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The year 2020 invites a (sadly limited) number of jokes about visual acuity. In January, we had our "2020 visions" for the year. By now, it's clear that hindsight is 2020. Our calendars are filled with dashed expectations. We should have bought Clorox wipes back in February.

Hindsight means that understanding comes well after the time it would have been most useful. *If I'd known, I would've done that differently*. But looking to the past can help us to see our present and future with greater clarity. This summer and fall, P&R is releasing exciting new books that do just that—and some that will help you to avoid the regret of hindsight in the first place.

#### The Case for Biblical Archaeology (John D. Currid)

Christians can have a sense that the events of the Bible, especially those in the Old Testament, happened in a mystical time and place that barely overlaps with our own world. The distant past feels...well, *distant*.

John Currid—author, professor, and archaeologist—has written *The Case for Biblical Archaeology* (p. 10) to enrich our understanding of life and events in Old Testament lands. With the aid of fullcolor photographs and maps, as well as classroom resources such as a glossary and study questions, Currid helps us to see and know an ancient land and its people with new insight.

## TRADE HINDSIGHT FOR INSIGHT

#### Everyday Prayer with the Reformers (Donald K. McKim)

Minister and author Donald McKim has a "vocational passion" to introduce the theologians of yesteryear to today's Christians: "Their theologies can live in the church and with Christian believers in the present time."

Last year McKim presented John Calvin's writings on prayer in an accessible devotional format. This year, he draws on the writings of more than thirty theologians in *Everyday Prayer with the Reformers* (p. 12) and provides commentary to complement their own. Featuring eighty-five short readings, this giftable book brings lessons of the past into the present.

#### Letters to a Romantic: First Years of Marriage (Sean Perron and Spencer Harmon)

Only in hindsight do many couples see the trajectory they set in their first years together. Pastors Sean Perron and Spencer Harmon don't want you to look back with regret—and that's why they've written to help you and your spouse to take advantage of this crucial time.

If you want to navigate the early years of your marriage in a way that glorifies Christ, *Letters to a Romantic: First Years of Marriage* (p. 16) is a handy resource to get you started. In short letters, Sean and Spencer tackle a whole range of topics—from spiritual habits to household patterns to sexual difficulties—with questions to spur reflection and discussion.

#### 40 Favorite Hymns for the Christian Year (Leland Ryken)

The works we know today as great hymns historically started out as devotional poetry, and some of our favorites were written for religious holidays and occasions. Their writers displayed real poetic skill that we easily overlook when trying to keep up with a tune.

In 40 Favorite Hymns for the Christian Year (p. 14), Professor Leland Ryken draws out the meaning and beauty of classic seasonal and holiday hymns. "It is not an overstatement to claim that this anthology . . . will introduce readers to the hymns they never knew."

#### Is It Abuse? (Darby A. Strickland)

Few situations are as marked by confusion as those in which abuse plays a part. For both the victim and the helper, clear vision seems impossible. For years biblical counselor Darby Strickland has been working with women who have experienced abuse. Now she has written a book for helpers—professional or otherwise so they can provide wise and effective counsel.

*Is It Abuse?* (p. 18) can't do your work for you, but it will show you how to make sense of abuse—and how to help a victim of abuse to do the same.

### Pastors and Their Critics (Joel R. Beeke and Nick Thompson)

"Like every servant of Christ, I learned early that criticism is part of a minister's labor," writes pastor Heath Lambert. "But the last few years have brought a level of criticism beyond anything I have ever experienced. In this torrent of controversy and pain, I was asked to review and endorse Pastors and Their Critics (p. 20) by Joel Beeke and Nick Thompson. My words here, however, [are not] as much an endorsement as a public expression of gratitude to men who have served me so crucially. Their rich work provided comfort, encouragement, correction, and solace that few books ever have." This book is a true and vital encouragement for anyone who experiences criticismespecially pastors.

As, in the words of T. S. Eliot, we "fare forward" through this year, we at P&R Publishing are so grateful to the authors who have kept up their good work at a difficult time, and to you, their readers, for supporting them. We hope these books bless and upbuild you, serving you with their insight as you press on.

### Amanda Martin Editorial Director

# THE HUNGER FOR SEEING THE IMAGE OF GOD IN MAN

# **R.C. SPROUL**

Category: Humanity/Anthropology

**ISBN:** 978-1-62995-791-3

Price: \$16.99

Direct: \$13.00

**Pages:** 264

Binding: Paperback (5.5" x 8.5")

## Table of Contents Includes

- Our Search for Personal Worth
- Our Search for Love
- Our Search for Dignity
- Dignity in the Home
- Dignity in the School
- Dignity in the Hospital
- Dignity in the Prison
- Dignity in the Church
- The Marxist Option
- Dignity in the Workplace

# The Hunger for Significance Seeing the Image of God in Man R.C. SPROUL

Our desire for respect isn't wrong. In fact, it reflects a deepdown awareness that we are made in the image of God. Dr. Sproul's reflections on dignity and image bearing get to the heart of our search for personal worth, and he shows how to better respect one another on key fronts—from the home to the hospital to the workplace.

**R.C. Sproul** (Drs, Free University of Amsterdam) was the founder of Ligonier Ministries and general editor of The Reformation Study Bible. A prolific author, he wrote more than sixty books, including *The Holiness of God*, *Faith Alone, Scripture Alone, Chosen by God, What Is Reformed Theology?, The Glory of Christ, The Mystery of the Holy Spirit, and Getting the Gospel Right*. Dr. Sproul was professor of systematic theology and apologetics at Knox Theological Seminary in Fort Lauderdale until 2004 and, before that, taught at Reformed Theological Seminary. He served as senior minister of preaching and teaching at Saint Andrew's Chapel, Sanford, Florida, and taught on the national daily radio program *Renewing Your Mind*.

## Endorsements

"As Dr. Sproul unpacks the powerful and biblical axiom of human dignity, he shows the reader how to effectively ascribe life-worth to the people we encounter every day. In an age of identity politics where the weak and vulnerable are forgotten, *The Hunger for Significance* is a must-read!"

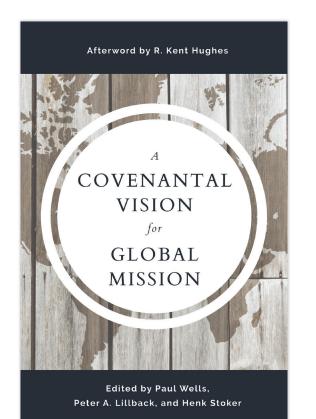
-Joni Eareckson Tada, Founder, Joni and Friends International Disability Center

"This is classic R.C. Sproul. It is precisely the book the church needs to help us to rightly grasp the dignity and purpose of each and every human being, all image bearers of our holy, loving, and gracious God."

-Burk Parsons, Senior Pastor, Saint Andrew's Chapel, Sanford, Florida

"It takes someone who so profoundly wrestled with the question *Who is God*? to help us so clearly and cogently with the question *Who am I*? In our current moment of identity confusion, chaos, and crisis, this new edition is urgently needed."

-Stephen J. Nichols, President, Reformation Bible College



Category: Missions & Outreach ISBN: 978-1-62995-730-2

Price: <u>\$29.99</u>

### Direct: \$22.50

Pages: 384 Binding: Paperback (6" x 9")

## Table of Contents Includes

- Part 1: The Covenant Theology of Mission
- The Source of Mission in the Covenant of Redemption (Davi Charles Gomes)
- Covenant of Creation, Cultural Mandate, and Mission (Pierre Berthoud)
- Part 2: Covenant Theology and the Missionminded Church
- Missions in the Fear of God (Flip Buys)
- Christ's Dominion over Creation and Spiritual Warfare in Mission (Henk Stoker)
- Part 3: Covenant Theology and Global Mission Vision

## A Covenantal Vision for Global Mission PAUL WELLS, PETER A. LILLBACK, AND HENK STOKER (EDITORS)

Bringing together contributors from Africa, Asia, North and South America, and Europe, *A Covenantal Vision for Global Mission* shows that the growing interest in the missional character of Christian outreach is grounded in the classic biblical and historic Reformed theological understanding of God's covenantal relationship—of creation, grace, and redemption—with mankind.

**Peter A. Lillback** is president and professor of historical theology at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, a senior editor of *Unio cum Christo* (an international journal of Reformed theology and life), and author of the best-selling book *George Washington's Sacred Fire*. He has served in pastoral ministry for over thirty years.

**Henk Stoker** is professor of apologetics and ethics at the Faculty of Theology of North-West University, Vice-Rector at the Theological School of the Reformed Churches in Potchefstroom, South Africa, and a member of the Council of the World Reformed Fellowship.

**Paul Wells** is emeritus professor of the Faculté Jean Calvin in Aix-en-Provence, France. He holds a doctorate from the Free University of Amsterdam (VU) and an honorary doctorate from Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia and is the editor in chief of *Unio cum Christo*. He lives in Liverpool, England.

### Endorsements

"A treasure trove of mature theological reflections on how Reformed covenantal theology intersects with various aspects of global missions. The renowned scholars who have written for this significant work should be commended for their insights and contribution to Reformed missiology for this generation and generations to come."

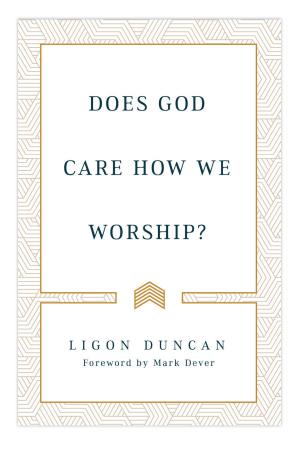
-Lloyd Kim, Coordinator, Mission to the World, PCA

"If theologians and missiologists are still debating the merits and problems of *missio Dei* theology, Reformed theology with its Christ-centered focus, rooted in the biblical redemptive history of promise and fulfillment, provides an antidote to certain of its dangers. The book is recommended reading for all those who want to familiarize themselves with good, biblically based Reformed mission theology."

— Hannes Wiher, Missiologist in French-speaking Africa; Adjunct Professor, Seminaries at Vaux-sur-Seine and Aix-en-Provence, France

"This collection does more than enlarge on the missional component of core theological themes. The authors also make application to the heart of those engaged in missions, to the outward-focused identity that the church must embrace, and to new missional realities in the world."

**— Rob Edwards,** Assistant Professor of Pastoral Theology, Westminster Theological Seminary



Category: Worship & Liturgy ISBN: 978-1-62995-792-0

Price: \$12.99

Direct: \$10.00

**Pages:** 96

Binding: Paperback (5.5" x 8.5")

## Table of Contents Includes

- Part One: Does God Care How We Worship?
- The Bible as the Key to Reforming Worship
- Is the Regulative Principle Outmoded?
- God's Pervasive Concern for How He Is
   Worshiped
- Part Two: Foundations for Biblically Directed
  Worship
- Foundational Realities
- Knowing That, What, Whom, When, Where, Why, and How
- The Form and Content of Worship

## Does God Care How We Worship? LIGON DUNCAN

Does God care how we worship? For thousands of years, believers have answered with a resounding yes! Ever since the days of Cain and Abel, God has emphasized right worship, and it's clear that careless worship can have serious consequences.

Worship consciously regulated by God's Word is a distinct characteristic of the Reformed church. Yettoday many churches do not understand that both the Old and New Testaments have much to say about appropriate worship before God. Ligon Duncan lays the foundations of the regulative principle in worship, providing full biblical support as well as historical context. He also answers objections: Is this "right worship" essentially European? Is it flexible to different churches and contexts? Is it really still applicable today?

**Ligon Duncan** (MDiv, Furman University; MA, Covenant Theological Seminary; PhD, University of Edinburgh) is chancellor and CEO of Reformed Theological Seminary. Previously he was the senior minister of the historic First Presbyterian Church of Jackson, Mississippi. He also served as president of the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals from 2004–12.

## Endorsement

"Does God care how we worship? Indeed he does, and Ligon Duncan's practical explanation of biblical principles for public worship will help pastors, musicians, and other churchgoers to find greater enjoyment in the God they love to praise." —**Philip Graham Ryken**, *President, Wheaton College* 

"When too many Christians today are wandering around in the darkness of self-imposed ignorance, how brilliant a discov-ery it is that God's Word sheds plenty of light on our regular times together in corporate worship. Read and profit."

-Mark Dever, Senior Pastor, Capitol Hill Baptist Church

JAMES MONTGOMERY BOICE

SEVEN

LESSONS FROM THE APOCALYPSE

EDITED BY PHILIP GRAHAM RYKEN

Category: Eschatology ISBN: 978-1-62995-764-7 Price: \$27.99 Direct: \$21.00 Pages: 272

Binding: Cloth (6" x 9")

## Table of Contents Includes

- The Revelation of Jesus Christ: Revelation 1:1–3
- John to the Seven Churches: Revelation 1:4–5
- Soli Deo Gloria: Revelation 1:5-7
- Jehovah Speaks: Revelation 1:8
- When John Saw Jesus: Revelation 1:9–20
- To the Church in Ephesus: Revelation 2:1-7
- To the Church in Smyrna: Revelation 2:8-11
- To the Church in Pergamum: Revelation 2:12–17
- To the Church in Thyatira: Revelation 2:18–29
- To the Church in Sardis: Revelation 3:1-6

## Seven Churches, Four Horsemen, One Lord Lessons from the Apocalypse JAMES MONTGOMERY BOICE

James Boice was known in his pastoral ministry for offering clear, practical, and biblical instruction. Never before published, this dynamic work on Revelation 1–6 gives his final thoughts on the church and on worship, as well as on facing trials in the light of heavenly realities. As you look to Christ's return, learn how to live now for his glory.

**James Montgomery Boice** (BA, Harvard; BD, Princeton; ThD, University of Basel) was the pastor of historic Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia.

## Endorsements

"These studies on the book of Revelation were the last sermons in the fruitful ministry of James Montgomery Boice. They also represent the height of his expository prowess. Dr. Boice died with a supreme anticipation of the glories he so remarkably describes from Revelation 4 and 5 and with an optimism for the church due to the sovereign reign of her Lord. Anyone who benefited from Boice's long and faithful ministry will find this a must-have volume."

---Richard D. Phillips, Senior Minister, Second Presbyterian Church, Greenville, South Carolina; Chairman, Philadelphia Conference on Reformed Theology

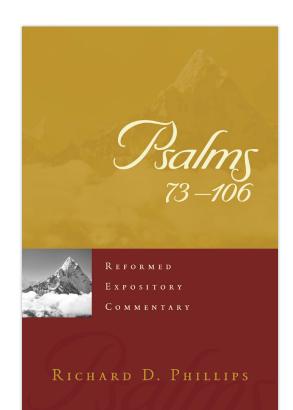
"Jim Boice's final series of sermons at Tenth Presbyterian Church before his untimely death and promotion to glory cover only the first six chapters of the book of Revelation, but they are a marvelous synthesis of exegesis and theology, of doctrine and life. Read this book for your own well-being, to lead yourself into adoration, to hunger and pray for righteousness that springs from the gospel of grace. Then distribute copies to your friends for their well-being, too."

**— D. A. Carson,** Emeritus Professor of New Testament, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School; Editor, Pillar New Testament Commentary series

"Dr. James M. Boice's commentary on Revelation is like a theological GPS that helps the reader to navigate the challenges of understanding the Bible's most apocalyptic book. Thankfully, he stresses Jesus's saving work as the central point of Revelation, downplaying charts and predictions in favor of highlighting Jesus as the triumphant Servant, victorious Lamb, and reigning King at the center of all history. Brilliant, biblically rich, and a true blessing."

— **Doug Logan Jr.,** President, Grimké Seminary; Codirector, Acts 29's Church in Hard Places

# NEW RELEASES **Reformed Expository Commentaries**



Category: Commentaries / Old Testament ISBN: 978-1-62995-658-9

Price: <u>\$39.99</u>

Direct: \$30.00

**Pages:** 480

Binding: Cloth (6" x 9")

### Table of Contents Includes

- Spiritual Recover: Psalm 73
- Why, Oh God? Psalm 74
- The Horn of Righteousness Lifted: Psalm 75
- The Lion of Judah: Psalm 76
- Up from the Depths: Psalm 77
- The Wonders That He Has Done: Psalm 78:1–39
- A Hymn to the Good Shepherd: Psalm 78:40–72
- Help Us, Oh God: Psalm 79
- The Shining Face of God: Psalm 80

## Psalms 73–106 RICHARD D. PHILLIPS

Even by the high standards of the Psalms, the poems contained in Books 3 and 4 (Psalms 73–106) are extraordinary in their insight and inspiration. In this thoughtful, devotional commentary, pastor-theologian Richard D. Phillips shows how these psalms' particular honesty about the trials in our human experience magnify the justice and grace of our sovereign God. He alone offers the remedy to life's fiercest struggles.

**Richard D. Phillips** (MDiv, Westminster Theological Seminary; DD, Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary) is the senior minister of Second Presbyterian Church of Greenville, South Carolina. He is a council member of the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals and of The Gospel Coalition, chairman of the Philadelphia Conference on Reformed Theology, and coeditor of the Reformed Expository Commentary series.

## Endorsements

"Rick Phillips is known for his careful exegesis, faithful exposition, theological insights, and pastoral concern. He beautifully blends these qualities in this excellent commentary on Psalms 73–106. This book should be close at hand for any preacher or teacher of the Word of God who wishes to understand the holy text and proclaim its inerrant truth."

**—Daniel L. Akin,** President, Professor, Preaching and Theology, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary

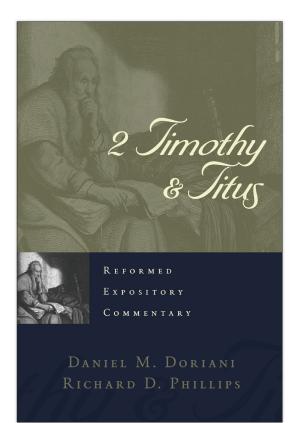
"The Psalms open the soul to expose the heights of worship and the depths of sorrow—sometimes in the same psalm. They are, as Calvin put it, 'an anatomy of all parts of the soul.' Both informative to the mind and encouraging to the soul, Richard Phillips's sermonic commentary leads the believer through valley and mountaintop to discover that wherever we are, our faithful God is there with us and will minister to our every need."

-Joel R. Beeke, President, Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary

"Rick Phillips has now written a dozen or more commentaries in this series and has developed a reputation as one of the finest and most trustworthy expounders of Scripture alive today. Each volume has excelled in exegetical and homiletical skills possessed by only a very few preacher-scholars. . . . For those collecting the series, this is a no-brainer. For those who are discovering these volumes for the first time, this is a good place to start."

— Derek W. H. Thomas, Chancellor's Professor of Systematic and Pastoral Theology, Reformed Theological Seminary

# NEW RELEASES Reformed Expository Commentaries



Category: Commentaries/New Testament ISBN: 978-1-62995-788-3 Price: \$29.99 Direct: \$22.50 Pages: 312

**Binding:** Paperback (6" x 9")

## Table of Contents Includes

- 2 Timothy: Running the Race
- Thanksgiving in Distress: 2 Timothy 1:1–7
- Shame and Glory: 2 Timothy 1:8–18
- Strengthened by Grace: 2 Timothy 2:1–7
- The Source of Endurance: 2 Timothy 2:8–13
- Approved Workers: 2 Timothy 2:14–21
- Titus: Grace and Godliness
- For the Sake of Faith: Titus 1:1-4
- Our Certain Hope: Titus 1:2-4
- The Calling of Elders: Titus 1:5-9
- Trustworthy and Sound: Titus 1:9–14
- To the Pure: Titus 1:15-16

## 2 Timothy & Titus DANIEL M. DORIANI AND RICHARD D. PHILLIPS

The apostle Paul is known for his doctrinally rich writing, but we should not overlook his concern for the practical. In his letters to Timothy and Titus—faithful younger men who had followed him into ministry—Paul has much to teach every one of us about godly leadership, sound teaching, and holy living.

In this warm and pastoral commentary, Daniel Doriani and Richard Phillips show how the letters brim with the message of God's grace as it is practically applied, challenging us to embrace Paul's priorities and to remain faithful in suffering. They explore Paul's treatment of important doctrines such as election, predestination, assurance of salvation, and more. And they point us to Christ, who empowers us by his grace as we labor for his sake.

**Daniel M. Doriani** (MDiv, PhD, Westminster Theological Seminary; STM, Yale Divinity School; Research Fellow, Yale University) is professor of theology and vice president at Covenant Theological Seminary. He is the founder and president of The Center for Faith and Work, St. Louis; a member of the Council of The Gospel Coalition; and a regular blogger. He was also a lead pastor for fifteen years.

**Richard D. Phillips** (MDiv, Westminster Theological Seminary; DD, Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary) is the senior minister of Second Presbyterian Church of Greenville, South Carolina. He is a council member of the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals and of The Gospel Coalition, chairman of the Philadelphia Conference on Reformed Theology, and coeditor of the Reformed Expository Commentary series.

## Endorsements

"Unobtrusive scholarship and pastoral passion are the earmarks of this volume.... The textual comments are clear and on point. The theology is edifying. The applications and illustrations are warm, pointed, and personal. Pastors, particularly, will find the volume valuable both for their own personal benefit and encouragement and for insight in how to preach the Pastoral Epistles effectively to their flocks."

--Michael Barrett, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Academic Dean, Professor of Old Testament, Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary

"Paul's letters to his pastoral apprentices and colleagues . . . abound in wise, concrete counsel, grounded in the gospel of Christ. Who is better equipped to open up these pastoral messages than Doriani and Phillips, who are both seasoned pastors and scholars of Scripture? These expositions provide rich resources for preaching and teaching the Word, while they boldly and warmly challenge us to embrace the grace that yields godly living to God's glory."

-Dennis E. Johnson, Professor Emeritus of Practical Theology, Westminster Seminary California

# THE CASE FOR Biblical Archaeology

Uncovering the Historical Record of God's Old Testament People



JOHN D. CURRID Foreword by David W. Chapman

Category: Bible Background

**ISBN:** 978-1-62995-360-1

Price: \$29.99

### **Direct:** \$22.50

**Pages:** 288

Binding: Paperback (7" x 10")

### Table of Contents Includes

- Setting
- Geography of Israel and the ANE
- Study of the History of the Archaeology in Israel
- A Journey Throughout the Land
- From East to West
- From North to South
- Aspects of Society
- Agriculture and Herding

# The Case for Biblical Archaeology

Uncovering the Historical Record of God's Old Testament People

## JOHN D. CURRID

Archaeologist and professor John Currid explores the geography of the land of the Bible and a history of its excavation; describes archaeological sites throughout the land; and introduces discoveries connected to agriculture, architecture, ceramics, burial practices, and more. This introduction will encourage anyone interested in the witness of the land of the Bible (sometimes called the fifth gospel) and the insights archaeology gives us on Scripture.

**John D. Currid** (PhD, University of Chicago) is Chancellor's Professor of Old Testament at Reformed Theological Seminary. He has held several expedition staff positions, including ones at Bethsaida, Carthage, and Tell el-Hesi. He also served as the director of the Tell Halif (Lahav) Grain Storage Project. Currid has authored numerous books, such as *The ESV Bible Atlas* (with cartographer David Barrett, 2010) and *Against the Gods* (2013), both published by Crossway. He also served as senior editor for the *ESV Archaeology Study Bible* (2018) and contributed the notes to the Pentateuch in that volume.

## Endorsements

"John Currid provides the reader with a wonderful introduction to important geographical, historical, and cultural aspects of the Bible. Readers will benefit from the archaeological and textual knowledge found here."

-Richard S. Hess, Distinguished Professor of Old Testament and Editor, Denver Journal, Denver Theological Seminary

"Currid's work flows from the mind and heart of a person who well understands the discipline of archaeology and related fields, drawing from decades of excavation and study and ministry."

**—Boyd Seevers,** Professor of Old Testament Studies, University of Northwestern–St. Paul, Minnesota

"Leads the reader from the broader areas of the history and work of archaeology in the Holy Land, to specific consideration of archaeological work in the various regions of the land, and finally to important factors relating to life in ancient Israel."

**— H. Wayne House,** Distinguished Research Professor of Biblical and Theological Studies, Faith International University and Faith Seminary

## FIVE SIGNIFICANT ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS FROM OUTSIDE ISRAEL THAT ENLIGHTEN OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

by John D. Currid

**1** Rosetta Stone. When Napoleon invaded Egypt in 1798, he brought with him a scientific team to study the ancient monuments of Egypt. In its exploratory work, the team discovered the Rosetta Stone in a rebuilt wall. It dated to the time of Ptolemy V near the beginning of the second century BC. Writing on the stone was in three scripts: hieroglyphics, Demotic, and Greek. The stone proved to be the initial key in deciphering ancient hieroglyphics, which then opened up the study of the land and history of ancient Egypt. Since the Hebrews spent over four hundred years in slavery in Egypt, Egyptology has much to tell us regarding that time.

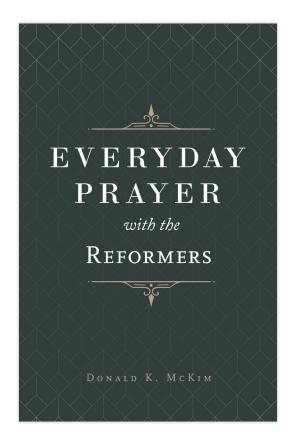
2 Shishak Relief. After the death of King Solomon, Israel divided into two kingdoms. This split gave Egypt an opportunity to take advantage of the political weakness, and so Pharaoh Shishak (Shoshenk I) attacked both Israel and Judah (see 1 Kings 14:25–27). At the Temple of Amun at Karnak, Shishak had a relief carved that explains the route of his military campaign. It includes well-known sites such as Megiddo, Gibeon, Gezer, and Beth-shean. At Megiddo, excavators uncovered the "Shishak Stele" that the pharaoh had set up to commemorate his victory at the site.

B Ugaritic Texts. Major excavations began at the site of Ras Shamra (Ugarit) on the Phoenician coast in 1929. Ugarit was an important Canaanite city-state during the second millennium BC. At the site, hundreds of texts were found, and more than fifteen hundred of them have been published. One particularly valuable aspect of the textual material is the insights they provide regarding Canaanite religion and

mythology. These texts give the religious context of the Old Testament and demonstrate the clash of worldviews between the Hebrews and the Canaanites. The language of Ugarit is similar to that of Hebrew, and that Canaanite language can help us to understand the development and grammar of ancient Hebrew.

**4** Relief of Sennacherib. In 701 BC, the Assyrian king Sennacherib assaulted the kingdom of Judah (see 2 Kings 18:13). One of the major attacks came against the city of Lachish. Sennacherib celebrated his victory there by having a carved relief set up in his palace in Ninevah. The relief contains two scenes: (1) the conquest of the city and (2) the surrender, execution, and deportation of city's inhabitants. Assyrian warfare practices are pictured graphically, including an earthen ramp and various types of siege machines. Excavations at Lachish have uncovered the remains of a furious battle from this time.

**5** Prism of Sennacherib. This cuneiform inscription discovered in a palace at Ninevah contains the historical annals of Sennacherib, king of Assyria (705-681 BC). The king recorded the account of his army's siege of forty-six towns and cities in Judah: he employed ramps, siege machines, mines, and infantry to subdue them. Column II of the prism contains a reference to the siege of Jerusalem, in which Sennacherib made Hezekiah "a prisoner in Jerusalem, his royal residence, like a bird in a cage" (see 2 Kings 18:13–19:37).



Category: Prayer

**ISBN:** 978-1-62995-773-9

Price: \$15.99

Direct: \$12.00

**Pages:** 136

Binding: Hardbound (5.5" x 8.5")

### Table of Contents Includes

- Pray and Proceed
- Pray to the God Who Is True
- Tongues Break Forth into Speech
- Conversation with God
- Our Cares Are Lightened
- Praying God's Promises
- Commit Your Cause to God
- No Calamities Hinder Us from Praying
- Hidden Faults
- Faith in God's Word in Prayer
- God Gently Summons Us to Pray
- Praying for the Whole Church

## Everyday Prayer with the Reformers DONALD K. MCKIM

"It is required, that our prayer be speech of the soule," wrote royal chaplain George Downame. In this devotional, Donald McKim takes us back to the wisdom of the Protestant Reformers—including John Calvin, Martin Luther, Philip Melanchthon, George Downame, and more than twenty others. Drawing from their writings and prayers, he provides brief, meditative readings to nourish our prayers today with the wisdom of yesteryear.

**Donald K. McKim** has served as a pastor in the Presbyterian Church (USA), a professor of theology and academic dean at Memphis Seminary, a professor at the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary, and an editor for Westminster John Knox Press. He is an award-winning author and editor.

### Endorsements

"These devotional gems bring together scriptural passages, Reformers' insights, and Donald McKim's own pastoral heart. This rich resource will surely foster and deepen believers' lives of prayer."

-Karin Maag, Director, H. Henry Meeter Center for Calvin Studies, Calvin University

"We are all indebted to Don McKim for making the great Reformers accessible and for showing us how pertinent their work remains to our spiritual lives today. This is a gem of a book and a wonderful guide for worship and devotion."

**— Timothy George,** Distinguished Professor of Divinity, Beeson Divinity School, Samford University; General Editor, Reformation Commentary on Scripture

"This book weaves together two wonderful avenues of theological reflection: historical and theological perspectives on Scripture from the Reformers as well as thoughtful direction for how we can apply these truths in our lives today. It is rich in content without being too heavy or heady and has been a wonderful addition to my daily reading."

-Scott Manor, President, Knox Theological Seminary

# SEVEN TIPS FROM THE REFORMERS TO ENERGIZE YOUR PRAYER LIFE

by Donald K. McKim

HRISTIAN PEOPLE PRAY. Prayer is central to our Christian lives and a vital dimension of our relationship with God. Without prayer, our lives would wither. We would lose our lifeline to the source of our faith: God's love for us, salvation in Jesus Christ, and the continuing work of the Holy Spirit in us every day.

Protestant Reformers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had much to say about prayer, and they said it very robustly. Their discussions of prayer are a rich resource for us. They show us aspects of prayer that can shape and energize our prayer lives every day.

**1. Know that God wants us to pray.** We pray because God commands it and because God invites us to pray. Jesus gave us the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:9–13 so that we can address God in a most personal way and sense the depth of God's loving care for us. Prayer is a most blessed gift. God bids us, "Call upon me" (Ps. 50:15).

**2. Pray with a focus.** The Reformers saw our prayers as having two major dimensions: thanks and petition. We thank God—with all that is within us—for who God is and what God has done. We petition God, making requests for what is important to us and what we believe aligns with God's will. The heartbeat of prayer is our gratitude and our requests: thanks and petition.

**3. Be honest with God.** There is no use trying to fool God or to be less than candid. God knows us. In prayer, we can be completely and radically honest with God, open our hearts, and cry from our hearts to the Lord. God hears and cares. As Luther said, "Regardless of what it is, just throw it in a pile before him, as you open your heart completely to a good friend." Tell God all. Call out to God in your grief. Identify the cry of your heart. Stop holding back the tears. Spend time on your knees. Listen to music that helps you know what you feel. Write out the words you have been holding back. Rely on the Holy Spirit who intercedes for you when you don't know how to pray.

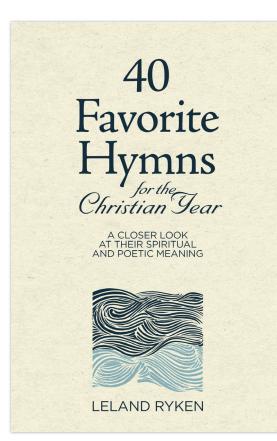
**4. Trust God's will and answers.** When we pray, we pray in faith, believing God will answer our prayers according to God's will and purposes. This is our great comfort and confidence as we face life. God knows what is best for us, and by praying we open ourselves—in faith—to receiving God's answers. We leave all things to God. We believe God's will can be trusted!

**5. Watch for God's answers.** God hears and answers our prayers. We need to be open and to watch for the ways God's answers come. God uses various means through which our prayers can be answered. If we think God should only answer in one way (our way), we may miss what God is doing and how God is working to answer us—in totally unexpected ways!

**6. Persevere and be patient.** It is so hard for us is to be patient. We want everything now! But John Hooper urged two things: perseverance in prayer and patient expectation that God will act. We pray . . . and keep on praying! As we do, we wait patiently for the Lord to hear us (see Ps. 40:1). God promises to answer our prayers, however long it takes. Persevere and be patient!

**7. Pray for others.** It is easy for our prayer lives to become very self-focused. We are to present our needs and desires to God. But we are also to love others by presenting their needs to God as well. Our prayers can touch others, can bless others. We tell God the needs of others and our loving hopes that they will be blessed. Our love for others means we pray for others.

All our prayers are for God's glory. Our prayer lives can be energized when we realize, as the martyr Hugh Latimer said, "the greatest comfort in the world to talk with God, and to call upon him." Let us pray . . . !



Category: Worship & Liturgy ISBN: 978-1-62995-793-7

Price: \$15.99

Direct: \$12.00

**Pages:** 176

Binding: Hardbound (5.5" x 8.5")

## Table of Contents Includes

- New Year
- O God, Our Help in Ages Past (Isaac Watts)
- Standing at the Portal (Frances Ridley Havergal)
- Good Friday
- When I Survey the Wondrous Cross (Isaac Watts)
- O Sacred Head, Now Wounded (Paul Gerhardt)
- Easter
- Christ the Lord Is Risen Today (Charles Wesley)
- Christ Jesus Lay in Death's Strong Bands (Martin Luther)

## **40 Favorite Hymns for the Christian Year** A Closer Look at Their Spiritual and Poetic Meaning

## LELAND RYKEN

For generations, Christians have celebrated holidays and seasons with special songs. We all have favorite Christmas carols or Easter hymns, and some of us associate certain hymns with events like Thanksgiving or the New Year. But often we overlook the fact that these familiar songs are also powerful works of devotional poetry.

This anthology of great hymns associated with the calendar year invites us to experience these works as poems—to slow down and savor their well-turned phrases, their surprising metaphors, and their evocative language. English professor Leland Ryken provides historical background and literary analysis for each hymn, finishing each with a Scripture reading to accompany it. The result is a wonderfully devotional and poetic study for the Christian's year, drawing on hymns for the New Year, Good Friday, Easter, Christmas, and more.

**Leland Ryken** (PhD, University of Oregon) is the author of more than fifty books on biblical and literary topics, the literary editor of the ESV Bible, and emeritus professor of English at Wheaton College in Illinois.

## Endorsement

"The reader will be doubly enriched—by the delightful poetry of the songs and by the instructive prose of a great literary scholar."

-Karen Swallow Prior, Author, On Reading Well and Fierce Convictions

### PRAISE FOR 40 FAVORITE HYMNS ON THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

"A foundation of powerful and beautiful hymns is essential in the development of a community of believers and the expression of God's goodness through their lives. Thank you, Dr. Ryken, for this resource to the church."

-Keith Getty, Award-Winning Hymnwriter, Musician

"If you are seeking God's will for your life and are faced with obstacles, if you are a student of poetry and desire fresh insights into literary devices, if you are a songwriter like I am and you need some excellent worship texts, this short collection of hymn poems will strengthen your faith and your craft."

—JAMES WARD, Recording Artist, Singer-Songwriter

## FIVE GOOD REASONS TO READ HYMNS AS POEMS

by Leland Ryken

Reading hymns as devotional poems is not a novel idea. Until the 1870s, hymn books were small, portable, wordonly books three inches by five inches in size. They were daily companions to school and office and used in private and family devotions in the home.

By providence, I have become a spokesman for reclaiming the great hymns as devotional poems. Here are five reasons for you to share my great discovery.

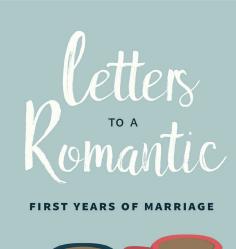
**1. Hymns should be read as hymns because that is what they are.** As hymn writers themselves attest, every hymn begins as a poem. It becomes a hymn only when the poem is matched to music and then sung. A hymn begins as a verbal text that possesses all the features of a poem, such as composition by lines and stanzas, presence of rhyme and regular meter, and use of imagery and figurative language to embody the meaning.

**2. We should experience hymns as poems so we can absorb their content.** When we sing a hymn, we are not in control of the pace. We are hurried forward by the need to keep up with the singing. We cannot hit a pause button. As I have become more and more accustomed to experiencing hymns as poems, I have come to see what a small percentage of the content of a hymn is available to me when I sing it.

**3. We should read hymns as poems so we can unpack the meanings of the poetic language.** Poetry does not carry all its meaning on the surface, nor is that meaning immediately obvious. Images and figurative language require analysis and pondering. Additionally, since by ourselves we do not see everything that is present in a poem, the accumulated insights of literary scholars and ordinary readers are an immense asset.

**4. We need to experience hymns printed as poems so we can see their unity and coherence.** The biggest revolution in my experience of hymns came when I saw them printed as poems, with the lines and stanzas and rhyme scheme clear to view. Hymnbooks actually print hymns as prose. Printed as poetry, hymnic poems reveal how carefully their authors achieved stanza-by-stanza coherence within their compositions.

**5. Experiencing hymns as poems opens the door to seeing the craftsmanship of their authors.** As I have edited two volumes of hymnic poems accompanied by five-hundred-word explications, one of the most gratifying discoveries I have made is that the best hymnic poems measure up to all the literary qualities of the poems I have taught in the class-room for over half a century. This applies particularly to their verbal beauty.





Category: Prayer ISBN: 978-1-62995-465-3 Price:-\$12.99 Direct: \$10.00 Pages: 192 Binding: Paper (5.5" x 8.5")

### Table of Contents Includes

- When Marriage Exposes Your Heart
- Should We Go to Church?
- Getting Help in Your Marriage
- What Are the Roles of a Husband and Wife?
- Freedom in Marriage
- Cultivating a Spiritual Marriage
- Suffering in Marriage
- Doubting God
- Money, Possessions, and Generosity
- Leisure and Entertainment
- Opening Your Home
- Loving Your Parents

# Letters to a Romantic

First Years of Marriage

## SEAN PERRON AND SPENCER HARMON

In warm, short, practical letters, Sean and Spencer guide couples through their common "firsts": from major choices like deciding when to start a family, to the everyday details of establishing holy household habits, to the concerns raised by common sexual issues in marriage. You will discover the biblical wisdom you need to lay a foundation for a healthy and God-honoring lifelong relationship.

**Sean Perron** (MDiv, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary) is the associate pastor at First Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Florida. He is a certified biblical counselor who has a specialization in marriage counseling, and he was previously the director of operations at the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors (ACBC). He and his wife, Jennifer, have one son.

**Spencer Harmon** serves as the campus pastor at First Baptist Church's Nocatee Campus in Jacksonville, Florida. He and his wife, Taylor, live in Saint Johns, Florida, and have two daughters and one son.

### Endorsements

"This book for newlyweds is needed and tremendously helpful. It contains timely challenges and encouragements as well as relevant instructions for people at every stage of marriage, though its material is especially relevant for newlyweds."

**—Wayne Mack,** Academic Head, Strengthening Ministries Training Institute; Director, Association of Certified Biblical Counselors—Africa

"Whether you consider yourself a "romantic" or not, this book will strengthen every young marriage—and I can personally report that its wisdom is strengthening at least one older marriage, too!"

**—Alasdair Groves,** *Executive Director, Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation* 

"The early years of marriage can be some of the sweetest—and some of the hardest. This book is a gold mine for every young couple!... Do your marriage a huge favor and grab a copy of this helpful book."

Kristen Clark and Bethany Beal, Cofounders, GirlDefined.com

## FIVE REASONS THE FIRST YEARS OF MARRIAGE MATTER

by Sean Perron and Spencer Harmon

THE FIRST YEARS OF MARRIAGE should not be treated lightly. Why do they matter so much?

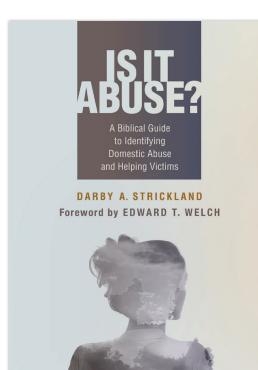
**1. The first years of marriage were designed for your joy.** God wants you to enjoy his good gift of marriage. He gets glory when you delight in him as the giver of the joys of marriage. The warmth of companionship, the thrill of intimacy, and even the comfort of shared burdens are designed by God to bless you. All these good things come from him, and he wants you to enjoy them properly. Although the first years of marriage hold challenges, there are countless opportunities to enjoy God through this gift.

**2. The first years of marriage are a time when you form impactful habits.** The patterns set in the first years of marriage often set the trajectory of decades of life together between a couple. Will you have a spiritual relationship? How will you spend money? How committed will you be to the local church? What is your strategy for handling conflict? How would you spend leisure time? These decisions are what make up our marriages. They are settled in the first years.

**3. The first years of marriage matter because marriage matters.** And marriage matters because the gospel matters. Marriage reflects the gospel. It is meant to be a display the relationship between Christ and the church (see Eph. 5:22–33). Couples entering marriage must sense the staggering opportunity they have to testify to God's great love for his people in Jesus Christ. In the first years of marriage, there is an opportunity to grow in our knowledge of this gospel and our commitment to living in our in our daily relationship.

**4.** The first years of marriage are when you enter a cultural battlefield. Biblical marriage is strange to the world. It celebrates God's design for marriage between one man and one woman, while our culture rejects it. It joyfully submits to God's roles for men and women in marriage, while society finds God's call restrictive and outdated. When a couple committed to the Bible says "I do," they enter a cultural battlefield over the very meaning of their marriage. It is crucial for couples to fortify their convictions about God's design for marriage because our culture supports this design less and less.

**5.** The first years of marriage are a time to learn from others. Millions of marriages have preceded yours. The path of a God-glorifying marriage is well-worn by multitudes of Christian couples. To be sure, the first years will contain many sins and mistakes—but they don't all have to be your own. Commit to identifying and avoiding the common pitfalls of this season. God's Word is a light to our feet so that we can navigate this season with wisdom.



Category: Biblical Counseling ISBN: 978-1-62995-694-7 Price: \$19.99 Direct: \$15.00

Pages: 352 est. Binding: Paperback (6" x 9")

## Table of Contents Includes

- Part 1: Understanding Oppression
- Is It Abuse?
- The Helper's Calling
- The Dynamics of Abuse
- Understanding the Impacts of Abuse
- Part 2: Uncovering Oppression
- Uncovering Physical Abuse
- Uncovering Sexual Abuse
- Uncovering Emotional Abuse
- Part 3: Upholding the Oppressed
- Helping Mothers and Children
- Supporting Steps toward Freedom

# Is It Abuse?

## A Biblical Guide to Identifying Domestic Abuse and Helping Victims DARBY A. STRICKLAND

God does not intend for marriage to be a place of oppression. Providing practical tools and exercises, biblical counselor Darby Strickland prepares potential helpers to pick up on cues that could point to abuse and investigate them wisely. You will learn how to identify a range of abusive behavior and better understand the impact of abuse on victims—particularly wives. Ultimately, you will become equipped to provide wise and Christ-centered counsel while navigating a difficult and complex situation.

**Darby A. Strickland** counsels and teaches at CCEF. She is a contributor to *Becoming a Church That Cares Well for the Abused* and author of two booklets, *Domestic Abuse: Recognize, Respond, Rescue* and *Domestic Abuse: Help for the Sufferer.* 

### Endorsements

"This resource and the wisdom it provides are integral to pastoral ministry—and indeed to the work of everyone who is ready to speak for the oppressed and cry out for justice. I cannot recommend it highly enough."

-Rachael Denhollander, Speaker; Author; Victim Advocate

"A stunning work. . . . If you ever read a book about abuse in couples, let it be this one."

—Alasdair Groves, Executive Director, Christian Counseling & Educational Foundation

"The clearest and most complete work on understanding the dynamics and impact of abuse."

-Chris Moles, Author, The Heart of Domestic Abuse

"Deftly equips counselors, pastors, and caring leaders to navigate through the difficult and often confusing narrative surrounding what's wrong and what to do."

-Leslie Vernick, Author, The Emotionally Destructive Marriage

"An exemplary biblical counseling manual."

-Curtis W. Solomon, Executive Director, The Biblical Counseling Coalition

"Gospel rich, well written, and chock-full of practical wisdom. Darby Strickland is a gift to the church."

**—Jason Meyer,** Pastor for Preaching and Vision, Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis

"If you read this book before you need it, you will be grateful . . . and so will the person who is reaching out to you for guidance." —**Brad Hambrick**, *General Editor*, *Becoming a Church That Cares Well for the Abused* 

# FIVE MYTHS ABOUT DOMESTIC ABUSE

by Darby A. Strickland

hich one of us does not want to bring relief to the people we love who are suffering? Compassion and care are two ways Christians shine the light of Christ into this broken world. God seeks to protect the vulnerable, and we, when we are in Christ, are drawn to do the same. Even in our fallen state, we cannot help but notice injustices. And the more we read God's Word, the more we long to protect the vulnerable as God's concerns become our concerns.

To offer wise and helpful counsel, we have to understand the suffering that we encounter. I believe that if we fully knew the horrors going on inside a victim's home, we would feel compelled to be part of God's rescue for them. If we saw the domination and destruction taking place, we could easily name the particular sins and see dozens of places in Scripture that speak to their oppression and suffering. The problem is that we do not see domestic abuse happening. Consequently, we fail to understand it.

In my ministry to victims of domestic abuse, I spend quite a bit of time educating church leaders on how they can provide protection and care for the victims in their midst. When I ask for help and support, I typically come up against five common myths. Each wrongly held position holds the potential to lead to unhelpful—even harmful—counsel being offered. In Galatians, we learn that "a little leaven leavens the whole lump" (Gal. 5:9). In other words, it only takes a tiny kernel of false teaching to spoil the outcome completely. Knowing that most of us would never set out to harm the vulnerable God has entrusted to us, I want to debunk these myths so that your care of victims is wise and compassionate.

**MYTH 1: Abuse is an anger problem.** Many believe that people do abusive things when they are angry; they become so fed up that they lose control. But the opposite is true. Oppressive people use punishing behaviors to establish and maintain control over their victims. They are not out of control. They are using control to get their world the way they want it. Like the bad kings we regularly encounter in the Old Testament, they are plotting to establish their kingdoms, glory, and comforts without regard for those God entrusted to them. Abusers rarely show anger when frustrated in public. Abusers are very selective about who witnesses their rage. Their abuse always serves their agenda, and if we fail to understand the purposefulness at play, we fail victims when we try to help them.

<sup>14</sup>"When Children Witness Violence," DomesticShelters.org, November 5, 2014, https://www.domesticshelters.org/articles/childhood-domestic-violence/whenchildren-witness-violence#.Ws4TOIjwaUk. **MYTH 2:** Abuse is a marriage problem. Yes, every marriage involves two idolatrous sinners, but it is the oppressor's sin pattern that leads them to seek to control and dominate their spouse. The oppressed spouse is powerless to make the domination stop, and they are not responsible for their spouse's sin (see Matt. 15:18). Now, abuse can undoubtedly cause a marriage problem, but it is not a relationally based problem. No amount of trying to improve the relationship will adequately address the idolatrous heart that seeks to oppress the other. Treating an abusive marriage as though it is a typical marriage can place a victim in danger since such counsel fails to address the imbalance of power and vulnerability of the oppressed.

### MYTH 3: Victims know that they are being abused.

Oppressors want to obscure what they are doing, so they work to create confusion in the minds of their victims. They do this by making their victim feel sorry for them and making their victim feel responsible for the abuse. They are masters at deflecting blame. Almost everyone who is oppressed struggles with confusion, no matter how overt the abuse is. Oppressors need their victims to be off-balance and disoriented to maintain control. When you try to help, do not expect victims to be able to articulate or see the problem clearly.

**MYTH 4: Children are not aware that abuse is happening.** When asked, almost all children in a home with abuse reveal that they are aware of the abuse.<sup>1</sup> They see it, hear it, or sense it, and they are frightened. Most children believe it is their fault. In my mind, the most profound damage caused by childhood domestic violence is the spiritual damage. When children have a father who pretends to be pious but abuses them or their mother spiritually or with Scripture, the damage done to a child's faith can be formidable.

**MYTH 5: She should have seen this coming.** In most cases, abuse does not start until the honeymoon. Many women say it's like a switch has flipped and everything has changed. Wives often keep working hard in the marriage to get things back to the way they were, not realizing that the sinister tactics of control employed by their husband reveal the person he has been all along.

Abuse ministry is complex and filled with stories of tragedy. But the more we understand about the dangers and dynamics of abuse, the better able we will be to offer Christ-centered counsel that extends true and lasting hope.

Foreword by SINCLAIR B. FERGUSON

PASTORS AND THEIR CRITICS

A Guide to Coping with Criticism in the Ministry

JOEL R. BEEKE and NICK THOMPSON

Category: Pastoral Ministry

**ISBN:** 978-1-62995-752-4

Price: \$15.99

Direct: \$12.00

**Pages:** 192

Binding: Paperback (5.5" x 8.5")

### Table of Contents Includes

- Part 1: Biblical Foundations for Coping with Criticism
- Christological Foundations for Coping
   with Criticism
- Part 2: Practical Principles for Coping with Criticism
- Receive Criticism Realistically
- Part 3: Practical Principles for Constructive Criticism in the Church
- Giving Constructive Critique to Others
- Part 4: Theological Vision for Coping
   with Criticism
- Reorient Your Perspective

# **Pastors and Their Critics**

A Guide to Coping with Criticism in the Ministry

## JOEL R. BEEKE AND NICK THOMPSON

All pastors and church leaders experience criticism—but that doesn't make criticism easier to process or to address well. With wisdom, charity, and a wealth of personal illustrations Joel Beeke and Nick Thompson strengthen and equip the reader as they provide a biblical foundation, a Christ-focused theological vision, and practical principles for coping with, and benefitting from, criticism.

**Joel R. Beeke** is president of Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary, where he also serves as professor of systematic theology and homiletics. He is a pastor of the Heritage Netherlands Reformed Congregations in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

**Nick Thompson** is a graduate of Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary and is pursuing ordination in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

### Endorsements

"I'm thankful for the hard thinking that has gone into these subjects in this book. . . . It will help you as you try to develop a 'tough skin and a tender heart."

-Ligon Duncan, Chancellor and CEO, Reformed Theological Seminary

"What a helpful and encouraging book. . . . Should be added to the list of books all pastors and seminarians should read if they are to endure with joy and without bitterness."

— Michael Reeves, President and Professor of Theology, Union School of Theology

"Criticism makes and breaks pastors more often than we would like to admit. . . . This book will help you to react to criticism in a biblical way—a way that builds you instead of destroying you."

-Conrad Mbewe, Pastor, Kabwata Baptist Church, Lusaka, Zambia

"A wonderful gift to the church.... If you experience or fear opposition, this little volume is a must read. My only criticism of the book is that it was not published ten years ago."

---Chad Van Dixhoorn, Professor of Church History, Westminster Theological Seminary

# FOUR PLACES TO LOOK WHEN FACING CRITICISM

by Joel R. Beeke and Nick Thompson

I f you are in pastoral ministry, criticism is inevitable. As an old Dutch saying goes, "He who stands in the front will soon be kicked in the rear." But being kicked in the rear one-toomany times can result in exasperation, insomnia, cynicism, burnout, and even despair. It is imperative for pastors to be equipped to handle verbal critique when it comes. Whether the criticism is constructive or destructive, receiving and responding to it well is largely a matter of perspective. Where ought we to turn our eyes when criticism comes? Here are four suggestions.

**1. The Garden of Eden.** It was here that the first criticism was uttered. By his words, the serpent placed a major question mark over the goodness of God, slandering Him as a restrictive, envious, unloving liar (see Gen. 3:1–5). When we suffer from the false accusations and character-disfiguring words of others, our minds should be quick to return to this grim garden conspiracy. It is one thing for creatures like us to be criticized by fellow creatures, but it is the atrocity of atrocities for the Creator of all things to be verbally assassinated by a mere creature.

**2. The Cross of Christ.** Nothing will keep us humble and enable us to receive criticism like the cross. To behold Christ's suffering upon the accursed tree is to be critiqued in the most comprehensive way imaginable. The cross reminds us that we are always worse than our worst human critic makes us out to be. But as we behold the cross, we also catch a glimpse of the unfathomable love of God for sinners. The cross humbles us

lower than the most scathing human criticism, but it simultaneously opens to us God's heart so that the negative appraisal of our fellow man no longer devastates us.

**3. The Judgment Day.** The apostle writes, "But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court" (1 Cor. 4:3). How many of us could say that? To be judged, misunderstood, slandered, or condemned by others is anything but "a very small thing." We are easily consumed by the verdict of a human court. But Paul is not. He is almost entirely indifferent to the matter. What is the verdict that matters ultimately? It is God's: "It is the Lord who judges me" (v. 4). Such an eschatological perspective frees us from being consumed with the human courtroom we often find ourselves in. What is the judgment of man in light of the judgment of God?

**4. The New Heavens and Earth.** Those who are in Christ are journeying toward what Jonathan Edwards called "a world of love." The cosmos ushered in at the consummation will be entirely free of criticism. In our glorified humanity, there will be nothing in us worthy of criticize, nor will there be anyone who possesses the ability to criticize us unjustly. All criticism will be forever silenced. Fixing our eyes on this glorious future loosens our grip on our reputation, our comfort, and our very life, enabling us to bear up under the critical words of others as we walk this earthly pilgrimage.

# **Reformed Expository Bible Studies**



### Esther & Ruth: The Lord Delivers and Redeems

Designed for groups and individuals, this 13-lesson Bible study shows how God sovereignly and graciously helps his people, despite their flaws, whether they are in the palace or the field.

#758-6, p, <del>\$9.99</del>

\$ 7.50

### Hebrews: Standing Firm in Christ

Designed for groups and individuals, this 13-lesson Bible study shows us how to stand firm in faith amid deep struggles and points us to the surpassing supremacy of Christ.

#755-5, p, <del>\$9.99</del>



## Matthew: Making Disciples for the Nations (Vol. 1 & 2)

Designed for groups and individuals, this 13-lesson Bible study shows Matthew's emphasis on making disciples by forming the minds, hearts, and hands of believers in light of the new covenant.

Vol. 1 #761-6, p, <del>\$9.99</del> Vol. 2 #808-8, p, <del>\$9.99</del>

\$7.50

\$ 7.50

(Reformed Expository Bible Studies listed on p. 37)

## Author **Q&A**

We asked our authors, "What, in your opinion, is the most iconic summer food or drink and why?" Check out additional author interviews on our blog: www.prpbooks.com/blog/

"Peach tea with a dash of mint." —**Sean Perron**, *coauthor of the* Letters to a Romantic *series* 

"Hotdogs are fun. They taste great and can be 'dressed' with anything you'd like. In the summer, they remind me of ballgames, picnics, and just plain fun! Hotdogs have been around a long time. May they continue to be the great summer treat that makes us smile—in so many ways!"

-Don McKim, author of the Everyday Prayer series

"Barbecued chicken, farm stand sweet corn, homegrown tomatoes, and fresh peaches. It's the quintessential summer supper in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania! As for a beverage, we love making "Raspberry Shrubs" using either seltzer water or ginger ale with Tate Farm's Shrub Mix. They're located on State College where we lived for a few years. Another PA winner!"

-Stephanie Hubach, author of Same Lake, Different Boat

"The most iconic summer food would be watermelon. Since it is 92 percent water, it is pretty much a drink as well. In my mind, I think of watermelon in the context of picnics and family time, so it's a pleasant association." —Joel R. Beeke, *author of* Pastors and Their Critics

"For me, it would have to be cherries (with watermelon a close second). If I'm watching 4th of July fireworks, at a baseball game, sitting at the beach . . . whatever it is, there is a 100 percent chance that I want to be eating cherries and spitting the seeds as far as I am physically and socially able."

-Mike McKinley, author of Engagement (31DD)

"A hamburger on the grill and some freshly sliced watermelon with some sweet tea!"

-Spencer Harmon, coauthor of the Letters to a Romantic series

"Grilled hamburgers and hotdogs, or as I would say, 'burger-dogs.' These, to me, go inextricably together. A grilled burger without a grilled dog is not complete, or the reverse. Burger-dogs are the ultimate summer feast (preferably two burger-dogs). And if one may include the perfect complement to a burger-dog, it would be corn on the cob—swimming in butter and nicely salted. That, my friend, is summer as it was meant to be!"

-Tim Shorey, author of Respect the Image

"Nothing like catfish, hushpuppies, and RC Cola on a hot summer's day. Learned that in my many years of teaching at RTS-Jackson in Mississippi."

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"I'd have to say ice cream. There's only one problem, however. I eat ice cream 365 days a year. 366 if it's a leap year."

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"Here in Scotland the hedgerows are covered with wild raspberries at this time of year. With a spoonful of clotted cream and ground hazelnuts, you've got a perfect Scottish summer dessert."

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"Every summer, I have to eat at least one hotdog roasted to a crisp over a fire followed by a perfectly browned marshmallow s'more. These are the summer foods of my childhood. They are iconic for me because they feel nostalgic and remind me of simpler days." —Esther Smith, *author of* Chronic Illness

## FOUR REASONS PEOPLE WHO LIVE WITH CHRONIC ILLNESS NEED SPACE TO CULTIVATE A REGULAR PRACTICE OF LAMENT by Esther Smith

ast week, two of my friends had major health crises, and all I could do was listen from afar. The details are not mine to share, but their stories left me with an unsettled feeling in my chest. The level of suffering my friends were enduring did not make sense. These were not stories you could wrap up in an important lesson. As I thought about how to respond to my friends' pain, the goodness of God felt distant. It felt like God was being cruel, and I did not understand the point.

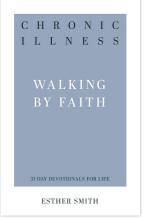
I feel this way about my own life at times. I have several chronic illnesses, and many days, my symptoms feel meaningless. It's depressing to struggle in the same ways for so many years and even more depressing when new issues pop up out of nowhere to join a situation that already feels unmanageable. Life with chronic illness is filled with a continuous stream of losses. Small deaths pile on top of small deaths to our work lives, leisure lives, and social lives. As we wrestle with ongoing suffering, extra doses of encouragement and positivity are not enough. What we really need is space to cultivate a regular practice of lament.

### 1. We need lament because it is a godly response

**to loss.** Think of lament as an honest outpouring of grief. It is in active process in which we recognize difficult thoughts and emotions inside ourselves and allow them to be expressed. The Psalms model this, portraying the words of godly men who called out to God in their pain. Lament is a proper response to loss because our emotions are designed to accurately respond to our circumstances. Many people feel bad or guilty when they don't respond to suffering with joy and feelings of hope. In reality, it is healthy, appropriate, and godly to feel bad when bad things happen.

**2. We need lament because it is honest.** When your suffering is long term, it can be difficult to be honest about how you are actually doing. In the company of others, we want to seem as though we have it all together. In the solitude of our own homes, we hide how much we are hurting, because we don't want to face the full force of our emotional pain.

Fake displays of positivity bear false witness to the real state of our lives, while honest lament helps us to move through our



pain and invite others into our sorrow. Without lament it is not possible to live a Romans 12:15 life in which we weep with those who weep. Pretending we are fine threatens our own well-being while also removing permission for other people to be honest about their pain in our presence. Our communities are healthiest when we honestly share our hurt with those we trust.

**3. We need lament because it is an active response to unfixable suffering.** When life goes wrong, our natural urge is to want to fix the problem. We often don't know what to do with problems that have no earthly solution. When there is no cure and pain relief won't be forthcoming and suffering will remain until you die, what in the world are we supposed to do? In these paralyzing moments, the urge to act can be met by practices of lament.

Call out to God in your grief. Identify the cry of your heart. Stop holding back the tears. Spend time on your knees. Listen to music that helps you know what you feel. Write out the words you have been holding back. Rely on the Holy Spirit who intercedes for you when you don't know how to pray.

**4. We need lament because it shows us the path forward when we feel hopeless.** Does life with chronic illness feel unfair? Are you angry at God or questioning his character? Does it all feel so very pointless? The answer to these feelings is not to replace them with positive thoughts. We won't find hope through circumventing pain. The answer is to lean into the questions that seem like too much and feel the feelings we would rather not feel.

Hope is on the other side of lament. Somehow we must face and traverse the tears of today to find the true joy of tomorrow morning (see Ps. 30:5). Lament leads us toward hope when it becomes a vessel that places us in front of God. Our tears compel us to pray. Our fears invite us to trust. Weakness and frailty beckon us to receive God's strength and look for the living hope we need.

If today promises to be difficult and nothing can fix the pain, turn your urge to act into a prayer of lament. God is on your side.

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## TEN KEYS TO SOLVING MARRIAGE CONFLICT IN QUARANTINE

by Steve Hoppe

Times are stressful. Uncertainty abounds. Here are ten helpful guidelines for tackling marriage conflict with your spouse during this tumultuous season.

**1. Take off your tool belt.** When your spouse's sins and shortcomings surface, you will be tempted to enter fix-it mode. But fixing your spouse isn't your job. Only God can mold us into people who produce Christlike thoughts, words, and actions. You aren't your spouse's heart engineer. God is.

**2. Play catch.** When your spouse speaks, put your pingpong paddle down. Catch the conversation ball (listen to your spouse's words). Hold the ball for a little while (think about what was just said). Toss it back gently (speak in a loving manner). Listen. Think. Speak. In that order. It will take practice and patience, and it will produce peaceful conversations.

**3.** Put on high heels (or Air Jordans). Work hard to empathize with your spouse—to walk in their shoes and speak back their feelings. Empathy emulates the empathetic love of Christ—the one who chose to leave heaven, walk in our shoes (or sandals, in his case), feel our joys and pains, and speak them back to us in his Word.

**4. Ask why.** If you're responding to your spouse in an unholy manner, ask yourself why. Dig to the root of your response—the heart-level cause of your irreverent words or actions. After all, if the roots don't change, the fruit won't change (see Luke 6:43–45).

**5. Avoid exaggeration.** Exaggeration takes something that's true, stretches it, and turns it into something untrue. Try avoiding the following words when critiquing your spouse: *always, never, all, none, everything, nothing, everybody, nobody,* and *constantly.* There are more, but you get the gist of it.

**6. Celebrate criticism.** According to the book of Proverbs, the fastest path to wisdom is to hear, internalize, and apply constructive feedback. It might hurt, but the prize is certainly worth the pain.



**7. Refuse to retaliate.** As stress increases and tension escalates in conflict, your spouse may make false accusations of you. What do you do? Emulate Christ. Jesus willingly bore injustice and did not retaliate. Why? Because he knew that God would one day vindicate him (see 1 Peter 2:23). Will you do the same?

**8. Take a time-out.** Sometimes it's best to step away and take a time-out from a conflict. This will allow you to reach a state of emotional equilibrium and gain spiritual clarity. As you spend time with God (the key to a successful time-out), your heart will change and your thoughts will start to align with God's. You will be a new person when you reenter the conversation.

**9. Call in the reserves.** When times are especially tough, I suggest that the two of you reach out to your pastor, a trusted elder, a spiritually mature married couple in your church, or, if necessary, a Christ-centered marriage counselor. Don't be too proud or afraid to call for help.

**10. Hydrate frequently.** Drink Christ's living water with your spouse regularly during this crisis. Read and discuss the Bible together. Pray daily. Spend Christ-focused time with other Christians (virtually, if necessary). Worship as a couple on Sundays. Find ways to serve the less fortunate. Introduce Jesus to others. Give generously. The more living water you consume, the holier your communication will be when conflict arises. In the end, the key to making it through the COVID crisis alongside your spouse boils down to the simplest yet most difficult command that Jesus gave us: love. Lay down your life for your spouse out of love. Even when you're in conflict. Especially when you're in conflict.

Note: This article was adapted from a post written by Steve Hoppe for use on The Gospel Coalition website, which can be found at the following link: https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/ article/10-keys-marriage-conflict-quarantine/

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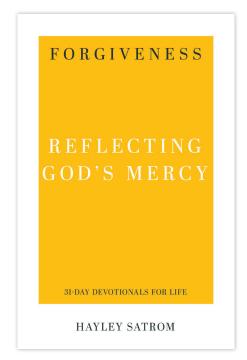
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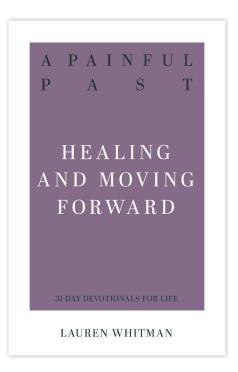
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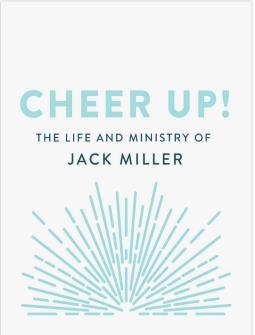
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**Michael Graham** (MDiv, Covenant Theological Seminary; PhD, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary) is pastor at Hickory Grove Church in Mt. Juliet, Tennessee, and director of The Jack Miller Project.

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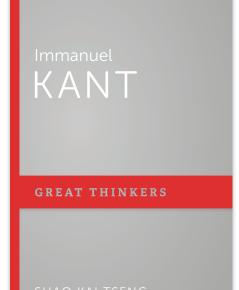
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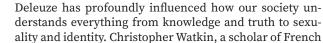
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**Scott Christensen** (MDiv, The Master's Seminary) is the author of *What about Free Will?* He worked for nine years at the award-winning CCY Architects in Aspen, Colorado; several of his home designs were featured in *Architectural Digest* magazine. Called out of this work to the ministry, he graduated with honors from seminary and now serves as the associate pastor of Kerrville Bible Church in Kerrville, Texas.

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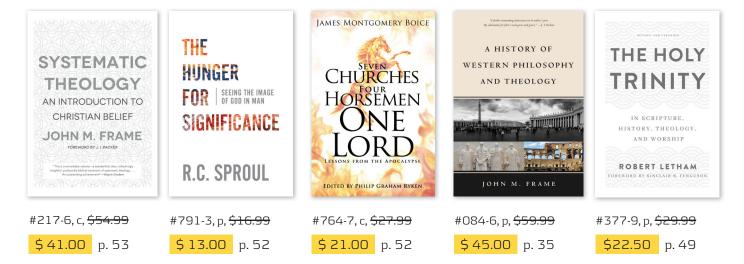
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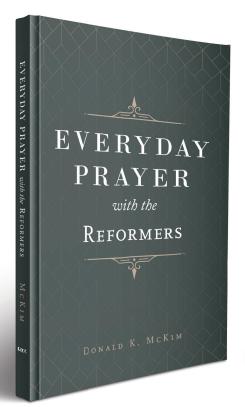
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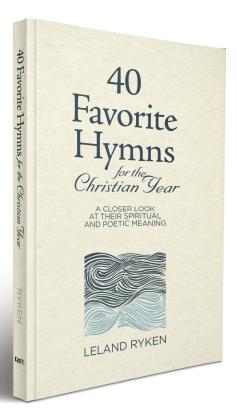




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