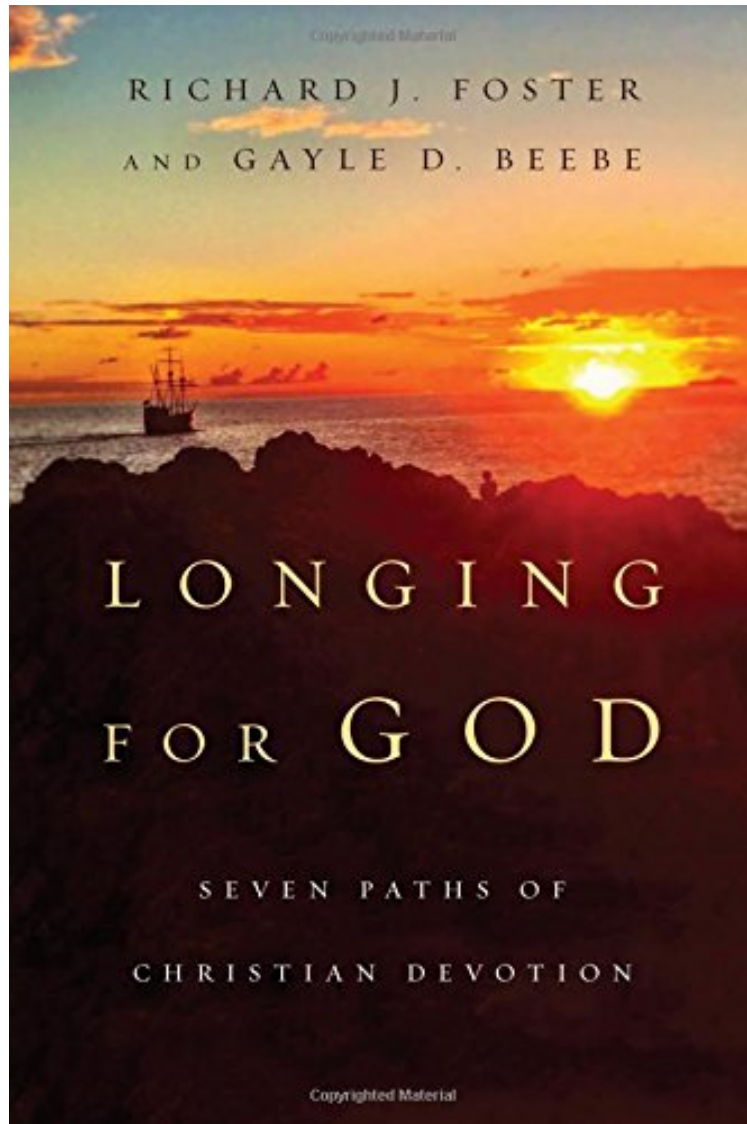


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## Longing for God: Seven Paths of Christian Devotion (Renovare Resources)

*Richard J. Foster, Gayle D. Beebe*  
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**Richard J. Foster, Gayle D. Beebe : Longing for God: Seven Paths of Christian Devotion (Renovare Resources)**  
before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Longing for God:  
Seven Paths of Christian Devotion (Renovare Resources):

24 of 24 people found the following review helpful. Systematizing paths of Christian devotionBy Alex TangThis book reminds me of the approach taken by Richard Foster (2001) in his book, Streams of Living Water. While in Streams,

Foster divided the Christian traditions, here they try to divide the spiritual life as seven paths of Christian devotion. These paths are (1) The right ordering of our love for God (2) The spiritual life as journey (3) The recovery of knowledge of God lost in the Fall (4) Intimacy with Jesus (5) The right ordering of our experiences with God (6) Action and contemplation (7) Divine ascent. The authors have selected a few Christian spiritual saints from the past to support each one of these paths. For example in the path of action and contemplation, John Cassian, Benedict of Nursia and Gregory the Great were chosen as examples and a small sample of their writings were quoted. As a student of Christian spirituality, I welcome the revival of interest in the leaders of the spirituality tradition. The Desert Fathers and Mothers, Christian mystics, spiritual directors and spiritual writers are enjoying a revival of sorts. Their works are being taken down from dusty shelves and their writings are being reprinted. These saints are very complex people and they lived in a time and space very remote to our time and space. Therefore I fear when they and their works are used to support certain views of spiritualities without reference to the context in which their works were produced. Oops. Sorry about the rant. This is a well written book by two scholars of Christian spirituality. The seven paths mentioned are well defined but somehow felt too 'neat.' I hope now that Christian devotion is categorized, it will not be systematized and formulized. In his book, *Streams*, Foster identifies six dimensions of the Christian life. After the publication of the book, *Renovare* organizes spiritual formation groups which meet regularly. During each group meeting, they make sure they study or conduct activities that touches upon these six dimensions. While this sounds like a balanced Christian life, somehow it is too artificial and again, neat. Christian life is more complex than that. It is not a formula but a way of life. After saying all that, this is a good book to read about Christian spirituality. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. matters of the heart By Patrick R. Watters I loved both *Spiritual Classics* and *Devotional Classics* (Foster Smith), so this offering was a pleasant journey back to many of those authors, but with the added benefit of helping me draw closer to God . . . to continue the renovation of heart work begun with the help of Foster, Willard and others previously. To be sure, there are authors with whom my heart rings truer than others, (Pascal and Teresa of Avila to name just a couple), but "it's all good" as popular youth vernacular would say. I have suggested the book to our Spiritual Formation Team at church for future classes and for individuals seeking the "higher" communion with God (our mysterious Trinitarian Savior). I am about to read it all over again, this time more slowly and with pen and highlighter in hand. Much in this book will no doubt trouble and perturb church leaders and the church, as it should. Christ followers, of which this book gives the stories of many, have been troubling and perturbing the church and its leaders since He ascended and sent the Spirit to reveal all things. Hopefully, the challenges and conviction contained within this book will prompt the "work" of spiritual renewal/formation . . . renovation of the heart (to take from Willard)? Hopefully, one day, the church . . . Christians and Christianity . . . will reflect Christ more visibly in this world. Make me more like you Lord, make me more like you. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Graduate Course in the High Points of Christian Teaching By Customer A very solid walk through the greatest Christian authors of all time. This book caused me to re-read several of the classics in my collection and investigate a few new authors of whom I knew little before this encounter. Think of this as a gateway to the essential Christian thought of the past two millennia.

2010 Christianity Today Book Award winner! 2010 Golden Canon Leadership Book Award winner! Think of the moment you last experienced God. Do you know him that closely in this moment? Truly experiencing the love of God gives us a taste of his goodness and his love for us, but often those moments are fleeting. We get distracted by life. Our awareness and understanding fade while our longing to experience him that way again increases. In these pages you can begin to fill that longing by developing your capacity to receive and respond to God's love. Spiritual formation is the process through which one's inner self is opened to the work of the Holy Spirit, who forms us into the image of the Son. Here Richard Foster and Gayle Beebe, both experienced leaders in spiritual formation, introduce you to people from the past who have known God deeply. Each person helps you to grasp one of the seven primary paths to intimacy with God that have been developed throughout Christian history. Chapters are divided into sections, each segment surrounding a key figure and concluding with a reflection and prayer. This rich resource can guide you into the same deep intimacy with God, opening you to the Spirit's work of transformation. A *Renovar* Resource.

From Publishers Weekly Coauthors Foster (*Celebration of Discipline*) and Beebe (*A Concept to Keep*) have much to say on the variety and history of Christian devotion. They develop seven ways of characterizing methods for spiritual development, and illustrate those methods by classifying major Christian figures according to these paths. The work of Augustine, for example, illustrates the right ordering of love. The seven paths are not equally obvious: the meaning of action and contemplation is more apparent than the right ordering of love, which is more metaphoric but also cryptic. A better balance between the frequently scholastic-sounding treatments of the major Christian thinkers and the warm, informal reflecting and responding chapter conclusions written by Foster would have broadened the book's appeal. Some who are strongly inclined to devotion may be taken aback by the book's varied tables and lists. On the other hand, this is a meaty, thoughtful book that will satisfy those who want substantive prescriptions for ways to grow spiritually. One bonus is that it includes not only fathers but also mothers of the church. This book puts religion back

in spirituality, a good, true home for it. (Apr.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. "This is very much a survey work, useful as an introduction to a wide range of spiritual masters--and especially useful if it inspires one to read some of the classic texts it summarizes." (Lawrence S. Cunningham, Commonweal, June 4, 2010)"Few people pass through life without at one time or another wishing they had faith--or more faith. Longing for God offers the examples of Christians whose longings were answered." (J. Douglas Ousley, August 2009)"By featuring the lives and teaching of 26 spiritual masters from church history, Foster and Beebe shine a light on seven paths (or orientations) to spiritual development. This survey brings together shared themes and unique contributions that guide those journeying with and toward God." (The 2010 Christianity Today Book Awards, Spirituality Category Winner, February 2010)"Anyone longing for God will find this book to be a treasure chest full of gems. Dig in and you will be lavishly rewarded." (Barbara Sartorius-Bjelland, The Covenant Companion, November 2009)"A rich resource which can lead one into a more intimate relationship with God." (Arnold Rzepecki, Catholic Library World, December 2009)"Like a personal introduction to those well-known Christian writers of the past." (Betty Waller, The Lamplighter, vol. 41, no. 2)"Foster and Beebe certainly captured my interest and spiritual imagination as I used this book for my morning quiet time. I recommend it highly. The book is also available as an abridged audio book--a great resource for the morning commute or a road trip." (Gerry Ediger, Mennonite Brethren Herald, September 2009)"The authors do an excellent job. They relay the practical and powerful messages of great thinkers and doers who were not always understood in their times, and they do so in a way that is intelligible for today's readers." (Wayne E. Groner, Congregations, Fall 2009)"This book can serve as spiritual 'food' to nourish a hungry soul and serves as a great resource for teachers and pastors who do not have time to dig through ancient manuscripts looking for nuggets of useful information." (David Mercadante, Quaker Life, September/October 2009)"A rich feast of Christian life and practice. Powerfully instructive on how serious people make real progress in the life with God." (Dallas Willard, Christian Retailing, July 6, 2009)"Articulate, intellectual dialogue will satisfy the mind looking for a clear understanding of the ways people have historically attained spiritual intimacy." (K. R. C., Church Libraries, Summer 2009)"When it comes to growing in-depth in one's spiritual life, Richard Foster is one of the first authors to whom you should turn. In his latest book, Foster teams up with Gayle D. Beebe, president of Westmont College in Santa Barbara, CA, on a project that has taken three years to develop and write. [This] is well worth the wait. The book is based on the idea that throughout history, both individuals and societies have taken different paths to become alive to God. . . . [As] a result, the book is part devotional, part lesson in church history, and part challenge for deeper spiritual growth. Reading the pages is a rich reminder that we are not alone in our journeys of spiritual formation--God is with us, and many have gone before us." (Margaret Oines, FaithfulReader.com, June 2009)"Looking for a good mentor? This book helps you reach back into history to find spiritual mentors who had deep and abiding relationships with Christ. Each person featured (from Martin Luther to Augustine to John of the Cross) represents seven enduring paths to Christian devotion. You'll learn how they cultivated their relationship with Christ and gain insights for your own life and those you lead." ("Ministry Toolbox" (pastors.com), May 2009)"I have found this book to have excellent insight into our walk with God. To probe deeply into the lives of those who had generally given all to have a relationship with God, resulted in much valuable reading. I can recommend this book to all those who want to invest more deeply into their Christian lives, or are interested in learning more about church history." (City Light News, Calgary, Alberta, May 2009)"For a survey text on Christian spirituality, this would be an excellent book. Foster has always excelled at helping Christians appreciate the large variety of spiritualities and paths of spiritual formation that grow out of various Christian traditions. By using 3-4 persons as examples of each path, and drawing those persons from a broad historical and denominational background, the reader will certainly encounter everything from Quakers to Catholics, classical spiritual writers to contemporary guides." (Internet Monk (internetmonk.com), April 13, 2009)"I would like every single Christian I know to read the book. It is a gold mine of knowledge, inspiration, encouragement, straightforwardness, and a joy to read. I could hardly put it down. It moves rapidly and keeps your interest. I cannot recommend it highly enough." (Bill Vaswig, founder and president, Preaching Prayer Ministries, Inc., May/June 2009)"Today we are in a state of flooding and yet have no water to drink. It is difficult to find authentic principles that satisfy our spiritual thirst. This is the very book that greatly helps those who are thirsty, worn out, burned out and tired of religious malpractices that are not truly spiritual. Richard Foster and Gayle Beebe show us how our faith ancestors found the wellspring of the deep and authentic spirituality and drew the fresh water that cleared their thirst. If you are looking for an authentic spiritual formation manual, you must read this book that will take you to the 'never-ending presence of God' experience!" (Joshua Choonmin Kang, author of Deep-Rooted in Christ, and pastor of OMC, Los Angeles)"Living amid the rush of today's world--especially as one who leads in today's church--I need the wisdom of past saints. Their will to nakedly live in the light of God's Word distinguishes them from our tendencies to clothe ourselves in mere success, recognition or knowledge. Foster and Beebe afford us a resource to 'strip down'--to till our hearts, review our priorities and invite the Holy Spirit to plow our souls. His rain on such prepared soil is the key to any lasting fruitfulness in life or leadership." (Jack W. Hayford, chancellor, The King's Seminary, Los Angeles)"Deep wells of living water dug by our ancestors have been filled with religious rubble and trash by American consumer spirituality. Like Isaac, digging again the wells of his father that the

Philistines stopped up, Richard Foster and Gayle Beebe have cleaned out these deep sources of Christian nurture and formation for us. It turns out that there are wells all over the place. Use this book for your bucket." (Eugene H. Peterson, translator of *The Message*) "Reading *Longing for God* is like stepping into an unfamiliar room and finding a wonderful group of vital and brilliant brothers and sisters in the way of Christ, reaching out to us from across the ages and from all kinds of personal characteristics and circumstances. We need to reach back and let them help us to know the fullness of life in the kingdom of God for who and where we are now. The spiritual impoverishment so widespread today among Christians is largely due to disconnection from 'the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.' The authors have opened doors into 'the unsearchable riches of Christ.' Let's go in." (Dallas Willard, author of *The Divine Conspiracy*) "This is a feast for the mind and the soul. This is the best and richest of Christian thinking and soul-making made accessible to everybody. It would be very hard to read this without having your heart grow." (John Ortberg, author and pastor, Menlo Park Presbyterian Church) "This marvelous source book by Foster and Beebe invites us to a pilgrimage toward God. It takes us deeply and slowly into the old trusts of our fathers and mothers in faith. The book will be a valuable detailed reminder that the journey is not an easy one, and that we are not the first ones who have walked that way. The book meditates on the old habits whereby one may break from the present rush in order to be refreshed and transformed by a holiness that is beyond every quick fix and every surface offer." (Walter Brueggemann, author of *The Prophetic Imagination*) "This book is a marvelous bringing together of seven historic paths of Christian devotion which Gayle Beebe and Richard Foster label this way: the right ordering of our love for God, the spiritual life as a journey, the recovery of knowledge of God lost in the fall, intimacy with Jesus Christ, the right ordering of experiences of God, action and contemplation, and divine ascent." (Willard E. Roth, *Sharing the Practice*, September 2016) "Reading *Longing for God* is like stepping into an unfamiliar room and finding a wonderful group of vital and brilliant brothers and sisters in the way of Christ, reaching out to us from across the ages and from all kinds of personal characteristics and circumstances. We need to reach back and let them help us to know the fullness of life in the kingdom of God for who and where we are now. The spiritual impoverishment so widespread today among Christians is largely due to disconnection from 'the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.' The authors have opened doors into 'the unsearchable riches of Christ.' Let's go in."