

# The Pastor's Library

by E.A. Johnston

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*E.A. Johnston emphasizes the importance of a curated reading list for Christians to enrich their faith and ministry.*

**Duration:** 31:12

**Scripture:** Psalm 1:2, Psalm 90:12, Psalm 119:11, Proverbs 4:23, Matthew 6:33, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, 2 Timothy 3:16-17

**Topics:** "Pastors"

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## Description

In this sermon transcript, the speaker discusses the life and practices of Thomas Brooks, a pastor who lived in the 17th century. Brooks was known for his dedication to prayer and devotion to God, often waking up early in the morning to spend time in prayer and contemplation. The speaker emphasizes the contrast between Brooks' commitment to God and the average pastor today, who spends only ten minutes in prayer. The transcript also mentions several books that the speaker recommends, including one by Oswald Smith on missions, one by J.I. Packer on the Doctrine of Redemption, and one by Joseph Alene on evangelism. The speaker encourages the audience to read these books for spiritual nourishment and growth.

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## Transcript

Paul's advice to Timothy was, give attendance to reading. Christians should read widely and selectively, for our admonition is to redeem the time. As a Christian author of some 16 books, I've done a lot of research through the years.

And in conducting that research, I've been blessed by the many books I have read. For years, I have worked on a recommended reading list for Christian workers, and through the years, I have modified it, condensed it, and refined it, for the singular purpose that the books recommended be of the most useful blessing to the reader. I have entitled this list, The Pastor's Library, but it's for any serious Christian who wants to be stirred up for God.

Over the course of 50 years, I have read thousands of books, I'm a trained speed reader, and determining which books to include in this list was a most difficult task. The busy pastor and evangelist has precious little time, and it's easy to become worn out from the demands of ministry. However, if we do not refuel, we will burn out.

Our walk with God and what we do with our spare time will determine much about ourselves and our ministry. The person who gathers every fragment of time in the exercise of prayer, Bible study, and reading Christian literature will be greatly rewarded. On the other hand, the person who wastes their time on activities which hold no eternal worth will be greatly disappointed at the beamless seat for believers, excuses gain no rewards on that day.

With this in mind, the books which I have recommended for study have been carefully selected for the benefits they will produce in the diligent reader. After adding these 33 volumes to your library, you will soon find these familiar friends within reach on your bookshelf to encourage, inspire, and ignite you when you need it most. This recommended reading list is formatted by title and the reason for the recommendation.

They are arranged by category. I have grouped the biographical material together. For reading Christian biographies, one of the most beneficial exercises a Christian can perform on a regular basis.

For what we know about those whom God has used in former times can aid us greatly in our day as we minister to our generation. My own life has been greatly enriched by the following titles and my prayer is that your life will be enriched by reading them as well. Here now is the list, the pastor's library.

First on the list is the Word of God, the Bible. Ezehiel Nettleton, greatly used in the Second Great Awakening, was known as a man of one book and we all should be well familiar with that one book and that book is the Bible. So my first recommendation is the Word of God and what I'd like to recommend to you is the Matthew Henry Study Bible.

It's the King James Version and the commentary by this Puritan, Matthew Henry, is pure dynamite. It's deep and delightful. George Whitfield, the great British evangelist, read Matthew Henry's commentary together with his Bible on his knees.

Now both of these are available in one book, therefore my recommendation. Next on the list are two books under the category of spiritual warfare. The first is entitled Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices and it's written by the Puritan, Thomas Brooks.

It's published by the Banner of Truth Trust. This book should be read by every Christian. I've read it four times and still it's fresh every time I read it and I still have need to sit under Pastor Brooks from time to time.

Thomas Brooks was a London pastor who was evicted from his living on the infamous Saint Bart's Day in 1662 and his convictions drove him into nonconformity. If you want a taste of the delights you are in for by reading this book, then consider Brooks' opening comments which are, Remember this, that your life is short, your duties many, your assistance great, and your reward sure, therefore think not, hold on and hold up in ways of well-doing, and heaven shall make amends for all. I like that and I highly recommend this book by Thomas Brooks.

The next book on spiritual warfare is The Christian in Complete Armor by another Puritan, William Gurnell. It's two volumes in one published by the Banner of Truth and it's 1,200 pages of Puritan dynamite. It's the most thorough examination on Ephesians chapter 6 ever written.

To not have this book in your library and to not know its contents well is to be cheated of much for in its pages you will better learn of your chief adversary, the devil, and your own wicked heart. I read this book

every day. Every morning I spent time in this book.

J.C. Ryle said of Gurnell, It would be easy to heap up testimonies to the value of Gurnell's Christian in Complete Armor. Baxter and Flavel both thought most highly of the book. Toplady used to make copious extracts from it in his Commonplace book.

John Newton said that if he was confined to one book beside the Bible, he dared say Gurnell's Christian Armor would be his choice. And it certainly is my choice too, friends. Next on our reading list is two books on prayer.

The first is The Complete Works of E.M. Bounds on Prayer. Edward McKendree Bounds was a man of prayer and Baker Books has come out with The Complete Works of E.M. Bounds on Prayer. And I tell you what, all you have to do is read a little bit of E.M. Bounds and you will be ignited to be a person of prayer.

He walked with God and wrote so that others could walk with God. And apart from India's Pray and Hide and Pray and Pace in Portland, few men could lay hold of God like E.M. Bounds, sit at his feet and learn of him. The next book on prayer that I highly recommend is Reese Howell's Intercessor written by Norman Grubb.

It's published by CLC. This book is a treasure and once you read it, you will treasure it as well. Reese Howell knew his God and few have been used to God like him.

Study this book and weep at your defects in prayer and faith and pray to God that he will give you an ounce of Reese Howells. Next are a couple books, a few books on revival. We need to study historical revivals so that we will be able to recognize God should he come in revival in our day.

Some of these books are must-haves to have in your library on revival. The first is Lectures on Revival by W.B. Sprague published by Banner of Truth. William B. Sprague was a gifted church historian on revival.

He was a Presbyterian pastor from Albany, New York in the 19th century. Sprague knew personally many of the subjects he wrote about and this is one of the better books on what was known in America as the Second Great Awakening. Read it and be blessed then repent for your lack and repent for our lack of God's manifest presence today.

The next book on revival is George Whitefield's journals published by Banner of Truth. Whitefield was one of God's greatest gifts to the church. Study these pages and stand amazed at how the Almighty was pleased to use this young man with a squint in his eye.

This book will light a fire beneath you. If it doesn't, you're dead. Read it and be ignited to see God move in revival again in our day.

This book will encourage you on in ministry and shame you for so little you have done in His holy name. Oh, that God would send us a woodpile today. The next book is the Cambuslang Revival by Arthur Fawcett, again published by the Banner of Truth.

This brilliant work by Fawcett demands study, for within its pages you will find how a simple country pastor, William McCulloch, was stirred by reading Jonathan Edwards' accounts of the revival at Northampton, Massachusetts and relating those accounts to his own congregation in Scotland. Soon, God showed up in a glorious revival known as the Cambuslang Revival, and its chief instrument was William

McCulloch. He was also known as the Ale Minster, for when he preached, his style was so dry, many would leave for the ale house.

But that was before he became a man of revival, and God anointed his powerful preaching. Whitfield came to his church and preached for him, to 20,000 hearers on the preaching braze beneath the church, and God's glory shone on Whitfield's face while he handed out the communion wafers. This book is a must-read for any serious student of revival.

Next on this list is Azahel Nettleton, *Sermons from the Second Great Awakening*. Oh friends, I highly recommend this book. It's published by International Outreach.

It was said of Nettleton by his biographer and friend, Bennett Tyler, that he was the means of grace to over 30,000 souls. I believe that figure was much higher. No man was used as greatly as Nettleton in the Second Great Awakening.

I have sat at the archives at Hartford Seminary and have gone through his personal papers and read his handwritten accounts of the revivals that God performed under this man's ministry, and they'll make the hair stand on the back of your neck. This man, Nettleton, lies among the mighty dead. Study his sermons of which God shook entire towns under Nettleton's powerful ministry where God moved in over 60 revivals throughout New York, Massachusetts, and Connecticut.

Please read these sermons from the Second Great Awakening. Next on our list is a book on revival that's become a classic. It's *Why Revival Tarries* by Leonard Ravenhill, published by Bethany House.

Any recommendation on revival must include Ravenhill's work. Ravenhill was a man of prayer who knew his God, and his contribution to the study of revival is profound. His writings are pithy, pointed, and piercing.

I highly recommend that book. The last book on revival, and I highly recommend it as well, is called *The Invasion of Wales by the Spirit* through Evan Roberts, and it was written by James Stewart, the great Scottish evangelist who was using revival mightily right before World War II in Europe. This is published by Revival Literature.

Evan Roberts was the primary human instrument used by God in the Welsh revival of 1904 and 1905. Evan Roberts believed in the power of prayer, and he believed in God's ability to hear and respond to that prayer. This book by James Stewart has been a means of blessing and inspiration to many who have hungered for revival in our day.

This book not only details many exciting events of the Welsh revival, but it shows the afterglow of it in missionary activity. Seen in the lives of Rhys Howells and others, every student of revival should study what God did in Wales in the day of his power, whereby 100,000 souls came to Christ. This book is an excellent help in understanding the Welsh revival.

Next I have some books on evangelism I'd like to recommend to you. The first is *God's Hitchhike Evangelist*, the biography of Ralph Barnard. The author is E. A. Johnston.

It's published by Revival Literature. And two questions arise, why recommend my own book, and why place a biography in this category of evangelism? Just read the book and find out. Next is *The Nature of Saving Conversion* by Solomon Stoddard, published by Solo Deo Gloria.

I will give you one good reason to study this book by the great divine Stoddard. It's one of the best writings on what true conversion is compared to false profession. Stoddard knew his God, and he knew what a sincere Christian was.

Stoddard's sermon, *The Way to Know Sincerity in a Hypocrisy Cleared Up*, is a wonderful sermon. And it disturbed me and awakened me to my sins when I read it. So please read that book.

It's an excellent work. The next title is *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* by J. I. Packer, published by IVP. It's probably one of the best books ever written on the subject of evangelism.

God has seemed pleased to bless it through the years. It was published back in 1961. Read it, study it, and then re-read it.

And go and do likewise. The next title is *The Introductory Essay* by J. I. Packer from the book *The Death of Death and the Death of Christ* by John Owen. This is published by *The Banner of Truth*.

Purchase this book not for Owen's hard reading, but for Packer's beautiful essay on the doctrine of redemption. I have read Packer's essay on planes, in hotel rooms, and in my study. It must be carefully read several times.

I think it's the best 25-page read on the biblical gospel written. The next book on evangelism, and this is a classic friend, it's *An Alarm to the Unconverted* by Joseph Alleynes, published under *The Banner of Truth* under the title *A Sure Guide to Heaven*. You simply must read this book.

A preview from the introduction is this. All the time of his health, writes his wife, he did rise constantly at or before four o'clock and on the Sabbath sooner. If he did wake, he would be much troubled if he heard any smiths or shoemakers or such tradesmen at work at their trades before he was in his duties with God, saying to me after, Oh, how this noise shames me! Doth not my master deserve more than theirs? From four till eight he spent in prayer, holy contemplation, and singing the Psalms, which he much delighted in, and did daily practice alone as well as in his family.

The average pastor today, friends, spends ten minutes in prayer. Are we yet ashamed? Well, next I have some listings of Christian biography. It's vastly important to study how God has moved through the lives of his servants in past times.

The first biography I want to recommend to you is a classic. It's *The Life and Diary of David Brainerd*, edited by Jonathan Edwards. This is published by Baker Books.

The *Diary of Brainerd* has been one of the most used books in the history of the church in regard to mission enterprise. William Carey and Robert Myrne McShane were both greatly influenced by it. Jonathan Edwards felt it was a great honor to have Brainerd die in his home in Northampton, Massachusetts.

Brainerd's remains lie beneath the white slab in Bridge Street Cemetery in Northampton awaiting the resurrection. I have visited his grave many times and wept over our lack today. If you read his diary, your Christianity will be resurrected as well.

Oh, that God would send another Brainerd among us today. The next is a book on Jonathan Edwards written by Ian Murray. It's called *Jonathan Edwards, A New Biography*, and it's published by *The Banner of*

Truth.

Listen friends, the life of Edwards must be studied. Murray does a more than excellent job in capturing the genius of Edwards and his usefulness to the church. Any serious revival should study Jonathan Edwards, both his life, his sermons, and what God did through that blessed man's life.

The next book is a book about D.L. Moody entitled Moody, The Biography by John Pollock. Published by Moody Press. D.L. Moody used more God than all of us put together.

He could not even properly spell the word bed, he was such an uneducated man. But he believed in a big God and trusted him to do big things. And Pollock captures the spirit of Moody better than most.

Men like Moody must be studied if we ever hope to see God move once more. His remains lie atop his favorite round top in Northfield, Massachusetts and his influence is still felt today. Many times I've stood at the grave of Moody and my tears have hit his gravestone as I have prayed for God to raise up another Moody in our day.

Next is a book on the life of C.T. Studd. It's written by Norman Grubb and entitled C.T. Studd, Cricketer and Pioneer. And it's published by CLC.

Charlie Studd left for Africa at the age of 53 after serving for years as a missionary in China and India. And his sacrificial life was really something to read about. He didn't see his wife for 14 years once he went to Africa.

He poured his life out so others might live. Charlie Studd is the one that wrote, only one life will soon be passed. Only what's done for Christ will last.

He wrote and admonished us not to be a chocolate soldier. He gave away his father's fortune. His father, Edward Studd, was converted under Moody's preaching.

And Studd gave all his money away to the cause of Christ. It literally fulfilled what the rich young ruler would not. Please read this book about C.T. Studd and have your own life be ignited for God.

Next, a must read is the autobiography of C.H. Spurgeon in two volumes published by Banner of Truth Trust. Friends, I highly recommend you study the life of Charles Spurgeon, the Prince of Preachers. He was a man mightily used to God and his life story compiled after his death by his widow and best friend is a must read for any minister of the word.

You will be in for a treat as you read about his life. One anecdote I will share for your preview enjoyment is this. While Spurgeon was in his beloved winter retreat in France, he slipped while descending a marble staircase, doing a double somersault and making the coins from his trousers fall into his boots and in the process knocking out two of his front teeth.

At the bottom of the stairs, upon regaining consciousness and realizing what had befallen him, he declared to his friends, painless dentistry with money to boot. Next is a biography I highly recommend, friends. It's the biography of John Song.

Song is pronounced Song in the Chinese. It's written by Leslie Lyle, published by Armour Publishing. God used John Song in many revivals in China.

Song was a genius coming to America to study. He earned a PhD in chemistry. He spoke fluent Chinese, English, and German.

And while at Columbia Seminary in New York, he was marvelously converted. And it so changed him that his professors had him committed to a mental institution for 193 days. And it was during this time of being institutionalized that he read the Bible 40 times.

God used John Song like few men in history, and few suffered more for God than Song. He poured his life out for his fellow Chinese, and he was the means of salvation to thousands. Next, I highly recommend To the Golden Shore.

The Life of Adirondum Judson by Courtney Anderson. Every hopeful missionary should study this book. Judson was hung by his ankles and tortured in Burma.

His first three children and wife died on the mission field. His sacrificial life has encouraged thousands. Read it and be encouraged, and then repent for your lack.

Next is The Little Jewel by Samuel Morris. Published by Bethany House in the Man of Faith series. It's a short little book.

It's written by Lindley Baldwin. This brief little biography on the life of the African Samuel Morris is a treasure. God saved him like he saved Paul with a blinding flash of light.

Then God transplanted this African boy to America to shake a city with his prayers and testimony. Let me give you an insight into this man of God's heart. When the president of Taylor College asked little Samuel Morris what dormitory room he desired, Samuel replied, Give me the one nobody else wants.

Get this book at any cost, friends, and read it. Next, I can't recommend this book enough. It's a book on Duncan Campbell's life called The Channel of Revival.

Written by Andrew Wolseley. Published by The Faith Mission. Get this book at any cost, friends.

Duncan Campbell was an ordinary man whom God used in an extraordinary way. The Lewis Revival of 1949 and 1952 in the Wendy Hebrides in Scotland was saturated with God under Campbell's anointed preaching. Get this book and devour it and you will be challenged, changed, and chastised.

Next is a book that's just come out called The Herald of the Cross. It's written by John Heugel and it's on the life and work of his father, F.J. Heugel. It's published by Rare Christian Books.

The greatly used F.J. Heugel, and actually his name's pronounced Heagle, but I'll pronounce it Heugel because that's how it reads. His life impacted thousands through his vital pen ministry and missionary life. He wrote the classic Bone of His Bone and other books.

And I would highly recommend this book because of what God did through F.J. Heugel's life. He was a great sufferer for Christ. His little daughter was purportedly poisoned by the very people he was ministering to in Mexico.

He suffered great crosses for the one who hung on a cross a sinful man. Read this book and be stirred. Next are a few books on Christian living.

And the first is entitled True Discipleship by William MacDonald. It's published by Gospel Folio Press. Bill was my friend and a model for Jesus and a man who gave everything away for his blessed master.

William MacDonald had a Harvard MBA and he could have made his millions, but he chose poverty for Christ's sake. In fact, his desk in his apartment in California was a door taken off its hinges and put atop two chairs. He gave every penny away to the cause of Christ and the spread of the gospel.

He's the author of some 90 books including the widely read Believer's Bible Commentary. Read True Discipleship and it will change your life. By the way, True Discipleship has sold over a million copies.

Bill never took a penny. He gave it all to missions and for God's glory. Please read that book.

Next is The Way of the Cross by J. Gregory Mantle. Oh friends, you've got to get a copy of this book. It's formally entitled Beyond Humiliation, but it's been retitled The Way of the Cross and it's published by Kingsley Press.

Let me ask you, do you desire a deeper walk with God? Then read this book and you will have one. On my fourth read of this book, I was still learning under Mantle's mantle. Next is a book I highly recommend called Fair Sunshine, Character Studies of the Scottish Covenanters by Jack Purvis, published by the Banner of True Trust.

Fortunate are those who wear the martyr's crown. Read this little gem and feel like the worm that you are. The drowning of Margaret McLaughlin and Margaret Wilson, the martyrs of Wigton, will humble your very soul and inspire you to do great things for God.

The next book is The Autobiography of George Mueller, published by Westminster Literature Resources. This book will help you through your storms and comfort you in your trials. It will inspire you to walk by faith as you witness what God did for dear Mueller in answer to his faith and prayers in support of the thousands of orphans that God fed through the life of George Mueller.

Listen friends, this book is a faith builder. Next is The Memoir and Remains of Robert Murray McChain, written by Andrew Bonar and published by Banner of Truth. Holy McChain prayed, Lord, make me as holy as a saved sinner can be, and God did just that.

Reading his memoir is both inspiring and humbling. Bonar does a worthy job of paying tribute to his dear friend. McChain's short life has had immense influence over believers through the years.

Read it for your spiritual nourishment. The last two books on this list, friends, fall under the category of missions. The first is entitled The Challenge of Missions and is written by Oswald Smith, the famous pastor of the famous People's Church in Canada.

It's one of the best books ever written on the subject of missions. Read it. It's a classic.

I promise you, you will be challenged by it. The last book I'd like to recommend is Operation World by Patrick Johnston. It's published by Zondervan.

Every Christian who has a burden for soul should have this book. Each country is detailed with the spiritual needs for prayer. Get this book and use it frequently so that it's dog-eared like both my copies are.

I have found it useful to take this book and a globe and during a daily quiet time read Operation World and pray for that country and the needs of that country and the loss and perishing of that country. This book will be extremely helpful in enlarging your vision for ministry. Well, dear friend, these 33 recommendations were carefully chosen for their ability to stir your heart and provide instruction as an aid to ministry and to reach this generation for Christ in our generation.

I gave away my first library to a pastor and a missionary. My current library is comprised of books I've read. So read these books.

The brevity of this list was on purpose with the purpose that these books would be read. My prayer for you, friend, is that God may attend your study of these books and bless you as you read them. All for His glory.

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