



GRACE BIBLE CHURCH

Reading Guide

Grace Bible Church exists as the household of God to make disciples in New Orleans who, together, accurately represent God and faithfully uphold his truth in the world.



This is a free resource from Grace Bible Church.
For Bible teaching and other biblical resources, please visit GraceBibleNOLA.org

Thanks

for opening our church's 2024 Reading Guide! This resource is meant to promote spiritual growth through consistent Bible reading, as well as engagement with sound extra-biblical resources.

Familiarity with God's word through reading it, memorizing it, studying it, hearing it, and singing it matters for this life and for eternity. Understanding the truth written in God's word is the thing necessary to salvation (2Tim. 3:15). It is also the only sure way to know the truth about God's character (Pro. 2:1-6), to seeing the world and oneself rightly (Ps. 119:104, 130), and to practicing genuine godliness (Ti. 1:1). Most of all, understanding and obeying God's word is the only path to true blessing in this world as well as the world to come (Ps. 1:1-6; Heb. 2:1-5).

I am convinced that happiness now and happiness in eternity depend on our knowledge of and submission to the Scriptures. This reading guide was written with this in mind. I am sure that all who humbly, sincerely, and diligently apply themselves to the recommendations contained herein will find themselves growing in godliness and increasing in knowledge so they are more able to walk in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ (Phil. 1:27). It is my prayer that you would avail yourself to the resources that follow and, as you do, that you would experience the truth of **Proverbs 3:13-18**,

*Blessed is the one who finds wisdom,
and who gets understanding,
for the gain from her is better than gain from silver
and her profit better than gold.
She is more precious than jewels,
and nothing you desire can compare with her.
Long life is in her right hand;
in her left hand are riches and honor.
Her ways are ways of pleasantness,
and all her paths are peace.
She is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her;
those who hold her fast are called blessed.*

Grace to you,



Omri Miles,
Pastor

"Men do not throw off God from being their rule, till they throw off Scripture from being their guide."

– Stephen Charnock, ***The Existence and Attributes of God***





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"A godly man shows his love to the Word written... A godly man's heart is the library to hold the Word of God; it dwells richly in him (Col. 3:16)... As a man would carry an antidote about him when he comes near an infected place, so a godly man carries the Word in his heart as a spiritual antidote to preserve him from the infection of sin."

– Thomas Watson,
***The Godly Man's
Picture***



Why **READ THE BIBLE?**

Reading the Bible is not the only way for Christians to learn God's word and be edified by the contents of Scripture. In fact, for most of human history, God's words were unable to be read personally and regularly by the average person. It was not until soon after the invention of the printing press in 1440 that the Bible became widely available for the common man. Before the printing press, which is arguably the most important invention in human history, books had to be copied by hand and/or memorized. Because of the preciousness of God's word, God's people have practiced both.¹ But by the time Jesus lived and ministered on earth, it was clear that he expected those with access to the written word of God to be acquainted with its teaching by having read it for themselves (cf. Matt. 12:3, 5; 19:4; 21:16, 42; 22:31). Now, God's word is available to English speakers in nearly every format imaginable. This only heightens our culpability to know God's word well.

Undoubtedly, the emphasis for God's people according to Scripture is to hear and heed God's voice. This is why, among other things to do with his word, God instructs us to memorize his word (Ps. 119:16; Pro. 3:1), meditate on his word (Josh. 1:8; Ps. 119:15, 23, 48), sing his word (Ps. 119:54; Eph. 5:19), preach his word (2Tim. 4:2), listen to his word (Pro. 2:2; 8:6), speak his word to one another (Eph. 4:15; 1Thess. 4:18), and to pay close attention to what he has said (Heb. 2:1; 2Pet. 1:19).

The following several reasons explain the importance of regular Bible reading. For an excellent, extended treatment on the benefits of Bible reading, pick up *How Readeest Thou?* by J. C. Ryle, our church's giveaway book and the first book in the recommended resources section (page 11).

1. **GOD SPOKE THE WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.** On its own, this is reason enough to read the Bible. The worth of the speaker is what makes God's words so precious, and God, being of infinite worth, is infinitely worthy of being heard (Job 23:12; Ps. 19:10).
2. **GOD WROTE THE WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.** This goes beyond God speaking merely. God's words that we have written down for us in Scripture were also God's doing (Ex. 31:18; Jer. 36:27-32; 2Pet. 1:19-21). Therefore, we should read them.
3. **KNOWLEDGE OF SCRIPTURE IS NECESSARY FOR SALVATION.** No one can be saved apart from having some Bible knowledge because it is the Bible alone that tells man how

¹ For more on the history of the copied biblical Text and its trustworthiness, see James R. White, *The King James Only Controversy: Can You Trust Modern Translations?* (Bloomington, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 2009).

to be saved. A man may not own a Bible, may not have a Bible in his own language, and may have never seen a Bible before. But he must have first heard something of the biblical gospel before he can believe it and be saved (Rom. 1:15-16; 10:11-15). Regularly reading God's word will make the Christian more acquainted with his own salvation and better able to communicate the gospel to others.

4. **KNOWLEDGE OF SCRIPTURE IS NECESSARY FOR SANCTIFICATION.** We are all in need of personal change. We must become more like Jesus, and to do this, God has made his word the means by which we are conformed into the image of Christ (i.e., sanctified, Jn. 17:17). Therefore, regular Bible reading brings God's people into contact with the truth, God's choice medium for producing personal change.
5. **KNOWLEDGE OF SCRIPTURE SHAPES OUR SUFFERING.** Job, the same man who, for all time, exemplifies godly endurance in suffering (Jas. 5:10-11) also said, "I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my portion of food" (Job 23:12). Therefore, we ought to conclude that endurance in suffering and esteem of God's word go hand in hand.
6. **KNOWLEDGE OF SCRIPTURE PROTECTS US FROM DANGER.** God's wisdom, given to us in God's word, protects us from the danger and trouble we incur when left to our own foolish thoughts (see Proverbs chapter 2). To be sure, more than mere head-knowledge about the contents of Scripture is necessary to experience the protection that God's word offers. We must not only hear God's words, but also heed them as well (Pro. 4:1-6). Nevertheless, the point is that, before the word can be applied, it must first be known. Bible reading makes us know what God has said so that we can live trouble-free lives as we heed God's wise counsel in the Scriptures (Ps. 119:24).
7. **KNOWLEDGE OF SCRIPTURE AIDS OUR ENTRANCE INTO THE KINGDOM.** Those who endure to the end so that they eventually inherit God's kingdom (Ps. 1:6; 2:6-8) are those who delight in God's word (Ps. 1:2) because their humble faith in what God has spoken compels them to avoid ungodliness (Ps. 1:1), to grow constantly (Ps. 1:3), to heed God's gracious warnings (Ps. 2:10), and to worship him with reverence (Ps. 2:11-12). Entrance at last into God's kingdom begins with humbly opening his word.²

² This connection between inheriting the kingdom and heeding God's voice can be seen in the way Jesus begins and ends the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:2-12 and 7:24-29). This same connection is made by the writer of Hebrews throughout the entire epistle, but especially poignantly in 3:7-4:2.

Suggestions

FOR BIBLE READING

1. **READ PRAYERFULLY** by asking God to grant you insight into what you read from his word and to cause you to submit to whatever he will teach you in your reading. Psalm 119:33-37 offers an excellent example of this.
2. **READ HUMBLY** by receiving every word of Scripture as the very voice of almighty God. Humble confidence in God's ability to speak requires us to believe, obey, love, and receive, as inherently good, every word he has spoken (Pro. 30:5-6).
3. **READ TRUSTINGLY** by believing the truth of everything God has spoken. Jesus prayed that the truth would change us (Jn. 17:17); therefore, believing what he has revealed is the key to living a faithful life. For wherever faith is found, faithfulness is sure to follow (see Hebrews chapter 11).
4. **READ SINCERELY** by pursuing holiness of life inwardly in the fear of God. The one who fears God will care most what God thinks about his heart, where only God sees (Pro. 4:23; 1Thess. 2:3-4; Heb. 3:12). This fear of God will make us put on sincerity, which God's word is useful to produce (1Tim. 1:5).
5. **READ PURPOSEFULLY** by planning beforehand for regular, consistent, thoughtful Bible reading. Avoid reading verses or portions of Scripture randomly and, instead, read entire books of the Bible at a time. (Col. 4:16)
6. **READ ENGAGINGLY** by reading from the same physical Bible as often as possible and making marks with a pen or pencil. While the ability to access God's word digitally is an incredible modern blessing from the Lord, for most people, it seems the mind and memory are better aided by seeing the written word open before us as we carefully notate it in helpful ways.
7. **READ PATIENTLY** by taking a longterm approach to your Bible reading. The goal of Bible reading isn't so much to master God's word as it is to be mastered by God's Word. This should encourage us to think about our Bible intake in terms of years and decades, rather than seeking life-changing discoveries every time we read.



"Do not think you are getting no good from the Bible, merely because you do not see that good day by day. The greatest effects are by no means those which make the most noise, and are most easily observed. The greatest effects are often silent, quiet, and hard to detect at the time they are being produced. Think of the influence of the moon upon the Earth, and of the air upon the human lungs. Remember how silently the dew falls, and how imperceptibly the grass grows. There may be far more doing than you think in your soul by your Bible-reading."

*— J. C. Ryle, **How Readest Thou?***

Bible

READING PLANS

NAVIGATORS BOOK-AT-A-TIME BIBLE READING PLAN

This reading plan is designed to help readers complete the entire Bible in a year. It guides the reader through an entire book of the Bible at a time, mixing Old and New Testament readings throughout the year and staying in only two different books at once. The Navigators website will require an email address before granting access to the free plan.

ROBERT MURRAY M'CHEYNE READING PLAN

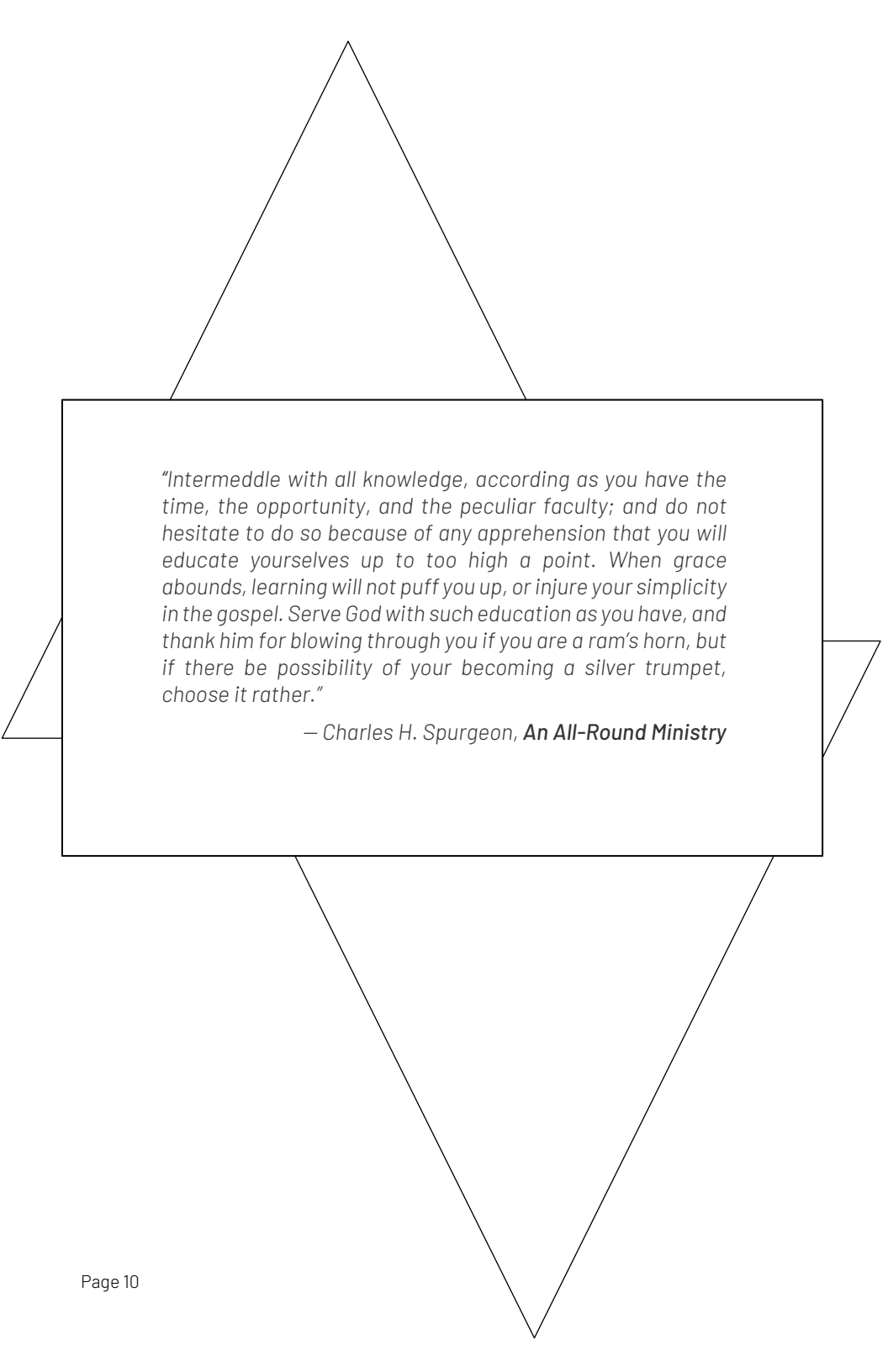
This reading plan was practiced by Robert Murray M'Cheyne, a Scottish preacher in the 1800s, and popularized by modern theologian and author, D. A. Carson. It includes readings from four places daily, taking the reader through the Old Testament once and the New Testament and Psalms twice. Bookmarks with the readings from each section of Scripture can be downloaded [here](#). Other printable formats can be found [here](#).

FIVE DAY BIBLE READING PLAN

This plan takes the reader through the entire Bible (or just the New Testament) in one year, while only reading five times each week. The Old Testament readings are structured chronologically, as far as possible, instead of straight through from left to right or an entire book at a time. Job is placed at the end of this plan.

CHRONOLOGICAL BIBLE READING PLAN

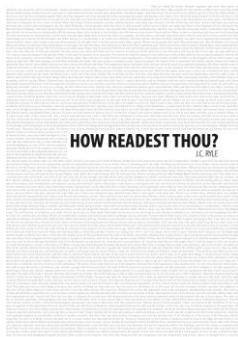
This plan will take the reader through the entire Bible in a single year, ordering the reading for each day by the order in which it occurs in Scripture historically. Many have found that reading the Bible this way helps to grasp how the people, events, and books of the Bible all fit together. However, those who do utilize this plan should keep a couple factors in mind: (1) the books of Scripture were written as single units rather than to chronicle the order of events; therefore, the reader may find greater difficulty in grasping the author's intention in writing a certain book due to regularly moving between various parts of Scripture; (2) some portions of Scripture (many of the Psalms, for example) are difficult, or even impossible, to order chronologically; (3) at times the interpreter must make a decision about the particular timing of an event, whether it is past, present, or future, or whether (as in the gospels) similar events are the same or different; therefore, with these final factors in mind, the order of the readings is not always beyond debate or discussion.



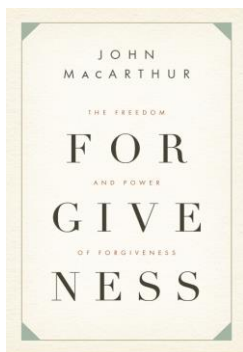
"Intermeddle with all knowledge, according as you have the time, the opportunity, and the peculiar faculty; and do not hesitate to do so because of any apprehension that you will educate yourselves up to too high a point. When grace abounds, learning will not puff you up, or injure your simplicity in the gospel. Serve God with such education as you have, and thank him for blowing through you if you are a ram's horn, but if there be possibility of your becoming a silver trumpet, choose it rather."

– Charles H. Spurgeon, **An All-Round Ministry**

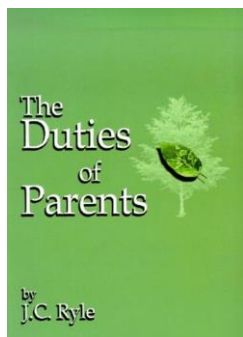
RECOMMENDED Resources



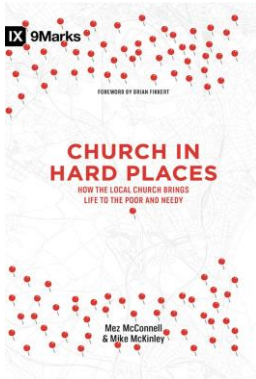
J. C. RYLE — *HOW READEST THOU?* This is our church's giveaway book, an excellent resource for motivating Bible reading. J. C. Ryle was a pastor who lived from 1816-1900. He was a faithful pastor who was well-respected in his day for his genuine godliness, doctrinal clarity, and unwavering convictions. *How Readeſt Thou?* is a short book that Ryle wrote to explain the uniqueness of the Bible and why, because of its uniqueness, Scripture is worthy of every man's devotion and trust. *53 pages*



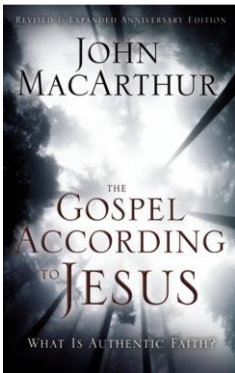
JOHN MACARTHUR — *THE FREEDOM AND POWER OF FORGIVENESS* Unbiblical views about guilt, blame, reconciliation, and forgiveness abound in our day. This book offers a refreshingly simple biblical corrective to our culture's current confusion. In it, MacArthur explains the gospel, the basis of forgiveness, as well as the practical and positional aspects of God's forgiveness and forgiveness with other human beings. Our next series after Psalm 119, Lord willing, will address forgiveness and reconciliation, so this book will be a welcome supplement to the preaching. *243 pages*



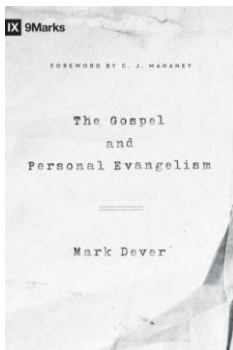
J. C. RYLE — *THE DUTIES OF PARENTS* Another excellent resource from Bishop Ryle, *The Duties of Parents* exhorts parents to their God-given parental obligations. In it, Ryle expounds 17 different lessons to help parents obey God's instruction to, "Train up a child in the way he should go" (Pro. 22:6). The size of this booklet makes it easily accessible for moms and dads in the midst of a busy family schedule. *34 pages*



MEZ MCCONNELL & MIKE MCKINLEY — *CHURCH IN HARD PLACES: HOW THE LOCAL CHURCH BRINGS LIFE TO THE POOR AND NEEDY* This book, written by experienced church planters, applies sound teaching about the church specifically to low-income communities. It answers the question, “What must a biblically sound church prioritize and practice to effectively reach underprivileged people?” Since we are a church plant in a low-income area, this will help our members and those considering joining our church understand our perspective on ministry. 194 pages



JOHN MACARTHUR — *THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JESUS* Though he is the author of more than 150 books, this is John MacArthur’s most famous and most controversial work. In it, MacArthur refutes the teaching that Jesus can be Savior without also being Lord and shows with piercing clarity that the good news preached by Jesus himself called for unqualified submission to his authority. Relevant as it was when first published in 1994, *The Gospel According to Jesus* is especially useful in the Deep South/Bible Belt where almost everyone attends church and so many claim to know God but deny him with their lives. 282 pages

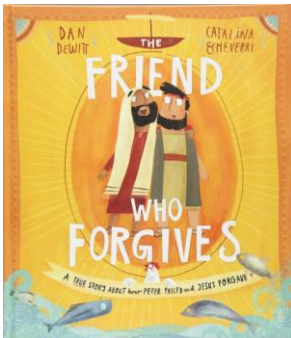


MARK DEVER — *THE GOSPEL AND PERSONAL EVANGELISM* This resource explains the gospel message and how to explain it to others. Every Christian is called by God to tell others about what God has done in Christ to save sinners. But this clear obligation does not resolve the frequently intimidating nature of personal evangelism or the difficulty of explaining such an eternally-important message. Mark Dever helps to clarify what is personal evangelism, distinguishing it from other good Christian practices and explaining how to faithfully practice it. 119 pages

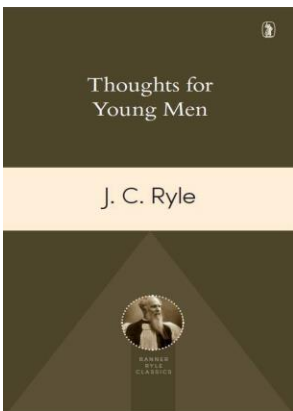
CHILDREN'S Resources



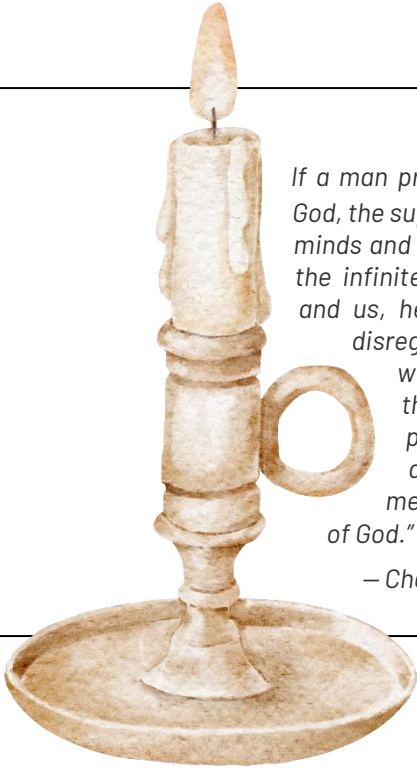
KRISTI AND T. LIVELY FLUHARTY — *FOOL MOON RISING* This book portrays the moon as arrogant, boastful, and ambitious, taking credit as the source of the sun's light that he merely reflects. In a playful, rhyming story, good for children and adults, the Fluhartys remind readers of the folly of pride and man's purpose of glorifying God.



DAN DEWITT AND CATALINA ECHEVERRI — *THE FRIEND WHO FORGIVES* This children's book highlights Jesus' abundant forgiveness by retelling the gospel accounts' testimony of his relationship with the apostle Peter. It is a helpful resource to encourage and teach forgiveness principles.



J. C. RYLE — *THOUGHTS FOR YOUNG MEN* A great resource for young people, this book exhorts young readers in a compelling and urgent way to take seriously the claims of the Bible on their lives. Ryle does a masterful job of helping readers grasp the sense of urgency that God, the gospel, and heaven and hell demand of those destined for eternity. *Thoughts for Young Men*, was Ryle's attempt to apply Titus 2:6, "Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded." Young men and young women can benefit from its contents. 75 pages



If a man properly appreciate his relation to God, the supremacy which he claims over our minds and consciences, as well as our lives, the infinite distance there is between him and us, he will feel the folly and guilt of disregarding what he has revealed. He will feel that he is not to postpone the Bible to his own reasonings; by practically forming his opinions in doctrinal matters in a great measure independently of the word of God."

– Charles Hodge, quoted in **The Pastor**

ONLINE Resources

GRACE BIBLE CHURCH Several resources are currently available on our church website. Our catalogue of sermons, blogs, and digital media continues to grow.

[Sermons](#) | [Crook & Nib](#) blog | [Updates](#) blog | [YouTube](#) channel | [Corporate Songs](#) on Spotify

GRACE BIBLE CHURCH (TEMPE) Our home church in Arizona that planted us has many helpful resources available online, including weekly sermons from main service and evening service and equipping hour, as well as teaching in their Build and Wellspring ministries for men and women, respectively. Those resources can be found most easily under the "Resources" tab [here](#).

MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE (podcast) The Grace & Granite podcast is the regular men's leadership training venue at [Grace Immanuel Bible Church](#) in Jupiter, FL and home base for [The Expositor's Seminary](#). Pastor Jerry Wragg is a wealth of ministry wisdom and experience, which makes his regular training of the men at GIBC an invaluable resource for the church. These lessons should be available wherever podcasts are found.

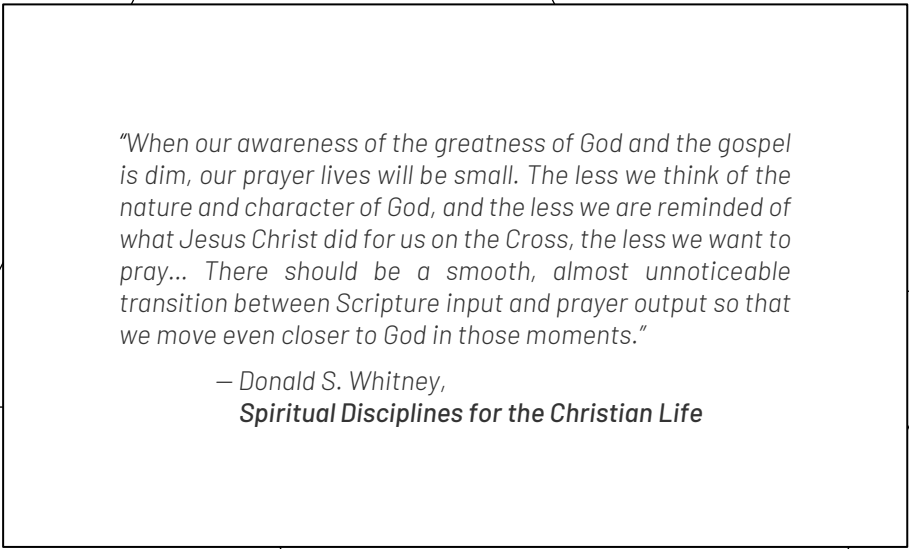
STRAIGHT TRUTH PODCAST This podcast is produced by Richard Caldwell, the pastor-teacher of Founders Baptist Church, one of our supporting churches in Spring, TX. In each episode, Pastor Richard briefly offers biblical answers to various questions submitted by listeners. Regular episodes can be found wherever podcasts are available.

CORPORATE Prayer Requests

Please keep our church in prayer regularly. If it's helpful, use the following requests and the accompanying passages of Scripture to inform your prayers.

1. God would receive glory through this church in New Orleans East (Eph. 3:20-21).
2. Increasing love and unity between those currently gathering with us on Sundays and for Midweek Bible Study (1Cor. 1:10; 1Thess. 3:12-13).
3. The preaching and teaching would produce love and godliness in the lives of those who gather with us (1Tim. 1:5).
4. The church's distinctives would become commonplace among us so that the church would be known for these godly virtues (1Thess. 1:8).
5. God would raise up elders and deacons to help lead in shepherding and serving the church body (1Tim. 3:1-13; Ti. 1:5-9).
6. A music leader to lead us in singing during our gatherings (Eph. 5:19).
7. Diligence and wisdom for Omri as he leads the church in preaching, discipleship, and shepherding (1Tim. 4:6-16).
8. Success in our evangelism efforts as we proclaim Christ to those around us, especially in New Orleans East (1Cor. 1:22-31; Col. 1:28).





"When our awareness of the greatness of God and the gospel is dim, our prayer lives will be small. The less we think of the nature and character of God, and the less we are reminded of what Jesus Christ did for us on the Cross, the less we want to pray... There should be a smooth, almost unnoticeable transition between Scripture input and prayer output so that we move even closer to God in those moments."

— Donald S. Whitney,
Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life