

ADVANCE!

TIM CHALLIES

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INTRODUCTION

Patience, Priorities, Preparation

Nobody left a deeper or more indelible mark on history than Jesus of Nazareth. In his birth, life, death, and resurrection, he impacted lives, transformed nations, and changed the world. It is for good reason that we measure history with B.C. and A.D., with what came before the birth of Jesus and what came after. He forever stands at the very center of human existence.

Without a doubt, Jesus lived a life of great significance. But I wonder if you have ever considered this: Jesus had no lasting accomplishments before his 30s. We know this from the gospel accounts. After he died, four men wrote detailed biographies of his life: Matthew and John, who were his friends, and Mark and Luke, who were friends of his friends. These men spoke to his family and his followers, they interviewed people who knew him, they collected all the facts. And from all of their research, they mention just one detail about his teens and 20s: he was a carpenter, a normal man working a normal job.

Some early religious enthusiasts found this too hard to believe, so they embellished his story with tales of childhood miracles. The Gospel of Thomas, written more than 100 years after his death, fabricates stories of a young Jesus raising the dead and forming birds from clay to bring them to life. But we know this to be nonsense, an attempt to make sense of his normalcy, to excuse his early lack of accomplishments. In reality, one of the most remarkable facts about Jesus is how unremarkable he seemed in his teens and 20s.

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Only Matthew and Luke record the facts surrounding Jesus' unusual birth, while Mark and John skip his childhood altogether and begin their narratives when he is already past 30. Only Luke records a glimpse of Jesus in his childhood, but then the record goes silent until he says, "Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years of age..." (Luke 3:23). Of all we know about the life and the deeds of Jesus the Messiah, almost everything takes place in a three-year window sometime after his 30th birthday.

This is not to say those silent years were wasted or that they served no purpose. To the contrary, the many years of anonymity were foundational to the few years of visibility. The Jesus of the three years of public ministry was formed during the 30 years of private obscurity. The 10 percent of his life that was carefully recorded cannot be separated from the 90 percent of his life that was not.

We can see something of these silent years in Luke's account. He gives us one glimpse of Jesus when he was 12, explaining that he willingly submitted to the care and oversight of his parents. Then he provides a brief summary of what Jesus was up to between 12 and 30: "And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man" (Luke 2:52). In all these silent years, Jesus was advancing—advancing in obedience, wisdom, stature, and in favor with both God and man. In this way, we see that Jesus was actually full of accomplishments in his childhood, teens, and 20s. His accomplishments were accomplishments of character. His silent years laid the foundation of godly character that would enable and sustain him as he changed the world.

In this booklet I want to consider what Jesus accomplished in these years of silence, and I want to show how they were crucial to who he would become and what he would accomplish. From the life of Jesus, I want to encourage young

Christians to make the most of their teens and 20s by advancing first in accomplishments of character. Many young Christians have a noble desire to change the world and to do great things, but in most cases God intends to first change them and to do great things in their hearts and minds.

What follows will not be a call to lazy apathy but to deliberate priority. I'm going to call younger Christians to be patient, to establish right priorities, and to make your younger years a time of preparation. I'm going to plead with you to use these years not first to focus on outward accomplishments to shape the world, but inward achievements to shape your life. I want to ensure that as you advance in life, you advance first in character. In short, I want to call you to be like Jesus.

STUDY GUIDE

1. *How would you define a successful life?*
2. *What kinds of goals have you set for yourself for your remaining teenage years?*
3. *What kinds of outward accomplishments are you most proud of?*
4. *What inward achievements are you most proud of?*
5. *Do you measure your faith by your outward accomplishments or your inward achievements?*

CHAPTER 1

One Key Pursuit for Young Christians

Imagine for a moment that you have been charged with coming up with a life plan for the most important person in all of human history. The Messiah, the Son of God, will soon come to earth and will remain here for just over 30 years. He will be fully man, so you will need to plan accordingly, giving him time to grow from infancy to maturity, ensuring he has times of devotion to refresh his soul and of sleep to refresh his body. But he will also be fully God, so you will need to ensure he uses his perfect knowledge to explain the will of God and his perfect power to perform incredible miracles. It is up to you to plan the time between his birth and death.

If you were given such a task, you would most likely plan for Jesus to live as much of his life as possible in the public eye. You would want him to preach every sermon he possibly could, to perform every miracle, to tell every parable, to exorcise every demon. You would plan for him to grow up quickly so he could minister as publicly as possible for as long as possible. After all, you wouldn't want him to waste any of these precious years.

The Messiah, the Son of God, really did come to earth. But it fell to God—not you or me—to set the course for his life, and God planned it very differently. Jesus lived for around 33 years, but his entire public ministry fit into just the final three. He spent 90 percent of his life in obscurity and only ten percent in the public eye. For every one year that was recorded, there were ten that were not. God arranged the itinerary, and

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he chose to have Jesus spend 30 years in quiet preparation for his three years of public activity.

It should be both comforting and challenging to consider that the perfect, sinless Son of God celebrated his 30th birthday without any major accomplishments to his credit. To that point, his actions and achievements had been so unremarkable that his family and neighbors were flabbergasted when he at last began his public ministry. When he began to teach with authority and to perform great miracles, his neighbors sneered, “Isn’t this the carpenter?” while his embarrassed family tried to hustle him away. Yet his silent years were not wasted years. His years between childhood and full adulthood were purposeful, and he used them to accomplish great things, even if they were invisible things. He lived these years so well that God himself would speak from the skies to commend him.

In this booklet we are discussing priorities for young Christians. The title and structure are drawn from the life of Jesus, from the words of one of his biographers who, in a sentence, summarizes Jesus’ teens and 20s: “And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man” (Luke 2:52). In this chapter, we are going to consider that simple word “increased” and how it challenges young Christians to one key pursuit.

ONE KEY PURSUIT

Embedded deep within the modern Western ethos is the idea that life never gets better than the teens and 20s. This trope is at the heart of a thousand Hollywood productions and cheesy pop songs. These are the years when you are most carefree, when expectation is low, when responsibility is minimal. These are the years when you are unrestrained by career,

marriage, and children. According to this ethos, these years are best used to indulge in every desire, every freedom, and every fantasy, before you are at last forced to surrender to the inevitable and settle down into a hum-drum adulthood.

Many Christians have pushed back by teaching young believers to embrace these years for higher purposes and nobler pursuits. Rightly, they teach that the very activities the world advocates are the ones that will actually stain the years and squander them. They replace the low expectations of the world with the high expectations of God's Word. Well and good. Yet while this is a healthy reorientation, it may lead young Christians to believe that in order to make the most of their teens and 20s, they must have accomplishments that can be displayed—they must have written a book, or spoken at a conference, or founded a charity. They must have something that has earned accolades and garnered the praise and respect of others. At the very least, they may think the people who can display such accomplishments are the ones who have been most pleasing to God, the ones who are living best before him.

I have deep admiration for young Christians who want to make a difference in their church, in their community, and in their world. I would never wish to replace enthusiasm with apathy. However, I do need to raise the matter of priorities and insist that the most important priority for the teens and 20s is not external accomplishments but internal ones. The number one priority for young Christians is to advance in character. Life is not over at 30 but just beginning. The teens and 20s are not the time to live a whole life but to prepare for a whole life. In these years, young Christians need to prepare themselves for the rest of life by laying a foundation of godly character that will sustain them for the many years to come.

This does not mean that young Christians ought to substi-

tute painstaking external accomplishments for more leisurely work on their character. Jesus' advancement in his character during his teens and 20s was far from easy. We know this because the word translated "increase" in Luke 2:52 carries the sense of advancing against obstacles and impediments. It is not the word for a leisurely stroll in the park but the word for blazing a trail in the woods. Jesus models the most strenuous, demanding kind of work for young Christians: the work of developing character.

Jesus himself needed time to prepare for public ministry. If Jesus needed time to prepare for his life's work, isn't it worth considering that perhaps you do, too? If even he was willing to put aside external accomplishments to focus first on internal achievements, shouldn't you be willing to do the same? Even Jesus had to be before he could do, to develop his character before he could minister effectively. In the end, Jesus used 90 percent of his life in preparation! Yet these years of preparation did not frustrate God or thwart his purposes. Rather, they pleased God and fulfilled his purposes.

WELL PLEASED

Jesus' public ministry began with his baptism. His cousin John had gone "into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" (Luke 3:3). He warned people to turn away from their sin and to prepare themselves for the coming of the Messiah. Crowds were flocking to John to hear his message and to respond with repentance, confession, and baptism. So many came that Matthew says that "Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to him" (Matthew 3:5). Genuine revival was stirring.

Then one day Jesus shows up. When he is around 30, he

comes from Galilee to the Jordan and asks John to baptize him just like everyone else. John knows Jesus' true identity and is shocked and offended by the very notion of baptizing him. "John would have prevented him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?'" (Matthew 3:14). But Jesus insists, saying, "Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (verse 15). John consents and lowers his cousin into the water.

As Jesus emerges from the waters of the Jordan River, something remarkable happens. "The heavens were opened, and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, 'You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased'" (Luke 3:21-22). God the Father tells God the Son of his delight in him, of his satisfaction in the life he has lived. "I take pleasure in you. I approve of who you are. I am satisfied in all you have accomplished."

What has Jesus accomplished? As far as we know, up until this point, Jesus has a one-line resume: carpenter. He has not yet preached his first sermon, told his first parable, exorcised his first demon, or performed his first miracle. He has no medals to hang around his neck, no awards to pin on his chest, no accolades to trim from the local newspaper and carefully glue into his scrapbook.

The one thing he does have to his credit is character. He has carefully, deliberately, substantially advanced in character. And that is enough. It is more than enough for God, his Father. He has done the very thing God has called him to do for 30 years. He has advanced in obedience, in wisdom, in stature, and in favor with God and man. He has prepared himself in obscurity for a ministry he will fulfill with great publicity. He has obeyed God. He is prepared for what God has for him.

Young Christian, look to Jesus and see that the most important advances you can make in your teens and 20s are

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advances in character. It is in these years that you will lay a foundation of godly character capable of guiding and sustaining you for a lifetime. Your one key pursuit for your teens and 20s must be to advance. Follow after your Savior and advance in godly character, advance in obedience, advance in wisdom, advance in favor with God and man.

STUDY GUIDE

- 1. How have you bought into worldly ideas about your adolescence? These worldly ideas can vary from being justified in wasting your years with fun and pleasure or perhaps being known for an incredible accomplishment.*
- 2. Do you see how it affects your attitudes towards responsibility and your mindset on adulthood? Do you notice how it affects the goals and plans you set for yourself?*
- 3. How do you see yourself making a difference in your family, in your friendships, school, church, and community?*
- 4. Are you preparing yourself for adulthood? How?*

CHAPTER 2

Advance in Submission

Why was Jesus born into the world as a baby instead of arriving as a fully-grown man? Did he really have to endure infancy with its helplessness, childhood with its ignorance, those teenage years with their awkwardness? Why didn't he just arrive at 30, bang out his mission in three short years, and then make a quick escape from this sin-stained world?

The author of the letter to the Hebrews answers our questions: "Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him" (Hebrews 5:8-9). To complete his mission, the Son of God had to live a complete life as a man. He had to be a baby, he had to be a toddler, he had to be a child, a tween, a teen, a young adult, and a grown man. He had to face and endure the temptations that come with every one of life's stages. He had to be tempted as a toddler to defy his parents, as a teen to retaliate against sinful brothers and sisters, as an adult to be quick-tempered and sharp-tongued. He was tempted in every way we are, yet he never sinned (Hebrews 4:15).

But he did not only need to avoid temptation; he also needed to express perfect obedience. He had to perfectly avoid the sins of each of the 10 commandments and also model complete adherence to them. He had to avoid worship of all other gods, and he also had to worship the true and living God. He had to avoid taking God's name in vain, and he also had to always speak well of the Father. He had to refrain from

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murdering anyone, and he also had to express love to every person all of the time. God's commandments are not just sins to avoid but also righteousness to obey. In all of history, only Christ has perfectly avoided all sin and perfectly achieved all righteousness, and this is why he can be our Savior.

Among these 10 commandments, there is one that stands out as especially unusual for this God-man to obey: "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you" (Exodus 20:12). For Jesus to live a perfect life and to perfectly obey God's law, he would have to honor parents. He who had existed from eternity would have to obey mortal beings. He who had created all things would have to honor those he had brought into existence. He, the perfect Son of God, would have to submit to an imperfect mother and father. To be a suitable Savior, he would need to willingly subject himself to Mary and Joseph.

As we continue our look at the silent years between Jesus' childhood and public ministry, we first encounter his submission. Luke comments on these 18 years when he says, "And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them" (Luke 2:51). Jesus used his teens and 20s to advance in submission. As we will see, this obedient submission was essential to the other advances Luke highlights—advances in wisdom, stature, and favor. From Jesus we learn that young Christians who wish to advance in those other noble qualities must first advance in submission.

HE WAS SUBMISSIVE TO THEM

Children are naturally rebellious. Even as tiny infants they begin to express discontent with their parents, and already as toddlers they begin to defy every form of authority. Mary and Joseph eventually had a large family, and they would have

done their utmost to raise their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. They would have told their children to honor their mother and father, they would have disciplined them for their defiance, they would have pleaded with them for obedience. All of them but one, that is. Each of Mary's other children were daughters or sons of Joseph, but Jesus was the Son of God. Because he was conceived by the Holy Spirit, he had no sin and no sinful desire to defy his parents.

Jesus spent his childhood, his teens, and his 20s in submission to his parents. Never once did he sinfully defy them. Never once did he rebel against their authority. Never once did he talk back in spite. To the contrary, he only ever joyfully and voluntarily submitted to them. He willingly put himself under their leadership, under their direction, and under their authority.

His submission was the kind of submission God calls for in the fifth commandment. This is a submission that takes the form of obedience and honor. Jesus submitted by obeying his parents and honoring his parents.

OBEDIENCE

The Bible has much to say about the relationship of children to their parents, but we can distill it to something like this: All children are to honor their parents; young children are to obey their parents. Childhood obedience is the training ground for mature honor. This why the commandment given to Moses is more broad: "Honor your father and your mother..." (Exodus 20:12). But when Paul addresses young children, he says, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right" (Ephesians 6:1). All children owe their parents lifelong honor, while young children also owe their parents joyful obedience.

Young children are to obey their parents because children



The Commandment We Forgot

Tim Challies

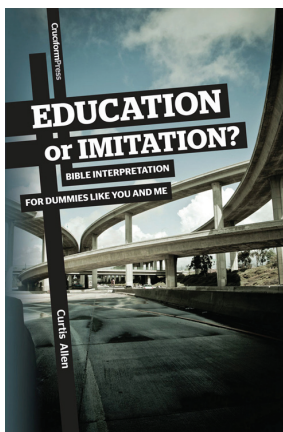
The fifth commandment—“Honor your father and your mother”—is not just for children. Rather, it pertains to the whole of life and to every person of every age. In the home, the church, and the workplace, it provides a stable foundation for all of society. Yet we often neglect it and fail to appreciate its relevance to our lives. It is the commandment we forgot.



Set an Example

Tim Challies

There are many ways to invest your time in your teens and 20's, but the Bible is clear: none is better than the pursuit of godliness. In Paul's letter to young Timothy, you (yes, you!) are called to be an example to your peers and even to older Christians. He calls you to set an example of maturity and godliness in your speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity.



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***Thabiti Anyabwile, Author, Senior Pastor, First Baptist Church,
Grand Cayman; Council Member, The Gospel Coalition***

“Curt Allen’s book on interpreting the Bible is wonderfully practical and clear, giving believers basic principles for understanding God’s Word. He rightly emphasizes that every believer can understand the Bible. It isn’t necessary to be a scholar or preacher or to know Greek and Hebrew to grasp the Scriptures. Certainly, we are helped by teachers and scholars, but we can understand the Bible ourselves and need to test whatever others say by the Scriptures. Allen also shows that the Bible is Christ-centered. We are only reading the Bible rightly if we are seeing Jesus Christ, our crucified and risen Lord, in its pages. At the same time, the Bible is not just meant to be understood but to be lived out in our everyday lives. I recommend gladly such an accessible, Christ-centered, and practical book on interpreting the Scriptures.”

***Thomas R. Schreiner, Professor of New Testament Interpretation,
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Do More Better

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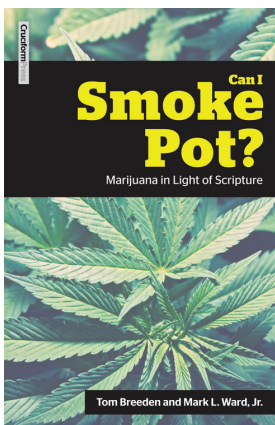
Shortly after its release, *Do More Better* had received 173 reviews on Amazon, with an average rating of 4.8 out of 5 stars. The book sold more than 10,000 copies in its first two months. Here are Tim's thoughts about this book:

I am no productivity guru. I am a writer, a church leader, a husband, and a father—a Christian with a lot of responsibilities and with new tasks coming at me all the time. I wrote this short, fast-paced, practical guide to productivity to share what I have learned about getting things done in today's digital world. It will help you learn to structure your life to do the most good to the glory of God.

*In *Do More Better*, you will learn:*

- *Common obstacles to productivity*
- *The great purpose behind productivity*
- *3 essential tools for getting things done*
- *The power of daily and weekly routines*
- *And much more, including bonus material on taming your email and embracing the inevitable messiness of productivity.*

It really is possible to live a calm and orderly life, sure of your responsibilities and confident in your progress. You can do more better. And I would love to help you get there. — Tim Challies



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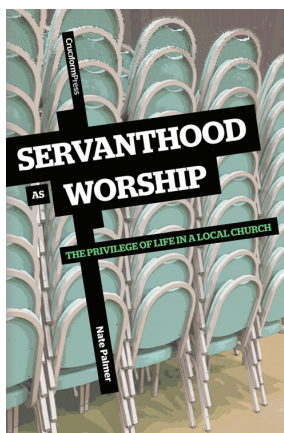
***Chad Van Dixhoorn, Chancellor's Professor of Historical
Theology, Reformed Theological Seminary – Washington DC***

“This book deals with the important questions, using Scripture as its basis for ethical decision-making. With a good summary of biblical teaching on a number of relevant principles, it shows the possibility of medicinal use but rejects recreational use of marijuana. It is clear and engaging; it has sound arguments and sensitivity to our human condition.”

***Vern Poythress, Professor of New Testament Interpretation,
Westminster Theological Seminary***

“*Can I Smoke Pot?* is a good summary of the biblical teaching relevant to the use of marijuana. Authors Ward and Breeden have written it in language easily understood by young people. It makes a strong case against the recreational use of pot while recognizing the possible medical benefits of it.

***Dr. John Frame, Professor of Systematic Theology &
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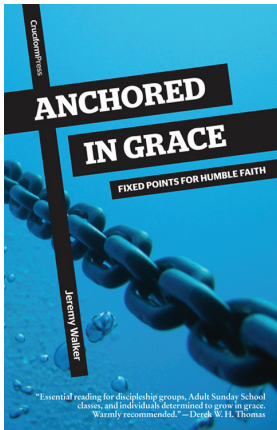
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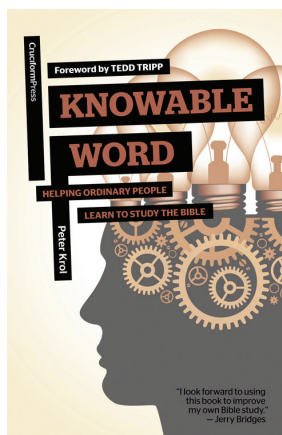
Conrad Mbewe, African Christian University, Lusaka, Zambia

“Crisp, clear, concise, and biblical, Walker’s book offers up the doctrines of God’s grace in a manner persuasive to the mind and powerful to the heart.”

Dr. Joel R. Beeke, Pres., Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary

“A sure-footed journey...a trusted guide. Reading this book will both thrill and convict, challenge and confirm. Essential reading for discipleship groups, Adult Sunday School classes, and individuals determined to grow in grace. Warmly recommended.”

Derek W.H. Thomas, Professor, Reformed Theological Seminary



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by Peter Krol

Foreword by Tedd Tripp

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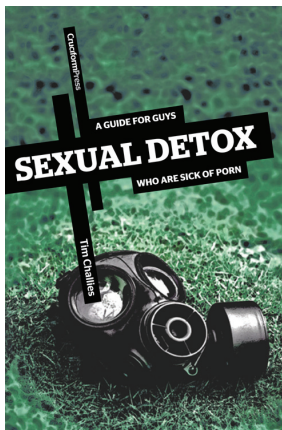
Eric Metaxas, New York Times Best-selling author of Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy

“*The Most Encouraging Book on Hell Ever* is also one of the wisest. This book is crammed with hilarious quips, but the message is deadly serious. Losing the doctrine of hell isn’t trivial. It means losing truth, righteousness, and grace. Ultimately it means losing God. Thor’s book uses humor to disarm readers just enough to deliver this crucial and timely message.”

Drew Dyck, managing editor of Leadership Journal, a Christianity Today publication

“Praise God for Thor! The end must be getting near as Christians are actually getting funny. After a few pages, you’ll realize this ain’t your grandma’s book about hell...but she’d love it just the same. Because it’s only funny in the right places.”

Stephen Baldwin, actor, author, radio host



Sexual Detox

A Guide for Guys Who Are Sick of Porn

by Tim Challies

90 pages

bit.ly/SDetox

“Online pornography is not just a problem for Christian men; it is THE problem. Many men, young and old, in our churches need *Sexual Detox*. Challies offers practical, doable and, above all, gospel-centered hope for men. I want every man I serve and all the guys on our staff to read this book.”

Tedd Tripp, Pastor, and author of *Shepherding a Child's Heart*

“Tim Challies strikes just the right balance in this necessary work. His assessment of the sexual epidemic in our culture is sober but not without hope. His advice is practical but avoids a checklist mentality. His discussion of sexual sin is frank without being inappropriate. This book will be a valuable resource.”

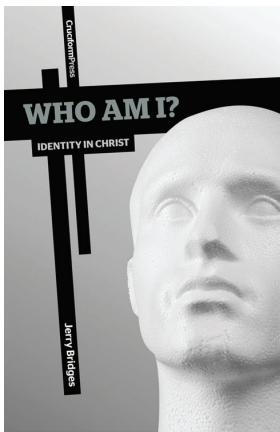
Kevin DeYoung, Pastor and author

“Thank God for using Tim to articulate simply and unashamedly the truth about sex amidst a culture of permissiveness.”

Ben Zobrist, Tampa Bay Rays

“*Sexual Detox* is just what we need. It is clear, honest, and biblical, written with a tone that is knowing but kind, exhortative but gracious, realistic but determined. We have been given by Tim Challies a terrific resource for fighting sin and exalting Christ.

Owen Strachan, Boyce College



Who Am I?

Identity in Christ

by Jerry Bridges

Jerry Bridges unpacks Scripture to give the Christian eight clear, simple, interlocking answers to one of the most essential questions of life.

91 pages bit.ly/WHOAMI

“Jerry Bridges’ gift for simple but deep spiritual communication is fully displayed in this warm-hearted, biblical spelling out of the Christian’s true identity in Christ.”

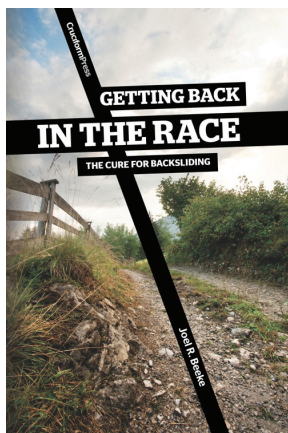
J.I. Packer, Theological Editor, ESV Study Bible; author, Knowing God, A Quest for Godliness, Concise Theology

“I know of no one better prepared than Jerry Bridges to write *Who Am I?* He is a man who knows who he is in Christ and he helps us to see succinctly and clearly who we are to be. Thank you for another gift to the Church of your wisdom and insight in this book.”

R.C. Sproul, founder, chairman, president, Ligonier Ministries; executive editor, Tabletalk magazine; general editor, The Reformation Study Bible

“*Who Am I?* answers one of the most pressing questions of our time in clear gospel categories straight from the Bible. This little book is a great resource to ground new believers and remind all of us of what God has made us through faith in Jesus. Thank the Lord for Jerry Bridges, who continues to provide the warm, clear, and biblically balanced teaching that has made him so beloved to this generation of Christians.”

Richard D. Phillips, Senior Minister, Second Presbyterian Church, Greenville, SC



[Getting Back in the Race](#)

The Cure for Backsliding

by Joel R. Beeke

Backsliding is the worst thing that can happen to anyone claiming faith in Jesus.

Find out why. Learn the diagnosis. Experience the cure.

103 pp

bit.ly/THERACE

“This book is a masterpiece, and I do not say that lightly. This excellent work, so helpfully spiced with quotations from the Puritans, needs to be read over and over again. I heartily commend it.”

Martin Holdt, Pastor; editor, Reformation Africa South

“Joel Beeke’s characteristic clarity, biblical fidelity, and unflinching care as to detail and pastoral wisdom is obvious on every page. This book is an honest and sometimes chilling exposition of the seriousness of backsliding; at the same time, it unfailingly breathes the air of grace and hope. Timely and judicious.”

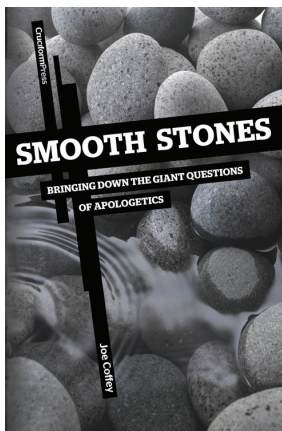
Derek W.H. Thomas, First Presbyterian Church, Columbia, SC; Editorial Director, Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals

“Don’t settle for being a spiritual shrimp,’ argues Dr. Beeke. The pity is that too many modern Christians are opting for shrimpishly small degrees of grace. Indwelling sin drags the careless believer down into guilty backsliding. This book is a prescription for the believer who feels his guilt.”

Maurice Roberts, former editor, Banner of Truth magazine

“Dr. Beeke outlines the best means of bringing balm and healing to the backslidden soul. Highly recommended.”

Michael Haykin, Professor, Southern Baptist Theo. Sem.



Smooth Stones

Bringing Down the Giant Questions of Apologetics

by Joe Coffey

Street-level apologetics for everyday Christians.

Because faith in Jesus makes sense. And you don't need an advanced degree to understand why.

bit.ly/CPStones

“What a thrill for me to see Joe Coffey, a graduate of our first Centurions Program class, apply the biblical worldview principles we teach at BreakPoint and the Colson Center. In this marvelous little book, Joe simply and succinctly lays out the tenets of the Christian faith within the context of the four key life and worldview questions. This is an excellent resource for Christians and non-Christians alike who are seeking the Truth.”

Chuck Colson, Founder of Prison Fellowship and the Colson Center for Christian Worldview

“This book may be the best resource I've seen to answer common objections in everyday language.”

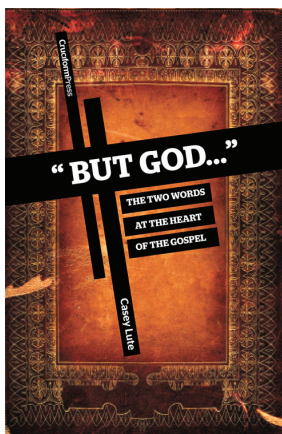
Jared Totten, Critical Thinking Blog

“A quick read that packs a punch.... I'm always on the lookout for something like this. *Smooth Stones* is a winner.”

Mike del Rosario, ApologeticsGuy.Com

“Most books on apologetics are too long, too deep, and too complicated. This book has none of these defects. Like its title, it is like a smooth stone from David's apologetic sling directed right to the mind of an enquiring reader”

Norman L. Geisler, Distinguished Professor of Apologetics, Veritas Evangelical Seminary, Murrieta, CA



[“But God...”](#)

The Two Words at the Heart of the Gospel

by Casey Lute

Just two words.

**Understand their use in Scripture,
and you will never be the same.**

100 pages bit.ly/ButGOD

“Keying off of nine occurrences of “But God” in the English Bible, Casey Lute ably opens up Scripture in a manner that is instructive, edifying, encouraging, and convicting. This little book would be useful in family or personal reading, or as a gift to a friend. You will enjoy Casey’s style, you will have a fresh view of some critical Scripture, and your appreciation for God’s mighty grace will be deepened.”

Dan Phillips, Pyromaniacs blog, author of The World-Tilting Gospel (forthcoming from Kregel)

“A refreshingly concise, yet comprehensive biblical theology of grace that left this reader more in awe of the grace of God.”

Aaron Armstrong, BloggingTheologically.com

“Casey Lute reminds us that nothing is impossible with God, that we must always reckon with God, and that God brings life out of death and joy out of sorrow.”

Thomas R. Schreiner, Professor of New Testament Interpretation, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

“A mini-theology that will speak to the needs of every reader of this small but powerful book. Read it yourself and you will be blessed. Give it to a friend and you will be a blessing.”

William Varner, Prof. of Biblical Studies, The Master’s College