

2013 Pastor's Reading List

1. **TEXAS GOT IT RIGHT!** by Sam and Andrew Wyly. This is an interesting little book. 176 pages of TEXAS pride, history and innovation that has made us the #1 state in the country by many accounts. In highlighting our history it defines our character which is made up of just about every ethnic group imaginable who have come together with a "can do" attitude. Texas pride goes without saying and these authors got here as quickly as they could. This is a great "coffee table" book. (I know no one really has coffee tables any more.) But it is the type of book that you can refer to for helpful information that might be able to help those living in "less fortunate" states like California or Oklahoma. Commerce and industry information abound in the book... like the fact that Texas ports create over one million jobs which generate over 50 billion dollars in personal income. This book also highlights Texas citizens from Sam Houston to Beyonce'... and it also answers the question of where the word maverick comes from. There is a reason to be in Texas because Texas Got It Right!
2. **Living with Honor: A Memoir of Medal of Honor Recipient Staff Sergeant Salvatore A. Giunta.** Staff Sergeant Salvatore, "Sal," Giunta was the first living person to receive the Medal of Honor since the conclusion of the Vietnam War. He calls himself "just and a soldier" not a hero and from the beginning the author's words jump out at you... and wash over you as comfortably as if you're talking with your buddies on the street corner or walking down the halls of your high school. It is excellent on so many levels. You'll learn about those who volunteer to fight our wars. You'll learn how the war in Afghanistan was/is really fought. If your kids read it, they'll learn the value of their citizenship. When you read it you will see the sacrifice, the camaraderie, and the leadership skills that are developed when you least expect it sometimes and then how they are used in a crisis situation. It's very well and tightly written, without a dull moment, and you can breeze through it in just a few hours, because you won't want to put it down. But most of all, you'll learn about Sal Giunta, a humble, American hero from Iowa who excels at representing all of our country's heroes. I say humble because Sal tells us of the bumps and bruises along the way of his life as a confession as well as lessons learned. One of the awesome responsibilities of someone who receives the Medal of Honor is representing all warriors who have served their country and

Sal seems to be doing that with this book giving me hope that he is doing that in his life.

3. **Center City** by Timothy Keller. This book is written very much like a text book on the subject of church growth from a biblical perspective. With so many seeking to “figure out” how to communicate effectively in this post-Christian culture we now live in, this book lays out a theological vision for ministry that are dependent upon biblical principles and doctrines that the Church has utilized for centuries because man has not really changed. We may have more stuff but our hearts are the same and once the church gets away from the “all is well” mentality and gets back on mission the more effective the church’s ministry will become. Dr. Keller organizes his book around three core commitments: “*‘Gospel-centered’ ...recognizing that is the gospel alone that is the a to Z of the Christian life and it alone is what can change the hearts of men., ‘City-Centered’ ...since cities increasingly influence our culture we need to use this energy and push forward with the gospel-centered message to influence them for Christ. And thirdly, ‘Movement-centered’ ...instead of just focusing on our church an intense focus on growing the kingdom.*”
4. **The Jefferson Lies** by David Barton. The sub-title says it all; “*Exposing the Myths You’ve Always Believed About Thomas Jefferson*”. This is written with David Barton’s usual completeness. He has a affinity for correct scholarship and he goes to great lengths to show by using the original documents the weakness in each of the 7 myths that he tackles. The 7 myths that he deals with are the main ones that scholars today float as fact and they are: (1) Thomas Jefferson Fathered Sally Henning’s’ Children; (2) Thomas Jefferson founded a secular university when he started the University of Virginia; (3) Thomas Jefferson wrote His own Bible and edited out the things he disagreed with; (4) Thomas Jefferson was a racist who opposed equality for Black Americans; (5) Thomas Jefferson advocated a secular square through the separation of church and state; (6) Thomas Jefferson detested the clergy; (7) Thomas Jefferson was an atheist and not a Christian. In every case Barton uses the original documents written by Jefferson and those who knew him...even those who did not like him...to reveal these as myths and while there is some questions as to the state of Jefferson’s living out his faith at his death there seems to be little doubt in the author’s or mine for that matter that Thomas Jefferson was a Christian. This is a great and easy read even for the nominal historian. There are literally hundreds of footnotes to support his position most from the original

sources which is how we ought to judge someone from the past. And just so you are wondering Jefferson himself wrote over 19,000 letters (yes, you read that right.) with answers to many of these myths within them.

5. **My Share of the Task: A Memoir** By Gen. Stanley McChrystal, U.S. Army, retired. This book is definitely a memoir...for it reads almost like a daily journal of the good general as he relates his share of the task in rebuilding the Special Forces to be able to deal with what many consider the on-going threat of terrorist insurgents. This is the new battlefield across the globe and at home...nowhere is safe. The General like so many good leaders is a student of military campaigns from Rome to Sun Tzu to Vietnam to the Gulf War. As a devoted student of history his book reads very much like the biographies and military records that he had grown up reading. **My Share of the Task** seeks to do just that... reveal that he was only one piece of a much bigger task. Even when speaking of the controversy that led to his resignation he only gives a brief account...maybe 3 pages total with no explanation for his actions. He had made it clear throughout the book that as a soldier he served at the pleasure of his commander-in-chief and that if he in anyway made this person look bad or anyone on his staff did the same...it was his responsibility and so he resigned taking the brunt of the heat. Rather than taking credit he gives credit. This book is filled with leadership principles that can be incorporated in every walk of life. A slow read to capture all the meaning but a well worth read! (440 pages)
6. **God Has a Wonderful Plan for Your Life: The Myth of the Modern Message, By Ray Comfort.** I came across this book the other day and the title alone compelled me to read it. I have always had a problem with the **4 Spiritual Laws** used by Campus Crusades for Christ that makes this simple statement in its evangelistic presentation, “*God has a wonderful plan for your life.*” Ray Comfort is probably one of the few people who could take this on effectively from a practical and theological perspective since he spent many years with CCC and worked closely with Dr. Bill Bright. My problem has always been; what if God does not have a wonderful plan for your life? What if you are not numbered among His children. If God has such a wonderful plan for my life then why IS there pain and suffering my life...is there something even more wrong with me that keeps Him from taking this away? This little booklet makes it clear that the modern church with the use of this statement has been trying to sell the public a cure for all their ailments, giving a guarantee for

a better life...focusing on self-improvement if you will... but the problem is it doesn't do that. In presenting this "gospel" as an easy fix we have tampered with the gospel by leaving out the standard and the need for repentance. If people are never put face to face with the disease they will never really take the cure... this is his premise. I am not going to discuss some of the finer points of theology here because the principles he teaches about evangelism are sound. A great little book to consider in your own life as you prepare yourself to go out and proclaim the gospel.

7. **Memoirs of a World War II U.S. Army Chaplain, by Lt. Col. Floyd H. Chunn, (chaplain, Ret.).** This was a great reminder of the sacrifices made by the men of the cloth on the frontlines of WWII. We spend a lot of time commemorating, as we should, the soldier, but here is a lively account of a chaplains work from Fort Benning, Ga. , to Normandy Beach, all the way through to Berlin and how he was separated from his family for 5 years of this war. A man of great conviction...a true patriot...but more than that a man of God.**On Prayer, by E.M. Bounds.** E.M. Bounds was a chaplain in the Confederate States Army (3rd Missouri Infantry CSA). This is one of the classic works on prayer of the church. This book is compiled of 8 original treatises on the different aspects of prayer like: the purpose of prayer; the necessity of prayer; the realities of prayer; all the way through to prayer and praying men to name 4 of the 8. These 8 sections were actually 8 separate books published sometime after the Civil war and before his death in 1913. These classic books can continue to inspire and instruct us on all aspects of prayer and its uses in everyday Christian life if we would only pick them up and study them... or as is the case today all of them have been placed in another book entitled **The Complete Works of E. M. Bounds.** *"Prayer has to do with the entire man. Prayer takes in man in his whole being, mind, soul and body. It takes the whole man to pray, and prayer affects the entire man in its gracious results. As the whole nature of man enters into prayer, so also all that belongs to man is the beneficiary of prayer. All of man receives benefits in prayer. The whole man must be given to God in praying. The largest results in praying come to him who gives himself, all of himself, all that belongs to himself, to God. This is the secret of full consecration, and this is a condition of successful praying, and the sort of praying which brings the largest fruits."* -E. M. Bounds
8. **Government Bullies** by Sen. Rand Paul. The Subtitle for this book is, ***How Everyday Americans are Being Harassed, Abused and Imprisoned By the Feds.*** Well, this pretty much says it all. This book is a compilation of "horrific" act perpetrated by an overreaching and uncaring federal government that continues to grow pretty much unchecked. These are all stories of meaningful legislation, perhaps, that have been left unchecked that have grown up to be unregulated, chaotic, and seemingly unstoppable. Sen. Paul is not one of my favorite politician for the way he seems to always be crying

wolf on every little thing but...maybe...he has a point that we regular Americans that have not “yet” been stepped on by our government need to look into. He doesn’t care if he is everyone’s favorite politician but he does care that we all pay attention. After reading this book believe me I will try to pay more attention.

9. **Your Home: A Place of Grace** by Susan Hunt. Susan always writes in a way that makes me think deeper. This book makes you think deeper. Why do we do family the way we do? What is our purpose as believers, family members, children of God? This book gets everyone who reads it to stop and to look deeply at their lives seeking to discover if we are in fact seeking to be covenantal in our life and faith. Susan says; *“I am passionate about the biblical doctrine of the covenant, and my desire to see God’s people apply this doctrine in their lives is a fire in my bones.”* Truly, as long as I have known her this is seen in all she does and in all that she writes. The companion book that I would whole heartedly recommend is **Heirs of the Covenant: Leaving a Legacy of Faith for the Next Generation**. We often get so caught up in trying to find the “right” book for parenting and we forget that we must have a strong foundation before we jump into those how-to books no matter how good they are. Susan gives that foundation along with many tips in growing a godly family...making your home a place of grace.

10. **TONIGHT WE DIE AS MEN: The Untold Story of the Third Battalion 506 Parachute Infantry Regiment from Toccoa to D-Day**, by, Ian Gardner and Roger Day. An interesting read to be sure. This is the story about another group of Band of Brothers, if you will. Stephen Ambrose’s world renown work Band of Brothers highlights many of the men from 101st Airborne Div. 2nd Battalion 506 Parachute Infantry Regiment E (Easy) Company from Toccoa, Ga. through to the end of the war. This book however, gives a thorough accounting of the 3rd Bat....literally trying to put every man in the 3rd Battalions G, H and I Companies in print. The authors are to be commended for that but...with so many people to keep track of and the jumping from one battlefield to another ...one date to another it was not always easy to keep track of where you were. And then you add to that the font size and light print made it difficult for this “old guy” to read...oh, well you get the picture. Having said that though it is a good companion to the work done by Ambrose, **Band of Brothers: E Company, 506 Regiment, 101st Airborne** because there were many cross over names that you would recognize.

11. **Prayers of the Bible - Equipping Women to Call on God in Truth** by Susan Hunt. I seek to always read whatever Susan writes because she always writes things that cause me to grow and change making me a better disciple. I wish more men read her books. They are filled with such insightfulness that I come closer to the Lord just by reading her materials. This book is no different. She wrote this book to help women to be able to call on the Lord in truth, but everything except perhaps her specific comments to the “true woman” apply to all of us. Godly men need to read this one as well to gain insight into how easy prayer is and how necessary. This is a great book for those trying to figure out how to pray, for she takes some of the prayers of the Bible and shows us what they meant to those who prayed them and what they mean to us as we consider how to pray today. This book is also for those whose prayers have gone stale and need a renewal in this department. I highly recommend this book to both genders...but to the guys...you will have to get past the cover...put some “camo” duct tape on it or something.
12. **What It Means to be a Bulldog-Vince Dooley, Mark Richt and Georgia’s greatest Players** By Tony Barnhart. Tony is particularly equipped to speak on this subject as a graduate of UGA and a sports writer for over 30 years. This book is for those of us who are “Dawg” fans and it is a real tribute to many of the greats from Georgia’s great football history. Stories of greats like John Rauch, Charley Trippi, Fran Tarkenton and Herschel Walker are captured when possible through first-person accounts and recollections...a must for any true fan.
13. **The Wild Blue: The Men and Boys Who Flew the B-24’s Over Germany**, by Stephen Ambrose. Just like his many other books like **Citizen Soldiers** or **Band of Brothers: E Company, 506 Regiment, 101st Airborne** he is engaging in the way we come to know the true life characters who were the heroes flying these extremely powerful and imposing planes that helped win the war in Europe. In many ways this book is about George McGovern, U. S. Senator and 1972 Presidential candidate and anti-war activist during the Vietnam War. This book follows Mr. McGovern from his home in South Dakota through AAF training and his 35 bombing missions over Europe in 1944 and 1945 till the end of the war in Europe. But it is not just about this war hero but also the heroes that flew with him and it represents all the heroes who came back and those who gave the ultimate sacrifice in the skies over Italy, Austria and Germany in those last days of WW II. A great read for any

historian or novice that wishes to know more about these men, what they were thinking and how they made it out with their sanity.

14. **Spectacular Sins and Their Global Purpose in the Glory of Christ, by Dr. John Piper.** Dr. Piper states his aim and purpose clearer than I can, *“The aim of this book has been to show that over and over in the history of the world, the epoch-making sins that changed the course of history never nullified but only fulfilled the global purposes of God to glorify His Son and save His people.”* This little book was written in 2008, but I just became aware of it. It is a very timely book for the Church of the 21st Century to consider. This book speaks clearly of God’s sovereignty in a way that can be easily understood by even the newest Christian. It is to be applauded for speaking so plainly about such a complex attribute of God. He speaks of God’s acts and His reasons in bold terms for he is adamant about the need for the Church to have this image of the God of the universe. We need to see God’s providence in the way he describes so that we can be strengthened, encouraged and prepared for the sure and certain battles that are ahead for God’s Church. The only real criticism I have of this book is that while he uses very bold terms to describe God’s work there is one term that is interestingly absent that I believe would lend even more weight to an already weighty little book. He chooses to use the term “permits” far too many times when speaking to the spectacular sins in this book. For my money, I think the term “decreed”...as in He decreed these events to occur... is stronger. Having said that, I still **would highly recommend its reading to any and all who seek to know God and be able to articulate why He does what He does to the world around us.** (112 pages)

15. **Command of Honor: General Lucian Truscott’s Path to Victory in World War II, by H. Paul Jeffers.** The author’s purpose is to show us an unsung homegrown hero that very few know much about. Prior to reading this book I only knew of Gen. Truscott as one of Gen. George S. Patton’s generals...wow, did that assessment miss the mark. After reading this book and doing a little extra research on my own I have found that Ge. Truscott truly was a military giant who was tough, resourceful and at the same time devoted to the men under his command. He like many other unsung heroes exemplified one who lived for duty, honor, and courage...qualities that are not lifted up much today. This book chronicles the life of this raspy-voiced ex-school teacher. “90 day wonder”, and tight-lipped general who engineered many of the greatest military victories of WWII from North Africa, through the boot of Italy with his soldiers

beating back a tough and seasoned German military. While much has been written about the campaigns in Europe especially from D-Day on this book chronicles the events of the “forgotten front” that was just as instrumental, if not more in Germany’s ultimate surrender. This book also talks of Gen. Truscott’s work after the war for President Eisenhower and the beginning of the CIA and the general role in securing and disseminating the first operatives in the early days of the service. Overall this is another excellent book for the military history buff...like myself. (312 pages)

16. What Every Christian Needs to Know About the Qur’an by James R.

White. I am convinced that we spend too much time talking about the cults like; Mormonism and Jehovah Witnesses. As Christian we need to know about one of the main threats to our faith and worldview that exists in the world today and that would be Islam. We need not fear it but we do need to understand it for it is coming and is here in so many parts of this country. This book clearly and succinctly takes you through the main doctrines of Islam using their own sacred texts. It can shed light on global politics and the worldview of your Islamic next door neighbor. From their own documents the author reveals the inconsistencies in what the orthodox Muslim refers to as the Book of absolute authority, without error, and that no other book can claim this...the Qur’an. He goes on through this book to reveal how the Qur’an speaks against Christian doctrines to which it is not even familiar like the Trinity. They, of course, say the Christian believes in three gods when we speak of the Trinity. Who makes up the Trinity according to the Qur’an? The Father, Mary and Jesus! In many places this is attested to in the Qur’an revealing the Qur’an’s weakness in understanding what Christians teach and what the Gospel...the Injil, which they hold to be from God, actually teaches. In fact, there is little evidence, if any, to support that Mohammed or any of his followers ever read the Injil/or the Gospels. This is a timely book that clearly shows that Islam and Christianity represent two contradictory truth claims. This book will aid in our engaging in open and honest discussion with Muslims and others who wish to know more. Within the book is also a “correct” reading guide for reading the Qur’an. (307 pages) I have an extra copy of the book that will be available to read on the library shelves.

17. A Place for Weakness: Preparing Yourself for Suffering by Michael

Horton. Sometimes we wonder where God is in our weakness. This book answers that He is right there with us. That He does not usually remove the

difficulties from us. That we are better when we walk through suffering following Him rather than thinking as the world and many in the church seem to want to teach that through Jesus we will be healthier, wealthier and wiser...and if we aren't then there is something wrong...with us. Dr. Horton writes, "*Feeling good has emerged as not only a national priority but a religious obsession for Christians and non-Christians alike.*" It seem that when suffering comes, many who have never gotten beyond sentimental images of God find they simply do not have a God worth trusting when the going gets tough. This book encourages us who are not looking for a way to "feel better" but rather for a way to glorify God. A great read on a hard subject. Only 203 pages with study questions to think about.

18. **Man Asks, God Answers, by Craig R. Brown. (RE in the PCA)** Here we find a fine book on the basic doctrines of the Christian faith in question form. Question like; *Is there a God and is He in control; How do I get to heaven and Where did evil come from* are answered with Scriptural and doctrinal clarity. There have been books written on these subjects from Horton to Sproul to Keller in our day and from Augustine, to Calvin, to Beottner in days gone by, seeking to get into the hands of God's people the "simple" truths of Scripture so that we can adequately be prepared to give an answer for the hope we have been given in Christ Jesus. We can't have too many of these well written and "easy" to read booklets since all people learn in different ways. This book is written by a ruling elder who has served in both the orthodox Presbyterian Church and the PCA. It is only 140 pages and is a great "handbook" to have available when teaching your children or answering questions by Christians and others. (Only 139 pages).

19. **7 MEN AND THE SECRET OF THEIR GREATNESS** by Eric Metaxas. Paul tells us in Philippians 3, "***Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us.***" Paul expects that we will want to know what the Christian life is to look like and so he says imitate himself and the others who are living as God's Word prescribes. We sometimes think that all we need to do is look around us and we will find what we are looking for, but that is not always the case...not because the people aren't there but because we don't "really" know what to look for...another reason Paul said to imitate him and the others in this passage. Anyway, to this book; Mr. Metaxas brings to us 7 men that we need to look at from history that will enable us to further know what to look for in true

Christians. We need a book like this because it enables us to see the qualities we should be looking for in those that are described in the above text. We are not sure if any of these people exist anymore...or maybe we have been taught to never seek to imitate others, but only Christ...but here and many other places in Scripture we are told we need examples of how this faith works and how it looks. Well, here are 7 prime examples, according to the author...men that he has looked to, learned from and sought to emulate as far as they imitate Christ.

20. If you have been an Eric Metaxas fan from his other great books like: **Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy** or **Amazing Grace: William Wilberforce, the Heroic Campaign to End Slavery** ...then you know how he writes and this book will not let you down. If you have not read any of his works this would be a great book to pick up. These “great men” surrendered themselves to a higher purpose...giving something away that they might have kept because of their devotion to the Lord of the universe. And this submission by such men is what makes them “great”. As Paul says in **II Cor. 12...**“*When I am weak, then I am strong.*” (Only 194 riveting pages) (Another book along this same line worthy of your checking out is one that Os Guinness’ (yes the same family as the beer brewery :) edited called **CHARACTER COUNTS: THE LEADERSHIP QUALITIES IN WASHINGTON, WILBERFORCE, LINCOLN AND SOLZHENITSYN.**

21. **THE PICTORIAL LIFE OF GEORGE WASHINGTON: Embracing a Complete History of the Seven Years War, The Revolutionary War, The Formation of the Federal Constitution and the Administration of Washington** , By John Frost, LL.D. (originally published in 1859, most recently re-published by White Hall Press 2009). This is wonderful re-print of what was at the time considered an authoritative history of President George Washington’s life. You have to love the enthusiasm of this book. The author obviously comes at this subject from the aspect of our nations sovereignty and from ours being the most favored of all nations...a true patriot in most ways. He re-prints so many original documents here that you cannot help but see the heart of Washington and many of the Founding Father’s. This book was published just on the eve of the Civil War which I would presume was no coincidence. Many were seeking to regain the national pride that we had had less than 100 years before as we stood up to and gained our independence from the tyranny of the English crown. Also seeking to dispel a conflict which had the potential of destroying our nation and returning us to an enslaved status. As I said. The timing of the publishing of this book was certainly no coincidence since Washington was still such a popular person in this country...one whose ideals needed to be emulated and rallied around even 60 years after his death. It

is timely today as well, not because we are preparing for a Civil War but because we are in the midst of a cultural war...a war of worldviews and we have lost our way. His leadership was solely based on his faith in the One Christ and his total surrender to his Lord and the cause that he believed the Lord had called him to...the service of his country at a time of its greatest need. (A whopping 604 pages which include a couple of appendix and a list of the most popular and recommended books of the time.)

22. **St. Andrew's Expositional Commentary on John, by R.C. Sproul.** I know they call this an expositional commentary and while that is true I found it to be extremely devotional. So much so that I had a hard time putting it down when beginning to use it for study and verification on some of the points of teaching. R.C.'s style is not always conducive to the way the average person thinks, but this commentary reminds me of what caused me to be drawn to the book the Holiness of God. His style here draws the reader to want to know more of God. This may be because these are adaptations of sermons preached on these texts and R.C. is an animated preacher to be sure. His passion for God comes out best when he speaks and so it makes sense that that passion would be communicated into this book. Endorsing a commentary series as a devotional may seem like lunacy but in this case this book is a great devotional read. I look forward to picking up some of the others that he has done.
23. **NO ATHEISTS IN FOXHOLES: Prayers and Reflections from the Front, by Chaplain Patrick McLaughlin, CDR.USN.** From Camp David to two tours in Iraq, Chaplain McLaughlin captures in his heart warming stories and prayers the mind and heart of true warriors. As a chaplain for the president he was privy to the needs of the commander-in-chief in a time of preparation for war and he reflects on that with stories and prayers. His next assignment was as a chaplain with the Surgical Shock Trauma Platoon and detail he saw as much pain and suffering as any combatant without leaving the wire on many days. This is not your Fr. Mulcahy from M.A.S.H. kind of hospital but it was an in the operating room type of ministry. After that he also served as chaplain to the Marine Corps Mortuary Affairs, those who honorably handle the deceased and he had many opportunities to minister to these men and women as well. This book is the compilation of many of his prayers and personal reflection during these times. They are very real and arresting...stories that none of us should shy away from. Whether you ever served or not these prayers

and reflections help us to better honor those who have served by getting a first person account about something that often seems so far away.

24. **A Rabbi Looks at the LAST DAYS, Surprising Insights on Israel, the End Times and popular Misconceptions, by Rabbi Jonathan Bernis.** This book was recommended to me and since I have not read anything by any current Messianic Jews it intrigued me. My history with this movement had been limited to the Jews for Jesus Movement that had wide popularity 20 plus years ago. As I looked at this book it seemed to suggest at the beginning that it was different from all others books on the end time that have come before it so I continued to read more. But after a few chapters I realized that it was just the same Dispensational Pre-Millennialism that had been around for a while from other Messianic Jewish groups just placed in a better package. It makes the Jewish people out to be different from the Church... almost a separate group entirely. He affirms that faith is in the Messiah but at the same time affirms that if you are a Jew you can stay firmly entrenched in Judaism. He says in great biblical assurance that “*Jesus is coming back*” but it is the next statement that deviates from scripture, “*But He cannot come back until He is invited back by His Jewish brethren...*” and it is at that time that He will physically set up His kingdom in Jerusalem. So when he talks of popular misconception of the Christian church concerning the End Times those are usually fringe interpretations not the standard Dispensational Pre-Millennialism of the modern age which he affirms with a bit more of a Jewish twist than found in your standard non-Reformed church. However, having said this there are some good reminders to be found here about how we in the larger Christian Church ought to look at the Jewish people. There will be those from their ranks that will also come back into the fold through Jesus Christ. Also at the end there is a good summary of the main festivals and how they point to Jesus which is a helpful guide to be sure as we grow in the knowledge and history of our faith. So I wouldn’t recommend this book except to the most astute student who is mature in their faith so that they could look past the bad theology to see the things that could be helpful in evangelizing the Jews in their neighborhood.

25. **Stand For Life: A student’s Guide for Making the Case and Saving Lives, by John Ensor and Scott Klusendorf.** Interesting fact about today’s pro-life movement: young people in the 18-35 year old age bracket are polling out saying that abortion is wrong at all stages and that abortion is the killing of a human life, but of the 1.2 million abortions performed annually more than

half of them are performed on college-age women... an almost complete disconnect between polling and practice. This shows us as this short booklet (158 pages) confirms that there is still a lot of work to be done in convincing people that abortion is actually the taking of a life. I like this book overall but I don't like the packaging. The smallness in overall size and the smaller than normal font size made this book physically hard for me to read. If the content wasn't so well written I would have had a hard time staying with it. The format and the size of this book is clearly suited for a younger person and for those who do not know how to present what they say they believe to those who are either unsure or are very certain of their position. It is a good book to help develop an apologetic concerning the pro-life movement.

26. **Swallowed by a Snake: the gift of the masculine side of healing, by Thomas R. Golden.** Let me begin by saying that this is a completely secular book with very little mentioned about faith or a biblical worldview while much is said about everything else. This is interesting because when you get to the back of the book it would appear that the author grew up in a home based on biblical beliefs and he speaks freely of his father's genuine faith. Having said that, I found this book to be very enlightening and encouraging because truth is in here. Oh, it may be surrounded by some psycho-babble but mostly there is truth. Truth concerning the human condition and our need to grieve even though in this culture we do everything in our power to deny the need to grieve especially if you are a man. I would not recommend this book to just anyone on one hand, but on the other there is much in here that can help in preparing you to help others especially men. The reader could find it easy to get caught up in his discussion about the "goodness" of man or he could see the nuggets of truth that are on almost every page. It was recommended by a military chaplain as a "good" read for the discerning reader and I agree with his assessment.
27. **Happy, Happy, Happy: my Life and legacy as the Duck Commander, by Phil Robertson with Mark Schlabach.** This is a very heart-warming book that tells a truly American tale of rags to riches. But in this case the riches are found in the Lord and in family with the material riches way down the road of importance. It is true to the Phil-isms we have all come to enjoy and agree with from the TV show Duck Dynasty. And if you don't watch the show you are simply un-American and quite possibly a pagan! (Not really, but pretty close...I guess you could simply just be a "yuppie" as Phil likes to describe certain people.) Any way, to read a living autobiography written by one who

realizes what God has done for him and to him is very engaging. Alan, Phil's oldest son, recounts that one of the phrases of his father's that has stuck with him is, "*Son, don't ever tell people how good or great you are at something; let them tell you.*" And this phrase defines the life of Phil Robertson who would tell you that the only one He knows that is great is his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Having read this I can't wait for **Si-cology 101** by Silas Robertson better known as Uncle Si by the boys. (due out in Sept. 2013)

28. **Finding a Vision for Your Church: ASSEMBLY REQUIRED, by Michael A. Milton.** There is nothing new here...but that is what makes this book so wonderful...it is like the gospel that we need to teach to ourselves every day. The truths he talks about in here concern the vitality of a church. They concern the churches health as Dr. Donald MacNair used to say, "*A healthy church grows naturally.*" This book is not so much about creating a vision...it is but it isn't...it is mostly about pointing out "again" what should be apparent in every Bible believing Christ Centered church in the world. The basics are always important especially in a day and age when everyone is about "thinking outside the box". These "basics" are the things that God Himself prescribes and we should all be concerned about our churches exhibiting these things like; a burden for God's glory, a passion for God's Word, a heart for God's world, a commitment to God's grace so that he is in fact glorified and we are found obedient. The best way to be at peace in this world of unrest is to obey the commands of God. Since we have the Spirit we can and when we do we do not have to fear.
29. **BUFFALO WAGONS, by Elmer Kelton.** A masterful novel from the late 50's where he highlights the last of the Buffalo Hunters. There is the loss of buffalo, the hope of true love and a finding of one's true calling in this wonderful book about the closing of two Texas treasures...the near extinction of the buffalo and the taming of the Comanche.
30. **HOT IRON, BY Elmer Kelton.** Mr. Kelton captures Texas again in a time just before fences begin to go up. As cattle are free ranging they always seemed to be enough "mavericking" going on to make a living but often some people get greedy and begin to hot iron...that is find ways to change the brand by branding over the old with a new hot iron. This little novel is about a true

cowboy, Espy Norwood, and all the hard luck that can come upon a man until his luck changes. His lifestyle as estranged him from his own son after his wife dies. On top of that his sister-in-law will do anything to keep Espy's son and then there are the usual bad guys who are determined to make life even harder for him. All of this comes together to make an extremely heartwarming tale that could soothe the most pressured person.

31. **SHADOW OF A STAR, by Elmer Kelton.** Mr. Kelton was a gem in the Western genre and this is one of his best. Here we have the story of a young man named Jim-Bob McClain who has just become a deputy sheriff in the same county his dad had been sheriff years before. This is a story of growing up and becoming the man that his father and the new sheriff always thought he would be...and not just in law keeping. Mr. Kelton touches every area of a young man's life in how to keep and maintain his integrity and grow into the kind of man that people will wish to follow.
32. **CAPTAIN'S RANGERS , BY Elmer Kelton.** This book is extremely interesting on one hand because it is a fictionalized version of some of the true exploits of Captain L.H. McNelly and his Texas Ranger's as they did whatever was necessary to tame the Nueces Strip in and around the year 1875. To keep the peace...or seek peace for maybe the first time Capt. McNelly used harsh and sometimes very controversial measures but they didn't appear to be racially motivated. He despised lawlessness and lawlessness didn't have a color in his mind. On the other hand, the sub plot about a cowboy, Lanham Neal, and his love for one Zoe Dangerfield is among the weakest of all the books I have read by Mr. Kelton. Having said that, however, it doesn't take away from the masterful re-telling of Texas history that he is so good at.
33. **The Pumpkin Rollers by Elmer Kelton.** During the cattle drive years of the West, "pumpkin rollers" was the nickname given to green farm boys who joined a drive because they were usually more trouble than they were worth. This book is about one such "pumpkin roller" from East Texas who was seeking to become a cattleman and all the lessons he learned along the way about friendship, deceit, violence, love, and pride that work together to make him into what he was intended to become in spite of the odds.

34. **Hanging Judge, by Elmer Kelton.** This book is about the actual Texas Hanging Judge, Judge Isaac C. Parker. He was a judge in Fort Smith from 1875-1896 and during that time 79 men were sent to the gallows often 4-6 at a time so that the spectacle would send a clear message to the lawless that justice had come. The jurisdiction of the Western District of Arkansas included the Indian Territory, which today composes much of the present-day state of Oklahoma. While the legal systems and governments of the Five Civilized Tribes and other Native American tribes in the Indian Territory covered their own citizens, federal law applied to non-Native American, United States citizens in the territory. During the Parker court, notable lawmen served as deputy marshals, including Old West gunman Frank Canton, Zeke Proctor, Frank Eaton, Bass Reeves and Heck Thomas. The characters of this story, as is usual for Mr. Kelton are made up of the personalities of all the good lawmen of the day like those listed above and the characters of the lawless of the time who rode in and out of the Indian territory of Oklahoma seeking refuge and disorder. A great tale of history with a twist of drama.
35. **Shotgun, by Elmer Kelton.** Another tale of good guy meets bad guy with bad guy seeming to win and then comes the end....of the bad guy. Great stuff for us old western buffs out there. In this story we have a long time rancher Blair Bishop who has been instrumental in pioneering and growing an area of North Central Texas. In his long history of making this a respectable place others moved in who weren't so respectable. One of those was Macy Modock who by his very nature wanted to control everything. Well, because of that desire to control he broke a few laws and was helped off to prison by the testimony of Blair Bishop. Well, now he's back seeking revenge.
36. **Donovan, by Elmer Kelton.** Can the dead rise again? This is the question that this book answers. It seems that an outlaw by the name of Clabe Donovan was killed years ago and has apparently now come back to life to take his revenge on the people who put him in jail and ultimately caused his ruin. The good sheriff living in this South Texas, border town slips across the border to discover the truth... about life and death.

37. **The Dark Thicket, by Elmer Kelton.** This story is written during the waning days of the War of Northern Aggression when the South had a sense that it was losing so the conscription of new soldiers and the “justice” brought upon “deserters” were equally severe. Owen Danforth is sent home to recover from life altering wounds and find his home in Texas embattled by the “home guards” who were really seeking to wrest away the family farm and the farms of many others along the way. Owen, tired of fighting, finds that he will need to join the “resistance movement”...in the dark thicket... to battle a war the size and scope of which makes him wonder whether there can ever be peace in Texas again. I had read this previously but it was a good read a second time around as well.

38. **Texas Rifles, by Elmer Kelton.** Another historical fiction taken right out of the history books. The Texas Rifles or Texas Long Rifles or Texas Mounted Rifles were a Ranger type police force established during the War of Northern Aggression (the Civil War for Yankees) to protect families of soldiers who were off to war against Indian depredations and also to round up those who were running from the war. On March 4, 1861, Confederate secretary of war Leroy Pope Walker directed Benjamin McCulloch to raise a regiment of ten companies of mounted riflemen to protect the Texas frontier between the Red River and the Rio Grande. The ten companies of the regiment occupied a line of forts from Camp Jackson, at the confluence of the Red River and the Big Wichita, southwestward to Fort Belknap, Camp Cooper, Fort Phantom Hill, Fort Chadbourne, Camp Colorado, Camp Concho (at present-day San Angelo), Fort McKavett, and Fort Mason. Eventually the new Confederacy did not have the man power so it empowered Texas to do this on its own. This book is a story concerning these men set in the midst of a fictional story of one man hoping to get Texas back on the right path...his name was Sam Houston Cloud.

39. **Stand Proud, by Elmer Kelton.** An excellent book. This book covers the period from the 1830's through to the early 1900's and was Elmer Kelton's attempt to write a novel about the development of the cattle industry in West Texas, the heyday of the open-range cattleman and the cowboy, to its virtual demise after the turn of the century. The original cattlemen were the pioneers who suffered much at the hands of the Indians to open up the great state of Texas and as the century wound down they were treated as land grabbers and arrogant fools for wanting to hold on to what they had worked so hard to build. This is the story of one such man, Frank Claymore, and all of his travails as he

builds one of the largest spreads in West Texas only to see it divided up and taken from him by politician's hungry for election and old friends, who had become enemies, bent on his destruction. It was his valley but now it was being taken from him by the truly greedy ones who wanted to take without having to work for it. A very contemporary message set in a time long ago. Virtues and characteristics are displayed that have fallen from the radar over the years...virtues such as self-starting, hard work, commitment, right and wrong, taking care of one another...codes that were once at the core of who we were as a people that we have allowed to fall away because of our greed and our zest to have what the other man has without having to work for it as he did...somehow thinking we deserve it. This novel has many twists and turns and keeps you in your seat right to the very end. I was saddened when I had to put it aside and sadder still when I finished it.

40. **Insourcing, Randy Pope.** Rev. Pope is the founding and current pastor of Perimeter Church in Atlanta, Ga., and has helped plant over 28 churches in the greater Atlanta area for the PCA. Randy has for all his years been a churchman and a pastor with a desire to see God's people mature and fully equipped for the ministry that God has called us to. This latest book deals with a programmed approach to discipleship that he has used in his churches with great success over the years developing true disciples who are reproducing true disciples for Christ in their homes, workplaces and in their churches. This is a great book that can lead the local church to renew its focus on discipleship. After reading this book I was pleased to note that we were and have been doing many of the things he has recommended for churches to be doing...maybe not so much as a programmed approach by as a more natural outworking of understanding our purpose and mission as Christ Presbyterian Church. It was encouraging to read as it encourages me to continue doing what we have been doing and well as find ways to expand this to more and more people naturally.

41. **JUST DO SOMETHING-A LIBERATING APPROACH TO FINDING GOD'S WILL OR How to Make a Decision Without Dreams, Visions, Fleece, Impressions, Open Doors, Random Bible Verses, Casting Lots, Liver Shivers, Writing in the Sky, Etc.** by Kevin DeYoung. It is God's will to read this book. Yeah that is what I just said. This book can be summed up simply. As Christians we need to STOP spending all our "free" time searching, agonizing and sweating over what we want to happen and hope that God will somehow show it to us so we can call it God's will, and focus on what He has

revealed to us as His will for our lives. In his own words, *“God is not a magic 8-ball we shake up and peer into whenever we have a decision to make. He is a good God who gives us brains, shows us the way of obedience, and invites us to take risks for Him. We know God has a plan for our lives. That’s wonderful. (Don’t miss the play on words here.) The problem is we think He’s going to tell us the wonderful plan BEFORE it unfolds. We feel like we can know...and need to know...what God wants every step of the way. But such preoccupation with finding God’s will, as well-intentioned as the desire may be, is more folly than freedom. The better way is the biblical way: Seek first the kingdom of God, and then trust that He will take care of our needs, even before we know what they are and where we’re going.”* A great little book that can promote a lot of discussion. (only 124 pages)

42. **John Adams by David McCullough.** This has been one of the most informative and delightful reads on the founding Fathers that I have ever picked up. I have a whole new appreciation for John Adams. His leadership style seems to have been extremely sacrificial and while he didn’t fight in the Revolutionary War he fought for our freedoms in the Continental Congresses and he equally fought for acceptance on the world stage even though he was not considered a worthy diplomat by today’s standards. Instead he was honest, modest, thrifty...a man of integrity and a true patriot unwilling to give up our national identity to any foreign power. This book is filled with so many letters and pieces of letter from the likes of from George Washington, Thomas Jefferson. Benjamin Rush along with other signers of the Declaration of Independence. Also there are various newspaper articles concerning the elections of Washington and then Adams as well as other correspondence that clearly give the flavor of the country as the two party system began to emerge.. Along the way we see his life on display in how he raises his children to farming and loving his wife, Abigail with a love so endearing that there are many books written just about that. All in all a wonderful read even if it is rather long in number of pages.

43. **The Hole in Our Holiness: Filling the Gap between Gospel Passion and the Pursuit of Godliness. By Kevin DeYoung.** Pastor DeYoung is quickly becoming one of my favorite contemporary writers. He says things the way I think and say them...with little to know apology...none whatsoever for gospel truth. I like that. In this book. This book offers important insight and reminders on a crucial topic in the op-going debate about the joys and struggles

of the Christian life. As the author says this about his purpose in writing this book, *“The hole in our holiness is that we don’t seem to care much about holiness. Or, at the very least, we don’t understand it... Whatever the case, the problem is clear: too few Christians look like Christ and too many don’t seem all that concerned about it.”* Extremely readable, engaging and satisfying for those who are seeking to understand and take our holiness seriously. Kevin likes to write short books like this one. If you include the study question all total it is 150 pages.

44. **St. Andrew’s Expository Commentary on 1 and 2 Peter: Be All the More Diligent to Make Your Calling and Election Sure, By R.C. Sproul.** These expository commentaries have been extremely devotional to me. This is the second one that I have read with this purpose in mind and while they are extremely informational, they have been a great comfort. I don’t usually recommend commentaries but these are sermons that were adapted into book form and they are really worth the devotional use. R.C. like no one else I know captures the heart of the matter in each line of these books. His *Thus saith Lord* style linked with his genuine desire to disciple God’s people to greater holiness make these works a real gem in the growth of God’s people. I read this alongside my journaling through these letters of Peter and I found all this very helpful in experiencing a closeness with God that we all desire.
45. **A Rabbi Looks at Jesus of Nazareth, What happens when a Jewish man takes a serious look at the life and works of the Man who claimed to be the Messiah? Rabbi Jonathan Bernis.** Once again, just like in **A Rabbi Looks at the Last Days** there is much to be commended. In this case this one man’s journey to the true faith after being raised in an orthodox Jewish home is always something worth reading. The testimonies of God’s people can be very encouraging to others. However, just like in the other book his Dispensationalism clouds his conclusions. I have yet to figure out why converted Jews would gravitate away from a covenantal system of doctrine...but many Messianic Jews like the author here do and because of that their conclusion like many other of our brothers in the faith are skewed away from what the scriptures intend. And for this reason I could not recommend this book except to the most ground and discerning...one who would not get caught up in the emotionalism and exceptionalism of the Jewish people.

46. **The Heart and the Fist: The Education of a Humanitarian, the Making of a Navy Seal, by Eric Greitens.** The leaf cover synopsis begins with these words... *"Like many young idealists, Eric Greitens wanted to make a difference."* This is the story of a young man who wanted to make a difference in the world. He began very simply as most young men not particularly excited about school with little ambition and then as he went off to college he began to go on service work overseas and he saw many things that shaped his idea of the world and himself. He worked in some of the world's worst places from Croatia to Calcutta and came away knowing that something vital was missing. When innocents were threatened with harm there was absolutely nothing that he could do and very little that others wanted to do to help protect them. So he "joined" the Navy Seals to make a difference. Now there is no such thing as "joining" the Navy Seals...so he catalogues his experiences here with the same detail of his experiences in the refugee camps and orphanages he had served in. One author put it this way, *"At the heart of Eric's powerful story lies a paradox: sometimes you have to be strong to do good, but you also have to do good to be strong. The heart and the fist together are more powerful than either one alone."* Or in Eric's own words; *"I've learned from nuns who fed the destitute in Mother Teresa's homes for the dying in India, aid workers who healed orphaned children in Rwanda, and Navy Seals who fought in Afghanistan. As warriors, as humanitarians, they've taught me that without courage, compassion falters, and that without compassion, courage has no direction. They've shown me that it is within our power, and that the world requires of us...of every one of us...that we be both good and strong."* This was an extremely inspirational read. I received much more than I expected.

47. **Stepping Up: a call to courageous manhood,** by Dennis Rainey. I have read much and used a few things through the years by the organization that this man of God began called Family Life, a ministry of Campus Crusades for Christ. Through the years he and his staff have sought to reveal how the Scriptures speak to family life...the structure for a strong family as the Bible...God's Word...lays it out for us. In this book he gives a great encouragement to the male of our species. For years his favorite question to pose to men in conferences or one on one has been *"What's the most courageous thing you've ever done?"* All of life requires decisions that demand courage. These decision cannot be made without grounding in God's Word...but these decision must be made and we must not step down in passivity but step up with courage for our families lives depend upon us. It is not a matter of trying it is a matter of doing...following through when we are in the midst of the battle...for all of us are in the middle of a battlefield with everything and everyone seeking to win

the hearts of our families away. In this book he gives a great synopsis on the 5 stages of a man: Boyhood, Adolescence, Manhood, Mentor, and finally Patriarch. This whole book seems to be written as a response from a Christian perspective to this quote, ***“Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the judgment that something else is more important.”*** This is an excellent book that would be helpful for all men to read and assimilate into their thinking. The weaknesses are so evident as not to take away from the overall usefulness of what this book seeks to teach. (206 pages)