

Pastor Recommended Reading List

Updated Fall 2026

After being requested on a few occasions to create a recommended reading list, I hope this serves those who are interested. Under each major category, I offer suggestions in three tiers—beginner, intermediate, and advanced.

A beginner book is usually under 200 pages, reads easily for those in high school or beyond, and serves as an important introduction to the theme.

An intermediate book is anywhere from 150-350 pages, goes into greater depth than a beginner book, and is usually a more difficult read because of vocabulary, developed reasoning/thoughts, etc.

An advanced book has no maximum page length and is suited for those with a good foundation in basic Christian beliefs, the Bible, and some knowledge of literature, culture, and the arts.

On Becoming a Christian

Beginner: *Just for Starters* by Phillip Jensen and Tony Payne, *You Me and the Bible* by Tony Payne, *Why I am a Christian* by John Stott, *What is the Gospel* by Greg Gilbert, *Conversion* by Michael Lawrence

Intermediate: *Mere Christianity* by C.S. Lewis, *Born Again* by Charles Colson, *Grace Abounding* by John Bunyan, *Turning to God* by David Wells

Advanced: *Beginning Well* by Gordon Smith, *Finally Alive* by John Piper, *The Doctrine of Regeneration* by Stephen Charnock, *Confessions* by Saint Augustine, *Surprised by Joy* by C.S. Lewis

Explaining and Defending Christianity (Apologetics)

Beginner: *The Air We Breathe* by Glen Schrivner, *Reason for God* by Tim Keller, *More than a Carpenter* by Josh McDowell, *The Case for Faith* and *The Case for Christ* by Lee Strobel, *Confronting Christianity: 12 Hard Questions for the World's Largest Religion* by Rebecca McLaughlin

Intermediate: *Mere Christianity* by C.S. Lewis, *The Universe Next Door* by James Sire, *Reasonable Faith* by William Lane Craig, *Scaling the Secular City* by J.P. Moreland, *Expository Apologetics* by Voddie Baucham, *Defending the Faith* by R.C. Sproul

Advanced: *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self* by Carl Trueman, *The God Who is There* by Francis Schaeffer, *Christian Apologetics* by Douglas Groothuis

On Growing as a Christian

Beginner: *Crazy for God* by Francis Chan, *Screwtape Letters* by C.S. Lewis, *You Can Change* by Tim Chester, *Little Pilgrim's Progress* by Helen Taylor (good to be read by or to elementary age kiddos or adults who think John Bunyan's work and language is a bit heavy)

Intermediate: *True Spirituality* by Francis Schaeffer, *The Emotionally Healthy Church* by Peter Scazzero, *The Celebration of Discipline* by Richard Foster, *The Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan, *Desiring God* by John Piper, *The Pursuit of God* by A. W. Tozer, *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction* by Eugene Peterson, *On Mortification of Sin* by John Owen, *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas à Kempis, *Enjoying God* by Tim Chester

Advanced: *The Divine Conspiracy* and *The Spirit of the Disciplines* by Dallas Willard, *The Cost of Discipleship* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Holiness* by J.C. Ryle

On Making Disciples

Beginner: "Born to Reproduce" by Dawson Trotman (a short article), *Disciples are Made, Not Born* by Walter Henrichsen, *Essential Guide to Becoming a Disciple* by Greg Ogden (to be done with 2-3 others)

Intermediate: *Jesus Christ Disciple Maker* by Bill Hull, *The Master Plan of Evangelism* by Robert Coleman, *Discipleship Essentials* by Greg Ogden (a 6 month study to be done with 1-3 others)

Advanced: *The Mission of God* by Chris Wright, *The Cost of Discipleship* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Reaching Out* by Henri Nouwen

On Christian Beliefs and Doctrine

Beginner: *Christian Beliefs* by Wayne Grudem, *The Gospel for Real Life* by Jerry Bridges, *Basic Christianity* by John Stott

Intermediate: *Evangelical Convictions* by the Evangelical Free Church of America, *Knowing God* by J.I. Packer, *Redemption: Accomplished and Applied* by John Murray, *The Cross of Christ* by John Stott

Advanced: *Christian Theology* by Millard Erickson, *Systematic Theology* by Wayne Grudem, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion* by John Calvin

On Leadership

Beginner: *Spiritual Leadership* by J. Oswald Sanders, *Be the Leader You Were Meant to Be* by Leroy Eims

Intermediate: *Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership* by Ruth Haley Barton, *In the Name of Jesus* by Henri Nouwen, *Liberating Ministry from the Success Syndrome* by Kent Hughes, *Brothers We are Not Professionals* by John Piper, *Lead* by Paul David Tripp,

Advanced: *The Making of a Leader* by J. Robert Clinton, *Biblical Eldership* by Alexander Strauch, *Canoeing the Mountains* by Tod Bolsinger,

On Serving and Understanding Your Community and Culture

Beginner: *The Art of Neighboring* by Runyon and Pathak, *The Church of Irresistible Influence* by Robert Lewis, *Out of the Saltshaker and into the World* by Rebecca Manley Pippert

Intermediate: *Missional Church* edited by Darrel Gruder, *How Now Shall We Live* by Colson and Pearcey, *Let Justice Roll Down* by John Perkins, *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger* by Ron Sider, *The Hole in the Gospel* by Richard Stearns, *When Helping Hurts* by Corbett and Fikkert

Advanced: *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self: Cultural Amnesia, Expressive Individualism, and the Road to Sexual Revolution* by Carl Trueman, *To Change the Word* by James Hunter, *The Mission of God* by Chris Wright

On the Bible (please just focus on reading the text of Scripture)

Beginner: www.bibleproject.com, *Ten Keys for Unlocking the Bible* by Colin Smith, *The Bible Jesus Read* by Philip Yancey, *The Jesus Story Book Bible* (Children's Bible) by Sally Lloyd-Jones

Intermediate: *The Books of the Bible* by John Salihamer, *How to Read the Bible for all Its Worth* by Fee and Stuart, *Eat This Book* by Eugene Peterson

Advanced: *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* by Klein, Blomberg and Hubbard

On the Christian Church

Beginner: *9 Marks of a Healthy Church* by Mark Dever, *Life Together* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Gospel-Driven Church* by Jared Wilson, *Church Membership* by Jonathan Leeman

Intermediate: *Total Church* by Chester and Timmis, *The Body* by Charles Colson, *The Trellis and the Vine* by Marshall and Payne, *Don't Fire Your Church Members* by Jonathan Leeman

Advanced: *The Church* by Edmund Clowney, *The City of God* by St. Augustine, *The Didache*

On Sharing Christ (Evangelism and Missions)

Beginner: *Evangelism* by Mack Stiles, *How to Give Away Your Faith* by Paul Little, *Stay Salt* by Rebecca Manley Pippert

Intermediate: *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* by J.I. Packer, *Let the Nations be Glad* by John Piper, *Evangelism as Exiles* by Elliot Clark,

Advanced: *The Mission of God* by Chris Wright, *The Next Christendom* by Philip Jenkins, *The Heart of Evangelism* by Jerram Barrs, *Evangelism through the Local Church* by Michael Green

On Preaching and Teaching

Beginner: *Folly, Grace, and Power* by John Koessler, *Why Johnny Can't Preach* by T. David Gordon

Intermediate: *Christ-Centered Preaching* by Bryan Chapell, *Biblical Preaching* by Haddon Robinson, *Between Two Worlds* by John Stott, *Biblical Preaching* by Donald Sunukjian

Advanced: *Preaching and Preachers* by D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Teaching Christianity* by St. Augustine, *Evangelical Eloquence* by R.L. Dabney, *Fool's Talk* by Os Guinness

Work, Vocation, and Productivity

Beginner: *Do. More. Better* by Tim Challies, *Work Matters* by Tom Nelson, *What's Best Next* by Matt Perman

Intermediate: *Every Good Endeavor* by Tim Keller, *God at Work* by Gene Veith, *Kingdom Calling* by Amy Sherman, *Culture Making* by Andy Crouch

Advanced: *Business as a Calling* by Michael Novak, *The Call* by Os Guinness, *Visions of Vocation* by Steven Garber, *For All God's Worth* by N.T. Wright

On Marriage

Beginner: *What Did You Expect* by Paul David Tripp, *You and Me Forever* by Francis Chan, *Love and Respect* by Emerson Eggerich, *Before Sinners Say I Do* by Dave Harvey

Intermediate: *The Meaning of Marriage* by Tim and Kathy Keller, *Intended for Pleasure: Sex Technique and Sexual Fulfillment* by Ed Wheat, *The Marriage You've Always Wanted* by Gary Chapman, *The Smart Step Family* by Ron Deal

Advanced: *God, Marriage, and Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation* by Andreas Kostenberger

On Suffering and Pain

Beginner: *Gentle and Lowly* by Dane Ortland, *A Grief Observed* and *The Problem of Pain* by C.S. Lewis, *A Letter of Consolation* by Henri Nouwen

Intermediate: *The Bruised Reed* by Richard Sibbes, *When God Weeps* by Joni Eareckson Tada, *Suffering and the Sovereignty of God* by John Piper, *Shame Interrupted* by Edward Welch, *Where is God When It Hurts* by Philip Yancey

Advanced: *How Long, O Lord* by D.A. Carson, *The Mystery of Providence* by John Flavel, *The Mute Christian Under the Smarting Rod* by Thomas Brooks, *Suffering and Sovereignty: John Flavel and the Puritans on Afflictive Providence* by Brian H. Cosby

On Sexuality and Gender Issues

Beginner: *Out of a Far Country: A Gay Son's Journey to God* by Christopher Yuan, *What Does the Bible Really Teach about Homosexuality* by Kevin DeYoung, *The Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert* by Rosaria Butterfield, *Washed and Waiting* by Wesley Hill, *Gay Girl, Good God* by Jackie Hill-Perry

Intermediate: *Holy Sexuality and the Gospel* by Christopher Yuan, *A Better Story* by Glynn Harrison

Advanced: *Understanding Gender Dysphoria* by Mark Yarhouse, *Love Thy Body* by Nancy Pearcey

Relationships, family, etc.

Beginner: *The Jesus Story Book Bible* (Children's Bible) by Sally Lloyd-Jones, *Boundaries* by Cloud and Townsend, *Shepherding a Child's Heart* by Paul David Tripp, *Resolving Everyday Conflict* by Ken Sande, *Raising a Modern Day Knight* by Robert Lewis

Intermediate: *Sacred Parenting* by Gary Thomas, *Peacemaker* by Ken Sande, *The Five Love Languages* by Gary Chapman

Advanced: *God, Marriage, and Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation* by Andreas Kostenberger

Recommended Authors

Authors who I believe have served the church well in their generation and recommend with minimal reservations (though I don't endorse everything they write):

Voddie Baucham, Craig Blomberg, Jerry Bridges, John Bunyan, Rosaria Butterfield, D.A. Carson, Francis Chan, Matt Chandler, Bryan Chapell, H.B. Charles, Tim Chester, G.K. Chesterton, Mark Dever, Kevin DeYoung, Jonathan Edwards, Elisabeth Elliot, Sinclair Ferguson, Richard Foster, Wayne Grudem, Os Guinness, Phillip Jensen, Tim Keller, Soren Kierkegaard, John Lennox, C.S. Lewis, Martin Lloyd-Jones, Max Lucado, John MacArthur, George MacDonald, Beth Moore, J.P. Moreland, Iain Murray, John Newton, Henri Nouwen, John Owen, J.I. Packer, Tony Payne, Nancy Pearcey, Eugene Peterson, John Piper, David Platt, Peter Scazzero, Glen Scrivener, Richard Sibbes, R.C. Sproul, Charles Spurgeon, John Stott, A.W. Tozer, Paul David Tripp, Carl Trueman, Cornelius Van Til, Thomas Watson, John Wesley, Jen Wilkin, Dallas Willard, Jared Wilson, Chris Wright, N.T. Wright.

Most published works by The Good Book Company, Matthias Media, Banner Books, and Crossway.