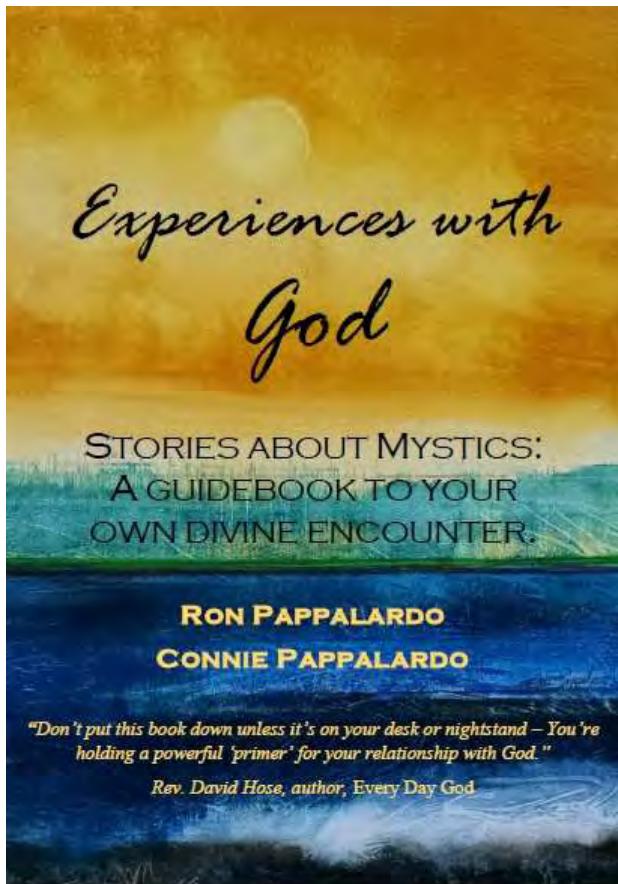


Book review of "Experiences with God. Stories about Mystics: A Guidebook to Your Own Divine Encounter" by Ron and Connie Pappalardo

Patricia Graham
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Experiences with God is what this book promises and it is exactly what it delivers. From the introduction to the last page, without pretense or judgement, the reader is taken on an entertaining and enlightening journey. The book explores pathways and possibilities for uniting the human and the divine, through stories of modern and ancient mystics, practical exercises, and examples. Living in a world where spirit and science are now viewed as part of an integrated whole, Experiences with God makes a significant contribution to that conversation.

The supportive tone encourages the examination of many simple, common, spiritual experiences. Mystical reality is viewed as part of the human experience. The book placed me in my comfort zone. I was taking baby steps and I could leap when I was ready.

Ron and Connie Pappalardo, the authors, are special and loving people who have fully embraced the spiritual journey of life. Through sorrow and joy, and the myriad of emotions in-between, they have sought an anchor in eternity. They have actively studied and explored what a continual relationship with the Divine can mean. This book is

one result of that life's work.

Their research, which organizes and presents the common characteristics of mystical experiences throughout history, is at once a relief and a delight. What had previously been a collection of random otherworldly events available only to a special breed of human, emerges as part of the fabric of life.

Each story is genuine and unique. New light is shed on Jesus' baptism at the Jordan River and his deep personal relationship with God as his father. The story of Sharon Lund from the 1980's, alone, makes owning the book worthwhile. The book also provides insight into the life of Charles Finney, a key leader of the Second Great Awakening. Targeted quotes from Eckhart, Gandhi, Schweitzer, and St. John of the Cross, and many others reveal the similarity of the mystics' experience of the Divine. We are offered a framework to investigate limitless possibilities.

There is obviously much I love about this book but two parts that I will be re-reading and using as a basis for contemplation and spiritual renewal were the chapters on "How to Meet God", and Connie's "Adventures in Journaling with God".

Current, personal, and relevant, Experiences with God is illuminating. It places me on a path to embrace mystical and transformative experiences by opening my spirit, mind and heart.