

COURSE INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Robert Reimer, Professor of Pastoral Theology

SF770/PMN460 Soul Care

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### The Signature Of Jesus

Richard Francis Xavier Manning, known as Brennan Manning is author of the signature of Jesus. The Signature of Jesus was first published in 1988. The current revised edition was published in 1996 by Multnomah Books. Ordained a Franciscan priest, Manning earned degrees in philosophy and theology. He had training with a monastic order which included seven months of isolation in a desert cave. Years later, after a collapse into alcoholism, he shifted direction and focused on writing and speaking. He became persona non grata among the Roman Catholic hierarchy as a result of his marriage in 1982. He was born on April 27, 1934 – April 12, 2013. He was an American author, laicized priest, and public speaker. Brennan Manning believes that Christians who acknowledge Jesus with their lips, walk out the door, then deny Him by their lifestyles are the biggest single factor in atheism in the world today. That is absolutely incomprehensible to a non-believing world.

The author's three main points, which had the greatest impact on me, are how the Gospel of "cheap grace" is criticized in The Signature of Jesus, which also exhorts the church to extreme discipleship. This book challenges me to live as Jesus did by being devoted to simplicity, chastity, and obedience to the gospel with passion and audacity.

And how the Christians have grown up with a devotional spirituality that "places more emphasis on behavior than on consciousness...on doing God's will and engaging in devotional acts that please him rather than experiencing God as God truly is" (p. 216).

And how Manning mentioned the conflict between two perspectives on the Christian life. One that he portrays as being conventional, cold, intellectual, ritualistic, unemotional, unloving, uncaring, insensitive, ugly, and obsessive. He portrays the other as fresh, inviting, liberated,

emotional, loving, considerate, appealing, and sensitive. He agrees that Bible study and group worship have their role, but contends that the most important thing is "practicing the presence" through focusing prayer.

Daily devotions that include Bible study, meditation, memorization, and traditional prayers are only marginally significant in Manning's contemplative spirituality, he claimed. What matters is a kind of prayer that has its roots in Eastern mysticism. Practice being present. Freeing the mind and experiencing God existentially are what are really needed. According to the philosophy of contemplative spirituality, true spiritual development results from focusing just on God when your mind is empty, not about Scripture. This book speaks much of God's grace and love but these precious biblical concepts are actually replaced by vague notions of wholeness through an eastern religious meditation technique, Centering Prayer.

The book has opened my eyes in my present and future ministry. Because of this book, I now think that there is a difference between belief and experience. Knowledge can be divided into two categories: belief and experience. This is the traditional two-story method of learning. Through the contemplative process, this divide is crossed: Because it is a bridge of faith, contemplative prayer helps people bridge the gap between belief and experience. This book helped me to realize that even though a prayer originates from the Bible, it will eventually be considered "vain repetition" if it is repeated every time we pray. The Lord's Prayer is an example of how we should pray, not a repetition to recite aloud to God every day. By reading this book, I was able to comprehend how everyone is reconciled because of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Moreover, nothing can be done to obtain God's life. Jesus' unwavering love for us is a truth that everyone already knows. As a God who loves sinners, he is the only God that man has ever heard about. Because False gods-the gods of human understanding-despise sinners, but the Father of Jesus loves all, no matter what we do. We find this to be almost unbelievable to believe. The main claim of the Reformation, however, still stands: through the life, death, and

resurrection of his loving Son, we have been reconciled to God by his mercy, not because of anything we have done. This is the gospel of grace, the good news.

In order to be a radical disciple and have an authentic faith, The Signature of Jesus will assist me in my theological practice and soul care both now and in the future. My future ministry and authentic faith both seem to benefit from radical discipleship. Yet, reading the book has helped me to comprehend what it means to believe in or follow Jesus Christ. Keeping up with "the masters of the inner life" is the goal. This book will also inspire me to start praying for twenty minutes twice a day, closing with the Lord's Prayer, a favorite psalm, or some spontaneous expressions of gratitude. If I follow the advice of destroying the "false self," "crucifixion of the ego," and other oddly combined spiritual and psychological phrases, this book will aid me in taking my soul care practice. One would need a more honest understanding of centering prayer

This book will be a radical alternative for me as a Christian who wants to live by faith rather than merely by "religion," who recognizes that many of the pressing doctrinal matters in the church today are neither pressing nor biblical, who sees Christianity as a love affair rather than a set of beliefs, who has not forgotten that we are followers of a crucified Christ, who knows that doing so means living dangerously, and who wants to live a life of service to others. "Behold," Jesus proclaims, "I stand at the door and knock." This book helped me realize that, rather than the Bible, God's most crucial wisdom comes from his experience of centering down. Always keep in mind that "God cannot be contained between the covers of a leather-bound book. Currently and in the future this book made me understand that certain fundamental facts about God can be discovered by reading the Bible, but focused prayer (stillness and solitude) is the only way to gain a close understanding of God.

Ref: [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brennan\\_Manning](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brennan_Manning)

the  
signature  
of  
Jesus

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With integrity, I have read this book ~~the~~ Thoroughly  
and Entirely— 100%  
Quickly but Completely—  
Thoroughly but NOT  
Quickly and NOT  
Not at all— \_\_\_\_\_ %

• **Dates Due:** 3/17/23

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