

BOOKS FOR PASTORS AND OTHER CHRISTIAN SERVANTS

Chosen by Rev. Howard Lawler

*“The things I want to know are in books; my best friend
is the man who’ll get me a book I ain’t read.”
Abraham Lincoln*

Why bother? That is the question. Why did I bother making this collection of books? Why should you bother reading any of my recommendations?

I read a lot and the Lord has enabled me to read quickly. As a good steward (and friend), I try to help others who cannot sift through as much material as I can and to point them to good resources.

If this document seems too long, view it as a menu. I do not expect anyone to consume everything on this menu. I present options for you to consider to meet your needs and expand your vision. The list covers five decades of reading. I was highly selective.

The list is personal. The following books have most helped me serve the Lord’s church. I arranged them by a small set of topics. I do not cover commentaries, reference books, and other useful types. I do cover a wide range of interests, lengths, reading levels, and doctrinal maturity. There is something here for everyone in church ministry, from newbies to veterans. I update the list from time to time.

The versions listed are on my bookshelves. Many appear in various editions and revisions. Some come from outside of the evangelical tradition in which I serve. Some represent viewpoints that are not Christian but the material can be useful to believers. I do not endorse every word of the books below nor do I endorse all books by a given author. Test everything by God’s inerrant Scriptures.

I recommend one book in particular to everyone: [The Pastor’s Justification: Applying the Work of Christ in Your Life and Ministry](#), by Jared Wilson. It appears under the heading: “Books about Significance, Stewardship, and Success.” I wish I had that book in my early days of Christian service and especially when I became a pastor.

If you want a few laughs while you learn valuable lessons, check out the last section “Odd Offerings.”

Feel free to contact me with any questions or comments. Tell me about books you highly recommend that are not on my list. It’s what friends do.

THE PURPOSE AND PRACTICES OF THE CHURCH

Worship: The Ultimate Priority, by John MacArthur (Moody, 1993). This is an accessible book about worship as the Bible defines it. Worship is the eternal occupation of the church so it is the main purpose of our ministry.

Engaging with God: A Biblical Theology of Worship, by David Peterson (Eerdmans, 1992). Peterson provides an excellent survey of what true worship means in the Bible and how worship must shape the whole life of the church.

Servanthood as Worship: The Privilege of Life in a Local Church, by Nate Palmer (Cruciform Press, 2010). This brief book puts the purpose of life in clear biblical perspective and tells why we must commit ourselves to a sound local church.

Rediscover Church: Why the Body of Christ is Essential, by Collin Hansen & Jonathan Leeman (Crossway, 2021). This approachable book covers not only the basics but also why virtual church (which grew during the Covid pandemic and is now urged by some as an abiding model) is not enough.

To the One Who Conquers: 50 Daily Meditations on the Seven Letters of Revelation 2-3, by Sam Storms (Crossway, 2008). Leaders should prioritize the way Jesus assesses churches rather than run right to consultants. This book draws attention to the Lord's evaluation of seven churches.

The Invading Gospel: A Distinguished Poet Describes His Journey from Isolated Self-Involvement to the Joy of Christian Fellowship, by Jack Clemo (Fleming Revell, 1958). This is a powerful declaration of how the gospel confronts sinners and converts them. I resonate with Clemo having had a long-term aversion to the gospel before trusting Christ for salvation.

Let the Nations Be Glad: The Supremacy of God in Missions, by John Piper (Baker, 1993). Piper roots healthy missionary ministry in worship as the church's purpose.

Following the Master: A Biblical Theology of Discipleship, by Michael J. Wilkins (Zondervan, 1992). This important work cleared a lot of clutter from my mind about what discipleship means.

God in the Whirlwind: How the Holy Love of God Reorients Our World, by David F. Wells (Crossway, 2014). This book distills decades of reflections by an outstanding scholar. He has a God-centered approach and a warm heart for the church and the lost.

The Prodigal Church: A Gentle Manifesto Against the Status Quo, by Jared Wilson (Crossway, 2015). Wilson does a humble but penetrating job of questioning common operating assumptions among churches and points in a biblically healthy direction.

Uncomfortable: The Awkward and Essential Challenge of Christian Community, by Brett McCracken (Crossway, 2017). The author offers a much-needed correction for evangelical churches driven by marketing models.

Autopsy of a Deceased Church: 12 Ways to Keep Yours Alive, by Thom Rainer (B&H, 2014). An experienced church consultant reveals a dozen common traits of dying churches and points to healthy practices.

The Church and the Surprising Offense of God's Love, by Jonathan Leeman (Crossway, 2010). This outstanding book roots healthy church membership and church discipline in God's holy love.

What is the Mission of the Church?: Making Sense of Social Justice, Shalom, and the Great Commission, by Kevin DeYoung and Greg Gilbert (Crossway, 2011). The authors have crafted a stimulating look at a well-intentioned but misdirected approach to church ministry.

The Sky is Red, by Geoffrey T. Bull (Moody, 1965). These are remarkably powerful reflections on the church by one who switched from communism to service as a missionary for Christ.

DOCTRINE AND DEVOTED SERVICE

Bible Study: A Students Guide, by Jon Neilson (P&R, 2013). The best thing you can do is *not* read books on my list but learn to study the Bible properly, in context, to get the point God makes. Neilson's book will help you do that.

Exegetical Fallacies, by D. A. Carson (Baker, 1996). If you tell people you teach, "the original text says," or "my word study indicates," or "the aorist tense means," this book will steer you clear from common interpretive mistakes.

What is the Gospel?, by Greg Gilbert (Crossway, 2010). We must be clear on the core message of Scripture and this small book does a great job explaining the gospel.

This Changes Everything: How the Gospel Transforms the Teen Years, by Jaquelle Crowe (Crossway, 2017). A young writer provides a remarkably mature look at the gospel-driven life. I wish the word "teen" was not in the title because people of any age can benefit from this brief gem.

The God Who Is There: Finding Yourself in God's Story, by D. A. Carson (Baker Books, 2010). This book places our lives in the God-centered view of history.

A Theology of the New Testament, by George Eldon Ladd (Eerdmans, 1974). Ladd sharpened my understanding of God's kingdom in this age and beyond.

Institutes of the Christian Religion, by John Calvin (Westminster, 1960). I always learn valuable lessons from the great Reformer's landmark work.

Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine, by Wayne Grudem (Zondervan, 1994). I like how Grudem links theology to the life of the church and ends each section with devotional readings, questions, and a hymn. His more compact version, Bible Doctrine: Essential Teaching of the Christian Faith, does the same but omits the hymns.

A Little Exercise for Young Theologians, by Helmut Thielicke (Eerdmans, 1962). One of my graduate school professors made us read this little book because he knew knowledge-based pride was a constant danger.

A History of Christian Thought, by Justo Gonzales (Abingdon, 1970). Available in one-volume and three-volume editions, this book focuses on the historical elaboration of doctrine. He does the best job I have seen of putting the church's discussion of the Trinity and the deity of Christ in historic context.

Mere Christianity, by C. S. Lewis (Macmillan, 1952). Originally broadcast on radio to the British public, these talks convey Christian basics. Lewis is especially helpful on the Trinity and "right and wrong as a clue to the meaning of the universe."

The Ascended Christ: A Study in Earliest Christian Teaching, by Henry Barclay Swete (MacMillan, 1910). The doctrine of the ascension and session of Christ was almost absent in my formative church experience. This book brings the doctrine forward and applies it to church life.

The Supremacy of God in Preaching, by John Piper (Baker, 1990). This is one of the best books I've read about God-centered preaching.

Preaching the Eternities, by Hamish Mackenzie (Saint Andrew, 1963). A great book for gaining perspective on the true responsibility of preaching.

The Trivialization of God: The Dangerous Illusion of a Manageable Deity, by Donald McCullough (NavPress, 1995). This book shows how people make idols today, even if they never touch wood or stone.

God the Holy Father, by P. T. Forsyth (Independent Press, 1957). The first article in this collection of essays helped me see the centrality of God's holiness and how it gives us confidence in God's love.

Justification Reconsidered: Rethinking a Pauline Theme, by Stephen Westerholm (Eerdmans, 2013). In recent decades, some scholars have argued that the Apostle Paul was not focused on human guilt and divine rescue when he taught about justification. This book shows why that claim is not based on good scholarship.

The Pursuit of God, by A. W. Tozer (Christian Publications, 1982). Here is a true gem that can benefit everyone. This is my favorite of Tozer's writings.

Personal Revival, by Stanley Voke (O.M. Literature, n.d.). A friend who endured a hard time in ministry directed me to this book about brokenness and grace. It is short but full of encouragement.

Power Encounters: Reclaiming Spiritual Warfare, by David Powlison (Baker, 1995). The author provides a non-sensational, sober, and positive presentation of spiritual warfare in Scripture.

The Imitation of Christ, by Thomas a Kempis, (Moody, 1958). That Moody Press would publish the work of a Medieval monk shows how far-reaching this devotional classic has become.

The Pursuit of Holiness, by Jerry Bridges (NavPress, 1978). Bridges shows us how holiness is both a pure gift of grace and a pursuit of those living under grace.

Champagne for the Soul: Rediscovering God's Gift of Joy, by Mike Mason (Regent, 2006). This book is the product of a 90-day experiment in joy by a man who is "not happy by nature." I asked an elder team to read this during a trying time of ministry.

Holy Sonnets of the Twentieth Century, by D. A. Carson (Baker 1994). It amazes me that a person who writes great scholarly prose expresses devotion so well in one of the hardest poetic forms. This is beautiful, God-entranced art.

PRAYER

Developing a Healthy Prayer Life: 31 Devotions for Communing with God, by James Beeke and Joel Beeke (Reformation Heritage, 2010). These 2-to-3-page devotionals can enrich anyone's personal prayer practice.

Preacher and Prayer, by E. M. Bounds (Kessinger Rare Reprints, n.d.). This book was published in 1907 but changed my life a century later.

How Do Preaching and Corporate Prayer Go Together?, by Ryan McGraw (Reformation Heritage, 2014). I wish everyone would read this little 26-page pamphlet. Following its lead would produce big changes for the better.

Praying for One Another: The Rewarding Experience of Praying with Others, by Gene Getz (Victor, 1983). It is worth searching for this out-of-print book about corporate prayer.

The Potential and Power of Prayer: How to Unleash the Praying Church, by Chuck Lawless (Tyndale, 2022). This is an honest, biblical, and practical book encouraging the church body to pray together.

Only a Prayer Meeting: Studies on Prayer Meetings and Prayer Meeting Addresses, by Charles Spurgeon (Christian Focus, 2000). The renowned preacher's lessons about believers praying together are collected here from various years of his ministry. Spurgeon knew that prayer meetings are the engine of effective ministry.

Praying Together: The Priority and Privilege of Prayer in our Homes, Communities, and Churches, by Megan Hill (Crossway, 2016). Hill has given us a fine book on the principles and practice of prayer.

The Revival in Ireland: Letters from Ministers and Medical Men in Ulster on the Revival of Religion in the North of Ireland Addressed to the Rev. H. Grattan Guinness, by Henry Grattan Guinness (Martien, 1860). This collection of letters shows how prayer is both the prod and the product of true revival.

Praying with Paul: A Call for Spiritual Reformation, by D. A. Carson (Baker, 2015). Paul's prayers for churches serve as a template for our priorities.

Intercessory Prayer: A Ministerial Task, by Eugene Bradford (Simpson Publishing, 1991). This pamphlet helps us to perform a neglected duty and privilege.

Quiet Talks on Prayer, by S. D. Gordon (Fleming Revell, 1939). This is a heartwarming and thought-provoking book.

The Valley of Vision: A Collection of Puritan Prayers & Devotions, edited by Arthur Bennett (Banner of Truth, 1975). This collection displays old gold that never loses luster.

SIGNIFICANCE, STEWARDSHIP, AND SUCCESS

The Pastor's Justification: Applying the Work of Christ in Your Life and Ministry, by Jared Wilson (Crossway, 2013). This outstanding book helps anyone involved in church life and ministry. It roots our significance in the gospel, not in achievements.

Finding Hope in Hard Things: A Positive Take on Suffering, by Pierce Taylor Hibbs (Pierce Taylor Hibbs, 2020). Not only is this a great book on suffering, but it deals with the key issues of loss, anxiety, and self-doubt. It is especially good at linking these issues to our identity and success. It is both beautiful (almost poetic) and theological—a rare combination.

Liberating Ministry from the Success Syndrome, by Kent and Barbara Hughes (Crossway, 1987). This is a powerful testimony to the danger of a flawed idea of success and to the freedom that comes from a biblical understanding of faithfulness.

Memoirs of an Ordinary Pastor: The Life and Reflections of Tom Carlson, by D. A. Carson (Crossway, 2008). This renowned scholar deeply respected his father who faithfully labored as a small church pastor. Carson issues a call to humble service through this loving testimonial.

Freedom for Ministry, by Richard John Neuhaus (Eerdmans, 1979). It is not easy, it is quirky, and it comes from outside my church tradition, but this is one of the most stimulating books on pastoring I have read. Neuhaus roots our calling in God's eternal kingdom.

The Strategically Small Church: Intimate, Nimble, Authentic, Effective, by Brandon J. O'Brien (Bethany, 2010). While not against large churches, the author encourages small churches to be good stewards of the advantages they have and to understand true success at any size.

People Pleasing Pastors: Avoiding the Pitfalls of Approval-Motivated Leadership, by Charles Stone (IVP, 2014). This book deals with a fundamental problem that often undermines the ministry of pastors and lay leaders.

When People are Big and God is Small: Overcoming Peer Pressure, Codependency, and the Fear of Man, by Edward T. Welch (P&R, 1997). Welch charts a God-centered path away from needing people's affirmation and toward loving people more.

Glory Hunger: God, the Gospel, and Our Quest for Something More, by J. R. Vassar (Crossway, 2015). This book helps us fight self-absorption and channel service in a truly satisfying direction.

Kenosis: Emptying Self and the Path of Christian Service, by Kevin M. Cronin (Element, 1992). A Franciscan priest wrote this book from the crucible of urban ministry. His reflections challenged me to serve more humbly in very different ministry settings.

Resilient Ministry: What Pastors Told Us About Surviving and Thriving, by Bob Burns, Tasha D. Chapman, and Donald C. Guthrie (IVP, 2013). Numerous pastors contributed to this five-year research project. The report (full of personal stories as well as data) covers marriage, family, self-care, emotional intelligence, group dynamics, and more.

How to Succeed as CEO of Your Life: 12 Spiritual Principles I Wish I Had Learned Long Ago, by Paul Brownback (Foundation Stone, 2019). Paul, my mentor for over 20 years, deepened my understanding of how good stewardship is a framework for all decision making, not just financial matters.

Shantung Compound: The Story of Men and Women under Pressure, by Langdon Gilkey (Harper One, 1966). This fascinating World War II account shows original sin in action. Gilkey was interned in a prison camp for non-military Westerners. His memoir displays the difference between pride (often in religious garb) and humility.

LEADERSHIP

Shepherding the Church: Effective Spiritual Leadership in a Changing Culture, by Joseph Stowell (Moody, 1997). This book had a big impact on me when I first read it and I have gone back to it repeatedly.

The Christian Ministry: With an Inquiry into the Causes of its Inefficiency, by Charles Bridges (Banner of Truth, 1991). First published in 1830, this classic has stood the test of time. It is full of fortifying truth.

Note to Self: The Discipline of Preaching to Yourself, by Joe Thorn (Crossway, 2011). The 48 readings (usually just two pages long) apply the gospel to a wide range of concerns.

Good Christians, Good Husbands?, by Doreen Moore (Christian Focus, 2019). Moore offers a unique look at the marriages of John Wesley, George Whitfield, and Jonathan Edwards. It is fairly compact but full of great lessons.

Strengthening Your Marriage, by Wayne Mack (P&R, 1999). This unusual book combines a biblical theology of marriage and practical applications. The section on communication alone is worth the price of the book.

The Conviction to Lead: 25 Leadership Principles for Leadership that Matters, by Albert Mohler (Bethany House, 2012). Nicely arranged into 25 short sections, this is one of the most important leadership books I have read.

No Other Foundation: An Exposition of Acts 2:42, by Sam Thorpe Jr (ECS Ministries, 2010). The author points to a crucial passage often neglected in church leadership books. Luke's summary statement in Acts 2:42 is a prime tool for shaping and assessing ministry today.

Reveal: Where Are You?, by Greg Hawkins, Cally Parkinson, and Eric Arnson (Willow Creek Resources, 2007). This book summarizes the results of an internal spiritual audit of Willow Creek Church commissioned by the church leadership. It revealed that the famed seeker-driven church was not making disciples well. The study also points to markers of real spiritual progress.

Reforming Pastoral Ministry: Challenges for Postmodern Times, edited by John Armstrong (Crossway, 2001). This collection of 14 essays by various authors has especially helpful chapters on courageous leadership, church growth, and prayer.

Campaigning with Grant, by Horace Porter (Konecky & Konecky, 1992). A personal aid to Ulysses S. Grant produced a colorful record of humility, focus, decisiveness, and courage exhibited by the general.

Harvard Business Review on the Mind of a Leader, (Harvard Business School, 2005). These eight articles focus on character rather than technique. The material is more transferable to ministry contexts than many business publications.

The Courageous Follower: Standing Up to and for Our Leaders, by Ira Chaleff (Berrett-Kohler, 1995). There are too few publications about followership. This business book is about good “stewardship” (the term the authors use) for both leaders and followers.

Get Rid of the Performance Review! How Companies Can Stop Intimidating, Start Managing—and Focus on What Really Matters, by Samuel Culbert with Lawrence Rout (Business Plus, 2010). This book exposes why traditional business performance reviews (often done with staff in churches) fail and shows a better option.

Common Sense for Board Members: 40 Essays about Board Service, by Edgar Stoesz (Good Books, 2000). Each of the thought-provoking essays is less than two pages long.

Meetings that Work: A Guide to Effective Elder’s Meetings, by Alexander Strauch (Lewis and Roth, 2001). This small book helps leaders make good use of time and opportunity.

The Unity Factor: Developing a Healthy Church Leadership Team, by Larry Osborne (Owl’s Nest, 2001). Osborne argues for the priority of team unity (not uniformity) in church leadership.

ENGAGING CULTURE

What’s Your Worldview?: An Interactive Approach to Life’s Big Questions, by James N. Anderson (Crossway, 2014). Creatively cast as a choose-your-own-adventure story, this book helps you discover your worldview and how it shapes your behavior.

The Other Worldview: Exposing Christianity’s Greatest Threat, by Peter Jones (Kirkdale, 2013). This is a great book about the two basic models for understanding our world. I wish all parents would read this with their teens before sending them to a college.

Strange New World: How Thinkers and Activists Redefined Identity and Sparked the Sexual Revolution, by Carl F. Trueman (Crossway, 2022). Here is another great book about the root ideas shaping our culture. Pair this with The Other Worldview to perceive the cultural forces harming young people.

Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture, by Lesslie Newbigin (Eerdmans, 1986). This book by a missionary to India showed me the need to study our own culture as we would a foreign culture in which we sought to serve.

Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business, by Neil Postman (Penguin Books, 1985). Postman's classic work explains the significance and drawbacks of living in an image-oriented culture. He displays a great sense of humor while making sobering points.

A God of Many Understandings: The Gospel and a Theology of Religions, by Todd Miles (B&H, 2010). This resource honors Christ as the only way of salvation, is intellectually satisfying, and is compassionate.

A Reasonable Response: Answers to Tough Questions on Christianity by William Lane Craig and Joseph Gorra (Moody, 2013). The book uses real questions submitted to the website ReasonableFaith.org to address common objections to Christianity.

Eschatological Discipleship: Leading Christians to Understand Their Historical and Cultural Context, by Trevon Wax (B&H, 2018). Wax provides a stimulating presentation of biblical discipleship and rival worldviews like consumerism.

When Harry Became Sally: Responding to the Transgender Movement, by Ryan T. Anderson (Encounter, 2018). This is the best material I have seen on this issue. Anderson is kind, scholarly, approachable, and frank.

The Good of Affluence: Seeking God in a Culture of Wealth, by John Schneider (Eerdmans, 2002). The author takes us beyond simplistic thinking about money and possessions. This book is a good counterpoint to evangelical writings that tend to demonize capitalism and lean toward socialism.

The Heresy of Orthodoxy: How Contemporary Culture's Fascination with Diversity Has Reshaped Our Understanding of Early Christianity, by Andreas Kostenberger & Michael Kruger (Crossway, 2010). These scholars effectively critique liberal theologians who misrepresent the history of Christianity. The book covers the canon of scripture, text transmission, and the true roots of Christianity.

The Intolerance of Tolerance, by D. A. Carson (Eerdmans, 2012). This is a brilliant exploration of how the meaning of "tolerance" has radically shifted in our culture to become a weapon for stopping true dialogue.

Reinventing Jesus: How Contemporary Skeptics Miss the Real Jesus and Mislead Popular Culture, by J. Ed Komoszewski, M. James Sawyer, & Daniel B. Wallace (Kregel, 2006). This book deals in a scholarly but readable way with subjects like tradition, manuscripts, the canon, the deity of Jesus, and mythical religion.

Truth Matters: Confident Faith in a Confusing World, by Andreas Kostenberger, Darrell Bock, & Josh Chatraw (B&H Books, 2014). The authors use the work of Professor Bart Ehrman as a case study in weak but dangerous teaching. Ehrman's attacks on the Christian faith are widely published.

Tactics: A Game Plan for Discussing Your Christian Convictions, by Gregory Koukl (Zondervan, 2009). The author coaches us on how to interact with people by using sound thinking and displaying a gracious manner.

It's Dangerous to Believe: Religious Freedom and Its Enemies, by Mary Eberstadt (Harper Collins, 2016). This is a sobering yet encouraging call to action.

Fool's Talk: Recovering the Art of Christian Persuasion, by Os Guinness (IVP, 2015). This guide draws on the author's 40-plus years of talking with people who oppose the Christian worldview. He helps us ask questions, engage common assumptions, and speak with grace and truth.

Atheist Delusions: The Christian Revolution and its Fashionable Enemies, by David Bentley Hart (Yale University Press, 2009). This book is not easy but is worth tackling. It addresses many myths about Christianity taught in academic settings. His wit and words are too sharp at times, but his historical survey and critique are impressive.

Absence of Mind: The Dispelling of Inwardness from the Modern Myth of the Self, by Marilynne Robinson (Yale University, 2010). Robinson has produced a beautifully written reflection on human nature. She analyzes powerful cultural forces from science, literature, and religion.

The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, by Thomas S. Kuhn (University of Chicago, 1970). A theology professor made me read this classic philosophy of science book to understand how paradigms (thought frameworks) function. After the tough slog through it, and much to my surprise, I was glad he assigned it. The book taught me how we form frameworks in science, theology, and ministry.

WRITING

On Writing Well, by William Zinsser (Collins, 2006). This is a fine book on how to write non-fiction. Nothing has helped me more as a writer.

Writing Tools: 55 Essential Strategies for Every Writer, by Roy Peter Clark (Little Brown, 2016). The author devotes a few pages to each tool but delivers a lot of help in each one. This book helps with all types of writing.

Style: The Basics of Clarity and Grace, by Joseph Williams & Gregory Colomb (Longman, 2012). This book provides many examples of poor writing and revises them as it unpacks the basics.

Woe Is I: The Grammarphobe's Guide to Better English in Plain English, by Patricia T. O'Conner (Riverhead, 2003). I have read unclear books about clear writing. This one is a welcome relief.

ODD OFFERINGS

Bible in Pocket, Gun in Hand: The Story of Frontier Religion, by Ross Phares (University of Nebraska, 1964). I thoroughly enjoyed this scholarly and hilarious look at religious life in the early American West.

He Sent Leanness: A Book of Prayers for the Natural Man, by David Head (Macmillan, 1959). This is the only tongue-in-cheek prayer book I have seen. He turns bad attitudes into liturgy. The humor prods us in a better direction.

Is that a Fish in your Ear? Translation and the Meaning of Everything, by David Bellos (Faber & Faber, 2011). This academic but approachable study shows the challenge of translating any written text. Some (not all) of his comments about the Bible are ignorant but the book is helpful for those seeking insight about moving from original to receptor languages. Touches of humor makes a technical topic easier to digest.

All Creatures Great and Small, by James Herriot (St. Martins, 1972). A book about rural veterinarian practice might seem misplaced on this list, but Herriot's positive and patient interaction with people challenged me as a shepherd of souls. I assigned it for a class on pastoral theology. We can all benefit from his example and have fun reading some great stories.

"When you find a leader, you have found a reader...We simply cannot lead without a constant flow of intellectual activity in our minds, and there is no substitute for reading when it comes to producing this flow"

Albert Mohler

"He is inspired, and yet he wants books! He has been preaching at least for thirty years, and yet he wants books! He had seen the Lord, and yet he wants books! He had had a wider experience than most men, and yet he wants books! He had been caught up into the third heaven, and had heard things which it was unlawful for a man to utter, yet he wants books! He had written the major part of the New Testament, and yet he wants books! The apostle says to Timothy and so he says to every preacher, "Give thyself unto reading." The man who never reads will never be read; he who never quotes will never be quoted. He who will not use the thoughts of other men's brains, proves that he has no brains of his own. Brethren, what is true of ministers is true of all our people. You need to read. Renounce as much as you will all light literature, but study as much as

possible sound theological works, especially the Puritanic writers, and expositions of the Bible. We are quite persuaded that the very best way for you to be spending your leisure, 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."
Charles Spurgeon (reflecting on 1 Timothy 4:13)