

8 Books That Could Help Shape Your Spiritual Life

Looking for some new reading material? Here are 10 books that have helped shape my spiritual life.

1. *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire*, Jim Cymbala. The times are urgent. God is on the move. Now is the moment to ask God to ignite his fire in your soul. Cymbala believes Jesus wants to renew his people—to call us back from spiritual dead ends, apathy and lukewarm religion. Cymbala knows the difference firsthand. Thirty-five years ago, his own church, the Brooklyn Tabernacle, was a struggling congregation of 20. Then they began to pray ... God began to move ... street-hardened lives by the hundreds were changed by the love of Christ ... and today, they are more than 10,000 strong. The story of what happened to this broken-down church in one of America's toughest neighborhoods points the way to new spiritual vitality in the church and in your own life. *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire* shows what the Holy Spirit can do when believers get serious about prayer and the gospel. As this compelling book reveals, God moves in life-changing ways when we set aside our own agendas, take Him at His word and listen for His voice.

2. *A Tale of Three Kings*, Gene Edwards: This best-selling tale is based on the biblical figures of David, Saul and Absalom. For the many Christians who have experienced pain, loss and heartache at the hands of other believers, this compelling story offers comfort, healing and hope. Christian leaders and directors of religious movements throughout the world have recommended this simple, powerful and beautiful story to their members and staff. You will want to join the thousands who have been profoundly touched by this incomparable story.

3. *Crazy Love*, Francis Chan: Crazy, relentless, all-powerful love. Have you ever wondered if we're missing it?

It's crazy, if you think about it. The God of the universe—the Creator of nitrogen and pine needles, galaxies and Eminem—loves us with a radical, unconditional, self-sacrificing love. And what is our typical response? We go to church, sing songs and try not to cuss. Whether you've verbalized it yet or not, we all know something's wrong.

Does something deep inside your heart long to break free from the status quo? Are you hungry for an authentic faith that addresses the problems of our world with tangible, even radical, solutions? God is calling you to a passionate love relationship with Himself. Because the answer to religious complacency isn't working harder at a list of do's and don'ts—it's falling in love with God. And once you encounter His love, as Francis describes it, you will never be the same. Because when you're wildly in love with someone, it changes everything.

4. *Running with Horses*, Eugene H. Peterson: In Jeremiah 12:5 God says to the prophet, "If you have run with the footmen, and they have wearied you, then how can you contend with horses? And if in the land of peace in which you trusted, they wearied you, then how will you do in the thicket of the Jordan?"

We all long to live life at its best—to fuse freedom and spontaneity with purpose and meaning. Why then do we often find our lives so humdrum, so un-adventuresome, so routine? Or else so frantic, so full of activity, but still devoid of fulfillment? How do we learn to risk, to trust, to pursue wholeness and excellence—to run with the horses in the jungle of life? In a series of profound reflections on the life of Jeremiah the prophet, Peterson explores the heart of what it means to be fully and genuinely human. His writing is filled with humor and self-reflection, insight and wisdom, helping to set a course for others in the quest for life at its best.

5. *Accidental Pharisees*, Larry Osborne: Zealous faith can have

a dangerous, dark side. While recent calls for radical Christians have challenged many to be more passionate about their faith, the downside can be a budding arrogance and self-righteousness that “accidentally” sneaks into our outlook. In *Accidental Pharisees*, bestselling author Larry Osborne diagnoses nine of the most common traps that can ensnare Christians on the road to a deeper life of faith. Rejecting attempts to turn the call to follow Christ into a new form of legalism, he shows readers how to avoid the temptations of pride, exclusivity, legalism and hypocrisy.

6. *The High-Definition Leader*, Derwin L. Gray: *The High-Definition Leader* is an invitation of grace for churches and their leaders to grasp the ancient call of the early New Testament Church that crossed ethnic and socioeconomic barriers to create heavenly colonies of love, reconciliation and unity on earth. In it, you will learn the theology and practices that will help you build a mission-shaped, multi-ethnic church.

7. *The Pursuit of God*, A.W. Tozer: *The Pursuit of God* is an inspirational book that aims to guide those who wish to follow Christ. It includes biblical teachings that emphasize the concept of pursuing God. The concept of seeking God should be evident in the context of obtaining a genuine relationship between the Creator and the creature. Man must consider God as not only a creator, but also the one who sustains life; hence, all creatures must depend solely on Him.

8. *The Cost of Discipleship*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer: One of the most important theologians of the twentieth century illuminates the relationship between the teachings of Jesus and our lives. What can the call to discipleship, the adherence to the word of Jesus, mean today to the businessman, the soldier, the laborer or the aristocrat? What did Jesus mean to say to us? What is His will for us today? Drawing on the Sermon on the Mount, Dietrich Bonhoeffer answers these timeless questions by providing a seminal reading of the

dichotomy between “cheap grace” and “costly grace.” “Cheap grace,” Bonhoeffer wrote, “is the grace we bestow on ourselves ... grace without discipleship. ... Costly grace is the gospel which must be sought again and again, the gift which must be asked for, the door at which a man must knock. ... It is costly because it costs a man his life, and it is grace because it gives a man the only true life.”

What books have shaped your spiritual life? Leave a comment below. {eo}

Jarrod Wilson is a husband to Juli, dad to Finch, pastor, author, blogger, founder of Cause Roast. He's helping people live a better story. For the original article, visit [here](#).