

What Are You Reading?

It is interesting to walk in stores (and not just bookstores) and see displays for summer reading. People like to take a book to the beach or somewhere else while on vacation. **The New York Times** and other publications promote their “bestseller lists” and these also encourage reading. I believe a Christian can improve himself/herself by reading regularly. Though all one’s reading does not have to be religious material, the following religious items could be well-incorporated into one’s regular reading program.

The Bible—It is certainly a good thing to cultivate the habit of daily Bible reading and regular Bible Study. Find a trustworthy translation in a format that is conducive to your personality and habits. Then start reading and stay with it. You will reap many benefits.

Biographies—You might be surprised at the number of biographies that have been written about Christians. Though many of them are about preachers, there are numerous ones about “regular” people. I know of one company among our brethren that has produced many biographies and autobiographies of missionaries. These books can excite you with tales of real adventure and poignant stories of conversion.

Sermons—Many of us have admired at least one famous preacher in our lifetime (B.B. Baxter, Guy N. Woods, Hugo McCord, Wendell Winkler, to name a few). Maybe that man is dead now and we miss being influenced by his sermons. Thanks to sermon books, we can continue to drink from the wells of knowledge in the minds of godly men.

Doctrinal books—There are times when one needs to firmly grasp biblical teaching on a certain topic. Books written on the subject can go a long way in establishing your belief and practice. These should not be a substitute, however, for one’s own systematic study of the Bible.

Devotional books—Sometimes we want to read books that make us feel closer to God by imparting stories, poetry, etc. that connect with us emotionally. While I do not believe that this type of material should be our only reading source, I think it has a definite place in the life of a Christian. After all, God made room for such literature in the Bible itself: the book of Psalms. One word of caution: Be sure that you are firmly grounded in your faith and that the author is trustworthy. Many Christians have been led astray by the clever “heart-appeal” of false teachers.

—Lance Cordle