

DEVOTED

GREAT MEN *and* THEIR GODLY MOMS



TIM CHALLIES

FEATURING THE MOTHERS OF:

JOHN NEWTON / HUDSON TAYLOR / J. GRESHAM MACHEN

JOHN PIPER / CHARLES SPURGEON / AUGUSTINE

D.L. MOODY / TIMOTHY / AND MORE

DEVOTED

Great Men and Their Godly Moms

Tim Challies

God blessed me with a mother who
loved me, taught me, shaped me,
and prayed for me. It is to her that I
dedicate this book.

– Tim Challies

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“*Devoted* offers rich encouragement, wisdom, and hope for any mom who longs for her sons and daughters to follow, love, and serve Christ.”

Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth, author, teacher, and host of *Revive Our Hearts*

“*Devoted* challenged, inspired, and encouraged me. It was fascinating to see how God used eleven mothers, with their unique personalities, abilities, strengths, and weaknesses, to produce great men. None of these women parented under ideal conditions, and while their skill sets and gifting were quite varied, the common denominator was each mom’s devotion to Christ. *Devoted* will encourage moms (and dads) in the trenches, but also pour out grace and hope on the parents of prodigals. Reading this book was sheer delight and I highly recommend it.

Kimberly Wagner, author, *Fierce Women*

“As mom to a young boy, one of my prayers is that the Lord might enable me to be a great mom, but not as measured by the world. Tim has collected for us the stories of women whose greatness was largely hidden. The devoted lives of women like Elizabeth Newton, Amelia Taylor, Mary Machen, and more will inspire and encourage you. These stories and examples, so easily overlooked, are now presented in this accessible and helpful book.

Trillia Newbell, author, *God’s Very Good Idea, Enjoy*, and *Fear and Faith*.

“We look to our heroes of the faith and wonder, ‘How did she do it?’ Godly moms want their labors to make an impact in eternity, but sometimes persevering to the end of a twenty-four day seems impossible. Challies describes the powerful influence of a godly mother in articulate detail through stories of real women who have gone before us. These women believe the same gospel and cling to the same Christ, and I pray this book encourages many more mothers to follow their lead.”

Gloria Furman, author, *Missional Motherhood* and *Treasuring Christ When Your Hands Are Full*

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Introduction

Boys thrive under the love and leadership of an attentive father. Boys need their dads to model godliness and masculinity, to display patterns of love and respect within marriage, to teach skills necessary to grow into mature manhood. Much has been written to encourage fathers to embrace these responsibilities, to be the example their sons need.

Well and good. But with all the attention given to a father and his son, I fear that too little has been given to a mother and her son, for this relationship, too, is uniquely precious and important. Sadly, we often look upon it with suspicion, as if closeness between a boy and his mother is a warning sign indicating femininity or perhaps even latent homosexuality. We have names for boys who are close or too close to their moms—they are mama's boys. They are sissies, or pansies, or worse. A boy who is close to his mother is a boy we believe to be weak, not strong.

It may surprise us, though, to learn how many of

our Christian heroes were shaped by the attentiveness and godliness of their mothers. Even though they may have had fathers who were present, involved, and godly, still they would insist that their primary spiritual influencer had been their mother. One of history's greatest preachers would say with affection, "I am sure that, in my early youth, no teaching ever made such an impression upon my mind as the instruction of my mother," while one of its most committed evangelists would say, "I learned more about Christianity from my mother than from all the theologians in England." An eminent theologian would state, "To our mother, my brother and myself, under God, owe absolutely everything." A great defender of the faith would write about an overwhelming moment of doubt, then relate how he found deliverance: "My mother [spoke to me] in those dark hours when the lamp burned dim, when I thought that faith was gone and shipwreck had been made of my soul. 'Christ,' she used to say, 'keeps firmer hold on us than we keep on him'."

History tells of women whose love for the Bible shaped its earliest and most prominent teachers, and women whose unceasing prayers led to the long-awaited salvation of their wayward sons. It tells of women who were great theologians in their own right, yet whose only students were their own children. It tells of women who laid an early foundation in the lives of their sons that, despite their best efforts, they could

never undermine. It tells, time and again, of exceptional Christian men who owe so much to their godly mothers.

We will take a brief look at some of them. We will look to the church's earliest days to find a man who owed his salvation to the careful biblical instruction he received on the lap of his mother. We will zoom forward a few centuries to a woman whose constant prayers were at last rewarded when her son came to faith and went on to become one of history's most influential theologians. We will advance to recent centuries to see how the prayers, teaching, and examples of godly mothers have shaped evangelists, preachers, and stalwart defenders of the faith. We will learn together of Christian men and their godly moms. We will celebrate mothers who were used to shape the men who changed the world.

A Note about Format

This book began as a series of articles I shared on my blog, Challies.com. Many who read the series asked if I would put it in print. Before I did so, though, I asked a couple of friends to read it through. My gratitude goes to Rebecca Stark and Melissa Edgington for making a number of suggestions that undoubtedly improved its quality and usefulness. They also prepared the "questions for reflection" that follow each chapter. Additionally, Melissa prepared a brief response to each of the biographies. These are titled "A Mother's Reflection."

ONE

The Hidden Strength of a Weak Mother

John Newton

You may have heard the phrase before: Behind every great man there's a great woman. Like most maxims, it is generally true, even if not universally true. But here's the surprise: Sometimes that great woman is not *behind* the man, but *before* him. Sometimes that great woman is not his wife, but his mother. In this book we are looking at noteworthy Christian leaders whose most formative spiritual influence was a godly mother.

We begin with a man whose mother proves that spiritual strength can abide even where there is physical frailty. She was his first and dearest teacher, the one who first taught him truth and the one who first modeled it in her life. Though his gentle early

years would soon give way to the deepest depths of depravity, he would eventually be rescued by God's amazing grace. Later he would say, "My dear mother, besides the pains she took with me, often commended me with many prayers and tears to God; and I doubt not but I reap the fruits of these prayers to this hour." John Newton would wander, he would run, he would pursue every manner of sin, but he could never escape the great strength of that weak mother.

A Pious Woman

John Newton was born on August 4, 1725, in London, the only son of Elizabeth and John. History has not recorded how his parents met and married, but it does tell of the impact they made on their son's life—John Sr. as a stern and often absent father, and Elizabeth as a gentle, caring mother whose life was tragically short-lived.

Elizabeth Scatliff was born around 1705 in Middlesex, England, the lone daughter of Simon Scatliff who worked and lived in East London as a maker of mathematical instruments. Little is known of her early days except that she received a fine education and was raised a Nonconformist, a Protestant who chose not to associate with the established Anglican Church. John Sr. was a sea captain who regularly sailed the Mediterranean Sea, taking him away from home for months at a time. He was also a strict disciplinar-

ian who insisted on maritime conventions even in his home.

By the time of John's birth, Elizabeth and her husband were members of the Old Gravel Lane Independent Meeting House, a Dissenting congregation pastored by Dr. David Jennings. While Elizabeth's faith was genuine, her husband's appeared to have been merely formal. John would later say that though his father was a moral man, he had not come under the true "impressions of religion."

Because of his mother's warm faith and his father's long absences, John grew to be very close to Elizabeth, whom he later described as a "Dissenter, a pious woman" who was "of a weak, consumptive habit, and loved retirement." As did so many in that time, Elizabeth suffered from tuberculosis, the disease that would eventually claim her life. Among the many symptoms of her tuberculosis was chronic fatigue, which often confined her to bed.

Though Elizabeth was unable to function as she might have wished, she did not squander her days. Knowing that time with her son might be short, she determined to make the most of what remained. She took on the role of teacher and spent hours with John each day. She was a good instructor, and he was an eager, bookish student. He progressed quickly. "When I was four years old, I could read (hard names excepted), as well as I can now: and could likewise

repeat the answers to the questions in the Assembly's Shorter Catechism, with the proofs; and all Dr. Watt's smaller Catechisms, and his Children's Hymns." From this list of material we know that Elizabeth consistently trained her son in Reformed theology. John later wrote, "As I was her only child, she made it the chief business and pleasure of her life to instruct me, and bring me up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

Based on her son's quick mind and easy grasp of theology, Elizabeth prayed and hoped God would call him to ministry. "My mother observed my early progress with peculiar pleasure, and intended from the first to bring me up with a view to the ministry, if the Lord should so incline my heart." She may have gone so far as to devote him to the ministry through prayer and to form plans to enroll him in the Calvinistic school of divinity at St. Andrew's in Scotland.

Sadly, Elizabeth would not live to see such a day. By early 1732, her disease had advanced and her symptoms had become grave. She traveled to the coast, hoping the sea air would provide respite or cure. But it was to no avail, and she succumbed to tuberculosis on July 11 at the age of 27. John was thought to be too young to witness his mother's final days, so he remained with family friends and learned the terrible news just two weeks short of his seventh birthday.

John Sr. returned from his voyage in 1733 and,

learning of his wife's death, wasted no time in remar-
rying. John's stepmother was at first attentive, but she
soon bore children of her own and lost interest in John,
excluding him from family life. He became distant
and rebellious. When John was just 11, after he had
attended boarding school for a year or two, his father
decided it was high time for the boy to head to sea.

And the rest, as they say, is history. He would
rebel against God and commit horrifying atrocities.
But later, he would experience God's amazing grace
and become a preacher, hymn writer, and abolition-
ist. He would tell his own story and the story of every
Christian in his most famous song: "Amazing grace!
how sweet the sound / That saved a wretch like me! / I
once was lost but now am found / Was blind but now I
see."

A Weak Body, a Strong Faith

When John Newton looked back on his life, he was
quick to give credit to his mother. He knew his
eventual salvation was inseparable from the early
training he had received on her knee and from the
many prayers she had prayed on his behalf. He wrote,

Though in process of time I sinned away all the
advantages of these early impressions, yet they
were for a great while a restraint upon me; they
returned again and again, and it was very long

before I could wholly shake them off; and when the Lord at length opened my eyes, I found a great benefit from the recollection of them.

Elizabeth, he said, had “stored my memory, which was then very retentive, with many valuable pieces, chapters and portions of scripture, catechisms, hymns, and poems.”

Though Elizabeth was gravely ill for all of her son’s early life, she did not allow her condition to keep her from fulfilling her God-given duty. To the contrary, her illness made her urgent to lay an early foundation of Christian doctrine and practice.

She used what strength she had to express the deepest kind of love for her son. She taught him to know God’s existence, God’s holiness, and God’s demands on his life. She taught him songs that would remain in his mind and heart until his dying day. She taught him to honor the Bible and to turn to it for spiritual knowledge and strength. She taught him the good news of the gospel, that salvation is by grace through faith in Christ Jesus. She displayed a sweet submission to God’s will and a deep piety, treasuring and obeying God’s every word.

As biographer Jonathan Aitken says, “The spiritual lessons the boy had learned at his mother’s knee were never forgotten. They become the foundation for Newton’s eventual conversion and Christian

commitment.” We cannot understand this great man apart from his godly mother.

You, too, may be weak. You, too, may battle frailness and illness. Or perhaps you have some other besetting weakness. Learn from Elizabeth that a mother of feeble physique can still be formidable in faith. See how God delights to use even the weakest people to preach the greatest news. Like Elizabeth, make the most of every day and every opportunity, for you do not know how many years you will have to love, teach, and train your son. Know that those early lessons are not easily forgotten, that this early foundation is not soon destroyed, that your labor in motherhood is not in vain.

* * *

A Mother's Reflection

For those of us who don't have those types of challenges to contend with, here's what I find encouraging and challenging about Newton's story: every bit of the instruction he received from his mother happened before he even turned seven years old. This means that while he was still a preschooler he got a Christian foundation from his mother.

It's encouraging because when we're in the throes of raising small children, we sometimes think that the things we do don't matter all that much. We try to

teach them but wonder if it makes any difference at all, in between the never-ending laundry and the evidence that (oh yes!) these kids really are sinners at every turn.

But this story shows us that even the small things we do as we point them to Christ really matter, that they are taking in so much more than we know, that we have no way of knowing how the Holy Spirit is working through the words of the Bible as we speak them over our kids.

It's also encouraging if we have a child who is wandering or wayward. Even though it isn't promised that a child will return to "the way he should go," this story is definitely a great example of seeing that general truth become a reality. Maybe it was the prayers of his dear mother being answered long after she was around to offer any more up for him.

It's challenging because Newton's mother gave him much more credit than most of us give to our own kids. She taught him things he probably shouldn't have been able to learn, but because she took the time to do it, he did, and those things came back to him in later years at a crucial time. That said, we have to be careful not to inadvertently hold our children back, spiritually speaking, by assuming they're too little. And it should be a huge wake-up call for those mothers who believe that it really doesn't matter if kids are in church when they're little or not, as if they have plenty of time to get that biblical foundation.

I've read that spiritual foundations are pretty well formed by the age of nine. If that is true, many of us are doing too little, too late with our own kids, and John Newton and his mother are a good reminder that the time to start is now. Jesus works in the youngest lives, too, even when we don't expect it.

Reflection Questions

- *Can you think of a time when your child surprised you with spiritual insight that you didn't realize he/she had?*
- *Have you ever wondered if what you're teaching your kids really matters, especially at a young age? How does John Newton's story change your thinking?*
- *What are some ways that you can begin now, wherever your kids are spiritually, to teach them to follow Christ?*
- *Do you regularly ask God to give you the ability to teach his truths to your children? Do you ask him to store these truths in their memory and use them as a foundation for their commitment to Christ?*
- *Whether you are new at motherhood or have never taken the time to teach biblical truths to your children, it may feel overwhelming to begin this process of teaching. Don't know where to begin?*

There are many solid biblical resources available for you to use. Here are a few that my family has especially enjoyed: Training Hearts, Teaching Minds and Comforting Hearts, Teaching Minds by Starr Meade; Big Beliefs! by David Helm; Long Story Short, Old Story New, and The Ology by Marty Machowski.

Sources:

John Newton, *The Works of John Newton* (Banner of Truth Trust, 1820).

Jonathan Aitken, *John Newton: From Disgrace to Amazing Grace* (Crossway, 2007).

TWO

The Prayer of a Godly Mother

Hudson Taylor

In preparing these words, I searched through the long and storied history of the church to find examples of Christian men who had godly moms. More specifically, I searched for notable Christian men whose most important spiritual influence was their mother. I discovered many, and have been deeply encouraged by what I've found. One such man was a great missionary who impacted an entire nation and the very course of Christian missions. It is his story we will examine in this chapter.

To tell this story properly, we must begin with the deep spiritual crisis this man endured in his teenage years, when he found himself unexpectedly torn between God and the world, drawn to the allure of

wealth. It was in this moment of excruciating crisis that Hudson Taylor came to learn the power of a praying mother.

A God-Fearing Home

Hudson Taylor was born on May 21, 1832, in Barnsley, England, the firstborn child of James and Amelia.

James was a chemist. He had desired to be a doctor but, as the family was unable to pay for medical school, had settled for pharmacology. Raised in a believing home, he became a committed Christian at a young age and developed a deep love for Scripture and theology.

When he was still a child, his parents moved to a home close to Wesleyan minister Benjamin Hudson. James quickly befriended the minister's daughter, Amelia, despite being six years her senior.

Amelia, too, had put her faith in Jesus from a young age. She was raised in impoverished conditions and had to take up work as a governess in 1824 when she was just 16. Yet she was confident she would not be forever at this vocation, for by that time, she knew of James' intentions for marriage. Later that same year, the couple announced their engagement. But before they could settle down together, James had to prepare to provide for Amelia, first through education and then through successfully establishing his own shop. By 1831 he had settled into a small shop in Barnsley and on April 5, they were married. In the intervening time, James' gift

for preaching had been identified, and he was set apart as a lay preacher, charged to give sermons each Lord's Day. Six days of each week were committed to the healing of bodies and the seventh to the healing of souls.

It was just thirteen months after James and Amelia's wedding day that they were joined by their first child. Though named after his father, he was always known as Hudson, after his mother's maiden name. Hudson was soon joined by Amelia Jr., who became his dearest friend, and then other siblings, at least two of whom died in childhood. Hudson's parents had dedicated him to the Lord before his birth, giving him to ministry and especially to mission work in China. Hudson learned this information only after he had already taken up the work.

James was a loving father committed to training his children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. But he was also severe in discipline and excessively frugal, often advocating forced austerity as a means of piety. In contrast to her husband, Amelia was kind, gentle, and forbearing. She had a quiet and pleasant personality and a rich sense of humor. She was well-respected in her local church, where she taught Bible classes for girls. She maintained an open home and welcomed many strangers, especially believers from surrounding villages. She and James consistently led their children in family worship—reading the Bible, praying, and singing hymns together.

The Taylor children grew up in an amiable, God-fearing home with their parents as teachers and their siblings as confidants. Hudson developed an early interest in spiritual matters and even an interest in missionary work. But it would not be long before he would be challenged to throw it all away.

The Power of a Praying Mother

When Hudson was 15, his father determined it was time for the boy to gain a wider experience of life. Hudson took up employment at a bank, and it was in this environment that he first encountered people who openly mocked the Christian faith. He soon joined them in scoffing and swearing. The job also opened his eyes to wealth and those who lived to accumulate and enjoy it. He found himself drawn to money and to the pleasures it could afford. His spiritual life began to languish, and he lost interest in prayer and in reading the Bible.

When weakening eyes eventually forced him to resign, he returned to his father's shop in a state of deep spiritual crisis. James attempted to help his son but was too often harsh and impatient. The crisis deepened. These were difficult days as Hudson, now 17, found himself despondent and short-tempered, inwardly and at times outwardly rebelling against his father's strict authority.

Amelia intervened because she understood

Hudson in a way James did not and perhaps could not. She redoubled her efforts to be kind, gentle, and patient toward him. She spoke to him, of course, and counseled him, but also became convinced that the best thing she could do for her son was to commit him to prayer.

During a short holiday that took her away from the family home, she felt compelled to increase the length and earnestness of her prayers. One day that compulsion grew to such a degree that she determined to pray for her son until she came to a sense of assurance that God would save him. She locked herself in her room and for hours pleaded that God would extend mercy to Hudson. And then, all of a sudden, she believed that God had answered her prayer. Her heart turned from pleading to praise, and she worshiped God that he had, indeed, saved Hudson.

Meanwhile, Hudson had been at home. Bored and discontent, he began looking for something to do. He wandered into his father's library and, though he pulled book after book from the shelf, found nothing of interest. Finally, he spotted a tract titled "Poor Richard." He read the story, then came to the simple words "the finished work of Christ." In that very moment, Hudson understood that Christ had done all that was necessary for salvation and the only right response was to accept that work by faith. Right there, he fell to his knees and committed his life to the Lord,

promising to serve him forever. He soon learned that as he was on his knees praising God for his salvation, his mother was doing the very same thing, though many miles away.

A few days later, he and his mother were reunited, and he immediately exclaimed, “I have some news to tell you.” Before he could say anything more she replied, “I know what it is! You have given yourself to God.” She explained that for days she had already been rejoicing in his salvation.

(Surely it is not an incidental detail that his sister Amelia Jr. had also committed to pray for his conversion in this time. Though she was only 13, she had pledged before God that she would pray three times each day for God to save Hudson. He learned this only later when he accidentally opened her diary and realized that she had made this promise just one month before God saved him. Many Christian men have godly moms, and many also have godly sisters.)

Taylor’s life was forever transformed. He soon committed his life to missionary work, trained as a doctor, began to preach, and at last departed for China in 1853. His mother was there to say farewell, and his description of their parting tells of their love and of her earnest prayers.

My beloved, now sainted mother, had come over to Liverpool to see me off. Never shall I forget

that day, nor how she went with me into the cabin that was to be my home for nearly six long months. With a mother's loving hand she smoothed the little bed. She sat by my side and joined in the last hymn we should sing together before parting. We knelt down and she prayed—the last mother's prayer I was to hear before leaving for China. Then notice was given that we must separate, and we had to say good-bye, never expecting to meet on earth again.

For my sake she restrained her feelings as much as possible. We parted, and she went ashore giving me her blessing. I stood alone on deck, and she followed the ship as we moved toward the dockgates. As we passed through the gates and the separation really commenced, never shall I forget the cry of anguish wrung from that mother's heart. It went through me like a knife. I never knew so fully, until then, what "God so loved the world" meant. And I am quite sure my precious mother learned more of the love of God for the perishing in that one hour than in all her life before.

Even on the mission field, Hudson continued to depend upon his mother's prayers, urging her to plead for him and writing to her with affection: "God be with you and bless you, my own dear, dear mother, and give you so to realize the preciousness of Jesus, that

you may wish for nothing but to ‘know him’ ... even in ‘the fellowship of his sufferings.’” From afar, Amelia gave counsel and encouragement to her missionary son. Their bond of friendship was only separated by her death in 1881.

Hudson Taylor would spend 51 years in China and found the China Inland Mission (now known as OMF International). Hundreds of missionaries would follow him to China and thousands of Chinese would come to know Christ. Rightly would he be known as one of the great Christian missionaries. And his story cannot be told without giving due credit to the power of a praying mother.

Even when raised in a godly home with a loving mother, some children may be dragged away from God into the sinful desires of the world. But no matter how far your children stray, no matter the circumstances, you must not succumb to despair. You can pray like Amelia prayed. You may not receive such a clear and remarkable answer to your prayer. But as you plead for your children before a sovereign God, as you cry out in faith to him, you can trust that there will be a day when your tears of mourning will turn to tears of joy.

* * *

A Mother's Reflection

One thing we can remember, especially in light of this story, is that even when you are at your absolute weakest as a mother—when you feel like a complete failure, when you feel you aren't doing anything right, when you feel that you are lacking most everything you need in order to show your children how to live for Christ—you can always pray. That is one thing that even a little child can do. You can always sit at Jesus' feet and pour out your sorrows, your anxieties, and you can take those precious babies that you feel you are royally messing up and lay them at his feet, knowing that you are too weak and too imperfect to bear the weight of saving them yourself.

Any mother who is at the end of her parenting rope and is all out of strength and ideas and just about out of hope for her children can pray. She can find all the power and strength that she needs there, not in herself, but in Christ. Amelia shows us how to trust God with our children, from her day-long prayer in her room to the cry of anguish on the dock the day that Hudson sailed away forever. She had committed her son to Christ, and then he gave her the faith to let Hudson go. No doubt it was her dedicated prayer life that gave her that kind of reliance on Christ—so beautiful!

Reflection Questions

- *Did you grow up with a praying mother? In what ways have you seen her prayers affect your life?*
- *How has God proven himself faithful in your own prayer life and in your prayers for your children? Take the time to thank him for his kindness and grace in your prayer life.*
- *When you struggle with anxiety and concerns for your kids today, will you spend more time worrying or more time praying? What are some specific ways that you can pray for your children today?*

Sources:

Howard Taylor, *The Spiritual Secret of Hudson Taylor* (Moody Publishing, 2012).

Jim Cromarty, *It Is Not Death to Die: A New Biography of Hudson Taylor* (Christian Focus, 2014).

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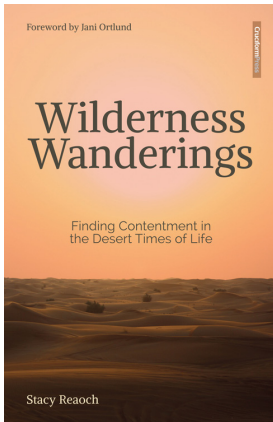
Kathleen Nielson is author of the *Living Word Bible Studies*; Director of Women's Initiatives, The Gospel Coalition; and wife of Niel, who served as President of Covenant College from 2002 to 2012.

Diane Schreiner – wife of professor, author, and pastor Tom Schreiner, and mother of four grown children – has led women's Bible studies for more than 20 years.

Connie Dever is author of *The Praise Factory* children's ministry curriculum and wife of Pastor Mark Dever, President of 9 Marks Ministries.

Kristie Anyabwile, holds a history degree from NC State University, and is married to Thabiti, currently a church planter in Washington, DC, and a Council Member for The Gospel Coalition.

Gloria Furman is a pastor's wife in the Middle East and author of *Glimpses of Grace* and *Treasuring Christ When Your Hands Are Full*.



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"Stacy Reaoch is a gifted guide for real joy in hard places."

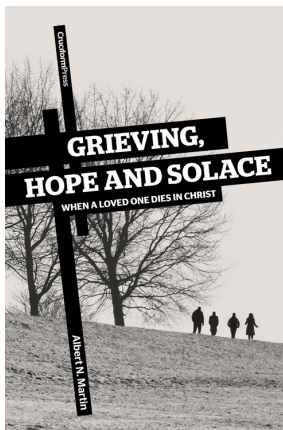
David Mathis, executive editor, [desiringGod.org](#); pastor; author

"A tonic for the soul...biblically faithful, spiritually challenging, and encouraging. A wonderful resource for both personal reading and for group discussion."

Tom and Diane Schreiner, Southern Seminary

"A guidebook through these barren and difficult paths, and a drink of cool water for the weary traveler."

***Megan Hill, author; editorial board member,
[Christianity Today](#)***



[Grieving, Hope and Solace](#)

When a Loved One Dies in Christ

by Albert N. Martin

**There is comfort for the grief.
There are answers to the questions.
The Bible does offer hope, solace,
healing, and confidence.**

**Pastor Albert Martin has been
there.**

112 pages bit.ly/GriefHope

“This tender book by a much-loved pastor, written after the death of his beloved wife, offers comfort to those in tears. A rare guidebook to teach us how to grieve with godliness, it is relevant to us all – if not for today, then no doubt for tomorrow.”

Maurice Roberts, former editor, Banner of Truth magazine

“Albert N. Martin is a seasoned pastor, skilled teacher, and gifted writer who has given us a priceless treasure in this book. All who read these pages will, unquestionably, be pointed to Christ and find themselves greatly helped.”

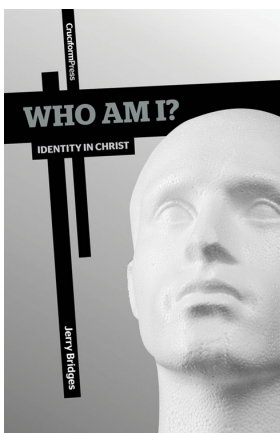
Steve Lawson, Christ Fellowship Baptist Church, Mobile, AL

“Like turning the corner and being met by a glorious moonrise, or discovering a painter or musician who touches us in the deepest recesses of our being—this little book by Pastor Al Martin has been such an experience for me. Whether you are a pastor or counselor, one who is experiencing the pangs of grief, or a member of the church who wants to be useful to others, you need to read this book.”

Joseph Pipa, President, Greenville Presbyterian Theo. Sem.

“Personal tenderness and biblical teaching in a sweet book of comfort. Buy it and give it away, but make sure to get a copy for yourself.”

Dr. Joel R. Beeke, President, Puritan Reformed Theo. Sem.



[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.”

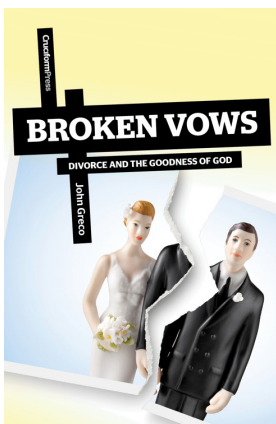
J.I. Packer, Theological Editor, ESV Study Bible; author, Knowing God, A Quest for Godliness, Concise Theology

“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



[Broken Vows](#)

Divorce and the Goodness of God

by John Greco

Because divorce can and does happen, even to Christians.

86 pages

bit.ly/B-VOWS

“I really, really like this book...John helps us see and live in the relentless grace and sure direction of the Father in the face of our seemingly unbearable real-life trials. He writes wisely, not from untried theory, but fire-tested experience.”

Glenn T. Stanton, Director of Family Formation Studies, Focus on the Family

“I’ve always marveled at Joseph’s perspective in Genesis 50:20. He acknowledged the deep pain his brothers had inflicted on him, but also recognized God’s sovereign ability to transform his personal pain into something beautiful. I had the same feeling as I read *Broken Vows*. John Greco does a beautiful job making it clear that though he never wanted his marriage to end, he would never trade the intimacy he now enjoys with his Heavenly Father. This book is filled with wisdom from cover to cover. It’s the overflow of a painful personal struggle that resulted in a life full of authenticity and hope.”

Phil Tuttle, President and CEO, Walk Thru the Bible

“John Greco’s first-hand account of coping with the trauma of broken vows offers straightforward and biblical insight into a complicated subject. *Broken Vows* provides a lifeline of hope laced with empathy, practical guidance, and non-judgmental biblical wisdom.”

Laura Petherbridge, author, When “I Do” Becomes “I Don’t”



[The Company We Keep](#)

In Search of Biblical Friendship

by Jonathan Holmes

Foreword by Ed Welch

**Biblical friendship is deep, honest,
pure, transparent, and liberating.**

It is also attainable.

112 pages

bit.ly/B-Friend

“Jonathan Holmes has the enviable ability to say a great deal in a few words. Here is a wonderful primer on the nature of biblical friendship—what it means and why it matters.”

Alistair Begg, Truth for Life, Senior Pastor, Parkside Church

“Jonathan has succeeded in giving us a picture of how normal, daily, biblical friendships can be used by God to mold us into the likeness of Christ. If you want a solid, fresh way of re-thinking all of your relationships, read this book.”

Dr. Tim S. Lane, co-author, How People Change

“A robust and relevant GPS for intentional and vulnerable gospel-centered friendships....a great book not only for individuals, but also for small groups...a significant contribution to the Kingdom.”

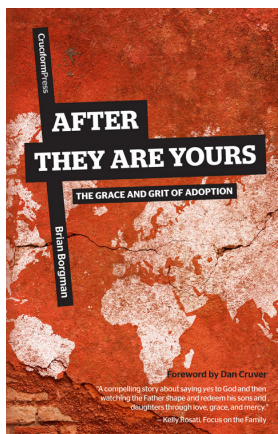
Robert W. Kelleman, Exec. Dir., Biblical Counseling Coalition

“Short. Thoughtful. Biblical. Practical. I’m planning to get my friends to read this book so we can transform our friendships.”

Deepak Reju, Pastor of Biblical Counseling, Capitol Hill Baptist

“Filled with answers that are equally down-to-earth, nitty-gritty, and specific....taking us where we need to go with warmth and wisdom.”

Wesley Hill, author, Washed and Waiting



[After They are Yours](#)

The Grace and Grit of Adoption

by Brian Borgman

Foreword by Dan Cruver

This is about the “other side” of adoption, the difficult realities that are not often discussed. What do you do when it’s hard to hope? Here is a story of adoption that’s real, raw, redemptive, and edifying.

102 pages

bit.ly/AfterThey

“A compelling story about saying *yes* to God and then watching the Father shape and redeem his sons and daughters through love, grace, and mercy.”

Kelly Rosati, V.P. Community Outreach, Focus on the Family

“The decision to adopt is heroic. The reality is often hard. This book does not sugar coat the sacrifice that comes standard with adoption. It will help those considering adoption count the cost. And it will provide encouragement and help for parents who have already welcomed a child into their forever family.”

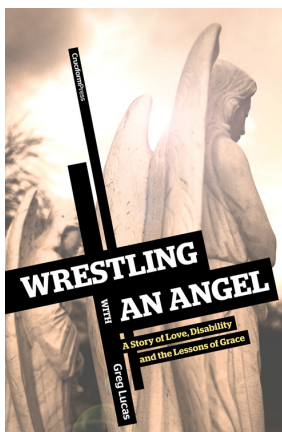
Bob Lepine, Co-Host, FamilyLife Today

“It’s all here – joy, hurt, and longing. And this is precisely what we most need: truth-telling that plunges beyond cliché and facade to speak of both the beauty and the brokenness that so often come woven together in adoption, all of it wrapped round by God’s limitless grace.”

Jedd Medefind, President, Christian Alliance for Orphans

“Brian Borgman lets us step into his family’s experience as he unashamedly shares the joys and difficulties of their adoption story. Pain and loss are an inescapable part of every adoption, and Borgman points us to the gospel that provides both the framework and the fuel families will need for the challenges... an excellent resource.”

Stephen Story, Executive Director of Covenant Care Services



[Wrestling with an Angel](#)

A Story of Love, Disability
and the Lessons of Grace

by Greg Lucas

The riveting, inspiring true story that readers have called “a touchstone book of my life,” and “alternately hilarious and heartbreaking,” a book that “turns the diamond of grace in such a way that you see facets you never really noticed before.”

bit.ly/CPWrestle

“C.S. Lewis wrote that he paradoxically loved *The Lord of the Rings* because it ‘broke his heart’ – and Greg Lucas’ writing does the same for me.”

Justin Taylor, Managing Editor, ESV Study Bible

“Witty...stunning...striking...humorous and heartfelt. *Wrestling with an Angel* provides a fresh, honest look at one father’s struggle to embrace God in the midst of his son’s disability. Can sheer laughter and weeping gracefully coexist in a world of so much affliction? Greg knows all about it. I highly recommend this wonderfully personal book!”

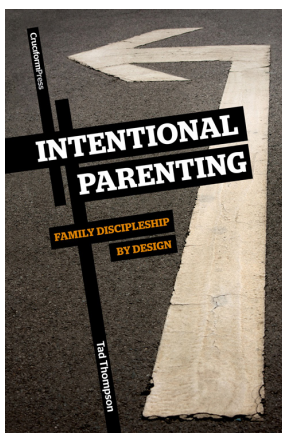
Joni Eareckson Tada, Joni and Friends International

“You will laugh; you will cry. You will feel sick; you will feel inspired. You will be repulsed by the ugliness of sin; you will be overwhelmed by the love of God. Greg Lucas takes us on an unforgettable ride as he extracts the most beautiful insights into grace from the most painful experiences of life.”

David P. Murray, Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary

“Greg Lucas is a captivating storyteller. When he writes about life with Jake, I recognize God’s grace and loving persistence in my life. I want more!”

Noël Piper, author, and wife of pastor and author John Piper



[Intentional Parenting](#)

Family Discipleship by Design

by Tad Thompson

The Big Picture and a Simple Plan— That's What You Need to Do Family Discipleship Well

This book will allow you to take all the sermons, teachings, and exhortations you have received on the topic of family discipleship, make sense of it, and put it to use.

“As parents, we know God has given us the responsibility to train our children in his ways. But many parents don't know where or how to start. Tad has done us all a favor by identifying seven key categories of biblical teaching we can utilize in teaching our children godly truth and principles. This easy-to-follow plan will help any parent put the truth of God's Word into their children's hearts.”

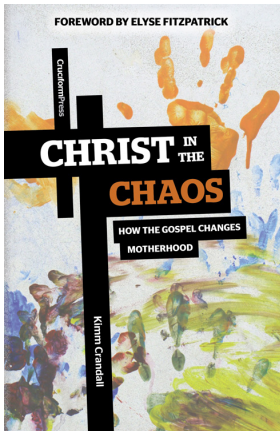
***Kevin Ezell, President, North American Mission Board,
Southern Baptist Convention; father of six***

“Here is a practical page-turner that encourages fathers to engage the hearts of their families with truth and grace. In an age when truth is either ignored or despised, it is refreshing to see a book written for ordinary fathers who want their families to be sanctified by the truth. Thompson writes with a grace which reminds us that parenting flows from the sweet mercies of Christ.”

***Joel Beeke, President, Puritan Reformed Theological
Seminary***

“Need an introductory text to the topic of discipling children? Here is a clear, simple book on family discipleship, centered on the gospel rather than human successes or external behaviors.”

***James M. Hamilton, Associate Professor of Biblical
Theology, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary***



[Christ in the Chaos](#)

How the Gospel Changes
Motherhood

by Kimm Crandall

MOMS: Stop comparing yourself to others. Stop striving to meet false expectations. Stop thinking your performance dictates your worth.

Look to the gospel for rest, joy, sufficiency, identity, and motivation.

112 pages bit.ly/Christ-in

“Although Kimm Crandall’s message would revive any soul longing for the breath of the gospel of grace, I am especially eager to recommend this book to that heart who strives to know God and to make him known to the little ones who call her ‘Momma.’ Kimm is a candid and gracious fellow sojourner, faithfully pointing to God’s immeasurable steadfast love and grace in the midst of our mess.”

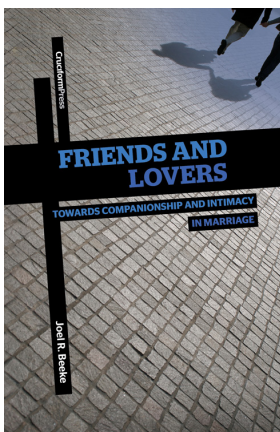
Lauren Chandler, wife of Matt Chandler (pastor of The Village Church), mother of three, writer, singer, and speaker

“What an amazingly wild and wise, disruptive and delighting, freeing and focusing book. Kimm’s book is for every parent willing to take the stewardship of children and the riches of the gospel seriously. This is one of the most helpful and encouraging books on parenting I’ve read in the past twenty years. This will be a book you will want to give to parents, to-be parents, and grandparents.”

Scotty Smith, author; Founding Pastor, Christ Community Church

“Kimm Crandall has discovered that chaos can be the perfect context in which to experience God’s liberating grace. She is a wise, practical, gospel-drenched guide for anyone navigating through the wearisome terrain of parenting.”

Tullian Tchividjian, author; Pastor, Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church



[Friends and Lovers](#)

Cultivating Companionship and Intimacy in Marriage

by Joel R. Beeke

Marriage is for God's glory and our good.

The secret?... Intimate Christian companionship.

bit.ly/FriendsAnd

"A book about love, marriage, and sex from Joel Beeke that is surprisingly candid yet without a trace of smuttiness. Fresh and refreshingly straightforward, this is the best book of its kind."

Derek WH Thomas, Visiting Professor, Reformed Theo. Sem.

"Marriage is hard work. And wonderful. And sometimes, it's both at the same time. *Friends and Lovers* is like a personal mentoring session on marriage with a man whose heart is devoted to seeing Christ honored in how we love each other as husbands and wives. It's full of practical wisdom and grace. A delight."

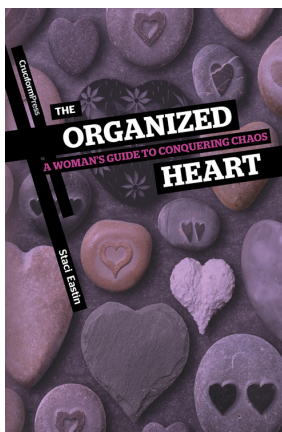
Bob Lepine, Co-Host, FamilyLife Today

"By laying the theological, emotional, social, and spiritual foundations of marriage before heading to the bedroom, Joel Beeke provides a healthy corrective to the excessive and obsessive sex-focus of our generation and even of some pastors. But, thankfully, he also goes on to provide wise, practical, down-to-earth direction for couples wanting to discover or recover physical intimacy that will both satisfy themselves and honor God."

Dr. David Murray, Professor, Puritan Reformed Theo. Sem.

"There is no better book than this to renew the affection of happy marriage."

Geoffrey Thomas, Pastor, Alfred Place Baptist Church, Wales



[The Organized Heart](#)

A Woman's Guide to Conquering Chaos

by Staci Eastin

Disorganized? You don't need more rules, the latest technique, or a new gadget.

This book will show you a different, better way. A way grounded in the grace of God.

bit.ly/OHeart

“Staci Eastin packs a gracious punch, full of insights about our disorganized hearts and lives, immediately followed by the balm of gospel-shaped hopes. This book is ideal for accountability partners and small groups.”

Carolyn McCulley, blogger, filmmaker, author of Radical Womanhood and Did I Kiss Marriage Goodbye?

“Unless we understand the spiritual dimension of productivity, our techniques will ultimately backfire. Find that dimension here. Encouraging and uplifting rather than guilt-driven, this book can help women who want to be more organized but know that adding a new method is not enough.”

Matt Perman, Director of Strategy at Desiring God, blogger, author of the forthcoming book, What's Best Next: How the Gospel Transforms the Way You Get Things Done

“Organizing a home can be an insurmountable challenge for a woman. The Organized Heart makes a unique connection between idols of the heart and the ability to run a well-managed home. This is not a how-to. Eastin looks at sin as the root problem of disorganization. She offers a fresh new approach and one I recommend, especially to those of us who have tried all the other self-help models and failed.”

Aileen Challies, Mom of three, and wife of blogger, author, and pastor Tim Challies