

# Recommended Reading

by Brian Strider

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## **CRAVINGS AND CAVEATS**

“Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good” (1 Peter 2:2-3). How’s that for a growth model? Digesting Scripture is essential to Christian maturity, and therefore should be at the center of all our discipleship.

Let me suggest some books and materials that I think will be useful in your desire to make disciples and see the life-changing gospel cover the world. Reading quality Christian books will help your disciples grow in their maturity.

Before I delve into shelves of books, let me make a few comments. First, this is not an exhaustive list in any sense. We could go broader and think of more categories or we could go deeper with more titles. Second, you may not run across your favorite book for different reasons: I didn’t know about it, I didn’t like it or agree with it, or I just didn’t have space. Third, you may not agree with me on a particular book or reason I included here. Fourth, I’m assuming a certain level of comprehension—a college student or recent graduate. Fifth, I don’t endorse everything in these books. And sixth, I’m also assuming a certain level of familiarity with Campus Crusade materials, therefore, I’ve only mentioned a couple newer resources from our ministry, which are available through CruPress or New Life Resources. In the first couple of years of growing in Christ I am assuming you will have given them to read some of the following basic books:

*More than a Carpenter* , Josh McDowell

*Fireseeds of Spiritual Awakening* , Dan Hayes

*The Case for Christ* , Lee Strobel

*The Case for Faith* , Lee Strobel

*Mere Christianity* , C. S. Lewis

*A Handbook of Christian Maturity: 10 Basic Steps Series* , Bill Bright

*Basic*

*Christianity* , John Stott

*The Purpose Driven Life* , Rick Warren

*Witnessing Without Fear* , Bill Bright

## **FIRST THINGS FIRST**

This article may cause you to feel under the pile about more things you need to do, but don't let it. Relax. Remember the gospel and that Jesus graciously invites us to work along with Him in bringing His people to maturity (Colossians 1:28-29).

If anyone wants to make disciples, that person must be a disciple. The distinction is helpful but not perfect. Our relationship with people is inseparable from our relationship with God. "If anyone says, 'I love God,' yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother" (1 John 4:20-21).

So with that I commend to you...

## **HIT THE GROUND RUNNING**

Besides spending time searching and meditating on the Bible itself, here are the books I'd recommend for a new believer. These are simpler titles that will give them basic categories to build on and grow with.

***When We Get It Wrong* , Dominic Smart (Paternoster, 2001)**

A must

read for a new Christian and anyone wanting to help others grow in Christ! The gospel continually re-calibrates our lives. If it is not fueling your ministry, your machine will produce burned-out or, maybe worse, arrogant people. I guarantee.

***10 Keys for Unlocking the Bible* , Colin Smith (Moody, 2002)**

First, it is

like an interstate map of the Bible—just the main roads. Second, it's a spotlight on Christ who is the center of God's plan and our lives. Third, it will help your disciple confidently explain the distinctiveness of Christianity while witnessing. Bible, growth, and evangelism are all in one book. Don't work harder, just smarter.

A new believer must understand the need for community, which is not a recent idea faddishly adopted by Christians. God has always been moving through history to make a community of people who live for Him. We see this in the church—as seen in local church groups, not buildings. To be a Christian is to be part of Christ's body. You can help someone long-term by connecting them to a good church where he'll grow beyond college. If you don't do this, he'll be at your Cru meetings until he's 35, wearing excessive amounts of cologne and hitting on freshman women. So consult:

***Nine Marks of a Healthy Church* , Mark Dever (CCR, 1999)**

Only a

booklet, but a good place to start. It's also available as a PDF at [www.NineMarks.org](http://www.NineMarks.org). The book form is by the same title and author (Crossway, 2004). Covers topics like preaching, evangelism, growth, and leadership.

***Spiritual Disciplines Within the Church* , Donald Whitney (Moody, 1996)**

Good for

curbing the idea that growth takes place when I'm snuggled up with my Bible at a coffee shop all by myself. It takes what we typically think of disciplines and places them in the context of the body of Christ.

Other books for discipling are...

***A Call to Spiritual Reformation* , D. A. Carson (Baker, 1992)**

This is an excellent book on prayer even though you could get the nine volumes of E. M. Bounds for about five bucks. It is practical (prayer partners, creating lists), biblical (based on expositions from Paul's prayers), and challenging (heart attitudes and values). Read it together; pray together.

***Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* , Donald Whitney (NavPress, 1991)** There are numerous books on things like prayer, Bible study, meditation, fasting, etc. Whitney's book is thoroughly evangelical. Richard Foster's *Celebration of Discipline* (HarperCollins, 1988) is probably more popular but also more mystical, so I would be cautious giving it to a newer believer. Dallas Willard is another popular author in this area.

***Know the Truth: A Handbook of Christian Belief* , Bruce Milne (IVP, 1998)** Everyone asks questions. This is book touches on most aspects of Christianity in 350 pages. Start with this small book on systemic theology.

None of these books are outrageously expensive. Don't take out student loans for discipleship materials, but prioritize them over your Nth visit to Taco Bell. Suffer a little. Show some passion!

So now you are ready to build on the groundwork of Christ, Scripture, the Church, evangelism, and healthy practices and habits. Here are books in different categories that will be good for stretching yourself.

## **BIBLE, THEOLOGY AND THE GOSPEL**

***God's Big Picture: Tracing the Storyline of the Bible* , Vaughan Roberts (IVP, 2002)**

Enables them to think about what they are reading in light of the kingdom motif running through Scripture. It will make their devo- tional reading more informed and richer.

**“Genesis to Kings” through “Paul” in New Dictionary of Biblical Theology , Rosner, et al. (IVP, 2000)**

For the minimalist and even shorter overview of the whole Bible in 25 pages, gives you a feel for the themes in the major grouping of Scripture (wisdom, prophetic, Gospels, etc). See pages 115-140.

***The Cross-centered Life* , C. J. Mahaney (Multnomah, 2002)**

*Christ*

***Our Mediator* , C. J. Mahaney (Multnomah, 2004)**

Tempting to most of us

is to think that we graduate from one level to the next, including the Gospel. Two books for maintaining a spiritual North Star.

***The Cross of Christ*, John Stott (IVP, 1986)**

A more recent classic about what the crucifixion means for your life. Deep and even devotional.

***The Work of Christ* , Robert Letham (IVP, 1993)**

Walks around the cross and looks at Jesus’ ministry in terms of prophet, priest and king. Rich reading. 250 pages.

**“Atonement” in New Dictionary of Biblical Theology , Alexander, et al. (IVP, 2000)**

Only four pages. Scans a central theme of God’s clearest demonstration of His faithfulness, holiness, righteousness and mercy.

***Systematic Theology* , Wayne Grudem (Zondervan, 1994)**

This expands on the format introduced by Milne above. It is about three times bigger. Studying God should lead you to worship, so he includes application questions, a suggested hymn/chorus and Scripture to memorize related to the chapter.

## **EVANGELISM AND APOLOGETICS**

***Tell the Truth* , Will Metzger (revised. IVP, 2002)**

This is the best all-in-one introduction to evangelism I've read. It blends sound theology and practical pointers, encouraging us to be God-centered messengers.

***Questioning Evangelism* , Randy Newman (Kregel, 2004)**

More about how to think, not what to think. Brings together sample (or actual) conversations, ideas, and real issues facing evangelism today. Metzger and Newman compliment each other like science and art.

**BOOKS TO REMIND YOU THAT CHRISTIANITY DIDN'T BEGIN WITH YOU**

***The Early Church* , Henry Chadwick (Penguin, 1967)**

For the person who must begin at the beginning. Covers the first several hundred years of church history.

***Here I Stand* , Roland Bainton (Abingdon, 1950)**

Everyone needs heroes and Luther's life is inspiring. A man with rough edges used immeasurably by God. If you must, you could just rent a movie about him.

***Letters of John Calvin selection from Bonnet's edition* (Banner of Truth, 1980)**

After reading a 15-page biography on him, read Calvin's mail. This is a glimpse into history and his ministry. He may be one of the most influential Christians of the last one thousand years.

***Selina: Countess of Huntington* , Faith Cook (Banner of Truth, 2001)**

Jump back into the 1700's revivals and see the life of a woman who was devoted to Christ and seeing people come to him.

***On the Golden Shore* , Courtney Anderson (Judson, 1987)**

About the life and ministry of Adoniram and Nancy Judson, America's first missionaries. Early 1800's.

***Marriage to a Difficult Man* , Elisabeth Dodds (Audubon, 2003)**

A book about the relationship of Jonathan and Sarah Edwards, two people who spent their lives seeing God glorified in all things. Christianity in America is deeply indebted to them.

***Exploring Church History* , Howard Vos (Nelson, 1994)**

Two

thousand years in about 200 pages.

**FORMATION, TRANSFORMATION, AND THE CHRISTIAN LIFE**

***Valley of Vision* , Arthur Bennet (Banner of Truth, 1975)**

A gem. Don't be thrown off by the cover. Move slowly through this book and "amen" with saints far godlier than us.

***Ten Questions to Diagnose Your Spiritual Health* , Donald Whitney (NavPress, 2001)**

Reflective questions to ponder. "Do you still grieve over sin?" "Do you thirst for God?"

***A Hunger for God* , John Piper (Crossway, 1997)**

Prayer and fasting in light of what Jesus has done for us.

***Flesh* , Rick James (WSN, 2004)**

One of a kind resource containing articles and small group Bible studies. Tangible material for turning our hearts from pornography and to God.

***The Purity Principle* , Randy Alcorn (Multnomah, 2003)**

Start thinking about various areas of their sanctification. Sexuality cannot be assumed.

***Possessed by God* , David Peterson (IVP, 1995)**

Advanced. Drills home the importance of having already been sanctified as motivation for living holy. In depth look at a New Testament theology of sanctification and holiness.

***“Holiness” in New Dictionary of Biblical Theology , Alexander, et al. (IVP, 2000)***

This is Peterson’s five-page stab at the book above in case you’ve spent too much time watching TV this week and need the bare bones idea of how to understand sanctification.

***True Spirituality , Francis Schaeffer (Tyndale, 1971)***

For someone wrestling with understanding or struggling with seeing his or her life authentically and genuinely changed by the Gospel.

***The Treasure Principle , Randy Alcorn (Multnomah, 2001)***

A book on stewardship and money. We need to learn to give early in our Christian life. A fuller treatment is called *Money, Possessions, and Eternity* (revised. Tyndale House, 2003)

**MORE APOLOGETICS, WORLDVIEW AND CULTURE**

Note: The categories we set up are somewhat arbitrary. It’s hard to separate theology, evangelism, the Bible and apologetics, but the categories help us to grasp the smaller parts of the whole.

There is more than one approach to apologetics. It’s like saying an operating system is necessary and you must choose Windows XP. There are other options. I want to suggest an apologetic approach (in Always Ready below) that is less common in many circles, but is a very rigorous defense of Christianity. You don’t have to memorize volumes of arguments, counter-arguments, proofs, and factoids, though those are helpful to know and even bolster your confidence in the faith. Start here:

***Faith and Reason , Ronald Nash (Zondervan Corp, 1994)***

Excellent explanation of the issues surrounding the problem of evil.



***The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict* , Josh McDowell (Nelson, 1999)**

Can't remember the dates of the earliest New Testament fragments or all the prophecies Jesus fulfilled? Josh does. Overflowing with info and resources.

***The Universe Next Door* , James Sire (4th ed. IVP, 2004)**

Shows why life attitudes and differences are more than preference in bumper stickers.

***Love the Lord Your God with All Your Mind*, J. P. Moreland (NavPress, 1997)**

The second appendix is worth the book alone. It lists resources for different vocations and disciplines of study such as political studies, medicine and healthcare, mathematics, biology, etc.

**NOW YOU'RE CRUISING PAST DIFFERENT OFF RAMPS: ARTS...**

***Escape from Reason* , Francis Schaeffer (IVP, 1968)**

Integrates theology, philosophy, history and culture. Not a practical book, but useful to gaining a big picture. Under 100 pages.

***All God's Children in Blue Suede Shoes* , Kenneth Myers (Crossway, 1989)** Do

Thomas Kinkade and the Veggie Tales make you cringe? A guide to understanding and engaging pop-culture. Especially for anyone interested in the arts.

**ONTO SCIENCE**

***Doubts about Darwin: A History of Intelligent Design* , Thomas Woodward (Baker, 2003)**

Orients the Christian to the debate about God and science.

***The Wedge of Truth: Splitting the Foundations of Naturalism* , Phillip Johnson (2000)**

Don't get caught up in arguing the specifics and limitations of carbon dating. Approaches the

evolution from a worldview level. Johnson also recommends these for further reading: *Darwin's Black Box* by Michael Behe (Free Press, 1998); *Intelligent Design* by William Dembski (IVP, 2002); *Icons of Evolution* by Jonathan Wells (Regnery, 2002).

*Defending Your Faith: An Introduction to Apologetics*, R. C. Sproul (Crossway, 2003) A good foundation for the new apologist.

## **WHAT'S HOT OR PERENNIAL: SEXUALITY AND GENDER**

***The Straight and Narrow*, Thomas Schmidt (IVP, 1995)** We cannot ignore the issue or make fun of it. Homosexuality is such a charged topic, but Schmidt looks at it from a balanced, honest, and compassionate angle.

***Homosexuality: Speaking the Truth in Love*, Edward Welch (P&R, 2000)**

This is a booklet that introduces this very complex issue.

***The Genesis of Sex*, O. Palmer Robertson (P&R, 2002)**

Not a How-to book and NO pictures! The Bible says a lot about our sexuality. Somewhat devotional. Chapters include Unrequited Love, Romance, Divorce, Rape, Homosexuality, and Loneliness.

***Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Crossway, 1991)**

How do we relate as men and women if you're shaped by a culture that produces genderless people? Several articles that can be read individually from the vantage of theology, other disciplines and application.

***What's the Difference?*, John Piper (Crossway, 2001)**

This is a condensed version of the book above.

## **CLONING, ABORTION, AND BIOETHICS**

### ***Bioethics: A Primer for Christians* , Gilbert Meilaender (revised, Eerdmans, 2004)**

Honestly, who cares about your millennium view if you don't have moorings for getting situated and a stance on issues (e.g., cloning, euthanasia and abortion) facing us today. 150 pages.

## **THE PROBLEM OF EVIL**

### ***How Long O Lord*, D. A. Carson (Baker, 1990)**

This is not a book to give to your angry or upset non-Christian friend, but it's for us to understand evil and suffering from a biblical perspective.

### ***Making Sense Out of Suffering* , Peter Kreeft (Servant, 1986)**

Creative. Not simplistic. He is C.S. Lewis-like.

## **TOMES ON LOVE, HATE AND COMMUNITY...**

### ***Love in Hard Places*, D.A. Carson (Crossway, 2002)**

This book gives handles to a slippery word. Looks at racism, war, justice, and revenge. Compliments the next article on "Love."

### ***"Love," "Man and Woman," and "Marriage" in New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* , (IVP, 2000)**

These are three articles on things defined too fuzzily by society. Together only 10 pages. Make them the grist of a topical study around Valentine's Day. It might even be somewhat evangelistic (Ephesians 5:31-32).

### ***Boy Meets Girl* , Josh Harris (Multnomah, 2000)**

I know. Don't judge me. His proposal is much more biblical than most of our emulated or Christianized versions of Friends. You can't go back to holding hands. Authors this strongly loved

or hated usually have something to say. *I Kissed Dating Goodbye* (revised. Multnomah, 2003) is better for high school kids.

***Life Together*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer (HarperCollins, 1954)**

Written by a reflective pastor who died under the Nazis. It's what we Christians want: the real life of Christian fellowship. 100 pages.

***Not Even a Hint*, Josh Harris (Multnomah, 2003)**

Accountability, pornography and masturbation. Three words that leave most of us squirming. The book is for men AND women. Piper says it's, "Realistic, practical and hope-giving."

***From Every Tongue, Tribe and Nation*, J. Daniel Hays (IVP, 2003)**

"Does Jesus really have pasty white skin with bright blue eyes?" Racism can't be ignored. Particularly useful for those wanting to consider race in God's redemptive plan.

***"The Humanitarian Theory of Punishment" in God in the Dock*, C. S. Lewis (Eerdmans, 1972)**

Seminal for Christian thought on justice, capital punishment and war. Creative, clear, and overlooked.

***The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict*, Ken Sande (revised, Baker, 2004)**

You can't avoid dealing with conflict. Biblical and practical. Prevent yourself and those you love from going postal.

**BOOKS FOR MEN**

***God Is a Warrior*, Longman and Reid (Zondervan, 1995)**

Follows God and warfare through the Bible. Gives extra depth to being a "Tender Warrior." Advanced.

## BOOKS FOR WOMEN

***When Life and Beliefs Collide* , Carolyn James (Zondervan, 2003)** Everyone woman I know who has read this could not say enough about it. Looks at the practical benefits of knowing God deeply. Study questions included.

## “SOMEONE I LOVE SHAVES HIS HEAD AND WEARS AN ORANGE TOGA”: CULTS AND RELIGIONS

***The Kingdom of the Cults* , Walter Martin (Bethany House, 2003)** Almost any question about most cults (and some world religions) will be answered here. If you buy only one book on cults/world religions, this is it.

***The Compact Guide to World Religions* , Dean Halverson (Bethany House, 1996)** Concise and clear. Covering every major religion in about 15-20 pages each. Intended to help in witnessing.

## POSTMODERN THOUGHT

There are so many directions to head from here. Not everything written by Christians on PM is helpful. But here are a few places to start.

***Postmodern Times*, Gene Veith, Jr. (Crossway, 1994)**

A little dated, but easy to read and get a feel for can be an overwhelming or vague issue.

***Telling the Truth: Evangelizing Postmoderns* , Edited D. A. Carson (Zondervan, 2000)**

Not to be confused with *Tell the Truth* . A compilation of several evangelicals (many from Campus Crusade staff) edited by D. A. Carson. Meant to strengthen our evangelism in our current culture. Excellent for its breadth.

***The Gagging of God* , D. A. Carson (Zondervan, 1996)**

For the serious and patient reader who wants to think deeply about how we got to postmodernism, its implications, and what the church needs to do.

**BOOKS TO HUMBLE THE GUY WHO THINKS HE KNOWS IT ALL**

***Little Exercises for Young Theologians*, Helmut Thielicke (Eerdmans, 1962)** Knowledge and learning should not simply puffeth uppeth your head, but also increase your desire to be more gracious and patient. 40 pages for the theologian of your movement.

***Exegetical Fallacies* , D. A. Carson (Baker, 1996)**

By focusing on the mistakes we make, the book is intended to make us more careful. A little technical but for those who want to lead groups or think they should.

***Knowing God* , J.I. Packer (IVP, 1993)**

When we see how great and magnificent God is, the more we see how small and limited we are. One of the best contemporary books you'll ever read.

***The Attributes of God* , A. W. Pink (Baker, 1975)**

***Knowledge of the Holy* , A. W. Tozer (HarperCollins, 1961)**

***The***

Similar to Packer's book. These are two books that simply stare intensely at God in slightly different ways, but both insightful and reflective. (A. W. must have been a popular name.)

**TITLES FOR THOSE WHO JUST WANT TO LOOK WELL-READ**

***The Early Church Fathers* , 38 volumes, Phillip Schaff (Eerdmans, 1980)** Everything you ever wanted to know and much more about the first centuries of the church.

***Calvin's Commentaries* , 22 volumes, (reprint. Baker, 2003)**

These are great and cover most of the Bible.

These are

Any CBD set special with the titles embossed in gold on the spine like Hodge's *Systematic Theology* (3 volumes for \$25)

## **BOOKS THAT MAKE YOU DANGEROUS**

### ***English-Greek or English-Hebrew Interlinear Bible***

Any words people don't know gives you gnostic power, elevating you above the intimidated and ignorant. But unless you know original languages, you really have no use for them.

## **FOR THE DISCIPLE WHO DEMANDS JARS OF CLAY SONGS AND THINKS GOD STILL MEETS HIS PEOPLE IN SANCTUARIES**

### ***True Worship, Vaughan Roberts (Authentic, 2002)***

Meaningful conversation about "worship" can't begin with hymns vs. praise songs. First answer, what is Christian worship? Invest in people before letting them lead music at Cru meetings.

### ***Worship by the Book, D. A. Carson (Zondervan, 2002)***

Similar to above title, but longer and from the perspective of three different traditions and settings.

***"Worship" in New Dictionary of Biblical Theology, Alexander (IVP, 2000)*** This is about as concise an article I've read about answering. What does the whole Bible say regarding worship? Under seven pages.

## **INITIATE EVANGELISM THE PASSIVE WAY AND PUT THESE ON YOUR COFFEE TABLE**

### ***The Terrible Alternative , Andrew Chandler (Cassell, 1998)***

Subtitled

"Christian Martyrdom in 20th Century."

***Not the Way It's Suppose to Be, Cornelius Plantinga, Jr. (Eerdmans, 1995)***

For the pessimist. Here's a whole book about sin. It is contemporary in its illustrations and thorough in explaining a theology of sin and its effects. How do you make the cross clear if the idea of sin is dismissed or misunderstood?

**A BOOK TO READ IF YOU'RE DATING THE PERSON YOU'RE DISCIPLING**

***Boy Meets Girl , Josh Harris***

See

above. Shame on you.

**LIFE AFTER OZZY: ALTERNATIVES TO MY UTMOST FOR HIS HIGHEST**

***Morning and Evening, Charles Spurgeon (various publishers)***

One page a

day. Never boring. Colorful metaphors and expressions.

***For the Love of God , D. A. Carson (Crossway, 1998)***

Not fluffy. Devotional-like commentary moving through the Bible in a year, highlighting its unity. One page a day plus Bible reading schedule (included).

***A Godward Life, John Piper (Crossway, 1999, 2001)***

Provocative and thoughtful meditations on various topics and passages. Each devotional is a few pages long. Two volumes are available today, with a third due soon.

***Seeing and Savoring Jesus Christ , John Piper (Crossway, 2001 or 2004)*** Though not a daily book (only 13 chapters, each about 8-10 pages long), it is a series of hard glances at the person of Christ. You become saturated in Scripture about aspects of Christ like His wisdom, power, gladness, anguish, and second coming.



### ***Quiet Times for Couples: A Daily Devotional*, H. Norman Wright (Harvest, 1997)**

This and most others in this vein probably ought to be in the category below. There isn't a Bible within the Bible that only married (or dating) people read. All of God's word is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training.

### **BOOKS YOU CAN SAFELY ADD TO YOUR YARD SALE**

***Armageddon, Oil, and the Middle East Crisis* , John F. Walvoord**                      There are a 900 used copies at Amazon starting at \$0.01. You be the judge. (This used to be a CBD bargain box title.)

Almost anything you got from a CBD bargain box special.

Your fifth extra copy of ***My Utmost for His Highest*** .

Books with covers of multi-racial groups eating produce and surrounded by zoo animals (Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, a.k.a. Jehovah's Witnesses).

### **BREATH MINT? BOLD AND BLUNT TITLES**

#### ***Don't Waste Your Life* , John Piper (Crossway, 2003)**

Challenges mediocrity which plagues so much of Christianity. Anything he writes is deeply God-centered and brings eternity/life into focus.

#### ***Whoredom*, Raymond Ortlund (Eerdmans, 1996)**

Subtitled: *God's Unfaithful Wife in Biblical Theology* . A book tracing the marriage, the love of God, and the unfaithfulness of his people. IVP is now printing it as *God's Unfaithful Wife* .

A BOOK THAT IS OFTEN ALLUDED TO BUT HARDLY READ.

## ***Pilgrim's Progress* , John Bunyan (various publishers and editions)**

About 350 years old. Read and translated more than any other book with the exception of the Bible. An allegory of the Christian life simple enough for kids to enjoy, but profound for all of us on our own pilgrimage toward the celestial city. There's even modern translations and—if you must—abridged children's versions. Some trivia for you: Vanity Fair stole its magazine name from the book.

## **BOOKS THAT ARE REALLY GOOD, BUT YOU MAY NOT FINISH.**

### ***The Death of Death in the Death of Christ* , John Owen (Banner of Truth, 1983)**

J. I. Packer wrote the introduction to the book. Jesus' death makes salvation possible for all people, but actual for saved people. This is the point he thoroughly defends. For committed readers; less passionate readers should consult Packer's intro.

**Jonathan Edwards:** His writings and sermons are profound. They are usually longish and you don't just leisurely read them. You need to keep a pen in hand. But I promise you will be edified and challenged by this (dead) pastor. He was considered to be one of America's brightest philosophers and theologians.

***The Works of Jonathan Edwards* , 2 vol. (reprint. Hendrickson, 1834)** Maybe for a Christmas present. This collection will keep you busy and give you plenty of choices from sermons, letters, and books. Purchase at CBD or [www.DesiringGod.org](http://www.DesiringGod.org). Or Piper's *God's Passion for His Glory* (Crossway, 1998), which is half biography and the other half a reprint of a treatise Edwards wrote.

**John Piper:** Speaking of which, you must read at least one of John Piper's books. He admits to owing much of his writing and teaching to Edwards. Piper is a gifted pastor and his writings usually make this point: God is most glorified in you when you are most satisfied in Him. In some ways all of these are some variation on that theme. Here are some of Piper's books.

***Future Grace (Multnomah, 1998)*** Intended for you to read a chapter a day for a month, covering subjects like despondency, bitterness, lust, covetousness, shame, and others in light of God's promised grace.

***The Pleasures of God (Multnomah, 2000)*** Probably his most theological book.

***Let the Nations be Glad (2nd ed. Baker, 2003)*** What is the goal of missions? Not salvation of sinners. Read this for a more biblical perspective and motivation for missions.

***Desiring God (Multnomah, 2003)*** Probably his most popular title.

***The Dangerous Duty of Delight (Multnomah, 2001)*** The Jabez-sized version of *Desiring God*. C'mon, only if you're the underachiever. Part of what is helpful in reading his books is allowing your thinking to be deeply changed over a long period of time.

## **ESSENTIAL TOOLS FOR THE CHRISTIAN**

You will study to feed your own heart and transform your thinking to reflect God's mind. You will also study to help teach and guide others through life. Discipling demands studying and serious thought about God's Word. There are reference tools that are aimed at helping you understand the meaning of the Bible. They are like cutting knives that allow you to take the chunks of Scripture and then cook and savor (meditate over) them. Help your disciple learn to study and in doing so to taste and see that the Lord is good.

Note: Borrow books when you can, especially ones you know you won't ever read again. Borrow those from the friend who feels she must own everything. Then kindly return the books, having taken notes of the thoughtful points. If the book is profound, then buy it. Otherwise, don't and save you money for books you'll use all the time like reference books.

Every Christian ought to have at least these three books (or ones similar).

***Zondervan NIV Exhaustive Concordance, Goodrick and Kohlenberger (Zondervan, 1999)***

The most basic tool for studying the Bible, enabling you to find passages and perform word studies. Concordances for other translations available (ESV, NASB, NKJV, etc). Don't get Strong's Concordance unless you use KJV. About \$20.

***New Bible Commentary (21st Century Edition) , Wenham, Motyer, et al. (IVP, 1994)***

Hands down the best one-volume evangelical commentary on the Bible. Includes introductions to each book and special articles. Trustworthy and useful. About \$30.

***New Bible Dictionary (3rd edition) , Marshall, Millard, Packer, and Wiseman (IVP, 1996)***

Dictionary articles on almost any topic you can think of like justification, Edomites, clean/unclean, Nero, and authority. Matches book above if you care. About \$30.

Similar ones with pictures and diagrams include:

***Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary , Youngblood (Nelson, 1995)***

***New Unger's Bible Dictionary , Harrison, Vos, and Barber (Moody, 1988)***

***Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary , Brand, et al. (Broadman, 2003)***

**THE SECOND TIER**

In addition to these books above I would seriously consider the New Dictionary of Biblical Theology, which I have referenced to several times already. It will help you see themes in the Bible and is another place to find dictionary entries. For some fascinating and encouraging studies, try following Zion/Jerusalem, Babylon, Priest or Tabernacle/Temple through the Bible. This book does just that and shows you why what, for example, is so significant about how we understand temple. This would affect the way you understand the church, worship/music, who you are, what God has in store for His people in heaven, etc. When we isolate or misplace ideas from the Bible, we fragment it and misunderstand the flow of God's purposes through history. This book helps to connect it all. Save up for it. Fast for a few days. Spend part of your tax return on it. Give plasma, then buy it.

***New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* , Alexander, Rosner, Carson, and Goldsworthy (IVP, 2000)**

Big book. A wealth of excellent information and useful guides to Scripture. About \$30.

***Atlas of the Bible and Christianity*, Tim Dowley (Baker, 1997)**

Why was 40 years in the desert so significant? The trip should have taken 11 days. Did you know the Babylonian Exile was 1/3 of the length of the Appalachian Trail? To see what is happening in the Bible and to get in their shoes you need an atlas.

**COMMENTARIES**

I've made a list of commentaries you might pursue when studying these books. The first one is less technical than the second, which means it's usually shorter and not getting into as many language or critical issues. They are all written by evangelicals. It's hard to find good ones on the Old Testament. Most out there are written by brilliant, but dead German liberals who were basically re-incarnated Darwins, describing the religious experiences of some sheep herders of the Ancient Near East. Most of commentaries in the list below are \$10-\$25. Don't ever pay retail.

In case you don't like to shop or research before you purchase, you might consider just ordering the whole Tyndale Old Testament Commentary set (IVP/Eerdmans) and the Tyndale New Testament Commentary set (IVP/Eerdmans). Otherwise, pick up commentaries as you go or as you are studying various passages/books.

If you must deal with original languages or want more technical books, then you can do further research and purchase the following two volumes, which function like "Consumer's Guide Report" to commentaries:

***Old Testament Commentary Survey, Tremper Longman III (3rd ed. Baker/IVP, 2003)***

***New Testament Commentary Survey , D. A. Carson (5th ed. Baker/IVP, 2001)***

Get the most current editions. Longman has a star rating system along with comments; Carson just comments and groups commentaries together. Carson covers more books; Longman covers with more detail. They are well worth buying, cost about \$8-10 each.

## **OLD TESTAMENT COMMENTARIES**

***Genesis*** [TOTC] by Derek Kidner (IVP, 1967)

***Genesis*** by B. Waltke and C. Fredricks (Zondervan, 2001)

***Exodus*** [TOTC] by Alan Cole (IVP, 1973)

***Exodus*** [NIVAC] by Peter Enns (Zondervan, 2000)

***Leviticus*** [TOTC] by R. K. Harrison (IVP, 1980)

[NIC] by Gordon Wenham (Eerdmans, 1979)

***Leviticus***

**Numbers** [TOTC] by Gordon Wenham (IVP, 1981)

**Numbers**

[NAC] by R. D. Cole (Broadman, 2001)

**Deuteronomy** [NIBC] by Christopher Wright (Hendrickson/Paternoster, 1996) **Deuteronomy**

[NIC] by Peter Craigie (Eerdmans, 1976)

**Joshua** [TOTC] by R. S. Hess (IVP, 1996)

**Joshua** [NAC] by D. M. Howard (Broadman, 1998)

**The Message of Ruth** [BST] by D. Atkinson (IVP, 1983)

**Ruth** [NIC]

by R. L. Hubbard (Eerdmans, 1988)

**1, 2 Samuel** [TOTC] by J. Baldwin (IVP, 1989)

**1, 2 Samuel** [NIVAC] by B. T. Arnold (Zondervan, 2003)

**1 and 2 Kings** [NIB] by I. Provan (Paternoster, 1995)

**1, 2**

**Kings** [NAC] by P. House (Broadman, 1995)

**1 and 2 Chronicles** [NCB] by H. G. H. Williamson (Sheffield, 1982)

**1 Chronicles and 2 Chronicles** [TOTC] by M. J. Selman (IVP, 1994 and 1994)

**Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther** [DSB] by J. G. McConville (Westminster, 1985)

**Ezra and Nehemiah** [TOTC] by D. Kidner (IVP, 1979)

**Esther** [TOTC] by J. Baldwin (IVP, 1984)

**Job** [TOTC] by F. I. Anderson (IVP, 1976)

**Job**

[NIC] by J. E. Hartley (Eerdmans, 1988)

***The Message of the Psalms 1-72*** [BST] by M. Wilcock (IVP, 2001)

***Message of the Psalms 73-150*** [BST] by M. Wilcock (IVP, 2001)

[TOTC] by D. Kidner (IVP, 1973)

***Psalms 73-150*** [TOTC] by D. Kidner (IVP, 1975)

***Proverbs*** [TOTC] by D. Kinder (IVP, 1964)

***Ecclesiastes*** [TOTC] by D. Kidner (IVP, 1976)

[NIC] by T. Longman III (Eerdmans, 1998)

***The Message of Song of Songs: the Lyrics of Love*** [BST] by T. Gledhill (IVP, 1994)

***Song of Songs*** [NIC] by T. Longman III (Eerdmans, 2001)

***Isaiah*** [TOTC] by Alec Motyer (IVP, 1999)

***Prophecy of Isaiah*** by Alec Motyer (IVP, 1994) –advanced.

***Jeremiah and Lamentations*** [TOTC] by R. K. Harrison (IVP, 1973) ***Jeremiah/Lamentations***

[NIVAC] by J. A. Dearman (Zondervan, 2002)

***Ezekiel*** [TOTC] by J. B. Taylor (IVP, 1969)

[NIVAC] by I. Duguid (Zondervan, 1999)

***The Message of Daniel*** [BST] by R. S. Wallace (IVP, 1979)

[TOTC] by J. G. Baldwin (IVP, 1978)

***Minor Prophets, 2 vol.*** [DSB] by Peter Craigie (Westminster, 1985) Covering Hosea through Malachi (all Minor Prophets in just two volumes)

D. A. Hubbard (IVP, 1989)

***Hosea*** [TOTC] by

***Joel and Amos*** [TOTC] by

***The  
Psalms 1-72***

***Ecclesiastes***

***The***

***Ezekiel***

***Daniel***



D. A. Hubbard (IVP, 1989)

**Obadiah, Jonah, Micah** [TOTC] by

Alexander and Waltke (IVP, 1988)

**Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah** [TOTC] by D. W.

Baker (IVP, 1988)

**Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi** [TOTC] by J. G. Baldwin (IVP, 1972)

## **NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARIES**

**Matthew** [TNTC] by R. T. France (IVP, 1987)

**Matthew** [NAC] by Craig Blomberg (Broadman, 1992)

**Mark** [TNTC] by Alan Cole (revised. IVP, 1990)

**Mark** [BNTC] by Morna Hooker (Hendrickson, 1993)

**Luke** [IVPNTC] by Darrel Bock (IVP, 1994)

**Luke**

by Robert Stein (Broadman, 1992)

**The Gospel and Epistles of John** by F. F. Bruce (Eerdmans, 1983)

**The Gospel of John** [Pillar] by D. A. Carson (Apollos/Eerdmans, 1991)—advanced

**The Message of Acts** by John Stott (IVP, 1994)

**Acts**

[TNTC] by I. H. Marshall (IVP, 1980)

**Romans** [NIBC] by James Edwards (Paternoster, 1995)

**Romans**

[NIVAC] by Douglas Moo (Zondervan, 2000)

**I Corinthians** [NIVAC] by Craig Blomberg (Zondervan, 1995)

**2**

**Corinthians** by Linda Belleville (IVP, 1996)

**I and 2 Corinthians** by F. F. Bruce (Eerdmans, 1980)

<b><i>The Message of Galatians</i></b> by John Stott (IVP, 1988) Walter Hansen (IVP, 1994)	<b><i>Galatians</i></b> by
<b><i>The Message of Ephesians</i></b> by John Stott (IVP, 1988) Peter O'Brien (IVP, 1999)—excellent but advanced	<b><i>Ephesians</i></b> by
<b><i>Philippians</i></b> (NIBC) by F. F. Bruce (Paternoster, 1989) <b><i>The Epistle to the Philippians</i></b> by Markus Bockmuehl (Hendrickson, 1998)	
<b><i>Colossians/Philemon</i></b> [TNTC] by N. T. Wright (IVP, 1987) <b><i>Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon</i></b> [NIC] by F. F. Bruce (Eerdmans, 1980)	
<b><i>The Message of 1 and 2 Thessalonians</i></b> by John Stott (IVP, 1994) <b><i>Thessalonians</i></b> [NIC] by Leon Morris (Eerdmans, 1994) <b><i>The Pastoral Epistles</i></b> [TNTC] by Donald Guthrie (revised. IVP, 1990)	<b>1, 2</b>
<b><i>The Message of 2 Timothy</i></b> by John Stott (IVP, 1986) <b><i>Message of 1 Timothy and Titus</i></b> by John Stott (IVP, 1996)	<b>The</b>
<b><i>Hebrews</i></b> [TNTC] by Donald Guthrie (IVP, 1983) [NIVAC] by George Guthrie (Zondervan, 1998)	<b><i>Hebrews</i></b>
<b><i>James</i></b> [NIBC] by Peter Davids (Paternoster, 1989) [Pillar] by Douglas Moo (Apollos/Eerdmans, 2000)	<b><i>James</i></b>
<b><i>The Message of Peter</i></b> by Edmund Clowney (IVP, 1994) <b><i>Peter</i></b> [TNCT] by Wayne Grudem (IVP, 1988) <b><i>Peter and Jude</i></b> [TNTC] by Michael Green (revised. IVP, 1987) <b><i>and Jude</i></b> [NIVAC] by Douglas Moo (Zondervan, 1996)	<b>1</b> <b>2</b> <b>2 Peter</b>

***The Epistles of John*** [TNCT] by John Stott (revised. IVP, 1988)

***The***

***Epistles of John*** [NIC] by I. H. Marshall (Eerdmans, 1994)

***Revelation*** [TNCT] by Leon Morris (revised. IVP, 1987)

***Revelation***

[NIC] by Robert Mounce (revised. Eerdmans, 1997)

One last comment on Bible study references: you may want to skim or quickly read through a book that touches on various kinds of literary types in the Bible. For instance, the Psalms are obviously poetry as seen in the indentations and breaks between stanzas. You don't read Revelation the same way you read Philippians. Some of this is common sense, but some books that will help adjust your reading to the form you're reading are ...

***How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* , Fee and Stuart (3rd ed. Zondervan, 2003)**

Lots of examples

and written by an Old Testament and a New Testament professor. Helpful appendix on evaluating commentaries.

***An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics* , Kaiser and Silva (Zondervan, 1994)**

Not as packed with as

many references as Fee and Stuart's but touching on broader strokes. Both are professors as well and intended to be practical.

You'll also want a dictionary to help with words and to make sure your word studies aren't too far off.

***Vines Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Terms* , W. E. Vines (Nelson, 1996)**

Easiest to use. Don't need to know Hebrew or Greek.

## FROM INFANTS TO ADULTS

Having a list of resources and books is a blessing. Most countries have a fraction of what is available to us. All of this learning, doctrine, insight and devotion is a trust given to us by God and intended for the strengthening and building of His people so that He is more fully praised by the world he created and will completely make new.

*“We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me” (Colossians 1:28-29).*

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