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Stepping Heavenward: One Woman's Journey To Godliness (Inspirational Library Series)



Synopsis

"How dreadfully old I am getting! Sixteen!" So begins 'Stepping Heavenward' by Elizabeth Prentiss, the journal-like account of a nineteenth century girl who learns, on the path to womanhood, that true happiness can be found in giving oneself for others. "This book is a treasure of both Godly and womanly wisdom told with disarming candor and humility, yet revealing a deep heart's desire to know God," says noted Christian speaker Elisabeth Elliot. "I do not hesitate to recommend it to men, who need to understand the wives they live with, and to any woman who wants to walk with God."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

ELIZABETH PRENTISS (1818 -1878) was the daughter of an early nineteenth-century revival preacher and began writing as a teenager. Born in 1818 in Portland, Maine, Prentiss was also the writer of the hymn "More Love to Thee, O Christ." Prentiss died in Ver

Write what you know. It's good counsel, and, if followed, results in a kind of authenticity that can't happen if the author attempts to write outside her realm of real-life experience. Maybe that's why people are still reading Stepping Heavenward by Elizabeth Prentiss, a fictional journal that follows the life of Katherine Mortimer from her first entry at age 16 [How dreadfully old I am getting!] to her final entry just before her death. Like the author, Katherine lost her father at a young age and suffered from a variety of physical ailments.

The intersection between fiction and reality becomes even more pronounced as Katherine struggles to allow her suffering to *do its perfect work* in her life. Through weariness and discouragement, through joy and fresh resolve, the message of *Stepping Heavenward* is ageless and relevant to wives and mothers set in all times (and might just encourage their men-folk, too). Written in 1869, the quaint style and slow pace is charming, and I smiled at the extreme modesty of that era in which babies just appeared in the narrative with only veiled references to pregnancy (and certainly none whatsoever to the delivery!), and I winced at the eagerness of mothers to have their children's gums lanced to ease teething discomfort [really??] and at the prevalence of infant mortality and debilitating illnesses. These were hard times compared to the 21st century, and yet Elizabeth harnesses Katie's sufferings and points her readers to a God who notices the most trivial act, accepts the poorest, most threadbare little service, listens to the coldest, feeblest petition, and gathers up with parental fondness all our fragmentary desires and attempts at good works. Oh, if only we could begin to conceive how much He loves us, what different creatures we should be! It was heartening to see Katie's trajectory of growth and to receive her offerings of homely wisdom: "One must either stop reading the Bible altogether, or else leave off spending one's whole time in just doing easy, pleasant things one likes to do." (And this was written in the days before binge-watching Netflix was a thing . . .) In an era when women were not encouraged to read deeply or to flex their theological muscles, Elizabeth Prentiss offered solid teaching on various topics, all embedded within the narrative arc of Katie's life. On the sacred versus secular dichotomy: "You speak of going back to your music as if that implied going away from God. You rush from one extreme to another. The only true way to live in this world, constituted just as we are, is to make all our employments subserve the one great end and aim of existence, namely, to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever." On mothering: "What a fearful thing it is to be a mother! But I have given my children to God." "When you speak contemptuously of the vocation of maternity, you dishonor, not only the mother who bore you, but the Lord Jesus Himself, who chose to be born of a woman, and to be ministered unto by her through a helpless infancy." On perfectionism: "I am a little afraid of good people. I fancy that they are always criticizing me and expecting me to imitate their perfection." On prayer: "I have learned, at least, to face and fight such distractions, instead of running away from them as I used to do. My faith in prayer, my resort to it, becomes more and more the foundation of my life, and I believe . . . that nothing but prayer stands between my soul and the best gifts of God." On perseverance through trials: "There is no wilderness so dreary but that His love can illuminate it, no desolation so desolate but that He can sweeten it. I

know what I am saying. It is no delusion. I believe that the highest, purest happiness is known only to those who have learned Christ in sick-rooms, in poverty, in racking suspense and anxiety, amid hardships, and at the open grave. If the author's name, Elizabeth Prentiss, rings a bell, check your nearest hymnal, for in addition to *Stepping Heavenward*, Elizabeth also wrote "More Love to Thee," and I will share the lyrics below. You can also click [here](#) to see a YouTube video of the hymn sung by Fernando Ortega. More love to Thee, oh Christ, more love to Thee! Hear Thou the prayer I make on bended knee. This is my earnest plea. More love, oh Christ, to Thee. More love to Thee, more love to Thee! Once earthly joy I craved, sought peace and rest. Now Thee alone I seek, give what is best. This all my prayer shall be. More love, oh Christ to Thee. More love to Thee, more love to Thee! Elizabeth Prentiss wrote with the aim of encouraging others along the path of a fierce discipleship. I've been intending to read *Stepping Heavenward* ever since the days when Elisabeth Elliot was recommending it on her radio program, and now, since it is in public domain, it is available very inexpensively in various editions. The author joins Peter in exhorting her readers to "think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you." The struggle to pray, to be patient, and to care for others is very real, but so is the comfort that God brings to the heart that looks to Him for daily strength.

This book is an absolute gem, however, this readaclassic.com edition is a disgrace. Buyer beware. The grammatical errors are so numerous and severe that I found myself struggling to understand the meaning of whole passages. I don't know how anything of this quality ever made it to press. Shameful!

This book is the thought provoking story of one woman's journey through life and growth in faith. It's easy to identify with Katy as she struggles to be good and kind, to love the Lord and other people as she ought. It gives the reader hope to see her "stepping heavenward," slowly, by inches, learning and growing and maturing in her spiritual walk. Highly recommended.

This is a timeless story. This is the second copy I have bought. I have one for myself and bought this as a gift for a graduate. I did find the story slow at first, but once it got going, I could not put it down. This story challenged me and convicted me in my walk. This is one I will definitely read over and over. And will be my go to gift for graduates.

I loved this book so much that I will not give it a lower rating due to numerous typos, etc., that apparently occurred in the process of turning it into a Kindle edition. This book is as fresh and relevant today as it was when it was written approximately 150 years ago. I was challenged to look at my own Christian walk in a different way. I hope many others will gain insight from this marvelous work of fiction. It's well worth the effort to put up with the typos and occasional archaic language. I think that this book will challenge each woman in different ways, depending on their circumstances and season of life.

One of my favorite books of all time. I first read it when I was a young teen and didn't really "get" it. I read it later when I was older and realized how wonderful and timeless it is. This book is a must-read for all Godly young ladies. It shows that girls have been making mistakes in life and love for generations - it's not just a new phenomenon - and listening to sound, Godly advice is wise when you are blinded by love. Life is never as you expect it, and dealing with disappointments gracefully is important. Fantastic book!

I haven't finished this book yet, but so far it has been totally relateable and a great read! I definitely think my daughters should read this book when they are older.

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