

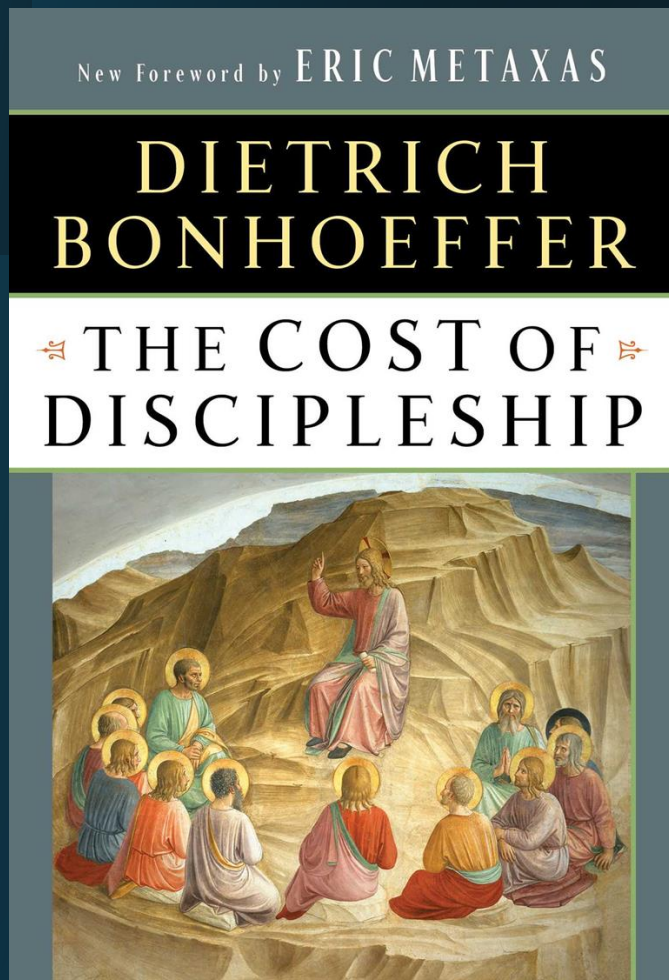


Influential Christian Literature

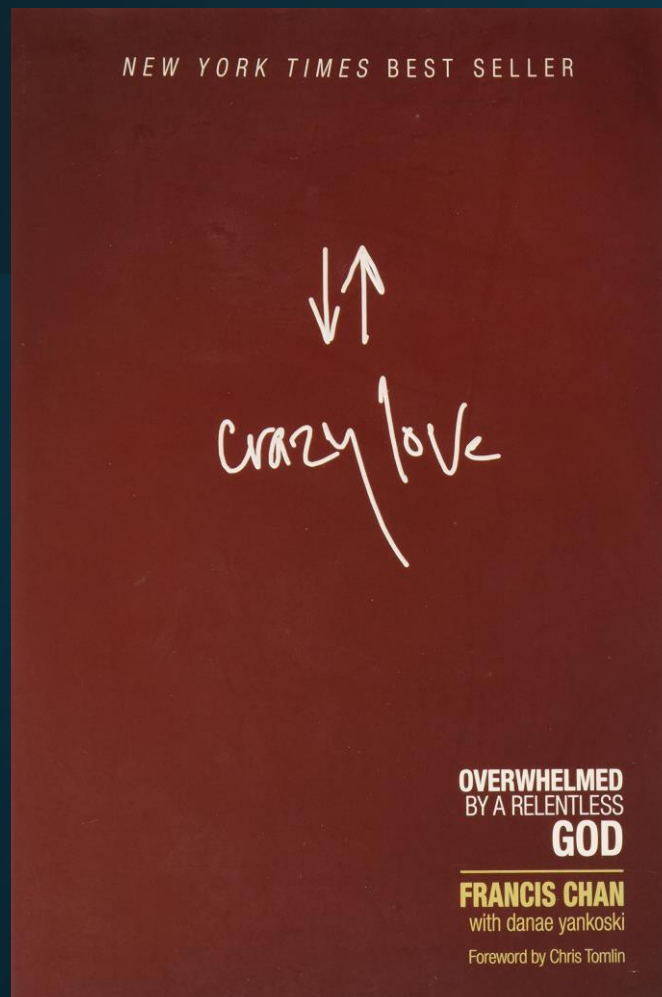
*Exploring Essential Works That Shaped
Christian Thought*

Wilbur Reid, summer of 2025

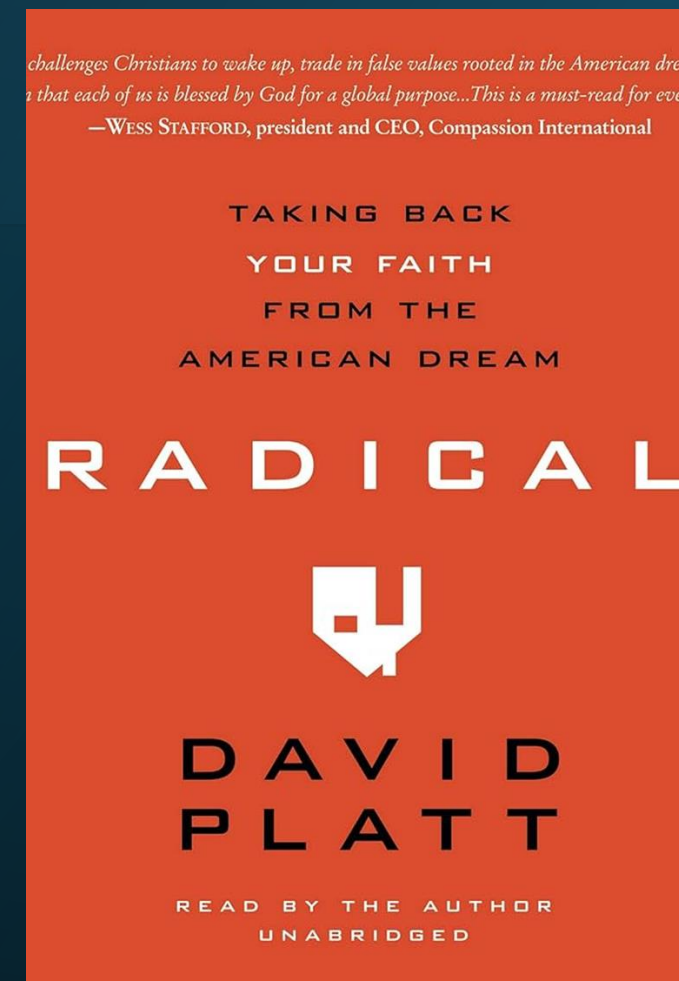
The Cost of True Discipleship



1937 (31 years old)



2008 (41 years old)



2010 (31 years old)

The Cost of Discipleship (1937)

-
- **Author:** Dietrich Bonhoeffer
 - German Lutheran pastor, anti-Nazi, martyr
- **Summary:** A powerful call to authentic Christian discipleship, contrasting "cheap grace" with costly, sacrificial following of Christ.
- **Quote:** "When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die."

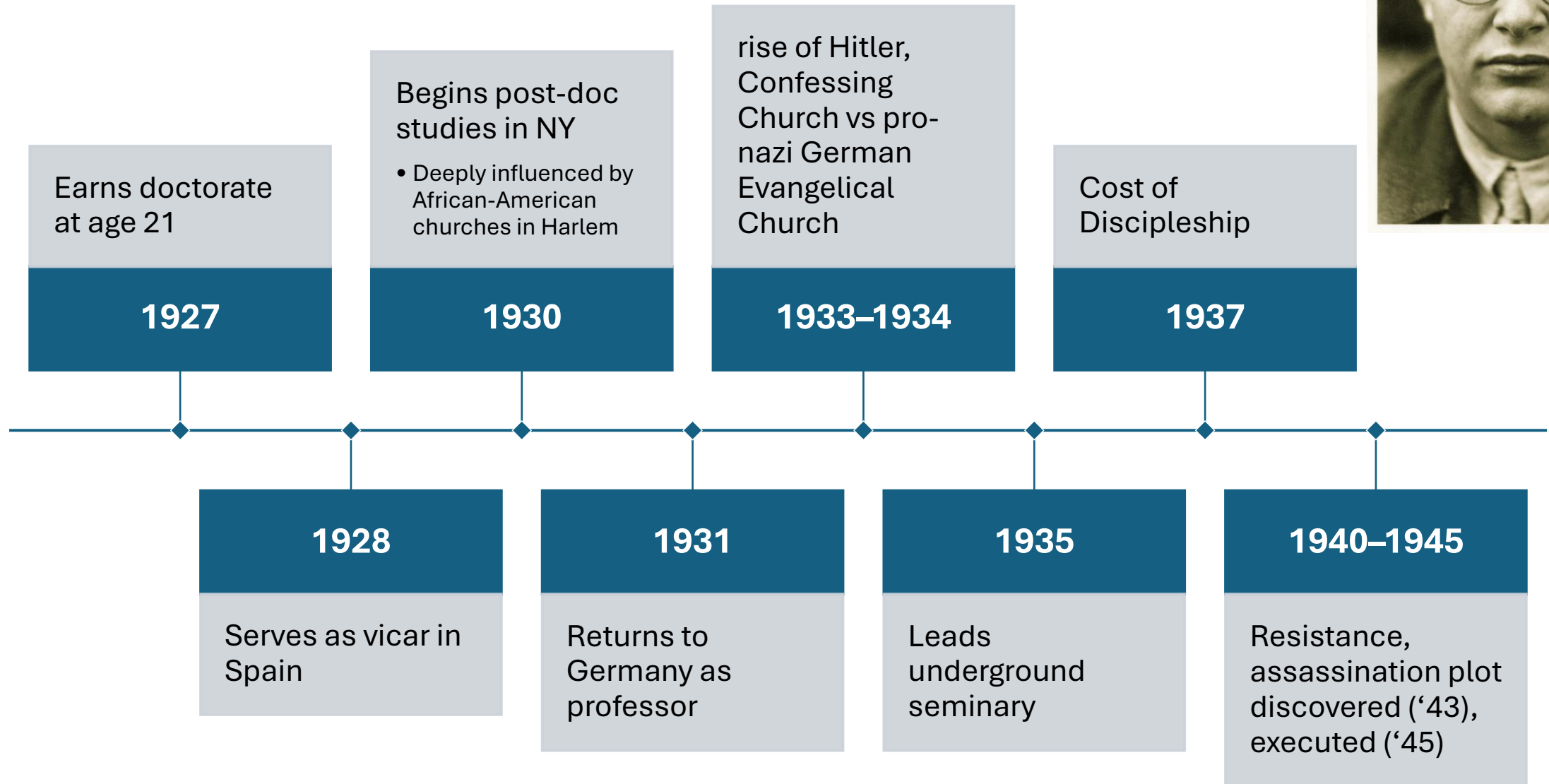
New Foreword by ERIC METAXAS

DIETRICH
BONHOEFFER

✠ THE COST OF ✠
DISCIPLESHIP



Timeline of Bonhoeffer





“Cheap grace is the grace we bestow on ourselves. Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, Communion without confession...Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate.”

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Costly Grace

Costly grace is the treasure hidden in the field; for the sake of it a man will go and sell all that he has. It is costly because it calls us to follow, and it is grace because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ. It is costly because it costs a man his life, and it is grace because it gives a man the only true life. It is grace because it gives a man the only true life."



2011
Book

FOREWORD BY TIMOTHY J. KELLER,
NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR
OF THE REASON FOR GOD

—
New York Times
Bestseller
—

BONHOEFFER

PASTOR, MARTYR, PROPHET, SPY

ERIC METAXAS

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF AMAZING GRACE

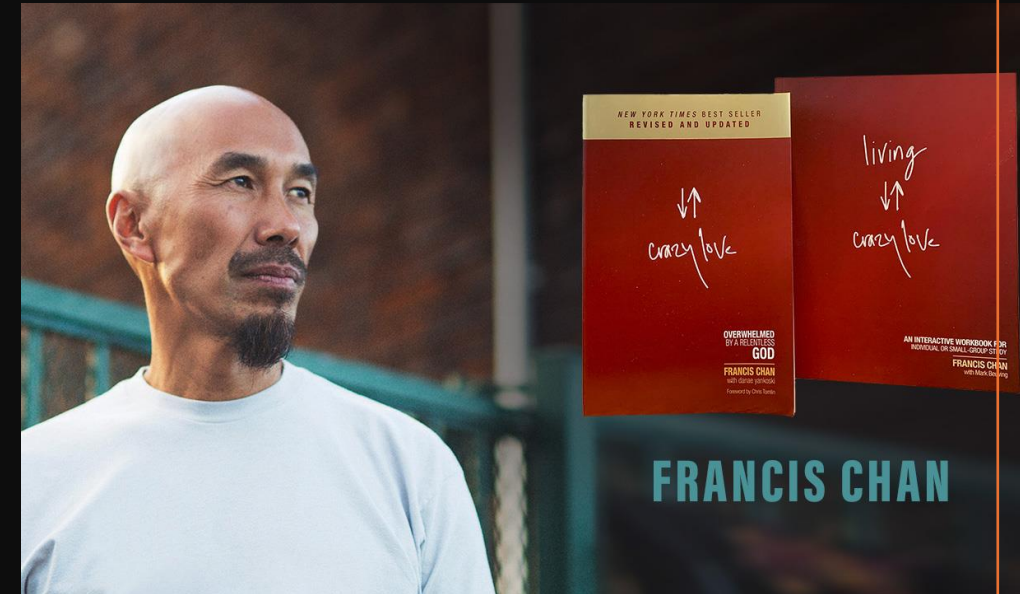
2024
Movie





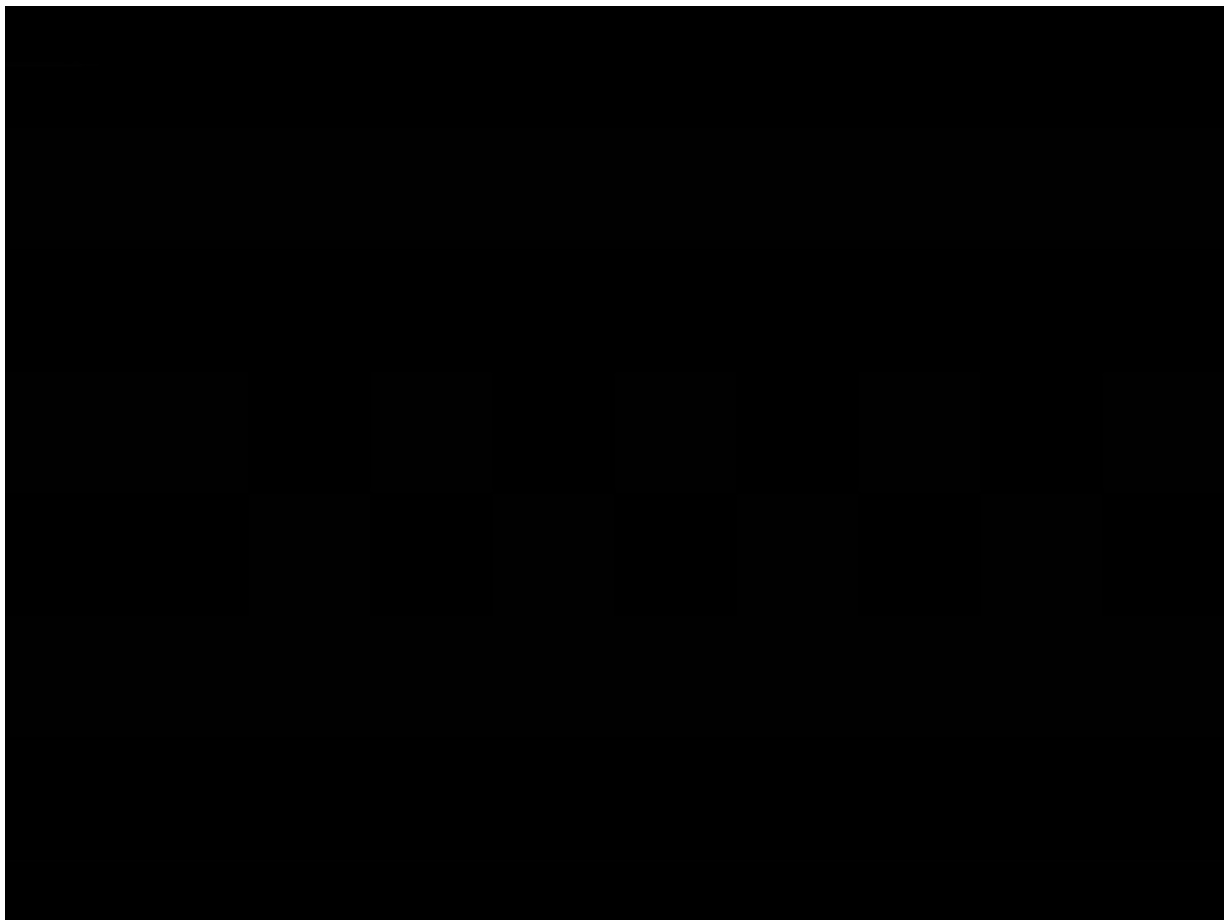
Crazy Love (2008)

- **Author:** Francis Chan
 - American evangelical pastor and author
- **Summary:** A challenge to experience God's overwhelming love and respond with radical, wholehearted devotion rather than lukewarm faith.
- **Quote:** "Our greatest fear should not be of failure but of succeeding at things in life that don't really matter."



Key Themes

- Lukewarm faith
 - “Lukewarm people do not live by faith; their lives are structured so they don’t have to.”
- The Love of God
- Surrender and passion
- Heavenly perspective



What is weird?





Radical (2010)

- **Author:** David Platt
 - American, Southern Baptist pastor
- **Summary:** A call to abandon comfortable Christianity and embrace the radical demands of following Jesus in a world of urgent spiritual and physical needs.
- **Quote:** "We are settling for a Christianity that revolves around catering to ourselves when the central message of Christianity is actually about abandoning ourselves."

challenges Christians to wake up, trade in false values rooted in the American dream, and embrace a faith that each of us is blessed by God for a global purpose...This is a must-read for every Christian.

—WESS STAFFORD, president and CEO, Compassion International

TAKING BACK
YOUR FAITH
FROM THE
AMERICAN DREAM

R A D I C A L



DAVID
PLATT

READ BY THE AUTHOR
UNABRIDGED

Key Themes

Christianity vs the American dream

- “We were settling for a Christianity that revolves around catering to ourselves when the central message of Christianity is actually about abandoning ourselves.”
- “Radical obedience to Christ is not easy... it’s not comfort, not health, not wealth, and not prosperity in this world.”

Global need

Faith as risky and costly

Redistribution of time and resources

- a return to early church priorities: discipleship, evangelism, and care for the needy.



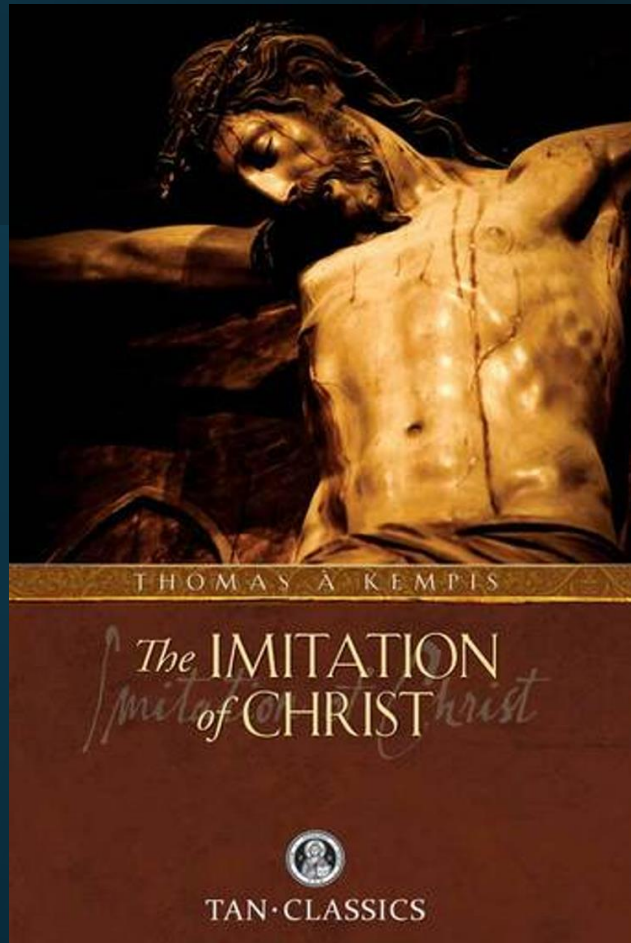
Books,
ranked
by
reading
level

Rank	Title	Author	Reading Grade Level	Difficulty	
1	Summa Theologica	Thomas Aquinas	Graduate/16+	Most Difficult	★★★★★
	The City of God	Augustine	Graduate/16+	Most Difficult	★★★★★
	Institutes of the Christian Religion	John Calvin	Graduate/16+	Most Difficult	★★★★★
4	Divine Comedy	Dante Alighieri	College/14-16	Very Difficult	★★★★☆
	The Christian System	Alexander Campbell	College/14-16	Very Difficult	★★★★☆
	The Everlasting Man	G.K. Chesterton	College/14-16	Very Difficult	★★★★☆
7	Orthodoxy	G.K. Chesterton	College/13-15	Difficult	★★★☆☆
	Religious Affections	Jonathan Edwards	College/13-15	Difficult	★★★☆☆
9	Confessions	Augustine	College/12-14	Difficult	★★★☆☆
10	The Imitation of Christ	Thomas à Kempis	High School/11-13	Moderately Difficult	★★★☆☆
	Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God	Jonathan Edwards	High School/11-13	Moderately Difficult	★★★☆☆
12	The Pilgrim's Progress	John Bunyan	High School/10-12	Moderately Difficult	★★★☆☆
	Luther's 95 Theses	Martin Luther	High School/10-12	Moderately Difficult	★★★☆☆
14	How Now Shall We Live	Chuck Colson	High School/9-11	Moderate	★★☆☆☆
	Knowing God	J.I. Packer	High School/9-11	Moderate	★★☆☆☆
	The Knowledge of the Holy	A.W. Tozer	High School/9-11	Moderate	★★☆☆☆
	The Cost of Discipleship	Dietrich Bonhoeffer	High School/9-11	Moderate	★★☆☆☆
18	Mere Christianity	C.S. Lewis	High School/8-10	Moderate	★★☆☆☆
	The Screwtape Letters	C.S. Lewis	High School/8-10	Moderate	★★☆☆☆
	The Lord of the Rings	J.R.R. Tolkien	High School/8-10	Moderate	★★☆☆☆
21	The Pursuit of God	A.W. Tozer	Middle School/7-9	Moderately Easy	★★☆☆☆
	The Practice of the Presence of God	Brother Lawrence	Middle School/7-9	Moderately Easy	★★☆☆☆
23	Chronicles of Narnia	C.S. Lewis	Middle School/6-8	Easy	★☆☆☆☆
	Radical	David Platt	Middle School/6-8	Easy	★☆☆☆☆
	Crazy Love	Francis Chan	Middle School/6-8	Easy	★☆☆☆☆
	In His Steps	Charles Sheldon	Middle School/6-8	Easy	★☆☆☆☆
27	The Purpose Driven Life	Rick Warren	Elementary/5-7	Easiest	★☆☆☆☆

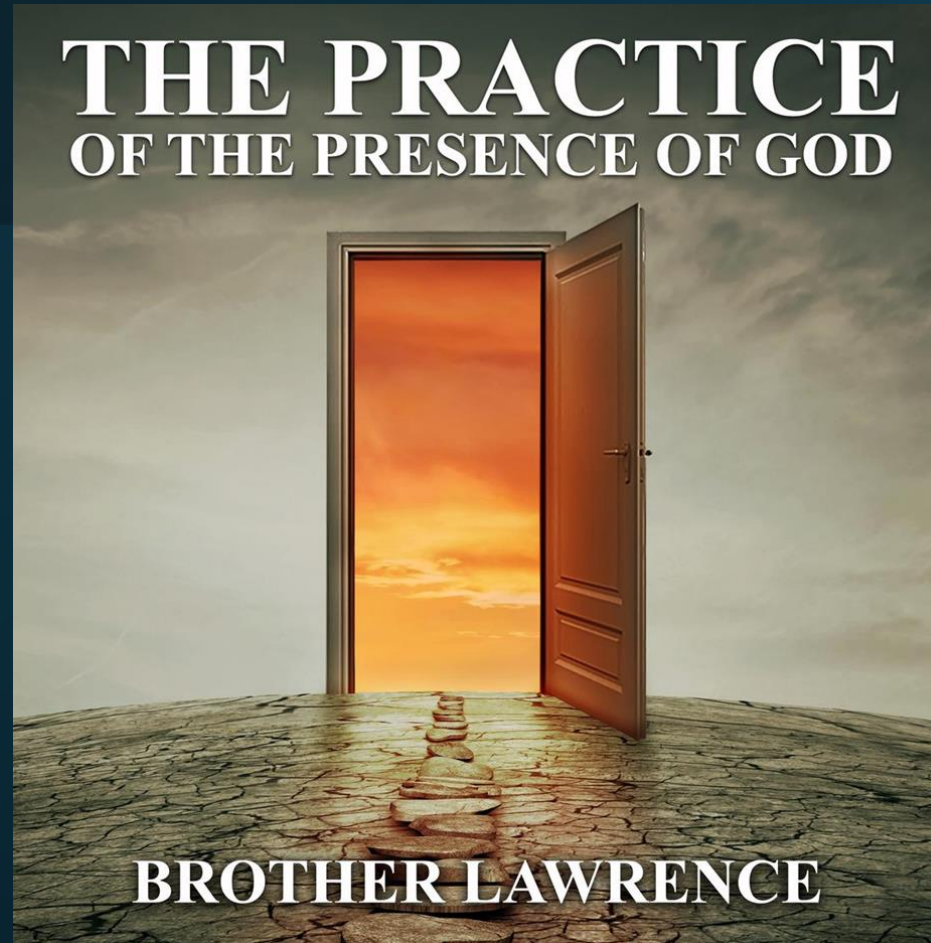


Next week:

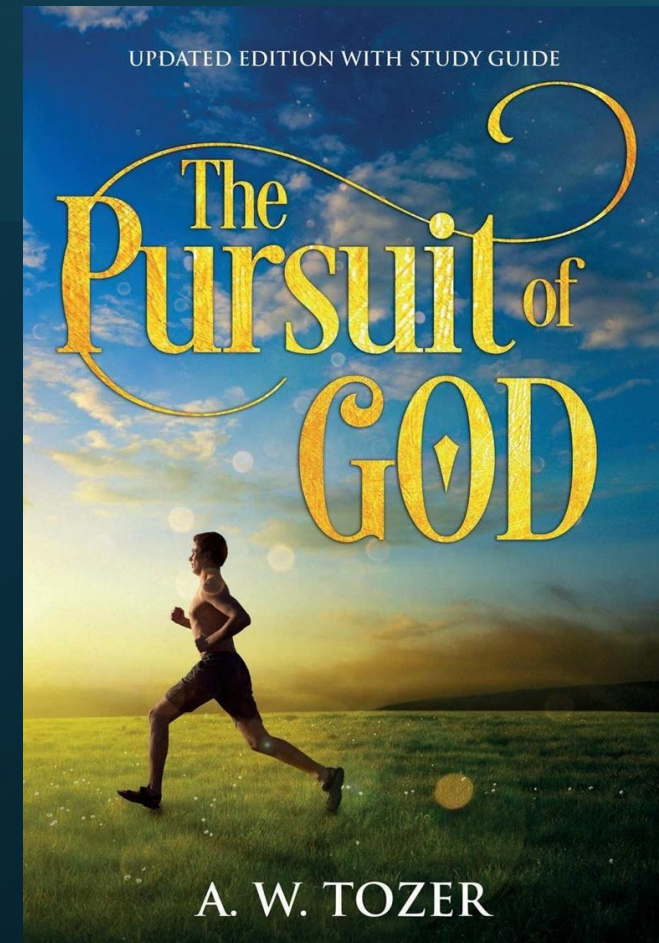
The Pursuit of God's Presence



1427



1692



1948

Twelve Unifying Themes

1. **The Foundation of Faith** - What we believe and why
2. **Knowing God's Character** - His attributes and nature
3. **Authentic Conversion** - What real faith looks like
4. **The Cost of Discipleship** - Following Christ isn't easy
5. **Pursuing God's Presence** - Intimacy with the Divine
6. **Spiritual Warfare** - The battle for our souls
7. **Defending the Faith** - Christianity makes sense
8. **Engaging the World** - Faith and public life
9. **The Pilgrim's Journey** - Life as movement toward God
10. **Faith, Reason, and Wonder** - Christianity appeals to the whole person
11. **Life's Purpose** - Why are we here?
12. **The Unity of Truth** - How it all fits together

Great Christian Literature Course Schedule

Woodlawn Christian Church - Fellowship in Christ Class

Week	Date	Theme	Description	Texts		
1	July 13	The Foundation of Faith	Explore how the Reformation's call back to Scripture laid the groundwork for returning to biblical simplicity.	<i>Luther's 95 Theses</i>	<i>Calvin's Institutes of the Christian Religion</i>	<i>Campbell's The Christian System</i>
2	July 20	Knowing the Character of God	Discover God's attributes through three different eras showing He is both knowable and beyond full comprehension.	<i>Tozer's The Knowledge of the Holy</i>	<i>Packer's Knowing God</i>	<i>Aquinas' Summa Theologica (selections)</i>
3	July 27	The Journey of Conversion and Confession	Examine authentic spiritual experience from autobiography's father to America's greatest theologian.	<i>Augustine's Confessions</i>	<i>Edwards' Religious Affections</i>	
4	Aug. 3	The Cost of True Discipleship	Challenge comfortable Christianity through voices that demand everything in following Christ.	<i>Bonhoeffer's The Cost of Discipleship</i>	<i>Platt's Radical</i>	<i>Chan's Crazy Love</i>
5	Aug. 10	The Pursuit of God's Presence	Discover that God desires intimate fellowship with ordinary believers across three centuries of seeking.	<i>Tozer's The Pursuit of God</i>	<i>Brother Lawrence's The Practice of the Presence of God</i>	<i>Thomas à Kempis' The Imitation of Christ</i>
6	Aug. 17	The Reality of Spiritual Warfare	Explore the spiritual battle for human souls through wit and fire-and-brimstone warnings.	<i>Lewis' The Screwtape Letters</i>	<i>Edwards' Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God</i>	
7	Aug. 24	Defending the Faith	Witness the golden age of Christian apologetics demonstrating Christianity's intellectual credibility.	<i>Chesterton's Orthodoxy</i>	<i>Chesterton's The Everlasting Man</i>	<i>Lewis' Mere Christianity</i>
8	Aug. 31	The Christian Worldview and Society	Understand how Christians should engage the world through voices from Rome's fall to modernity's rise.	<i>Augustine's The City of God</i>	<i>Chesterton's Orthodoxy (selections)</i>	<i>Colson's How Now Shall We Live</i>
9	Sept. 7	The Pilgrim's Journey	Experience the Christian life as a journey toward God through cosmic vision, everyman allegory, and practical action.	<i>Bunyan's The Pilgrim's Progress</i>	<i>Dante's Divine Comedy (selections)</i>	<i>Sheldon's In His Steps</i>
10	Sept. 14	Faith, Reason, and Wonder	See how Christianity engages both mind and imagination through rational foundation and imaginative power.	<i>Lewis' Chronicles of Narnia (selections)</i>	<i>Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings (selections)</i>	<i>Aquinas' Summa Theologica (selections)</i>
11	Sept. 21	Purpose and Meaning in Life	Compare contemporary approaches to purpose with insights from earlier authors on life's fundamental question.	<i>Warren's The Purpose Driven Life</i>	<i>Selections from various authors</i>	
12	Sept. 28	The Unity of Christian Truth	Demonstrate the remarkable unity of Christian truth across 1,600 years of faithful witnesses.	<i>Synthesis of major themes</i>	<i>Brief readings from multiple authors</i>	