

OpenTheo

Keep a Close Watch on Your Life with Justin Taylor and Collin Hansen

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Life and Books and Everything - Clearly Reformed

After a summer break, the triumvirate is back together to talk about books and biography. Kevin and Justin highlight some of their favorite books from the past few months, and Collin talks about the Tim Keller biography (of sorts) he has coming in the months ahead. Before getting to the books, the three friends discuss the latest news regarding Matt Chandler's leave of absence from The Village Church and what lessons there may be for all of us.

Timestamps:

Intro and Sponsor #1: Crossway [0:00-3:04]

When Pastors Fail [3:05-27:44]

Sponsor #2: Desiring God [27:45-29:39]

Tim Keller's Influences [29:40-40:44]

Update on Keller's Health [40:45-42:21]

Justin's Summer Books [42:22-46:30]

Kevin's Summer Books [46:31-53:47]

Current Projects [53:48-58:20]

Books:

Watergate: A New History - Garrett Graff

https://www.amazon.com/Watergate-History-Garrett-M-Graff/dp/1982139161/ref=mp_s_a_1_2?crid=DP6EMZZH3P0B&keywords=garrett+graff&qid=1661821814&sprefix=garrett+graff%2Caps%2C114&sr=8-2

My Grandfather's Son: A Memoir - Clarence Thomas

https://www.amazon.com/My-Grandfathers-Son-Clarence-Thomas/dp/006056556X/ref=mp_s_a_1_1?crid=OTWTNASNJCMC&keywords=my+grandfather%27s+son+clarence+thomas&qid=1661821764&sprefix=my+grandfa%2Caps%2C102&sr=8-1

The Crooked Path to Abolition: Abraham Lincoln and the Antislavery Constitution - James Oakes

https://www.amazon.com/Crooked-Path-Abolition-Antislavery-Constitution/dp/1324020199/ref=mp_s_a_1_1?crid=5WC8DOZQJ0X5&keywords=The+Crooked+Path+to+Abolition&qid=1661821876&sprefix=the+crooked+path+to+abolition%2Caps%2C181

Lincoln on the Verge: Thirteen Days to Washington - Ted Widmer

https://www.amazon.com/Lincoln-Verge-Thirteen-Days-Washington/dp/1476739447/ref=mp_s_a_1_1?crid=2VOGULCPX61AB&keywords=13+days+to+washington&qid=1661821951&sprefix=13+days+to+washington%2Caps%2C98&sr=8-1

The Glorious Cause: The American Revolution, 1763-1789 - Robert Middlekauff

https://www.amazon.com/Glorious-Cause-American-Revolution-1763-1789/dp/019531588X/ref=mp_s_a_1_5?crid=WX3FN60ZMV0K&keywords=oxford+history+of+the+united+states&qid=1661821997&sprefix=oxford+his%2Caps%2C126&sr=8-5

Empire of Liberty: A History of the Early Republic, 1789-1815 - Gordon S. Wood

https://www.amazon.com/gp/aw/d/0199832463?ref_=dbs_m_mng_wam_calw_tpbk_9&storeType=ebooks&qid=1661821997&sr=8-5

What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848 - Daniel Wal

Transcript

(upbeat music) - Greetings and salutations. Welcome back to life and books and everything. I'm Kevin D. Young and we have Justin Taylor and Colin Hanson.

No most of you are probably listening to this, but if you are watching, we got an excellent triple box. I feel like we are on ESPN's first take or around the horn or one of those shows. We can give our hot takes.

There has been a great demand for commentary on the Northwestern Nebraska game, but perhaps for Justin's sake, we should forgo such commentary. - Would be a mercy. - Would be a mercy.

I mean, it is, I have a lot of Nebraska family and I got Northwestern connections too. So I wasn't sure who to root for since Colin's Northwestern. I guess I was rooting for Nebraska because of the family and because Colin's backup team is Alabama.

Come on, you didn't know sympathy. - That's true. - Yeah, when your second team is Alabama, it's kind of like the people are like, "You know, I just decided, I think I'll like the Warriors." Really? - Maybe the Yankees.

- There were coaches before Nick Saban. Let me just remind you and I started before then. So shout out to Mike DeBose, Dennis Francione, Mike Shula, Mike Price, you know, the Mount Rushmore of Terrible Alabama football coaches.

- Oh, okay. All right, well, we just lost their moms listening. Good to have you guys here.

If we have time, we'll maybe do a little summer recap and talk about some summer books or some summer book projects. I do want to mention our sponsor. We got a couple of books to mention.

One here at the beginning from Crossway, the epic story of the Bible. How to read and understand God's word, written by our epic friend, the one and only Greg Gilbert. Many Christians view the Bible as a book that they know they should read, but it can be hard to know where to start.

Even when reading the Bible, often it can feel like just a chore, just something to check off. And so we miss how the pieces connect together. I remember, I think it was when I was in college, end of my years there.

Finally, it started to come together, not just a story about Noah and Abraham and some patriarchs and David, but the whole sweep, the warp and woof started to come together and it makes the Bible so much more enjoyable and approachable. This book, the epic story of the Bible, you can pick up and if you go to crossway.org, you can find out how you can get 30% off with a crossway plus account. So thank you to Crossway.

We had a number of things. As Justin and Colin and I were texting back and forth over the weekend to talk about in a lot of books and maybe we'll get to some of that. And we debated whether or not to lead in with this first topic, but I think we're gonna do so gingerly and generally many of our listeners by the time this goes up in a day, we're recording this on Monday morning, probably go up Tuesday or Wednesday.

We'll have read from various news outlets that Matt Chandler is stepping aside for a leave of absence and it was announced publicly. So there's nothing here and I don't think any of us know anything more than anyone else can read. We all know Matt and we count Matt a friend.

I haven't probably talked to Matt in over a year, but we were sobered and sat into to hear about this online DMing relationship, which sounds like stupid was the word inappropriate. I might add sinful though we don't know any more of the details than anyone else knows. And so we wanna pray for the pastors and elders there at the Village Church and pray for Matt and his family, pray for others who are touched by this and involved by this, pray for those who are going to report on this and all of this our hope is that in the midst of a sad situation that God would make himself present as we know he is and show himself to be the God of truth and grace.

So we don't want to dwell so much on the particulars and we don't know if there's other things, important parts of the story that are yet to be told or known and doesn't serve us or others to speculate and it doesn't serve people online if that's your game to go and speculate about things. So we wanna avoid that and not even pile on for this specific incident. As I said, all of us, the three of us would count Matt as a friend and so we're praying for him and whatever else and whoever else may be involved in touch by this.

And I like what sounds like Josh Patterson said at the service yesterday when people were giving Matt a round of applause and he said, I'm gonna interpret that as your love and support for Matt not condoning what happened. And I think that's really good and wise because of course when these things happen it is churches need to walk truth and grace and how to understand that pastor sin and we believe in the gospel and we believe that sins don't mark us out as okay, you're just another one of those sinners and just put you down on the list and that's the end of your story and that's how your life should be marked out, praise God. That's not the gospel when there's repentance, when there's true, honest, earnest, fruit and keeping with repentance.

At the same time we don't want to ever condense in no matter who it comes from, especially when it comes from leaders and Christian examples. I don't know that someone would have to do some mathematical study to say, well, do we live in a time when more of these things happen because of online or do we just hear about more of them? Certainly we have to be aware that the more people that you can influence the bigger your platform as it were, the more people you have looking to you as an example and the more scrutiny you'll receive, the higher standard you should be held to and the more people you can influence, the more people you can really hurt and let down when we do sin and so that's very sobering for me. What do you guys think? I'll just throw it open.

I have a few more thoughts but just reflections on, not the specifics of what should be done and what's happening in Matt, none of us know anymore than what anyone else can read but just thinking about this need to walk in holiness and above approach with the Lord. Justin, what thoughts do you have? - Yeah, thanks for setting that up, Kevin and it is particularly sobering because Matt has been a friend of ours and for everything we know, we only know a limited about everyone, right? The three of us are good friends but we don't know everything that each of us is doing at night or in private and so without delving into the specifics of the case, which of course, we have no insider knowledge, we know just the same amount that everybody else knows. There's a limit to what we can say or how much we can process but I do think it's a reminder to go back to first things, to biblical principles and to meditate on what does the Lord say in his word in terms of warning, in terms of correction and my mind went to 1 Timothy 4, Paul's letter to Timothy as he's the older saint instructing his younger disciple, apprentice, protege in pastoral ministry and verse 12, he says the famous passage that every kid in youth group has memorized, let no one despise you for your

youth but.

- Oh right, I'm 12, listen up. - Right, I've got the t-shirt, no one despise you for your youth, positively set the believers an example and then he lists five different areas where you're supposed to be an example or the whole church as a young pastor in speech in conduct, in love, in faith, in impurity. So those five areas set the bar, set the example and then he says and watch your doctrine, be careful about how you teach, not just how you're living privately but next verse he says until I come to vote yourself to the public reading a scripture, to exaltation and to teaching and then a few verses later in verse 16 he says, "Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching." So I think that's a good perennial lesson for us, keep a watch on yourself on your speech, on the way that you talk, are you involved in course jesting and filthy talk and profanity, profanity in conduct and the way that you carry out your life in love, are you failing to love your neighbor as yourself in faith, are you trusting the Lord in purity, are you seeking to be pure in heart and then also in terms of doctrine, what you're exhorting, are you living your life publicly in terms of the word of God and then Paul closes by saying persist in this for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hairs and I think anytime we're just focused on one or the other we can get off kilter, we're really into our doctrine but we're not watching our life, we're into our life but we're not watching our doctrine, we're concerned about just saving ourselves and feeding ourselves but we're not concerned about feeding the flock or vice versa.

So those are just some quick reflections on First Timothy for watching your life, watching your doctrine and then also First Corinthians 10 of course the famous passage in verse 12 about if you think you're standing, if you kind of hear news about somebody else's fall, stumble, sin, foolishness, stupidity and you think man sure sure feels good that I'm not doing that sort of thing. Paul says be careful, you think you're standing be careful lest you fall and then give some encouragement that there is a way out for temptation that nothing's coming at you that's unique to you but the Lord always provides a way out. So I think in these sort of situations our mind should just go back to scripture and we should think about I don't know all the particulars.

I don't have the New York Times coming to me asking me for comment, what can I do in terms of my own heart and soul and church and family in terms of watching my life and doctrine closely. - Colin, anything to add? - Yeah, I got the news yesterday just as I was heading into church. I was in the afternoon, I was wrangling our one year old son and trying to catch up and I forgot the bottle back in the car I had to run all the way back.

Couldn't find a parking spot. It was church was overflowing with college students back and I was thinking about that really, I mean, thinking about the story in that context people listening to this podcast are in many different church contexts. For me at least the last 10 years I've been in churches that are full of young people almost always younger than me in those churches and you'll notice in different congregations that different social media platforms are popular.

So I don't spend enough time on TikTok to know how popular that is though I know it is very popular especially with younger people today but if you're in a boomer church, Facebook might be that place if you're in a certain different kind of like highly engaged church, Twitter might be that spot but for churches that I've been in it's always been Instagram, at least for the last six or seven years or so and I know that we can see over the years that Matt, like everybody else, trying to figure out how to get a handle on this social media thing. We've seen the way that his comments on Twitter could be taken out of context or clips from his sermons. We know how big of a deal that is now as well.

We know what happens on Facebook with the same kind of dynamics and just the kind of engagement that you end up having with members of your church which is really difficult but I think a lot of people may not understand the dynamics of Instagram and I thought, Justin, your colleague and our friend Samuel James had some interesting observations about some of the particular challenges on Instagram and like I said, we don't know, we're like we've talked about, we don't know the situation with Matt and Justin makes a good point of simply reflecting in these situations on what does this mean for us? What can we do? And I can say that if you're in a church where there are a lot of young people, well, let me take a step back and say that Samuel mentions joint accounts and a lot of people have made fun of the joint accounts on Facebook but that arose from a situation where many divorces were instigated by people connecting over Facebook especially with old flangs and other neighbors, things like that. Well, Instagram's a different dynamic and I know that that's an area that-- - How does it work Colin? We don't know this situation but what's the, for the Instagram newbies out there? - Well, essentially, so Instagram's the platform, it's got all these images, right? And obviously there's also videos and things like that but the situation with Instagram is that it's always pictures, it's not content focused for the most part. Young people are very active on that and if you're meeting younger members of your church, you're gonna naturally connect with them, they're gonna wanna follow you, you may end up following some of them as well but it becomes a very quick jump from seeing people in different contexts that are not like church to then all of a sudden just starting to talk with them or they may reach out to you because you're a lot more accessible on social media than you are in a different context as a leader in a church.

So you could just start with an innocuous back and forth but I'll tell you that thing can escalate quickly. That can really get out of hand and especially when it's being fueled by, I mean, another challenge with Instagram is you're gonna get fed a whole bunch of stuff that you don't want and it's, again, it's very visual in many cases and so again, not knowing the specifics, I can just say if you are a leader of a church active on social media, I'm talking elder, small group leader, pastor, all that sort of stuff, you gotta be really careful engaging with young members of your church on that platform. I don't know if that's clear.

Like I said, I'm not trying to, I don't know the specifics and Kevin or Justin, they may not be the same case in your church but it's definitely the case for my last 10 years with hundreds of college students and young adults. - Yeah, let me just, that's really good. Biggie back on that.

I've got three thoughts in my head. One, you know, there's, the Billy Graham rule has gotten a lot of bad press over the last few years. How dare you, this is, this is be knighted or this is a holdover from the patriarchy or something that what you're gonna keep women out of places of power and influence if you can't ever have a meal.

Are you saying that women are such temptresses? You're just viewing them? No, no, it's not about that. It's not saying that every male-female interaction is loaded up with innuendo, let alone that it's because the woman is such a threat. That's not the idea behind it.

But I do think there is a danger of, of so, what should we say, so destigmatizing, so emphasizing that we can be brothers and sisters, we can be friends, we can have such a familiarity and I can understand some of that impulse to say, you don't want to, especially as a pastor in a church,

have more than 50% of the people in your church feel like you are always scared around them or you can't have a conversation with them or every time they come and talk to you. So I get that and yet I've been concerned to hear some of the language in some Christian circles over the last few years saying, wow, what we really need are more men and women, married men and women other than their spouse to really have close friendships or familiarity. I can just tell you guys, my wife is not, suspicious, she's fine, I have to talk to people, but I can tell you, she's never saying, you know what, what I really wish Kevin had? I wish Kevin had some closer female friends in his life.

I wish he would have some, I wish he would email some people, I wish he would text them, I wish he would have some really good kind of, I'm really feeling like what he needs and what would be really spiritually good for us is some more female friends in his life. Now hopefully we have, I can relate to people I hope and we have friends and we have couple friends. I mean, one of the rules of thumb I have is you should never have more familiarity with the wife than you have with the husband.

And even if, you know, you can still get in trouble with, well, that guy's my best friend and that means I got really close to his wife. I think guys, men and women, we would be better served to once in a while, say, oh, I think we drew the boundaries here a little too tight, we made the walls a little too high than to go the other way and have, and again, maybe this wasn't the cause of it, but there was some of that language in the announcement that we are a place that prizes these brother sister relationships in the church and men and women can be friends and I'm putting up a pretty bright yellow flag. Don't know about this situation, but Justin, so that's one comment and you guys can think about that, agree or disagree.

Second, I don't think you were on this text last night, but Justin was and our friend, Denny Burke, was texting some of us and I thought had a good pastoral reminder for all of us, no matter who we're talking to, whether we're talking to men or women, the Bible says not to be engaged in course joking, Ephesians 5-4. Again, I do not know what was meant by that in this situation, but here's what P.T. O'Brien says in his commentary quoting from another commentator, P.W. Vanderhorst, who suggests the meaning in Ephesians 5-4, of course joking, is that which has suggestive overtone and double entendres. All three of these terms here in chapter four, obscenity, foolish talk, course joking, this kind of language must be avoided as inappropriate among those whom God has set apart as holy, a dirty mind expressing itself in vulgar conversation.

That's true for all of us, whether we're talking to men or women. Now, I think, you know, the human body has, there are things that are funny about us, you know, and little kids make bathrooms sort of humor. And there's probably, you know, some gray area and just, you know, just laughing at our own human foibles and imperfections.

But I think most of us know when that's gone to course jesting, when it's gone to this sort of talk that has a sensuality over it, that has double meanings that is in no way edifying. And I thought, Denny was right to just say, hey, to all of us who are on that thread, hey guys, this is true no matter who we're talking to. And I think it's an easy thing to sort of creep in and start to excuse in any of our lives.

And the sort of stuff we watch on YouTube, the shows we watch, all of that, it just becomes very normal and becomes, it seems like just an acceptable way to talk. And maybe there's certain swear words we wouldn't say, but we talk in a way that scripture tells us not to. And we could do well, I could do well, to look at, you know, an earlier generation, read some of the Puritans, read the older commentaries, and you might say from time to time, wow, those guys were pretty fussy about stuff, but we tend to not be fussy about this sort of stuff.

And we could really learn from them. And that just leads to my third thought here. And it's really about me and it's about us.

Whenever these things come up, and you and I have had, you know, the three of us have had a number of friends who, one decision or another, some of greater or lesser severity, but have turned from the Lord or sinned against the Lord, and it's really sobering. And the wrong response, as you intimidated Justin, the wrong response is to think, wow, that's terrible, I would never do that. The right response is to think, oh Lord, keep me from being sinful, keep me from being stupid.

We ought to be praying, if not in the exact words, then in our spirit, in our hearts, the Lord's prayer every day. And that's lead me not into temptation. Every day is a day in which the three of us, and anybody listening to this, are capable of being really stupid.

And I'm sure Godly saints, probably a lot of Godly older saints in my churches, have kept me from being stupider and sinfuler than I could have been, just by praying for me. And we need to pray for each other. And so it's a sobering reminder, and that's what it should be for each of us.

I think, oh Lord, where have those metaphorical little foxes, where have we let those into our lives? Where have we not paid attention? Where have we sort of, we've allowed that these sort of standards of holiness don't have to be too exacting in our lives? Because most people don't think, today's the day I'm gonna do something really, really embarrassing. No, it's little by little eroding the protections that we had, eroding the sanctified common sense that we ought to have. So end of many three-point sermon, anything you guys wanna chime in on this topic before we move on to some books? - Yeah, Kevin, thanks for that.

I think that was just a good pastoral word in season. And it just sparked two quick follow-up thoughts. Number one, according to the announcement, they hired a law firm that did kind of a comprehensive audit of all of Matt's communications from his emails to his text messages, to his social media.

And first of all, kudos to them to say, like we wanna look under every rock, kudos to Matt for allowing that. But I think just the fact that that was done, we should all think about that. Like, what if somebody just, not talk about FBI raid, come into your house and just without warning, you can't delete anything.

If somebody were to confiscate all of your electronic devices, would you feel that burning sense of shame in advance knowing that this is going to be public? And of course, as a Christian, there is no such thing as a purely private life. Everything that we do is before the Lord, he sees all and we should also be open with others and write texts and emails in such a way that we would not be embarrassed for our children or our lives or our friends or our pastors or fellow church members to see what we're seeing there. So that was just a reminder to me.

And the second thing from Matt's personal situation is, he tells the story, this friend of this woman kinda confronted him, he didn't see anything wrong with it. And immediately went to the elders, which I think is the right thing to do to submit yourself to leadership. But the big warning

sign for him for them was, you're not seeing that this is foolish and stupid and sinful.

I think we need to add the category of sin and not just stupidity and unhealth and those sort of things. That's a sign of sin that you're not seeing your sin. And we need others to be able to tell us that and to have relationships where things can be brought forward to us to say you're not living in a cord with what you are preaching and teaching.

So thanks for those thoughts, Kevin. - Yeah, that's good, anything else, Colin? Yeah, so listeners out there, watchers, they're by the grace of God, go each of us and pray. And be praying for your own pastors and leaders.

They are in need of your prayer. It can sound like a cop-out to say that the devil is particularly after pastors. That's not to excuse pastoral sin or the sin of leaders in any way, but I do think it is true in the devilish rude and knows how to operate.

So we need to be in prayer, we need to be vigilant. There's a book, DG is also a sponsor of life and books and everything. And they line these up weeks or months in advance.

And one of the books to mention for today or the book, and I thought, well, this, maybe this is a little too ironic to mention this book, but no, it actually is an important book considering what we're talking about by David Mathis, our good friend, each of us, it's called *Workers for Your Joy*. And it's about Christian leadership. And it's relevant to the things we're talking about, not only casting a vision for what leaders should be, but also how we should relate to our leaders.

And we know that leaders can sin in all sorts of ways. Every way that human beings can sin. And we need to be mindful of that, and we need to not ignore that.

We need to not put people on a pedestal such that their sins are not taken seriously or they're overlooked because of giftedness. All of that is very, very true. And yet it can be easy then to swing far to the other side and be suspicious of all of our leaders or not show the sort of respect that we should to those who are working faithfully in our midst.

So this book by David Mathis, I like the title *Workers for Your Joy*, the *Call of Christ on Christian Leaders*. And so it's for all of us because whether we're official leaders or not, we probably are exerting some influence and all of us have those who exert influence over us and lead us. And this is a vision taking that phrase from the epistles, workers for joy.

That's what leaders do as they work for our joy. So check that out, desiring God, David Mathis, workers for your joy. Let's talk about books.

We have just about 15 minutes before we have a hard stop. Colin, you, we'll revisit this in another episode, but you have written a biography of sorts on Tim Keller. Tell us about that, "When Does the Book Come Out?" And what did you learn about writing biography? - Well, it's a biography of sorts.

We're not using that term because we tried to do something innovative and one of the challenges is one, Tim is still alive and we hope that he has a long, long ministry career of writing and speaking and things like that from here on out. Also, it's when somebody who's writing that book is close to the subject, there's naturally gonna be a fair amount of skepticism toward that book. You're gonna be accused of, hey, geography and just covering some things up.

So I didn't think that I was in a very good position to be able to write about, to kind of give a critical evaluation that a biography would offer. So what we decided to do was to flip this around and to talk about the influences on Tim Keller. And I think he lends himself uniquely to that kind of treatment because he wears his influences on his sleeve.

He's so transparent about where he gets his ideas. So what are they? What are the three, four big? This is who you need to know to understand what makes Tim Tim. - Easiest Jonathan Edwards, CS Lewis, Kathy Keller.

So, I mean, Edward, it's just fascinating when we think about another, one of Tim's peers, John Piper, CS Lewis, Jonathan Edwards there up at the top. - Not Kathy Keller, I mean, not that she's not Porter, John's love. - But that's a unique aspect of Tim's life that probably will strike more people as feeling biographical, but there's simply no way to talk about Tim without talking about Kathy.

I think we've reflected here on this show before that men in ministry can have all kinds of different faithful, effective ministries with different kinds of wives, different giftings, different relationships with their wives. Tim and Kathy are intertwined in a way that is unique to them. So when you're writing a book about Tim, you're really writing a lot about Kathy in there.

So, the basic thing I learned though is that biographies are so fun to read because the structure is so transparent and easy to follow. It's chronological in most cases. And so, you get to see somebody's progression through time and the only other thing I'll say about it, and hopefully we'll get another chance to talk about it down the road.

It comes out as soon as the end of January, we'll see, depends on some other factors. It should go to print here at the beginning of November, but what I really landed on, it was actually a gospel coalition video that Tim had done with Don Carson and John Piper years ago where they were talking about their influences. And Tim said that influences, and this is especially true of him, are like rings on a tree.

And I think for a lot of people, it's more like connect the dot. It's this guy, and then it's this book, and then it's this topic, and then it's this, but it's not that way for Tim. His core stayed the core the entire time.

He just kept adding new influences, but they didn't supplant earlier ones. So so many of us have this sense of progressing and overcoming our childish, really when Tim became a Christian in college, that remained the heartbeat of his entire life. He just added other things with time.

And so it was my first, I mean, I've written a lot of things kind of like this, but never one figure before. I don't know if I'll ever have another opportunity to do something like this, because in many ways, I've been studying Tim closely for 15 years, I've been working with him and for him for more than 10. So I don't know that I'll ever have another opportunity like this, but it's been a fascinating process.

And I think people are gonna be pretty surprised by what they learned, because I think they probably think they know more about Tim than they realize. They don't realize Tim's not a very biographical speaker. He talks about his influence, doesn't talk about himself much.

And they're gonna learn a lot about Tim through this exploration of his influences, I think. - Can I ask you the question I asked a while back on? Is Tim, okay, and Tim will maybe listen to this and he can agree or disagree with you. But I asked Colin a while back, I said, so Colin, is Tim Keller, is he, you know, he talking, I like the image of the rings around the tree, is Tim fundamentally, like a dyed in the wool, reformed guy with all of the reform, but with an evangelist heart in New York City that leads him to creatively adapt and build bridges and give that sort of old Princeton, kind of that sort of reform to New Yorkers and a new judge.

So is that the core leaning or is Tim, do you think at the core, a bit of a bigger tent evangelical influence by post-war evangelicalism and then got enough, well, not enough. I mean, he's reformed and Presbyterian, he's a colleague in the PCA with me, but got reformed theology and that sort of keeps him tethered and enough boundaries on, so which of those do you think is Tim? - I even get chills thinking about this because biographies are so illuminating to, and I learned so much myself. A year ago, two years ago, Kevin, I don't know if I could have answered that question.

I don't know if I would have known how to answer, but it's very clear when you look at the chronology, first, Tim becomes an evangelical through Intervarsity Christian Fellowship, Big Tent Evangelical of the British Evangelical Sort, Packer, Stott, Stoy Jones. - Stoy Jones. - That whole stream in there.

Second, he becomes reformed through Richard Loveless on Jonathan Edwards, but then also Roger Nicole on Neil Calvinism. - And RC Sproul and Kathy Keller? - Yeah, well, yeah, and then RC Sproul's definitely a factor in there as well. RC had had a big effect on both of them, but especially on-- - He did their wedding.

- And the wedding did their wedding, but of course came kind of right before their last semester, essentially, but yeah, Gerstner, there was a huge revival, a reformed revival in Pittsburgh, Kathy's from Pittsburgh, and Gerstner and Sproul were a major part of that Ligonier Valley Studies Center, was a huge part of that. And then jump from that to then, Andrew Lincoln comes from the UK and Tim doesn't become Presbyterian until the very end of his seminary, and then goes into this brand new denomination, the PCA that RC Sproul told him about. There's no congregations in the Northeast, so they have to go to Hope Well, Virginia in there.

I think that illustrates Kevin that progression, and then I'll just add this, I don't know if you and I've talked about this much at length, but you'll recall Marsden's assessment of the CRC, the three different camps, the doctrinalists, the pietists, the transformationalists. Tim's adapted that, as you know, to the PCA. Tim's very clear, and when I talked with him for this book, that he is a pietist and a transformationalist, those are one and one A, or they're both one, and then two is doctrinalist.

He doesn't say that he's not a doctrinalist because he subscribes to the standards, he believes in them, but they definitely take a back seat to the transformationalists and pietist approaches. And once he explained that to me, I realized, oh, makes perfect sense. It also explains why some people, he's not their biggest hero in the PCA, because that's just not who he is, it's not his formation.

He got too much bawink early on in Neocalvinism via Roger Nicole, and I think he's even grown into that. And so early days, Westminster Seminary for Tim, kind of his peer counterpart on the doctrinalist side would have been Sinclair Ferguson. So they're an interesting contrast with each other.

They've got a lot of overlaps, but in this way, Tim's gonna emphasize the Neocalvinism, the pietism, and Sinclair's gonna focus on the standards. - Is that Tim wrote a chapter for a book on Neocalvinism? Has that come out yet? That was in, okay, and we'll have to get that and mention it again. Tim had sent it to me, and I thought in 25 or 30 pages, it was the clearest distillation of what makes Tim tick.

And a lot of brilliance, and I read it, and Tim, if you're listening, I love you, and not surprised to you, I read it. I said, ah, that's why I disagree with Tim. - Well, you know, Kevin, it's interesting.

Tim's personality is a synthesis. He likes to bring influences together. He doesn't like to dichotomize these things.

I mean, he'll do the third way thing. Interesting, one of the only people who came up as a negative, and I don't wanna overplay this, we're just saying, Tim doesn't talk negatively about people. The only person who came up as a contrast with what he's trying to do was Charles Hodge.

He was the only person. And part of it's because of, I know Kevin, you shake your head. - I shake my head.

- But I think it's because, and I really, I learned this late in the stage, and we could have a whole different episode on this. But essentially, the Neocalvinist starts with what we assume, what we share with one another, apologetically, essentially before God, made in the image of God. They appeal to reason, believing that you have a God given ability to be able to think together.

Whereas other reforms stream start with dichotomizing, the disagreements about how without the illuminating of the Holy Spirit, there is no commonality in there. Tim is everything about Tim's preaching, and evangelism, and apologetics, makes sense when you start from that theological premise, and that he's on the Neocalvinist side of that. And all of a sudden, it's like, "Oh, this is how he approaches everything." Makes a lot more sense.

But I'm telling you, I was reading and watching him for 15 years, and still didn't connect those dots until we talked about it in that article. So again, I think people will also read the book, and some of them will think, "Oh, that's why I disagree with Tim." It'll be clear about why they disagree with him. - So you're gonna get off maybe, Justin, and I can talk about-- - Yeah, you guys keep going.

- You talk about Colin once he leaves here in a moment, 'cause you actually are getting on a call with Tim, who just trumps our friendship, I get it. Look, if Justin could figure out how to use Squadcast and get on a time-- - We would have been on time with you earlier. - Can you give us an update on Tim's health? Are you on liberty to say? I don't think I haven't talked to him for a few months.

- Yeah, so the latest has been positive. I mean, there was a really, really serious scare this summer. No doubt about it.

It was related not necessarily to the cancer, but to the treatment. - To the treatments, that's been attempted. - Look, Lord willing, this treatment is really, as far as we understand, it's his chance for another 10 years.

If it doesn't go well, then this pancreatic cancer, it's not normally a good diagnosis, but everything's been positive since that really big scare in the middle of June. And so we'll just cautiously optimistic. And one thing, Tim and Kathy both are absolutely adamant about, and I'm gonna take every opportunity to remind is that Tim is preparing for many more projects and many more years ahead.

As Kathy often says, he is not circling the drain. So we will pray that the Lord grants him that time with us. - Yes, indeed.

Well, Colin, we will let you go. If you're listening and not watching, you're missing Colin's beard, he's absolutely obliterating the androgyny of our age. He also looks like he's a quartermaster for the army of the Potomac, perhaps.

- I don't know, I think I'd probably be in Sherman's army, realistically, I mean the Midwest boys, right? - Okay, not the army of Northern Virginia with your wife's family. - Oh, no, not that one. And I got the blues.

I got the blues on. - Yeah, okay, all right. Well, we'll let you go, Colin.

- Thanks, guys. - Thanks. Justin, can we talk summer books for a few minutes? - Sure.

- What, so give, it's life in books and everything. Let's just finish here. Finally, we got rid of Colin.

- Wow. - Now we can breathe and really talk about some of the poems of you. - Something other than teller.

- Yeah, no, can you talk? What, give us a few books. You read this summer. - Well, I mean, the thing is when I talk to you, you know, you're, I read about the same amount in the summer that you would like in a week or a weekend.

So my, my output is pathetic compared to yours, but I had 70, I think I added up 70 hours of driving this summer. - So you listen to this? - Some good for audible. Yep.

- Yeah. - Listen to Garrett Graff's oral history, his oral history of Watergate actually wasn't oral history. Didn't oral history of 9/11.

- Right. - This is more of traditional history, which was really, really insightful, really helpful. Is that the book, I think I read a review of it.

Does he have little revisionist take on Watergate? - Yeah, I think so. Revealing things that really haven't been reported before and it seems like a young guy, but from his work on 9/11 and then Watergate, he's a very impressive researcher and seemingly read everything that's out there and pulled together stuff that, you know, you wait long enough as a historian that things come out that were embargoed or that weren't revealed or things that were put together. So really first rate, sort of, if you need to read one thing on Watergate, one of the things that came out is, oh, here was a point where all the President's men booked the reporters, essentially lied or made up stuff or added details that weren't really true.

And so you kind of have that because deep throat was revealed since all those sort of things. So really interesting book. - Good.

- I read a book that you had recommended, Clarence Thomas is my grandfather's son, a memoir, which is read by him on Audible. So that's a benefit of listening to audiobook to hear. - My wife read that this summer.

She couldn't put it down if she loved it. - Really interesting book. And there's some celebrity memoirs where you know that they basically sat down with somebody who was a really good writer and that writer wrote it.

But you could tell that he put a lot of time and effort into it. And of course there were things in his past where you don't know for certain what exactly happened, but for somebody, I think there's a lot that would be interesting and revealing in that book. I always have to read on Lincoln.

So "The Crooked Path, The Abolition", James Oakes book on Lincoln and the anti-slavery constitution, that there was a anti-slavery constitution, a reading of the constitution, a use of the constitution and a pro-slavery reading and the way in which Lincoln sorted through that and returned through the declaration of independence in the constitution. Really eye-opening, helpful book for me. And then most recently on Lincoln just finished Lincoln on the verge, 13 days to Washington, my Ted Widmer where he basically takes every diary and journalistic account and this narrates what it was like to basically follow the train from Springfield to Washington, DC for Lincoln's inauguration.

And then finally, I've made a goal, at least to get through the first several volumes of the Oxford history of the United States. - Oh yeah. - So started with the glorious cause by Robert Milkoff on the American Revolution, followed it up with Empire Liberty by Gordon Wright, Gordon Wood and then I'm into Daniel Walker Howes, what God hath wrought, which is 1515 to 1848.

So that's where I'm at right now. - That's a great list. Here's a few things I read, but I'll tell you, I read some of them in different ways.

So first, I got this book and I read some of it and then I thought, okay, this is good, it can be a reference, but Robert Sierico, Sareco I think from the Acton Institute. So a Catholic priest, Acton ensues a conservative think tank, the economics of the parables. And I would recommend it to pastors or student of the parables just to, Jesus is obviously not trying to give economic lessons per se and he's very clear about that.

And yet there's certain assumptions about, you know, he, you should have put this with the banker or how, how did Jesus understand property? And so without turning it into an economics lesson, it's just helpful because sometimes pastors can, can start waxing eloquent from the gospels in particular about economic theory and not really know what they're talking about. So just a creative good look at the parables. I mentioned these two books to you a while back Justin and I admit that I skimmed them, but by Ward Farnsworth, and I think you said, if your name is Ward Farnsworth, you're either, you know, really smart or a yokele or something, you don't know if it's, hello, Ward Farnsworth or what I am, okay, I don't wanna do the accents and make in front of it, but Farnsworth classical English style and he's got one on classical English rhetoric.

And the little one on English style is basic thesis, which I suppose is maybe a little overwrought, but it was really interesting is that in English, we have Latin eight words and Anglo-Saxon words and the Latin eight words tend to be longer and flowery and more ornate. And the Anglo-Saxon words tend to be punchy and more direct. And so he, what makes the book interesting is he has hundreds of examples and he tends to pull from the great sources of literature for him.

It's the King James Bible, it's Shakespeare, speeches of Lincoln, speeches of Churchill and shows how in so many cases, these really elegant powerful passages that we've all heard use this formula of going from long words to short words and front ending long, latinate words and punchy Anglo-Saxon words at the end or vice versa. A couple other books, I reread the abolition of man by C.S. Lewis, if you haven't read that, you should. And this is a real interesting book, Abigail, if you say her name, Favelle, The Genesis of Gender, A Christian Theory.

So she's Catholic, became Catholic, and really well-versed, really well-taught in feminist theory, not just, hey, I had an extra grind, but this was her path, this was her PhD. There's things in here that you disagree with some of her assumptions about the first 11 chapters of Genesis or who wrote which books. And she's not trying to write a book of biblical exegesis and talks very frankly about body sort of issues.

So maybe not a book that you just plunked down for your Sunday school class, but in terms of someone from an insider explaining what feminist theory is and then deconstructing it to show the, in so many ways, the hollowness of it and the unfulfillment of it and the intellectual dead end of it. This book, The Genesis of Gender, really has some brilliant sections. A Christian Theory, The Genesis of Gender, it's a little over 200 pages.

And okay, two more books. One, I'm reading a bunch of biography, I won't mention all of them, but I'll mention them maybe as I finish them in the months ahead. But this little book by Harold Linzell, Park Street Prophet, A Life of Harold John Auchin Gay, was crazy, crazy because it says probably as much about Harold Linzell as it does about Auchin Gay.

It was really fascinating, I know some things about Auchin Gay, but I hadn't read a full biography before. But what's crazy is this is quintessential hagiography. I mean, when he meets his wife, it's such purple prose.

His eye did light upon a maiden fair, then none could be conceived. And I think I showed you the line, Justin, he talks about when he was a young man, he worked overseeing a thousand souls at the Boy Scout camp, and not a single man was lost to fatality. Okay, good, he was a lifeguard and no one died.

So you have to take that with a grain of salt. It's fascinating because he wrote it when he was 45. You should really not write hagiographies when someone's 45, but he had already done a lot and many people today sort of vaguely maybe have heard of Harold John Ockingay.

Then he did something with Fuller, something with Gordon Conwell, maybe it was at Park Street, all that's true. But he was a leader of, I mean, what comes through is, even by the time he was 45, everybody wanted him to do everything. And at his funeral, Billy Graham said no one outside of his immediate family had had more influence on him, or there was no one that he turned to for advice more than to Harold John Ockingay.

So someone, because he didn't write a famous book, he's probably not as well known, but that was a really fascinating little book. And like I said, sit as much about Harold Linzell, who taught at Fuller with Ockingay, very much a hagiography, but still worth reading. And then finally, this book by Anthony Esselen, I finished in June, "No Apologies, Why Civilization Depends on the Strength of Men." So again, another Catholic author, it's under 200 pages.

If you've not read Anthony Esselen, if I'm saying his last name correctly before, I've read a number of his books. He's a very gifted author. He's very eloquent, very literary minded.

And we're gonna have our staff actually go through this book this fall. And he makes just what the book says, "No Apologies, Why Civilization Depends on the Strength of Men." And it's a powerful book, and I recommend that men and women read it. He's gonna come out.

It's not one of those books saying here, you've got this point, this point, this point. Let me concede as much ground as I can, and then try to bring you over here. He comes out sort of swinging and wants to make a case without apology why we need the strength of men.

I think he does that well. All right, lots of other books. Justin, any great book you're working on or you're editing, you got coming up through Crossway that we should know about? - One that's a little bit interesting is in 1978, J.I. Packer went down to Sydney, Australia, and gave them more lectures on proclaiming Christ in a pluralistic age, and my friend Griffin Gutledge put that on his website, the YouTube videos, old scratch of black and white videos, and we had them transcribed, and in agreement with Packer Estate, we're going to publish those.

So I'm gonna go through the first draft of the transcript. So vintage Packer is always worth returning to, especially as he's talking about proclaiming Christ, and so looking forward to that. I mean, that's probably a year and a half out from publication, but yeah, part of the project to do.

- So I worked on a number of writing projects. This summer, one is a book called Impossible Christianity that Crossway's publishing. Thank you, I can't remember the subtitle.

It's one of those long subtitles that sometimes my books have. It's something like, why following Jesus doesn't mean you have to change the world, be an expert in everything, be a spiritual failure, and feel pretty much miserable all the time. Impossible Christianity.

So the idea is we've made Christianity impossible when, while we certainly cannot earn our way to heaven, we can be faithful disciples of Christ, and God can be pleased with us. So that is a little book about the size of just do something and that will come out maybe a year from now. I also put together an even shorter book.

People say, how do you write so much? I write very short books usually. That I posted online, the commencement talk. I gave it to Geneva College, and I also gave a version of it here at our high school.

Whatever you do, do not be true to yourself. And then added in four or five other addresses I've given at commencement or baccalaureate or similar occasions. And so it'll be just a little book, booklet.

I don't know how many pages it is well under 100 pages, but five chapters and the sort of thing that you could give to graduates to reinforce the importance of church, for example. I have a chapter in there on the most important decision you're gonna make the first week of school is, are you going to church when no parent is there to make you to go to church? So be great for graduates, young adults, and crossways doing that. And I guess we'll probably come out next spring.

And then I'm working on a longer project, series of readings on systematic theology, daily doctrine. And about halfway done with that. It'll be kind of a devotional page a day on a systematic category, or you could read it as a little mini systematic theology.

If Birkoff distilled bovanks four volumes into one volume, this is sort of, K.D. Young's gonna take the marrow from Birkoff and Turreton, whoever, and try to get it into 300 pages. And straight 100 proof, I don't know, I don't know, that's an alcohol term. So I don't understand what it means.

The most alcohol I've ever had in my life was at an Anglican service one time. So, but I'm still working on that. And I'm grateful for the opportunity, grateful to my church for giving me some time this summer to write.

All right, Colin is gone, and we hope he's having a great time talking to Tim Keller right now. So Justin, thank you for sticking around, and look forward to being back for a new season. As I did last season, I have Colin and Justin intermittent throughout the season, and then I'm lining up some interviews as well.

So glad to have you all back. And until next time, glorify God, enjoy him forever, and read a good book.

(upbeat music)

(upbeat music)

(upbeat music)

(dramatic music)