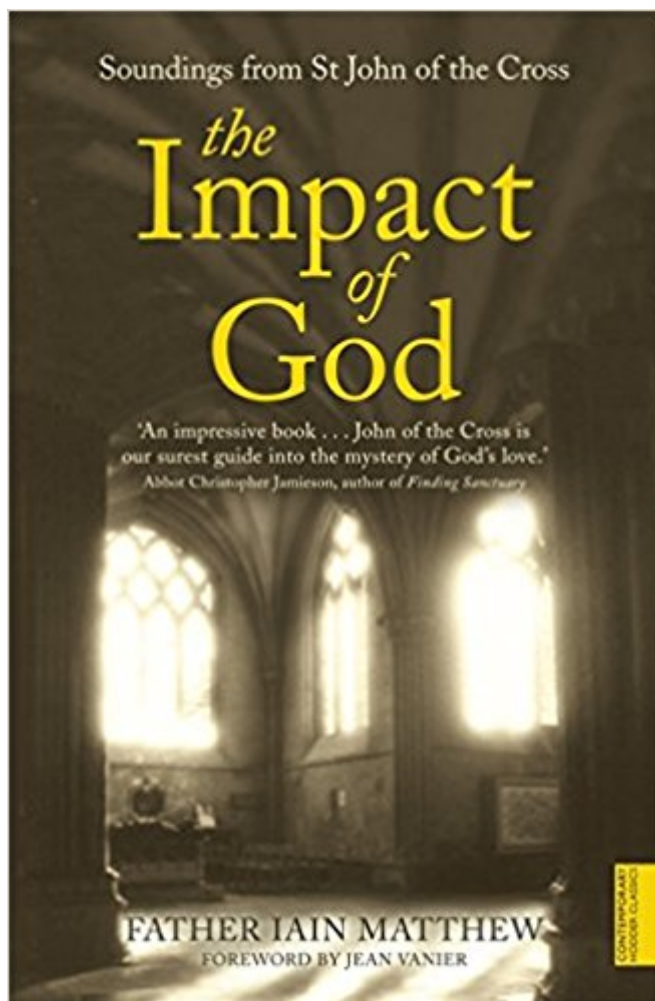


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# The Impact Of God (Soundings From St John Of The Cross)



## Synopsis

St John of the Cross testifies to a God who longs to meet us in our deepest need. Whilst rejection and imprisonment played their part in the life of this sixteenth-century Spanish friar, John's poetry and prose reveal the beauty and power of a wondrous God. It gives us courage to believe in the possibility of change in our own lives, however unlikely or impossible this may seem. Father Iain Matthew uses this classic inspirational Christian writing as his starting point, and offers five interpretations which make its richness relevant to the modern reader.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This impressive book introduces us to the beautiful, painful world of John of the Cross, who is still our surest guide into the mystery of God's love. •Abbott Christopher Jamieson

Iain Matthew joined the Discalced Carmelites in Oxford in 1978. He has worked in parish and youth ministry, and has given retreats and courses in Europe and Australia.

I've had this book now for almost 6 years...and just now getting around to delving into it. This is the trouble with small, seemingly short books - you pick it up start reading a page or two and put it down thinking, this is just not what I expected. Put the book down and ignore it until a chain of events in your life lead you pick it up again and "BLAM!" The book is not a primary source for St John of the

Cross' works and why I couldn't warm up to it at first. So 6 years later after lightly studying the primary works of St John of the Cross, I can now see the value of the book. Through the wisdom of Friar Iain Matthew, a true excavation is done into St John's works and practical teachings uncovered. Maybe it was a personal journey, but I think the book is a must for anyone who is unable to find or experience really good teachings on St John's works for practical application. It is particularly beneficial for seculars in formation in the Discalced Carmelite Order. Reading - yet only skimming the surface - of say the Dark Night of the Soul, can be so difficult and it's not like you're not trying to delve deeply into it. You just need professional help! So, here's some help and it's really good.

For me, as a Franciscan, this has been the most helpful commentary I have ever read on the writings of John of the Cross. I take Iain Matthew to be a kind of genius in making the immense and profound wisdom of John of the Cross available to our minds and hearts. One of the strokes of his genius is that he grasps that some of the teachings of John of the Cross can be understood in a most harsh and negative way. But, because Matthew has a sense of the positive anthropology of Catholic thought, he is able to make sense of the "darker" sayings of this wonderful saint and Master of the Spiritual Life. the Christian sense of communion and positive anthropology of John Paul II would flourish in the reader as John is also our major teacher of the way to the Lord.

I have many books by contemplatives/saints/mystics. This is one of the very, very best. John of the Cross can be a bit unwieldy, but this book captures his essence and makes his spirit accessible to all. I keep this book by my bedside and return to it often. It is beautifully written, poetic even. It is thorough without being laborious. The book deserves to be printed on nicer paper. Other than that one small complaint, I can find nothing upon which to improve. Like John of the Cross, the author is a Discalced Carmelite and successfully interprets that tradition for the reader.

Matthew has a gift of bringing the reader into St. John of the Cross's experience and doctrine. With Matthew as a guide, we are able to appreciate the absolutely positive message: the God, who presses in needs empty hands. This takes place in the night. The whole spiritual life is about Union. This an excellent book, especially for those who have a developed relation with the Lord.

I have had this on my Kindle for about 7 months now. A Carmelite nun recommended it to me after I showed an interest in St. John. I read a few pages every couple of weeks and just let them sit with

me. I have found this a very moving and clear introduction to John of the Cross. I don't know how I would be able to approach his poetry without a guide who is so patient and thorough as Matthew.

Boy, Fr. Matthew does an amazing job of explaining and unpacking what John of the Cross writes. Even though I read this book 3 years ago, I still reference it. It has forever changed my understanding of our relationship with God and has helped to clear out the unimportant things that take up space - space that God should have. At times it was slow going because I had to stop and grasp what was being presented, but it was worth it.

An easily read reflection on the writings of St John of the Cross and the way in which his perspectives allow us to experience the presence of God in our lives. An excellent reinforcement for those who have read John's work. The one caveat is that the individual unfamiliar with John of the Cross may not fully benefit from the author's insights. Matthew's prose style flows easily. He succeeds in emphasizing and clarifying much of what might be easily lost in John's sixteenth century Spanish [in translation].

Iain Matthews has done exhaustive study. If you are interested in Christian mysticism and moving closer into connection with God, then this is your book. Matthews has some tremendous insight, although the book could have been condensed a little bit more. He gets a little redundant and tries to read a little bit too much in St. John OTC, that is only my opinion. If you have been struggling with Dark Night over the last several, several years, this book will help you on your journey, but it is not one of those ahaaaaa, books so you can categorize and then shelve St. John OTC and park him into one of those slots that thinks, well I got that. You will continue to seek, and ask, and meditate. Good for you, and good for me.

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