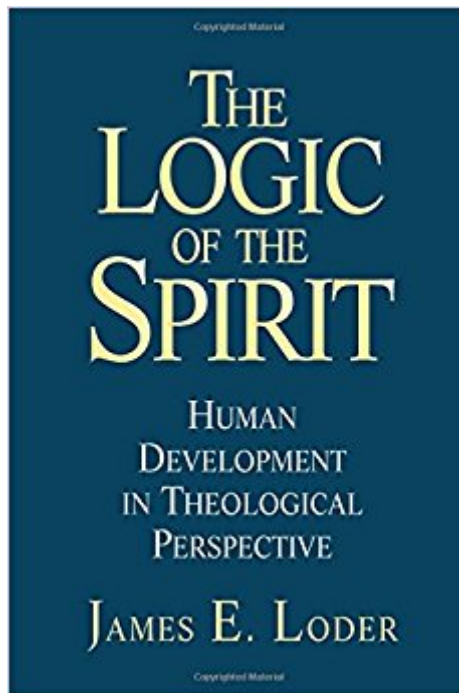




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# The Logic Of The Spirit: Human Development In Theological Perspective



## Synopsis

Those . . . prepared to grapple with science, social science, and Christian theology, will find [this book] important, thought-provoking, and rewarding. ?Sharon Daloz Parks, Whidbey Institute In this deep and enlightening discussion, psychologist, and theologian James E. Loder demonstrates how a theological perspective enlarges our understanding of how humans grow and develop from birth through the life span. Loder examines the intimate relationship between human nature and the divine and provides moving case studies, bringing the work of psychologists Freud, Erikson, and Piaget to that of seminal Christian theologians Kierkegaard, Barth, Torrance, and Pannenberg. Loder acknowledges that psychological stage theories enable us to understand the logic of humans' evolving relationship with the world and with God. At the same time, he demonstrates that the divine spirit has a logic of its own, which is not bound by stages. Seminarians, theologians, ministers, and pastoral counselors will benefit from this rich, thought-provoking guide. James E. Loder is the Mary D. Synnott Professor of the Philosophy of Christian Education at Princeton Theological Seminary and author of *The Transforming Moment* and coauthor of *The Knight's Move*.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"A truly wonderful book. Loder brings together-in a very illuminating and profound way-the bearing of the Holy Spirit upon the human spirit. I hope that every seminary will make this book an absolute must for all students." (Thomas F. Torrance, emeritus professor of Christian dogmatics, University of Edinburgh, Scotland) "James Loder combines an uncommon intelligence with the compassion of

an extraordinary therapist. Those . . . prepared to grapple with science, social science, and Christian theology, will find [this book] important, thought-provoking, and rewarding." (Sharon Daloz Parks, Whidbey Institute, co-author, *Common Fire: Leading Lives of Commitment in a Complex World*) "A masterful interdisciplinary work. . . an insightful and engaging contribution for reflective practitioners in . . . fields concerned with formation and transformation, such as Christian education, counseling, mentoring, youth ministry, and spiritual direction." (Daniel S. Schipani, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary) "In a profound and unique synthesis of postmodern science and theology, Jim Loder shows how the creative power of the human spirit can reconstruct and transform the self, once the human spirit discovers the true 'ground' in the Holy Spirit." (John S. McClure, professor of homiletics, Louisville Presbyterian Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky)

### A Profound and Insightful Interpretation of the Human Spirit and its Impact on Human

Development  
In this deep and enlightening discussion, psychologist and theologian James E. Loder demonstrates how a theological perspective enlarges our understanding of how humans grow and develop from birth through the life span. "What is a lifetime," he asks, "in a vast, apparently empty universe . . . when time and space so far outreach our grasp?" In exploring this question, Loder examines the intimate relationship between human nature and the divine and provides moving case studies, bringing the work of psychologists Freud, Erikson, and Piaget to that of seminal Christian theologians Kierkegaard, Barth, Torrance, and Pannenberg. Loder acknowledges that psychological stage theories enable us to understand the logic of humans' evolving relationship with the world and with God. At the same time, he demonstrates that the divine spirit has a logic of its own, which is not bound by stages, and which reveals "patterns of ultimate significance in the transient, fleeting moments we call a human lifetime." Seminarians, theologians, ministers, and pastoral counselors will benefit from this rich, thought-provoking guide." James Loder combines an uncommon intelligence with the compassion of an extraordinary therapist. Those . . . prepared to grapple with science, social science, and Christian theology, will find [this book] important, thought-provoking, and rewarding." "Sharon Daloz Parks, Whidbey Institute, co-author, *Common Fire: Leading Lives of Commitment in a Complex World* "A masterful interdisciplinary work. . . an insightful and engaging contribution for reflective practitioners in . . . fields concerned with formation and transformation, such as Christian education, counseling, mentoring, youth ministry, and spiritual direction." "Daniel S. Schipani, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary "In a profound and unique synthesis of postmodern science and theology, Jim

This book was on my recommended reading list for a human development course, and yet the main course books kept citing it as a resource. I purchased it because I cited often from it directly and truly enjoyed the writing style and spiritual insights viewed through the lens of human development. Loder uses his theoretical perspective to explain the human development stages. For example there are certain spiritual components a grade school child may understand, just as an adolescent may experience a certain level of spiritual understanding. Loder writes almost lyrical at times in expressing spiritual experience at the various life stages, but this is not necessarily a book for the average reading crowd. Some of the theology was beyond my understanding, and some of the theology I did understand, I disagreed with (from my own perspective). However, I would recommend this book for someone approaching pastoral counseling as a career.

James Loder was one of those people who obviously knew God. I was privileged to be in one of his last classes before his recent death, and it was obvious that this was one of the truly Godly men in this world. This text was the basis of his course on Faith and Human development, a study of the full picture of what it means to be and become human. He develops an understanding of human development from the perspective that the reality of God and his Spirit actually makes an impact in who we are as people. Rather than divorcing the religious from humanity, he develops a study which incorporates this essential aspect of who we are as full human beings. It is not an easy read, but is certainly an essential text for anyone seeking to understand how we become who we are. One of the more important books I've read so far in my seminary career.

The book was written in beautiful poetic language as well as being clear for easy understanding. The author describes the spiritual meaning of development. I personally found it helpful on my spiritual journey. I plan to read it again soon.

I was a Doctor of Ministry student at Princeton Seminary and studied under Loder. This book clarifies his unique perspective on human development and makes his important work available for a new generation of students. It is a must read in the field.

I am loving this book! Very comprehensive perspective that is most appreciated.

James Loder's book 'The Logic of the Spirit: Human Development in Theological Perspective' is a fascinating text, for it helps to re-integrate the idea of spiritual development (without becoming

bogged down by denominationalist views on what that development should be) as an integral part of human psychological development. There has been the trend in the last century to separate out religious and spiritual matter from psychology--often for good cause. However, to negate the importance of this part of the human being when it is so clear throughout human history that it belongs as a centre-piece, has been a failure on the part of modern psychology, and that failure is beginning to be addressed by work such as Loder's.'It should be recognised that the functionalist, structuralist, and empiricism toward which the human sciences are inclined keep them in a dualistic Newtonian world, where the person of the investigator is bracketed for the sake of objectifying the findings and meeting the canons of an empirical test. However, in contemporary physics, the hardest of sciences, it is recognised that the observer is an irreducible part of what must be accounted for in any scientific investigation. In Neils Bohr's understanding of subatomic phenomena and in Heisenberg's (a student of Bohr) uncertainty principle, to mention only two, it is evident that all observations at this level are observer conditioned.'Much of the book follows the life cycle stages (a la Freud, Erikson, et alia) and examines underlying psychological theories (not dismissing any major school out of hand, but rather modifying and showing the differing implications each has for spiritual formation). Chapters on infant ego formation are coupled with the idea of infant's confrontation with nothingness as a spiritual challenge. While cognitively not capable of grasping the idea of nothingness (any more than they are capable of realising what an 'ego' is) they nonetheless begin sensing and making pre-linguistic determinations. The toddler, oedipal and school-age stages likewise are explored from a psychological and spiritual standpoint. As a toddler transitions from 'parallel play' to interactive play, and begins to understand and use concepts and words such as 'I' and 'me', there begins to be a community sense developing, and a need for greater things, even beyond the parental influences, and for more comfortable things, beyond mother or transitional objects. With the oedipal child, Erikson gives as a core conflict in development initiative versus guilt -- and this is decidedly theological. Guilt and shame socially different, and perhaps the word guilt is too heavily loaded here.'Shameless' is a term of opprobrium--you ought to have some shame; 'guiltless' is an honourific term implying innocence. Psychologically and developmentally, the deeper weakness or wound is shame, not guilt, though when we think theologically, we will see that guilt is still the deeper notion. Further chapters explore spiritual development and psychological issues in adolescence, young adulthood, middle years, and older age (Loder has a beautiful chapter entitled 'Beyond 65: Dreaming Dreams and Talking with God'), which begins:'In the book of the prophet Joel, the Lord said he would pour out his "spirit on all flesh". It was this prophecy that was fulfilled at Pentecost, and in Peter's sermon on that occasion "all flesh" meant not only the Jews but all nations

(Acts 2:17). In almost the same breath, the prophecy discloses that by the Spirit, "old persons will dream dreams". That the old persons will dream dreams doesn't imply faulty thinking or a case of alzheimers or dementia. As people get older, they are getting closer to their own dream fulfillment in an ultimate sense, and this is a very positive affirmation from God. Throughout this wonderful text, Loder uses personal examples from his case work and that of others in close practice with him, in which the spiritual dimensions of psychological work can be clearly seen and appreciated.

My book arrived very quickly and in immaculate condition. I am very happy with the service provided.

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