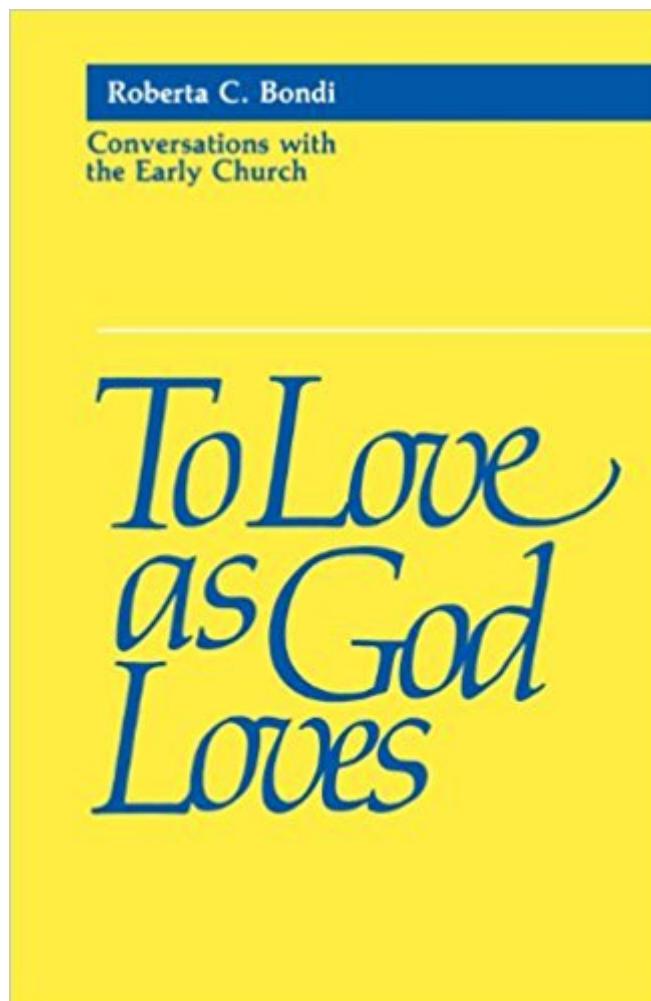


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# To Love As God Loves



## **Synopsis**

Being a Christian means learning to love with God's love. But God's love is not a warm feeling in the pit of the stomach. It has definite characteristics we learn in the course of our life, in the behavior and teaching of the early monastics, as we ponder over what we can say about God as God deals with us, and finally, as we model our own lives on what we have learned.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

This helpful book is shock therapy for the masses who have swallowed the "old" thinking about the conflict of faith and reason, God inspiration and human will. Rebecca Bondi simply elucidates the prevailing psychology of the time and in the context of things such as flesh, spirit, intellect, reason, mind, soul, demons and desire gives us a new understanding of the New Testament writing and the very helpful but universally misunderstood writings of the early church holy women and men who have contributed much to Western Civilization thought. The activity of the "God part" in the human activities is explained. Yes, there is hope for us all.

With Constantine and the rise of popular Christianity as a world power and influence some sought to live as Jesus lived and to learn his ways. These early monastics chose poverty and chastity and lived in the wilderness, separate, yet in community. Roberta C. Bondi has given the world a book deserves a careful patient reading and rereading. I've heard of the Desert Fathers for years but did not realize what a wealth of guidance into intimacy with God was to be found in their writings. Buy this book. Read it. Give it as a gift. Talk about it. To Love as God Loves is a treasure.

This is a short, simple companion to reading the desert fathers. Because the historical and cultural chasm that separates us from the desert fathers/mothers tradition, some of their practices and sayings can sound rather strange and bizarre. Bondi writes as an old friend to the tradition and gives some pointers to anyone with an open mind and heart to receive the gems of these ancient spiritual masters. Bondi advises us against absolutizing the desert fathers' sayings but instead to capture the essence of what they are driving at in some of their rather sometimes shocking statements. For example, the saying 'one hour of sleep a day is enough for the monk who is a fighter' probably goes against the basic rule of modern sleep hygiene. But, taken in context, it is aimed at subduing the body's many compulsions and indulgence so that the will is set free to love. Indeed, the whole end of the desert fathers' many seemingly superhuman feats is not how far they can stretch their mortal bodies beyond normal breaking points but love. Hence, humility remains the main foundational virtue upon which the whole spiritual quest is built. It is really not in the heroic acts and death-defying stunts where love is nurtured but in the day-to-day small acts of service, hospitality and kindness. The imagery of the sailboat is a helpful illustration of how the divine and the human come together in a beautiful synergy in the life of sanctification. Human efforts are like the steering of the sail whereas it is the powerful wind of God's grace that propels the boat forward. No desert fathers ever thought that one can make it on his own without the grace of God. Yet, few realize more than they the place of human co-operation and indeed struggles in the economy of real spiritual growth. Hence, even the murderer does not lie beyond the possibility of redemption in so far as he has the ability to cry out 'God, help me!' and yes, 'God has more pity on the murderer struggling to turn his heart and face to God than the thoughtless monk.' (loose paraphrase) As for the approach to sanctification, Bondi identifies at least two prongs: the subduing of the 'passions' (understood here as the excessive and inordinate desires of the flesh) and a life of prayer. The discussion of the passions is done by giving a brief treatment of the classical seven deadly sins. Prayer is dealt with in the forms of the apophatic tradition - the wordless, imageless prayer of quiet - and the kataphatic tradition - using the psalms, a question, or imagery that reshapes our vision of God around biblical themes. Overall, a short, easy companion that offers one helpful perspective and approach to harnessing the wisdom of the desert fathers, whose life's quest is to love as God does.

Dr. Bondi not only presents the spiritual teachings of the earliest monastic movement in their proper perspective, but she also presents the teachings of these holy men and women as a sound

foundation of contemporary Christian Spiritual life. I have always loved the wisdom of the Desert Fathers, and it's apparent that the author does too.

The best book on the concept of humility I have read. A life changing book. Must be read every 6 months to relearn and practice!!!!!!

I was assigned this book for class. My professor used it because it was written by his professor. It focuses on how the Desert Fathers and Mothers (around the years 400-600A.D.) saw God's love. It is thought provoking, because the sayings of those saints are designed to get you to think. Sometimes, what they suggest is not what you should do, but it challenges you to reflect more on God and his world. This book has some amazing passages about God's love and about prayer...probably some of the best, most concise explanations that I have read. I actually borrowed this book from a friend, but after reading it, purchased it for my permanent library. I highly recommend this work.

One of my favorite books. Roberta was one of my professors, and I treasure this book. Even 20 odd years later, it still speaks to me.

Bondi breaks it down! Important contribution for living the Christian life as it was intended.

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