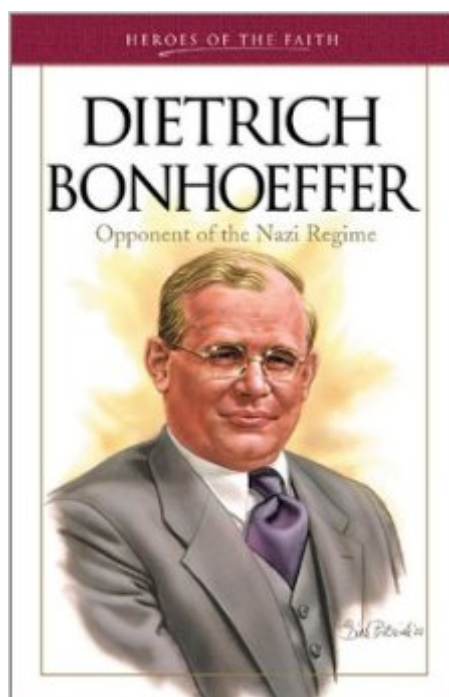


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# Heroes Of The Faith: Dietrich Bonhoeffer



## Synopsis

Born into a prominent German family, Dietrich Bonhoeffer died in a Nazi prison camp. The son of a physician, Bonhoeffer decided to follow his heart and went into theology. As social conditions worsened in Germany, he traveled abroad, but felt himself drawn back to his native land to resist Adolf Hitler's programs. Ultimately, after much mental struggle, Bonhoeffer became involved in a plan to eliminate Hitler. His resistance efforts led to his arrest by the dreaded Gestapo, and Bonhoeffer was hanged on April 9, 1945, just weeks before the end of the war in Europe.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I have heard a lot of quotes from Dietrich Bonhoeffer and always wanted to read more about this man of God. This book goes through his entire life but the focus is on the time of the Nazi regime. The book was a very easy read and gave some good insights about his life. The book did not go into much detail on Bonhoeffer's theological convictions but more about his overarching defense of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I wish there was a little more about his theological convictions but just to hear how he stood up to Hitler and the Third Reich Government Church was fascinating. Dietrich was definitely not an "underground" player during the War, he was very much on the front lines of the church and state debate. I would recommend this book to give a better understanding of what those were going through that were inside Germany and having to preach and teach against the newly established government church.

Van Dyke gave a nice intimate picture, a close up, if you will, of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Having read the biographies of Bonhoeffer by Metaxas and Schlingensiefen, this short biography reported incidents in Bonhoeffer's life in a way the reader could truly share the moment. This book was also published earlier as *Radical Integrity: The Story of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*. Placed in the panoply of other heroes of faith, Bonhoeffer stands out as a very exceptional theologian of our modern era.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945) was a German Lutheran minister, theologian, and martyr. He was born into a prominent middle-class family at Breslau (Wrocław), the sixth of eight children. His father, Karl Bonhoeffer, an agnostic, was one of the most distinguished neurologists in Germany as a professor of neurology and psychiatry at the University of Berlin and the director of the psychiatric clinic at Charité Hospital in Berlin. His mother, Paula von Hase, was a granddaughter of Karl von Hase, a distinguished church historian and preacher to the court of Kaiser Wilhelm II. The Bonhoeffer family was not notably religious, although Paula homeschooled the children until each was six or seven and read them Bible stories. Dietrich was an exceptional pianist and athlete but surprised his parents when he decided as a teenager to become a theologian and later a minister. After attending Tübingen University and the University of Berlin, Bonhoeffer spent a year in 1928-1929 as minister of a German community in Barcelona, Spain. He returned to the University of Berlin to work on his thesis then went to the United States in 1930 for postgraduate study and a teaching fellowship at New York City's Union Theological Seminary where he studied under Reinhold Niebuhr and met Frank Fisher with whom he attended the Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem. Following his return to Germany from America in 1931, Dietrich became a lecturer in systematic theology at the University of Berlin and was appointed a secretary by the World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches, a forerunner of the World Council of Churches. However, with the Nazi rise to power and takeover of the German Church, Bonhoeffer became one of the founders of the opposition Confessing Church. Upon completing a two-year appointment with two German-speaking Protestant churches in London, England, he returned to Germany to conduct an underground seminary and published his best-known book, *The Cost of Discipleship*, a study on the Sermon on the Mount, in which he not only attacked "cheap grace" as a cover for ethical laxity but also preached "costly grace." During this time he became involved with the Abwehr German military intelligence organization, which was the seat of anti-Hitler resistance, in several plots to overthrow Hitler. Escaping to the United States in 1939, he soon regretted his decision and returned to Germany to continue his work with Abwehr, helping Jews escape to Switzerland. Eventually arrested in 1943 and imprisoned for a year and a half, Bonhoeffer was

executed in 1945, just weeks before Germany surrendered. I first became acquainted with the name of Bonhoeffer when a teenager by reading an article entitled "Dietrich Bonhoeffer: The Qualified Disciple." I do not now remember where I saw it or who wrote it. Later, I received a copy of *The Cost of Discipleship* from my great aunt and read it. More recently, we obtained the CD audiodrama *Bonhoeffer: The Cost of Freedom* from the Focus on the Family Radio Theatre series to hear while on car trips. So I thought that it would be nice to read a biography of Bonhoeffer. Eric Metaxas has recently written a definitive biography *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy* published by Thomas Nelson, but I wanted something more suitable for children. I remembered that there was a biography of Bonhoeffer in the excellent "Heroes of the Faith" series by Barbour Publishing. We already had some of these 37 books, including ones about Sojourner Truth, Corrie ten Boom, Fanny Crosby, Frederick Douglass, George Washington Carver, and C. S. Lewis. Unfortunately, they are no longer available, but I found a used copy. I enjoyed reading it. Please understand that this is not a blanket endorsement of Bonhoeffer's beliefs. He was a product of German liberalism, and while he gravitated towards Karl Barth's neo-orthodoxy, he continued to promote the social gospel concept and ecumenism. There are many "heroes" of history with whose religious beliefs we may not always agree but may still learn from their convictions and courage in other areas. Certainly, we can appreciate Bonhoeffer's resistance and opposition to the evil Nazi regime of Adolph Hitler.

Bonhoeffer's story is vast, encompassing a myriad of details and various periods of his short 39 year life. This book is a simple, yet effective look at the important details.

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