



These Beautiful Bones: An Everyday Theology of the Body

Emily Stimpson

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It was Blessed John Paul II's greatest gift to the Church: The theology of the body. A window into who we are, the theology of the body is a theology for the rooms where we make love. But it's also a theology for the rooms where we work, where we eat, where we laugh, and where we pray. These Beautiful Bones takes you on a walk through those rooms. With both humor and practical wisdom, it sheds light on what the theology of the body has to say about life beyond the bedroom, about the everyday moments of life, helping you discover how to let grace enter into those moments and make of them something extraordinary.

These Beautiful Bones: An Everyday Theology of the Body Details

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J says

Can I give it more than 5 stars? This was SO good. Easily the best book I've read this year.

I had trouble reading her food book and I didn't connect with her opening about the Bone Church. However, by page 6, it got easier to read and I fell in love with her everyday theology of the body (TOTB). Good (orthodox) Catholic understandings, but completely understandable and relateable. TOTB meets manners. TOTB meets fashion. TOTB meets technology. TOTB in the everyday world.

I loved her premise that physical things communicate something about God, like metaphors. The objects themselves aren't God (an important distinction) but we can learn about God, Truth and Beauty through the physical world. Our bodies and the things we do with them have meaning. This book makes everything so simple and beautiful, I'd recommend it for all Christians - not just Catholics. Heck, I'd recommend it to anyone interested in living a beautiful, authentic life. It was an uplifting read. Challenging in subtle ways because it gives glimpses of the greatness and beauty that our own lives could contain.

I definitely needed this read as I struggle with failures in my own life. It contained endless insightful and inspiring quotes. I could re-read it every year and get something else out of it.

Around page 120, it slowed a bit for me. Or maybe I just got distracted by life. It took a while to finish, but I feel like a better person having read it. If you read one spiritual book this year, make it this one. It is great for people in love with the Lord and those on the fence. The full Truth is spoken, but it is done so in everyday language. Little bits at a time, so that it doesn't overwhelm. Kind of like how life greets us.

Jill says

Parts of it were great. I loved the beginning of the chapter on food. Food as symbolic of God's grace... Great thought! The liturgy chapter and the distraction chapter were both really good. Also, the message of the Bone Church gave much food for thought.

But I found a lot of the writing to be 'preachy' with too much of pointing out how badly we're doing things. And I wanted to understand more of the Theology of the Body, its philosophy, and this is not really the book for that.

Laura P. says

This book touches on many different ways we can live JPII's Theology of the Body in our everyday lives. There really were great points made. But to be honest, this isn't my favorite book about TOB. It could be that because I've read some of the original TOB, the ideas didn't seem incredibly "new" to me. But I think it mostly wasn't my favorite because I would have loved if Emily had gone so much deeper into what she mentioned. I wanted to know more of the "why" and "how". If you haven't read much about TOB, I think this would be a great book to start learning about it and applying the concepts to everyday. Then pick up

some of JPII's work to go deeper!

Philip Martin says

I have a Master's Degree in Theology, have been to the Theology of the Body Institute, have read the original Theology of the Body and much of Christopher West. This book was very refreshing. I found myself smiling half of the time and lost in introspection the other half. To take the concepts of the Theology of the Body and apply it to modern times in a practical way was very beautiful and beneficial to myself as a Catholic Christian. Emily Stimpson is a gifted writer and I look forward to more from her like this.

Lorraine Shelstad says

An interesting book showing how John Paul II's book "Theology of the Body" is for every part of our lives. It is not just for married people because it talks about the body in daily life. She does repeat her ideas over and over but it is nicely written. She had struggles with eating disorders and The Theology of the Body was the book that got her on track to healing.

Audrey says

Overall, a really excellent, practical book with a lot of food for thought. I love the premise of incorporating a body + soul unity in every aspect of our lives. She makes so many great points about ordering our lives toward what matters, moving and living in our bodies (not just going from cubicle to couch), avoiding the pitfalls of the age of distraction, and so much more. I saved many passages to look back on later!

Some parts were confusing--particularly in the chapter on dressing. I don't get the reference to "proportion and balance" in clothing, such as pairing "arm-baring blouses with longer skirts or pants." Doesn't it just depend on what you're doing, the weather, etc.? What's wrong with shorts and a tank top for casual scenarios? The whole modesty thing always gets confusing fast, though. She also says older guys shouldn't wear baseball caps. Huh? There were some other tricky topics--like extreme forms of self-mortification--that left me with more questions than answers. But it's not like self-flagellation was recommended for all.

The book also has some typos (Mother Theresa instead of Teresa), and several references to 1896 as being during of the Edwardian era (this probably bothered me more than it should). I'm not immune to such errors myself, but you never know--perhaps they'll see this review and correct subsequent editions.

When I read a book, unfortunately my quibbles tend to stick with me more than the amazing lights and insights the text offered. This honestly was a great read, and I heartily recommend it.

Theresa says

A perfect balance of philosophy, theology and practicality. I've never know where to start with the theology of the body and this was an excellent starting point. The author is aware of the challenges of the real world

and how to live in it. At the same time she does a great job explaining the history and philosophies that have pushed the world to where it is today. I would recommend this book for anyone who is struggling to figure how they are supposed to live a Catholic/Christian lifestyle in a world that rejects the Church.

Jeff Cann says

I liked several things about this book. First, it reiterates the idea that according to Catholic teaching (from Genesis 2:7) we believe that body and soul are united and cannot be separated (CCC 362).

So it stands to reason that the way we view, think about, and behave with our bodies directly affects our relationship with God. This is profound, particularly in our modern society in which many of us think our bodies are a toy because we do not understand we can cause spiritual damage through bodily abuse.

Next, I like that Emily Stimpson clearly spent time thinking about how we can apply the Theology of the Body to our everyday lives. She definitely broadened my perspective on this topic because too often, people think Theology of the Body is about only sex.

Finally, she writes in an approachable style. I could hear her voice coming through the pages of the book. It is warm and inviting but dense with wisdom. I think it's a book that requires more than one read.

I recommend this book for those Catholics who want a general introduction to the Theology of the Body. I think it's a book to give to your teenage children to help them understand there is another view of our bodies than that proposed by secular society.

Rich says

I've given this book 5 stars because it sets out on a crucial task not only for Theology of the Body devotees, but anyone trying to live an authentic integrated human life.

Is it the be all and end all? No. But Emily Stimpson "gets it." The Theology of the Body is not a theology of sex, as it is most often portrayed, but a theology of being human made in the Image and Likeness of God. Stimpson's work attempts to make that palpable to the modern reader, in theory and in practice.

My hope is that this spurs on more work in seeing the Theology of the Body as it applies to the whole of life.

Bravo.

Richard says

This is an accessible, practical, and winsome reflection on the implications of John Paul II's "theology of the body" for daily life. Brimming with wisdom, it is an invitation to a sacramental way of life.

Ashley Stangl says

One of the most beautiful and practical little theology books I've ever read. Teaches how to bring holiness to even the most mundane parts of daily life.

Veronica says

An excellent synopsis of the Theology of the Body. Prior to reading it, I was only familiar with the sexuality aspect of TOB, but Emily Stimpson reveals how much more it truly is about, giving practical ways to live it out in our daily lives. This is a must read.

Fr. Mark says

Many books of Theology of the Body (TOB) address the implications for marital relationships, but this may be the first book to talk about the real impact of TOB on everyday life. If we take the body seriously as a revelation of God's goodness and His plan for our life, then that effects how we organize our time, how we work, and how we relate to others. It is really just the beginning of a conversation about this aspect of TOB, and is a little scattered in organization at times, but a great read. It also gives a brief overview of TOB in the beginning for those who haven't read anything on the subject. 5 stars simply because no one else is talking about this yet!

Sarah says

Brace yourself, because I didn't just love this book. I am not about to just expound about one of my favorite author's genius lightly. No, when I call this book a modern masterpiece, I'm not exaggerating. I'm probably understating by a factor of 100.

If you've spent the last ten years watching "theology of the body" become a catchphrase and still not understanding it...

If the phrase "theology of the body" has you (a) rolling your eyes, (b) running in fear, or (c) puking in the toilet...

If you don't even know just what in the world that phrase "theology of the body" means (and don't really want to)...

This is the book for you.

If you love good writing, appreciate practical wisdom, and desire to grow closer to God, this is the book for you.

Stimpson has managed to make theology of the body something everyday, and by doing that, she's made it

accessible for even the most mundane and ordinary among us. She has taken the dust of our lives and the reality of our experience and woven a book that applies theology of the body to such as that.

In short, it is a brilliant book. Don't believe me? Get a copy and prove me wrong. :)

Emily says

A practical, easy to read--but not necessarily to follow!--book on applying St. John Paul II's Theology of the Body to our entire lives, from clothing to food to social media, and more. A definite must-read!
