



5 YEAR CHRISTIAN READING PLAN

*. . . that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend, **with all the saints** what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God* (Ephesians 3:18-19).

Year 1

Evangelistic Sermons
Pilgrim's Progress
The Knowledge of the Holy
Five English Reformers
Profiting from the Word
A Guide to Prayer

David Martyn Lloyd-Jones
John Bunyan
A. W. Tozer
J. C. Ryle
A. W. Pink
Isaac Watts



Year 1|

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- 6 Six categories:**

**the gospel, theology, Church history,
general Christian living, Bible reading, prayer**

Year 1

Evangelistic Sermons

David Martyn Lloyd-Jones

Exceptional insight into how unbelievers think about life and religion. Stimulating aid to evangelizing.

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Pilgrim's Progress

John Bunyan

Classic allegory of the Christian life. Considered to be one of the world's great literary works. A *must* for Christians.

This wonderful work is one of the very few books which may be read over repeatedly at different times, and each time with a new and a different pleasure.

--Samuel Taylor Coleridge

*. . . that tenderest and most theological of books. . .
That is pulsating with life in every word.*

--J. Gresham Machen

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The Knowledge of the Holy

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Outstanding meditations on Divine perfections. Perhaps the best place to begin to learn to glorify God for His attributes.

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Five English Reformers

J. C. Ryle

Why were our reformers burned? Inspiring accounts of five of the most influential English reformers during the cruel reign of “Bloody” Mary yield the answer.

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A Guide to Prayer

Isaac Watts

Essence of what Watts taught a group of young men who asked him how to pray. Not anecdotal. Earnestly substantive.

Year 2

The Everlasting Righteousness Horatius Bonar
Warm, insightful, pastoral treatment of justification by faith alone. A life-changer.

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Horatius Bonar

Warm, insightful, pastoral treatment of justification by faith alone. A life-changer.

The justifying work of Calvary was God's way, not only of bringing pardon, but of securing certainty. It was the only perfect thing which had ever been presented to God in man's behalf; and so peculiar was this perfection, that it might be used by an in his transactions with God, as if it were his own.

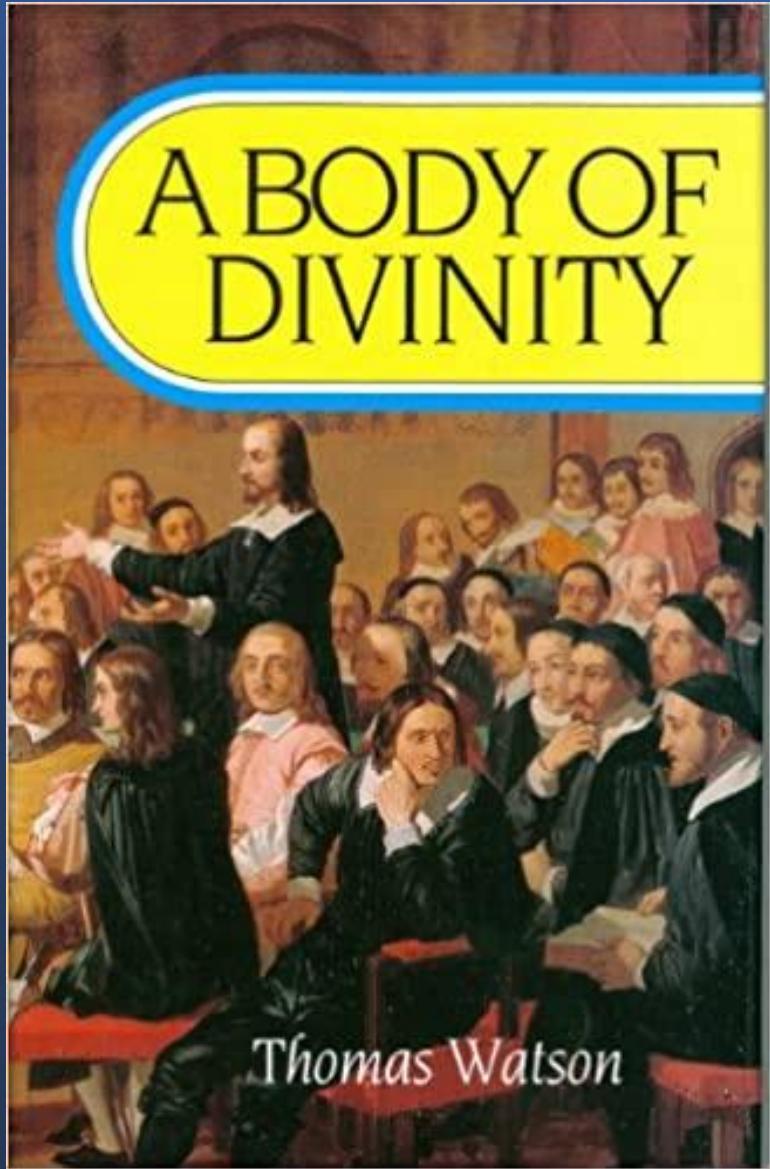
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The Ten Commandments Thomas Watson

Penetrating exposition and application. Spiritually warm. God-glorifying all the way through.



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The Incomparable Christ

J. Oswald Sanders

A devotional/doctrinal treatment of the great facts of the person & work of Christ. 36 chapters of inspirational, applied Christology.

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Worldly Saints: The Puritans as They Really Were Leland Ryken

Best corrective of misinformed impressions of God's choicest saints. Arranged topically: money, family, worship, education, etc.

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Equates the Lord's Day with the Sabbath. But a convicting, practical persuasive for keeping the Lord's Day *for the Lord!*

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A Method for Prayer with Scripture Expressions Matthew Henry

Ripe fruit of Henry's life-long preparation for pulpit prayers. Expanded outlines for each major category of prayer. 2300 Scripture references employed. Unparalleled resource.

b) 2dly, We must give God thanks for the spiritual mercies bestowed upon us in particular, especially if we are called with an effectual call, and have a good work of grace begun in us.

(1) We must bless God for the striving of his Spirit with us, and the admonitions and checks of our own consciences.

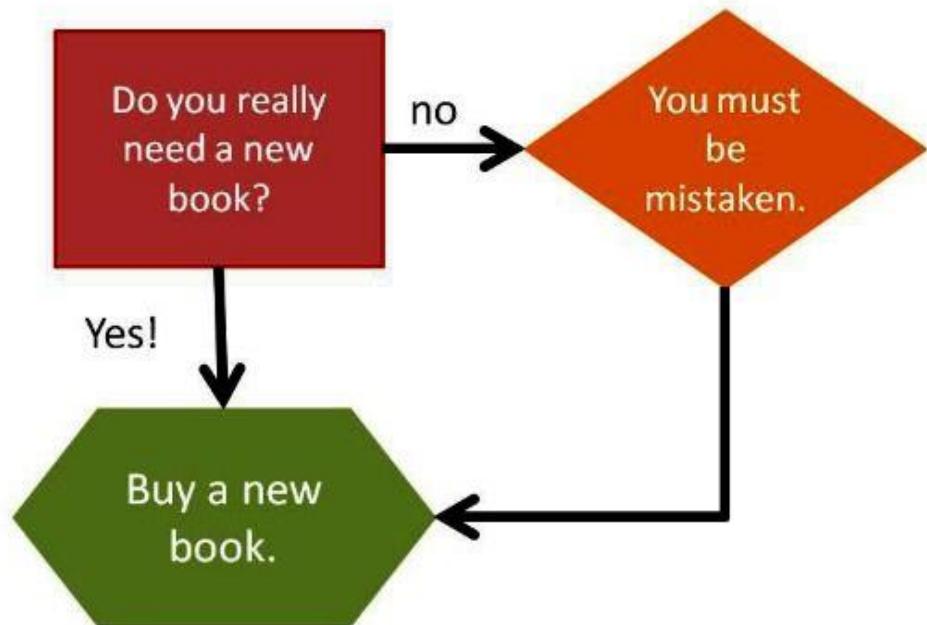
We bless thee, that thou hast not given us over to a reprobate mind,²⁸⁸ that our consciences are not seared,²⁸⁹ that thou hast not said concerning us, They are joined to idols, let them alone,²⁹⁰ but that thy Spirit is yet striving with us.²⁹¹

We thank thee for the work of the law written in our hearts, our own consciences also bearing witness, and our own thoughts between themselves accusing or excusing one another.²⁹²

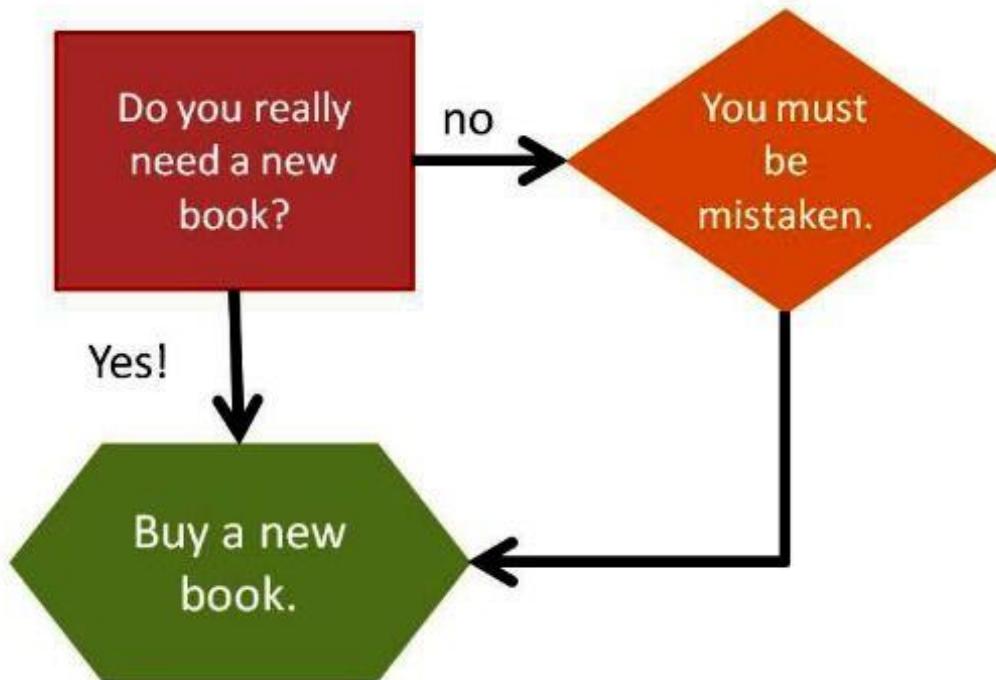
(2) We must bless God if there be a saving change wrought in us by his blessed Spirit.

And hath God by his grace translated us out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his dear Son?²⁹³ Hath he called us into fellowship

DO YOU REALLY NEED A NEW BOOK?



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C. H. Spurgeon wrote,

We are quite persuaded that the very best way for you to be spending your leisure time, is to be either reading or praying. You may get much instruction from books which afterwards you may use as a true weapon in your Lord and Master's service. Paul cries, "Bring the books" — join in the cry.



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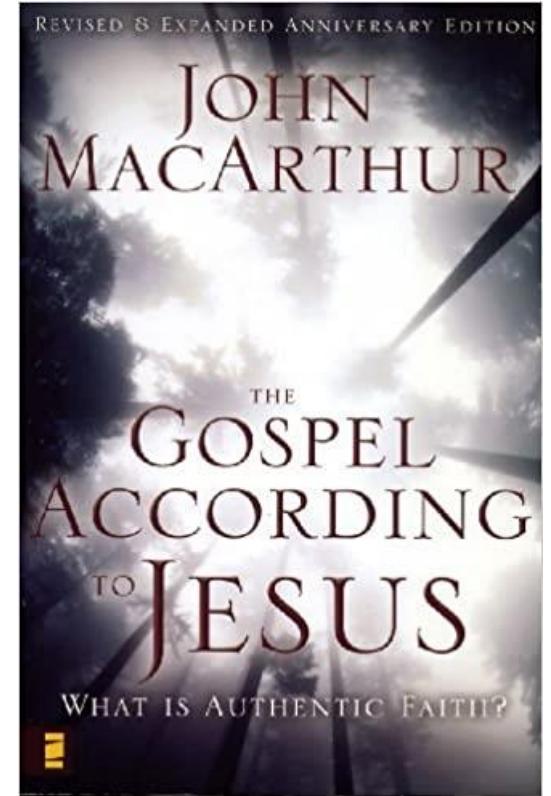
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Year 3

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Correction of easy-believism. Occasionally a bit over-stated, but a sobering, scriptural examination of what Jesus Christ preached and taught to be necessary in order to be saved.



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The Sermon on the Mount David Martyn Lloyd-Jones

Sermons preached at Westminster Chapel in London in the 1950's. Most spiritually insightful of the many expositions of the Lord's most famous sermon.

Year 3

Knowing God

J. I. Packer

Classic explanation of what it means to know God experientially; not just knowing *about* God, but *knowing* Him yourself.

Over 1 ½ million copies. Translated into over a dozen languages.

Three sections: The first directs our attention to how and why we know God, the second to the attributes of God and the third to the benefits enjoyed by those who know him intimately.

Year 3

Christian Leaders of the 18th Century J. C. Ryle

Well known (George Whitefield, John Wesley, August Toplady) and lesser known (William Grimshaw, William Romaine, John Berridge, and others) English and Welsh speaking dynamos of the 17th century. Marked by arresting anecdotes and quotations.

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Psalm 119

Charles Bridges

Single most helpful work on the Bible's longest chapter. Written as a theology of sanctification through the expressions and progression of the Psalm.

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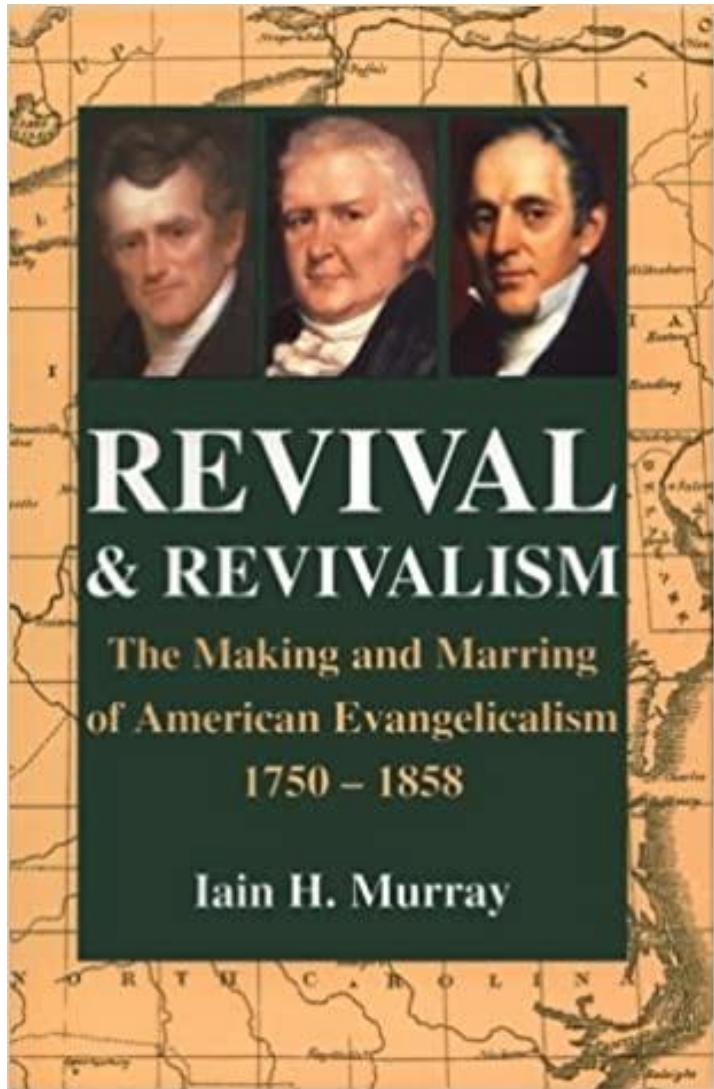
Letters of Samuel Rutherford

Andrew Bonar, ed.

365 letters breathing devotion to Christ.

*When we are dead and gone let the world
know that Spurgeon held Rutherford's Letters
to be the nearest thing to inspiration which
can be found in all the writings of mere men.*

--C. H. Spurgeon



Year 4

Revival and Revivalism

Iain Murray

Gracious, factually objective expose of the gradual change in the theology and the methodology of American evangelistic preaching that occurred in the century following the 1st Gt. Awak.

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Spiritual Depression

David Martyn Lloyd-Jones

Twenty-one sermons originally delivered on consecutive Sunday mornings at London's Westminster Chapel.

Unhappy Christians are, to say the least, a poor recommendation for the Christian Faith; and there can be little doubt but that the exuberant joy of the early Christians was one of the most potent factors in the spread of Christianity.

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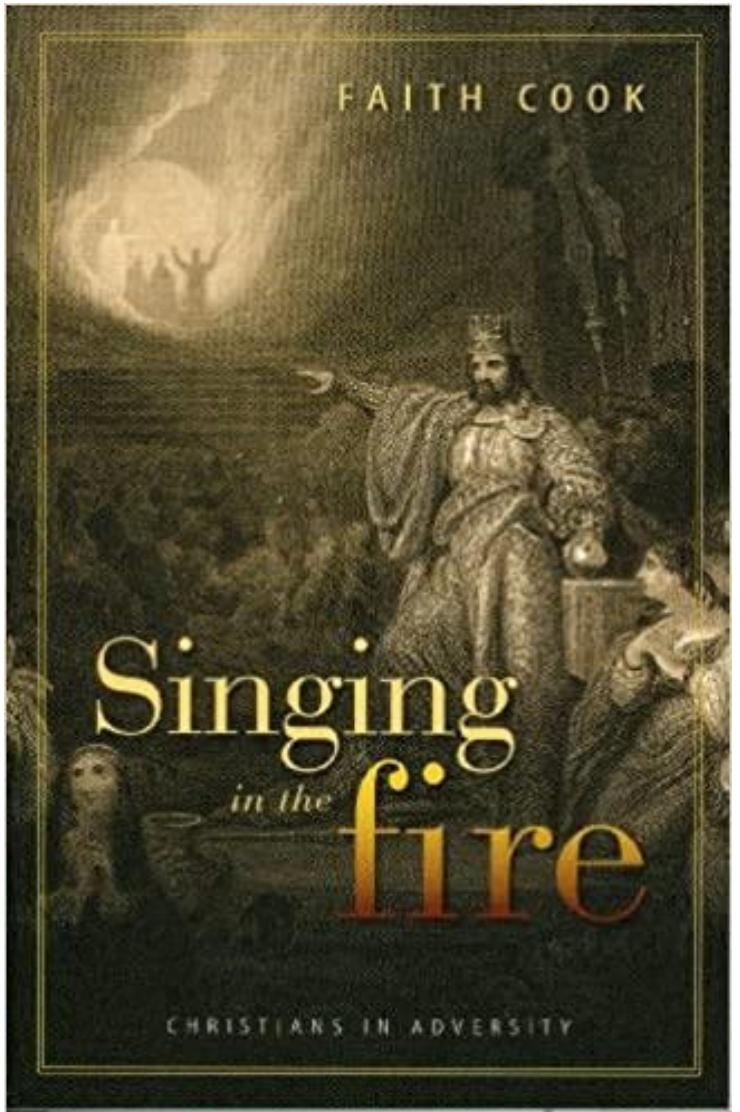
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The End for Which God Created the World Jonathan Edwards
Seminal theology explaining and glorifying the ultimate purpose for our existence. Unequaled on the subject. Best edition is *God's Passion for His glory*, with notes by John Piper.



Year 4

Singing in the Fire

Faith Cook

Subtitled: *Christians in Adversity*. Recounts the extraordinary faith of fourteen otherwise ordinary men and women.

Year 4

*Singing in the Fire
Holiness*

Faith Cook
J. C. Ryle

Irenic, pastoral corrective of a common imbalance in the understanding of sanctification. Challenging appeals to practical godliness. Best edition is *Faithfulness and Holiness*, ed. by J. I. Packer.



Year 4

Singing in the Fire Holiness

Faith Cook
J. C. Ryle

Ironic, pastoral corrective of a common imbalance in the understanding of sanctification. Challenging appeals to practical godliness. Best edition is *Faithfulness and Holiness*, ed. by J. I. Packer.

The Mortification of Sin

John Owen

The one volume on the subject which it is impossible to imagine ever being superseded. Truly life-altering. Best edition is in *Overcoming Sin and Temptation*, ed. by Kelly Kapic and Justin Taylor.

1. Read these during your normal devotional time. If you generally read scripture and pray, try adding something from a sound, spiritually stimulating book.

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2. Read even 10-15 minutes a day. We sometimes hesitate to begin a book because we know we can't possibly afford the time. But that may be because we're thinking in terms of long periods of time.

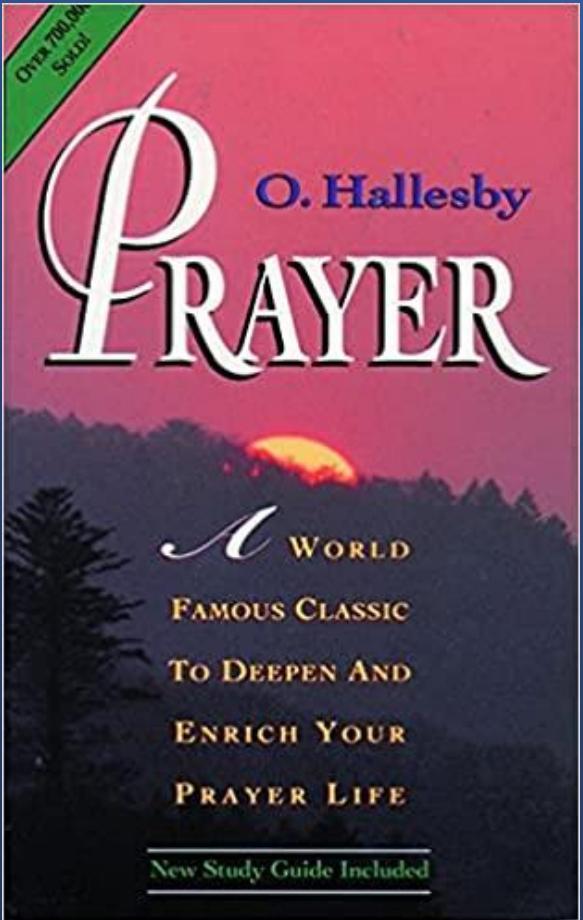
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3. Read more intelligently. One of the reasons we bog down in good books is because we haven't started well. Opening a carefully planned, well written book and beginning with the first sentence is like pulling out of your driveway but not knowing where you're going.

Or walking into a forest without a map.

Take the few minutes necessary to skim the Table of Contents. Do you understand the chapter headings? The trend today is to title chapters with trendy blurbs that scarcely reveal anything about the their contents. The book will be about prayer, and the chapter headings will be something like, “Rollercoaster Rave,” “Never Again On My Turf,” “Poked, Poking, and Provoking,” and other such nonsensical trivia.

Really good books, classics, do nothing of this superficial sort. They tell you with each new chapter or chapter division what additional step will now be traveled through the book’s “journey.”

4. Thumb the book. Once you've taken a minute to read through the Table of Contents, ask yourself if you understand the chapter titles. If not, turn to those which are unclear and read a few of their opening sentences or paragraphs.



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PRAYER

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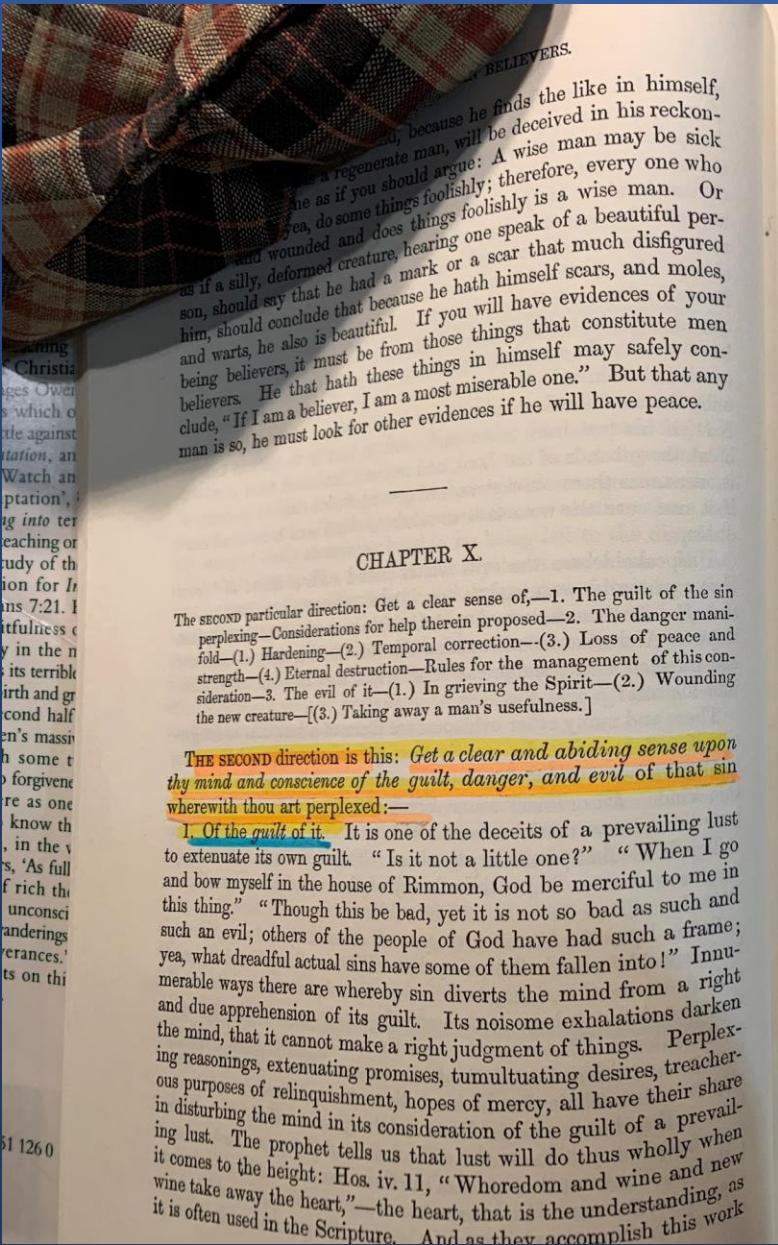
we declared, the promises of him as a Spirit of grace and holiness in the covenant belong unto the believers of the Gentiles also. If they do not, they have neither share nor interest in Christ; which is a better plea for the Jew than this peculiar instance will afford. But this promise is only an especial declaration of what in one case this Spirit shall do, who is promised as a Spirit of grace and holiness in the covenant. And, therefore, the author of the evasion, suspecting that the fraud and sacrilege of it would be detected, betakes himself to other subterfuges, which we shall afterward meet with, so far as we are concerned.

It may be more soberly objected, "That the Spirit of grace and supplication was given unto believers under the Old Testament; and, therefore, if there be no more in it, if some extraordinary gift be not here intended, how comes it to be made an especial promise with respect unto the times of the New Testament? It may, therefore, be supposed that not the ordinary grace or gift of prayer, which believers, and especially the officers of the church, do receive, but some extraordinary gift bestowed on the apostles and first converts to the church, is here intended. So the prophecy concerning the effusion of the Spirit on all sorts of persons, Joel ii. 28-32, is interpreted by Peter, and applied unto the sending of the Holy Ghost in miraculous gifts on the day of Pentecost, Acts ii. 14-21."

Ans. 1. I have elsewhere already, in general, obviated this objection by showing the prodigious folly of that imagination, that the dispensation of the Spirit is confined unto the first times of the gospel; whereof this objection is a branch, as *enmity* unto the matter treated of is the occasion of the whole. **2.** We nowhere find *grace* and *prayer*, the things here promised, to be reckoned among the *extraordinary gifts* of the Spirit under the New Testament. Prayer, indeed, in an unknown tongue was so; but prayer itself was not so, no more than grace; which if it were, the whole present church is graceless. **3.** The promise in Joel had express respect unto the extraordinary gifts of *prophecy* and *visions*, and therefore had its principal accomplishment on the day of Pentecost. This promise is quite of another nature. **4.** That which is necessary for and the duty of all believers, and that always, is not an *extraordinary gift*, bestowed on a few for a season. Now, if there are any who think that grace and prayer are not necessary unto all believers, or that they may have abilities, and exercise them, without any aid of the Holy Spirit, I will not at present contend with them; for this is not a place to plead with those by whom the principles of the Christian faith are denied. Divine commands are the rule of our duty, not man's imaginations. **5.** If this be not an especial promise of the New Testament, because the matter of it, or grace promised, was in

the Old, then is there no season; for the saints under the Old were partakers of all the same graces with the saints under the New before, 6. Two things are intended in the promise, 1. *An amplification and enlargement* of this grace or favour, as unto the subjects of it *extensively*. It was under the Old Testament confined unto a few, but now it shall be communicated unto many, and diffused all the world over. It shall be so poured out as to be shed abroad, and imparted thereby unto many. That which before was but as the watering of a garden by an especial hand is now as the clouds pouring themselves forth on the whole face of the earth. (2.) *An increase of the degrees* of spiritual abilities for the performance of it, Tit. iii. 5, 6. There is now a rich communication of the Spirit of grace and prayer granted unto believers in comparison of what was enjoyed under the Old Testament. This the very nature of the dispensation of the gospel, wherein we receive from Jesus Christ "grace for grace," doth evince and confirm. I suppose it needless to prove that, as unto all spiritual supplies of grace, there is brought in an *abundant* administration of it by Jesus Christ, the whole Scripture testifying unto it.

There were, indeed, under the Old Testament, prayers to and praises of God dictated by a Spirit of prophecy, and received by immediate divine revelation, containing mysteries for the instruction of the church in all ages. These prayers were not suggested unto them by the aid of the Spirit as a Spirit of supplication, but dictated in and to them by the Spirit as a Spirit of prophecy. Nor did they themselves comprehend the mind of the Holy Spirit in them fully, but inquired diligently thereinto, as into other prophecies given out by the Spirit of Christ which was in them, 1 Pet. i. 10-12;—an instance whereof we may have in Ps. xxii.; a prayer it is with thanksgiving from first to last. Now, although David, unto whom it was given by inspiration, might find in his own condition things that had some low and mean resemblance of what was intended in the words suggested unto him by the Holy Spirit, as he was a type of Christ, yet the depth of the mysteries contained therein, the principal scope and design of the Holy Ghost, was in a great measure concealed from himself, and much more from others. Only it was given out unto the church by immediate inspiration, that believers might search and diligently inquire into what was signified and foretold therein; that so thereby they might be gradually led into the knowledge of the mysteries of God, according as he was pleased graciously to communicate of his saving light unto them. But withal it was revealed unto David and the other prophets, that in these things "they did



to the height in unregenerate persons, so in part in regenerate also. Solomon tells you of him who was enticed by the lewd woman, that he was "among the simple ones;" he was "a young man void of understanding," Prov. vii. 7. And wherein did his folly appear? Why, says he, in the 23d verse, "He knew not that it was for his life;" he considered not the guilt of the evil that he was involved in. And the Lord, rendering a reason why his dealings with Ephraim took no better effect, gives this account: "Ephraim is like a silly dove without heart," Hos. vii. 11;—had no understanding of his own miserable condition. Had it been possible that David should have lain so long in the guilt of that abominable sin, but that he had innumerable corrupt reasonings, hindering him from taking a clear view of its ugliness and guilt in the glass of the law? This made the prophet that was sent for his awaking, in his dealings with him, to shut up all subterfuges and pretences by his parable, that so he might fall fully under a sense of the guilt of it. This is the proper issue of lust in the heart,—it darkens the mind that it shall not judge aright of its guilt; and many other ways it hath for its own extenuation that I shall not now insist on.

Let this, then, be the first care of him that would mortify sin,—to fix a right judgment of its guilt in his mind. To which end take these considerations to thy assistance:—

(1) Though the power of sin be weakened by inherent grace in them that have it, that sin shall not have dominion over them as it hath over others, yet the guilt of sin that doth yet abide and remain is aggravated and heightened by it. Rom. vi. 1, 2, "What shall we say then? shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"— "How shall we, that are dead?" The emphasis is on the word "we." How shall we do it, who, as he afterward describes it, have received grace from Christ to the contrary? We, doubtless, are more evil than any, if we do it. I shall not insist on the special aggravations of the sins of such persons,—how they sin against more love, mercy, grace, assistance, relief, means, and deliverances than others. But let this consideration abide in thy mind,—there is inconceivably more evil and guilt in the evil of thy heart that doth remain, than there would be in so much sin if thou hadst no grace at all. Observe,—

(2) That as God sees abundance of beauty and excellency in the desires of the heart of his servants, more than in any the most glorious works of other men, yea, more than in most of their own outward performances, which have a greater mixture of sin than the desires and pantings of grace in the heart have; so God sees a great deal of evil in the working of lust in their hearts, yea, and more than in the open, notorious acts of wicked men, or in many outward sins where-

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5. Use highlighters. Good books often have lengthy chapters which need to be cut like pies. Colored highlighters can clearly divide their pieces, and subdivide them even further if needed.
6. A point very important for reading for spiritual edification and fellowship. Ability to read non-critically (that is, not as an exercise in critical thinking), but nevertheless, with an awareness of the need always to be able to differentiate between *what is so*, and *what the writer may think is so*.

You will still be interested in other books, but you will find, as I find—and I say this to the glory of God—that there are many books I would like to read, but I just do not have the time. I am too busy reading the Bible and books that help me understand it.

Now I am not criticizing the others. I like to read books on history. I like reading biographies. I like reading about music. I like reading about medicine, aspects of science, psychology, philosophy, and so on. But my problem is to find the time. I find life here in this Book. It moves my heart. It melts me. It fills me with righteousness. It strengthens my feeble will. I want this.

--David Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Authentic Christianity*, 115

. . . In everything by prayer. . . (Philippians 4:6).

--J. I. Packer

John Newton.

I know not a better rule of reading the Scripture than to read it through from beginning to end and, when we have finished it once, to begin it again. We shall meet with many passages which we can make little improvement of, but not so many in the second reading as in the first, and fewer in the third than in the second—provided we pray to him who has the keys to open our understandings, and to anoint our eyes with his spiritual ointment.

John Newton.

The course of reading today will prepare some lights for what we shall read tomorrow, and throw a further light upon what we read yesterday. Experience only can prove the advantage of this method, if steadily persevered in. To make a few efforts, and then give over is like making a few steps and then standing still, which would do little towards completing a long journey. But, though a person walked slowly, and but a little way in a day, if he walked every day, and with his face always in the same direction, year after year, he might in time encompass the globe.

John Newton.

Happy should I be, could I fully follow the advice I am now offering to you. . . But my evil heart obstructs the dictates of my judgment; I often feel a reluctance to read this book of books, and a disposition to hew out broken cisterns which afford me no water, while the fountain of living waters is close within my reach (“On Reading the Bible.” In 4224, pp. 153-154).