

## Tools to Study the Bible and Theology

*Andy Naselli | Last Updated on September 29, 2025*

*Purpose.* I recommend the following tools to help you study the Bible and theology.

*Two Exhortations.* (1) Make “the best use of the time, because the days are evil” (Eph 5:16). *You don’t need to read these tools to be a faithful and fruitful Christian.* The only book you *need* to read is the Bible. The Bible is sufficient for you to know, trust, and obey God. But these tools may help you better understand and apply the Bible. The Bible is not boring! As Gregory the Great [says](#), the Bible is like a river that is shallow enough for a lamb to wade in and deep enough for an elephant to swim in. (2) Use these tools with discernment. The Bible is without error and incapable of error, but that is not the case for each of the tools I recommend below (including [my own books and articles](#)).

*Organization.* I have organized the tools under five main headings—the five theological disciplines:

1. *Exegesis:* Study what the authors of books of the Bible intended to communicate.
2. *Biblical Theology:* Study how the whole Bible progresses, integrates, and climaxes in Christ.
3. *Historical Theology:* Study how significant interpreters and theologians have understood the Bible and theology.
4. *Systematic Theology:* Study what the whole Bible says and how it coheres.
5. *Practical Theology:* Study how to apply the Bible to yourself, the church, and the world.

The way you approach those five interrelated theological disciplines is your *theological method*. For a short introduction, see my article “[Theological Method](#).” For a more detailed explanation, see my book [How to Understand and Apply the New Testament: Twelve Steps from Exegesis to Theology](#).

The below tools are at basically an introductory level for adults with two exceptions:

- Tools with a caret (^) are for children.
- Tools with an asterisk (\*) are intermediate/advanced.

*Canon+*. A plus sign (+) indicates that the resource is available as an audiobook or video from [Canon+](#), which the members of Christ the King Church have access to. The pastors of Christ the King Church give our members a subscription to Canon+ so that they can benefit from sound and practical teaching, particularly on God’s good design for [men, women, and families](#). These tools help us better understand and apply God’s words, and they help build our church’s immune system with the result that we can convictionally refuse to let evil ideologies steer us.

I don’t agree with every opinion that people on Canon+ express. For example, I don’t believe that a church should baptize infants (paedobaptism) or let infants participate in the Lord’s Supper before they can credibly profess to follow Jesus (paedocommunion), and I don’t fully agree with those who baptize infants regarding how the major covenants in the Bible relate to each other (Reformed covenant theology). But I respect the Reformed view as my brothers articulate it, and believers who were baptized as infants may covenant together with our church in membership if they understand their infant baptism in a way that does not contradict the gospel (see footnote 12 in our “[Member Affirmation of Faith](#)”). I and my fellow pastors encourage our members to think critically as they benefit from the many edifying resources on Canon+.

*Advice.* For reading tips, see [+Andrew David Naselli](#), [How to Read a Book: Advice for Christian Readers](#) (Moscow, ID: Canon, 2024). The bottom of [this article](#) includes some of my lectures and interviews about how to read.

*Contents:*

## [Ten Tools to Prioritize](#)

### [1. Exegesis: Study what the authors of books of the Bible intended to communicate.](#)

#### [The Whole Bible](#)

#### [The Old Testament](#)

[The Law: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy](#)

[The Prophets: Joshua, Judges, 1–2 Samuel, 1–2 Kings, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah, The Twelve](#)

[The Writings: Ruth, Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Lamentations, Daniel, Esther, Ezra-Nehemiah, 1–2 Chronicles](#)

#### [The New Testament](#)

[The Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John](#)

[Acts](#)

[Paul’s Letters: Romans, 1–2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1–2 Thessalonians, 1–2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon](#)

[Hebrews and the General Epistles: Hebrews, James, 1–2 Peter, 1–3 John, Jude](#)

## Revelation

2. Biblical Theology: Study how the whole Bible progresses, integrates, and climaxes in Christ.

3. Historical Theology: Study how significant interpreters and theologians have understood the Bible and theology.

4. Systematic Theology: Study what the whole Bible says and how it coheres.

### Whole Systematic Theologies

Theological Method: How to Approach Exegesis and Theology

The Doctrine of God (Theology Proper)

The Doctrine of the Bible (Bibliology)

The Doctrine of Angels and Demons (Angelology)

The Doctrine of Man (Anthropology) and Sin (Hamartiology)

The Doctrine of Christ (Christology)

The Doctrine of Salvation (Soteriology)

The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit (Pneumatology)

The Doctrine of the Church (Ecclesiology)

The Doctrine of the End Times (Eschatology)

### Apologetics

5. Practical Theology: Study how to apply the Bible to yourself, the church, and the world.

### Men, Women, and Families

#### Ethics

Introduction to Ethics

Sexuality

Ethnicity

The Civil Government

Other Ethical Issues

Spiritual Disciplines: Means of Grace

Worship

Fighting Sins and Cultivating Virtues

Evangelism and Missions

Biblical Counseling

Other Tools on Practical Theology

## ***Ten Tools to Prioritize***

This document of recommended tools may seem long, but it is just a sliver of the outstanding English tools that are available today (many as audiobooks). If you would like specific guidance on what to read, talk to one of your pastors. If you're not sure where to start, I suggest that you prioritize the following ten tools:

1. [\*The ESV Study Bible\*](#). Edited by Wayne Grudem. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008.
2. Bunyan, John. [\*The Pilgrim's Progress from This World to That Which Is to Come\*](#). 1678.
3. Naselli, Andrew David. [\*How to Understand and Apply the New Testament: Twelve Steps from Exegesis to Theology\*](#). Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2017.
4. DeRouchie, Jason S. [\*How to Understand and Apply the Old Testament: Twelve Steps from Exegesis to Theology\*](#). Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2017.
5. DeRouchie, Jason S., Oren R. Martin, and Andrew David Naselli. [\*40 Questions about Biblical Theology\*](#). 40 Questions. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2020.
6. DeYoung, Kevin. [\*Daily Doctrine: A One-Year Guide to Systematic Theology\*](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2024.
7. Van Dixhoorn, Chad B., ed. [\*Creeds, Confessions, and Catechisms: A Readers's Edition\*](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2022.
8. Piper, John. [\*The Pleasures of God: Meditations on God's Delight in Being God\*](#). Rev. ed. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2026.
9. Grudem, Wayne. [\*Christian Ethics: Living a Life That Is Pleasing to God\*](#). 2nd ed. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2024.
10. Wilson, Douglas. [\*Get the Girl: How to Be the Kind of Man the Kind of Woman You Want to Marry Would Want to Marry\*](#). Moscow, ID: Canon, 2022. (And the companion volume: Wilson, Douglas. [\*Get the Guy: How to Be the Kind of Woman the Kind of Man You Want to Marry Would Want to Marry\*](#). Moscow, ID: Canon, 2023.)

**1. Exegesis: Study what the authors of books of the Bible intended to communicate.**

### **The Whole Bible**

An excellent study Bible is probably the single best resource overall to help you better understand the Bible. It concisely comments on the entire Bible. The introductions to each book of the Bible explain the broad literary context, and the study notes explain individual passages. See my article “[How to Use a Study Bible](#)” (*Desiring God*, 22 September 2015). I think that these are the two best study Bibles available:

- [\*The ESV Study Bible\*](#). Edited by Wayne Grudem. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008. See [my review](#). This study Bible ends with a collection of concise and insightful “Articles and Resources,” including an overview of biblical doctrine, ethics, world religions, and cults (2499–2751).

- [\*NIV Biblical Theology Study Bible\*](#). Edited by D. A. Carson. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018. This ends with short biblical-theological essays that trace twenty-five themes through the Bible. (I worked on this study Bible for five years as the assistant editor.)

More whole-Bible tools:

- Calvin, John. [\*Commentaries on the Bible\*](#). Calvin wrote commentaries on most books of the Bible, and his comments are insightful. I almost always consult Calvin when I am studying a passage that he wrote on. (He apparently did not write commentaries on some of the OT historical and wisdom books as well as 2–3 John and Revelation.)
- Carson, D. A. *For the Love of God: A Daily Companion for Discovering the Riches of God's Word*. 2 vols. [[volume 1](#) | [volume 2](#)] Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1998–1999. **PDFs:** [volume 1](#) | [volume 2](#). This devotional work guides you through the Bible as you follow Robert Murray M'Cheyne's Bible reading plan, which covers the Old Testament once a year and the New Testament and Psalms twice. For each day, Carson comments on one of the readings from that day in the M'Cheyne plan.
- [\*ESV Expository Commentary\*](#). Edited by Iain M. Duguid, James M. Hamilton Jr., and Jay Sklar. 12 vols. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018–2025. If you are going to invest in a multivolume whole-Bible commentary series, start with this one. (I contributed [the commentary on 1 Corinthians](#).)
- MacArthur, John. [\*The MacArthur Bible Commentary\*](#). Nashville: Nelson, 2005. This expands the *MacArthur Study Bible*, which is available for several English translations: [LSB](#), [ESV](#), [NASB](#), [NKJV](#), [NIV](#). There are also over forty books in the [MacArthur Bible Studies](#) series.
- Mohler, R. Albert, Jr., ed. [\*NIV Grace and Truth Study Bible\*](#). Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2021. James M. Hamilton Jr. served as Old Testament editor, Benjamin L. Merkle as New Testament editor, and Mitchell L. Chase as managing editor. Most study Bibles comment on specific phrases and verses; this one focuses on small sections. I wrote the notes on 1 Corinthians, and the editors instructed the authors, “The notes should flow like a narrative and not like bullet points. The notes should not get bogged down in specific words or phrases unless it is absolutely germane to the interpretation of a passage.”
- [\*TGC Bible Commentary\*](#). 2022. Free concise commentaries on each book of the Bible.
- [\*The NET Bible\*](#). [2nd ed.](#) Edited by W. Hall Harris III, Michael H. Burer, and James Davis. Dallas: Biblical Studies Press, 2019. The genius of this translation is its notes. It has 60,000 translators' notes—an average of almost two notes for every verse in the Bible. The notes explain the translation on three levels: (1) textual-critical notes (“tc”) interact

with significant textual variants; (2) translator's notes ("tn") explain the translation or give a more form-based translation; and (3) study notes ("sn") are similar to typical notes that appear in a study Bible.

## The Old Testament

I highly recommend [Jason DeRouchie](#)'s work on the Old Testament:

- DeRouchie, Jason S. [\*Delighting in the Old Testament: Through Christ and for Christ\*](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2024. My endorsement: "Jason DeRouchie is a faithful guide to the Old Testament. He shows that its theological message is that God reigns, saves, and satisfies through covenant for his glory in Christ." For an abridged version, see DeRouchie's [\*Enjoying Jesus's Bible: The Old Testament for Christians\*](#) (Minneapolis: Cruciform, 2025).
- DeRouchie, Jason S., ed. [\*What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About: A Survey of Jesus' Bible\*](#). Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2013. My endorsement: "[1] DeRouchie unapologetically explains that this is not a theology of the Hebrew Bible on its own but a *Christian* Old Testament survey. Now that we have the whole story, how can we not read the first part in light of the whole? [2] This clear and attractive book combines academic rigor with devotional warmth. [3] Each chapter is message-driven; it briefly addresses introductory matters such as authorship and date, but it is not preoccupied with them. [4] The authors have taught Old Testament courses many times, and they know how to connect with students."
- DeRouchie, Jason S. [\*How to Understand and Apply the Old Testament: Twelve Steps from Exegesis to Theology\*](#). Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2017. This book is the fraternal twin to [my book on the New Testament](#). (We wrote these books while we were colleagues.)
- DeRouchie, Jason S. "[Old Testament Resources](#)." These resources are free on DeRouchie's website, and they include articles, lecture notes, and audio for lectures.

Other tools on the Old Testament as a whole:

- Barrett, Michael P. V. [\*Beginning at Moses: A Guide to Finding Christ in the Old Testament\*](#). 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2018. Michael Barrett is a rare combination of super *smart* and *accessible* and *edifying*. (I recommend more of his works below.)
- Bell, Robert D. [\*The Theological Messages of the Old Testament Books\*](#). Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press, 2010. See [my introduction](#).

- Clowney, Edmund P. [\*The Unfolding Mystery: Discovering Christ in the Old Testament\*](#). 2nd ed. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2013. The Old Testament does not merely collect some ancient stories. It tells one unified story that points to Jesus the Messiah.
- \*Dempster, Stephen G. [\*Dominion and Dynasty: A Biblical Theology of the Hebrew Bible\*](#). New Studies in Biblical Theology 15. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003. See [my interview of Dempster](#).
- House, Paul R., and Eric A. Mitchell. [\*Old Testament Survey\*](#). 3rd ed. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2023. Surveys each book of the Old Testament. For a survey that focuses on the theology of each book, see House's [\*Old Testament Theology\*](#) (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998).
- \*Merrill, Eugene H., Mark F. Rooker, and Michael A. Grisanti. [\*The World and the Word: An Introduction to the Old Testament\*](#). Nashville: B&H Academic, 2011. Surveys the historical-cultural context and the content of each book of the Old Testament.
- \*Schnittjer, Gary Edward. [\*Old Testament Use of Old Testament: A Book-by-Book Guide\*](#). Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2021. Analyzes how Old Testament passages quote, allude to, and interpret earlier Old Testament passages.
- Van Pelt, Miles V., ed. [\*A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the Old Testament: The Gospel Promised\*](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016. Good overview. For each Old Testament book (or unit such as The Twelve or Ezra-Nehemiah), an Old Testament professor organizes the material under six major headings: Introduction, Background Issues, Structure and Outline, Message and Theology, Approaching the New Testament, and Select Bibliography.

English Bibles typically organize the Old Testament into five parts:

1. *Pentateuch*: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy
2. *Historical Books*: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1–2 Samuel, 1–2 Kings, 1–2 Chronicles, Ezra-Nehemiah, Esther
3. *Wisdom Books*: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon
4. *Major Prophets*: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel
5. *Minor Prophets (The Twelve)*: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

In the below headings, I organize the Old Testament books into three parts:

1. the Law
2. the Prophets



### 3. the Writings

This three-part structure appears to be how Jesus refers to the Old Testament in Luke 24:44, and this is how Jews arranged the Hebrew Bible (see *Baba Bathra 14b*). Jason DeRouchie displays this arrangement in the following table:

The Law	The Former and Latter Prophets		The Former and Latter Writings	
Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy	Joshua Judges 1–2 Samuel 1–2 Kings	Jeremiah Ezekiel Isaiah The Twelve	Ruth Psalms Job Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Songs Lamentations	Daniel Esther Ezra-Nehemiah 1–2 Chronicles
Narrative	Narrative	Commentary	Commentary	Narrative

#### ***The Law: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy***

- \*Alexander, T. Desmond. [\*From Paradise to the Promised Land: An Introduction to the Pentateuch\*](#). 4th ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2022. Part 1 traces themes in the Pentateuch (~220 pages). Part 2 surveys contemporary academic approaches (~130 pages; a technical topic that you may skip).
- Barrett, Michael P. V. [\*The Gospel of Exodus: Misery, Deliverance, Gratitude\*](#). Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2020. Summarizes the theological message of Exodus with the rubric *misery*, *deliverance*, and *gratitude*—terms that the Heidelberg Catechism uses to summarize the Christian life.
- Barrick, William D. “A Historical Adam: Young-Earth Creation View.” Pages 197–227 (also 80–85, 134–38, 188–91, 252–54) in [\*Four Views on the Historical Adam\*](#). Edited by Matthew Barrett and Ardel B. Caneday. Counterpoints. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013. See also Barrick’s “Old Testament Evidence for a Literal, Historical Adam and Eve,” in [\*Searching for Adam: Genesis and the Truth about Man’s Origin\*](#), ed. Terry Mortenson (Green Forest, AR: Master, 2016), 17–51. I affirm young-earth creation, and I also agree with Samuel Emadi, “[Theological Triage and the Doctrine of Creation](#)” (*The Gospel Coalition*, 20 October 2015): “God specially created Adam and Eve, who both bear God’s image,” “Adam and Eve are humanity’s first parents,” “Adam and Eve are historical figures who really did disobey God in time and space history in the Garden of Eden,” and “The historicity of Genesis 2–3 should never be up for discussion.”



- Barrick, William D. “Noah’s Flood and Its Geological Implications.” Pages 251–81 in [\*Coming to Grips with Genesis: Biblical Authority and the Age of the Earth\*](#). Edited by Terry Mortenson and Thane H. Ury. Green Forest, AR: Master, 2008. In July 2011, I went on [an eight-day rafting trip through the Grand Canyon](#), and Bill Barrick helped lead the trip. He explained Genesis 6–8 and collaborated with a geologist on the trip to show that it is highly plausible that the Grand Canyon is the result of a catastrophic flood. In this article, Barrick explains that the worldwide flood in Genesis 6–8 has three stages: (1) 150 days of prevailing waters, (2) 165 days of receding waters, and (3) 56 days of drying. Barrick is currently working on a detailed commentary on Genesis for the Evangelical Exegetical Commentary series (Lexham Academic, forthcoming).
- Currid, John D. Well-researched commentaries on the Pentateuch:
  - *A Study Commentary on Genesis*. 2 vols. [[volume 1](#) | [volume 2](#)] Darlington, UK: Evangelical, 2003.
  - *A Study Commentary on Exodus*. 2 vols. [[volume 1](#) | [volume 2](#)] Darlington, UK: Evangelical, 2000–2001.
  - [A Study Commentary on Leviticus](#). Darlington, UK: Evangelical, 2004.
  - [A Study Commentary on Numbers](#). Darlington, UK: Evangelical, 2009.
  - [A Study Commentary on Deuteronomy](#). Darlington, UK: Evangelical, 2006.
- DeRouchie, Jason S. *Deuteronomy*. [Pillar Old Testament Commentary](#). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, forthcoming. DeRouchie has been studying Deuteronomy in depth for decades. This commentary will be a treasure.
- DeRouchie, Jason S. “[Our Young Earth: Arguments for Thousands of Years](#).” *Desiring God*, 7 July 2022. DeRouchie argues that God created the earth relatively recently—within thousands of years rather than millions or billions. See also DeRouchie’s reply to Wayne Grudem: “[A Response to Old-Earth Arguments](#).”
- Emadi, Samuel. [From Prisoner to Prince: The Joseph Story in Biblical Theology](#). New Studies in Biblical Theology 59. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2022. Emadi demonstrates that Joseph is a type of Christ. This book updates [Emadi’s PhD dissertation \(PDF\)](#). For an abridged version, see Emadi’s “[Covenant, Typology, and the Story of Joseph](#),” *TynBul* 69 (2018): 1–24.
- Grisanti, Michael A. “Deuteronomy.” Pages 457–814 in [Numbers to Ruth](#). 2nd ed. Expositor’s Bible Commentary 2. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012. Grisanti is a trustworthy Old Testament scholar.
- Hamilton, Victor P. [Handbook on the Pentateuch: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy](#). 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005. From Michael Grisanti’s

review: “Hamilton offers an expanded and revised treatment of the Pentateuch, not so much as a verse-by-verse commentary, but as a chapter or section-by section overview, highlighting key details along the way. Hamilton is a clear writer who makes numerous helpful observations, noticing key structural features and dealing with controversial issues throughout the Pentateuch. He is succinct without being vague. Although Hamilton sometimes takes a view that is only moderately conservative, his work will enhance any reader’s understanding of and appreciation for the message of the Pentateuch” (*The Master’s Seminary Journal* 19:1 [2008]: 123).

- Millar, J. Gary. [\*Deuteronomy\*](#). Evangelical Biblical Theology Commentary. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Academic, 2025. From Michael Morales’s endorsement: “Millar’s commentary is a sure and trustworthy guide for grasping what is perhaps the weightiest book of the Hebrew Scriptures!” For an abridged version, see Millar’s “[Deuteronomy](#)” (*TGC Bible Commentary*, 2021).
- Morales, L. Michael. [\*Exodus Old and New: A Biblical Theology of Redemption\*](#). Essential Studies in Biblical Theology. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2020. The exodus is a God-designed paradigm for God’s saving his people. For an abridged version, see Morales’s “[Exodus from Egypt](#)” (*TGC Concise Theology Essays*, 2022).
- Morales, L. Michael. *Numbers*. 2 vols. [[volume 1](#) | [volume 2](#)] ApOTC. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2024. From Gary Millar’s endorsement: “A breathtaking achievement. It is a rare thing for a work of this scale (or any scale) to marry depth of scholarship, breadth of reading, clarity of expression and an evident commitment to the gospel of Christ, but this book has it all.” From Gary Schnittjer’s endorsement: “Page-turner and game-changer! I never expected to say that of a book about Numbers.... No commentary or study opens up Numbers more richly than these two volumes.” For an abridged version, see Morales’s “Numbers,” in [\*NIV Grace and Truth Study Bible\*](#), ed. R. Albert Mohler Jr. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2021).
- Morales, L. Michael. [\*Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord? A Biblical Theology of the Book of Leviticus\*](#). New Studies in Biblical Theology 37. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015. Morales argues that the Pentateuch is a chiasm with Leviticus at the center, and he demonstrates that Leviticus is a chiasm with the Day of Atonement in Leviticus 16 at the center. The central question Leviticus answers is how man can dwell in God’s presence.
- Sklar, Jay. [\*Numbers\*](#). The Story of God Bible Commentary. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2023. Sklar is a gifted Old Testament scholar. For an abridged version, see

Sklar's "Numbers," in [\*NIV Biblical Theology Study Bible\*](#), ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018), 217–78.

- Wenham, Gordon J. [\*A Guide to the Pentateuch\*](#). Exploring the Old Testament 1. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003. Wenham wrote this survey after writing detailed commentaries on Genesis, Leviticus, and Numbers.

***The Prophets: Joshua, Judges, 1–2 Samuel, 1–2 Kings, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah, The Twelve***

- Barrett, Michael P. V. [\*Love Divine and Unfailing: The Gospel According to Hosea\*](#). The Gospel According to the Old Testament. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2008. Michael Barrett is a rare combination of super *smart* and *accessible* and *edifying*.
- Barrett, Michael P. V. "[Nahum](#)." [\*TGC Bible Commentary\*](#), 2021.
- Barrett, Michael P. V. [\*The Next to Last Word: Service, Hope, and Revival in the Postexilic Prophets\*](#). Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2015. Comments on Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. For abridged versions, see Barrett's "[Haggai](#)" and "[Zechariah](#)" ([\*TGC Bible Commentary\*](#), 2021).
- "[David](#)." A musical by Sight & Sound Theatres, 2022 (137 minutes). This musical is way better than I expected. There are some poor parts, like how David's relationships with his father and with his wife Michal are Disney-fied. But overall, it is well done. It nails the theme of the David-and-Goliath story: *The battle is the Lord's!* [The soundtrack](#) is a higher quality than you would expect for such a musical.
- Davis, Dale Ralph. [\*Joshua: No Falling Words\*](#). Focus on the Bible. Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2000. Davis is gifted at explaining and applying Old Testament stories.
- Davis, Dale Ralph. [\*Judges: Such a Great Salvation\*](#). Focus on the Bible. Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2007.
- Davis, Dale Ralph. [\*1 Samuel: Looking on the Heart\*](#). Focus on the Bible. Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2000.
- Davis, Dale Ralph. [\*2 Samuel: Out of Every Adversity\*](#). Focus on the Bible. Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2002.
- Davis, Dale Ralph. [\*1 Kings: The Wisdom and the Folly\*](#). Focus on the Bible. Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2003.
- Davis, Dale Ralph. [\*2 Kings: The Power and the Fury\*](#). Focus on the Bible. Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2005.
- DeRouchie, Jason S. "[Zephaniah](#)." [\*TGC Bible Commentary\*](#), 2021. I am not aware of an Old Testament scholar who has thought as deeply about Zephaniah as DeRouchie. For DeRouchie's advanced commentary, see [\*Zephaniah: The Savior's Invitation to\*](#)

- [\*Satisfaction\*](#), Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the Old Testament: A Discourse Analysis of the Hebrew Bible (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2025). See also DeRouchie's "[The Long History of God's Love for Africa](#)" (*Desiring God*, 7 April 2022).
- Duguid, Iain M. "Ezekiel." Pages 907–1208 in [\*Isaiah—Ezekiel\*](#). ESV Expository Commentary 6. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2022. Highlights the themes of "God's glory and sovereignty, man's sinfulness, the certainty of judgment, the promise of mercy and hope for the future" (914). See also Duguid's [\*Ezekiel\*](#), NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999).
  - Duguid, Iain M., and Matthew P. Harmon. [\*Zephaniah, Haggai, Malachi\*](#). Reformed Expository Commentary. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2018. Duguid explains in the preface, "Matt and I had the delight of preaching through Malachi together; the material on Zephaniah and Haggai is mine alone" (xiii).
  - Emadi, Samuel C. "1–2 Samuel." Pages 335–417 in [\*NIV Grace and Truth Study Bible\*](#). Edited by R. Albert Mohler Jr. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2021. Emadi is currently writing a commentary on Samuel for the Evangelical Biblical Theology Commentary series (Lexham Academic, forthcoming in 2028). Since 2020, Sam Emadi and Jim Hamilton have been discussing the Bible passage by passage with a biblical-theological framework for the "[Bible Talk](#)" Podcast. They discuss 1–2 Samuel in the episodes from August 2023 to March 2024.
  - Gentry, Peter J. [\*How to Read and Understand the Biblical Prophets\*](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017. From Jason DeRouchie's endorsement: "Peter Gentry is a master exegete and theologian, and in this brief volume he supplies excellent guidance for those of us who desire to read and understand the Prophets with greater biblical faithfulness." Bonus feature: The appendix is on the literary structure of the book of Revelation.
  - \*Hamilton, Victor P. [\*Handbook on the Historical Books: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Ezra-Nehemiah, Esther\*](#). Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001. See the chapters on Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings. From Michael Grisanti's review: "This volume introduces readers to a treatment of the OT historical books that will supplement a 'history' textbook and will offer different emphases than a commentary on a given book or set of OT books.... Hamilton provides a helpful overview on several issues, but never takes a clear position. After discussing various proposals concerning Joshua's long day, he contends that the language favors the stoppage of the sun rather than an eclipse, but does not affirm whether it actually happened or whether the passage represents a poetical description (52–55).... Hamilton's volume makes a significant

contribution to the ‘big picture’ of historical literature” (*The Master’s Seminary Journal* 14:2 [2003]: 335–37).

- Hays, J. Daniel. [\*Message of the Prophets: A Survey of the Prophetic and Apocalyptic Books of the Old Testament\*](#). Edited by Tremper Longman III. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010. See the chapters on Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah, and the Twelve. From Michael Grisanti’s endorsement: “Hays provides his readers with a superb overview of the message and significance of the Old Testament prophets.”
- House, Paul R. [\*1, 2 Kings\*](#). NAC 8. Nashville: B&H, 1995. House explains in the preface that his concerns include history, literature, the canon, theology, and application.
- House, Paul R. *Isaiah: A Mentor Commentary*. 2 vols. [[volume 1](#) | [volume 2](#)] Fearn, Scotland: Mentor, 2019. From Gary Smith’s endorsement: “His explanations are insightful, historical, well substantiated, interactive with other commentaries, and frequently mention NT quotations. He accepts the messianic interpretation of many key passages and explores how Isaiah’s theological reflections challenged his contemporary audience as well as contributed to biblical theology.”
- Howard, David M., Jr. [\*An Introduction to the Old Testament: Historical Books\*](#). Chicago: Moody, 1993. See the chapters on Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings. [David Howard](#) is my colleague at Bethlehem Seminary and a senior Old Testament scholar.
- Howard, David M., Jr. *Joshua*. 2nd ed. Christian Standard Commentary. Nashville: Holman, 2026. Howard recently revised the [first edition](#) (1998).
- Kidner, Derek. [\*The Message of Jeremiah: Against Wind and Tide\*](#). The Bible Speaks Today. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987. Kidner’s commentaries on the Old Testament are pithy.
- Kidner, Derek. “Isaiah.” Pages 629–70 in [\*New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition\*](#). Edited by D. A. Carson, R. T. France, J. A. Motyer, and G. J. Wenham. 4th ed. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994.
- Kidner, Derek. [\*The Message of Hosea: Love to the Loveless\*](#). The Bible Speaks Today. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1981.
- MacArthur, John, ed. [\*Jonah and Nahum: Grace in the Midst of Judgment\*](#). The MacArthur Old Testament Commentary. Los Angeles: The Master’s Seminary Press, 2024. MacArthur explains in the preface that in producing this new series, “I have been delighted to partner with Abner Chou, Iosif Zhakevich, and Nathan Busenitz to examine the biblical text word by word” (viii).
- \*McComiskey, Thomas Edward, ed. *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary*. 3 vols. [[volume 1](#) | [volume 2](#) | [volume 3](#)] Grand Rapids: Baker Academic,

1992–1998. From Michael Grisanti’s review: “Its combination of attention given to technical and expository issues makes it one of the best sets on this part of the Old Testament” (*The Master’s Seminary Journal* 10:2 [1999]: 314).

- Robertson, O. Palmer. [\*The Books of Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah\*](#). NICOT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990. From Paul House’s review: “Robertson produces a theological commentary that is academically sound and helpful for preaching” (*JETS* 38 [1995]: 274).
- Schnittjer, Gary Edward. [\*Old Testament Narrative Books: The Israel Story\*](#). Scripture Connections. Brentwood, TN: B&H Academic, 2023. See the chapters on Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings.
- Smith, Gary V. [\*Isaiah 1–39\*](#). Christian Standard Commentary. Nashville: Holman, 2021. Smith is a trustworthy Old Testament scholar.
- Smith, Gary V. [\*Isaiah 40–66\*](#). Christian Standard Commentary. Nashville: Holman, 2025.
- Smith, Gary V. [\*Hosea, Amos, Micah\*](#). NIV Application Commentary. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001.
- VanGemenen, Willem A. [\*Interpreting the Prophetic Word: An Introduction to the Prophetic Literature of the Old Testament\*](#). Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990. VanGemenen oversaw my PhD program at TEDS. I took his course on Isaiah, and he was on my dissertation committee. His knowledge of the Hebrew Old Testament is deep.
- Wright, Christopher J. H. [\*The Message of Jeremiah: Grace in the End\*](#). The Bible Speaks Today. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014. After one of my colleagues preached through Jeremiah, he told me that he likes this commentary best, even though he is not a huge fan of Wright: “He does an excellent job in this commentary, mixing good explanation with great insights into application and biblical theology.”

***The Writings: Ruth, Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Lamentations, Daniel, Esther, Ezra-Nehemiah, 1–2 Chronicles***

- Ash, Christopher. [\*The Psalms: A Christ-Centered Commentary\*](#). 4 vols. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2024. Christians should sing all the psalms (Eph 5:19; Col 3:16), and Ash helps us sing psalms now that Christ has come and will come again.
- Barrett, Michael P. V. [\*God’s Unfailing Purpose: The Message of Daniel\*](#). Greenville, SC: Ambassador Emerald International, 2003. “If Ecclesiastes defines time theology and the proper thinking and behavior that accompany it, Daniel proves and illustrates how a God-centered and God-controlled theology of time works. Daniel knew that God was sovereign and that the course of time was in His hands” (5).



- Barrick, William D. [\*Ecclesiastes: The Philippians of the Old Testament\*](#). Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2012. See Bob McCabe’s [review](#). (See McCabe’s “[The Message of Ecclesiastes](#)” below.)
- Davis, Dale Ralph. [\*The Message of Daniel: His Kingdom Cannot Fail\*](#). The Bible Speaks Today. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013. Davis is gifted at explaining and applying Old Testament stories.
- Duguid, Iain M. [\*Esther and Ruth\*](#). Reformed Expository Commentary. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2005. “In both stories, the grace of God to the undeserving and the outcasts is prominently on display” (xi).
- ^Edwards, Jay. [\*Daniel: A Fast-Paced Historical Fiction Where the Tough Issues Faced by Daniel Are Addressed Head-On, Not Dodged\*](#). 2 vols. n.p.: Xulon, 2010. What a story! At the end of nearly every chapter, my daughters would plead with me to keep reading.
- Hamilton, James M., Jr. [\*Exalting Jesus in Ezra and Nehemiah\*](#). Christ-Centered Exposition. Nashville: Holman, 2014. Jim Hamilton carefully interprets Old Testament passages in their whole-Bible context.
- Hamilton, James M., Jr. *Psalms*. 2 vols. [[volume 1](#) | [volume 2](#)] Evangelical Biblical Theology Commentary. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Academic, 2021.
- Hamilton, James M., Jr. [\*Song of Solomon: A Biblical-Theological, Allegorical, Christological Interpretation\*](#). Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2015.
- \*Hamilton, Victor P. [\*Handbook on the Historical Books: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Ezra-Nehemiah, Esther\*](#). Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001. See the chapters on Ruth, Chronicles, Ezra-Nehemiah, and Esther. See Michael Grisanti’s review (excerpt above under “The Prophets”).
- Howard, David M., Jr. [\*An Introduction to the Old Testament: Historical Books\*](#). Chicago: Moody, 1993. See the chapters on Ruth, Esther, Ezra-Nehemiah, and Chronicles.
- Kidner, Derek. [\*Psalms 1–72: An Introduction and Commentary\*](#). TOTC 15. London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1973. Kidner’s commentaries on the Old Testament are pithy.
- Kidner, Derek. [\*Psalms 73–150: An Introduction and Commentary\*](#). TOTC 16. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1975.
- Kidner, Derek. [\*Proverbs: An Introduction and Commentary\*](#). TOTC 17. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1964.
- Kidner, Derek. [\*The Message of Ecclesiastes: A Time to Mourn, and a Time to Dance\*](#). The Bible Speaks Today. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1976.
- Kidner, Derek. [\*Ezra and Nehemiah: An Introduction and Commentary\*](#). TOTC 12. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1979.



- Mabie, Frederick J. “1 and 2 Chronicles.” Pages 23–336 in [\*1 Chronicles–Job\*](#). 2nd ed. Expositor’s Bible Commentary 4. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010. I enjoyed working with Fred Mabie when he drafted “1–2 Chronicles” for the [\*NIV Biblical Theology Study Bible\*](#) (642–742).
- McCabe, Robert V. “The Message of Ecclesiastes.” *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 1.1 (1996): 85–112. [PDF](#). This first issue of Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary’s journal was the first theological journal I read straight through. McCabe’s article is still my single favorite resource on how to approach Ecclesiastes. See also Jason S. DeRouchie, “[Shepherding Wind and One Wise Shepherd: Grasping for Breath in Ecclesiastes](#),” *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 15.3 (2011): 4–25.
- Naselli, Andrew David. “[Job 41:3a in Context](#).” Pages 63–90 in *From Typology to Doxology: Paul’s Use of Isaiah and Job in Romans 11:34–35*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2012. [PDF](#). I overview the book of Job and paraphrase the dialogue—which I also do in my sermon “[The Steadfastness of Job](#)” (2024).
- Saldivar, Samuel. “[Lamentations](#).” *TGC Bible Commentary*, 2023. Sam Saldivar was one of my PhD classmates at Bob Jones University. He’s a diligent student of Scripture.
- Schmutzer, Andrew J., and David M. Howard, eds. [\*The Psalms: Language for All Seasons of the Soul\*](#). Chicago: Moody, 2014. Jason DeRouchie’s endorsement: “This book celebrates the lasting significance of the Psalms for the church. Through the centuries, in seasons of pain and pleasure, the Psalms have testified to the faithfulness of Yahweh and given Christians a voice for lament and praise. The volume supplies an effective guide and model that should serve both student and preacher and assist the church in recovering this biblical hymnbook.”
- Schnittjer, Gary Edward. [\*Old Testament Narrative Books: The Israel Story\*](#). Scripture Connections. Brentwood, TN: B&H Academic, 2023. See the chapters on Ruth, Daniel, Esther, Ezra-Nehemiah, and Chronicles.
- Smith, Gary V. [\*Ezra–Nehemiah and Esther\*](#). Cornerstone Biblical Commentary 5b. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2010. Smith is a trustworthy Old Testament scholar.
- Talbert, Layton. [\*Beyond Suffering: Discovering the Message of Job\*](#). Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press, 2007. See [my review](#).
- Waltke, Bruce K. *The Book of Proverbs*. 2 vols. [[volume 1](#) | [volume 2](#)] NICOT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004–2005. See also Bruce K. Waltke and Ivan D. V. De Silva, [\*Proverbs: A Shorter Commentary\*](#) (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2021). When I consult resources on Proverbs, Waltke is routinely the most insightful.

## The New Testament

- Beale, G. K., and Benjamin L. Gladd. [\*The Story Retold: A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the New Testament\*](#). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2020. My endorsement: “Beale and Gladd concisely survey each book of the New Testament through a biblical-theological lens.”
- Carson, D. A., and Douglas J. Moo. [\*Introducing the New Testament: A Short Guide to Its History and Message\*](#). Edited by Andrew David Naselli. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010. I abridged Carson and Moo’s seminary-level textbook [\*An Introduction to the New Testament\*](#), 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005) for laypeople. The big text is about 355,000 words, and this small one is about 47,000 words (about 13 percent as long).
- Gundry, Robert H. [\*Commentary on the New Testament: Verse-by-Verse Explanations with a Literal Translation\*](#). Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2010. Gundry is concise and attentive (and a bit of a maverick). I started using his commentary after John Piper told me that it is one of the few commentaries he consistently consults.
- MacArthur, John. [\*The MacArthur New Testament Commentary Series\*](#) [also [available from Grace to You](#)]. 34 vols. Chicago: Moody, 1984–2015. I thank God for MacArthur’s expository preaching. Formative. Listen to Phil Johnson [interview](#) John MacArthur after finishing the final volume of this series.
- Naselli, Andrew David. [\*How to Understand and Apply the New Testament: Twelve Steps from Exegesis to Theology\*](#). Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2017.
- Schreiner, Thomas R. [\*New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ\*](#). Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008. See [my review article](#) and [my interview of Schreiner](#). For an abridged version, see Schreiner’s [\*Magnifying God in Christ: A Summary of New Testament Theology\*](#) (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010). My favorite New Testament interpreters are Don Carson and Tom Schreiner, so they appear many times in my list of recommended tools.

## ***The Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John***

- Carson, D. A. [\*Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount and His Confrontation with the World: An Exposition of Matthew 5–10\*](#). Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1987. Carson updated his popular-level expositions on Matthew 5–10. When I read this book as a college student, I thought, “I want to learn how to teach the Bible like *that*.” I began devouring everything I could acquire by Carson, and I eventually earned a PhD under him and served as his research manager. (See my article “[D. A. Carson’s Theological Method](#).”)

- Carson, D. A. “[Matthew](#).” Pages 23–670 in *Matthew–Mark*. 2nd ed. Expositor’s Bible Commentary 9. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010. My favorite commentary on Matthew. (It bothers me when people continue to cite Carson’s *first* edition from 1984 instead of this *second* edition from 2010. I spent a lot of time helping Carson prepare this second edition!)
- Carson, D. A. [The Gospel According to John](#). Pillar New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991. I can’t recall exactly where I heard Tim Keller say this (maybe it was in his course “[Preaching Christ in a Postmodern World](#)”), but Keller recounted that Ed Clowney regarded Carson’s commentary on John as the overall best example of a commentary on a book of the Bible. That’s high praise. I condensed Carson’s commentary in the notes we coauthored on John for the [NIV Biblical Theology Study Bible](#) (pp. 1886–1937).
- Gladd, Benjamin L. [From the Manger to the Throne: A Theology of Luke](#). New Testament Theology. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2022. From Bob Yarbrough’s endorsement: “If there is a richer, better informed, and more concise biblical-theological reading of the Third Gospel, I have not come across it.”
- Lloyd-Jones, David Martyn. [Studies in the Sermon on the Mount](#). 2nd ed. 2 vols. in 1 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976. First published in 1959–1960. Classic exposition of Matthew 5–7. Lloyd-Jones explains in the preface, “These chapters are reports of sermons taken down in shorthand (no tape-recording machine being available at that time). They have been subjected to a minimum amount of correction and alteration, and no attempt has been made to conceal, still less to expunge, the sermonic form.”
- Maier, Paul L. [Pontius Pilate: A Novel](#). 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2014. This “documentary novel” depicts the New Testament world in a relatively entertaining way. Reading this genre engages a different part of your brain and encourages you to envision the world of the New Testament more vividly.
- Naselli, Andrew David. “[Chosen, Born Again, and Believing: How Election, Regeneration, and Faith Relate to Each Other in the Gospel According to John](#).” *The Master’s Seminary Journal* 32 (2021): 269–86. [PDF](#).
- Naselli, Andrew David. “[Harmony of the Gospels](#).” [TGC Bible Commentary](#), 2022. I answer the question “How should you approach apparent contradictions between the Gospels?”
- Schnabel, Eckhard J. [Mark](#). TNTC 2. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2017. Schnabel is a New Testament scholar whose expertise includes the historical-cultural context.

- Schreiner, Thomas R. “Luke.” Pages 703–1106 in [\*Matthew–Luke\*](#). ESV Expository Commentary 8. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021. Schreiner carefully traces the argument in its whole-Bible context.
- Strauss, Mark. [\*Four Portraits, One Jesus: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels\*](#). 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2020. A textbook that introduces the Gospels.
- \*Strauss, Mark L. [\*Mark\*](#). Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014. For an abridged version, see Strauss’s “[Mark](#)” ([\*TGC Bible Commentary\*](#), 2021).
- [\*The Gospel of John\*](#). 2003. Three-hour video. See [my review](#).
- Thomas, Robert L., and Stanley N. Gundry. [\*A Harmony of the Gospels with Explanations and Essays: Using the Text of the New American Standard Bible\*](#). San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978. This is still my favorite harmony of the Gospels. As I explain in “[Harmony of the Gospels](#),” a harmony of the Gospels attempts “to portray the four Gospels as a single, chronological, historical biography. When events and sayings overlap, harmonies of the Gospels typically use multiple columns (two, three, and sometimes four columns) and place the events and sayings parallel to each other.” This is helpful for comparing Gospel accounts with each other to help you responsibly discern how they harmonize. For a harmony of the end of Jesus’s earthy ministry (but without multiple columns), see Andreas J. Köstenberger and Justin Taylor, with Alexander Stewart, [\*The Final Days of Jesus: The Most Important Week of the Most Important Person Who Ever Lived\*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014).
- Williams, Peter J. [\*Can We Trust the Gospels?\*](#) Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018. Pete Williams is a brilliant scholar and master communicator. In this little book, he gives compelling reasons that you should trust the Gospels.
- Williams, Peter J. [\*The Surprising Genius of Jesus: What the Gospels Reveal about the Greatest Teacher\*](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2023. Williams interprets Jesus’s parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11–32), and [he makes some connections I hadn’t seen before](#). See also “[Prodigal Sons](#)” (~25 min.), one of the “[Modern Parables](#)” videos.

## ***Acts***

- Huffman, Douglas S. [\*The Story of Jesus Continues: A Survey of the Acts of the Apostles\*](#). Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2025. A reliable textbook.
- Peterson, David G. [\*The Acts of the Apostles\*](#). Pillar New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009. D. A. Carson, who edits this commentary series, concludes that

Peterson “focuses on what the text actually says, and his judgments are invariably sane, even-handed, judicious” (xv).

- \*Schnabel, Eckhard J. [\*Acts\*](#). Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012. Schnabel is a New Testament scholar whose expertise includes the historical-cultural context.
- Schreiner, Thomas R. [\*Handbook on Acts and Paul's Letters\*](#). Handbooks on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019. The chapter on Acts is pages 1–51.
- Tabb, Brian J. [\*After Emmaus: How the Church Fulfills the Mission of Christ\*](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021. Tabb shows how Luke 24 and Acts connect. Christology and the church's mission go together.

***Paul's Letters: Romans, 1–2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1–2 Thessalonians, 1–2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon***

- Beale, G. K. [\*1–2 Thessalonians\*](#). IVP New Testament Commentary 13. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003. Beale meticulously traces Paul's argument.
- Carson, D. A. [\*A Model of Christian Maturity: An Exposition of 2 Corinthians 10–13\*](#). Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1984. The original title was *From Triumphalism to Maturity*. My favorite line: “We have no right to treat as optional anything God has said” (111).
- Carson, D. A. [\*The Cross and Christian Ministry: Leadership Lessons from 1 Corinthians\*](#). Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993. The original subtitle was *An Exposition of Passages from 1 Corinthians* (chapters 1–4 and 9:19–27). This book is worth rereading. I've read it probably four or five times.
- Harmon, Matthew S. [\*Philippians: A Mentor Commentary\*](#). Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2015. My endorsement: “Matt Harmon explains Paul's letter clause by clause, traces Paul's argument, reads Paul's argument in light of the rest of the Bible, and applies the letter to people today. He reminds me of two of his professors when he was working on his PhD at Wheaton: Doug Moo and Greg Beale.”
- \*Hoehner, Harold W. [\*Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary\*](#). Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002. Meticulous exegesis.
- \*Knight, George W., III. [\*The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text\*](#). NIGTC. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992. When I preached through 1 Timothy (2025–2026), I read what I think are the top 35 or so commentaries (in addition to other tools that are relevant for a particular passage), and Knight's commentary was consistently the most helpful.

- \*Moo, Douglas J. [\*Galatians\*](#). BECNT. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013. Moo judiciously weighs options as he explains the text.
- \*Moo, Douglas J. [\*The Letter to the Romans\*](#). 2nd ed. NICOT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018. I own about 225 commentaries on Romans, and this one by Moo and the one by Schreiner (below) are by far the most helpful tools on Romans I have consulted. My commentary (below) is basically Moo-Schreiner lite.
- Moo, Douglas J. [\*The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon\*](#). 2nd ed. Pillar New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2024.
- Naselli, Andrew David. “[1 Corinthians](#).” Pages 209–394 in *Romans–Galatians*. ESV Expository Commentary 10. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020. See also Andrew David Naselli, [\*Tracing the Argument of 1 Corinthians: A Phrase Diagram\*](#) (Bellingham, WA: Logos, 2023).
- Naselli, Andrew David. [\*Romans: A Concise Guide to the Greatest Letter Ever Written\*](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2022. See also Andrew David Naselli, [\*Tracing the Argument of Romans: A Phrase Diagram of the Greatest Letter Ever Written\*](#) (Bellingham, WA: Logos, 2022).
- Piper, John. [\*Look at the Book\*](#). In these short videos, Piper marks up slides to explain Paul’s letters (in addition to other parts of the Bible and various topics). See also +Douglas Wilson’s “Crash Course Christianity,” about 30 short videos in a style similar to Piper’s “Look at the Book.”
- Schreiner, Thomas R. [\*Christ Crucified: A Theology of Galatians\*](#). New Testament Theology. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2024. Explains Paul’s conflict with his adversaries, the truth of the gospel, and what it looks like to live out the gospel in the new era.
- \*Schreiner, Thomas R. [\*Galatians\*](#). Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010. Schreiner carefully traces the argument in its whole-Bible context.
- Schreiner, Thomas R. [\*Handbook on Acts and Paul’s Letters\*](#). Handbooks on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019. The 13 chapters on each of Paul’s letters are pages 53–432.
- Schreiner, Thomas R. [\*Paul, Apostle of God’s Glory in Christ: A Pauline Theology\*](#). 2nd ed. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2020. “God’s work in Christ is the foundation and goal of Paul’s theology” (xi).
- \*Schreiner, Thomas R. [\*Romans\*](#). 2nd ed. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018. (See my comment above on Doug Moo’s commentary on Romans.)



- Storms, Sam. *A Sincere and Pure Devotion to Christ: 100 Daily Meditations on 2 Corinthians*. 2 vols. [[volume 1](#) | [volume 2](#)] Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010. Exegetical, theological, pastoral, accessible.

### ***Hebrews and the General Epistles: Hebrews, James, 1–2 Peter, 1–3 John, Jude***

- Bateman, Herbert W., IV, ed. [Four Views on the Warning Passages in Hebrews](#). Viewpoints. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007. This debate features four views: classical Arminian (Grant R. Osborne), classical Reformed (Buist M. Fanning), Wesleyan Arminian (Gareth Lee Cockerill), and moderate Reformed (Randall C. Gleason). Fanning argues most convincingly.
- Grudem, Wayne. [1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary](#). 2nd ed. TNTC 17. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2024. Grudem explains the text clearly and shows how it correlates with the rest of the Bible.
- Moo, Douglas J. [2 Peter, Jude](#). NIV Application Commentary. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996. Moo judiciously weighs options as he explains the text. I condensed Moo's commentary in the notes we coauthored on 2 Peter and Jude for the [NIV Biblical Theology Study Bible](#) (2248–54, 2268–72).
- Moo, Douglas J. [The Letter of James](#). 2nd ed. Pillar New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2021.
- Schreiner, Thomas R. [1 and 2 Peter and Jude](#). 2nd ed. Christian Standard Commentary. Nashville: Holman, 2020. Schreiner carefully traces the argument in its whole-Bible context.
- Schreiner, Thomas R. [Hebrews](#). Evangelical Biblical Theology Commentary. Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2020.
- \*Yarbrough, Robert W. [1–3 John](#). BECNT. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008. Yarbrough finished this commentary while I was serving as his teaching assistant at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. D. A. Carson says that Yarbrough's commentary is the best available: "He combines good exegesis, theological reflection, interaction not only with the most recent Johannine scholars but with two or three major figures in the past (notably Augustine, Calvin, and Schlatter), pastoral insight, and an independent judgment that means his work is always fresh. This is the place to start for pastors with functioning Greek" ([New Testament Commentary Survey](#), 7th ed. [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013], 151).



## ***Revelation***

- Beale, G. K., with David H. Campbell. [\*The Book of Revelation: A Shorter Commentary\*](#). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015. This condenses Beale's advanced work [\*The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text\*](#), NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999).
- \*Schreiner, Thomas R. [\*Revelation\*](#). BECNT. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2023. Schreiner carefully traces the argument in its whole-Bible context. On the millennium, Schreiner does not defend postmillennialism, amillennialism, or premillennialism but instead defends "new-creation millennialism" (659–82), a mixture of amillennialism and premillennialism. For an abridged version, see Schreiner's "Revelation," in [\*Hebrews–Revelation\*](#), ESV Expository Commentary 12 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 525–754.
- Tabb, Brian J. "Revelation." [\*TGC Bible Commentary\*](#), 2023. Tabb also wrote the notes on Revelation for the [\*NIV Biblical Theology Study Bible\*](#), and he is currently writing a detailed commentary on Revelation for the Evangelical Exegetical Commentary series (Lexham Academic, forthcoming).
- Wilson, Mark. [\*Charts on the Book of Revelation: Literary, Historical, and Theological Perspectives\*](#). Kregel Charts of the Bible and Theology. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007. Good charts are invaluable, and this book collects some good ones. Several scholars who have written commentaries on Revelation endorse the book (e.g., Grant Osborne and Richard Bauckham).

## ***2. Biblical Theology: Study how the whole Bible progresses, integrates, and climaxes in Christ.***

- \*Alexander, T. Desmond, and Brian S. Rosner, eds. [\*New Dictionary of Biblical Theology\*](#). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000. This handy reference work has three parts: twelve essays on biblical theology, articles on the sections of Scripture and each book of the Bible, and articles on over 140 biblical themes.
- \*Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson, eds. [\*Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament\*](#). Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007. In the second edition of this reference work (forthcoming), I coauthor with D. A. Carson the commentaries on James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1–3 John, and Jude.
- \*Beale, G. K., D. A. Carson, Benjamin L. Gladd, and Andrew David Naselli, eds. [\*Dictionary of the New Testament Use of the Old Testament\*](#). Grand Rapids: Baker

Academic, 2023. This 964-page (and 900,000-word) book supplements Beale and Carson's *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (above).

- \*Beale, G. K. [\*Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and Interpretation\*](#). Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012. If I were to select just one book to use as a text for a course on how the New Testament uses the Old, this would be it.
- Carson, D. A. [\*The God Who Is There: Finding Your Place in God's Story\*](#). Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010. Carson explains the Bible's storyline in 14 parts. I include his 14 video lectures at the bottom of [this article](#).
- \*DeRouchie, Jason S. "An Arc of the Covenants: Tracing How the Bible's Storyline Climaxes in Christ." *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 26.1 (2022): 10–45. [PDF](#). When Jason DeRouchie and I used to coteach a course on biblical theology, we devoted one of our classes to a workshop in which we asked the students to draft their own "arc of the covenant." An arc is an argument diagram that displays a text's logical flow of thought with curved lines (i.e., arcs). In my school we typically do this with texts such as a paragraph from one of Paul's letters. But our assignment here was different in that we asked students to trace the argument of the major God-initiated covenants in Scripture: Adamic (or the covenant of creation), Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic, and new. In this article DeRouchie explains and defends how he arcs the covenants. See also Schreiner's [\*Covenant and God's Purpose for the World\*](#) (below).
- DeRouchie, Jason S., Oren R. Martin, and Andrew David Naselli. [\*40 Questions about Biblical Theology\*](#). 40 Questions. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2020.
- ^DeYoung, Kevin. [\*The Biggest Story: How the Snake Crusher Brings Us Back to the Garden\*](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015. 132 pp. Targets children ages 6–11. Concisely summarizes the Bible's story line. DeYoung writes clearly, creatively, and soundly.
- ^DeYoung, Kevin. [\*The Biggest Story Bible Storybook\*](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2022. 528 pp. DeYoung tells the story of the Bible in 104 mini-stories for children ages 6–12. My children enjoyed these stories when I read them aloud to the family.
- \*Hamilton, James M., Jr. [\*Typology: Understanding the Bible's Promise-Shaped Patterns: How Old Testament Expectations Are Fulfilled in Christ\*](#). Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2022. Hamilton's definition: "Typology is God-ordained, author-intended historical correspondence and escalation in significance between people, events, and institutions across the Bible's redemptive-historical story (i.e., in covenantal context)" (26). In recent years Hamilton has increasingly emphasized chiasms in Scripture, and this book highlights that literary structure.

- ^Helm, David R. [\*The Big Picture Story Bible\*](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004. Ideal for very young children.
- Hunter, Trent, and Stephen J. Wellum. [\*Christ from Beginning to End: How the Full Story of Scripture Reveals the Full Glory of Christ\*](#). Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018. My endorsement: “A pastor and a scholar team up to explain the Bible’s storyline accessibly and skillfully. This book is a gift to the church.” For an abridged version, see Wellum’s “[The Story and Message of the Bible](#)” (*TGC Bible Commentary*, 2020). See also Wellum’s works under “The Doctrine of the Church (Ecclesiology)” below.
- ^Machowski, Marty. [\*Dragon Seed\*](#). Greensboro, NC: New Growth, 2017. This story creatively fills out Genesis 1–4, Mark 5, and Revelation 20–22. It targets ages 11–14, but my wife and I along with our younger children loved it when I read it aloud to our family in 2017.
- Naselli, Andrew David. “History of Interpretation: 1800 to Present.” Pages 319–27 in [\*Dictionary of the New Testament Use of the Old Testament\*](#). Edited by G. K. Beale, D. A. Carson, Benjamin L. Gladd, and Andrew David Naselli. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2023. I summarize and respond to twelve approaches to how the New Testament uses the Old. Here’s how I summarize my view: “NT authors consistently interpret OT passages in their literary contexts, and OT passages may have an expanded meaning that the divine author intended but that the human author did not consciously intend.” Three related components distinguish this approach: the “what” is an expanded meaning; the “why” is a canonical approach; and the “how” is typology (324–26).
- Naselli, Andrew David. [\*The Serpent and the Serpent Slayer\*](#). Short Studies in Biblical Theology. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020. A biblical theology of snakes and dragons.
- Schreiner, Thomas R. [\*40 Questions about Christians and Biblical Law\*](#). 40 Questions. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2010. This is the all-around best book on Christians and the law.
- Schreiner, Thomas R. [\*Covenant and God’s Purpose for the World\*](#). Short Studies in Biblical Theology. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017. Concisely explains six covenants and how they fit together: Adamic (creation), Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic, and New. See also DeRouchie’s “[An Arc of the Covenants](#)” (above).
- Schreiner, Thomas R. [\*The King in His Beauty: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments\*](#). Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013. A popular-level whole-Bible biblical theology that basically goes book by book from Genesis to Revelation. Schreiner combines some New Testament books into one chapter: Luke and Acts, John’s Gospel and letters, all of Paul’s letters, and 2 Peter and Jude.

- ^Thornton, Champ, and Andrew David Naselli. [\*The Serpent Slayer and the Scroll of Riddles\*](#). The Kambur Chronicles 1. Greensboro, NC: New Growth, 2022. This builds on my biblical theology of snakes and dragons (see above). The adventure story targets readers ages 8–12.
- Gentry, Peter J., and Stephen J. Wellum. [\*God's Kingdom through God's Covenants: A Concise Biblical Theology\*](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015. Defends progressive covenantalism (a view that I hold). Progressive covenantalism differs from covenant theology by arguing that the genealogical principle (a basis for infant baptism) significantly changes across redemptive history. Progressive covenantalism differs from dispensationalism by understanding the land not ultimately as Canaan but as a type of the new creation. For a more advanced version, see Gentry and Wellum's [\*Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants\*](#), 2nd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018). For an abridged version, see Wellum's "[Progressive Covenantalism and New Covenant Theology](#)" (*TGC Concise Theology Essays*, 2020). For essays that support and develop Gentry and Wellum's argument, see Stephen J. Wellum and Brent E. Parker, eds., [\*Progressive Covenantalism: Charting a Course between Dispensational and Covenant Theologies\*](#) (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2016). See also "[A Primer on Progressive Covenantalism](#)," *Christ Over All*, September 2023, and Wellum's essay and responses in [\*Covenantal and Dispensational Theologies: Four Views on the Continuity of Scripture\*](#), ed. Brent E. Parker and Richard J. Lucas, Spectrum Multiview Books (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2022).

### ***3. Historical Theology: Study how significant interpreters and theologians have understood the Bible and theology.***

Historical theology typically focuses on four broad periods of church history:

1. *The Early Church (first century–600)*. This includes the Apostolic Fathers (late first to early to mid-second century); early apologists, exegetes, and theologians such as Justin Martyr (c. 100–c. 165), Irenaeus (c. 130–c. 200), Tertullian (c. 160–c. 225), Origen (c. 185–c. 254), and Athanasius (c. 296–373); Augustine (354–430); and statements on historic Christian orthodoxy in [the Apostles' Creed](#) (200s–300s), [the Nicene Creed](#) (revised in 381 at Constantinople), [the Chalcedonian Creed](#) (451), and [the Athanasian Creed](#) (300s–400s).
2. *The Middle Ages (600–1500)*. This includes Anselm (c. 1033–1109) and Thomas Aquinas (c. 1225–1274).

3. *The Reformation and Post-Reformation (1500–1750)*. This includes Martin Luther (1483–1546), John Calvin (1509–1564), John Owen (1616–1683), and [confessions](#) such as the [Thirty-nine Articles of Religion](#) (1563), [Heidelberg Catechism](#) (1563), [Westminster Confession of Faith](#) (1646), and [Second London Baptist Confession](#) (1689).
  4. *The Modern Period (1750–present)*. This includes Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758), Charles Spurgeon (1834–1892), B. B. Warfield (1851–1921), and David Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1899–1981).
- Allison, Gregg R. [Historical Theology: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine: A Companion to Wayne Grudem's Systematic Theology](#). Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011. The chapters basically parallel the chapters in Grudem's [Systematic Theology](#) (see below), and in each chapter Allison surveys what notable theologians believed in four periods of church history.
  - Anselm. "Why God Became Man." Pages 260–356 in [Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works](#). Edited by Brian Davies and G. R. Evans. Oxford World's Classics. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998. See also Stephen J. Wellum, "[God's Glory Was Satisfied: Anselm's Why God Became Man?](#)" *Christ Over All*, 12 June 2024.
  - \*Aquinas, Thomas. [Summa Theologiae](#). Translated by Laurence Shapcote. Latin/English Edition of the Works of St. Thomas Aquinas 14–16, 19–21. Green Bay, WI: Aquinas Institute, 2017. For an introduction to Aquinas, see Robert Letham, "Thomas Aquinas (1225–74)," in [Gamechangers: Key Figures of the Christian Church](#) (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2015), 83–97, and Michael Reeves, "The Dumb Ox: Thomas Aquinas," in [Theologians You Should Know: An Introduction: From the Apostolic Fathers to the 21st Century](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 125–48.
  - Athanasius. "On the Incarnation of the Word." Pages 31–67 in [Athanasius: Select Works and Letters](#). Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church [Second Series] 4. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997. See C. S. Lewis's "[Introduction](#)" to Athanasius's essay ([London: Centenary, 1944](#) [5–12]).
  - Augustine. [Confessions](#). Edited and translated by Henry Chadwick. Oxford World's Classics. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992. For an introduction to Augustine, see Robert Letham, "Augustine (354–430)," in [Gamechangers: Key Figures of the Christian Church](#) (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2015), 37–50, and Michael Reeves, "Loving Wisdom: Augustine," in [Theologians You Should Know: An Introduction: From the Apostolic Fathers to the 21st Century](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 83–102.
  - Beeke, Joel R., et al. [Reformation Heritage Books](#). Puritan and Reformed literature.

- +“[Biographies](#).” A collection of life stories on Canon+. I enjoy [George Grant’s lectures](#).
- Dallimore, Arnold A. *George Whitefield: The Life and Times of the Great Evangelist of the Eighteenth-Century Revival*. 2 vols. [[volume 1](#) | [volume 2](#)] Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1970–1980. For an abridged version, see Dallimore’s [George Whitefield: God’s Anointed Servant in the Great Revival of the Eighteenth Century](#) (Westchester, IL: Crossway, 1990). [My favorite Whitefield quote](#): “I am content to wait till the judgement day for the clearing up of my reputation.”
- DeYoung, Kevin. [The Nicene Creed: What You Need to Know about the Most Important Creed Ever Written](#). Foundational Tools for Our Faith. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2025. A concise introduction (76 pp. + front matter and indexes). See DeYoung’s lecture “[The Doctrine of the Trinity: What Can We Learn from the Nicene Creed after 1,700 Years](#)” (Cross Conference 2025) and four sermons in 2023–2024: “[We Believe](#),” “[The Only-Begotten Son of God](#),” “[‘For Us’ and Filioque](#),” and “[One Church and One Baptism](#).” See also “[The Nicene Creed: 1700 Years of Homoousios](#),” *Christ Over All*, July 2025.
- \*Edwards, Jonathan. [Works of Jonathan Edwards Online](#). 73 vols. The Jonathan Edwards Center at Yale University hosts this digital archive of the complete writings of Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758), arguably North America’s greatest theologian. The collection includes all of Edwards’s known writings, including his sermons, treatises, letters, personal writings, and manuscripts. See also [+Edwards’s Charity and Its Fruits](#) on Canon+—an 11-hour exposition of 1 Corinthians 13.
- Ferguson, Everett. [Church History, Volume One: From Christ to Pre-Reformation; The Rise and Growth of the Church in Its Cultural, Intellectual, and Political Context](#). Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005. A good textbook.
- George, Timothy. [Theology of the Reformers](#). 2nd ed. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2013. George skillfully surveys the theology of Martin Luther, Huldrych Zwingli, John Calvin, Menno Simons, and William Tyndale.
- Haykin, Michael A. G. [Rediscovering the Church Fathers: Who They Were and How They Shaped the Church](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011. Haykin is an outstanding church historian. In this book the case studies are Ignatius of Antioch, the author of the *Letter to Diognetus*, Origen, Cyprian, Ambrose, Basil of Caesarea, and Patrick.
- Holmes, Michael W., ed. and trans. [The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations](#). 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007. See also Holmes’s [The Apostolic Fathers in English](#). [Paul L. Maier](#)’s endorsement: “After the New Testament itself, churchmen like Clement, Ignatius, and Polycarp provide the very earliest writings



of Christianity, and so their testimony is of enormous importance. More than church fathers, they are Apostolic Fathers, immediately adjacent to the events that gave rise to our faith. Small wonder, then, that Michael W. Holmes has focused his scholarship on this group, bringing out a third edition with all its enhancements in translation and commentary. Extremely readable and helpfully divided by headers, these texts are a gold mine of evidence on earliest Christian theology, worship, and history, including information on what happened to Peter and Paul at the end of their lives. As such, this material is next to the Bible in importance.”

- Lewis, C. S. [\*God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics\*](#). Edited by Walter Hooper. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970. A collection of 48 essays. See also *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis*, ed. Walter Hooper, 3 vols. (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2004–2007); in [this article](#) I share some of my favorite excerpts and include an engaging three-part interview with Walter Hooper.
- Machen, J. Gresham. [\*Christianity and Liberalism\*](#). 1923. New ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009. Theological liberalism is not Christianity but a different religion that is incompatible with Christianity. See “[Christianity and Liberalism Revisited](#),” *Christ Over All*, June 2023.
- Marsden, George M. [\*Jonathan Edwards: A Life\*](#). New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003. My favorite biography. For an abridged version, see Marsden’s [\*A Short Life of Jonathan Edwards\*](#) (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008).
- Murray, Iain H. [\*Evangelicalism Divided: A Record of Crucial Change in the Years 1950 to 2000\*](#). Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 2000. See [my review](#). See also George M. Marsden, [\*Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism\*](#), 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995).
- Murray, Iain H. [\*Revival and Revivalism: The Making and Marring of American Evangelicalism 1750–1858\*](#). Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1994. Related: “[The Altar Call](#).”
- Needham, Nick. *2000 Years of Christ’s Power*. 5 vols. [[volume 1](#) | [volume 2](#) | [volume 3](#) | [volume 4](#) | [volume 5](#)] Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2016–2023. From Carl Trueman’s endorsement: “Christians who want to learn about [church history] often wonder where they should start. For many years now I have always given the same answer: if you want a thorough, learned but accessible and well-written history of the church, read Nick Needham’s *2,000 Years of Christ’s Power*.”



- Nichols, Stephen J., and Justin Taylor. [Theologians on the Christian Life](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012–present. This series (it’s not a single book) is historically informed and warmly devotional. For example, see Joe Rigney’s [Lewis on the Christian Life](#) (2018).
- \*Owen, John. [The Complete Works of John Owen](#). Edited by Lee Gatiss and Shawn D. Wright. 40 vols. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2023–present. You can listen to Owen’s [+The Mortification of Sin](#), [+On Temptation](#), and [+Indwelling Sin in Believers](#) on Canon+. See also my article “[John Owen’s Argument for Definite Atonement in The Death of Death in the Death of Christ: A Brief Summary and Evaluation](#)” (*Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 14.4 [2010]: 60–82).
- Piper, John. [27 Servants of Sovereign Joy: Faithful, Flawed, and Fruitful](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2022. [PDF](#). These theologically informed, God-centered biographies are informative and inspiring.
- Renihan, James M. [To the Judicious and Impartial Reader: A Contextual-Historical Exposition of the Second London Baptist Confession of Faith](#). Baptist Symbolics 2. Cape Coral, FL: Founders, 2022. The 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith articulates Reformed Baptist theology. For a helpful chart that compares Westminster covenant theology, 1689 Federalism, and progressive covenantalism, see Richard Lucas, “[Progressive Covenantalism and 1689 Federalism: Comparing Baptist Covenantal Theologies](#),” *Christ Over All*, 11 September 2023.
- Roberts, Alexander, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, eds. [The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325](#). 8 vols. [[volume 1](#) | [volume 2](#) | [volume 3](#) | [volume 4](#) | [volume 5](#) | [volume 6](#) | [volume 7](#) | [volume 8](#)] Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997. Primary sources.
- Reeves, Michael. [The Unquenchable Flame: Introducing the Reformation](#). Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2009. Reeves explains the historical context of the Reformation and then surveys Martin Luther, Ulrich Zwingli, John Calvin, the Reformation in Britain, and the Puritans. Listen to Mark Dever [interview](#) Reeves about the Reformation (4 May 2010). See also my article “[20 Resources on the Protestant Reformation](#).”
- Reeves, Michael. [Theologians You Should Know: An Introduction: From the Apostolic Fathers to the 21st Century](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016. Reeves introduces Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Athanasius, Augustine, Anselm, Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Owen, Jonathan Edwards, Friedrich Schleiermacher (the father of modern theological liberalism), Karl Barth, and J. I. Packer. Reeves includes a chapter on Barth because Barth has been so influential, but Barth is generally not a reliable theologian to help you better understand the Bible. I feel like I must not be smart enough to appreciate

him adequately. It's like I have to squeeze the juice out of two dozen oranges to get a tiny glass of orange juice, and the juice doesn't even taste that great.

- Schaeffer, Francis A. [\*The Complete Works of Francis A. Schaeffer: A Christian Worldview\*](#). 5 vols. Westchester, IL: Crossway, 1985. See Stephen J. Wellum, “[Francis A. Schaeffer \(1912–1984\): Lessons from His Thought and Life](#)” (*Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 6.2 [2002]: 4–33). See also “[A Christian Manifesto for the 21st Century](#),” *Christ Over All*, October 2022 (I wrote [the essay on Schaeffer’s chapter 2](#)).
- Spurgeon, C. H. *The Autobiography of C. H. Spurgeon: Compiled from His Diary, Letters, and Records by His Wife and His Private Secretary*. 4 vols. Chicago: Revell, 1899–1900. PDFs: [volume 1](#) | [volume 2](#) | [volume 3](#) | [volume 4](#). A fascinating and inspiring autobiography. For all things Spurgeon, visit [the Spurgeon Library](#) on the campus of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Missouri.
- Van Dixhoorn, Chad. [\*Confessing the Faith: A Reader’s Guide to the Westminster Confession of Faith\*](#). Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 2016. Van Dixhoorn is probably the foremost expert alive on the history of the Westminster Standards. From Carl Trueman’s foreword: “It deserves to be the standard reference book for any pastor seeking to use the Westminster Standards in his ministry.” See Van Dixhoorn’s “[Reformed Theology in Full Harvest: The Story of the Westminster Confession of Faith](#)” (*Desiring God*, 9 February 2021). See also J. V. Fesko, [\*The Theology of the Westminster Standards: Historical Context and Theological Insights\*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), and +R. C. Sproul, [\*Truths We Confess: A Systematic Exposition of the Westminster Confession of Faith\*](#), 2nd ed. (Orlando: Reformation Trust, 2019)—a [34-hour audiobook on Canon+](#).
- Van Dixhoorn, Chad B., ed. [\*Creeds, Confessions, and Catechisms: A Readers’s Edition\*](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2022. Van Dixhoorn collects thirteen creeds and briefly introduces each. See also “[Creeds, Confessions, and Cooperation: The Basis of Our Unity](#),” *Christ Over All*, March 2024.
- \*Warfield, Benjamin B. [\*The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield\*](#). 10 vols. New York: Oxford University Press, 1932. [Available from Logos Bible Software](#). See also Warfield’s [\*Selected Shorter Writings\*](#), ed. John E. Meeter, 2 vols. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1970). When I was in seminary, I wrote a 90-page paper titled “B. B. Warfield’s Life and Significant Theological Contributions” (unpublished). Jenni and I had been married for about one year at the time, and I told her that if God gave us a son I might like to name him *Warfield*. God gave us four daughters! John Hughes is currently editing and

enhancing Warfield's work for P&R; see [\*The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible\*](#) and [\*The Person and Work of Christ\*](#).

- +Wilson, Douglas. [\*John Knox: Stalwart Courage\*](#). 2nd ed. Moscow, ID: Canon, 2021. Emboldening.
- +Wilson, Douglas. [\*Mere Fundamentalism: The Apostles' Creed and the Romance of Orthodoxy\*](#). Moscow, ID: Canon, 2018. Wilson explains that he is attempting "to place Christian fundamentalism in the catholic [i.e., universal Christian] tradition. This may seem odd, but really it should be thought no more odd than placing the foundation walls under the house" (5). He dedicates the book to J. I. Packer, which is fitting since Packer wrote [\*"Fundamentalism" and the Word of God: Some Evangelical Principles\*](#) (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1958).
- Woodbridge, John D., and Frank A. James III. [\*Church History. Volume 2: From Pre-Reformation to the Present Day; The Rise and Growth of the Church in Its Cultural, Intellectual, and Political Context\*](#). Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013. A good textbook.

#### ***4. Systematic Theology: Study what the whole Bible says and how it coheres.***

- Christ the King Church's "[Member Affirmation of Faith](#)" is adapted from [\*The New Hampshire Confession of Faith\*](#) (1833, revised in 1853).
- Christ the King Church's "[Elder Affirmation of Faith](#)" includes "[The Bethlehem College and Seminary Affirmation of Faith](#)."

#### **Whole Systematic Theologies**

- \*Bavinck, Herman. [\*Reformed Dogmatics\*](#). Edited by John Bolt. Translated by John Vriend. 4 vols. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003–2008. If I could have only one systematic theology on a desert island, I'd choose this one. Bavinck (1854–1921) was a Dutch Reformed theologian. He interprets relevant texts and considers historical theology in more depth than most systematic theologies as he logically synthesizes Bible doctrine. Louis Berkhof's [\*Systematic Theology\*](#), 4th ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1938), basically condenses Bavinck.
- Calvin, John. [\*Institutes of the Christian Religion\*](#). Edited by John T. McNeill. Translated by Ford Lewis Battles. 2 vols. Library of Christian Classics 20. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960. It's a classic for a reason. (Crossway is in the process of producing a new translation of the *Institutes*, and it will likely become the new standard.)

- DeYoung, Kevin. [\*Daily Doctrine: A One-Year Guide to Systematic Theology\*](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2024. DeYoung is gifted at explaining complex topics clearly and accessibly. I micro-read this one, and it was time well spent.
- Grudem, Wayne. [\*Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine\*](#). 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2020. My endorsement: “Grudem’s *Systematic Theology* is well organized, easy to understand, usually persuasive, and devotional. Grudem does not merely inform you; he stirs your affections to love and worship the triune God. Grudem is not attempting to write a cutting-edge contemporary theology that plays theological Ping-Pong with trendy non-evangelical theologians. Nor is he attempting to write a historical theology that exhaustively explains what significant Bible interpreters and theologians have believed. Rather, he is serving the church by helping Christians who are not experts in theology better understand what the whole Bible says about God, God’s word, man, Christ, the Holy Spirit, angels and demons, salvation, the church, and the end times.” This book is over 1500 pages. Wayne Grudem’s son Elliot abridged it twice: one is about 670 pages ([\*Bible Doctrine: Essential Teachings of the Christian Faith\*](#), 2nd ed. [2022]), and the other is about 200 pages ([\*Christian Beliefs: Twenty Basics Every Christian Should Know\*](#), 2nd ed. [2022]).
- MacArthur, John, and Richard Mayhue, eds. [\*Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Bible Truth\*](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017. My endorsement: “In addition to presenting orthodox theology common to historic Protestants, MacArthur and Mayhue defend an unusual combination of views that evangelicals debate, such as young-earth creationism, Calvinist soteriology, credobaptism, elder-rule polity, complementarianism, cessationism, and traditional dispensationalism (or what they call futuristic premillennialism). They argue in a clear and orderly way that is worth engaging even if you disagree.” For an abridged version, see MacArthur’s [\*Essential Christian Doctrine: A Handbook on Biblical Truth\*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021).
- ^Machowski, Marty. [\*The Ology: Ancient Truths Ever New\*](#). Illustrated by Andy McGuire. Greensboro, NC: New Growth, 2015. My endorsement: “This well-illustrated book clearly and logically introduces theology for children.” Sovereign Grace Music produced [an album for children based on the book](#). As transgenderism has become mainstream, the song “[Just the Way God Wanted Us to Be](#)” sounds radically countercultural: “He made us boys. He made us girls. / Different pieces of the puzzle joined together perfectly. / We are just the way God wanted us to be.”
- Morgan, Christopher W., with Robert A. Peterson. [\*Christian Theology: The Biblical Story and Our Faith\*](#). Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2020. My endorsement: “Chris

Morgan’s systematic theology is concise, easy to understand, and edifying. He models how to do theology by rooting his conclusions in exegesis and biblical theology while considering historical theology and culminating in practical theology.”

- Morgan, Christopher W., and Robert A. Peterson. [\*A Concise Dictionary of Theological Terms\*](#). Nashville: B&H Academic, 2020. A handy reference work. (There’s also a glossary in the back of Grudem’s [\*Systematic Theology\*](#) [1499–1528].)
- +Packer, J. I. [\*Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs\*](#). Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1993. Packer is gifted at concisely summarizing theology. He used to say of himself, “Packer by name, packer by trade.” Listen to interviews of Packer by [Matt Schmucker and Mark Dever](#) (1999), [Mark Dever](#) (1999), and [John Piper](#) (2015).
- Wellum, Stephen J. [\*Systematic Theology, Volume 1: From Canon to Concept\*](#). Brentwood, TN: B&H Academic, 2024. The first of three volumes by my favorite living systematic theologian. Wellum addresses introductory matters like theological method, God’s revelation, the biblical-theological framework of Scripture (a topic I haven’t seen other systematic theologies address like Wellum does), and the triune God.
- [Zaspel, Fred](#), ed. [\*TGC Concise Theology Essays\*](#). 2022. This collection of 250 essays is the best resource on TGC’s site.

### **Theological Method: How to Approach Exegesis and Theology**

- Carson, D. A., and Andrew David Naselli. *Exegetical Fallacies*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, forthcoming in fall 2026. A *fallacy* is an incorrect belief based on an unsound argument. *An elephant has four legs. Bianca has four legs. Therefore, Bianca is an elephant.* That’s a logical fallacy. Bianca might be a cat. Here’s how we organize fallacies in this book: 17 word-study fallacies, 7 grammatical fallacies (for NT Greek), 21 logical fallacies, 5 presuppositional fallacies, 5 literary fallacies, 4 historical fallacies, and 5 theological fallacies.
- DeRouchie, Jason S. “[Interpreting Scripture: A General Introduction](#).” [\*TGC Bible Commentary\*](#), 2020. This abridges DeRouchie’s [\*How to Understand and Apply the Old Testament: Twelve Steps from Exegesis to Theology\*](#) (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2017).
- Naselli, Andrew David. “[D. A. Carson’s Theological Method](#).” Pages 11–50 in *The Gospel and the Modern World: A Theological Vision for the Church*. Edited by Brian J. Tabb. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2023. [PDF](#).

- Naselli, Andrew David. “[Theological Method](#).” *TGC Concise Theology Essays*, 2020. This abridges my book [How to Understand and Apply the New Testament: Twelve Steps from Exegesis to Theology](#) (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2017).
- Piper, John. [Reading the Bible Supernaturally: Seeing and Savoring the Glory of God in Scripture](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017. [PDF](#). From D. A. Carson’s endorsement: “Not many books should be recommended for both beginning Bible readers and mature Bible readers, but this is one of them.” The book includes a valuable appendix on how to trace the argument by arcing (395–411).
- Plummer, Robert L. [40 Questions about Interpreting the Bible](#). 2nd ed. 40 Questions. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2021. A master teacher clearly and accessibly introduces hermeneutics.

### **The Doctrine of God (Theology Proper)**

- Carson, D. A. [The Difficult Doctrine of the Love of God](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2000. [PDF](#). Carson unpacks how the Bible speaks about God’s love in five ways: (1) the Father loves the Son, and the Son loves the Father; (2) God providentially loves all that he has made; (3) God has a saving stance toward the fallen world; (4) God has a particular, effective, selecting love toward his elect; and (5) God conditionally loves his own people when they obey him.
- \*Charnock, Stephen. [The Existence and Attributes of God: Updated and Unabridged](#). Edited by Mark Jones. 2 vols. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2022. The single best resource on God’s attributes. Mark Jones describes it as “perhaps the finest, most extensive theological-practical work written in the English language on the doctrine of God” (3). I think he may safely delete “perhaps.”
- Christensen, Scott. [What about Free Will? Reconciling Our Choices with God’s Sovereignty](#). Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2016. My endorsement: “Many think that free will is the silver-bullet answer to some of theology’s most difficult questions. But do we have a free will? Short answer: It depends on what you mean by free. Long answer: Read this book.” This is the overall best accessible book on free will that I am aware of. Christensen convincingly defends compatibilism and refutes incompatibilism. He simplifies the sound biblical arguments by luminaries such as Martin Luther (*The Bondage of the Will*) and Jonathan Edwards (*Freedom of the Will*)—as well as more recent theologians such as R. C. Sproul, John Frame, John Feinberg, D. A. Carson, John Piper, and Sam Storms. (I address the challenging issue of free will in chapter 6 of



[Predestination](#). I spent more time researching and writing that chapter than the rest of the book combined.)

- \*Feinberg, John S. [No One Like Him: The Doctrine of God](#). Foundations of Evangelical Theology. Edited by John S. Feinberg. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2001. When I read this book in my early seminary days, chapters 13–16 helped me better understand God’s meticulous sovereignty. From J. I. Packer’s endorsement: “John Feinberg reads theology with a philosopher’s eye and writes it with a philosopher’s sensitivity to illogic and incoherence.... This is the new landmark account of God that Bavinck might have produced had he been able to write his masterful *Reformed Dogmatics* a century later than he did.”
- Frame, John M. [The Doctrine of God](#). A Theology of Lordship. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2002. Typical John Frame: clear, unassuming, logical, and filled with threes. Frame does not care about impressing his peers and proving that he is scholarly. He aims to build up thoughtful Christians with sound, straightforward theology. See also Frame’s 2020 articles for [TGC Concise Theology Essays](#):
  - [“Divine Sovereignty and Human Freedom”](#)
  - [“Divine Transcendence and Immanence”](#)
  - [“God the Creator”](#)
  - [“Openness Theology and Divine Omniscience”](#)
  - [“The Eternality and Aseity of God”](#)
  - [“The Omnipotence, Omniscience, and Omnipresence of God”](#)
  - [“The Sovereignty of God”](#)
  - [“The Spirituality of God”](#)
- Jones, Mark. [God Is: A Devotional Guide to the Attributes of God](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017. Mark Jones, editor of Stephen Charnock’s [The Existence and Attributes of God: Updated and Unabridged](#) (see above), acknowledges, “Most people who honestly desire to know God better will never read [Charnock’s] work from cover to cover. As a result, my goal here is to provide a brief, simple, and clear book on the attributes of God that readers can (hopefully!) read from cover to cover” (18).
- \*Letham, Robert. [The Holy Trinity: In Scripture, History, Theology, and Worship](#). 2nd ed. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2019. For one of my systematic theology courses, I have assigned this 650-page book—mainly because “Part 2: Historical Development” (85–324) is so well-researched.
- Madueme, Hans. [Does Science Make God Irrelevant?](#) TGC Hard Questions. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2025. Madueme is working on some forthcoming books that defend



young-earth creationism, including Todd Wood, Hans Madueme, and Paul Garner, *Young-Age Creationism: Exploring the Science of Creation* (P&R); and Hans Madueme and Stephen Lloyd, eds., *Young-Age Creationism: Restoring the Biblical Metanarrative* (P&R).

- Piper, John. [\*God's Passion for His Glory: Living the Vision of Jonathan Edwards: With the Complete Text of The End for Which God Created the World\*](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1998. [PDF](#). When I read this in college, Piper's biography of Edwards made me want to be like Edwards, and the annotated text of *The End* led me to savor Romans 11:36 as [my favorite passage in Scripture](#).
- Packer, J. I. [\*Knowing God\*](#). 50th-anniversary ed. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2023. Packer's signature book. See Ligon Duncan's "[Knowing God, Outlined](#)."
- Piper, John. [\*Providence\*](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021. [PDF](#). My endorsement: "John Piper helps us see and savor God's purposeful sovereignty by inductively demonstrating what the whole Bible teaches about its ultimate goal, its nature, and its extent." For videos of Piper talking about *Providence*, see Joe Rigney [interview](#) Piper, [a playlist of ten videos](#), and [Piper's talk and my questions to him in the speaker panel](#).
- Piper, John. [\*The Pleasures of God: Meditations on God's Delight in Being God\*](#). Rev. ed. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2026. [PDF of previous edition](#). This is the first Piper book I read, and it is still my favorite Piper book. I read it on Christmas Day 1998, a few weeks after I learned that my youngest brother, Michael, had terminal cancer. He was just three years old. This book gave me bedrock on which to stand. God will most satisfy you when you know why God himself most satisfies God.
- \*Riccardi, Mike. "[Pursuing Unity on Triunity](#)." *Shepherds Conference*, 8 March 2023. [PDF handout](#). Riccardi explains why the Father-Son relationship of authority and submission is not eternal and applies only to Jesus's earthly ministry. He rightly rejects "eternal relations of authority and submission" (ERAS), also known as "eternal functional submission" (EFS).
- \*Sanders, Fred. [\*The Triune God\*](#). New Studies in Dogmatics. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016. Sanders's thesis: "The manner of the Trinity's revelation dictates the shape of the doctrine" (19). In other words, we should teach the Trinity based on how the triune God has revealed his triunity in Scripture. For example, when Scripture reveals God's triunity, it is connected to the gospel and salvation. See also [+Sanders's The Holy Spirit](#) (below).
- Sproul, R. C. [\*The Holiness of God\*](#). 2nd ed. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1998. Sproul's signature book. Watch Sproul [lecture on the holiness of God](#) (six videos about 30 minutes each). The phrase "holiness of God" appears 100 times in Stephen J. Nichols, [R. C.](#)

[\*Sproul: A Life\*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021). Nichols’s biography shows how that theme was integral to Sproul’s life and ministry.

- +Wilson, Gordon. *The Riot and the Dance*. This is the way nature documentaries should be—informative and in line with reality with the result that they promote true worship rather than God-denying naturalism.
  - “[The Riot and the Dance: Earth](#)” is an 83-minute documentary from 2018. See [my review](#). Unfortunately, this video is not on Canon+.
  - [+“The Riot and the Dance: Water”](#) is an 84-minute documentary from 2022.
  - [+“The Riot and the Dance”](#) is a four-part documentary from 2025.

### **The Doctrine of the Bible (Bibliology)**

- Brunn, Dave. [\*One Bible, Many Versions: Are All Translations Created Equal?\*](#) Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013. English-readers should appreciate and benefit immensely from our wealth of good Bible translations [rather than argue about which one is best](#).
- \*Carson, D. A. [\*Collected Writings on Scripture\*](#). Compiled by Andrew David Naselli. Wheaton: Crossway, 2010. I compiled these essays on behalf of Dr. Carson.
- \*Feinberg, John S. [\*Light in a Dark Place: The Doctrine of Scripture\*](#). Foundations of Evangelical Theology. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018. I used this as a textbook for one of my systematic theology courses for about six years and then replaced it with Wellum’s [\*Systematic Theology, Volume 1\*](#) (2024)—“Part 2: The Revelation of the Triune God Who Speaks” (149–389).
- \*Frame, John M. [\*The Doctrine of the Word of God\*](#). A Theology of Lordship. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2010. For an abridged version, see Frame’s “[Divine Revelation: God Making Himself Known](#)” (*TGC Concise Theology Essays*, 2020).
- Kruger, Michael J. “[The Biblical Canon](#).” *TGC Concise Theology Essays*, 2020. Kruger’s work on the canon is excellent. For more advanced books, see Kruger’s [\*Canon Revisited: Establishing the Origins and Authority of the New Testament Books\*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012); [\*The Question of Canon: Challenging the Status Quo in the New Testament Debate\*](#) (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013).
- Lanier, Gregory R., and William A. Ross. [\*The Septuagint: What It Is and Why It Matters\*](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021. My endorsement: “The Septuagint is unfamiliar and intimidating to most Bible students. I don’t know of a more accessible introduction than this book.” For a more advanced work, see Gregory R. Lanier and William A. Ross, eds.,

[\*The Authority of the Septuagint: Biblical, Historical, and Theological Approaches\*](#) (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2025).

- Naselli, Andrew David. “Scripture: How the Bible Is a Book like No Other.” Pages 59–69 in [\*Don’t Call It a Comeback: The Same Faith for a New Day\*](#). Edited by Kevin DeYoung. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011. [PDF](#).
- Rigney, Joe. “[With One Voice: Scripture and Nature for Ethics and Discipleship](#).” *Eikon: A Journal for Biblical Anthropology* 1.1 (2019): 26–37. [PDF](#). I require my students to read this article for my systematic theology course that covers general revelation, natural theology, and anthropology. I quote it at length in my sermon “[God’s Good Design for Men and Women: Part 4 of 4—Three More Arguments for Biblical Patriarchy](#)” (27 April 2025).
- Strauss, Mark L. [40 Questions about Bible Translation](#). 40 Questions. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2023. The best all-around book on Bible translation. (I used to say that about a previous book that Strauss coauthored: Gordon D. Fee and Mark L. Strauss, [How to Choose a Translation for All Its Worth: A Guide to Understanding and Using Bible Versions](#) [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007].) I love the two opening sentences to Strauss’s book: “The Bible is the most influential book in human history. For two millennia, it has been the most read, most studied, most copied, most translated, most published, most purchased, most discussed, most debated, and most revered book of all time.”
- [+Ward, Mark L., Jr. \*Authorized: The Use and Misuse of the King James Bible\*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2018. My endorsement: “Ward combines good writing and common sense to explain why English speakers today should both appreciate the KJV and benefit from excellent modern translations.” Ward turned his book into an entertaining \[45-minute documentary\]\(#\).](#)
- [+Wilson, Douglas. “\*Sola et Tota Scriptura\*.” 2021 \(~19 min.\). \*Sola Scriptura\* does not mean that Scripture is the \*only\* authority \(that would be \*solo Scriptura\*\). \*Sola Scriptura\* means that Scripture is the \*ultimate\* and \*infallible\* authority.](#)

### **The Doctrine of Angels and Demons (Angelology)**

- Cole, Graham A. [Against the Darkness: The Doctrine of Angels, Satan, and Demons](#). Foundations of Evangelical Theology. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2019. Good survey. In my systematic theology course that covers angelology, I give students the option to read either Cole’s book or Gilhooly’s book (below).
- DeRouchie, Jason S. “Greater Is He: A Primer on Spiritual Warfare for Kingdom Advance.” *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 25.2 (2021): 21–55. [PDF](#). You can

watch DeRouchie present the gist of this article in two lectures: [session 1](#) | [session 2](#). He researched and wrote this article while we were fellow pastors and professors.

- Gilhooly, John R. [40 Questions about Angels, Demons, and Spiritual Warfare](#). 40 Questions. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2018. Good survey. The format of the 40 Questions series makes it easy to survey the book. Each question ends with a short summary of the answer, so you can read the forty summaries and then decide which entries to read more carefully.
- Lewis, C. S. [The Screwtape Letters](#). London: Centenary, 1942. Lewis masterfully “teaches in reverse” by wryly using demonic points of view to enforce a biblical one. He calls it “diabolical ventriloquism.” See [my article](#) for a one-sentence summary of each of Screwtape’s thirty-one letters that advise Wormwood how to tempt his “patient” (who becomes a Christian between letters one and two).
- Talbert, Layton MacDonald. [The Trustworthiness of God’s Words Why the Reliability of Every Word from God Matters](#). Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2022. My endorsement: “Layton Talbert demonstrates from God’s own words that God is passionate about vindicating the complete integrity and trustworthiness of his words. All of God’s words are reliable. God always keeps his words.”

### **The Doctrine of Man (Anthropology) and Sin (Hamartiology)**

See also “Men, Women, and Families” under “5. Practical Theology” below.

- \*Gibson, David, and Jonathan Gibson, eds. [Ruined Sinners to Reclaim: Sin and Depravity in Historical, Biblical, Theological, and Pastoral Perspective](#). The Doctrines of Grace. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2024. 1,000 pages on man’s depravity. I require my systematic theology students to read the chapter by Steven Wedgworth: “The Heart Wants What It Wants: A Protestant Assessment of the Doctrine of Concupiscence” (633–67). Because of the doctrine of concupiscence (pronounced con-CUE-pih-sense), I no longer use the phrase “same-sex attraction” but instead refer to “same-sex lust.” For concise statements on concupiscence and temptation, see articles 5 and 6 in “[12 Statements on Human Sexuality](#)” (Kevin DeYoung is the primary author).
- Hoekema, Anthony A. [Created in God’s Image](#). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986. Good overview of what the Bible says about man and sin.
- Jones, Mark. [Knowing Sin: Seeing a Neglected Doctrine through the Eyes of the Puritans](#). Chicago: Moody, 2022. Accessible overview.
- Morgan, Christopher W., and Robert A. Peterson, eds. [Fallen: A Theology of Sin](#). Theology in Community. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013. Good overview that moves from

exegesis to theology. For a condensed version, see Morgan's "[The Nature of Sin](#)" ([TGC Concise Theology Essays](#), 2020).

- Strachan, Owen. [Reenchanting Humanity: A Theology of Mankind](#). Fearn, Scotland: Mentor, 2019. Good overview that takes courageous stands on contemporary controversial issues such as sexuality, race and ethnicity, and justice.

### **The Doctrine of Christ (Christology)**

- \*Bowman, Robert M., Jr., and J. Ed Komoszewski. [The Incarnate Christ and His Critics: A Biblical Defense](#). Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2024. My endorsement: "Bowman and Komoszewski make a cumulative-case argument that Jesus the Messiah is God the Son. Their argument is clear, memorable, extensive, informed, and compelling. It leads me to exult in and worship our God and Savior Jesus Christ."
- \*Gibson, David, and Jonathan Gibson, eds. [From Heaven He Came and Sought Her: Definite Atonement in Biblical, Historical, Theological, and Pastoral Perspective](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013. The definitive book on definite atonement (about 700 pages).
- Jeffery, Steve, Michael Ovey, and Andrew Sach. [Pierced for Our Transgressions: Rediscovering the Glory of Penal Substitution](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007. Our fundamental problem is our sin against God, and the heart of Jesus's death is that Jesus paid our penalty (*penal*) in our place (*substitution*) to make us right with God (*atonement*). This book makes the case for this precious teaching and responds to critics.
- Jones, Mark. [Knowing Christ](#). Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 2015. Devotional Christology. The title intentionally parallels *Knowing God* by J. I. Packer, who writes the foreword to *Knowing Christ*.
- \*Naselli, Andrew David, and Mark A. Snoberger, eds. [Perspectives on the Extent of the Atonement: 3 Views](#). Nashville: B&H Academic, 2015.
- Piper, John. [Fifty Reasons Why Jesus Came to Die](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006. [PDF](#). Crossway originally published this book in 2004 as *The Passion of Jesus Christ*, which coincided with Mel Gibson's 2004 film *The Passion of the Christ*. The movie focuses on Jesus's physical and emotional suffering, and the book explains from the Bible *why* Jesus died.
- Riccardi, Michael. "[O Perfect Redemption](#)." 2020–2022. Fourteen sermons on definite atonement. Riccardi argues clearly and compellingly.
- \*Riccardi, Michael. [To Save Sinners: A Critical Evaluation of the Multiple Intentions View of the Atonement](#). Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2023. My endorsement: "Mike

Riccardi robustly defends definite atonement with careful and coherent exegesis and theology. In particular, he explains and refutes the multiple intentions view that some Calvinists have recently argued for.”

- Schreiner, Thomas R. “Penal Substitution View.” Pages 67–98 (also 50–53, 148–51, 192–95) in [\*The Nature of the Atonement: Four Views\*](#). Edited by James K. Beilby and Paul R. Eddy. Spectrum Multiview Books. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006. Schreiner ably defends Jesus’s penal substitutionary atonement. For an abridged version, see Schreiner’s “[Substitutionary Atonement](#)” ([\*TGC Concise Theology Essays\*](#), 2020).
- Wellum, Stephen J. [\*Christ Alone—The Uniqueness of Jesus as Savior: What the Reformers Taught and Why It Still Matters\*](#). The Five Solas. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017. My endorsement: “Steve Wellum is my favorite living theologian because he masterfully integrates exegesis, biblical theology, historical theology, systematic theology, and practical theology culminating in doxology. He does it again in this book on *sola Christus*.”
- Wellum, Stephen J. “[The Death of Christ](#).” [\*TGC Concise Theology Essays\*](#), 2020. Concisely overviews the cross-work of Christ.
- Wellum, Stephen J. [\*The Person of Christ: An Introduction\*](#). Short Studies in Systematic Theology. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021. My endorsement: “Christians affirm seemingly contradictory claims about Jesus: self-existent and depending on food and water; all-powerful and getting tired and sleeping; all-knowing and growing in knowledge; everywhere present and localized; eternal and born from a mother’s womb; unable to sin and tempted as we are; immortal and dying; in short—God and man. How can that be? And why is that so glorious? I require my seminary students to read Steve Wellum’s 500-page [\*God the Son Incarnate: The Doctrine of Christ\*](#) because Wellum masterfully answers such questions by integrating exegesis, biblical theology, historical theology, and systematic theology. This book is shorter, more accessible, and less intimidating—an ideal entry point for someone who wants to better understand who Christ is.”

### **The Doctrine of Salvation (Soteriology)**

- Barrett, Matthew, ed. [\*The Doctrine on Which the Church Stands or Falls: Justification in Historical, Biblical, Theological, and Pastoral Perspective\*](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2019. I contribute a chapter titled “The Righteous God Righteously Righteouses the Unrighteous: Justification According to Romans” (213–37).
- Barrett, Michael P. V. [\*Complete in Him: A Guide to Understanding and Enjoying the Gospel\*](#). 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2017. My endorsement: “Barrett



correlates what the whole Bible teaches about the gospel in a way that is organized, clear, faithful, and edifying. As he says over and over, right thinking about the gospel produces right living in the gospel. The better you understand the gospel, the better you can enjoy it.”

- <sup>^</sup>[+Bunyan](#), John. *The Pilgrim’s Progress from This World to That Which Is to Come: Delivered Under the Similitude of a Dream Wherein Is Discovered the Manner of His Setting Out, His Dangerous Journey, and Safe Arrival at the Desired Country*. 1678. Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress* is the overall best book on progressive sanctification—especially the doctrines of perseverance and assurance. Charles Spurgeon read this classic over one hundred times. It’s a pity that many Christians today have not read it even once. My article “[The Pilgrim’s Progress for Children \(and Adults\)](#)” lists versions of the story that my family has enjoyed. A classy edition is [The Pilgrim’s Progress from This World to That Which Is to Come](#), ed. C. J. Lovik (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2009); see [my brief review](#). See also <sup>+</sup>Bunyan’s autobiography [Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners](#).
- MacArthur, John. [The Gospel According to the Apostles: The Role of Works in a Life of Faith](#). Nashville: Nelson, 2005. MacArthur soundly refutes the non-Lordship salvation view by showing that you must repent to be saved and that good works and continuing to believe in Jesus are the necessary fruit of saving faith. See MacArthur’s [The Gospel According to Jesus: What Is Authentic Faith?](#), 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008); [The Gospel According to Paul: Embracing the Good News at the Heart of Paul’s Teachings](#) (Nashville: Nelson, 2017). See also my article “[Must Jesus Be Lord?](#)” ([TGC Concise Theology Essays](#), 2020).
- Mahaney, C. J. [Living the Cross-Centered Life: Keeping the Gospel the Main Thing](#). Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 2006. The gospel is good news not just for non-Christians. The gospel continues to be good news for Christians. (That’s one reason I love to proclaim the Lord’s death when I celebrate the Lord’s Supper with my church every Sunday.)
- Morgan, Christopher W., and Robert A. Peterson, eds. [Faith Comes by Hearing: A Response to Inclusivism](#). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008. This book soundly refutes the false teaching of inclusivism—that is, that Jesus is the only Savior of the world but that one does not have to believe the gospel to be saved.
- Murray, John. [Redemption: Accomplished and Applied](#). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955. A classic introduction to Christ’s atonement and salvation. (What would make this book even better is adding *Planned* to the subtitle since three actions summarize how the triune God saves his people from their sins: *plan*, *accomplish*, and *apply*.)

- Naselli, Andrew David. [\*No Quick Fix: Where Higher Life Theology Came From, What It Is, and Why It's Harmful\*](#). Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2017. See also my 2020 articles “[Models of Sanctification](#),” “[Must Jesus Be Lord?](#),” “[What Is Apostasy? Can a Christian Become Apostate?](#),” and “[The Sin unto Death](#).”
- Naselli, Andrew David. [\*Predestination: An Introduction\*](#). Short Studies in Systematic Theology. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2024. Predestination means that God predetermined the destiny of certain individuals for salvation and others for condemnation. Predestination has two parts: choosing to save some (election) and choosing not to save others (reprobation).
- Peterson, Robert A. [\*The Assurance of Salvation: Biblical Hope for Our Struggles\*](#). Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2019. Apostasy, preservation, perseverance, and assurance are four distinct theological concepts that interrelate. It is difficult to talk about any one of them without talking about the other three. This book focuses on assurance—a genuine believer’s personal knowledge that he certainly possesses eternal life. Not all believers have assurance of salvation, and some believers are more sure of their salvation than others.
- Piper, John. [\*Does God Desire All to Be Saved?\*](#) Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013. [PDF](#). I have read this essay slowly probably about ten times; it strongly influences what I write in chapter 7 of [Predestination](#). Piper originally titled his essay “Are There Two Wills in God?,” and in this sixty-two-page book, he expands the original essay from about 9,000 words to 17,000 words. Meditating on these two aspects of God’s will leads me to exult in his greatness.
- Piper, John. [\*Finally Alive: What Happens When We Are Born Again\*](#). Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2009. [PDF](#). Piper explains and applies what the Bible teaches about regeneration.
- Piper, John. [\*Five Points: Towards a Deeper Experience of God’s Grace\*](#). Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2013. [PDF](#). Piper briefly explains and defends the five points of Calvinism: total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace, and the perseverance of the saints. (I explain in the introduction to [Predestination](#) why those five labels can be misleading. The following five labels are more accurate and less misleading: man’s pervasive corruption, the Father’s sovereign election, Christ’s definite atonement, the Spirit’s effective grace, and God’s preservation of the saints.)
- Schreiner, Thomas R. [\*Faith Alone—the Doctrine of Justification: What the Reformers Taught and Why It Matters\*](#). The Five Solas. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015. A reliable guide. Schreiner is particularly helpful on imputation, good works, and the new

perspective on Paul. See also [±Schreiner's \*Justification: An Introduction\*](#), Short Studies in Systematic Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2023), along with [Schreiner's talk and my questions to him in the speaker panel](#).

- Schreiner, Thomas R. [Run to Win the Prize: Perseverance in the New Testament](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010. Scripture warns believers that they must persevere in the faith and good works lest they face final damnation, and those in the new covenant always heed the warnings. The warnings are a God-ordained means through which God preserves believers. This book abridges Thomas R. Schreiner and Ardel B. Caneday, [The Race Set Before Us: A Biblical Theology of Perseverance and Assurance](#) (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001).
- Schreiner, Thomas R., and Bruce A. Ware, eds. [Still Sovereign: Contemporary Perspectives on Election, Foreknowledge, and Grace](#). Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000. Fourteen essays defend God's meticulous sovereignty in saving sinners. My favorite chapters are the ones by Schreiner, Piper, and Carson. The book abridges *The Grace of God, the Bondage of the Will*, 2 vols. [[volume 1](#) | [volume 2](#)] (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995).
- Sproul, R. C. [Chosen by God](#). Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1986. A master teacher explains a complex topic simply (not simplistically).
- Vincent, Milton. [A Gospel Primer for Christians](#). Bemidji, MN: Focus, 2008. A treasure for devotional reading. Vincent gives reasons to rehearse the gospel daily, and he tells the gospel story in prose and poetry. (By the way, when it refers to paint, the word *primer* rhymes with *timer*. When it refers to an introductory textbook, the word *primer* rhymes with *simmer*. In the title of this book, *primer* rhymes with *simmer*, not *timer*.)
- \*Wellum, Stephen J. "[The Federal Vision](#)." [TGC Concise Theology Essays](#), 2020. Wellum explains a subset of traditional Reformed, covenant theology. For a more detailed history of the relatively recent controversy, see six articles by Steven Wedgworth: [1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#), [5](#), [6](#) (2019–2020). After Wedgworth wrote the first two articles, Doug Wilson [commended](#) the articles as "enormously helpful," "fairminded," and "evenhanded," and he encouraged Wedgworth to write a book on the controversy.
- [±Wilson](#), Douglas, and Toby Sumpter. [Reformed Basics](#). 2021–2022. 16 videos (~ 20 min. each). See especially Wilson's videos on "[The Sovereignty of God](#)," "[Sola Fide](#)," "[Triune Grace](#)," "[The New Birth](#)," and "[Chestertonian Calvinism](#)."
- Zaspel, Fred G. "[Salvation: An Overview](#)." [TGC Concise Theology Essays](#), 2020. A concise survey.

See also tools below under “Fighting Sins and Cultivating Virtues” (under “5. Practical Theology”).

### **The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit (Pneumatology)**

- Cole, Graham A. [\*He Who Gives Life: The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit\*](#). Foundations of Evangelical Theology. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007. Good survey. I require my students to read this book for my systematic theology course that covers the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.
- \*Ferguson, Sinclair B. [\*The Holy Spirit\*](#). Contours of Christian Theology. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996. This is the best textbook on the Holy Spirit from the viewpoint of classic Reformed theology (which includes covenant theology and cessationism).
- Letham, Robert. [\*The Holy Spirit\*](#). Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2023. From Sinclair Ferguson’s endorsement: “A rich combination of biblical, historical, and systematic theology coupled with shrewd analysis and insight, all placed in tribute to the triune Lord.”
- Naselli, Andrew David. Comments on 1 Corinthians 12–14 (pp. 331–66) in “[1 Corinthians](#).” In *Romans–Galatians*. ESV Expository Commentary 10. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020. A case for a type of continuationism (i.e., God continues to give miraculous spiritual gifts to churches) that is earnest, content, and discerning.
- Naselli, Andrew David. “[Is the Holy Spirit an ‘It’? 7 Proofs for the Spirit’s Personhood](#).” *Word by Word*, 19 April 2023.
- Naselli, Andrew David. “[The Unpardonable Sin](#).” *TGC Concise Theology Essays*, 2020. Surveys four views on the unpardonable sin in Matthew 12:31–32; Mark 3:28–29; and Luke 12:10.
- [±](#)Sanders, Fred. [\*The Holy Spirit: An Introduction\*](#). Short Studies in Systematic Theology. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2023. Sound introduction. See also [Sanders’s talk and my questions to him in the speaker panel](#).
- Schreiner, Thomas R. [\*Spiritual Gifts: What They Are and Why They Matter\*](#). Nashville: B&H, 2018. A case for cessationism (i.e., God has ceased to give miraculous spiritual gifts to churches). For an abridged version, see Schreiner’s “[The Miraculous Gifts and the Question of Cessationism](#)” (*TGC Concise Theology Essays*, 2020).

## The Doctrine of the Church (Ecclesiology)

Christ the King Church's "[Member Covenant](#)" is adapted from the "Solemn Covenant," which the English Reformed Baptist pastor Benjamin Keach wrote in 1689. (The "Solemn Covenant" was the covenant for the church Charles H. Spurgeon pastored in London.)

- Carson, D. A. [\*Memoirs of an Ordinary Pastor: The Life and Reflections of Tom Carson\*](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008. [PDF](#). Don Carson's father, Tom, was a Canadian pastor who served in obscurity and adversity. This book draws from Tom's personal journals in a way that inspires pastors to be faithful. I require the pastors-in-training in my systematic theology course on the church to read this book, and the students consistently respond that this book is surprisingly motivating and encouraging.
- \*Compton, Jared M., and Andrew David Naselli, eds. [\*Three Views on Israel and the Church: Perspectives on Romans 9–11\*](#). Viewpoints. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2019.
- Dever, Mark. [\*Nine Marks of a Healthy Church\*](#). 4th ed. 9Marks. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021. Dever's signature book. For a condensed and repackaged version, see [+Dever's What Is a Healthy Church?](#), 2nd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2024). For the nine marks, see the 9Marks "[About](#)" page.
- Dever, Mark. [\*The Church: The Gospel Made Visible\*](#). 9Marks. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2012. I require my students to read this book for my systematic theology course that covers the doctrine of the church. See [my overview](#).
- Dever, Mark, and Paul Alexander. [\*How to Build a Healthy Church: A Practical Guide for Deliberate Leadership\*](#). 2nd ed. 9Marks. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021. [Sample PDF](#) (51 pages—includes the expanded table of contents, other front matter, and chapter 1). Capitol Hill Baptist Church in Washington, D.C., regularly hosts a "[Weekender](#)" to equip pastors and church leaders. This book is basically the comprehensive print version of what you'd learn in a Weekender plus much more. It's full of wise advice.
- Duncan, J. Ligon, III. "[Covenant Theology](#)." [\*TGC Concise Theology Essays\*](#), 2020. Concise summary by a covenant theologian. This is the theological framework for the Reformed view of infant baptism.
- Gentry, Peter J., and Stephen J. Wellum. [\*God's Kingdom through God's Covenants: A Concise Biblical Theology\*](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015. See my comments below on Wellum and Parker, eds., [\*Progressive Covenantalism\*](#). For a more advanced version, see Gentry and Wellum's [\*Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants\*](#), 2nd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018). For an abridged version, see

Wellum's "[Progressive Covenantalism and New Covenant Theology](#)" (*TGC Concise Theology Essays*, 2020).

- Jamieson, Bobby. [The Path to Being a Pastor: A Guide for the Aspiring](#). 9Marks. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021. Excellent advice for men who aspire to be pastors. See also my sermon "[How to Discern If a Man Should be a Pastor](#)" (13 July 2025).
- Kimble, Jeremy M. [40 Questions about Church Membership and Church Discipline](#). 40 Questions. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2017. My endorsement: "This handbook concisely explains the why and how of church membership and church discipline. Jeremy Kimble, who serves as a pastor and who wrote his PhD dissertation on church discipline, is a faithful guide."
- Leeman, Jonathan. [Church Discipline: How the Church Protects the Name of Jesus](#). 9Marks. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012. I require my students to read this book for my systematic theology course that covers the doctrine of the church. Excerpt: "[22 Mistakes Pastors Make in Practicing Discipline](#)." For an abridged version, see Leeman's "[Church Discipline](#)" (*TGC Concise Theology Essays*, 2020).
- Leeman, Jonathan. [Church Membership: How the World Knows Who Represents Jesus](#). 9Marks. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012. [Excerpt](#): "Twelve Reasons Membership Matters." For an abridged version, see Leeman's [The Case for Church Membership](#), Field Guides (Kingsburg, CA: The Mentoring Project, 2025). [PDF](#).
- Merkle, Benjamin L. [40 Questions about Elders and Deacons](#). 40 Questions. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2008. Good overview. For an abridged version, see Merkle's "[The Organization of the Church](#)" (*TGC Concise Theology Essays*, 2020). Merkle—not to be confused with the Ben Merkle who is president of New Saint Andrews in Moscow, Idaho—studied this topic for his PhD dissertation, published as [The Elder and Overseer: One Office in the Early Church](#), StBibLit 57 (New York: Lang, 2003).
- Parker, Brent E., and Richard J. Lucas, eds. [Covenantal and Dispensational Theologies: Four Views on the Continuity of Scripture](#). Spectrum Multiview Books. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2022. This is the best overall resource on continuity and discontinuity. I require my students to read this book for my systematic theology course that covers the doctrine of the church and the end times. See [my overview](#).
- Piper, John. [Brothers, We Are Not Professionals: A Plea to Pastors for Radical Ministry](#). 2nd ed. Nashville: B&H, 2013. [PDF](#). I [highlight](#) 31 excerpts.
- Schreiner, Thomas R., and Matthew R. Crawford, eds. [The Lord's Supper: Remembering and Proclaiming Christ Until He Comes](#). NAC Studies in Bible and Theology. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2011. Good overview.



- Schreiner, Thomas R., and Shawn D. Wright, eds. [\*Believer's Baptism: Sign of the New Covenant in Christ\*](#). NAC Studies in Bible and Theology. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2007. Good overview. My favorite chapter is Wellum's (see below).
- Vlach, Michael J. "Dispensational Theology." [\*TGC Concise Theology Essays\*](#), 2020. Concise summary by a dispensationalist theologian.
- Wellum, Stephen J. "Baptism and the Relationship between the Covenants." Pages 97–161 in [\*Believer's Baptism: Sign of the New Covenant in Christ\*](#). Edited by Thomas R. Schreiner and Shawn D. Wright. NAC Studies in Bible and Theology. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2007. [PDF](#). Baptism is a test case for how to put the Bible together. I require my students to read Wellum's chapter for my systematic theology course that covers the doctrine of the church. See [my overview](#). For an abridged version, see Wellum's "[Water Baptism](#)" ([\*TGC Concise Theology Essays\*](#), 2020).
- Wellum, Stephen J., and Brent E. Parker, eds. [\*Progressive Covenantalism: Charting a Course between Dispensational and Covenant Theologies\*](#). Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2016. My endorsement: "These ten essays exegetically and theologically support the argument that Steve Wellum and Peter Gentry present in [\*Kingdom through Covenant\*](#). Unlike covenant theology, progressive covenantalism argues that the genealogical principle (a basis for infant baptism) significantly changes across redemptive history. Unlike dispensationalism, progressive covenantalism understands the land not ultimately as Canaan but as a type of the new creation."
- ±Wilson, Douglas. [\*Evangellyfish\*](#). Moscow, ID: Canon, 2012. A clever story of two pastors: a sleazy, sex-crazed megachurch pastor and a faithful, down-to-earth Reformed Baptist pastor. See [my review](#).

### **The Doctrine of the End Times (Eschatology)**

- Alcorn, Randy. [\*Heaven\*](#). Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 2004. This 500-page book helps you be more heavenly minded, which is good because it helps you keep this earthly life in perspective. Even when Alcorn speculates, it's edifying. See also ^Alcorn's [\*Heaven for Kids\*](#) (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2006).
- Carson, D. A. "On Banishing the Lake of Fire." Pages 515–36 in [\*The Gagging of God: Christianity Confronts Pluralism\*](#). Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996. Carson refutes arguments for conditional immortality or annihilationism by John Stott and others. I require my students to read Carson's chapter for my systematic theology course that covers the end times.

- Gomes, Alan W. [\*40 Questions about Heaven and Hell\*](#). 40 Questions. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2018. Good overview.
- Johnson, Dennis E. [“Schools of Interpretation” and “Millennial Views.”](#) Pages 2456–60 in “Revelation,” in [\*ESV Study Bible\*](#). Edited by Wayne Grudem. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008. A concise survey with clear and clarifying charts.
- Piper, John [moderator], Sam Storms [amillennial], Douglas Wilson [postmillennial], and James M. Hamilton Jr. [premillennial]. [“An Evening of Eschatology.”](#) *Desiring God*, 27 September 2009. About 2 hours, 7 minutes. In the article that accompanies the video, John Piper introduces the video and the issues they discuss.
- MacArthur, John, and Richard Mayhue, eds. [\*Christ’s Prophetic Plans: A Futuristic Premillennial Primer\*](#). Chicago: Moody, 2012. A case for pretribulational premillennialism.
- Morgan, Christopher W., and Robert A. Peterson, eds. [\*Heaven\*](#). Theology in Community. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014. Good overview.
- Morgan, Christopher W., and Robert A. Peterson, eds. [\*Hell under Fire: Modern Scholarship Reinvents Eternal Punishment\*](#). Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004. Morgan and Peterson explain, “Attacks on the historic doctrine of hell that used to come from without the church are now coming from within. This is true especially with regard to two aberrations: universalism and annihilationism” (11). This book rebukes those who contradict sound doctrine (cf. Titus 1:9).
- Naselli, Andrew David. [“Hellfire and Brimstone: Interpreting the New Testament’s Horrific Descriptions of Hell.”](#) *9Marks Journal* 7.4 (2010): 16–19. [PDF](#).
- Naselli, Andrew David. “Serpent and Antichrist.” Pages 775–79 in [\*Dictionary of the New Testament Use of the Old Testament\*](#). Edited by G. K. Beale, D. A. Carson, Benjamin L. Gladd, and Andrew David Naselli. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2023. The first part of the article abridges my book [\*The Serpent and the Serpent Slayer\*](#) (a biblical theology of snakes and dragons), and the second part surveys the topic of antichrist in 1–2 John and then in Daniel, Matthew 24 and Mark 13, 2 Thessalonians 2, and Revelation.
- Naselli, Andrew David [moderator], Rob Green [premillennial], Owen Strachan [amillennial], and Joe Rigney [postmillennial]. [“Theology Refresh: The Millennial Maze.”](#) 4 February 2020, Bethlehem College and Seminary Conference for Pastors + Church Leaders, Minneapolis. About 75 minutes. See the end of [my article](#) for more resources on the millennium.
- Piper, John. [\*Come, Lord Jesus: Meditations on the Second Coming of Christ\*](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2023. [PDF](#). Part 1 gives reasons to love Christ’s second coming. Part 2

addresses the timing of Christ's second coming and makes a case for historic (posttribulational) premillennialism. Part 3 explains how to live in light of Christ's second coming.

- Schnabel, Eckhard. [\*40 Questions about the End Times\*](#). 40 Questions. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2011. Good overview. Schnabel focuses on interpreting specific passages. I agree that we should carefully interpret specific passages, but I don't share Schnabel's distaste for labels from systematic theology—labels such as amillennial, dispensational, or posttribulational. Schnabel explains, "I will generally refrain from using these terms, not because they cannot be helpful in marking a position, but because labels are often used as 'party terms' that tend to commit people to an entire system of belief regarding the end times. I am not interested in labels, nor in justifying a particular 'systematic' approach to the interpretation of passages that speak about the end times. I will not compare eschatological systems with each other, such as classical dispensationalism, progressive dispensationalism, amillennialism, postmillennialism, premillennialism, or preterist positions (whether partial preterist or consistent preterist). I am interested in reading the relevant texts of the Old and New Testaments afresh" (10–11).
- Schreiner, Thomas R. [\*The Justice and Goodness of God: A Biblical Case for the Final Judgment\*](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2024. My endorsement: "Does it sound uplifting to read an entire book about what the Bible teaches about God's judgment? It should. In this book Tom Schreiner delivers to us the hard truth about God's righteous judgment that we deserve for our sinful condition. The bad news is really bad. But that is what makes the good news about God's merciful kindness in Jesus the Messiah so uplifting. Tom, who used to live through Minnesota winters, ends the book with a fitting analogy that contrasts God's mercy with God's judgment: 'The warmth of the sunshine in the spring stands out in Minnesota in contrast to Florida since Minnesotans experience savagely cold winters. The warmth of the sun is glorious, delightful, and beautiful after experiencing a cold that penetrates to the bones.' The more accurately you understand God's righteous judgment, the more brightly God's saving work shines."
- Storms, Sam. *Kingdom Come: [\*The Amillennial Alternative\*](#)*. Fearn, Scotland: Mentor, 2013. A case for amillennialism. The final chapter gives thirty reasons as a cumulative-case argument for amillennialism (549–59).
- +Wilson, Douglas. [\*Heaven Misplaced: Christ's Kingdom on Earth\*](#). Moscow, ID: Canon, 2008. A case for postmillennialism. At the beginning of the video "[John Piper, Doug Wilson, and Tim Chester Talk Eschatology](#)" (17 min.), John Piper, a historic premillennialist, says that he read every word of Wilson's book and then thought, "I don't

think I disagree with anything in this book, and I'm not a postmillennialist." See also [+Wilson's "Postmillennialism"](#) (2021; ~18 min.).

### Apologetics

- Allison, Gregg R. [\*40 Questions about Roman Catholicism\*](#). 40 Questions. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2021. Good overview. For a longer treatment, see Allison's [\*Roman Catholic Theology and Practice: An Evangelical Assessment\*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014). For an abridged version, see Allison's "[Roman Catholic Theology](#)" ([\*TGC Concise Theology Essays\*](#), 2020).
- Anderson, James N. "God Is There." Pages 93–138 in [\*Why Should I Believe Christianity?\*](#) The Big Ten: Critical Questions Answered. Fearn, Scotland: Mentor, 2016. Anderson's thesis in this chapter is that nothing makes any sense in this world if God isn't real. Anderson accessibly presents the transcendental argument for the existence of God—that is, transcendent moral laws, our ability to reason, and the existence and success of science presuppose and depend on the existence of God. God is the transcendent moral law-giver, and he enables us to reason and do science. The key question to ask is "By what standard?" In other words, on what basis are specific aspects of your worldview true? On what basis are specific presuppositions true? See also Anderson's "[The Existence of God](#)" ([\*TGC Concise Theology Essays\*](#), 2020).
- Anderson, James N. [\*What's Your Worldview? An Interactive Approach to Life's Big Questions\*](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014. Anderson helps you identify and clarify your worldview.
- [+Bahnsen, Greg L.](#), vs. Gordon Stein. "[The Great Debate: Does God Exist?](#)" University of California, Irvine, 11 February 1985. [PDF of the transcript](#). When I was a boy, I dreamed about playing professional baseball, and when I was a seminarian, I dreamed about arguing like Greg Bahnsen. I listened to this debate over and over when I was in seminary. Bahnsen repeatedly employs the transcendental argument for God's existence (see comments above under James N. Anderson, "God Is There"). This debate raises four practical questions: (1) Is Bahnsen's approach a good model for public debate? Yes, it is for some cultural contexts and if the main audience is the onlookers and not the other debater. (2) Is Bahnsen's approach a good model for private discussion? No, when you are trying to win the person, you should be a velvet-covered brick, not a naked brick. (3) Does Bahnsen's approach guarantee that someone will become convinced of theism and Christianity? No, but his approach is rational and helpful. I think the transcendental argument is the best single argument for God's existence. (4) Is apologetics for

Christians? Yes, apologetics has an evangelistic purpose, but it is especially valuable to edify Christians and to keep the sheep. Apollos “greatly helped those who through grace had believed, for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the Scriptures that the Christ was Jesus” (Acts 18:27b–28). See also [+Bahnsen debate Edward Tabash](#) (“Does God Exist?”), [+Bahnsen debate Jerry Matatics and Fr. Manning](#) (“Debating Catholicism”), and [+Douglas Wilson debate Edward Tabash](#) (“Does the Christian God Exist?”).

- Bennett, Matthew Aaron. [\*40 Questions about Islam\*](#). 40 Questions. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2020. Good overview.
- Busenitz, Nathan. [\*Reasons We Believe: 50 Lines of Evidence That Confirm the Christian Faith\*](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008. See [my interview of Busenitz](#).
- Carson, D. A. [\*How Long, O Lord? Reflections on Suffering and Evil\*](#). 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006. Carson helps believers think about the problem of evil. I require my students to read his chapter “The Mystery of Providence” (177–203) for my systematic theology course that covers the doctrine of God.
- Chatraw, Joshua D., and Mark D. Allen. [\*Apologetics at the Cross: An Introduction for Christian Witness\*](#). Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018. For a survey of four approaches to apologetics, see chapter 5: “Making Sense of the Methods” (105–31). The four approaches are classical apologetics (first argue for *a god*, then for *the Christian God*), evidentialism (make a historical case for the Bible’s reliability, Jesus’s identity, and/or Jesus’s resurrection), presuppositionalism (nobody reasons neutrally apart from presupposing what is true; sound reasoning must presuppose that God exists and is supreme), and experiential/narrative apologetics (focus on internal, intuitive reasons that the story of Christianity is compelling). See also [+Greg Bahnsen and R. C. Sproul debate](#) “Presuppositional vs. Classical Methodology.”
- Christensen, Scott. [\*Defeating Evil: How God Glorifies Himself in a Dark World\*](#). Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2024 (249 pages). Wisely addresses the problem of evil. For a more advanced version that is over twice as long (544 pages), see Christensen’s [\*What about Evil? A Defense of God’s Sovereign Glory\*](#) (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2020).
- De Chirico, Leonardo. [\*Same Words, Different Worlds: Is Roman Catholicism Faithful to the Gospel?\*](#) London: Inter-Varsity Press, 2021. Repackages much of the material De Chirico originally prepared for his website “[Vatican Files: Evangelical Theological Perspectives on Roman Catholicism](#).” See also De Chirico’s [\*A Christian’s Pocket Guide\*](#)

[\*to the Papacy: Its Origin and Role in the 21st Century\*](#) (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2015).

- Frame, John M. [\*Apologetics: A Justification of Christian Belief\*](#). Edited by Joseph E. Torres. 2nd ed. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2015. I require students to read this textbook when I teach apologetics because Frame is a trustworthy guide.
- Frame, John M. “The Problem of Evil.” Pages 141–64 in [\*Suffering and the Goodness of God\*](#). Edited by Christopher W. Morgan and Robert A. Peterson. Theology in Community. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008. See [my interview of Frame](#).
- \*Habermas, Gary R. *On the Resurrection*. 4 vols. [[volume 1](#) | [volume 2](#) | [volume 3](#) | volume 4 forthcoming] Brentwood, TN: B&H Academic, 2024–2025. Habermas has been writing on Jesus’s resurrection for over sixty years, and he is the foremost scholar in the world on the topic. These volumes are his magnum opus.
- +Hitchens, Christopher, and Douglas Wilson. [\*Is Christianity Good for the World?\*](#) Moscow, ID: Canon, 2008. Two witty public intellectuals debate. The 87-minute +film [\*Collision: Christopher Hitchens vs. Douglas Wilson\*](#) (2009) is based on the book.
- Ibrahim, A. S. [\*Reaching Your Muslim Neighbor with the Gospel\*](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2022. See also Ibrahim’s [\*A Concise Guide to the Quran: Answering Thirty Critical Questions\*](#) (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020); [\*A Concise Guide to the Life of Muhammad: Answering Thirty Key Questions\*](#) (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2022); [\*A Concise Guide to Islam: Defining Key Concepts and Terms\*](#) (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2023).
- Keller, Timothy. [\*Walking with God through Pain and Suffering\*](#). New York: Dutton, 2013. Keller shrewdly addresses the problem of evil from three angles: cultural, biblical-theological, and practical.
- Lewis, C. S. [\*Mere Christianity\*](#). New York: Macmillan, 1952. Classic Lewis. See also Focus on the Family Radio Theatre’s [\*C. S. Lewis at War: The Dramatic Story Behind Mere Christianity\*](#) (2013) and George Marsden’s [\*C. S. Lewis’s Mere Christianity: A Biography\*](#) (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016).
- Martin, Walter. [\*The Kingdom of the Cults: The Definitive Work on the Subject\*](#). 6th ed. Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2019. Explains and evaluates groups such as Jehovah’s Witnesses, Christian Science, and Mormonism.
- Sproul, R. C. [\*Are We Together? A Protestant Analyzes Roman Catholicism\*](#). Orlando: Reformation Trust, 2012. See Mark Ward’s [review](#).
- Sproul, R. C. [\*Faith Alone: The Evangelical Doctrine of Justification\*](#). Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995. The document “[Evangelicals and Catholics Together](#)” (1994) argued



that evangelicals and Roman Catholics are brothers and sisters in Christ who affirm that we are justified by grace through faith because of Christ. Sproul responds that evangelical Protestants and Roman Catholics hold incompatible views on justification, grace, and faith. (ECT is one of the test cases in a debate-book I coedited: [\*Four Views on the Spectrum of Evangelicalism\*](#), Counterpoints [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011].)

- Sproul, R. C. [\*Getting the Gospel Right: The Tie That Binds Evangelicals Together\*](#). Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999. The document “[The Gift of Salvation](#)” (1998) furthered the argument of “[Evangelicals and Catholics Together](#).” Sproul responds by building on his book [\*Faith Alone\*](#) (see above) to argue that the ECT documents compromise essential Reformation principles for the sake of a pseudo-unity.
- Morgan, Garry R. [\*Understanding World Religions in 15 Minutes a Day\*](#). Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2012. Good overview. Morgan explains, “At the publisher’s request, this book intends to be descriptive rather than evaluative or polemic. It is designed to offer a concise overview of the major world religions and a sampling of some newer religious movements” (10). (Morgan used to serve as a board member of Bethlehem College and Seminary.)

## **5. Practical Theology: Study how to apply the Bible to yourself, the church, and the world.**

### **Men, Women, and Families**

Christ the King Church’s “[Elder Affirmation of Faith](#)” says, “The pastors affirm ‘[The Danvers Statement on Biblical Complementarity](#)’ (1987).”

- Bavinck, Herman. [\*The Christian Family\*](#). Translated by Nelson D. Kloosterman. Grand Rapids: Christian’s Library, 2012. The views of Bavinck (1854–1921) on men, women, and the family represent Reformed theologians over the past centuries.
- +Clary, Michael. [\*God’s Good Design: A Biblical, Theological, and Practical Guide to Human Sexuality\*](#). Ann Arbor, MI: Reformation Zion, 2023. Overall, Clary’s book is timely, faithful, courageous, accessible, and inspiring. See [my review](#).
- DeYoung, Kevin. [\*Men and Women in the Church: A Short, Biblical, Practical Introduction\*](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021. Excellent overview. I require my systematic theology students to read this book.
- +Dodds, Abigail. [\*\(A\)Typical Woman: Free, Whole, and Called in Christ\*](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2019. A woman who is currently a Supreme Court Justice refused to answer the question, “What is a woman?” Abigail Dodds knows how to answer that question.

See also Dodds's [\*A Student's Guide to Womanhood\*](#) (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2022) and [+“Home Fires”](#) podcast.

- [+Foster, Michael, and Dominic Bnonn Tennant. \*It's Good to Be a Man: A Handbook for Godly Masculinity\*. Moscow, ID: Canon, 2021.](#) There's also a 49-minute documentary: [+“It's Good to Be a Man: A Map to Manhood.”](#) The book and documentary motivate men to have weight-bearing gravitas through God-honoring, delightful duty—a mission with an excellent wife and a fraternity. Build and fight.
- [+Garris, Zachary M. \*Masculine Christianity\*. 2nd ed. Ann Arbor, MI: Reformation Zion, 2021.](#) I don't agree with how Zach Garris interprets 1 Corinthians 11 and 14, but overall his approach is refreshingly countercultural and in line with what Christians have believed about men and women for millennia. See also Garris's [\*Honor Thy Fathers: Recovering the Anti-Feminist Theology of the Reformers\*](#) (Ogden, UT: New Christendom, 2024). [+Doug Wilson](#) interviews Garris on masculine Christianity in an episode for *Man Rampant* (~50 min.).
- Grudem, Wayne. [\*Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth: An Analysis of More Than One Hundred Disputed Questions\*](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012. This reprints the 2004 edition that Multnomah published. From John Piper's endorsement: “After the Bible, I cannot imagine a more useful book for finding reliable help in understanding God's will for manhood and womanhood in the church and the home.” This remarkably helpful reference work responds clearly, concisely, and comprehensively to evangelical feminist (i.e., egalitarian) arguments against God's good design for men and women. (I disagree with Grudem's view that the Son is eternally functionally submissive to the Father. See Riccardi's [“Pursuing Unity on Triunity.”](#))
- [+Jankovic, Rachel. \*Fit to Burst: Abundance, Mayhem, and the Joys of Motherhood\*. Moscow, ID: Canon, 2012.](#) Practical parenting advice for moms. (Rachel Jankovic is one of Doug and Nancy Wilson's two daughters.)
- [+Jankovic, Rachel. \*Loving the Little Years: Motherhood in the Trenches\*. Moscow, ID: Canon, 2010.](#) Practical parenting advice for moms.
- [+Jankovic, Rachel. \*No Time to Be Dumb: Letters to Teenage Girls\*. Moscow, ID: Canon, 2025.](#) Practical advice for teenage girls.
- \*Köstenberger, Andreas J., and Thomas R. Schreiner, eds. [\*Women in the Church: An Interpretation and Application of 1 Timothy 2:9–15\*](#). 3rd ed. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016. See [my review of the second edition](#). See also my series [“God's Good Design for Men and Women and 1 Timothy 2:9–15.”](#)

- [+MacArthur, John](#). [\*The War On Children: Providing Refuge for Your Children in a Hostile World\*](#). Los Angeles: John MacArthur Publishing Group, 2024. MacArthur doesn't mince words as he analyzes how our culture is corrupting children.
- Mahaney, Carolyn, and Nicole Whitacre. [\*True Beauty\*](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014. My wife has used this book with some of our daughters because it is filled with wise advice for ladies. For more on modesty, see a sermon series by Douglas Wilson on [+“Feminine Modesty”](#) (3 hours 40 minutes) and my sermon on 1 Timothy 2:9–10: [“How Should Women Dress?”](#) (4 May 2025).
- [+Merkle, Rebekah](#). [\*Eve in Exile: And the Restoration of Femininity\*](#). Moscow, ID: Canon, 2016. See [my review](#). I also recommend the [\[+\]documentary](#) (2022). See also an hour-long interview on feminism: [“Feminine Ambition & Feminist Lies | Rebekah Merkle | Of Flames and Crowns Ep. 18”](#) (27 March 2025). (Rebekah Merkle is one of Doug and Nancy Wilson's two daughters.)
- Naselli, Andrew David. “Discipline: Training Our Children for Their Good.” *Journal of Discipleship and Family Ministry* 3:2 (2013): 48–64. [PDF](#). In the middle of this article, I respond to relatively recent anti-spanking arguments by answering five questions: Does “the rod” represent discipline but exclude *physical* discipline (Prov 13:24; 22:15; 23:13–14; 29:15)? Is spanking a form of physical and psychological child abuse? Do the proverbs about using the rod refer to young men rather than children? Is spanking an obsolete part of the Mosaic law-covenant in the Old Testament? Is spanking antithetical to the gospel?
- Naselli, Andrew David. [“Does Anyone Need to Recover from Biblical Manhood and Womanhood? A Review Article of Aimee Byrd's Recovering from Biblical Manhood and Womanhood.”](#) *Eikon: A Journal for Biblical Anthropology* 2.1 (2020): 109–51. [PDF](#). In my [nine-part sermon series](#) on God's good design for men and women and 1 Timothy 2:9–15, I incorporate much of this review article.
- Naselli, Andrew David. [“What the New Testament Teaches about Divorce and Remarriage.”](#) *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 24 (2019): 3–44. [PDF](#).
- Naselli, Andrew David. [“Women and Head Coverings: Explaining and Applying 1 Corinthians 11:2–16.”](#) *Christ Over All*, 8 March 2023.
- Piper, John, and Wayne Grudem, eds. [\*Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism\*](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1991. [PDF](#). The seminal text of complementarianism.
- [+Ryle, J. C.](#) [\*Thoughts for Young Men\*](#). 1886. Repr., Amityville, NY: Calvary, 1993. A short classic for men.

- Schrock, David. [\*The Business of Is-Ness: How to Live in the World God Made\*](#). Cape Coral, FL: Founders, 2025. My endorsement: “Our culture is rebelling against God’s good design for men and women—especially for marriage and sex and the family. In this book David Schrock highlights fundamental truths about God’s brilliant design.”
- Tripp, Tedd. [\*Shepherding a Child’s Heart\*](#). 2nd ed. Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherd, 1995. Practical parenting advice, including on how to discipline young children.
- +Wilson, Douglas. [\*Decluttering Your Marriage\*](#). Moscow: Canon Press, 2018. This is the first of many Doug Wilson books on the family in this list. These books are full of practical wisdom, encouragement, and zingers. The books are enlightening, inspiring, and motivating. A bonus is that Wilson’s clear and witty style is a pleasure to read.
- +Wilson, Douglas. [\*Excused Absence: Should Christian Kids Leave Public Schools?\*](#) 2nd ed. Moscow, ID: Canon, 2020. Related: In April 2025, the pastors of Christ the King Church wrote [a letter to our church regarding Christian enculturation and government schools](#) (PDF). See Wilson’s [\*Why Christian Kids Need a Christian Education: What Does the Christian Faith Have to Do with Where Your Kids Go to School?\*](#), Answers in an Hour (Monroe, LA: Athanasius, 2013). See also pages on Canon+ for “[Education](#),” “[Classics](#),” “[History](#),” and “[Kids](#).”
- Wilson, Douglas. [\*Father Hunger: Why God Calls Men to Love and Lead Their Families\*](#). Nashville: Nelson, 2012. Wilson defines masculinity as “the glad assumption of sacrificial responsibility” (41). That’s what it means to be a man. Canon+ has [sermons on the topic of father hunger](#), but the audiobook for this one isn’t on Canon+.
- +Wilson, Douglas. [\*Federal Husband: Covenant Headship and the Christian Man\*](#). Wilson Family Series. Moscow, ID: Canon, 1999. A husband is responsible before God to lead his wife and children. Authority flows to men who take responsibility.
- +Wilson, Douglas. [\*Fidelity: What It Means to Be a One-Woman Man\*](#). Wilson Family Series. Moscow, ID: Canon, 2004. Addresses lust and pornography, fornication, adultery, divorce, prostitution, rape, polygamy, sodomy, masturbation, and celibacy.
- +Wilson, Douglas. [\*Future Men: Raising Boys to Fight Giants\*](#). 2nd ed. Wilson Family Series. Moscow, ID: Canon, 2012. God created men to exercise dominion over the earth: (1) “they are fitted to be husbandman, tilling the earth”; (2) “they are equipped to be saviors, delivering from evil”; (3) “they are expected to grow up into wisdom, becoming sages”; and (4) “they are designed to reflect the image and glory of God” (13). There is also a [Future Men documentary](#). Wilson shares lots of practical insight about how to train future men to be godly men.

- [±Wilson, Douglas. \*Get the Girl: How to Be the Kind of Man the Kind of Woman You Want to Marry Would Want to Marry\*. Moscow, ID: Canon, 2022. \(See also the next book—a companion volume.\)](#)
- [±Wilson, Douglas. \*Get the Guy: How to Be the Kind of Woman the Kind of Man You Want to Marry Would Want to Marry\*. Moscow, ID: Canon, 2023. The two books \*Get the Girl\* and \*Get the Guy\* are fictional letters that Doug Wilson addresses to his unmarried niece and his unmarried nephew. I read both books to my daughters letter by letter at the dinner table because the books are filled with practical insights about guys and girls and how to think about dating and courtship and marriage.](#)
- [±Wilson, Douglas. \*Her Hand in Marriage: Biblical Courtship in the Modern World\*. Wilson Family Series. Moscow, ID: Canon, 1997. Full of wisdom about how to approach getting married.](#)
- [±Wilson, Douglas. \*How to Exasperate Your Wife and Other Short Essays for Men\*. Moscow, ID: Canon, 2015. Wise advice for husbands—with Wilson’s flair for wordsmithing.](#)
- [±Wilson, Douglas. \*Keep Your Kids: How to Raise Strong Kids in an Age of Therapeutic Sentimentalism\*. Moscow, ID: Canon, 2024. More wise advice about parenting in our worldly culture.](#)
- [±Wilson, Douglas. \*My Life for Yours: A Walk through the Christian Home\*. Moscow, ID: Canon, 2004. Creative approach, practical advice. The book condenses Wilson’s sermon series +“\[A Biblical Home.”\]\(#\)](#)
- [±Wilson, Douglas. \*Recovering the Lost Tools of Learning: An Approach to Distinctively Christian Education\*. 2nd ed. Moscow, ID: Canon, 2022.](#)
- [±Wilson, Douglas. \*Reforming Marriage: Gospel Living for Couples\*. 2nd ed. Moscow, ID: Canon, 2012. Wise advice for married couples.](#)
- [±Wilson, Douglas. \*Standing on the Promises: A Handbook of Biblical Childrearing\*. 2nd ed. Wilson Family Series. Moscow, ID: Canon, 1997. Wilson’s practical parenting advice is gold.](#)
- [±Wilson, Douglas. \*The Case for Classical Christian Education\*. 2nd ed. Moscow, ID: Canon, 2022. My wife read this book carefully shortly after we married, and it revolutionized how we understand what education is.](#)
- [±Wilson, Douglas. \*Why Children Matter\*. Moscow, ID: Canon, 2018. Practical advice for parenting. There’s also a series of short videos with the Wilsons: \[±“Why Children Matter.”\]\(#\)](#)

- [±Wilson, Nancy. \*Praise Her in the Gates: The Calling of Christian Motherhood\*. Wilson Family Series. Moscow, ID: Canon, 2000.](#) This book and the next two are filled with practical insights from a wise and godly older woman in line with Titus 2:3–5. Nancy Wilson also hosts the podcast [±“Femina.”](#)
- [±Wilson, Nancy. \*The Fruit of Her Hands: Respect and the Christian Woman\*. 2nd ed. Wilson Family Series. Moscow, ID: Canon, 1997.](#)
- [±Wilson, Nancy. \*Building Her House: Commonsensical Wisdom for Christian Women\*. Moscow, ID: Canon, 2006.](#) I quote an excerpt from this book in [“Must a Wife Always Follow Her Husband’s Leadership?”](#)

## Ethics

*Morality* is what’s right and wrong. *Ethics* is reasoning about what’s right and wrong.

### ***Introduction to Ethics***

- \*Feinberg, John S., and Paul D. Feinberg. [Ethics for a Brave New World](#). 2nd ed. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010. Thoughtful and thorough. Prior to Grudem’s book (below), this was the main textbook for my ethics course.
- Grudem, Wayne. [Christian Ethics: Living a Life That Is Pleasing to God](#). 2nd ed. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2024. My endorsement: “This is the best all-around book on Christian ethics I’m aware of, and I require it as the primary textbook for my course on biblical ethics. Grudem writes in his characteristic style: clear, logical, accessible, and (usually!) persuasive.”
- ^Naselli, Andrew David. [That Little Voice in Your Head: Learning about Your Conscience](#). Illustrated by Julie Carter. Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2018. The book targets children ages 4–10. It’s a series of conversations between a little girl named Emma and her mommy.
- Naselli, Andrew David, and J. D. Crowley. [Conscience: What It Is, How to Train It, and Loving Those Who Differ](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016.

### ***Sexuality***

Christ the King Church’s [“Elder Affirmation of Faith”](#) says, “The pastors affirm [‘The Nashville Statement on Biblical Sexuality’](#) (2017).” I was one of the initial signatories.

- Burk, Denny. [What Is the Meaning of Sex?](#) Wheaton: Crossway, 2013. My endorsement: “Clear writing, thoughtful arguments, wise positions, courageous countercultural stand. I learned some things I didn’t know (e.g., the intersex discussion) and honed what I did. Denny is a skilled Bible-interpreter and shrewd critic of politics and culture.”



- Butterfield, Rosaria. [\*Five Lies of Our Anti-Christian Age\*](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2023. See [my review](#).
- DeYoung, Kevin. “[Is It Wrong to Have Sex Before Marriage?](#)” *Clearly Reformed*, 31 October 2023. Surprisingly, there are relatively few resources on this topic. See also Mark A. Snoeberger, “[A Biblical Argument against Premarital Sex](#),” *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 20 (2015): 45–63.
- DeYoung, Kevin. “[The Case against Christians Attending a Gay Wedding](#).” *Clearly Reformed*, 5 February 2024. Sound arguments.
- DeYoung, Kevin. [\*What Does the Bible Really Teach about Homosexuality?\*](#) Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015. Excellent overview. I require my ethics students to read this book.
- +Klusendorf, Scott. [\*The Case for Life: Equipping Christians to Engage the Culture\*](#). 2nd ed. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2023. Clear and persuasive. Here’s how Klusendorf states the pro-life argument as a syllogism: “*Premise 1*: It is wrong to intentionally kill an innocent human being. *Premise 2*: Abortion intentionally kills an innocent human being. Therefore, *Conclusion*: Abortion is morally wrong” (12).
- Naselli, Andrew David. “[Don’t Women Need Access to Abortion for Rape?](#)” *Christ Over All*, 13 January 2023.
- Naselli, Andrew David. “[Seven Reasons You Should Not Indulge in Pornography](#).” *Themelios* 41 (2016): 473–83.
- Riccardi, Michael. [\*Gender and Sexuality: Biblical Sanity in a World of Confusion\*](#). The Institute for the Christian Life Series. Fort Washington, PA: CLC Publications, 2024. My endorsement: “As our culture increasingly rebels against God’s good design for men and women, we must understand and affirm and celebrate God’s brilliant design. Mike Riccardi helps us do that with his timely, clear, insightful, and sound teaching.” See also Riccardi’s series “[Confronting the Culture](#)” (12 sermons).
- +Rigney, Joe. [\*More Than a Battle: How to Experience Victory, Freedom, and Healing from Lust\*](#). Nashville: B&H, 2021. My endorsement: “Indulging in pornography is an international pandemic that will send you to hell. Is it worth it to pursue a fleeting pleasure that is God-defying, life-wasting, family-betraying, poison-injecting, mind-ruining, conscience-searing, and slavery-fueling? The wise advice in this book is a gift for two groups of people: those who are struggling and those who want to help.”
- Street, John D. [\*Passions of the Heart: Biblical Counsel for Stubborn Sexual Sins\*](#). Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2019. Rightly focuses on the heart.

- Walker, Andrew T. [\*God and the Transgender Debate: What Does the Bible Actually Say about Gender Identity\*](#). 2nd ed. Washington, D.C.: The Good Book, 2022. Good overview.
- <sup>+</sup>Wilson, Douglas. [\*Ride, Sally, Ride: Sex Rules\*](#). Moscow, ID: Canon, 2020. This novel is set a few decades in the future. In chapter 1, Ace destroys his neighbor's sex doll. Then he goes on trial for murder because his neighbor identified the doll as his wife. Brilliant satire. The story depicts sin, but it doesn't glorify it. Sin is dark and has miserable consequences in this life. But the story isn't gloomy. It's witty, funny, and edifying.
- <sup>+</sup>Wilson, Douglas. [\*Same-Sex Mirage: Phantasmagoria at the Altar and Some Biblical Responses\*](#). Moscow, ID: Canon, 2016. "The battle is over the right to define the world" (4).

Here are [four short books that teach children about God's design for sex](#):

- <sup>^</sup>Jones, Stan, and Brenna Jones. [\*The Story of Me\*](#). 3rd ed. God's Design for Sex 1. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019. For ages 3 to 5.
- <sup>^</sup>Nystrom, Carolyn. [\*Before I Was Born\*](#). 3rd ed. God's Design for Sex 2. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019. For ages 5 to 8.
- <sup>^</sup>Jones, Stan, and Brenna Jones. [\*What's the Big Deal? Why God Cares about Sex\*](#). 3rd ed. God's Design for Sex 3. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019. For ages 8 to 12.
- <sup>^</sup>Jones, Stan, and Brenna Jones. [\*Facing the Facts: The Truth about Sex and You\*](#). 3rd ed. God's Design for Sex 4. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019. For ages 12 to 16.

## ***Ethnicity***

Christ the King Church's "[Elder Affirmation of Faith](#)" says, "The pastors affirm '[Ethnic Harmony Affirmations and Denials](#)' (2021)."

- Baucham, Voddie T., Jr. [\*It's Not Like Being Black: How Sexual Activists Hijacked the Civil Rights Movement\*](#). New York: Regnery Faith, 2024. I agree with John MacArthur's endorsement: "Riveting. From the opening paragraph of the introduction to the book's final page, *It's Not Like Being Black* is filled with common sense, uncommon insights, and sound biblical wisdom. Voddie Baucham is a refreshing voice of clarity, courage, and conviction in a morally insane culture now completely given over to irrationality and sexual perversion. He excels at tipping the sacred cows and debunking the mythology of the LGBTQ+ movement. 'Gay is not the new black,' he writes. 'It is merely the old sodomy.' Despite the difficulty of the subject matter, this is a remarkably well-written, timely, and edifying book."

- Naselli, Andrew David. “[What the Bible Teaches about Ethnic Harmony](#).” *Midwestern Journal of Theology* 19.2 (2020): 15–57. [PDF](#).
- Schrock, David S. [Dividing the Faithful: How a Little Book on Race Fractured a Movement Founded on Grace](#). Douglasville, GA: G3, 2023. My endorsement: “Back in 2018 I was concerned about the progressive direction one of my Reformed evangelical friends was going. He was writing a dissertation (at one of the largest and most theologically conservative seminaries in America) on how white evangelicals are guilty of white fragility, and he had become an activist for what he called ‘racial justice.’ I asked him to recommend a book for me to read in order to better understand his perspective, and he cautioned me to avoid people like Thomas Sowell because such black intellectuals are marginal voices who do not represent the black view. The book he most encouraged me to read is Emerson and Smith’s *Divided by Faith*. I read it, and my concerns increased. I wish David Schrock’s *Dividing the Faithful* had been available then. I’m glad it’s available now.”
- [+Wilson, Douglas](#). [Skin and Blood: A Gospel Approach to Race and Racial Animosity](#). Moscow, ID: Canon, 2022. Sensible and prescient (originally published in 2017—well before Black Lives Matter peaked in summer 2020). Related: Watch Joe Rigney interview John Piper and Doug Wilson on race and related matters: “[The Church and the World: Homosexuality, Abortion, and Race with John Piper and Douglas Wilson](#)”—or “[Race and Culture](#)” (Bethlehem College and Seminary, 2013, ~1 hour, 55 min.).

### ***The Civil Government***

- \*Althusius, Johannes. [Politica: An Abridged Translation of Politics Methodically Set Forth and Illustrated with Sacred and Profane Examples](#). Edited and translated by Frederick S. Carney. Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1995. First published in 1603. See the two-page schema that summarizes the book: [page 1](#) | [page 2](#). I list Althusius as an example of view 5 in my article “[What Is the Spectrum of Major Views on Political Theology?](#)”
- Baird, James. [King of Kings: A Reformed Guide to Christian Government](#). Cape Coral, FL: Founders, 2025. [Sample PDF](#). From Joe Rigney’s endorsement: “In this short book, James Baird clearly and compellingly takes us back to the basic principles of Christian political philosophy. His thesis is clear—government must promote Christianity as the only true religion—and his arguments are biblically faithful and historically sound. More than that, in a time of church division, his argument has the potential of uniting

Protestants of all varieties—from Presbyterians to Baptists, from Anglicans to Pentecostals, and everywhere in between.”

- Busenitz, Nathan, and James Coates. [\*God vs. Government: Taking a Biblical Stand When Christ and Compliance Collide\*](#). Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2022. A pastor from Southern California and a pastor from Canada tell the stories of why and how their churches did not follow their government’s lockdown restrictions during the Covid crisis. See also [\*The Essential Church\*](#), a 2023 documentary that features John MacArthur and Grace Community Church along with Canadian pastors James Coates and Tim Stephens. You can watch it for free in Grace Community Church’s [Grace Media app](#). See also [“MacArthur and the Government”](#) (*The MacArthur Center Podcast*, 9 November 2022; 64 min.).
- Edwards, Benjamin G. [\*COVID, Churches, and Government Regulations: Answering Seven Key Questions\*](#). Detroit: Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary, 2021. This 53-page book wisely weighs the best arguments that answer seven questions: (1) How should believers view government? (2) What counts as religious persecution? (3) Are churches sinning if they gather for worship in violation of government restrictions? Are they sinning if they do not gather? (4) What are the limits to governmental authority over the church? (5) Does it matter if government restrictions on churches are reasonable and temporary? (6) Is it dangerous to let individual Christians and local churches decide when a specific government ruling does not need to be obeyed? (7) How concerned should we be about the “evangelical witness”?
- Grudem, Wayne. [\*Politics—According to the Bible: A Comprehensive Resource for Understanding Modern Political Issues in Light of Scripture\*](#). Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010. See [the review I coauthored with my dad \(PDF\)](#).
- Hamilton, Alexander, James Madison, and John Jay. [\*The Federalist Papers\*](#). Edited by Lawrence Goldman. Oxford World’s Classics. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008. This collection of 85 essays from 1787–1788 gives insight into what the framers of the U.S. Constitution intended regarding federalism, separation of powers, checks and balances, and representative government.
- Naselli, Andrew David. [“Politics, Conscience, and the Church: The Why, What, and How of Political Disagreement.”](#) *Christ Over All*, 9 September 2024. This article updates some of my [previous work](#).
- Naselli, Andrew David. [“Twelve Reflections on Twelve Interviews on Christian Nationalism.”](#) *Christ Over All*, 27 November 2023.

- Naselli, Andrew David. “[What Is the Spectrum of Major Views on Political Theology? A Proposed Taxonomy of Seven Views on Religion and Government.](#)” *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 28.2 (2024): 168–90. [PDF](#).
- Rigney, Joe. “[Everyman’s Guide to Protestant Political Thought: A Crash Course in Historic Reformed Political Discourse.](#)” *American Reformer*, 4 November 2024. Surveys and analyzes five Protestant perspectives: Magisterial Two Kingdoms, Kuyperian NeoCalvinism, Theonomic Reconstructionists, Reformed Two Kingdoms, and Baptists.
- Snoeberger, Mark A. “[How Can We Simultaneously ‘Submit to Every Ordinance of Man’ and ‘Obey God Rather Than Men’?](#)” *Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary*, 23 September 2020. Obeying the government is a general rule. There are two exceptions: when (1) “the government explicitly tells us to disobey God” (our ultimate authority) or (2) “the government exceeds its jurisdiction so as to speak authoritatively into a sphere regulated by another, God-instituted authority.”
- \*Steward, Gary L. [Justifying Revolution: The American Clergy’s Argument for Political Resistance, 1750–1776](#). Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021. In the published version of [his PhD dissertation](#) ([PDF](#)), Steward explains that many American clergymen resisted British political authority in line with their own theological tradition. See also “[10 Questions on the American Revolution with Gary Steward](#)” (*Credo*, 2 July 2021).
- +Wilson, Douglas. [Devoured by Cannabis: Weed, Liberty, and Legalization](#). Moscow, ID: Canon, 2021. Wilson explains why the government should not legalize marijuana.
- +Wilson, Douglas. [Flags Out Front: A Contrarian’s Daydream](#). Moscow, ID: Canon, 2016. A clever story about religion and government. My family enjoyed this one as a read-aloud. See [twenty lines that made me smile](#).
- Wilson, Douglas. [Frequently Shouted Questions About Christian Nationalism](#). Moscow, ID: Canon, 2025. This book is the most accessible introduction to Wilson’s political theology. It’s much clearer than +Wilson’s [Mere Christendom](#) (Moscow, ID: Canon, 2023). (See Brad Green’s [review](#).) When I read *Mere Christendom* in 2023, I was hoping for a clear, linear argument that sets forth the major views on political theory and then argues for what Wilson thinks is the right view. He does some of that in a roundabout way, but it is a series of loosely connected thoughts rather than a sustained argument. It is full of Wilson’s linguistic flair, which is fun to read but sometimes imprecise and hard to follow. In contrast, *Frequently Shouted Questions About Christian Nationalism* is a clear, linear argument. And it is persuasive. Wilson begins, “Christian nationalism is the belief that human societies require a transcendent anchor to hold all our cultural, political, and social assumptions in place, and that this transcendent anchor should be the true and

living God, not an idol” (1). The liberal media and some Christians depict Wilson’s Christian nationalism as scary and fringe, but Wilson demonstrates, “Christian nationalism is just an ordinary variant of conservative Christian faith and practice” (141). He ends with nine practical applications for Christians today: (1) worship in the splendor of holiness; (2) put away your idols; (3) stay in the word; (4) love your wife; obey your husband; (5) read; (6) make money; (7) live not by lies; (8) preach the word; and (9) keep your kids, and keep having kids (142–57). Wilson is emphasizing practical fundamentals that are sadly uncommon in many Christian cultures. One quibble is how Wilson answers Question 18: “Do you have to be postmillennial to be a Christian nationalist?” Wilson says, “The answer here is no and yes.” I think the answer is simply No. What’s necessary is *optimistically* trusting God. Postmillennialism is not the only system compatible with end-time optimism. See [+Doug Wilson interview Voddie Baucham on Christian nationalism—also on YouTube](#) (~65 min.). See also [+Doug Wilson and Dan Barker \(an atheist\) debate “Should Religion and Government Be Separate?”](#)

- Wilson, Douglas, Lisa Velthouse, and Russell D. Moore. “[Should Churches Display the American Flag in Their Sanctuaries?](#)” *Christianity Today* 56.7 (2012): 82. *Christianity Today* asked three people if churches should display the American flag in their sanctuaries: Douglas Wilson (“Just don’t do it”), Lisa Velthouse (“It’s all right by me”), and Russell D. Moore (“Fly it responsibly”). Wilson ends his short response with a zinger that makes me grin: “But being a Christian doesn’t mean we should hate our home country, just that we should know how to rightly order our allegiances. This is why, in my ideal scenario, the elders who vote in session to remove the American flag from the sanctuary should all have that same flag on their pickup trucks, right next to the gun rack.”

### ***Other Ethical Issues***

- Charles, J. Daryl, and Timothy J. Demy. [War, Peace, and Christianity: Questions and Answers from a Just-War Perspective](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010. Answers 104 questions about just war from six perspectives: the philosopher, historian, statesman, theologian, combatant, and individual.
- Croteau, David A. [Tithing after the Cross: A Refutation of the Top Arguments for Tithing and New Paradigm for Giving](#). Areopagus Critical Christian Issues 7. Gonzalez, FL: Energion, 2013. My endorsement: “This book is thoughtful, clear, pastoral, convincing, and convicting. It does not lead to a position that Christians should give less than ten percent. Rather, (a) if the foundation of giving is our relationship with God and the grace



and love he gives us and (b) if the amount we give is based on our income, what we determine in our heart, the needs of those ministering to us and of fellow Christians, and generosity, then why give only ten percent?”

- DeRouchie, Jason S. “[Lethal Self-Defense](#).” *Jason DeRouchie*, April 26, 2016. 36 slides. See also Charles and Demy’s chapter “What about self-defense? Does Christian faith prohibit force in this context?,” in [War, Peace, and Christianity](#), 361–64 (see above), and Grudem’s chapter “Self-Defense,” in [Christian Ethics](#), 545–59 (see above).
- Grudem, Wayne. [Business for the Glory of God: The Bible’s Teaching on the Moral Goodness of Business](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2003. Grudem considers how to glorify God in eleven aspects of business activity: ownership, productivity, employment, commercial transactions (buying and selling), profit, money, inequality of possessions, competition, borrowing and lending, attitudes of heart, and effect on world poverty.
- Naselli, Andrew David. [God’s Will and Making Decisions](#). Field Guides. Kingsburg, CA: The Mentoring Project, 2025.

### **Spiritual Disciplines: Means of Grace**

- Carson, D. A. [Praying with Paul: A Call to Spiritual Reformation](#). 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015. Carson gives practical advice on how to pray, and he devotionally exegetes seven of Paul’s prayers: Rom 15:14–33; Eph 1:15–23; 3:14–21; Phil 1:9–11; Col 1:9–14; 1 Thess 3:9–13; and 2 Thess 1. See also J. Gary Millar, “[The Doctrine of Prayer](#)” (*TGC Concise Theology Essays*, 2020).
- Emadi, Sam. [What Should I Do Now That I’m a Christian?](#) 9Marks: Church Questions. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020. Emadi recommends eight spiritually healthy practices: get baptized; join a local church; attend your church regularly; study the Bible; pray regularly; be discipled by others; give to the church; and evangelize the lost.
- Hughes, R. Kent. [Disciplines of a Godly Man](#). 3rd ed. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2019. Wise advice for men. See also Barbara Hughes, [Disciplines of a Godly Woman](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2001); and Kent Hughes and Barbara Hughes, [Disciplines of a Godly Family](#), 2nd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004).
- Mathis, David. [Habits of Grace: Enjoying Jesus through the Spiritual Disciplines](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016. From John Piper’s foreword: “This book is about grace-empowered *habits*, and Spirit-empowered *disciplines*. These are the means God has given for drinking at the fountain of life” (13). Mathis organizes the habits under three headings: word, prayer, and fellowship.

- Naselli, Andrew David. “[12 Reasons You Should Pray Scripture](#).” *Themelios* 38 (2013): 417–25. [PDF](#). See also Donald S. Whitney, *Praying the Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015).
- Naselli, Andrew David. “[Why and How to Memorize an Entire Book of the Bible](#).” 22 October, 2015.
- Whitney, Donald S. *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*. 2nd ed. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2014. Whitney addresses Bible intake, prayer, worship, evangelism, serving, stewardship, fasting, silence and solitude, journaling, and learning. For an abridged version, see Whitney’s “[Cultivating Practical Godliness](#)” (*TGC Concise Theology Essays*, 2020).

### Worship

- Anderson, Chris. *Theology That Sticks: The Life-Changing Power of Exceptional Hymns*. Madison, OH: Church Works, 2022. My endorsement: “Since there are hundreds of outstanding hymns, the church should not be content to sing shallow songs that came out ten minutes ago (or ten decades ago) and that nobody will request to sing on their deathbed. Chris Anderson wisely and engagingly counsels us what to sing.”
- Aniol, Scott. *Changed from Glory into Glory: The Liturgical Story of the Christian Faith*. Peterborough, Ontario: Joshua, 2022. Aniol explains worship in the Old Testament, New Testament, and church history. ([Scott Aniol](#) and I have been friends since we were in the same junior high youth group, and we were groomsmen in each other’s weddings in 2004. He is a gifted musician and teacher.)
- Aniol, Scott. “[Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs: Assessing the Debate](#).” *Artistic Theologian* 6 (2018): 13–18. [PDF](#). Aniol shows that ψαλμοῖς, ὕμνοις, and ᾠδαῖς (*psalmois*, *hymnois*, and *ōdais*) in Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16—often translated as “psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs”—are not clearly defined categories of congregational song but instead are overlapping terms that are near synonyms. Each of those three Greek terms appear as translations of psalm titles in the LXX (the Greek translation of the Old Testament), and the New Testament uses those terms interchangeably. Aniol concludes, “The only certain application to Christian churches from this phrase is that God expects his people to sing—at the very least they should sing inspired psalms” (18).
- Aniol, Scott. “[What Is Covenant Renewal Worship?](#)” *G3 Ministries*, 30 April 2025. This little article is a helpful resource to better understand how Christ the King Church

worships together on Sunday mornings. (We describe it with five C's: call, confession, consecration, communion, and commission. See Jeffrey Meyers's book below.)

- Carson, D. A. "[Worship under the Word](#)." Pages 11–63 in *Worship by the Book*. Edited by D. A. Carson. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002. This essay is famous for its unusually long definition of worship: "*Worship* is the proper response of all moral, sentient beings to God, ascribing all honor and worth to their Creator-God precisely because he is worthy, delightfully so. This side of the Fall, *human worship* of God properly responds to the redemptive provisions that God has graciously made. While all true worship is God-centered, *Christian worship* is no less Christ-centered. Empowered by the Spirit and in line with the stipulations of the new covenant, it manifests itself in all our living, finding its impulse in the gospel, which restores our relationship with our Redeemer-God and therefore also with our fellow image-bearers, our co-worshippers. Such worship therefore manifests itself both in adoration and in action, both in the individual believer and in *corporate worship*, which is worship offered up in the context of the body of believers, who strive to align all the forms of their devout ascription of all worth to God with the panoply of new covenant mandates and examples that bring to fulfillment the glories of antecedent revelation and anticipate the consummation" (26). Carson then unpacks that definition (26–58). I agree with Carson that we shouldn't refer to the music guy as the "worship leader": "Just as in the light of the New Testament we dare not think we gather for worship because we have *not* been worshipping all week, so also it is folly to think that only part of the 'service' is worship—everything but the sermon, perhaps, or only the singing, or only singing and responses. The notion of a 'worship leader' who leads the 'worship' part of the service before the sermon (which, then, is no part of worship!) is so bizarre, from a New Testament perspective, as to be embarrassing" (47).
- Gibson, Jonathan. [Be Thou My Vision: A Daily Liturgy for Worship](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021. Gibson's 31-day guide for personal devotions follows this structure: call to worship, adoration, reading of the law, confession of sin, assurance of pardon, creed, praise, catechism, prayer for illumination, Scripture reading, prayer of intercession, further petition, and the Lord's Prayer.
- \*[+Meyers, Jeffrey J. The Lord's Service: The Grace of Covenant Renewal Worship](#). Moscow, ID: Canon, 2003. Meyers explains the five C's of corporate worship: call, confession, consecration, communion, and commission (see part 2, pp. 151–229). This is the basic pattern that Christ the King Church follows for our Sunday morning worship service. For a condensed version, see Meyers's [Why Worship Is Liturgical: A Brief](#)

[\*Explanation of the Form and Content of Traditional Christian Worship\*](#) (West Monroe, LA: Athanasius, 2024).

- Naselli, Andrew David. “What Is a Biblical Theology of the Sabbath?” Question 26 in Jason S. DeRouchie, Oren R. Martin, and Andrew David Naselli, [\*40 Questions about Biblical Theology\*](#), 40 Questions (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2020), 257–65. See [my interview](#) (40 minutes). Christ the King Church’s “[Member Affirmation of Faith](#)” does not require that members define Sunday as the Christian Sabbath (see §15). See also Thomas R. Schreiner, “[Is the Sabbath Still Required for Christians?](#),” Question 37 (209–17) in [\*40 Questions about Christians and Biblical Law\*](#), 40 Questions (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2010); Thomas R. Schreiner, “Good-Bye and Hello: The Sabbath Command for New Covenant Believers,” in [\*Progressive Covenantalism: Charting a Course between Dispensational and Covenant Theologies\*](#), ed. Stephen J. Wellum and Brent E. Parker (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2016), 159–88; Stephen J. Wellum, “[3 Reasons Sunday Is Not the Christian Sabbath](#)” (*The Gospel Coalition*, 27 October 2020).
- Owens, Michael E., ed. [\*Treasury of Psalms and Hymns\*](#). 2nd ed. Denver, PA: NoteWorthy Music Services, 2022. Before Christ the King Church first covenanted together as a church in January 2025, I explained “[Why and How Our Church Plans to Use the Treasury of Psalms and Hymns](#).” I have no regrets that we chose to use the *Treasury*. Our church loves it.
- [+Wilson](#), Douglas. [\*A Primer on Worship and Reformation: Recovering the High Church Puritan\*](#). Moscow, ID: Canon, 2008. Wilson argues, “Worship is warfare, but we are to conduct this warfare in a certain way.”
- [+Wilson](#), Douglas. “The Worship Service.” Chapter 7 (129–64) in [\*Mother Kirk: Essays on Church Life\*](#). Moscow, ID: Canon, 2001. Here are the headings for chapter 7: The Regulative Principle, Cultural Impact of Worship, Just One Channel and No Remote, Worship Music and Propriety, Right Pretty, *Solempne* [“Like our word *solemn*, *solempne* represents the opposite of casual, but unlike *solemn*, it carries no connotations of austerity, moroseness, or gloom”], Anthems of Conquest, Why Not All Psalms?, Principles for Music (Roy Atwood and Eddie Gray), Public Prayer, A Defense of Liturgy, The Corporate Amen. See also [+Wilson](#)’s “[The Shape of Christian Worship](#)” (2021; ~20 min.).

## Fighting Sins and Cultivating Virtues

Christians fight sins such as anger, anxiety, bitterness, covetousness, cowardice, untethered empathy, gluttony, impatience, joylessness, judgmentalism, laziness, lust, pride, selfishness, sinful speech, and worldliness.

- Brauns, Chris. [\*Unpacking Forgiveness: Biblical Answers for Complex Questions and Deep Wounds\*](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008. Full of insight. Brauns defines God’s forgiveness as “a commitment by the one true God to pardon graciously those who repent and believe so that they are reconciled to him, although this commitment does not eliminate all consequences” (51). For Christians, then, forgiveness is “a commitment by the offended to pardon graciously the repentant from moral liability and to be reconciled to that person, although not all consequences are necessarily eliminated” (55). See also Brauns’s [review](#) of Timothy Keller’s [\*Forgive: Why Should I and How Can I?\*](#) (New York: Viking, 2022).
- Bridges, Jerry. [\*Respectable Sins: Confronting the Sins We Tolerate\*](#). Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2007. Bridges addresses ungodliness; anxiety and frustration; discontentment; unthankfulness; pride; selfishness; lack of self-control; impatience and irritability; anger; judgmentalism; envy, jealousy, and related sins; sins of the tongue; and worldliness.
- Crabtree, Sam. [\*Practicing Thankfulness: Cultivating a Grateful Heart in All Circumstances\*](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021. My endorsement: “I thank God for Sam Crabtree. He is a wise and jovial brother who practices what he preaches in this book: he gives thanks in all circumstances. (Don’t miss the last chapter—a creative list of one hundred practical ways to be thankful.)”
- +Dillehay, Tilly. [\*My Dear Hemlock\*](#). Moscow, ID: Canon, 2024. Dillehay has co-hosted the +“[Home Fires](#)” podcast with Abigail Dodds (a member of Christ the King Church), who writes the foreword to this book. Dillehay writes this book in the style of C. S. Lewis’s [\*The Screwtape Letters\*](#) (see above under “The Doctrine of Angels and Demons”). She focuses on ways that women are tempted to rebel against God. See also three interviews of Dillehay: [Doug Wilson](#), [Rachel Jankovic and Abigail Dodds](#), and [Abigail Dodds](#).
- Jones, Robert D. [\*Uprooting Anger: Biblical Help for a Common Problem\*](#). Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2005. Jones defines our anger as “our whole-personed active response of negative moral judgment against perceived evil” (15). Most human anger is sinful, and Jones advises how to uproot it.

- Lewis, C. S. “The Weight of Glory.” Pages 1–15 in [\*The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses\*](#). New York: Macmillan, 1949. I love how Lewis ends his opening paragraph: “If we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that Our Lord finds our desires, not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased” (1–2).
- Mahaney, C. J., ed. [\*Worldliness: Resisting the Seduction of a Fallen World\*](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008. See [my review](#).
- Naselli, Andrew David. “[Winsomeness Can Be a Virtue or a Vice: Winning Some vs. Pleasing Some](#).” *American Reformer*, 24 August 2023. I riff on Kevin DeYoung’s “[Why Reformed Evangelicalism Has Splintered: Four Approaches to Race, Politics, and Gender](#)” (*The Gospel Coalition*, 9 March 2021).
- Piper, John. [\*Desiring God: Meditations of a Christian Hedonist\*](#). Rev. ed. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2025. [Sample PDF](#). Piper’s signature book. You glorify God when he satisfies you.
- Piper, John. [\*Don’t Waste Your Life\*](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2003. [PDF](#). “This is not a book about how to avoid a wounded life, but how to avoid a *wasted* life” (10).
- Piper, John. [\*Future Grace: The Purifying Power of the Promises of God\*](#). 2nd ed. Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah, 2012. [PDF](#). Piper explains, “The ultimate purpose of this book is that God be prized above all things. . . . Sin is what you do when your heart is not satisfied with God. No one sins out of duty. We sin because it holds out some promise of happiness. That promise enslaves us until we believe that God is more to be desired than life itself (Psalm 63:3). Which means that the power of sin’s promise is broken by the power of God’s. All that God promises to be for us in Jesus stands over against what sin promises to be for us without him. This great prospect of the glory of God is what I call *future grace*. Being satisfied with that is what I call *faith*” (9–10). Throughout the book, Piper applies this paradigm to fighting the sins of anxiety, pride, misplaced shame, impatience, covetousness, despondency, and lust.
- Rigney, Joe. [\*Courage: How the Gospel Creates Christian Fortitude\*](#). Union. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2023. “Courage takes risks in the form of daring without falling into the excess of recklessness. Courage endures hardship in the form of fortitude without succumbing to passivity or cowardice” (33). Rigney ends his acknowledgements like this: “In terms of personal acquaintance, no one has imparted the quality of happy courage to



me more than my friend Doug Wilson. For over fifteen years, I’ve benefited from his glad-hearted steadfastness, hopeful stability, and cheerful ministry, and my prayer is that some element of that quality comes through in these pages” (126). See also Rigney’s +“[Courage in the Home](#),” +“[Courage in the Church](#),” and +“[Courage in the World](#)”—episodes from +“[Leadership in an Age of Anxiety](#).”

- +Rigney, Joe. [\*Leadership and Emotional Sabotage: Resisting the Anxiety That Will Wreck Your Family, Destroy Your Church, and Ruin the World\*](#). Moscow, ID: Canon, 2024. My endorsement: “The wise insights Joe Rigney presents in this book are the result of his marinating in the Bible, plundering the Egyptians, and applying sound principles in challenging contexts. Joe is entirely committed to the Bible’s authority, and he does not waver when people slander him. His goal isn’t to please people but to please God. Weak leaders often fail by having a failure of discernment (especially because of untethered empathy that hinders how others grow by affirming their low pain threshold) and a failure of nerve (especially by fearing to take stands at the risk of displeasing people). In this book Joe explains what a leader should do when people are highly reactive and anxious and combustible—like a gas leak that can explode with just a spark.” See also Rigney’s +“[The Everyman’s Guide to Emotional Sabotage](#)” (4 episodes with Doug Wilson) and +“[Leadership in an Age of Anxiety](#)” (7 episodes).
- +Rigney, Joe. [\*Strangely Bright: Can You Love God and Enjoy This World?\*](#) 2nd ed. Moscow, ID: Canon, 2024. For an expanded version, see +Rigney’s [\*The Things of Earth: Treasuring God by Enjoying His Gifts\*](#), 2nd ed. (Moscow, ID: Canon, 2024). The four men who have most influenced Rigney’s thinking on treasuring God by enjoying his gifts are Jonathan Edwards, John Piper, C. S. Lewis, and Doug Wilson. (Piper writes the foreword to *The Things of Earth*.) Wilson has quipped that Piper’s Christian hedonism could use a little more beer and bacon, and Rigney fleshes that out in these books. Watch Joe Rigney interview John Piper and Doug Wilson on “[The Supremacy of Christ in All of Life: The Pastor and His Worldview](#)”—or “[Desiring God and Bacon](#)” (Desiring 2012 Conference for Pastors, ~2 hours | [transcript](#)). See chapters 9–10 of *The Things of Earth* for a friendly critique of how some hold a wartime-lifestyle mindset.
- +Rigney, Joe. [\*The Sin of Empathy: Compassion and Its Counterfeits\*](#). Moscow, ID: Canon, 2025. This book is the result of nearly a decade of speaking and writing on how empathy can be sinful. Rigney dedicates this book to Tom and Abigail Dodds and to Jenni and me because we navigated some choppy waters together regarding these matters. The truths in this book apply widely to the Christian life. See [my article](#) for more

resources on untethered empathy, including many of Rigney’s articles, videos, and interviews on empathy.

- Ryken, Leland. [\*Redeeming the Time: A Christian Approach to Work and Leisure\*](#). Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995. Ryken insightfully describes work and leisure. He defends the Protestant work ethic; he does not sharply distinguish so-called “secular” work and “full-time Christian ministry.”
- +Wilson, Douglas. [\*A Serrated Edge: A Brief Defense of Biblical Satire and Trinitarian Skylarking\*](#). Moscow, ID: Canon, 2003. Wilson calls this book “our *apologia* for not apologizing” (8). The way people object to how he uses the serrated edge “can be divided into two general categories. The first is that what we are doing is unkind, and therefore unbiblical. The second is that what we are doing is counterproductive, that we are chasing people away from our position. Our response to these objections could be summarized in a two-fold fashion, reading from left to right as *Oh yeah?* and *Nuh uh*. But this requires further development” (9). For a counterpoint to how Wilson uses the serrated edge, see Denny Burk, “[The Serrated Edge of Doug Wilson](#)” (24 October 2023); Kevin DeYoung, “[On Culture War, Doug Wilson, and the Moscow Mood](#)” (*Clearly Reformed*, 27 November 2023). In reply, see Wilson, “[The Little Drummer Boy Responds to Denny Burk](#)” (30 October 2023); Wilson, “[My Rejoinder to Kevin DeYoung](#)” (4 December 2023); Joe Rigney, “[On Satire, Moods, and What We’re Known For: A Response to Kevin DeYoung](#)” (*American Reformer*, 1 December 2023). See Wilson’s [twenty-one principles about a godly satirist](#) (2007) and [thoughts about so-called microaggressions](#) (2014). See also two articles by Clint Manley, a member of Christ the King Church: “[The Serrated Edge of Scripture: How God Uses Satire](#)” (*Christ Over All*, 2 May 2025) and “[How Then Shall We Mock? Ten Principles for Wielding the Sword of Holy Satire](#)” (*Christ Over All*, 5 May 2025; [audio version](#); [interview](#)).
- +Wilson, Douglas. [\*Ploductivity: A Practical Theology of Work and Wealth\*](#). Moscow, ID: Canon, 2020. This paragraph captures the gist of what Wilson means by *ploductivity*: “If technology is wealth, then we are all surrounded with astounding amounts of it. This is what I refer to as *tangible grace*. If you have a smartphone, you have more wealth in your pocket than Nebuchadnezzar accumulated over the course of his lifetime. We have a responsibility to turn a profit on these astounding tools—and that is what is meant by *productivity*. We have a responsibility to do this methodically, deliberately, and intentionally. This is what I mean by *ploductivity*. This is deliberate faithfulness: working in the same direction over an extended period of time. Our electronic servants may be super fast, but we should be as deliberate as ever” (11).

## Evangelism and Missions

- Buser, Brooks. “[A Better Way to Look at Missions.](#)” *9Marks*, 21 May 2024. Buser proposes four lanes or strategies: train national pastors; plant English-speaking churches in cross-cultural contexts; plant churches in national or majority languages; and plant churches in minority languages. See [my summary](#).
- DeRouchie, Jason S. “By the Waters of Babylon: Global Missions from Genesis to Revelation.” *Midwestern Journal of Theology* 20.2 (2021): 6–30. [PDF](#). Traces the theme of missions through the Bible.
- Dever, Mark. [The Gospel and Personal Evangelism](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007. Dever wrote this book to help churches “develop a culture of evangelism”—that is, “an expectation that Christians will share the gospel with others, talk about doing that, pray about it, and regularly plan and work together to help each other evangelize. We want evangelism to be normal—in our own lives and in our churches” (17).
- Dever, Mark. [Understanding the Great Commission](#). Church Basics. Nashville: B&H, 2016. “The Great Commission is normally fulfilled through planting and growing local churches. Churches fulfill the Great Commission through planting more churches” (2).
- Doran, David M. [For the Sake of His Name](#). Allen Park, MI: Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary, 2018. God’s glory is why we do missions, and it determines the what, how, and where of missions. This book revises and abridges a 2002 book with the same title and that is now out of print. From John MacArthur’s foreword: “Dr. Doran has written a collection of insightful, biblically-informed articles on the topic of missions. They write to students interested in missions, yet pastors and church leaders would also benefit from the breadth of topics and depth of their treatment.”
- Koukl, Gregory. [Tactics: A Game Plan for Discussing Your Christian Convictions](#). 10th anniversary ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2019. Here’s my most memorable takeaway from Koukl’s book: A modest goal in every encounter with an unbeliever is not that they repent and believe in Christ at that moment but that you at least put a stone in his shoe. In other words, get him thinking, and crack the door to the reality of the triune God, sin, and the gospel.
- Metzger, Will. [Tell the Truth: The Whole Gospel Wholly by Grace Communicated Truthfully and Lovingly: An Evangelism Training Manual for Group and Individual Use](#). 4th ed. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012. After making a theological case for what evangelism is and what grace is (51–186), Metzger gives practical advice about witnessing for ordinary Christians (187–282).

- Naselli, Andrew David [moderator], G. K. Beale, Jason S. DeRouchie, Jonathan Gibson, and Brian J. Tabb. “[Biblical Theology of Mission: Theology Refresh Panel](#).” *Bethlehem Conference for Pastors*, 31 January 2017. You can summarize the difference for the nation Israel and for the church today with the phrases “come and see” vs. “go and tell.” When the nation Israel was under the Mosaic law covenant, the approach to the nations was “come and see.” Gentiles were welcome to come and see, but Israel did not have a foreign missions strategy in which they were intentionally deploying missionaries to live and serve in foreign lands. But after Christ rose from the dead, the risen Christ proclaimed, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations . . .” (Matt 28:18b–19a).
- Newman, Randy. [Questioning Evangelism: Engaging People’s Hearts the Way Jesus Did](#). 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2023. When talking to unbelievers, believers should ask questions that pave the way for answers. It’s also important to be prepared to answer questions that unbelievers are asking.
- Packer, J. I. [Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God](#). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1961. See [my summary and outline](#).
- Piper, John. [Let the Nations Be Glad! The Supremacy of God in Missions](#). 4th ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2022. [Sample PDF](#). The third sentence of this book is the one that everybody remembers—and rightly so: “Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. *Missions exists because worship doesn’t*. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man. When this age is over and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more. It is a temporary necessity. But worship abides forever. Worship, therefore, is the fuel and goal of missions” (3).

### **Biblical Counseling**

Christ the King Church’s “[Elder Affirmation of Faith](#)” says, “The pastors approach biblical counseling in alignment with ‘[The Standards of Doctrine of the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors](#)’ (2015).”

- Lambert, Heath. [A Theology of Biblical Counseling: The Doctrinal Foundations of Counseling Ministry](#). Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016. “Counseling is a conversation where one party with questions, problems, and trouble seeks assistance from someone they believe has answers, solutions, and help” (13). In *secular* counseling, an unbeliever seeks to provide answers, solutions, and help. In *integrationist Christian* counseling, a Christian seeks to provide answers, solutions, and help by embracing secular counseling

principles and techniques. In *biblical* counseling, a Christian seeks to provide answers, solutions, and help with the Bible, which is sufficient for counseling; secular counseling principles and techniques are not necessary. Counseling is always theological. Lambert gives a theological rationale for biblical counseling.

- MacArthur, John, and The Master's College Faculty. [\*Counseling: How to Counsel Biblically\*](#). The John MacArthur Pastor's Library. Nashville: Nelson, 2005. John MacArthur, Wayne Mack, and other colleagues explain the history, theological foundations, practice, and ministry of biblical counseling.
- Powlison, David. "[X-ray Questions](#)." Pages 129–43 in *Seeing with New Eyes: Counseling and the Human Condition through the Lens of Scripture*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2003. Questions to help you discern patterns of what motivates you.
- "[The Sufficiency Statement](#)." 2 December 2024. I was one of the original signatories.
- Thomson, Rich. [\*The Heart of Man and the Mental Disorders: How the Word of God Is Sufficient\*](#). 3rd ed. 2 vols. Sugar Land, TX: Biblical Counseling Ministries, 2022. From John MacArthur's endorsement: "I would recommend this great reference for the shelf of any pastor or minister who wishes to protect God's flock from the lies and falsehoods that the 'mental health' world puts on unsuspecting parishioners, and to point them to the complete adequacy of the Scripture and the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit."

### **Other Tools on Practical Theology**

- Basham, Megan. [\*Shepherds for Sale: How Evangelical Leaders Traded the Truth for a Leftist Agenda\*](#). New York: Broadside Books, 2024. My endorsement: "Megan Basham exposes and explains how some evangelical leaders are failing to affirm and defend with clarity what Scripture teaches about issues such as LGBTQ, abortion, abuse, and critical race theory. She also reveals how some wealthy secular progressives are targeting evangelicals with evil ideologies disguised as love for neighbor. But it's not loving, she argues, to minimize or overturn offensive parts of Scripture. I pray that Megan's book will embolden Christians to destroy arguments that keep people from knowing God and to take every rebellious thought captive to obey Christ the King. This book can help you recognize some ways you may have erred (even with good intentions) or some ways you have been misled so that you can walk in the truth."
- Butterfield, Rosaria. [\*The Gospel Comes with a House Key: Practicing Radically Ordinary Hospitality in Our Post-Christian World\*](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018. Butterfield describes not "PhD Christianity" but "ABC Christianity"—"the basic building block for vital Christian living. Start anywhere. But do start" (220). See also the

+“[Hospitality](#)” page on Canon+, including the documentary “[Come and See: Tips for Hospitality and Sabbath Dinners](#)” (~50 min.).

- Challies, Tim. [Do More Better: A Practical Guide to Productivity](#). Minneapolis: Cruciform, 2015. See [my review](#).
- <sup>^</sup>+Leithart, Peter. [Wise Words: Family Stories That Bring the Proverbs to Life](#). 3rd ed. Moscow, ID: Canon, 2003. See [my summary](#).
- +MacArthur, John. [Stand Firm: Living in a Post-Christian Culture](#). Orlando: Reformation Trust, 2020. This book was published in April 2020, which means that MacArthur wrote it before the Covid crisis and then practiced what he preached during the Covid crisis. (See the entry on Busenitz and Coates’s [God vs. Government](#) above under “The Civil Government.”)
- MacArthur, John, and Nathan Busenitz, eds. [Right Thinking for a Culture in Chaos: Responding Biblically to Today’s Most Urgent Issues](#). Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2023. Leaders of Grace Community Church in Los Angeles evaluate “contemporary trends and cultural issues through the lens of Scripture. These topics include secularism, relativism, environmentalism, critical race theory, transgenderism, homosexuality, education, epistemology, social media, dating and marriage, government overreach, technology and worship, spiritual apostasy, and our Christian witness before a watching world” (10).
- Naselli, Andrew David. “[Ten Resources That Have Helped Me Make Sense of Our Current Culture and How Christians Are Responding to It](#).” *Eikon: A Journal for Biblical Anthropology* 4.1 (2022): 116–41.
- Piper, John. [Ask Pastor John](#). In this podcast, Piper thoughtfully answers tough theological and pastoral questions. I listen to every episode because Piper helps me apply the Bible. See also Tony Reinke, [Ask Pastor John: 750 Bible Answers to Life’s Most Important Questions](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2024). Reinke explains, “My book is a guided tour, a narrated synthesis of our 750 most popular episodes, mostly on situational ethics, published in the *Ask Pastor John* audio podcast over the course of its first decade (from January 11, 2013 to December 30, 2022). This book is a core sample of John Piper’s mind and theology” (xxvii).
- +Rigney, Joe. [Live Like a Narnian: Christian Discipleship in Lewis’ Chronicles](#). Minneapolis: Eyes & Pen, 2013. My endorsement: “It’s evident that Joe Rigney has deeply breathed the air of Narnia for a long time, and he creatively applies Lewis’s masterpiece to Christian living with wit and wisdom.”



- ^+Wilson, Douglas. [\*Andrew and the Firedrake\*](#). Moscow, ID: Canon, 2019. Shortly after I wrote [a biblical theology of snakes and dragons](#), I read this dragon-slaying story to my family. Bravo.
- +Wilson, Douglas. [\*Confessions of a Food Catholic\*](#). Moscow, ID: Canon, 2016. Wilson refutes “every species of phood pharisees” (10). The following excerpt represents the gist of the book: “My point is *not* that sinning with food is impossible. A man can sin by not sharing it, by eating way too much of it, by throwing it across the cafeteria, and so forth. My point is that a man *cannot* sin by bowing his head over it, saying grace with true gratitude in his heart, and then tucking in—and this truth is not affected by whether what he is about to eat is a chocolate pudding cup from a fast food joint or lots of spinach, rich in iron. So the comparatively new and alarming trend in Christian circles toward the demonization of certain basic foods is the sin I particularly want to address. I am *not* speaking of those who have genuine allergies, but rather to a larger, culture-wide despising of things that God gave to us, having first pronounced them good. I am speaking (to take just two examples) of whole milk straight out of cows, and gluten straight out of a wheat field. To make my point clearer—yay, fat! yay, gluten!” (4).
- +Wilson, Douglas. [\*Gashmu Saith It: How to Build Christian Communities That Save the World\*](#). Moscow, ID: Canon, 2021. When you try to build a God-honoring culture, you must be resilient when others oppose you. (“Gashmu saith it” is how the KJV translates Nehemiah 6:6.) Wilson explains how to build a Christian community with a robust immune system. I love his serious and joyful believe-and-obey-the-Bible approach. The +documentary [How to Save the World \(in Eleven \\*Simple Steps\) \[\\*Not Easy\]](#) (48 min.) is based on this book. These are the eleven steps: (1) Be a good egg. (2) Assume the center. (3) Be a gate. (4) Think covenantally. (5) Love your wife. (6) Stay in fellowship. (7) Worship every week. (8) Teach your kids. (9) Work patiently. (10) Keep politics in perspective. (11) Therefore, go.
- +Wilson, Douglas. [\*Rules for Reformers\*](#). Moscow, ID: Canon, 2014. Wilson explains what he is doing in this book in his first two sentences: “A generation ago ‘community organizer’ Saul Alinsky famously penned his *Rules for Radicals*, and it is my conviction that those interested in reformation should match his craft and self-awareness without trying to compete at all with the speed and depth of his revolutionary destructo-vision. And, incidentally, if you are interested in the grace of God transforming individuals, families, neighborhoods, churches, communities, cities, cultures, nations, and the world, then you are interested in reformation.”

- [+Wilson, Douglas](#). [\*The Man in the Dark: A Romance Novel\*](#). Moscow, ID: Canon, 2019. Around 1900, a young lady named Savannah comes to the fictional town of Paradise Valley. Two men compete for her affection: the town's new pastor and its most powerful businessman. As you'd expect from a Wilson novel, the story is edifying and clever, and a bonus is that Wilson is a wordsmith who writes with flashes of P. G. Wodehouse. For example, "Savannah always felt that a quarter of an inch beneath his warm greeting was a layer of ice that approached glacial thicknesses" (26). "Whenever she wasn't speaking, she was a beautiful woman" (151).
- [+Wilson, Douglas](#). [\*What I Learned in Narnia\*](#). Moscow, ID: Canon, 2010. I have read this book four or five times—including once aloud to my family. See also +Wilson's [lectures](#) and my article "[Ten Narnia Resources](#)."
- [+Wilson, Douglas](#). [\*Wordsmithy: Hot Tips for the Writing Life\*](#). Moscow, ID: Canon, 2011. See [my overview](#).