

Pastor's picks for summer reads (and a friendly challenge from your pastor)

10 great Christian books to take to the beach or read in the hammock

Here's my challenge to you this summer. **Read one Christian book in July-August 2009.** That's it – just one Christian book.

I'm anticipating some objections to my challenge. 'I'm already doing the Bible-reading plan and don't have time for more reading!' 'I'm just not a reader – I can't concentrate on what I read.' 'I don't know good books to read.'

Let me put my challenge in perspective. If you watch one hour of television per day in July-August (many of us will watch more than this), you will watch about 60 hours of television over the course of the rest of this summer. *But it will take you only 7 hours to meet my challenge of reading one Christian book.*

Here's how I figure it. If you read one average-sized Christian book, that's a total of about 200 pages you'll be reading. If you figure that a typical book has about 400 words on each page, you're looking at reading 80,000 words this summer. Sounds like a lot, but it isn't. A slow reader can read about 200 words a minute. So, a slow reader can read 80,000 words in 400 minutes. That's only seven hours of reading over the course of two months. *That's only seven minutes a day.*

So, to summarize: you can complete my challenge of reading one Christian book this summer **if you will read for only seven minutes a day.** Many of us spend more time in the shower every day. Compare that to the time you will spend watching television. That's do-able, right? Read before bed. Read over your lunch break. Read at the beach. Here are ten great Christian books to choose from. Many of them are now in our church library.

The Bible, by God. The greatest Christian book of all time! If you aren't reading the Bible every day, read it for seven minutes a day. It's way better than all the other books in this list. Its Author is pretty amazing. He knows you personally and has written this Book just for you.

Total Church, by Tim Chester and Steve Timmis. One of the best books I've read on the church, and a key book that is influencing your PCF elders as we think about the direction of our church.

Death by Love: Letters from the Cross, by Mark Driscoll and Gerry Breshears. An exciting, gut-wrenching, Christ-honoring book. Twelve letters from a pastor to his people, showing how the cross of Jesus speaks into the depths of their lives.

***When Sinners Say I Do: Discovering the Power of the Gospel for Marriage*, by Dave Harvey.** A great, gospel-centered book on marriage. Guys, don't skip this book to get to something else. Read a book on marriage. Choose this one. Bless your wife.

***Business for the Glory of God*, by Wayne Grudem.** Those of you who spend a huge part of your life on the job, read this book and be helped to think through how you can spend those hours for God's glory.

***Just Do Something*, by Kevin DeYoung.** Written by a young pastor who was at seminary with me. It is getting rave reviews. One Christian leader says it is the best book on discerning God's will he has ever read.

***Stop Dating the Church!* by Joshua Harris.** A book on the importance of being involved with the church.

***The Hidden Smile of God: The Fruit of Affliction in the Lives of John Bunyan, William Cowper, and David Brainerd*, by John Piper.** Three excellent biographical sketches of great Christian men who suffered deeply and bore much fruit.

***Living from the Cross-Centered Life: Keeping the Gospel the Main Thing*, by C.J. Mahaney.** Written by a pastor. Very practical. Very short. Very clear. Very helpful.

***Keep a Quiet Heart*, by Elisabeth Elliot.** A helpful book for women by an evangelical hero and well-known author. Devotional thoughts for each day.

***Desiring God*, by John Piper.** One of my favorite Christian books of all time. Probably the one that has influenced me more than any other. It's rich in content and may be demanding for you to read, but is well worth the effort.