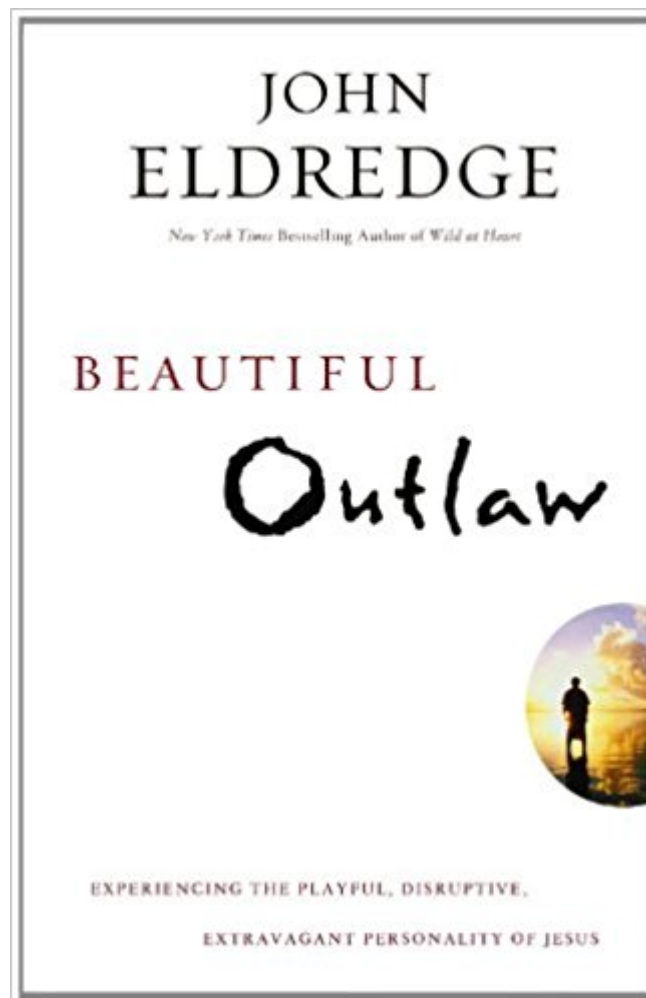




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Beautiful Outlaw: Experiencing The Playful, Disruptive, Extravagant Personality Of Jesus



Synopsis

Reading the Gospels without knowing the personality of Jesus is like watching television with the sound turned off. The result is a dry, two dimensional person doing strange, undecipherable things. But when we discover his true character-this man who made the wind, music and flying squirrels-suddenly all of the remarkable qualities of Jesus burst forth with color and brilliance like fireworks. Breaking Jesus out of the typical stereotypes, BEAUTIFUL OUTLAW welcomes readers into the rich emotional life of Christ showing how they can experience the actual personality of Jesus in their daily lives in ways that will deepen their faith.

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Customer Reviews

"Eldredge's trademark passion and personal transparency offer another inspiring challenge that could revolutionize lives as did his Wild at Heart." —Christian Retailing, on Beautiful Outlaw

Bestselling author Eldredge (Wild at Heart), founder of Ransomed Heart Ministries, uses his playful style to uncover the truth about who Jesus really was. With an eyebrow-raising warning about the "poison of religion," he urges readers to turn from religious power displays and legalism and instead spend time falling in love with the man, Jesus. Eldredge repeats tales from the Gospels to reveal a leader who was both humorous and confrontational, generous and moody. Eldredge clearly loves his subject, almost chuckling in delight at Jesus' antics. Readers get an intriguing glimpse of Jesus waiting his turn in line, "snorting" in anger, and artfully outsmarting his enemies. On the other hand, many of the themes are recycled (e.g., Jesus is your friend, suffering happens for a reason), and the book lacks opportunities for application and reflection (e.g., study questions).

Still, readers will find a three-dimensional Jesus and may find themselves re-reading scripture with an eye on characters' feelings." •Publishers Weekly

John is part of the leadership of Ransomed Heart, a ministry devoted to helping people discover the heart of God, recover their own heart in his love, and learn to live in his Kingdom. John grew up in the suburbs of Los Angeles. John earned his undergraduate degree in Theater at Cal Poly, and directed a theater company in Los Angeles for several years before moving to Colorado with Focus on the Family, where he taught at the Focus on the Family Institute. John earned his master's degree in Counseling from Colorado Christian University, under the direction of Larry Crabb and Dan Allender. He worked as a counselor in private practice before launching Ransomed Heart in 2000. John and his wife Stasi live in Colorado Springs with their three sons.

I recently read an autobiography by John Cleese of the Monty Python fame. In that book, Cleese included several "hilarious" (his words) skits that he had performed with other comedy troupes before his Monty Python days. As I read through the skits, I really didn't think they were that funny. I may have chuckled or snickered a bit, but that was it. I came away feeling a bit disappointed because, you would think if John Cleese thought they were hysterical, I would at least be able to feel somewhat satisfied in the humor department. Well, then, I SAW some of the skits actually being performed on YouTube, and yes, they were quite funny. My point being, if you only read a skit, without actually seeing it, you miss out on too much. The body language, the voice inflection, and the timing are all missing when all you have are the printed words. I mention this because this is the big hindrance when one reads the Bible, especially when Jesus is speaking. If one doesn't really think too much about what is going on beyond the actual words, you can miss quite a lot. This is what John Eldredge communicates in this offering. To fully appreciate who Jesus was and what he came to do, we have to understand so many more things than what is on the printed page. It doesn't help that when most of us hear these stories in church, the pastor (or whomever) tends to read through the passages as a fifth grader would read Shakespeare. How can we possibly fall in love with the son of God when an orator doesn't bother to inject any feeling into the words? So Eldredge takes us through many of the interactions of the recorded Jesus and tries to do just that "inject feelings into the words. We explore many of the events that happened to Jesus, pick apart the scenery, study the other people in the room, and when done carefully, we get a better picture of who the man really was. This is not an easy thing to do. We must remember that Jesus was fully man AND fully God. He'd have to go

through all of the trials, tribulations, heartaches, disappointments and anger that a human goes through, yet remain perfectly holy. For the most part Eldredge succeeds. The author is very honest as well admitting that at times he (or anyone) can't know completely the issues within Jesus ministry, and sometimes even his best stab at what Jesus was really saying and feeling comes across as being a bit obtuse. Example: We read several times when Jesus heals people and then tells them to go back to the town and "do not tell anyone what has happened". Why does Jesus do this? The author speculates that if Jesus actually commanded people to do this, our human nature would, in fact, make us do the opposite. As I read that I thought "um... no." I always believed that the reason Jesus told people not to tell people of many of his miracles was because he wanted to have a true, deep relationship with people, and not be looked at as a magic genie that would automatically grant people their wish. So depending on how versed you are in the gospels, you may come across several instances of issues such as this. Still though, Eldredge succeeds in making one stop and think. To view Jesus as fully man and fully God, we must look beyond what appears to be a bland, boring emotionless being. We also can't do the opposite which is to view a "white" Jesus glowing on a religious postcard with rays of majestic light beaming from his body. This book shows us the REAL Jesus, and for a man to be real, we must see everything, even if "everything" isn't what we're accustomed to seeing and hearing about from our Sunday school lessons. I remember one of the Hollywood blockbusters that dealt with the life of Christ (King of Kings?) where the movie producers insisted that the actor who played Jesus have his armpits shaved for the crucifixion scene. They were worried that hairy armpits might offend some viewers. Sadly, a little more than halfway through the book, the author seems to have run out of examples and strays from his original line of thought. It seems the last half of the book focuses on simply being one of the many devotionals out there. Not that a devotional is a bad thing, but I found the transition a bit jarring. In fact, when I finished the book, it seemed to be better suited for reading a few minutes each morning with a highlighting pen as opposed to a book that you would want to settle in for an hour at a time. Still, though, the author makes a lot of good points, has a very laidback style, and does a very good job of introducing the real Son of God to many who only know a one dimensional Jesus.

Jesus became more than a significant religious or historic person when I traveled in India - after searching other spiritual pathways. In India I came to the amazing realization that 'Jesus was interested in me'. This book brings me back to that original simple beauty of a conscious awareness of the person of Jesus and his desire to relate to his followers... to be known as John says, 'as he

wants to be known'. The way Jesus is unmasked in Beautiful Outlaw helps me to: see him more clearly, desire to be with him continually, become more like him, trust him and grow more in love with him. Is there any other more important point in the Christian religion? I recommend this book to anyone who has searched for God, but has been disappointed by the current state of the church - or other people who call themselves Christians. Don't blame this wonderful, playful, kind, generous, and extremely patient person - read the book and get to know him - really.

I enjoyed every chapter of this book. I look at John Eldridge as a writer to men, but this book made me fall in love with the human-ness of Jesus. I would recommend this book to anyone who looks at God as an unknowable, distant entity, yet longs for a door of entrance into His heart. I think this book might open that door.

While many people may think that this book is sacrilegious, I will tell you I am grateful for knowing this Jesus, who is honest, with the sense of humor, who sings my tune, and who loves me. There is nothing wrong with it. I always take Jesus to my parties, I won't be able to enjoy them without him. Thank you John Eldredge!

John Eldredge shares with us the humanity of Jesus. God in the flesh, a man with real feelings, with real human traits and personality. I really appreciate his perspective. To read that Jesus wants to really, really have an intimate relationship with me is almost overwhelming. I have a feeling that I'll be reading more of John Eldredge's books. Thank you!

I give it a full 5. Very well written and not over my head with huge words. How we can so easily be deceived. How we can KNOW Jesus more intimately. Loved the stories near the back of how Jesus was working in people's lives. I needed this book. I would recommend this book to anyone wanting to know Jesus better and realize he is with us always.

There is a complex simplicity that Beautiful Outlaw offers its readers. The character of Christ uncovered like I have never experienced before. Christ, the man without the slant of religion. Page by page this book unveils elements of Jesus never spoken of. John offers his readers gems of personality that reveals a powerful glimpse into the nature of God. Beautiful Outlaw captures not just the lost nature of Jesus but a new glimpse into his heart towards others. From the first page be prepared to encounter Christ and love him. Before you finish the book you will laugh, cry and play

with the one person who literally changed everything.

Was given to me and I didn't expect much because I figure Eldridge was under pressure to produce while he is commercially in his prime, but wow, it is a great study of the man, Jesus, and the implications not often considered of the law upsetting impact on the society of that time--and even ours today. He ties all the chapters together in the end with heartfelt wishes for all believers. I have since bought multiple copies for other people. Excellent group study material here, as each chapter pretty much stands alone.

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