

Review of *Prayerful Passages: Asking God's Help in Reconciliation, Separation and Divorce* (Outskirts Press, 2016) by Jack H. Emmott

Reviewer: Christine Hall in "Hall Ways", May 6, 2016

In *Prayerful Passages*, author Jack H. Emmott perfectly captures the desperation and devastating emotions that accompany an unraveling marriage. In the chaos of losing control of a relationship, Emmott's prayers allow people experiencing helplessness to find a measure of control by focusing on intentional prayers.

Clearly, Emmott is familiar with the wide range of not-so-Christian-like feelings and thoughts that bubble up to the surface in times of marital distress, and he doesn't shy away from them. Instead, Emmott provides specific prayers that address issues like wanting revenge, and in doing so, allows readers to recognize that they are not alone in their struggles with spiritually unhealthy thoughts. These focused prayers are also reminders that though unhealthy thoughts are normal, they are also destructive and best handed over to God.

The prayer topics are clearly listed, and the prayers are all fairly parallel in structure. Having this repetitive structure gives readers a comfortable and comforting place to return to time and again. Emmott demonstrates that when readers ask for God's help, they are taking a powerful step forward towards coping with and recovering from marital strife. The blank pages at the back of the book will encourage readers to write down their own notations as the prayers guide them into further reflections.

Though Emmott does give his personal view on divorce in the introduction, his prayers are never judgmental and are a simple, straightforward, and powerful way for anyone who feels lost and incapable of fixing a marriage to do something positive. The prayers are well-written and thoughtful, and I look forward to seeing how *The Companion Guide Book* enhances the prayer book.