

Beach Books

You. The ocean. And a book. Here are a few suggestions on what to take for a hot summer read this year—from some of your favorite Christian authors.

Melody Carlson

Because of my busy writing schedule I don't read as much  as I'd like, but I do enjoy reading while traveling. While flying recently I opened up Lisa Wingate's ***Talk of the Town*** (Bethany House). I'd never read a Wingate book but was immediately pulled in by her quirky characters. It was honestly laugh-out-loud funny and exactly what I needed at that moment in my life. It gave me a whole new respect for lighthearted romance because there are times when laughter truly is the best medicine! I emailed Lisa later and thanked her for writing such a refreshingly fun book.

Melody Carlson is the author of more than 100 books, including *Shattered*, *Never Been Kissed* and *The Four Lindas*.

Glenn Packiam

 The two books I'm reading at the moment are sure to make  it on my list of all-time favorites. The first is Eugene Peterson's memoir, *The Pastor* (HarperCollins). After spending a few days in his home last summer I experienced firsthand his pastoral warmth and

cheerful storytelling. Amid a culture that so quickly depersonalizes people for the sake of efficiency and effectiveness, Peterson calls the pastor to recover the sacredness of his or her vocation. His memoir is the story of his journey in becoming a shepherd to his flock. It stands as both a challenging rebuke and a vision of hope for all of us who are pastors.

The second book is ***Surprised by Hope*** (HarperOne) by N.T. Wright. It's a startling recovery of the biblical vision of hope and a call to live in the present in light of that "in-breaking future." Wright's careful exegesis of the Scriptures through the lens of the first century and his thoughtful guidance through the centuries of church history reveal a stunning picture of Christian hope.

Glenn Packiam is the author of *Lucky*, *Secondhand Jesus* and *Butterfly in Brazil*, and executive pastor at New Life Church in Colorado Springs, Colo.

 **Max Lucado**

The Singer (InterVarsity Press) by Calvin Miller: It's the story of Jesus in poetic form and one of the greatest creative pieces I have ever read.

Killing Giants, Pulling Thorns (Zondervan)

by Charles R. Swindoll: For me, Chuck is the model of really clear, engaging communication. He doesn't sacrifice biblical loyalty and accuracy for great creativity.

Peculiar Treasures (HarperOne) by

Frederick Buechner: It's such fun writing. It basically includes one-page character sketches of favorite biblical characters. I couldn't put it down. It wasn't exactly a Bible study, and it was a tad irreverent. It made me think, *Is it really OK to write like this?* I loved it.

Destined for the Throne (Bethany House) by

Paul Billheimer: It's a profound study on the topic of prayer. I learned on a whole new level that whatever we ask God for in His name we will have. This book really pounded the promises of prayer.

The Message of Romans (IVP

Academic) by John Stott: This book brought me to a deeper understanding of grace. His verse-by-verse explanation modeled biblical teaching for me. This book helped me trust the grace of God.

Max Lucado has sold 80 million books, including his latest, *Max on Life: Answers and Insights to Your Most Important Questions*. He is pastor of Oak Hills Church in San Antonio.

 **Francine Rivers**

The Professor and the Madman: A Tale of Murder, Insanity, and the Making of the Oxford English Dictionary
(HarperCollins)

by Simon Winchester is a recent discovery for me. This account has all the makings of a fantastic historical novel of intrigue and psychology of genius and obsession. The story centers on two men: professor James Murray, the remarkable man behind the compilation of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, and Dr. W.C. Minor, an American Army surgeon in the Civil War. Due to his wartime experiences, Dr. Minor went mad and committed murder in London. While institutionalized, he submitted more than 10,000 entries to the *Oxford English Dictionary*. Winchester's writing pulled me into the times, kept me turning the pages of history, and gave me a deep appreciation for the vast resource of information available today.

Francine Rivers is a *New York Times* best-selling author for *Her Mother's Hope* and *Her Daughter's Dream*. Her novel, *The Last Sin Eater*, received a Gold Medallion award from the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association.

 **Jerry B. Jenkins**

Autobiography of Mark Twain: The Complete and Authoritative Edition

(University of California Press) by Mark Twain, Harriet E. Smith, Benjamin Griffin and Victor Fischer remains in my mind weeks

after an
exhaustive—and exhausting—reading. For an admitted
nonacademic, plowing
through 200 pages of introductory material by Twain scholars
was
strangely fascinating. And getting to Twain himself was worth
the work.
His will embargoed the publishing of his autobiography for 100
years
following his death in 1910. He believed he would be more
honest about
himself and others if he knew his words wouldn't be read for a
century.
Samuel Clemens proved to be a devoted husband and family man,
a biting
social commentator and presciently contemporary. Sadly he was
also
thoroughly anti-Christian. I would love to have known him, and
for
several days I felt I did. He had an unusual ability to write
on
timeless themes, which will, I hope, inform my own writing.

Jerry B. Jenkins is co-author of the best-selling *Left Behind*
series. *The Brotherhood*, released in early 2011, is the first
of his new series, *Precinct 11*.

Sheila Walsh

At the moment I'm reading about the life of Dietrich 
Bonhoeffer in ***Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy***
(Thomas Nelson) by Eric Metaxas. Amid the nightmare of
Hitler's Third
Reich, Bonhoeffer's life shone like a beacon of what he called
"costly
grace" in the darkest night. His suffering gave him a deeper

understanding of what it cost the Lamb of God to redeem us. On the day of his execution, almost certainly ordered by Hitler himself, Bonhoeffer led a short service for a few fellow prisoners. His text was from Isaiah 53:5, "By his stripes we are healed." I am being challenged and changed by the impact of this man poured out for Christ.

Sheila Walsh is the author of more than 17 books, including *The Shelter of God's Promises* trade book and DVD-based study. She is a recording artist and a former co-host of *The 700 Club*.

Craig Groeschel

Sun Stand Still (Multnomah) by Steven Furtick: This  book is packed with faith-building stories and is a must-read. I couldn't put it down. The book drove me to deep prayer about several things God put on my heart.

Predictable Success (Greenleaf Book Group Press) by Les McKeown: I've read several books on organizational lifecycles. This was my favorite. I felt like I was looking in the rear-view mirror of the development of our church with hope for the future.

Cracking Your Church's Culture Code (Jossey-Bass) by Samuel R. Chand: If you want your ministry to move forward, buy this book for everyone on your leadership team!

Craig Groeschel has written several books, including *Christian Atheist*, *It* and his latest release, *Weird*. He is also the

founding and senior pastor of .

Brian Zahnd

The Jesus Way by Eugene Peterson (Wm. B. Eerdmans): Though he is perhaps best known for his translation of *The Message Bible*, Eugene Peterson has authored more than 40 books, most of them on the theme of what it means to be a follower of Christ in the contemporary American context. Written from nearly 50 years of pastoral experience, *The Jesus Way* is perhaps the best book I've read on how to get beyond religious cliché and cultural assumption in considering the Christ we confess and follow. I also highly recommend Peterson's recently published memoir, *The Pastor*.

The Doors of the Sea by David Bentley Hart  (Wm. B. Eerdmans): David Bentley Hart is one of Christianity's finest living theologians and apologists; he is a gifted writer as well. Subtitled *Where Was God in the Tsunami?* Hart's book is an expansion of an essay that originally appeared in *The Wall Street Journal* in response to the 2004 tsunami that claimed some 250,000 lives in Southeast Asia. In the wake of the Japanese earthquake and tsunami, this little book has renewed relevance. *The Doors of the Sea* is the best attempt I've found in addressing the age-old problem of reconciling the goodness of God with the reality of evil and suffering.

Surprised by Hope by N.T. Wright

(HarperOne): What C.S. Lewis was to a previous generation of serious

Christian readers, N.T. Wright is to our generation. I've read nearly

everything Wright has published (and he is wildly prolific!), and this

is Wright at his best. I wish I could get every Christian to read *Surprised by Hope*.

It's about the great Christian hope of resurrection and how a biblical

understanding of the hope of the Resurrection should inform and

influence every aspect of Christian witness and mission.

Brian Zahnd is the author of the recently released *Unconditional?* and *What to Do on the Worst Day of Your Life* (both from Charisma House). He is pastor of Word of Life Church in St. Joseph, Mo.

David Jeremiah

Books I am reading include Dinesh D'Souza's *What's So  Great About Christianity* (Tyndale House)—his arguments for theism are compelling; and Timothy Keller's *The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism* (Riverhead Trade)—scholarly devotional truth from a man who lives in the real world of skeptics and doubters.

David Jeremiah is the founder of Turning Point Ministries and has written several books, including *The Coming Economic Armageddon* and *What in the World Is Going On?*

✖ Shane Claiborne

I read *Defending Constantine* (IVP Academic) by Peter Leithart because I wanted to be challenged and hear a perspective that might challenge mine. Not bad.

I like N.T. Wright, so I've been reading *Surprised by Hope* (HarperOne) with my fiancée. I really like Peter Heltzel and have to say his book *Jesus and Justice* (Yale University Press) is pretty sweet.

On the fiction side, I'm a big fan of the circus (and do a little juggling and unicycling myself), so I really enjoyed *Water for Elephants* (Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill) by Sara Gruen.

For a good visual book, I like Fritz Eichenberg's *Works of Mercy* (Orbis Books) or Banksy's *Wall and Piece* (Random House UK). (We have those on our coffee table.)

For the fellas, Richard Rohr has some incredible stuff on male spirituality. I just reread his classic *Wild Man to Wise Man* (St. Anthony Messenger Press) and I have his book *The Naked Now*

(Crossroad Publishing) on the shelf to read soon. I also love everything John M. Perkins has written. We did a book together called *Follow Me to Freedom*, which is a good intergenerational read. The next book I hope to read is Rene Girard's *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning* (Orbis Books). And if you're looking for a daily devotional, it doesn't get much better than *Common Prayer* (Zondervan).

Shane Claiborne is the founder of The Simple Way and the author of *The Irresistible Revolution* and *Jesus for President*.

✖ Elizabeth George

Believe it or not, I'm reading through *My Utmost for His Highest* (Barbour Books) by Oswald Chambers for the first time.

The powerful writings about the most powerful topics in the universe—God; the Father; and Jesus Christ, His Son—are so utterly thought-provoking that we have to read them more than once. This has been a faith-deepening experience.

Elizabeth George is the author of many books, including *A Woman After God's Own Heart* and *The Bare Bones Bible Handbook*.

Tim Lahaye

What's So Great About Christianity (Tyndale House) by Dinesh D'souza: Great answers to the evangelists of atheism and evolution. "Who made the lightning, the water and the mud"? They have no answers, yet they're having a field day brainwashing our schoolteachers with their unscientific theory of evolution.

The Islamic Antichrist

 (WND Books) by Joel Richardson: He reveals that the return of the Islamic Imam of the 12th century is none other than the Antichrist of Revelation. Every preacher in America should read this book.

Re-thinking the Rapture (Loizeaux Brothers) by E. Schuyler

English is an out-of-print book that showed the Greek word *apostesia* does not mean “falling away” or the transliteration of the word as the KJV rendered it, but as the first seven translators of the Greek New Testament into English rendered it, “departing, first”—meaning “physical departing” or “rapture first.” This is the slam-dunk verse for the pretrib rapture that I have been seeking for years. It is the basis of a new book I am working on now.

Tim Lahaye is a *New York Times* bestselling author of more than 70 nonfiction books, many on biblical prophecy and end times. He is co-author of the record-shattering *Left Behind* series.

Robert Morris

The Power of a Whisper (Zondervan) by Bill Hybels: One of the best books I’ve ever read on the practical side of hearing the voice of God.

Hearing God: Developing a Conversational Relationship With God (IVP Books) by Dallas Willard: Willard takes a unique approach on hearing and obeying God that helps you deepen your walk with the Lord and develop your character.

When a Nation Forgets God (Moody Publishers) by Erwin W. Lutzer: Lutzer exposes our need to 

learn from
history and take a stand for truth, justice and
righteousness.

The Pastor (HarperOne) by Eugene
Peterson: A wonderful book of lifelong lessons learned about
understanding the call and hurdles of being a pastor and what
the
vocation of being a pastor *really* means.

Generation iY: Our Last Chance to Save Their Future
(Poet Gardner Publishing) by Tim Elmore: Elmore gives insight
into how
to reach the next generation by understanding and engaging
them.
Together, we can help change the course this generation is
headed
toward.

Robert Morris is the best-selling author of nine books,
including *The Blessed Life* and *From Dream to Destiny*, and the
founding pastor of Gateway Church in Dallas.

Pat Williams

Washington: A Life (The Penguin
Press HC) is the ultimate biography of George Washington by
Ron Chernow.
I interviewed him on my radio show in Orlando. It was
fascinating to
have him bring Washington alive as a real person. His book is
exhaustive
but written in a way that you really get a true picture of the
importance of Washington to all of us today.

I'm also reading a wonderful baseball book called *Campy: The
Two Lives of Roy Campanella*

(Simon & Schuster) about the great Brooklyn Dodgers catcher, who was one of my heroes growing up near Philadelphia. The author is Neil Lanctot.

I've had copies of this next one given to me and I've tried to read it over the years, but I'm finally into it—***My Utmost for His Highest*** (Barbour Books) by Oswald Chambers. It's a classic devotional, and finally this year it registered. I'm starting my day each morning with Oswald Chambers. I've tried to do this for probably 30 years, and finally it's connecting. Maybe I wasn't mature enough yet. That book's been around forever, obviously, but it's still palatable.

Another one is *Love Life for Every Married Couple* (Zondervan) by Dr. Ed Wheat. Wheat was a medical doctor, but as I read that book I finally figured out what it takes to be a good husband.

Finally, Andy Stanley wrote a book a few years ago called *The Best Question Ever?* (Multnomah). I bought a couple of copies and gave copies to all my children and their friends. Andy says every time you have a decision to make, ask yourself: *Based on my past experiences and my future hopes and dreams, what is the wise thing to do?* That's the best question ever. 3

Pat Williams is senior vice president of the Orlando Magic and has written 65 books, including *Bear Bryant on Leadership* and *The Leadership Wisdom of Solomon*.

Charisma's Top 10 Books of 2011 (so far)

✖ **1. *Unconditional?* Brian Zahnd**

(Charisma House) Think we're biased in calling this one of the most thought-provoking books on forgiveness to emerge in years? Read the book and you'll see what we mean.

✖ **2. *Passport Through Darkness* Kimberly L. Smith (David C.**

Cook) Riveting, heartwrenching, compelling and *true* story of a couple's global fight against human trafficking.

✖ **3. *The Scent of Water* Naomi Zacharias (Zondervan)**

Beautifully written account of discovering beauty in pain.

✖ **4. *Jolt!* Phil Cooke** (Thomas Nelson) Lives up to its title with a challenge (and lots o' tips) to navigate today's culture of disruption and change.

✖ **5. *Out of a Far Country* Christopher Yuan & Angela Yuan** (WaterBrook) Powerful story of a Chinese mother and son's journey to find God amid his lifestyle of homosexuality and drugs.

✖ **6. *Penetrating the Darkness* Jack Hayford** (Chosen) Revelatory teaching on the power of the Cross from one of our favorite Bible teachers of all-time.

✖ **7. *Faith in the Land of Make-Believe* Lee Stanley** (Zondervan) Award-winning filmmaker's transparent memoir on facing Hollywood with divine intervention.

✖ **8. *Darkness Follows* Mike Dellosso** (Realms) Eerie plot and

taut writing showcase why Dellosso's one of our favorites (see p. 36 for more reasons).

☒ **9. *The Cause Within You* Matthew Barnett** (BarnaBooks)
Inspirational read from the Dream Center founder.

☒ **10. *40* Travis Thrasher** (FaithWords) Pulsating writing style fits this modern-day supernatural thriller.