

READING RECOMMENDATIONS

From Julian Hardyman, Pastor, Eden Baptist Church, Cambridge.

Obviously there are shelves and shelves of books I could recommend in every section. This is not a comprehensive guide, nor does it even contain all the best books in each area. It is not 'balanced' in any particular way either. What I have done is to list some favourite books of mine that are not generally well known in the UK.

Recommending these books does not mean I endorse everything in them – of course we all need to read with discernment, checking what we read against Scripture. But I have found much of great helpfulness in them.

I have not provided full bibliographical details as these books are easily traced on Amazon.

1. Discipleship and Spiritual Growth

The Jesus Creed

Scot McKnight

This is a brilliant and easy to read introduction to the heart of Jesus' teaching and mission in the gospels. The author combines his scholarship, communication gifts and a deft, ordinary touch. Highly recommended for new Christians and older ones alike.

One thing

Samuel Storms

An inspiring book on enjoying God and his glory. Lots of passion and sound theology combined. A bit like John Piper but a different writing style. A great book to spark up a flagging devotion to God.

When People are Big and God is small

Ed Welch

What I like about this book is the author's honesty and challenge to those of us who are too influenced by what other people think.

Two great books on Romans 8, one of the greatest chapters in Scripture.

Supernatural living for ordinary people

Ray Ortlund, Jr.

Superb contemporary exposition of this great chapter.

No condemnation in Christ Jesus

Octavius Winslow

An older treatment of the same passage. Style a bit nineteenth century but very heart-warming and helpful

2. Christian World view and our work in the world

The Callings

Paul Helm

A great little book on what the bible says about 'calling' and 'vocation'. His approach is more biblical than Guinness (below).

The Call

Os Guinness.

A sparkling and passionate book about calling. More contemporary and historical than Helm. Most people should read both!

Creation Regained

Al Wolters

The most thorough entry-level explanation of Genesis 1-4 as the basis for a Christian worldview. Very useful for understanding work, culture, civilisation etc.

Heaven is not my home

Paul Marshall

Quite like Wittmer (see below). Very helpful on calling, the dignity of work etc. Good writing style.

The Transforming Vision

Walsh and Middleton

A great introduction to the idea of a Christian worldview. Some of the early material is a bit philosophical for the general reader. Some of the later examples feel a bit dated. But lots of helpful stuff here!

Heaven is a place on earth

Michael Wittmer

A lively provocative challenge to Christians who think all that matters is prayer and evangelism. Some of the early chapters are unnecessarily philosophical and could be skipped. Sometimes he is a bit provocative and overstates his case. But a superb book all the same.

3. Theology, doctrine and ethics

Systematic Theology

Wayne Grudem

In my view every Christian undergraduate should buy this book and aim to read it before they graduate. And every Christian house group leader, Sunday school teacher etc (let alone elders) should have a well-thumbed copy on their shelves. He is clear, biblical, balanced, helpful and practical.

The Doctrine of God

John Frame

This is a simply magnificent book. Quite advanced so read Wayne Grudem first! Frame is very sound and very readable. Issues like the Trinity, God's providence, miracles etc get fresh and clear treatment. Every pastor should read it!

Old Testament Ethics for the people of God

Chris Wright.

Buy this for the first part, 'Living as the people of God.' This is *the* thing to read to understand the Old Testament law. The later parts are more advanced but pure gold too

The Moral Vision of the New Testament

Richard Hays

A more advanced account of NT ethics. Particularly useful for its analyses of how the NT speaks to us ethically and the exploration of five key issues. A bit weak in integrating the Old Testament (we need someone to write a 'Moral Vision of the OT and NT' really!); not everyone will agree with his pacifism. But he is unashamedly biblical on sexual ethics.

God's Design

Elmer Martens.

One of the best bible overviews. Once you have read and absorbed Goldsworthy, you really ought to read Martens!

The Law, the Gospel and the Modern Christian

Ed. By Strickland.

Five evangelicals with very different views cross swords amicably. Very helpful to see the strengths and weaknesses of the different positions. I think Moo comes out on top but you may disagree.

The gospel for the poor

Tim Chester

Rich, comfortable Christians find it too easy to forget the human need in our world and to fail to hear the bible's teaching on it. Tim helps us magnificently without losing an emphasis on gospel communication.

4. Christian ministry and Helping others

Instruments in the redeemer's hands

Paul Tripp

This is a great explanation of why and how we help others spiritually. Helpful for pastors, elders, house group leaders and anyone wanting to promote God's work in other people's lives.

Seeing through new eyes

David Powlison

Thoughtful and suggestive for the pastor or anyone trying to help others pastorally.

Going the distance

Peter Brain

Too many of us burnout or drop out of paid Christian ministry. Or we just suffer unnecessarily. Brain is very practical and helpful. All pastors and full-time Christian workers should read this. And their elders and wives!

5. Suffering, bereavement, loss, grief

A Grace Disguised: How the Soul grows through loss

Jerry Sittser.

This is the best book I have read on this subject. The author lost his mother, wife and one of his daughters in the same car accident. He is very honest about the experience and very biblical in analysing it. A compelling and very helpful book.

When I don't desire God

John Piper

In my view this is one of the best of his books, taking the familiar theme of joy in God but from a different starting point.

6. Preaching, homiletics and church life

Christ-centred preaching

Bryan Chappell

Superb on preaching redemptive messages that help people to change by God's grace. Very good too on the detail of sermon structure, illustration etc

Contemporary worship music

John Frame

A lively and thoughtful defence of 'modern' worship styles by one of my favourite authors