

Christian Reading List Suggestions

The Historical Reliability of the Gospels. By Craig Blomberg.

For over twenty years, Craig Blomberg's *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels* has provided a useful antidote to many of the toxic effects of skeptical criticism of the Gospels. Offering a calm, balanced overview of the history of Gospel criticism, especially that of the late twentieth century, Blomberg introduces readers to the methods employed by New Testament scholars and shows both the values and limits of those methods. He then delves more deeply into the question of miracles, Synoptic discrepancies and the differences between the Synoptics and John. After an assessment of noncanonical Jesus tradition, he addresses issues of historical method directly.

A Meal With Jesus. By Tim Chester.

Meals have always been important across societies and cultures, a time for friends and families to come together. An important part of relationships, meals are vital to our social health. Author Tim Chester sums it up: Food connects. Chester argues that meals are also deeply theological—an important part of Christian fellowship and mission. He observes that the book of Luke is full of stories of Jesus at meals. These accounts lay out biblical principles. Chester notes, "The meals of Jesus represent something bigger." Six chapters in *A Meal with Jesus* show how they enact grace, community, hope, mission, salvation, and promise.

Don't Call It a Comeback. By Kevin DeYoung.

Recent cultural interest in evangelicalism has led to considerable confusion about what the term actually means. Many young Christians are tempted to discard the label altogether. But evangelicalism is not merely a political movement in decline or a sociological phenomenon on the rise, as it has sometimes been portrayed. It is, in fact, a helpful theological profile that manifests itself in beliefs, ethics, and church life.

Stuck. By F. Remy Diederich.

Stuck is like an owner's manual in that you can turn to the part of the book that addresses your specific need. Engaging and useful with questions and model prayers at the end of each section that help you apply the principles to your own situations. Bible verses that support his positions and offer further guidance. Wonderful insights into anger and forgiveness.

Finding God in Hidden Places. By Joni Eareckson Tada.

Stories from Joni's life shine in this collection of gathered memories. Readers will recall quiet, out-of-the-way moments in their own lives when God was present—both in happy and sad times. Words of encouragement, comfort, and insight leave the soul satisfied and longing to be closer to a loving Father, who often shows up when least expected.

Surprise Me: A 30-Day Faith Experiment. By Terry Esau.

"Surprise me, God." What if you started the next thirty days with this simple prayer? No agendas, no plans other than waiting on God with eager anticipation of what is about to happen next. *Surprise Me* invites you to approach your spiritual life with openness and an eye for the unexpected to discover God working the everyday moments in your life, from the spectacular to the mundane.

Love to Stay. By Adam Hamilton

In this book, Hamilton explores how, with God's help, we can make love last. Drawing upon a survey of thousands of couples and singles, interviews with relationship and marriage therapists, the latest research in the field, and wisdom from the Bible, Hamilton looks at what it takes to create and sustain healthy, meaningful romantic relationships across the course of a lifetime.

The Next Christendom: the Coming of Global Christianity. By Philip Jenkins.

By the year 2,050 only one Christian in five will be non-Latino and white, and the center of gravity of the Christian world will have shifted firmly to the Southern Hemisphere. The Next Christendom is the first book to take the full measure of the changing face of the Christian faith. Philip Jenkins shows that the churches that have grown most rapidly in Africa, Asia, and Latin America are often more morally conservative and apocalyptic than their northern counterparts. Mysticism, puritanism, faith-healing, exorcism, and dream-visions--concepts which more liberal western churches have traded in for progressive political and social concerns--are basic to these newer churches. And the effects of such beliefs on global politics, Jenkins argues, will be enormous, as religious identification begins to take precedence over allegiance to secular nation-states.

The Practice of the Presence of God. By Brother Lawrence.

Brother Lawrence was a man of humble beginnings who discovered the greatest secret of living in the kingdom of God here on earth. It is the art of "practicing the presence of God in one single act that does not end." He often stated that it is God who paints Himself in the depths of our soul. We must merely open our hearts to receive Him and His loving presence. For nearly 300 years this unparalleled classic has given both blessing and instruction to those who can be content with nothing less than knowing God in all His majesty and feeling His loving presence throughout each simple day.

The Blue Parakeet: Rethinking How You Read the Bible. By Scot McKnight.

In 'The Blue Parakeet', McKnight again touches the hearts and minds of today's Christians, this time challenging them to rethink how to read the Bible, not just to puzzle it together into some systematic theology but to see it as a Story that we're summoned to enter and to carry forward in our day.

Absolute Surrender. By Andrew Murray.

First published in 1895, Andrew Murray explores the depths of what it means to really surrender unconditionally to God. Readers report gaining more and more insight every time they reread it. Note: more recent printings in modern English are easier to read than his original works written in his time period.

Who Is This Man? By John Ortberg.

After reading "The Jesus I Never Knew" by Philip Yancey, one might assume they've learned pretty much all there is to know about Jesus and his time on earth. This book by John Ortberg may come as a surprise. There's virtually no end to the ripple effects of Jesus' example and his teachings from his time down to our present day. In many ways Jesus is "the Man Who Won't Go Away".

The Life You've Always Wanted. By John Ortberg.

Do the words "spiritual disciplines" put you on your guard? Do they call to mind things that are difficult, things that you'd perhaps rather leave for other people to do? This is an encouraging book, written, as the subtitle says, for ordinary people, in which John Ortberg takes apart the misconceptions we often have about spiritual transformation, about becoming more like Jesus. It can change your thinking about how you can change your life.

The Me I Want to Be. By John Ortberg

If God has a perfect vision for your life, why does spiritual growth seem so difficult? John Ortberg has some intriguing answers to that question, and he has organized his thoughts and God's words into a straightforward and timely guide for living your best life. This book will show how God's perfect vision for you starts with a powerful promise. All those who trust in God "will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit" (Jeremiah 17:7-8). Ortberg urges you to recognize your brokenness, understand that God is the project manager, and follow His directions.

Faithfully Frugal: Spend Less, Give More, Live More. By Kari Patterson.

Faithfully Frugal leads readers on a journey into simplicity, generosity, and joy. Instead of just looking to save a dime, score a deal, and snag the doorbuster, Kari Patterson teaches the true secrets of frugality that turn the penny-pinching game into a life-giving pursuit. She shares her family's real life story—from chasing the elusive American dream to embracing a life of simplicity, contentment and peace. Complete with fun stories, biblical truths, family-friendly frugal recipes, and 35 crazy ways to save, Faithfully Frugal will help you spend less, give more, and live more.

The Art of Forgiving. By Lewis Smedes.

If you are ready to make peace with those who have hurt or betrayed you, there can be no finer road map than this practical book. Smedes brings true forgiveness, "God's own gift," within the capacity of every wounded person, even in circumstances when only hate seems possible.

The Great Omission: Reclaiming Jesus's Essential Teachings on Discipleship. By Dallas Willard.

The Great Commission was the last command Jesus gave the church before he ascended to heaven. It was a call for Christians to "make disciples of all the nations." But instead Christians have largely responded by making "Christians," not "disciples." This, according to brilliant scholar and renowned Christian thinker Dallas Willard, has been the church's Great Omission.

The Divine Conspiracy. By Dallas Willard.

The Divine Conspiracy has revolutionized how we think about the true meaning of discipleship. In this classic, one of the most brilliant Christian thinkers of our times, Dallas Willard, skillfully weaves together biblical teaching, popular culture, science, scholarship, and spiritual practice, revealing what it means to "apprentice" ourselves to Jesus. Using Jesus's Sermon of the Mount as his foundation, Willard masterfully explores life-changing ways to experience and be guided by God on a daily basis, resulting in a more authentic and dynamic faith.

The Jesus I Never Knew. By Philip Yancey.

This is a classic, highly praised study that focuses on facets of Jesus and his ministry that many of us don't often think about. It challenges readers to let go of "the Jesus we thought we knew" and learn about the man who changed history more than anyone who has ever lived.

What's so amazing about grace? By Philip Yancey.

Yancey explores grace at street level. If grace is God's love for the undeserving, he asks, then what does it look like in action? And if Christians are its sole dispensers, then how are we doing at lavishing grace on a world that knows far more of cruelty and unforgiveness than it does mercy? Yancey sets grace in the midst of life's stark images, tests its mettle against horrific "ungrace."