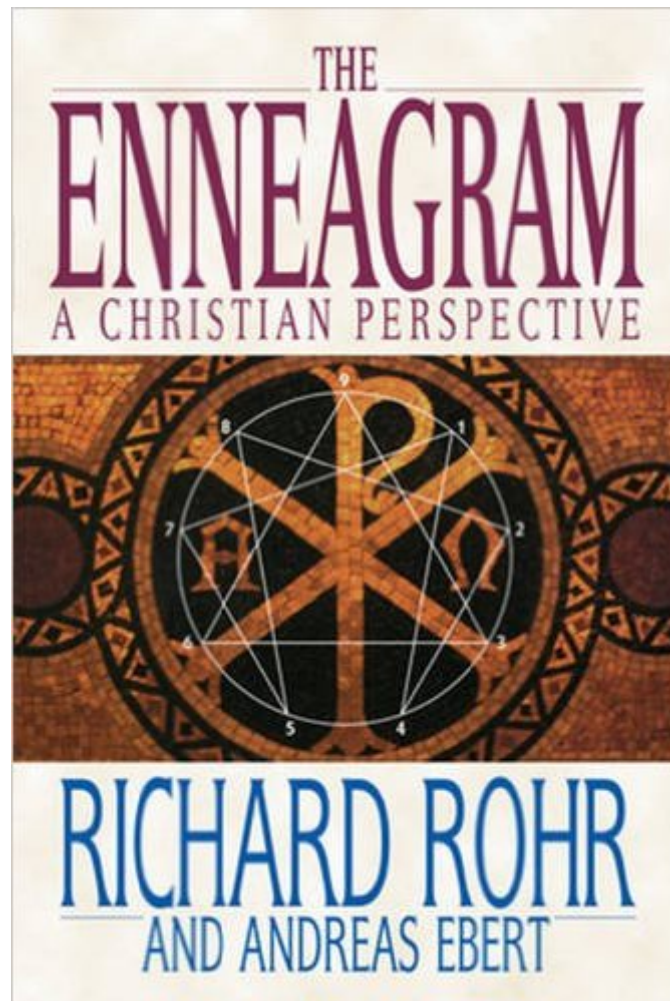


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The Enneagram: A Christian Perspective



Synopsis

Richard Rohr's and Andrea Ebert's runaway best-seller shows both the basic logic of the Enneagram and its harmony with the core truths of Christian thought from the time of the early Church forward.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Many Christians feel uneasy about the Enneagram as a way of deepening self-awareness; this is mostly because the test has some connections to the Sufi religion and new age thought. That makes this book by Richard Rohr necessary and helpful to be able to gain the insight of the enneagram from a source that is operating from a Christian worldview. This book has sections on where the enneagram came from, what it is, what the 9 enneagram personality types are, and how Christians can benefit from it without adopting non-Christian ideas. The most helpful part is part II of the book which goes into depth on the 9 types, from a Christian perspective. Most helpful, Rohr identifies the root sin of each type, and how God can redeem that sin into a beautiful gift. He also talks about what gifts the types naturally have, and how we can grow in those. I have heard that the enneagram does not put people in boxes, rather, that it helps people identify what boxes they are already in and how to get out of them. This book is very helpful for understanding yourself and others, and for getting out of the boxes that are keeping you from living in a full and redeemed way.

This updated version of DISCOVERING THE ENEAGRAM is truly a gem. It does a good job of explaining Enneagram theory and an excellent scholarly job of looking at the history of the

Enneagram. In addition, its descriptions of the 9 Enneagram types are well done and insightful. Each of these sections also contains many interesting historical references to important figures and event in Christian history. I have read a lot of Enneagram books including some that were written from a Christian perspective. Within the Christian subset of books, I feel this one is "hands down" the very best. It is also in general agreement with Riso and Hudson, Helen Palmer and Sandra Maitri on the characteristics of the types. These are three of the biggest names in Enneagram study and each has a useful perspective to offer. Rohr sees the Enneagram as both a useful psychological and spiritual tool for self growth. Psychologists and spiritual directors will really appreciate his rigor and depth. Another Christian author who uses the Enneagram for spiritual direction is James Empereur. His book *THE ENNEAGRAM AND SPIRITUAL DIRECTION* is also quite good. If you are a psychologist you may also want a copy of *PERSONALITY TYPES* by Riso and Hudson. This book covers the 9 developmental levels of each type in detail and the associated psychological pathologies. For a general audience, *THE WISDOM OF THE ENNEAGRAM* by the same authors may be better because it has a more broad focus on theory and keeps the detail on each developmental level to a minimum. Another point worth mentioning is that this updating version of Rohr's *DISCOVERING THE ENNEAGRAM* (retitled) covers new discoveries about the history of the Enneagram. This includes its use and possible origins in Early Christianity. This section is well-researched and you can find a lot of good references here on the history of the Enneagram.

As a fan of Richard Rohr, I must confess I found this book quite disappointing. Having engaged in coursework on the enneagram I entered this book with some familiarity with the lens it provided. I was very disappointed in Rohr's generalizations and use of stereotypical terms such as "Jewish mother" which I find inflammatory. I also found his assumptions as with certain types having had abusive childhoods (when this is not necessarily true). It appears that either Rohr or the other author has some personal issues with the two and seven types. As the tone of these chapters is much more negative than the rest of the book. Incidentally, in the chapter entitled "The enneagram and Jesus" there is disproportionately less space devoted to how Jesus was an enneagram 2 than any other type. As the book appears to be translated from German and is a republication of a 1989 German edition, I give Rohr the benefit of the doubt and give him 3 stars when I really believe it worthy of only 2 stars. There is some worthwhile information presented but the manner it is presented is questionable at best. Regardless of the author or teacher, the enneagram is a none too gentle wake up call to take a long hard look at our compulsions. Studying it is always painful if one truly invests in its philosophy. However I urge extreme caution in reading this book as I find it to

have more potential for traumatization. For a more gentle yet credible introduction to the enneagram I recommend anything by Riso and Hudson especially *THE WISDOM OF THE ENNEAGRAM*. Similarly anything by Helen Palmer is excellent. For brief bare bones essentials on the enneagram, *THE ESSENTIAL ENNEAGRAM* by Daniels and Price will suffice. For an excellent and gentle read on the Enneagram and its relation to Kabbalah look into the two books by Rabbi Addison. For an excellent book by Rohr read *HOPE AGAINST DARKNESS: THE TRANSFORMING VISION OF SAINT FRANCIS IN AN AGE OF ANXIETY*.

I first discovered the Enneagram from Richard Rohr's earlier work, both the first edition of this book and some tapes. It has been life changing for me and I highly recommend it. This book takes a very clear stand as spiritual approach, so if psychology alone is your goal, you may not like this. Even with its religious tone, I find this a great life tool. Not only has it been so helpful to me in self healing and discovery, it has helped me so much in the workplace and social arenas. Richard Rohr is a singular person and I recommend almost all of his works!

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