



Love, Power and Justice: Ontological Analysis & Ethical Applications (Galaxy)

Paul Tillich

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This book presents Paul Tillich at his very best--brief, clear, stimulating, provocative. Speaking with understanding and force, he makes a basic analysis of love, power, and justice, all concepts fundamental in the mutual relations of people, of social groups, and of humankind to God. His concern is to penetrate to the essential, or ontological foundation of the meaning of each of these words and thus save them from the vague talk, idealism, cynicism, and sentimentality with which they are usually treated. The basic unity of love, power, and justice is affirmed and described in terms that are fresh and compelling.

Love, Power and Justice: Ontological Analysis & Ethical Applications (Galaxy) Details

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From Reader Review Love, Power and Justice: Ontological Analysis & Ethical Applications (Galaxy) for online ebook

Rob says

Dense, philosophical, and abstract. I couldn't get through it.

Lyn Hill says

I left a ten-year career in corporate management to attend seminary and find an answer to the burning question: how, if power comes from God, can it be used for such evil. I already knew the answers provided by the social sciences, but they were shallow and unhelpful. I came across Love, Power and Justice in my first year of seminary and it changed my way of thinking and changed my life. Love, power and justice are three aspects of relationship, group dynamics, politics. Each can be viewed accurately only in light of the others. My "ontology"--my belief in what is real--was challenged by this book. It took several readings of Tillich's Systematic Theology before I began to understand the inconsistencies and errors in my assumptions about reality and to begin the journey of forging a new, more deeply considered view.

Ed says

good short dense book, but I'll still have no truck with ontology.

Adam Ross says

This was the first book by Tillich I read, and it was ultimately not a satisfying one, despite a lot of insights. His essential thesis, that love, power, and justice, are all interconnected, is a good one. But his emphasis on ontology as the means by which we connect the three of them, I found to be problematic. Perhaps it is my own study of philosophical ontology, especially in the postmodern epistemological framework, that soured this part of Tillich's argument for me. He was, after all, writing a long time ago, and his confidence in ontology seems dated to me.

Shane Wagoner says

Paul Tillich is the only person I've ever seen who so enthusiastically, skillfully, and successfully (in my opinion) unites the Christian idea of Love with Nietzsche's Will to Power. Gone are the days of divine commands and biological imperatives, these are ethics from the mind of God.

Wil Roese says

Professor Tillich uses ontology to discover the root meanings of love, power and justice. Ontology attempts to discover the common structure of everything that is. Nothing can be known without ontology because to know something is recognize it exists. Love, power and justice have an ontological dignity in that they are often used to describe the ontology of other things yet they can not be described ontologically by anything more basic.

The emotional aspect of love can not be defined or commanded but is an expression of the total involvement of the being. Love is the drive to reunite with that which has been separated. I think what Tillich means is that to love another person is to tear down the boundaries that separate us and treat the other as if it were part of the self.

Love brings pleasure and happiness when fulfilled and pain and suffering when it is not fulfilled but to be motivated by the pain or pleasure is to live a corrupted life. Eros and agape are not two different types of love but two characteristics of the only one type of love. Without eros love of God becomes mere obedience of God. Philia requires familiarity with and therefore is only possible between equals. Self-love is only meaningful metaphorically for love requires separation of the subject that loves from the object of that love.

Being can not be defined because every possible definition of being presupposes existence but being can be stated metaphorically as the power of being. The power of being is the power over nonbeing. Nonbeing is therefore not foreign to being. Being that contains nonbeing is finite. The self-affirmation of a being is proportional to its power of being. The power of being of an individual becomes apparent in its interactions with nature, other individuals and groups. The more centered a being is the more power of being it possesses. Love is the foundation of power and "compulsion is the strange work of love." The strange work of love is to destroy that which opposes love.

An object grows by transcending itself. But in transcending itself a being risks losing itself. Justice is expressed in the form of laws. Power is expressed in the making of laws. Love is the highest principle of all justice. The law given by God is consistent with man's essential nature.

The concept of God as all-powerful does not mean that God can do whatever He wants but that God is the power of being in all that is. In God love, justice and power are one.

Brian Tringali says

I like ontology, but I particularly was challenged by the discussion of "creative justice" and the need for it. Most readers will focus on the concepts of being and love. But I think Tillich offers a mind-stretching view of the concept of justice and the role it has to play.

John says

Good explanation of why one without the other two and two without the remaining one doesn't really mean that much.

Bob says

Very deep. I think of this often. JB Philips book *Your God is Too Small* is an interesting contrast. While Tillich refers to the Ground of Being as a way to refer to God, this in depth study of the nature of Being describes some intrinsic aspects of our own experience of being. Did I understand it? Not sure, but I sure enjoyed trying to. :-)

Terry says

It does not surprise me that my second reading of this paeon to ontology spread out over a year. I am still deeply impressed by the reasoning used and conclusions arrived at, but I no longer have the patience with philosophical discourse that I had 47 years ago.

John says

One of the few English-language works by Tillich I had not read. I read that it influenced Martin Luther King's thinking somewhat, so I was intrigued. This was a different book than I expected, and I am glad. I put off reading it thinking I had read everything ethically-related by Tillich, but this dives to the heart of things conceptually and was well worth the read. Also it was briefer than I expected. Tillich clarifies a lot of muddled language here in the way that only old-school Germans can.
