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INTIMACY

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## Intimacy

*Henri J.M. Nouwen*

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# Intimacy

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## **Intimacy** Henri J.M. Nouwen

“On the long road it’s good to have Nouwen and his divining rod. Deftly he bends toward the drop of spiritual wisdom caked in the most ordinary things.”

—Helen Prejean, C.S.J., author of *Dead Man Walking*

In his classic work *Intimacy*, Henry J.M. Nouwen, one of the most beloved spiritual writers of the 20th century, explores the pathway to a more creative and fulfilling intimacy in our relationship with God. A wise and optimistic guide to the complexities and rewards of the fully developed inner life, *Intimacy* stands alongside *The Wounded Healer*, *With Open Hands*, *Making All Things New*, and Nouwen’s other notable works, as well as the writings of C.S. Lewis, Thomas Merton, and other influential Christian scholars and thinkers.

## **Intimacy Details**

Date : Published November 17th 2009 by HarperOne (first published April 22nd 1981)

ISBN : 9780060663230

Author : Henri J.M. Nouwen

Format : Paperback 160 pages

Genre : Spirituality, Religion, Theology, Christian, Christian Living, Christianity, Faith

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# From Reader Review Intimacy for online ebook

## Garrett says

I love the writings of Henri Nouwen, however as other reviewers have stated, this book is not in line with it's description and stated purpose. Regardless of that fact, I still enjoyed reading it, and while it is fairly dated throughout, I felt it is still worth a read and had an interesting perspective on intimacy in Nouwen's well thought out words. Definitely worth a read if you're a Henri Nouwen fan!

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## Jimmy Wilson says

The first half of the book was challenging and extremely thought provoking , the other half was too specific to seminarians to be much worth to those of us non priest types. Could not find anything to glean out of the last few chapters except drudgery!

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## Carol says

I like Nouwen's writing. Here he looks at the question of "How can I find a creative and fulfilling intimacy with God and with other human beings? This is a book about the inner life (strange to be reading Emerson at the same time). The chapters I liked most was The challenge to love & intimacy and prayer.

from love --

Love is based on the mutuality of the confession of our total self to each other. This makes us free to declare not only: "My strength is your strength" but also "your pain is my pain, your weakness is my weakness, your sin is my sin." It is this intimate fellowship of the weak that love is born. When the exposure of one's deepest dependency becomes an invitation to share this most existential experience, we enter a new area of life.

from prayers--Nouwen ask students to submit prayers and came up with 7 categories. I was surprised at the differences in spiritual maturity within this group of college students. Starting with "confusion" and ending with "the coming God (hope)".

-This prayer shows a great self-confidence carefully integrated with a deep sense of humility...In this attitude of hope we see a man well-defined but always available for redefinition...Real hope is impossible without the deep awareness that life is a gift and holds endless promises.

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## Claire says

Had some really great insights into college Christian living and ministry. Found some of it difficult to relate

to as pertaining solely to Catholic priestly living. Still had some great quotes and insights...and this was my introduction to Henri Nouwen, whose clear and humble voice I enjoyed!

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### **Laura Pina says**

Sometimes engaging, this book felt out-dated, with a few interesting insights. I was a little disappointed.

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### **Greg says**

This book is not what I expected it to be, and as such I was disappointed in reading it. The back cover promised that Nouwen addresses the basic question, “How can I find a creative and fulfilling intimacy in my relationship with God and my fellow human beings?” That is not what Nouwen writes about. This work is fairly academic, and addresses key issues of individuals who choose to enter ministry, and how they can find intimacy with God and with the people to whom they minister. Nouwen also addresses many of the problems he sees in the seminary. If that were clearly articulated, I probably would not have read this book, which does have value. I’m disappointed because I was looking for Nouwen’s insights into the question above. I did find one nugget of inspiration, however, in Nouwen’s reference to Merton: “love is based on the belief in the reversibility of evil.” (32)

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### **Catherine says**

This book was like trying to chase a frightened rabbit through a thick briar patch. The title and content do not correspond. Conclusions on arguments are vague. The chapter titles are From Magic to Faith, The Challenge to Love, Student prayers: Between Confusion and Hope, Pentecostalism on Campus, Depression in The Seminary, The Priest and His Mental Health, Training for Campus Ministry. The most interesting chapters were Depression in the Seminary and The Priest and His Mental Health. I would not recommend reading this entire book.

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### **Cory says**

The title may be misleading for those expecting only to read of relational intimacy. This is not that book. In fact, Nouwen almost requires a redefinition of intimacy in this book. This is a challenging book, especially for someone in ministry, but one worth visiting and revisiting.

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### **Barbara says**

Found this to be an enlightening collection of essays related to the need for Pastoral Supervision and professional development of all in ministry.

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**Kate says**

I agree with other reviewers who felt the content of the book was mismatched with its title and advertising. It was also a disappointment how much each chapter felt like a five-paragraph essay. Chapters began with an introduction of three (ish) ideas to be examined, then they were examined, then we were reminded of what was examined. The writing felt amateurish.

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**Kristi Burns says**

Good writing and good reflection but mostly related to the process of becoming a priest.

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**Deborah says**

Sort of a strange mix of essays, but all worth reading.

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**Allison Hurst says**

The title is deceiving, I thought I was getting a comprehensive perspective on the topic of Intimacy as it exists within a spiritual realm. This was more of a guide for young male priests-in-training who are discerning how to consider and direct their intimacy. It was also very male focused, couldn't get identify with the masculinity of it all. I really appreciate Nouwen and his testimony and honestly it makes sense. This book is for a specific crowd though and it was a bit hard to glean from. And it was boring.

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**Michelle says**

Written from Nouwen's various perspectives, this book opens the eyes of clergy and laity alike to issues surrounding the personal and professional life regarding intimacy.

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**Drew Mason says**

I enjoyed reading about the various forms of intimacy (romantic, spiritual, academic, etc.)

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**Wade says**

I really enjoy Henri Nouwen, though this book was not what I expected it to be. I think with the title

“Intimacy” I was expecting Nouwen at his usual (and, even at his most) tender, speaking to the inner-self... more of his speaking-to-the-heart type of style. That is not the tone of this book. It is actually much more academic. Written when Nouwen was a bit younger. But, he addresses some really key issues of ministry and depression as well as the loneliness that often stems from being involved in ministry.

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## **Esther says**

Given that this book was written in 1969, it seems to be more affected by the time and setting (Catholic university campus) than some of his other writings. Still there are some incredibly relevant, timeless points of truth to be found if one can look beyond the context.

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## **Suzanne says**

I love Nouwen, and I found this book helpful. The intended theme of intimacy was somewhat lost in the midst of the essays, but, as they were written during his time at Notre Dame, an alternative theme inevitably arose - taking care (for lack of a better term) of college students. Some of the issues were older issues, but it's striking how similar the needs of college students in 1969 are to the needs of college students in 2012, and those needs were addressed with a surprising depth, given how short a collection this is. I think people who minister to college students or work with them in any sort of spiritual capacity would benefit from reading these essays. It would ease some frustration with the constant doubts and questions that are a necessary part of the college experience. Students must question. To avoid analyzing core values while analyzing their field is to end up an unhappy genius, "a man [sic] who knows everything except why he lives."

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## **Micah says**

In this short book, Henri Nouwen illuminates the painful contours of being in relationship with God and neighbor. He is at his best when he fearlessly lays out the challenges and disappointments of love. He writes, "Love is based on the mutuality of the confession of our total self to each other. This makes us free to declare not only: 'My strength is your strength' but also: 'Your pain is my pain, your weakness is my weakness, your sin is my sin.'"

Initially written as responses to ostensibly unrelated questions from friends, parishioners, and teachers, "Intimacy" can at times feel discursive; but even when rambling, Nouwen remains thoughtful and persistent in his goal of creating a volume unified by the idea of intimacy.

Those wondering what Nouwen, a celibate priest, could have to say on the subject of intimacy would do well to remember that people who are forced to observe may, in the end, have the best insights of all.

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