

# GRACE BIBLE CHURCH

**2026 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](http://GraceBibleNOLA.org).

*"It is not orders, or endowments, or liturgies, or learning, or grand cathedrals, that will keep a Church alive. Let free forgiveness through Christ be faithfully proclaimed in her pulpits, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against her. Let it be buried, or kept back, and her candlestick shall soon be taken away... Let us never forget that the brightest days of a Church are those when Christ crucified is most exalted. The dens and caves of the earth, where the early Christians met to hear of the love of Jesus, were more full of glory and beauty in God's sight than ever was St. Peter's at Rome. The meanest barn at this day, where the true way of pardon is offered to sinners, is a far more honourable place than the Cathedral of Cologne or Milan. A Church is only useful so far as she exalts free forgiveness through Christ."*

*- J. C. Ryle, "For Doctrinal Christianity," a charge at the Primary Visitation in Wigan, October 20, 1881 in Charges and Addresses (p. 44)*

In 1878, J. C. Ryle reminded his fellow Englishmen that "Ignorance can never be the mother of acceptable worship."<sup>1</sup> I wholeheartedly agree with this conviction. Without knowledge, God cannot be rightly worshipped by those whom he created for this very purpose (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14). And as it was then, so it is in our day, that biblical illiteracy prevents many from knowing, obeying, believing, and enjoying the God who made them.

This burden to help people in New Orleans become better worshippers of God and followers of Christ is what has motivated me to publish our church's annual reading guide. In it, you will find encouragement to read God's Word consistently and to familiarize yourself with extrabiblical resources that provide biblical instruction.

In this 2026 edition, you will notice various quotes, all from the pen of John Charles Ryle (1816-1900), the first bishop of Liverpool in England. His writings, life, and ministry have been a great encouragement to me over the years. In my opinion, he is one of the most clear, theologically sound, courageous, and accessible writers available to the English-speaking world. If others are encouraged to peruse his writings from this publication, I think I will have done the world a little bit of good.

May God, by His great grace, enliven your pursuit of Him this coming year.



Omri Miles,  
Lead Pastor

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<sup>1</sup> J. C. Ryle, *Practical Religion* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1998),

"I shall never  
hesitate to assert that  
if there is any one  
fact more  
incontrovertibly  
proved than another  
it is this, that the  
possession by a  
people of the Bible in  
their own language  
is the greatest  
possible national  
blessing."

- from "John  
Wycliffe" in *Light  
from Old Times* (p. 7)

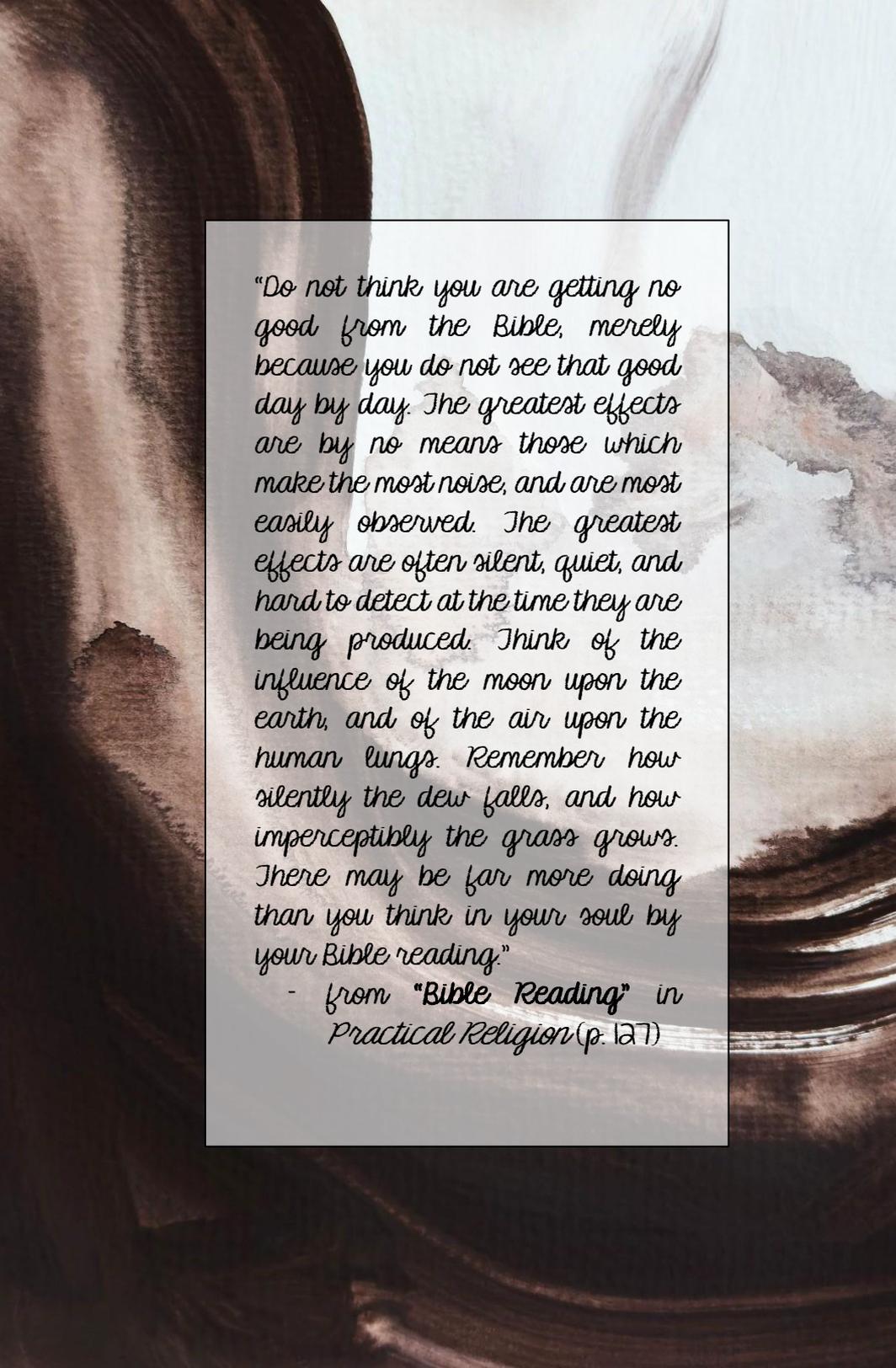


"A Bible-reading laity is a nation's surest defence against error. I have no fear for English Protestantism, if the laity will only do their duty."

- from "John Hooper: Bishop and Martyr" in *Light from Old Times* (p. 97)

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"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."

- from "Bible Reading" in  
*Practical Religion* (p. 127)

# REASONS TO 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 regularly in private 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 copying and memorizing Scripture.<sup>2</sup> 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 it (Ps. 119:16; Pro. 3:1), meditate on it (Josh. 1:8; Ps. 119:15, 23, 48), sing it (Ps. 119:54; Eph. 5:19), preach it (2Tim. 4:2), listen to it (Pro. 2:2; 8:6), speak it 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 our church's giveaway book, *How Readest Thou?* by J. C. Ryle.

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. 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 caused his spoken words to be written down for us in Scripture (Ex. 31:18; Jer. 36:27-32; 2Pet. 1:19-21). Therefore, we should read them.

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<sup>2</sup> 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).

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 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 salvation and also better able to communicate the good news of salvation 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 means 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 esteeming God's word is essential to enduring suffering.
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). Of course, more than mere head-knowledge about the Bible is necessary in order 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, before the word can be applied, it must be first be known. Bible reading makes us know what God has said so that we can live trouble-free lives as we heed His 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). 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 hearing him speak.<sup>3</sup>

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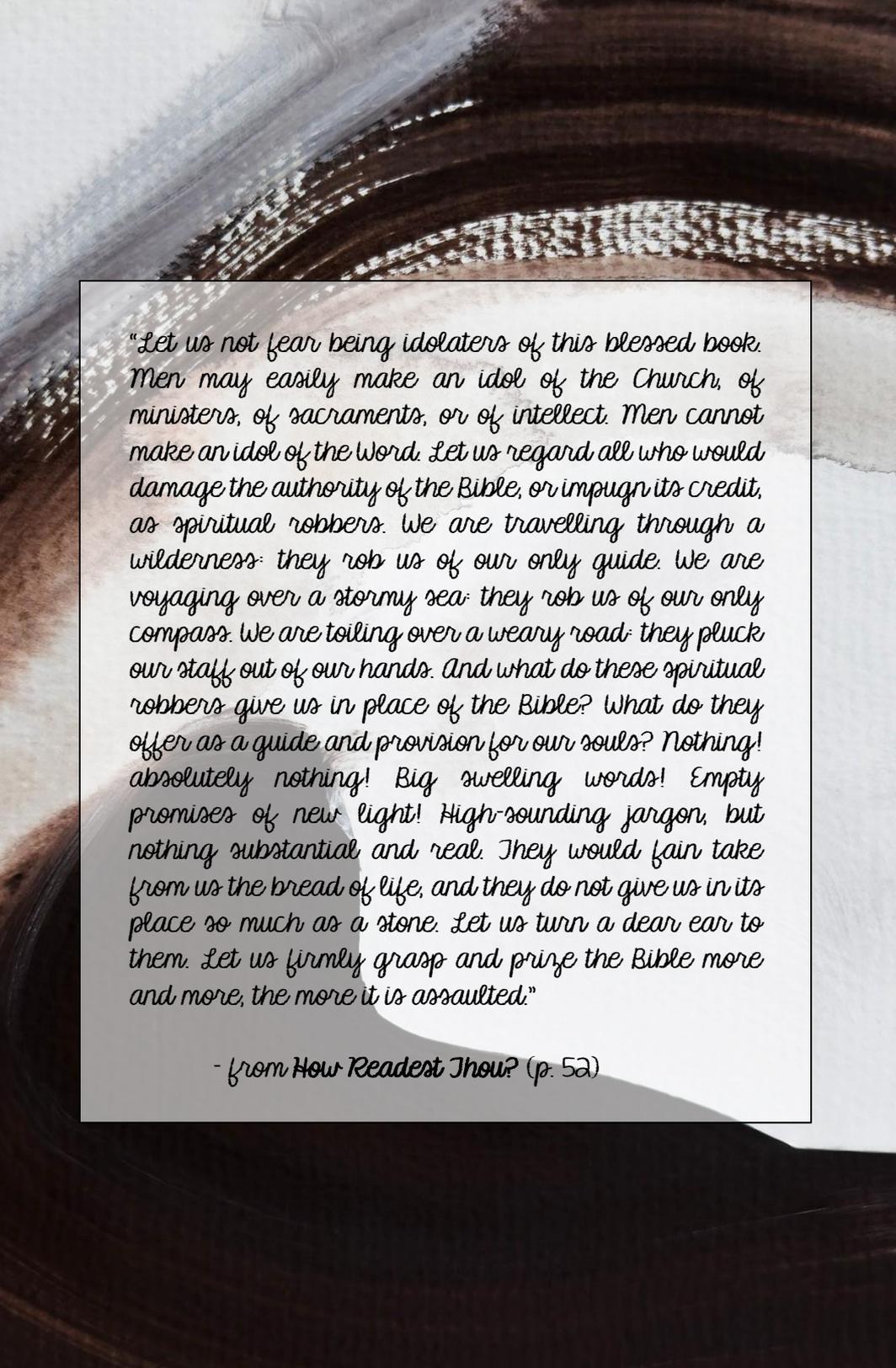
<sup>3</sup> This connection between inheriting the kingdom and heeding God's voice can be seen in the way Jesus begins and ends the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:2-12 and 7:24-29). This same connection is made by the writer of Hebrews throughout the entire epistle, but especially poignantly in 3:7-4:2.

"Every individual Christian has a right to judge for himself by the word of God, whether that which is put before him as religious truth is God's truth, or is not... God requires every Christian man to use the right of which I have just spoken, - to compare man's words and man's writings with God's revelation, and to make sure that he is not deluded and taken in by false teaching... It is absolutely needful for every Christian who loves his soul and would not be deceived, to exercise the right, and discharge the duty to which I have referred, seeing that experience shows that the neglect of private judgment has always been the cause of immense evils in the church of Christ."

- from "Private Judgment" in  
*Knots Untied* (p. 53-54)

# HOW TO READ THE BIBLE

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 through entire books of the Bible.
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, the mind and memory seem to be better aided by seeing the written word open before us as we carefully notate it in helpful ways.
7. ***Read patiently*** by taking a long-term 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.



"Let us not fear being idolaters of this blessed book. Men may easily make an idol of the Church, of ministers, of sacraments, or of intellect. Men cannot make an idol of the Word. Let us regard all who would damage the authority of the Bible, or impugn its credit, as spiritual robbers. We are travelling through a wilderness: they rob us of our only guide. We are voyaging over a stormy sea: they rob us of our only compass. We are toiling over a weary road: they pluck our staff out of our hands. And what do these spiritual robbers give us in place of the Bible? What do they offer as a guide and provision for our souls? Nothing! absolutely nothing! Big swelling words! Empty promises of new light! High-sounding jargon, but nothing substantial and real. They would fain take from us the bread of life, and they do not give us in its place so much as a stone. Let us turn a deaf ear to them. Let us firmly grasp and prize the Bible more and more, the more it is assaulted."

- from *How Readest Thou?* (p. 52)

# 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*

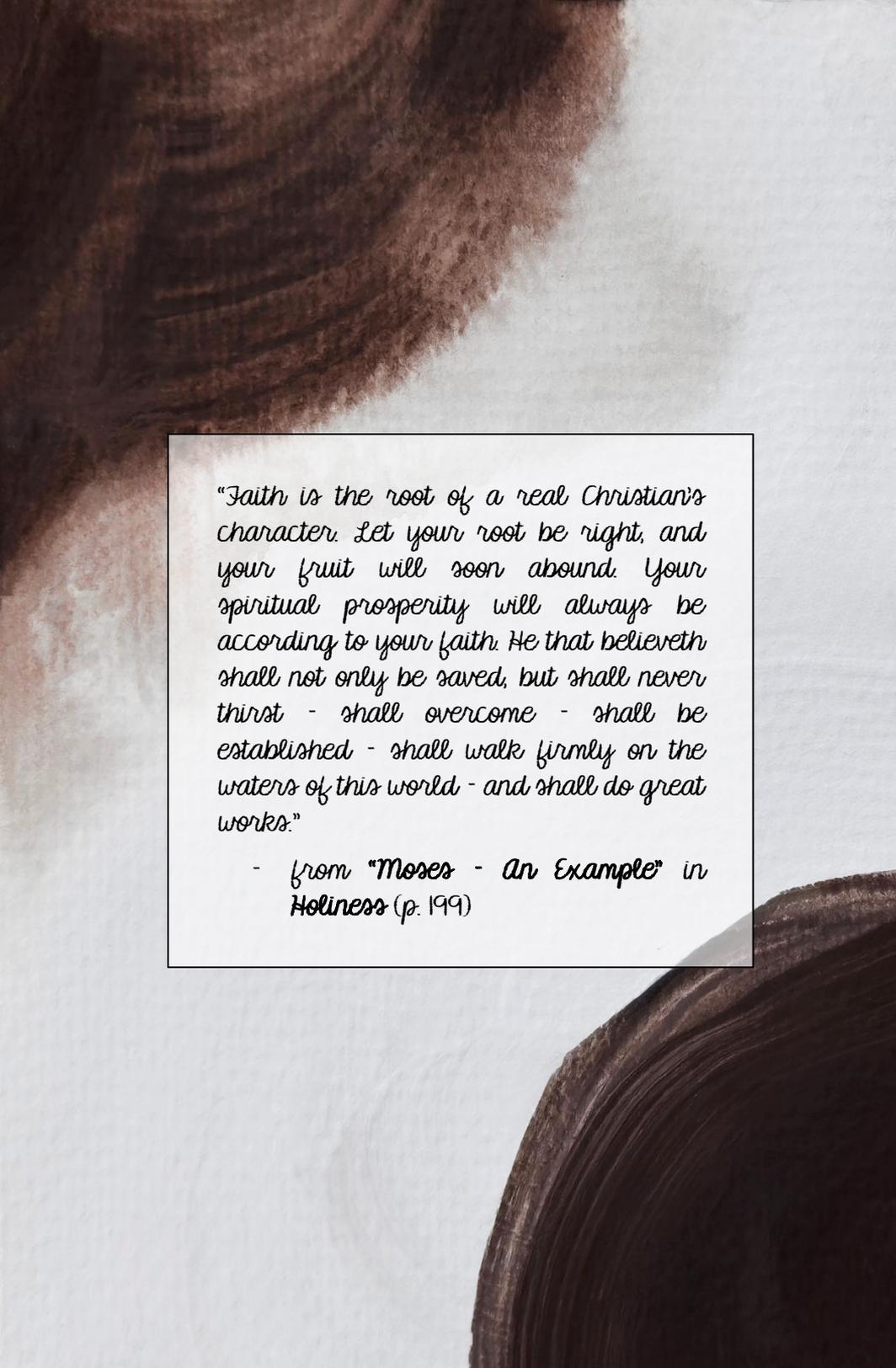
This plan takes the reader through the entire Bible (or just the New Testament) in one year, while only reading five times each week. The Old Testament readings are structured chronologically, as far as possible, instead of straight through from left to right or an entire book at a time. Job is placed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

"The truth is, that men who are left in ignorance of their duty to God are not likely to do their duty to their neighbours. The Bible, whatever some are pleased to say, is the true friend of order, morality, and peace, and people who never hear the Bible read and taught in church or chapel, as I fear is the case with myriads in Liverpool, are the seed-plot for every kind of mischief, and demand the most serious attention of the upper ranks of society."

- from "*Liverpool and England*," the second triennial charge to the Diocese of Liverpool, October 21, 1884 in *Charges and Addresses* (p. 86)



*"Faith is the root of a real Christian's character. Let your root be right, and your fruit will soon abound. Your spiritual prosperity will always be according to your faith. He that believeth shall not only be saved, but shall never thirst - shall overcome - shall be established - shall walk firmly on the waters of this world - and shall do great works."*

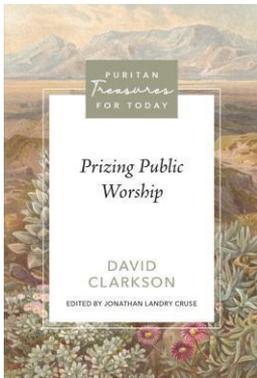
*- from "Moses - An Example" in  
Holiness (p. 199)*

# RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

This year's recommended resources include three books. The subjects covered include church history, ecclesiology (the study of the church), and practical theology. The remaining resources address holiness, assurance, and faith, themes found in the book of First John. It is my hope that the First John-related resources will be instructive supplementary helps as we continue studying it in our corporate Sunday gatherings.

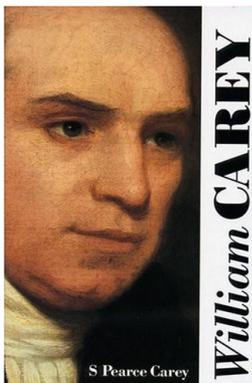
Also, the complete works of J. C. Ryle are available to be checked out in the church library. Several copies are also available for purchase among the books for sale.

## *David Clarkson - Prizing Public Worship*

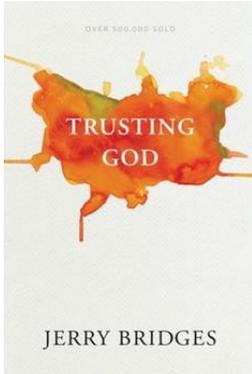


At a time when internet Bible teachers are commonplace, digital shepherds are sought after, and online church is preferred, we cannot overemphasize the priority God places on the corporate gathering of His people. In *Prizing Public Worship*, David Clarkson (1622-1686) makes a strong biblical case for the superiority of corporate worship over private devotion. Without denigrating the need to pursue Christ individually and in private, Clarkson offers compelling argumentation in favor of prioritizing the corporate gathering of God's people. *168 pages*

## *A. Pearce Carey - William Carey*

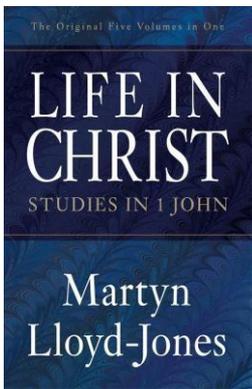


Known to us now as "the father of modern missions," William Carey (1761-1834) earned this title through his indefatigable zeal for the evangelization of people with no Bible and who had never heard the name of Jesus. After patiently overcoming the unwillingness of Christians in England to engage in missionary activity, he spent his life laboring in India as a missionary and Bible translator. This biography, written by Carey's great-grandson, will inform us how God used a country shoe-maker to accomplish great things for His cause and spur us on to also attempt great things for His name's sake. *432 pages*



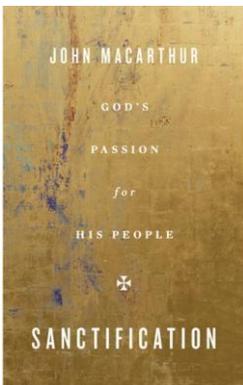
*Jerry Bridges - Trusting God* The principles taught in this book played a major part in sustaining me during a pivotal time in my life. In it, Bridges leads the reader into a greater confidence in God's trustworthiness by expounding a few attributes of God from Scripture – God's sovereignty, love, goodness, and wisdom. It is an incredible resource to help readers practically apply very weighty theological concepts about God's character.

368 pages

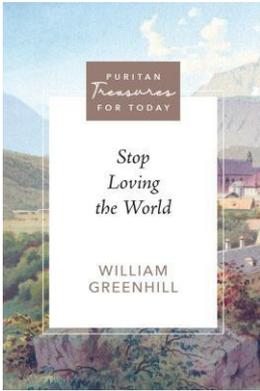


*Martyn Lloyd-Jones - Life in Christ: Studies in First John*

Martyn Lloyd-Jones is considered by many, the greatest preacher of the 20th century. This book, originally five separate volumes, is a compilation of his sermons preached at Westminster Chapel in London in the late 1940s. This has been my go-to resource on First John. I encourage those with us on Sundays to read along from week to week in preparation for hearing the sermons on Sundays. 736 pages

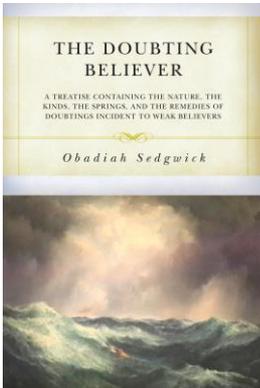


*John MacArthur - Sanctification* At a time when there is so much confusion about the Christian's duty before God, fight against sin, and practical growth in holiness, this little book shines a welcomed ray of clarity. With simple, insightful observations about the current evangelical landscape, Dr. John MacArthur succinctly demonstrates the importance and blessing of holiness in the lives of God's people. 75 pages



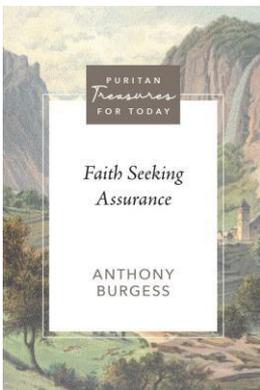
### *William Greenhill - Stop Loving the World*

Based on First John 2:15-17, the Puritan pastor, William Greenhill (1558-1671), eloquently explains how and why the believer must stop loving the world. What I especially found helpful in this volume was Greenhill's ability to compare the value of what is eternal with those lesser, earthly things that are unworthy of our devotion. *92 pages*



### *Obadiah Sedgwick - The Doubting Believer*

Assurance of salvation is a major theme in the book of First John. Puritan pastor, Obadiah Sedgwick (c. 1600-1658), taught a series of sermons on the subject of doubt and assurance. It was such a great encouragement that he finally put his teachings into print at the urging of others. This volume sheds light on the nature, causes, and cures of doubt in believers. *232 pages*



### *Anthony Burgess - Faith Seeking Assurance*

Another Puritan pastor, Anthony Burgess (d. 1664), rightly understood the value of assurance and, therefore, encouraged believers to pursue confidence in salvation. In this, his desire mirrors the apostle John's in his first epistle. In *Faith Seeking Assurance*, Burgess helps readers to carefully distinguish between carnal confidence and grace-wrought assurance of salvation.

*209 pages*

## 2024 Reading Guide

*How Readest Thou?* by J. C. Ryle

*The Freedom and Power of Forgiveness* by John MacArthur

*The Duties of Parents* by J. C. Ryle

*Church in Hard Places* by Mez McConnell and Mike McKinley

*The Gospel According to Jesus* by John MacArthur

*The Gospel and Personal Evangelism* by Mark Dever

## 2025 Reading Guide

*Rules for Walking in Fellowship or Duties of Christian Fellowship* by John Owen

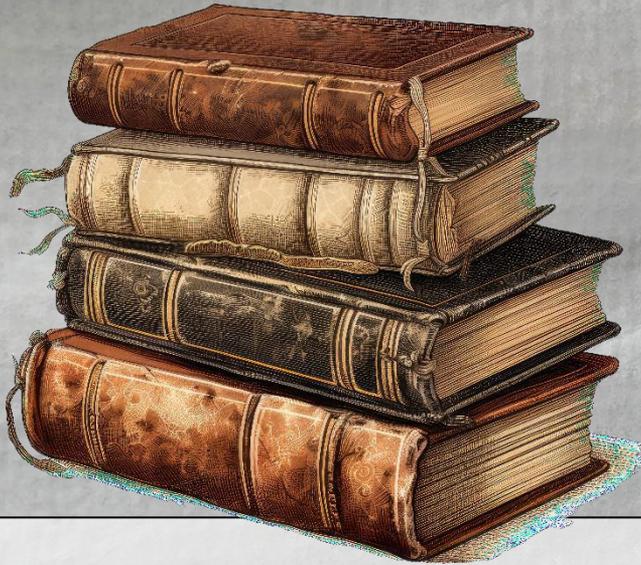
*The King James Only Controversy* by James R. White

*Letters on Christian Education* by an anonymous mother

*Evangelicalism Divided* by Iain Murray

*The Attributes of God* by Arthur W. Pink

*Keeping the Heart* by John Flavel



*"A lantern is an excellent help in a dark night, but it is not home. Means of grace are useful aids, but they are not Christ. Oh, no! Press onward, forward, upward, till you have had personal, business-like dealings with Christ himself."*

- from *"Come! A Christmas Invitation"*  
in *Christmas Thoughts* (p. 14)



*"The only way to be really happy, in such a world as this is to be ever casting all cares on God. It is the trying to carry their own burdens which so often makes believers sad. If they will only tell their troubles to God, he will enable them to bear them as easily as Samson did the gates of Gaza. If they are resolved to keep them to themselves they will find one day that the very grasshopper is a burden (Eccles. 12:5)."*

- from "Prayer" in *Practical Religion* (p. 75)

# 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 our members (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), and also seeks to leverage opportunities for ministry through writing and recording and teaching in other places.
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).
9. We would become financially self-sustaining, able to support numerous staff for the work of ministry (1Cor. 9:9-11; 1Tim. 5:17-18).
10. Praise God for those individuals and churches who have chosen to partner with us to see the gospel advance in New Orleans! Pray that their gifts to us would bear fruit here and in those local churches to the glory of God (Phil 4:15-17).

## ONLINE RESOURCES

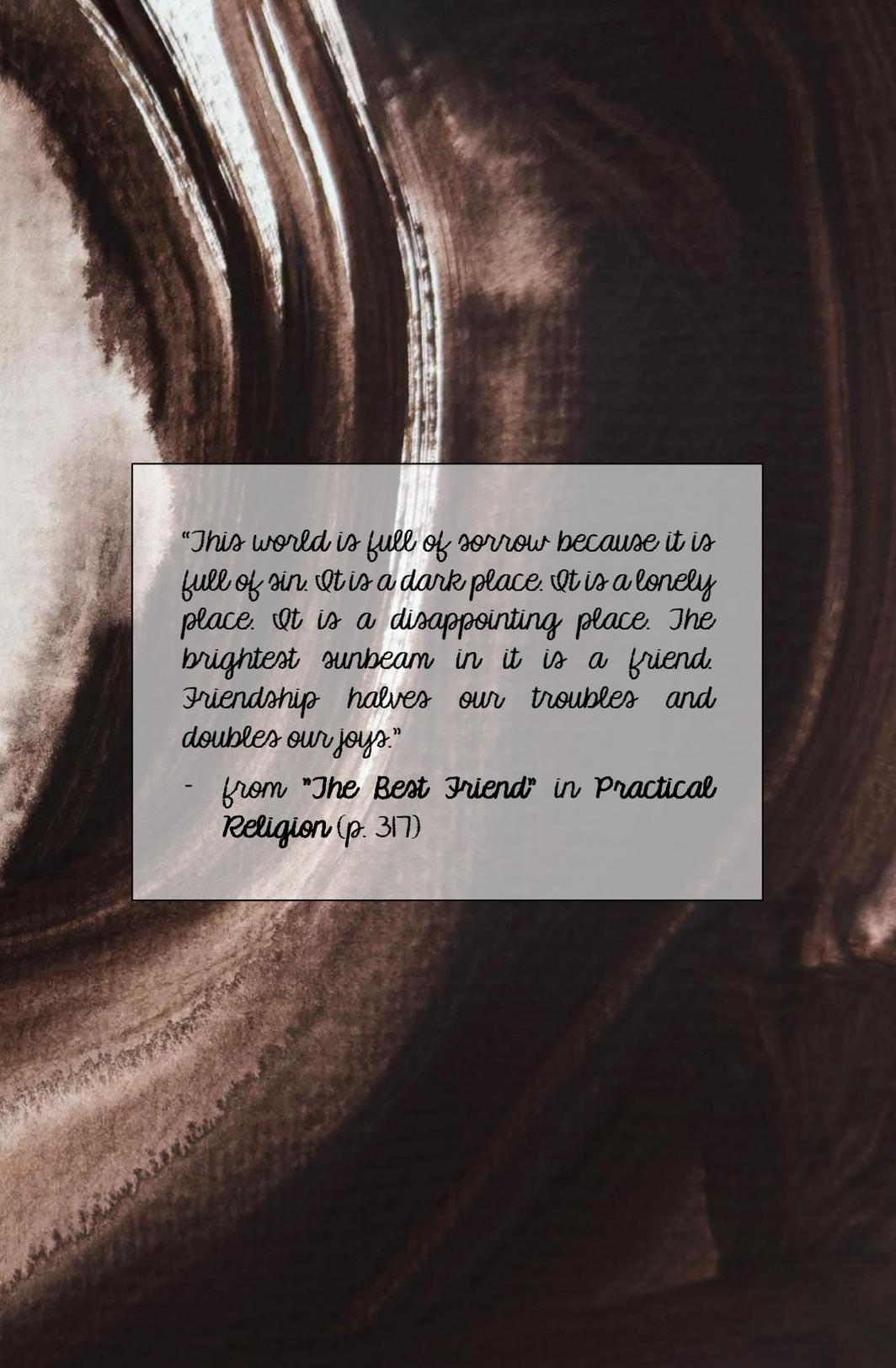
Several resources are currently available on our church [website](#). Our catalogue of sermons, blogs, and digital media continues to grow.

[SERMONS](#) | [CROOK & NIB BLOG](#) | [UPDATES BLOG](#) | [YOUTUBE CHANNEL](#)

# MINISTRY PARTNERS

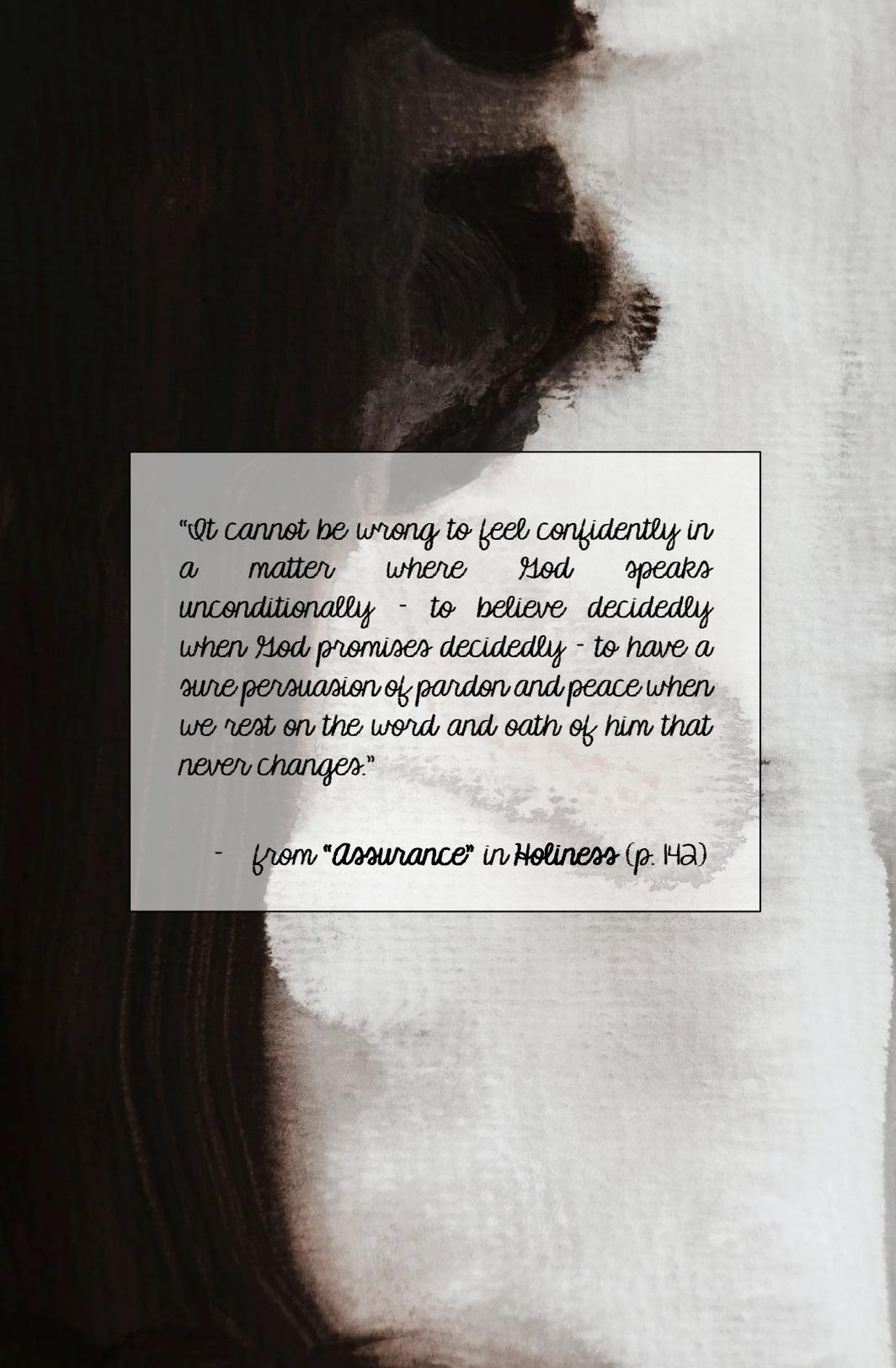
The several churches shown below support us financially, pray for us regularly, and/or share resources with us to advance the gospel here in New Orleans.





"This world is full of sorrow because it is full of sin. It is a dark place. It is a lonely place. It is a disappointing place. The brightest sunbeam in it is a friend. Friendship halves our troubles and doubles our joys."

- from "The Best Friend" in *Practical Religion* (p. 317)



"It cannot be wrong to feel confidently in a matter where God speaks unconditionally - to believe decidedly when God promises decidedly - to have a sure persuasion of pardon and peace when we rest on the word and oath of him that never changes."

- from "Assurance" in *Holiness* (p. 142)