

MATTHEW HOSIER'S RECOMMENDED READING

This list contains books that have been a significant help to me as a follower of Jesus, and which I know have also helped others. Some of the books are very short, while others are long. Some are easy reading while others are more challenging. This is by no means a comprehensive list, but it is a good one! All of these books are great!

Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*

Systematic theology is what we do when we take a subject and examine it from the viewpoint of the whole council of the Bible. So, for example, we might want to think about what we know about the subject of salvation, or heaven, or Jesus, and a systematic theology does a systematic job of examining these subjects. Wayne Grudem does this better than most.

Every believer should have a copy of this on their shelves. It is far more readable than most systematic theologies, and is much more open to a Charismatic experience of the Spirit.

I once read this cover to cover, over the course of a year, as part of my daily devotions. It was very helpful to do this, but you can also use the book simply as a reference source – have a question? what does Wayne say? He will probably be right!

CJ Mahaney, *The Cross-Centered Life and Humility*

These two short books by a supremely gifted communicator are great for getting to grips with what the cross has achieved for us and living in the implications of that. CJ explains with passion what Jesus has done for us, and how Jesus is our model of what constitutes true greatness.

RC Sproul, *Chosen by God*

This is the best book I know for explaining the essential principles of what we call Reformed theology, or the doctrines of grace. If you want to understand what God has done in enabling you to believe in Him, or if you are confused about subjects such as predestination, this is the book for you.

Joshua Harris, *Sex isn't the Problem, Lust Is*

Another short book, that does a great job of getting to the root of sin. The focus of the book is dealing with sexual temptation, but it is helpful in thinking about how to combat all the temptations we face.

R. Kent Hughes, *Disciplines of a Godly Man*

Self-discipline is not a very popular subject in our easy going culture, but it is an essential quality for the Christ-follower. I found this a helpful and challenging book.

Gordon MacDonald, *Ordering Your Private World*

This is a classic. MacDonald describes why and how we should order our inner world – our devotional life and use of time. It is very practical, as well as profound, and well written, which is important to me. What makes it all the more poignant is that shortly after writing this MacDonald abandoned all the principles he writes about and had an affair. Mercifully, MacDonald was subsequently restored to ministry and now has an elder-statesmen role with other pastors. Read it, and be warned.

Eugene Peterson, *Eat This Book*

Peterson is best known for his *Message* paraphrase of the Bible, but he is also the author of many other books, most of which are well worth reading. This one is about the Bible and reading it will help you gain a greater appreciation of God's word.

Mark Dever, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*

What is the local church? Is it important? What is it meant to do? Why should I be part of one? Dever writes as helpfully about the church as anyone I know.

Terry Virgo, *No Well Worn Paths*

If you want to know what makes Terry, one of the finest men I know, and Newfrontiers tick, this is the book to read.

Peter Lewis, *The Glory of Christ*

I wouldn't claim this is an easy read, but it is a wonderful one. I first read it through cover to cover in one hit, and then later read small sections of it day by day as part of my regular devotions. The second method was definitely the better option. If you want to know more about Jesus, you've got to read this.

Gordon Fee, *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God*

A confession: I haven't actually read this one myself. However, I have read Fee's massive *God's Empowering Presence*, of which *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God* is a condensed version. Of the two this is the one I would recommend to the general reader. If you want to understand who the Spirit is, and what he does, this is a good place to start.

Jack Deere, *Surprised by the Power of the Spirit and Surprised by the Voice of God*

The first of these books explains how a theology professor who did not believe in the gifts of the Spirit changed his mind, and the second is more specifically about the gift of prophecy. Both will help you understand more of the place and power of the Holy Spirit in your life.

John Piper, *What's the Difference?*

At Gateway we believe that men and women are equal in value, but have different roles. This is a confusing idea to many people, living as we do in a "gender-neutral" society. Reading this short book by Piper will help you understand where we are coming from.

John Piper, *Desiring God*

This was the book that catapulted John Piper to the top of many peoples reading lists and remains a classic of Christian living. Piper explains how the only sure way to true pleasure is through the enjoyment of God. If you think following Jesus is dull, this book will smash your preconceptions to bits!

John Piper, *Let the Nations be Glad!*

This is a fantastic book about mission. Every follower of Jesus needs to understand themselves as a missionary, called to make Christ known wherever they are. But we also need a heart for global mission, that every people group might hear the good news and be made glad by it.

John Maxwell, *Developing the Leader Within You*

There are loads of leadership books out there. This is a good one, written by a Christian and recognized leadership guru.

Miroslav Wolf, *Work in the Spirit*

This is a fairly tough read, but if you want to develop a theology of work I don't know anything better. It certainly changed my understanding of the subject.

Randy Alcorn, *The Treasure Principle and Money, Possessions and Eternity*

These are the two best books I know on how Christians should handle the stuff they own. The first one is very short, the second longer, but very worthwhile. It is essential that we have a God-honouring approach to money and possessions and Alcorn will help you in this, in a grace-filled, faith-building manner.

CH Spurgeon, *Autobiography*

Arnold Dallimore, *George Whitefield*

These are two long books (they both come in two volumes) and are expensive to buy, but I would urge you to take the plunge.

Reading about Whitefield when I was 23 changed my life. He was arguably the greatest evangelist since the Apostle Paul, and the first preacher to travel regularly between Britain and America. He saw revival and helped shape nations. Reading this will not only give you insight into this extraordinary hero of the faith, but help you understand the world as it was in the 18th century, which in turn will help you better understand our own century. It will give you a context for how evangelicalism subsequently developed, and it will give you a taste for revival.

The Spurgeon biography will help you understand the 19th century, and a man who was very much Whitefield's natural successor. Spurgeon had a delightful and at times outrageous sense of humour, which shines through in his writing, and makes it a pleasure to read. You will be amazed at Spurgeon's work rate and achievements, and brought to prayer for the gospel to go forth with more power in our own generation.

Two heroes. Four volumes. Time and money well spent!