

- I. Discipline of Reading
- a. The challenge: “This trend is troubling because the immediate appeal of visual entertainment is at odds with the gradual unveiling of literary treasure. Entertainment is passive and easy; books require an active mind and diligence. Books typically get ignored.”¹
 - b. Purpose: To cultivate and maintain a Christian habit of reading so that our spiritual life will grow.
 - c. Remember why we engage in spiritual reading: Consult outline and audio of session 1, of why read the Bible.
 - d. If you are engaged in spiritual reading already, continue to do so.
 - e. Read actively rather than passively.
 - i. “A passive reader is like a catcher who never returns the ball, while an active reader is one who fires the ball back in the form of questions that keep the game going and make the event exciting.”²
 - ii. If reading is worship (as we will establish later) and you ought to give your best in your worship, then consider also reading during times when you have energy and strength as well so you can read actively and engage the text.
 - iii. Pick readings that invite critical reflection: “Among Christian books, works on theology, apologetics, and ethics invite critical reading more than devotionals, biographies, novels, and poetry.”³
 - f. Read with a plan.
 - i. Plan what you want to read: “First, look at the books you have read over the last twenty-four months that have benefited your life. Create categories for those books. Second, include any category that you don’t currently read but would like to add, perhaps something mentioned in this chapter. Below you should have a list of two to five categories. Start small and be realistic. Third, begin making book selections informed by your reading priorities.”⁴
 - ii. Plan to read daily. It’s reasonable: “If most Christian books have approximately fifteen chapters and we read a chapter a day, the end result will be two books a month or twenty-four books a year! Such a plan is well within the scope of any average reader. So make a list of the books you want to read and leave room for new publications that hit the press. Just a chapter a day will make you an avid Christian reader.”⁵
 - iii. Read with a goal:⁶
 1. Read for information
 2. Read for inspiration
 3. Read for instruction

¹ Tony Reinke, *Lit! A Christian Guide to Reading Books* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 40

² David L. McKenna, *How to Read a Christian Book* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2001), 58.

³ David L. McKenna, *How to Read a Christian Book* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2001), 65.

⁴ Tony Reinke, *Lit! A Christian Guide to Reading Books* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 107.

⁵ David L. McKenna, *How to Read a Christian Book* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2001), 60-61.

⁶ David L. McKenna, *How to Read a Christian Book* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2001), 60-61.

4. Read for interrogation
 5. Read for intergration
- g. Switch around the types of books you are reading.
- i. In line with your goals of reading, reading in areas you typically don't so that you can grow in them and also not be bored or a one-sided Christian.
 - ii. "If we read too much on one subject for a long period of time, the law of diminishing returns takes over. We become bored, inattentive, and finally exhausted. Inspirational Christian books that are usually lighter in language and more free-flowing in style can give us the break we need. Autobiographies and biographies are especially good for letting us "get under the skin" of great saints and "feel the heartbeat" of our unsung heroes. Rather than struggling with the author's terms or searching for issues and arguments, we can read such a book as a drama that tugs at our emotions and lifts our soul. No one, for instance, can read Elisabeth Elliot's *Through Gates of Splendor* without weeping for our Christian martyrs or Billy Graham's *Just as I Am* without thanking God for anointing his servant. Fiction may also fit into the category of inspirational reading. This is the case when the mind is set free to soar with the imagination of creative authors. C.S. Lewis is the acknowledged master of Christian fiction. Parents and children who read together *The Chronicles of Narnia* series will never forget the experience, and adults who read *The Great Divorce* will spend a lifetime debating the images of the fable. Poetry tends to be the most neglected of inspirational Christian literature. Our high school English experiences should not continue to bias us. Calvin Miller's *Singer Trilogy* or Ruth Graham's *Sitting by My Laughing Fire* will rekindle the love for verse that we knew as children. The beauty, rhythm, and imagery of Christian poetry can cleanse our souls, enliven our minds, and set our spirits free."⁷
- h. Reflect on your reading
- i. Finally, realize that spiritual reading ultimately is a matter of the heart and about worshipping God.
 - i. It's inevitable that we all worship something. Our greatest act of worship is shown in what we enjoy.
 - ii. God has chosen reading as a way of meeting and worshipping Him: "By contrast, God planned to lead his people through this world of visual idols by words from his own lips—in language, through his revealed Word."⁸
 - iii. If we are believers, our identity in Christ now makes us want to worship Him.

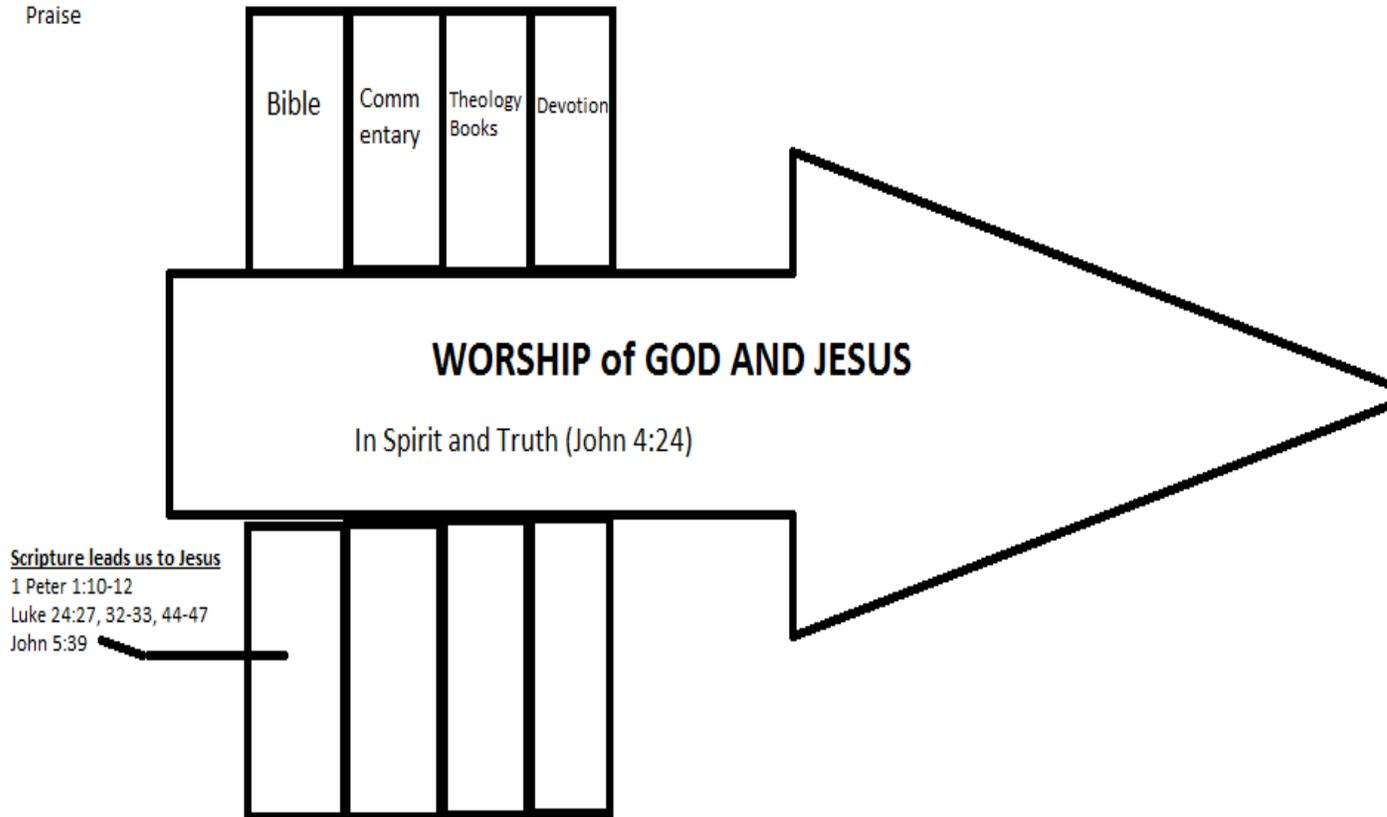
⁷ David L. McKenna, *How to Read a Christian Book* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2001), 62.

⁸ Tony Reinke, *Lit! A Christian Guide to Reading Books* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 41

- iv. If we want to worship God then we will meet Him in our spiritual reading.
 - 1. “Christian book reading is never a solitary experience, but an open invitation to commune with God.”⁹
 - 2. “As Christians, we read all of our books illuminated by God and in communion with him. Gleaning facts and information is not the highest purpose of reading. Reading can be ultimately a means to eternally benefit our soul.”¹⁰
- v. Reading so as to meet Christ.
 - 1. This will drive us to want to read the Bible and noncanonical books.
 - 2. See Chart.

Worship include:
 Awe
 Adoration
 Thanksgiving
 Praise

WORSHIP OF GOD AND JESUS DRIVES OUR READING



⁹ Tony Reinke, *Lit! A Christian Guide to Reading Books* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 37.
¹⁰ Tony Reinke, *Lit! A Christian Guide to Reading Books* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 37