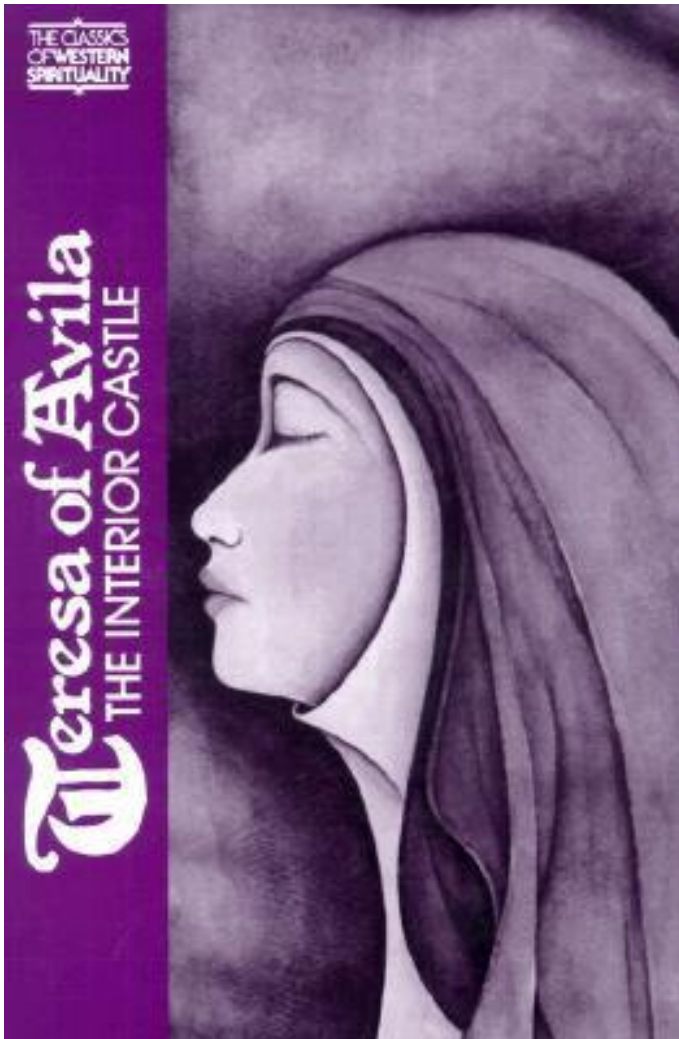

Teresa of Ávila

Teresa of Avila: The Interior Castle (Classics of Western Spirituality)



Title: Teresa of Avila: The Interior Castle (Classics of Western Spirituality)

Author: Teresa of Ávila

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Description

Deeply spiritual and profoundly human, this 16th-century masterpiece is the work of a revered saint. Teresa of Avila visualized the soul as a many-faceted diamond, with the ecstasy of divine communion at its center. Her insights into prayer and meditation as the keys to fulfillment have inspired generations of readers.

Insightful reviews

S.D. Johnson: Many years ago I had a dream about falling off the edge of a cliff and hovering then out in a void, and, as though suspended in empty space, there was a shining city of aquamarine crystal below me. I fell over the centre of the "city", (or large building - I had no idea of its size), contracted to a point and then radiated outward in a state of supreme ecstasy and all-knowingness. I could no longer see, but it was as though I was all-seeing. It was so powerful that when I awoke I thought that I had died. In fact although a dream, I still consider it to be the most profound religious experience I have ever had. In this work by St. Teresa, she describes a castle much like the one I saw in my dream. The castle is of clear crystal or diamond, and is used throughout the work as an extended metaphor of the soul - "All our interest is centred in the rough setting of the diamond, and in the outer wall of the castle - that is to say, in these bodies of ours." And further - "[I]n the centre and midst of them all is the chiefest mansion where the most secret things pass between God and the soul". St. Teresa takes us on a journey from the outside, the frame of the jewel so to speak, into the interior of the castle, a journey which is carried out through prayer and meditation, of which she advises us. I appreciated this work much more than **The Way of Perfection** which I read many years ago. The language and ideas are more interesting to me, despite the odd trite metaphor, or at least, trite by today's standards. (e.g. - the soul as butterfly) I think most people with a background in religion would get something out of it, especially those interested in mysticism. I balked at some of it, particularly dogmatic portions, or those tainted by racism or sexism, but these flaws are expected to be found in works of this era. I felt a closeness to the work because of the dream I had, and I since have realized that other poets relate similar visions of jeweled cities or palaces - I think of Coleridge, and references in Rimbaud and Montale in particular - which shows that it might be some part of our collective unconscious. What significance it might have I don't know. Or at least with these experiences I agree with St. Teresa and other mystics - the most profound are the most incommunicable.

Sondra Jones: I'm not going to "review" a classic. But I will say wow. Teresa of Avila's Interior Castles goes way beyond any spiritual practice or state that I've known existed. It's a whole new world. Again! It just keeps getting bigger and bigger. And that's a good thing.

This book is available on YouTube, read in its entirety. That's how I "read" it. Now I need a hard copy.

Some new ideas to me were around Jesus' suffering and suffering in general. That is why I need a hard copy; need to go back and read again. I want to see these words on paper.

I winced at the attitudes towards the capabilities, intelligence and nature of women. Definitely a product of the time. Teresa was brilliant, clearly. I am new to knowing about her life and work and sainthood but I know I will cherish Castles and look forward to reading more as a guide to my own prayer life.

Jonathan: It is oneness with God, that has been described by so many of the great Christian thinkers, that Teresa is describing in her text. It is a beautiful process of spiritual deepening, one that she does not pressure her comrades in, but invites them into.

As Teresa ventures into the soul with God, one thing she notes to her readers is not to limit the process itself. She says that to be one with God is more than just not sinning. It's even more than just prayer and contemplation. It is about living a transcendent life. One that overcomes the darkness of the age. It is about living a virtuous life. One without the passions that so easily entangle us. It is a complete transformation. Truly, entering the seventh and final castle, is another way of saying entering your own soul. As we venture deeper into who are true selves are, and we rid ourselves of the false self that has clouded us, we enter a deeper communion with God. Life in Christ is one whole cloth, it transforms who we are, not just our spiritual compartmentalization.

Teresa tells her audience that they cannot know themselves without knowing God. The whole purpose of our lives is to know God. For Teresa, mere knowledge of God deepens our relationship with him. Unmarried herself and speaking to people who have decided to "marry" the church, or in fact God, Teresa does not mince her words when she describes the betrothal and union with God in matrimonial terms. As we venture into deeper knowledge with God, we become one with him, and one with ourselves. This is again a theme and a lesson that points to becoming our true selves. Who we are and we are in God are the same thing. Our process of self-discovery is not as unique and individualistic as Westerners who came after Teresa, notably the Reformers, present it as. For many Americans, Teresa's discipline of life, being married to God, would be a relief from the pressures of finding hope and satisfaction in life's other temptations.

In the book's epilogue, Teresa speaks of not forcing the process. It is almost as if she anticipates her audience feeling inadequate about who they are and where they are and so she encourages them to be humble in their posture. Although she says that our force might anger God to the point of him prohibiting us from venturing deeper, I think she means to tell us that if we are too deterministic and too arrogant, that attitude, in and of itself, will limit us.

The beauty of the book for a spiritual audience today lies in the humble posture that Teresa encourages us to have. Part of learning to be who we really are, is learning to accept where we are. Even if we haven't rid ourselves fully of our falsehoods, it is important to be present and not anxious about moving forward.

Teresa herself admits that acceptance of our circumstances is part of our own transformation. She wrote about how she protested even writing the book itself. She was tired and despondent. Throughout the text she makes self-deprecating remarks. She takes long breaks and forgets what she has written in the past. But she ventures on and, in fact, notes how happy she is with her work at the conclusion of the text. I enjoyed the personal bits of the story, but the greater

lesson for us as followers of God is to let the process be what it is—even if we are annoyed or angry, let us exist, keep it at it, keep at the disciplines and see if God can't change your mind. Finally, Teresa admits that being one with God is not a matter of knowledge, it is not a matter of intellectual assent, but it is deeper than that. She even struggles to describe it on paper to her audience. She tells us that oneness with God will not stop suffering. We too will drink the Lord's cup, and suffer with him. But amid the regular tumult of life, or as her comrade St. John of the Cross would put it, amid the dark night of the soul, we find peace. She says even if our whole bodies ache, our head does not; and just because the body does, the head does not need to. So the temptation to venture out of our mansions, and out of our true selves will be with us for our lives on earth, but we need not submit to them. We are greater than who we have been. Greater than our false selves. We are bonded to God, we are meant to swim in his ocean and be surrounded by his love like water. It may take a lifetime to achieve this, but the goal is the journey, not just the destination.

Diane: it is a e-book approximately prayer written via Saint Teresa of Avila, a sixteenth century Carmelite nun, mystic and health practitioner of the Church. during this book, she offers a version of the human soul as a citadel minimize from a unmarried diamond. This fortress is split into seven teams of mansions, starting on the outer gate and relocating inward towards the center. We input the fort each time we pray, for the gate to the outermost mansion is prayer. (Those who by no means pray stay in a courtyard open air the gate.)As we development in prayer, we circulation progressively inward during the mansions. alongside the way, we find that our attachment to sin is trailing us within the kind of reptiles. We conflict our demons within the moment mansions, and to win we needs to demand supernatural the aid of God and the saints who stay close to Him. The 3rd mansions are the arid deserts of the soul, and right here we needs to shuttle evenly and quickly through, which we accomplish by way of losing our heavy self-centeredness. And within the fourth mansions, there are exact fountains: the wonder that comes from our personal prayers, and the comfort that comes from God. In St. Teresa's version of the soul, I'm guessing this can be so far as such a lot usual humans get. Because...The 5th and 6th mansions are very unusual and mystical. St. Teresa describes such issues as: death-like trances just like going right into a cocoon, raptures and visions of other types, out-of-body experiences, a data of the close to presence of Christ or one of many saints, unexpected urges to vocally compliment God, and an inside burning. within the 7th mansion, of course, there's the ecstasy of uniting with God, which St. Teresa describes as sacred marriage to a Bridegroom. This version of the internal fort isn't really Scripture, of course, and never Church doctrine either, however it does impress me to contemplate prayer, and it's whatever that would stick with me.

Jennifer: Teresa of Avila is a Christian mystic who lived within the sixteenth century. She wrote this publication to aid her sister nuns on their trips of their prayer lives. She describes seven "mansions," or degrees of prayer, every one deeper, extra spiritual, and extra inside than the last. in the event you have an easy prayer life, she provides encouragement. "If then, you usually fail, don't lose heart, or stop striving to make progress, for even from your fall God will carry good." to maneuver among Mansion 3 to Mansion Seven is a present of God, and can't be pursued and received through the individual. Rather. the Christian should still be aware of loving

God, jogging humbly, serve our fellow guy and check out to thrill God. As we do those things, he'll demonstrate extra of himself to these whom He chooses.

Stef: i have been examining this start-stop pass round style in view that 2012. this time i learn it from disguise to hide and each examining appeared to be deliberate by way of God to come back on the correct time, simply while i wanted to learn anything in particular. Thank You, Lord.

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