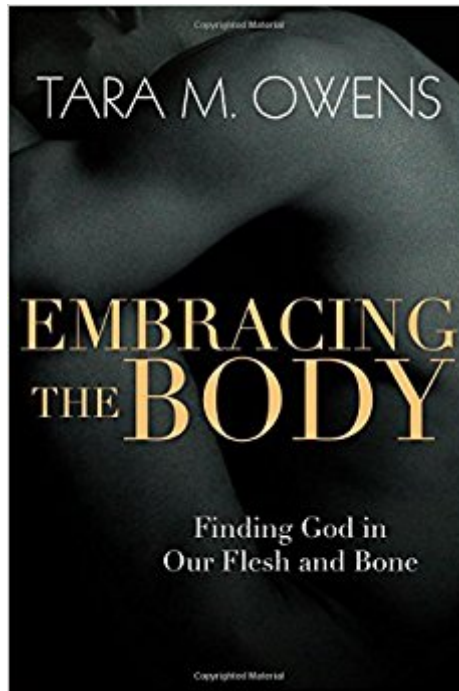




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Embracing The Body: Finding God In Our Flesh And Bone



Synopsis

Foreword Reviews' 18th Annual INDIEFAB Book of the Year for Body, Mind and Spirit 2015
Readers' Choice Awards Honorable Mention Our bodies teach us about God, and God communicates to us through our bodies. Our bodies are more good than we can possibly imagine them to be. And yet at times we may struggle with feelings of shame and guilt or even pride in regard to our bodies. What is God trying to do through our skin and bones? In *Embracing the Body* spiritual director Tara Owens invites you to listen to your thoughts about your body in a way that draws you closer to God, calling you to explore how your spirituality is intimately tied to your physicality. Using exercises for reflection at the end of each chapter, she guides you to see your body not as an inconvenience but as a place where you can meet the Holy in a new way—*à la* place to embrace God's glorious intention.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Owens, a certified spiritual director and senior editor for *Conversations Journal*, addresses the disconnect most of us, and our churches, experience between ourselves and the physical world around us, even though it is in the body that heaven actively meets earth. Through a gentle, compassionate exploration of our thoughts and feelings about our bodies, enhanced with exercises for reflection, Owens helps us to learn what it means to be at home in our own skin and sensitive to the body's innate wisdom." (Kristine Morris, *ForeWord Reviews*, Spring 2015) "Wise, erudite, loving and tender, *Embracing the Body* will bring true healing and wholeness to our theology of our physical bodies as a church. Tara Owens is the perfect guide for this holy journey." (Sarah Bessey,

author of *Jesus Feminist*) "This book is beautiful, learned and wise. It will make you think, and it will make you want to say 'amen'—and, more important, it will enable you more fully to live as a body." (Lauren F. Winner, author of *Girl Meets God and Still*) "Tara Owens's *Embracing the Body* is a gift for anyone seeking to understand how the body—with all of its twitches, itches and bentness toward false unions—is not an enemy of spiritual formation but an amazing gift from God and the ground for personal incarnation—experiencing the reality of the apostle Paul's number one teaching point, Christ within. She makes great use of real-life stories and engaging theological reflection." (Gary W. Moon, executive director, Dallas Willard Center, Westmont College) "Truth. Beauty. Revelation. Those are just some of the words to describe *Embracing the Body* by Tara Owens. It is a rare and insightful book written by a poet who longs to love Jesus with every fiber of her being and invites others to do the same." (Stasi Eldredge, coauthor of *Captivating*) "Tara M. Owens is a rare find among contemporary writers. Part theologian, part mystic, her insight is bold and rich, and her writing is fine-tuned. . . . I'm grateful for the ways Tara's words have revealed some of my own wounds and fears and helped me make space for new ways of encountering God, through the body, in the body. I will be meditating on this book for a long time to come. I hope the same for you." (Micha Boyett, author of *Found: A Story of Questions, Grace & Everyday Prayer*) "Tara Owens offers us a wise and tender exploration of the gifts our bodies offer to us as portals into God's grace and wisdom. This book is much needed and should be required reading in every church's adult faith formation program. Tara doesn't just invite us to read, but to ponder, to engage and to practice so that we might claim the truth of the incarnation in new ways." (Christine Valters Paintner, abbeyofthearts.com, author of *The Artist's Rule*) "Tara Owens writes with warmth and wisdom on a subject that many Christians have at best distrusted or at worst discarded—our bodies as carriers and avenues of spiritual growth and connection with God. We claim to be people of the incarnation but often live as if only our souls mattered and our bodies did not. Owens calls us back to our whole selves—body and soul—and in doing so helps us reconnect with incarnational living both through the central historical event that kicked off Christian movement and our ongoing task of being the disciples of Jesus cloaked in flesh and blood." (Brent Bill, coauthor of *Awaken Your Senses and Finding God in the Verbs*) "With tender words and emotional depth, Owens offers a sacred space to ponder the fears of our bodies and how the subtle and overt messages we receive from church and society numb us to the murmurs from God that reverberate through our flesh and bones. . . . What does it mean to be at home in your skin? Step into *Embracing the Body* to continue your own healing towards an embodied faith." (Ashley Goff, *Presbyterian Outlook*, June 11, 2015) "Tara Owen's book . . . presents a compelling

vision of what an integrated self – a self no longer divided into pure spirit and problematic body – looks and feels like. . . . Embracing the Body provides a heartfelt, accessible introduction to the many ways we can begin to bring body and spirit back together, figure out what our bodies have to do with our faith and embrace the remarkable implications of a God who took on human flesh." (Ellen Painter Dollar, Englewood Review of Books, Lent 2015)"God has created us to be connected to our bodies, and life has a way of disconnecting us. Tara has begun a conversation that will be helpful to many who feel alienated or even in conflict with their own bodies." (Dr. Henry Cloud, author of Boundaries and Never Go Back)

Tara M. Owens (MTS, Tyndale Seminary) is a Certified Spiritual Director and the senior editor for Conversations Journal, a forum for authentic spiritual transformation. Owens also provides spiritual direction through her ministry Anam Cara and is a part-time instructor for the Benedictine Spiritual Formation Program at Benet Hill Monastery, both based in Colorado Springs.

I found this book to be a refreshing and glorious step toward a holistic integration and healing of sexuality and the body. Christians are paying greater attention to the whole theme of embodiment. Several books have come out in recent years seeking to guide us through a fresh understanding of our bodies from a Christian perspective. There are some books that major on the sex part in focusing on the body with a genital-driven view of sexuality and they tend to be written by men. There are other books which talk about embodiment but hardly engage the explosive issue of sexuality. Owens provokes us to think about wholeness, healing, and fullness in the deep connection between sexuality and the body from a seasoned and mature female perspective. Evangelicals (this book is published by IVP) are so far behind when it comes to producing books by women on the subject of sexuality and embodiment. Sure, one can find books written by women that repeat the formulas and fears emanating from the evangelical purity sub-culture. The breadth of evangelical spirituality seeking to integrate embodiment and sexuality is beginning to emerge in the twenty first century. Owens invites us to move past stereotypical and formulaic approaches to the body. She doesn't offer superficial sound bites that reinforce a placating piecemeal ethic for the body. She presents a rich reflection on our fears, desires, struggles, and hopes as we seek redemption in our bodies. She courageously invites us to something more.

I thoroughly enjoyed "Embracing The Body" by Tara M Owens. Let me share some key points that I have uncovered that will help me as I journey on the path to wholeness

(salvation). "I am of the opinion that there isn't anyone alive who is at home in his or her body 100 percent of the time." How do I feel about my body? If I do not like my body, I cannot feel whole. To be honest, I had not really thought about that. I need to feel good about both my inner self and my outer body before I truly can feel whole. I think there are many people who do not feel whole. They feel empty. I also imagine that as we age or experience illnesses it certainly is not easy to continue to feel whole. "Salvation is the work of Christ to bring the whole of ourselves (and also our world) back into alignment with the way God intended." God wants me to feel whole! God wants all of us to feel whole. This is salvation! "Paul tells us to offer God our bodies as living sacrifices not because our bodies are worthless, or because we are to die to them, but because in Christ we are meant to have life abundant running in and through us." We are to bring not only our minds and hearts to God but our bodies. When we do this our whole self will experience abundant life. "Our bodies are incredible conductors of messages, both emotional and physical." We must listen to our bodies. They have much to teach us. Our bodies tell us when we are tired, anxious, hungry, thirsty, happy, sad, angry, bored, excited. "It's time to listen to the wisdom of our bodies." "The savor of God can be tasted in a good meal, smelled in the scent of wet, forested soil on a fall day, felt in the embrace of a friend." We need to utilize all of our senses to experience and savor God. We must engage the world with our bodies. "But here's the rub: the less we engage with the physical world around us, the less we are present to reality." When we are not present to reality, we are not present to God. Read Tara's book! You will not be disappointed. It will help you journey on the path to becoming a whole person (salvation). Rich Lewis SilenceTeaches.com

I fell so hard, and so quickly in love with this book that by the end of Chapter 2, I'd already ordered a second copy to give away. It's rare to find nonfiction that's so beautifully lyrical, and even rarer to find writing that is faithful to scripture about being spiritual beings inhabiting bodies we often live in great conflict with. Fair warning, this author does a great job of inviting the reader to embrace, engage, and dance with the material- and for that reason I have found it challenging, irritating, and at times intentionally-avoidable. It's not a book to read for a detached and intellectual study of the theology of physical creation- but rather an invitation to bravely peer inward and begin the conversation with God about your flesh.

It's hard to stay out of dualistic thought. We disrespect our bodies as temporary shells that are to be seen as flesh or as pleasure centres. Embracing the Body shows us a third way towards a holistic

and integrated body, spirit, Spirit and Body.

This book captured me with the title, Embracing the Body. It has long been a struggle of mine. To embrace myself as God sees me. To believe the truths about my body because of the mis-beliefs and harsh views of the body from life experiences to the cultural expectations and church taught/caught lies. I've been on this journey for awhile and I am grateful to Tara for boldly speaking the truth to enable greater health and healing and intimacy with God. I loved the Touch Points at the end of each chapter that gave spiritual direction and the invitations from God for to be Him in it all. I love this book!

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