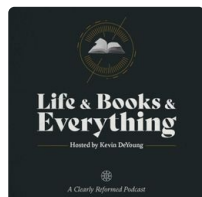


OpenTheo

Tears Do Not Equal Repentance

August 26, 2020



Life and Books and Everything - Clearly Reformed

In this episode of Life and Books and Everything, Kevin, Collin, and Justin discuss the recent scandal involving Jerry Falwell Jr. and the difference between a therapeutic confession and one that admits guilt and sin, what habits of rest and recreation they practice, what their favorite biblical commentaries are, and lastly, they discuss Samuel James's article, "Which Enemy? Which Doorstep?" This episode of Life and Books and Everything is brought to you by Crossway. A specific book from Crossway we would like to highlight for our listeners is Family Discipleship: Leading Your Home through Time, Moments, and Milestones by Matt Chandler and Adam Griffin. In this book, Matt Chandler and Adam Griffin help families develop a sustainable rhythm of gospel-centered discipleship through a guided framework focusing on moments of discipleship in 3 key areas: time, moments, and milestones. Each section provides parents with Scriptures to consider, questions to answer, structures to implement, and ideas to try out. Timestamps: Book giveaway winner announcement! [0:00 - 3:10]

The Jerry Falwell Jr. Scandal [3:10 - 15:55]

Habits of rest, recreation, and sabbath [15:55 - 36:50]

Favorite Commentaries [36:50 - 59:48]

Multi-Directional Leadership [59:48 - 1:10:08] Book recommendations Collin's favorite commentaries + other resources mentioned:

New Testament Commentary Survey by D. A. Carson

The Letter to the Romans (New International Commentary on the New Testament (NICNT)) by Douglas Moo

ESV Study Bible by Crossway

Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament by D. A. Carson and G. K. Beale

Blind Spots: Becoming a Courageous, Compassionate, and Commissioned Church by Collin Hansen
Kevin's favorite commentaries:

Introducing the Old Testament: A Short Guide to Its History and Message by Tremper Longman

The Gospel according to John (The Pillar New Testament Commentary (PNTC)) by D. A. Carson

The Pillar New Testament Commentary (14 Volumes) from

Transcript

(soft music) - Greetings and salutations, our loyal listeners. Welcome back to Life and Books and Everything. I'm Kevin Young with Justin Taylor and Colin Hanson.

Good to have you with us as we start season two of episode two brought to you again by our good friends at Crossway. We actually do have lots of good friends there. Justin's gonna remain silent because he cannot speak about the unnamed publishing company for which he works.

But Colin and I can say lots of good things about how much we appreciate Crossway and are glad to have their support for the show. We did want to announce last week's winner of the book giveaway. Oh, now I don't have it in front of me, Colin.

Where did John Dyer? - I don't know. - Dyer? - No, I don't think that's who it was. Now there's somebody out there saying I did win.

Okay, you pulled that up. Well, I'm gonna point it out. You're gonna tell us about the book that we want to highlight today from Matt Chandler.

- You pulled that up. Okay, the featured book today, my friends at Crossway is called Family Discipleship, Leading Your Home Through Time, Moments and Milestones, written by Matt Chandler and Adam Griffin. I talked with Matt from my Gospel Bound podcast at a really interesting interview.

This book really hits me right at just my life stage. I've got a child who just started kindergarten, another child who just started preschool. And it is the joy of our family for me to bang out some really not very good notes on a piano.

Oh, we're singing from the Methodist Timnall and reading through one of the many story Bibles that we've accumulated and also through the new city Catechism. So we love this sort of formal family discipleship but then also the kind of discipleship they talk about of while you're going on the way from the moment to moment in life. So anyway, if you're, you love family discipleship, you're looking to get to figure out how to do it.

Wherever you are on that spectrum, I think you'll really appreciate family discipleship leading your home through time, moments and milestones from Matt Chandler and Adam Griffin. - That's great. - Kevin, did you find that? - I did, so if you were.

- First one happened. Later in the podcast here, we're gonna talk about commentaries. And so I was just working, I was just looking at that best commentary site and I saw that at the bottom, it says developed by John Dyer.

So I had that name in my head. Sorry, John. But the winner is actually- - You've won nothing, John.

- Yes, the winner is actually Drew Byers. So there was a reason why I was thinking Drew Byers and we will get his mailing address and send those cross way books. Before we dive in, no one else will get this, but as we can see each other on the screen, even though you just hear us, Colin, could you put your camera down just a little bit? You just, all I can see is like the amount of score on.

Okay, good. - Just better. - Yeah.

- Okay, all right. - Excellent. - Most of your head is there.

Okay, good. - Now Justin, you've gotten way too close. - You've gotten way too big.

Okay, we are going to talk about several things and one that we weren't planning on talking about until two minutes ago and we won't spend, we hope more than five minutes on this, but I think all three of us did want to at least try to draw some lesson from ongoing embarrassment. There's no other word for it. Then is the Jerry Falwell Jr. scandal, the latest incident.

If you don't know what it's about, the details are too salacious even to want to try to explain, but the suspended and definitely president of Liberty University came out with a statement which was covered by the Washington Examiner earlier today and then the pool boy, you can't make this up, came out with his side of the story and Reuters. And here's, it's an absolute embarrassment to the church, to Christian education, to the name of Christ. There's no other way to put it, but I don't think any of us want to dwell so much on Jerry Falwell Jr. As we do what is symptomatic of larger potential problems and actual problems in the church and that's just to talk for a moment about the confession.

And if you could see me, I'm putting that in air quotes, the apology that he issued, which I told you guys earlier today was, and we also were trying not to sound like self-righteous jerks here, but there is some criticism that is fairly due. It sounded like a masterclass in a worldly apology. It minimized his own sins, describing them in vagaries and describing them with euphemisms, weaknesses, failure to be vulnerable, while other people's sins were described in detail and then took a quick turn to the therapeutic.

And I counted no fewer than four times where he made himself out to be the victim of either other people's sins against him or difficulty speaking and he had to overcome that and being Liberty's president or his wife's sins against him, this other man's sins against him and now suffering from mental illness and depression. There was nary a word of the incident which led to his suspension or indefinite leave of absence and it is all too common among not only celebrities or famous people, but regular Christians. We turned quickly toward the therapeutic instead of using strong biblical, honest language to describe our sins and to express earnest repentance.

And that to me is the lesson that we can draw perhaps among many and is maybe worth dwelling on for just a couple of minutes. What do you say, Justin? - I completely agree with you, Kevin. And it is a part of a larger trend that you and I and the three of us have talked about more than once, more than having to do with Jerry Falwell.

Almost every apology that we see, almost every confession leaves God out of it except for demanding or expecting forgiveness and non-judgment. But the sin is always expressed horizontally. I have sinned against these people and never against God, which is in a stark contrast to the way David talks about his sin in Psalm 51 that first and foremost, I mean David sinned against Bathsheba, he sinned against lots of people, but first and foremost he says, "I sinned against you and you only Lord." There's a God-centeredness to the confession that's just striking the absent in a lot of these confessions.

And then as you brought up the euphemisms, I mean one that just always gets under my skin as describing fornication and adultery and covenant breaking as inappropriate and inappropriate relationship. And I think something that's inappropriate is if I'm at a dinner party, a polite dinner party and I belch, or I commit a social faux pas, that's-- - Not that that's ever happened. - It has never happened, theoretically if it did, that would be inappropriate behavior.

But even to describe breaking your covenant vows to be sexually engaged with somebody who is not your spouse, to sin against the Lord and that way to describe that is inappropriate, I don't think that even registers on most Christians radar screens as they read that kind of language, that's just, but it's worldly language that's always downplaying. It tends to highlight what somebody else has done against me, tends to offer some excuses for I was really under duress. I can think of one example of a pastor who confessed to sin to his congregation and it was so theologically oriented that it was striking, he talked about sinning against God, he talked about the idolatry in his life, he didn't give any excuses, he didn't blame anybody else, he said, "I've disqualified myself from ministry, "of no intention of ever seeking that again." All of that was striking because it's so rare.

The therapeutic, I think is deeper in our bones than most of us want to admit. And you've

said before, Justin, that the language of failure or messed up, that sort of sounds like somebody, grandpa sort of tussling your head and sort of, oh you little rascal, you when the Bible's words are striking words of wickedness, sin, iniquity, transgression, think of C.S. Lewis's essay from the 40s about the Anglican Liturgy where it calls us to describe ourselves as miserable offenders and already then people were taking offense at that language, but that sort of language serves a purpose of reinforcing a biblical worldview. Colin, I think I cut you off what were you gonna add? - Oh, I don't have a lot to add.

I just, this has been a topic of conversation for some time because it's one thing if this were characteristic of the world and we were pointing fingers saying, see we Christians have been called to a different standard. But the examples that we're citing here are from Christians and not just from Christians, Christians in very high profile positions, high profile pastors, university presidents. The therapeutic as Justin said is more ingrained in us than we want to admit and perhaps is more ingrained in us than biblical patterns.

And that has to change. I often think that we become as Christians so worried about what's happening in the world that we don't see what the world is doing to us. And that we need to be more concerned about that.

Not exactly sure what else to say, but this is not about, I saw somebody complaining that this is all about overweening coverage about full well. Well, yeah, I can complain about how media will fixate on certain figures who are famous for being famous media figures and that feedback loop that becomes really unhelpful. But main problem here is that Christians are being expected to follow standards that Christians are ourselves called to uphold.

So in some way, it's really weird that the church or the world is asking the church, why aren't you acting like the church? And the church is saying, why do you expect us to be any different from the world? It's a very weird position that we're in. And I have to think that it also has to do with a lot of our primarily political orientation or our sort of us versus them culture war orientation that makes us think that these things are not serious, which they are. - And it reminds us how important for the Christian words are in language that the war is often fought on the level of words before it's fought anywhere else.

Of course, talking about metaphoric, but it's very true that we, I mean, just think of the language of brokenness, which has some, you know, there are a few examples in the Bible of using that sort of language to describe sin in terms of health and unhealth. And I understand why people use the language of broken. It signifies I don't work the way I ought to.

Sin has done something that there's something not right in me and in the world, all of that's true. But by itself and without, I would say more robustly biblical language, at least the preponderance of biblical language, broken describes us in passive terms. You break

your arm, something happened to you.

There's not a moral complicity when your arm is broken. Or you see this language all the time. It's in the culture, it's in Christians.

You know, someone, if it's a drinking problem, you know, it's been overcome by these demons. Again, I am perfectly willing to talk about nuances of genetic disposition to things and how at a point addictions no longer feel as if you're in control of those things. And we have lots of theological resources to talk in very nuanced ways about sin and the experience of sin.

But it should not be to overshadow moral responsibility for those sins. And that's so often what the therapeutic language does is it renders us passive agents in our lives. And we do away with moral language of vice and virtue.

And we only have people who are hurting, who are broken, who are put upon. I remember David Paulison often saying, and lots of the CCF guys, that everyone you meet is simultaneously a sufferer and a sinner. And you do need to remember both.

There are some Christians who only, they only see you're a sinner and they need to be reminded, know that person walks with a limp as it were. That person, you don't know where they've been through, what issues they've had to deal with. They're a sufferer.

But for most people, it's way on that side and it's forgetting that we are also free moral agents in the proper sense of that freedom who are sinners and must repent before a holy God. Anything else from you guys before I move us on? - Well, just to reiterate what you're saying, brokenness in and of itself is not a terrible metaphor. It is terrible if it's the only metaphor that you use.

So to go back to the little quip from Packer, a whole untruth, masquerading as the whole truth is a complete untruth, or a half-truth masquerading as the whole truth is a complete untruth. So it's not a problem to see that as one aspect of our following condition, but when it becomes the only thing that we talk about, that becomes deeply problematic. The other thing I think that as a practical lesson is that you can't tell repentance from the amount of tears that somebody sheds.

And Jerry Falwell might be crying himself to sleep every single night. Somebody in our church who might sin might even confess their sin, might feel very broken and weep a lot, but we have to probe deeper for what's their understanding of the nature of sin and how does it get fixed? And once you start listening for the words behind it, I think there's a revealing of the heart, which is why the Bible doesn't say that repentance is, tears are a sufficient condition for repentance. We need to see the fruits of repentance is another aspect of it.

- That's very good. Here's what we're gonna talk about now. We've had a few questions

from listeners, and by few I could mean 30, I could mean two or three.

- Could be two, yeah, two or three. - I was thinking, I'm aware in between, maybe in the hundreds, maybe it was our moms. But- - 2000.

- Yes, we've had, people have asked, I'm paraphrasing here, would you guys talk a little bit about your habits of rest, maybe habits of recreation, what it looks like, family time? I know it, not wanna turn this into just us sharing about our own personal lives, as fun as that would be for us. But I think the gist behind the question might be, you guys talk about all these books, and that's great, and maybe you have jobs that allow you to read a lot of books, but what else do you do? And are you just plowing through books all the time? Are you normal people? What do you do to prioritize rest, recreation, family in your life? Colin, you wanna give us some thoughts on that? We'll just go around the horn here.

- Sure.

Well, just list a few things that I wrote down here. I really enjoy walking. One of the things that's wonderful about walking is that it's exercise, you can do it with family, you're friends, very easy to converse in that way.

You can also do that and pray. So a lot of different advantages. One of the things that my wife and I prioritized and where we moved was a place that we could walk.

A lot of places too, so that's one thing. Swimming, I mean, it's Alabama, it's the summer. If you go swimming as a family, if you got little kids, opportunities to get in the water, that's always fun.

One of the best things I love about swimming is that I can't use my phone while I'm swimming. While I'm in the water, you're not calling me, you're not texting me, I've got my full attention. And again, another thing that's easy to pray during that time, if you buy myself, just sort of floating around there in the water, that's really nice.

I actually do sleep a fair bit. I know that there are people out there who can get by on four hours of sleep or five hours of sleep. And that's often a shortcut for somebody who does more than you think that person does.

Well, maybe they just don't sleep as much. You don't need as much sleep. Well, maybe there are people who don't need enough sleep.

But I aim for between seven and eight hours every night. And I find that if I don't, this goes all the way back to college, if I don't, I'm gonna end up falling asleep in the afternoon anyway. So I'm not gonna be very productive then either.

I also think that when you have clear times of working and not working, it helps you to be more efficient with your actual work. So that's one thing I know if I have to get these things done and not that I'm gonna have four more hours of work at night that's gonna

take me to two a.m. in the morning. It actually helps me to be more efficient and selective during my day.

I also try to work out at least three or so, three or four times a week. I've found that I personally need to get outside of the house for a long time, a decade. I used to work out in the house.

That was fine, but it just, I need a regular time outside of my house to be able to do that. And that makes a really big difference. And finally, reading is restful for me.

But the key is to have a lot of different kinds of books. Some of the books that I read, I'm actually listening to when I'm walking or when I'm in the car or when I'm slicing a watermelon or washing dishes or something like that. But generally I want a lot of different kinds of books.

And when I'm exhausted, I've been working hard. I've been around a lot of people. The way that I recharge is by being by myself and reading books and can usually get through a lot that way.

So a lot of different types, different people are gonna like different things, but I'm just grateful. Those are some of the things that I do that work pretty well. - Are you an introvert, Colin, on that scale? - I am mixture.

So when I'm extroverted, I'm really extroverted. And then after like I'm at a gospel coalition conference or something like that, I mean, I can really enjoy that for three days. And then for the next three days, I'm at home and I don't wanna talk to a single person.

And I'm reading a bunch of books. I need to get away. That's how that works for me.

- What do both of you guys do for your Sundays? That's always, you know, that's a Sabbath in a way for me, but as a pastor, it's also not. What does that look like? - How about you, Justin? - Yeah, we go to church in the morning and you have a small group in the evening. So those are kind of two, we don't have evening church at our church, but our small group usually gathers on Sunday evening.

So that kind of creates two, at least places where we're going and two points in the day. I think in my ideal self, we would just be not doing anything, not cleaning the house, not going anywhere on Sundays, but in reality that doesn't usually happen. So those are kind of the two fixed points of what our Sundays look like.

- Do you watch football on Sunday? Would you watch sports? - Big 10. - On Sundays? - On Sundays? - Yeah, I don't have a privileged savitarian objection to watching NFL football on Sundays. But it is an interesting thing with, and I don't know how you deal with this, Kevin, with multiple kids, like having an older son, like that would be something we could do together, but we could not necessarily do that with the toddler.

So sometimes I have to sacrifice those desires and do other things. - Colin, do you watch sports on Sunday? - I do. And I think I always have.

I do have the back of my head though, wondering the old Puritan objections to those things, just wondering how much more worldly I am than I realize. I don't think I quite noticed that so much when it comes to sports, as I do with movies, especially, even though I've changed my movie, watching habits quite a bit, especially in recent years. But I will say when you live in Alabama, it's easier to be a Saboteerian, because your college, your football day is Saturday.

- Yeah, sure. - You're a Dalitrous worship service is on Saturday. - Exactly, so it's totally sanctioned.

- That's the idea. - That's the idea. - I don't really like it away on Saturday nights, and then you're like, "Be to confess your sins." - It is funny.

Our church, yeah, our church does four services on Sunday, and we've never thought of doing a Saturday night service, and to my friends and other parts of the country, they'll often just say, "I don't understand, why would you do a Saturday night service?" And I said, "I don't think you know anything about what that would look like in Alabama. That's just not gonna happen." So that's what the reason. - Resurrection was on Sunday morning, and there's something together in other resurrection lords day.

- Well, yeah, that's also true. I have my other objections. I'm just speaking on the-- - Practicality.

- Pragmatic ground there. So I don't usually hear people raise those objections. But that's a good point though.

Okay, what about you Kevin? Just Sundays in general, I mean, you're working. So why don't you talk, I mean, you've written a whole book, - Yeah. - On these things, crazy, busy, and some of your rest.

You are one of the most, like, you're the one of the more accomplished people I know, meaning you really, when you set your mind to do something, you get it done. When you make a promise to something, you follow through on it. And I don't say that lightly, because I don't know a lot of people where that's really true, the way that it is with you.

And so it makes me think, there must be some secret. You either don't sleep, or you never see your children, or your marriages in chamels. (laughs) - Yeah, I'm not-- - How do you pull this off? - Yeah, yeah, it's kind of hard to talk about because that sounds really impressive, and it certainly doesn't feel that way at all.

But it is a question I've gotten, how do you write these books, or these blogs, or do these things? I mean, I'll give you very honestly, I'll tell you the things right off the bat that I'm

bad at. It has always, well, it has been hard since I've been a pastor to have the sort of Sabbath that I instruct my pastoral students to have. And I tell them that, I say, I'm gonna tell you what you ought to do, and I'm gonna be honest, that I'm struggling through this, because Sunday is a type of, it is worship, even for the pastor, hopefully, but yeah, it's not a day off.

So I try to take Saturdays off when my kids are in school, otherwise maybe Monday, I've tried lots of different days off, and they're all hard for me. Saturday works best with my family, but honestly, it's very rare that I'm not still having to finish work on a sermon and get ready for Sunday, but at least I'm home, and I can mow the lawn, and I can do stuff with the kids, and it's not an intense day of pressure. So I'm not good at that.

You guys probably can tell, I'm not good at putting away email and texting. Now, you guys is one thing, you're my friends, it's kind of like hanging out with my friends. It's all the other checking that comes in.

So I, for years, wanted to be better at that and read lots of books, and there's lots of good ideas, and I just need to execute that to not check email incessantly. I'm a zero inbox guy, so I get it and I gotta get it out of there. - Hey Justin, are you a zero inbox guy, or maybe I should say how many zeros at the end of your inbox? The little button says 42,000s.

- How could you do that, don't you? - I couldn't make it zero this afternoon if I wanted to. I have done that. - I just, a jubilee, an email jubilee is just gone.

- That's horrible, I mean, I wish that I could be like, I think I can say it's like Mark Devere, who just, you sent him email, he may write you back in two seconds and call you on the phone, or you may never hear from him, and he feels no shame whatsoever. You sent me an email? - That's two years later. - Doesn't novel, yeah, sometimes it is actually two years later, he was cleaning through his email, and it will call random people who asked him a question.

So I don't do those things well. I do think some things that by God's grace have been good to get in place, is I do exercise every day but Sunday, so I run bike or swim, and that has been a really good habit for me since 2014, and has served me well. I don't feel guilty when I'm not working, I don't think that's, I can't have a propensity to overwork, but it's not because I feel guilty like I should be doing something.

I love to rest, I love to not be on the grind, on the clock. Sleep, I'm like you, Colin, people often ask me, you must get four hours of sleep, no. Maybe there are few people who can do that, but I think for 99% of people, I say you can borrow sleep, but you can't steal it.

- You guys know anybody, you don't have to name names, you guys know anybody who gets like four hours of sleep a night and is really healthy. - I've heard, I hear of people's

second and third hand. Oh, but I'm not sure I know anybody first hand that up close that I can verify, yes, that's actually healthy.

- What about you, Justin? - I don't think so, maybe one, but most of the guys that I've heard that about tend to crash later and not be healthy, so I can-- - That's for examples. - That's what I was going to say. I want people to hear this podcast and understand that if you're listening or you're watching and you're just wondering, I don't know how this person pulls things off, often they aren't pulling it off.

I was joking about that earlier with Kevin, and I appreciate this behind the scenes look, but if you hear somebody say, yeah, I only need four hours of sleep a night, maybe that's true, I'm sure it is true for somebody, but my experience is like, Justin's, that person, then you end up hearing about them in the hospital. - Yeah, that's why I said you can borrow sleep, meaning, okay, you have a deadline and you get four hours of sleep, even you have a stretch several days, maybe a week where you're really dragging and you need caffeine to get you through, but you can't steal it. Eventually, that borrowing of sleep, you will have to pay it, and your body will shut down, you will get depressed, you will not be in a good place spiritually, and you will be forced because of God's kindness to remind us of our finitude to make up for that.

So I almost always get more than seven hours of sleep, seven and a half, I can feel good, seven, I can be okay. Under that, I start getting bad shape, but if I'm working at home, which is maybe two or three days a week, I take a, I'm a great power napper, 15, 20 minutes, I can wake up just like that and be very-- - Very churchily in the view. - Well, it really helps me get through the rest of the day, and I'd like to think if you were talking to my kids, they would tell you that I do lots of fun things with them, I play around with them, I'm, you guys know, I'm often running to pick up kids from one sporting event or play practice or bring them to something else, so I certainly feel like I'm very engaged as a husband or father, not to say that my wife hasn't had to appropriately scold me at times, Kevin, are you here? No, are you here? What's going on in the world? Is it more interesting than what's going on right now? - This is when you have your phone around the family.

- Yes, this is what I have my phone, but we have patterns of, you know, we have a late dinner, we watch Jeopardy every night that I'm home to turn it on. Now, Wheel of Fortune, not a huge Wheel of Fortune fan, but it's on afterwards, so it kind of stays on and sort of sucks you in, but-- - You just want to be able to watch all those political ads in North Carolina. - It is nonstop political ads, I told you that my 11 year old son, I don't know if he said it about Cal Cunningham or Tom Tillis who are running for Senate, but he said, "Well, why does he keep playing politics with the pandemic, Dad?" (laughing) Yes, so there are lots, they are really, I mean, they are really hilarious to a point because everyone's tough on China, "Dad, why aren't you tough on China?" And everyone is, you know, there's a great one for Cal Cunningham, he raised taxes so he could build a wet

bar in his house in a butler's pantry.

Higher taxes for you, butlers for him. But then there's the same one against Tom Tillis, he raised his, he allowed drug manufacturers, so you can't get your medicine and you die. - What was the goat demon one, a few cycles back, do you remember that? Like a goat demon with a goat running around with red eyes.

(laughing) - Yeah, we've gotten far field, Justin, we didn't give you a lot of time to talk about what else do you do family life? You've got a big family and you, has it been a healthy move to go to Sioux City? Has that been good for these things? - It has been. It's really nice to be around family. I can't remember if we've talked about this on the show, but my wife and I have been married 22 years and we have never lived within 100 some miles of family.

So last year in August, we moved back and both sets of parents all in their 70s live here and two siblings on each side, 12 nieces and nephews. So that ends up being a lot of our time, decompressing time, relational time, trying to hang out with them. And it's been really encouraging.

I think probably friendship time has cut down actually in the move and a lot of that has to do with COVID as well. - In the pandemic, yeah. - Yeah.

So yeah, maybe this is a good place to talk about like what not to do because you guys are so good and eloquent at what to do. But I mean, I think that the lockdown has been, in some ways it's been good for decompressing and rest and some ways it's been more anxiety-inducing. There was a tweet by a guy in the UK, James Shrimpton, who I follow on Twitter.

And I think I shared it with you guys, but he said COVID-19 has helped us rediscover the power of place. This is my place of work. This is my place of worship.

This is my place of rest. When all those places blur together, it comes hard to prepare your mind and heart properly for any of them. - That's been bad for me.

- Insightful. - Yeah, that's been bad for me. So something that's been restful historically is, you know, I have my family life and I'm in my house and then I get out of my house and I drive to work and I have my work time and then I leave work and I go back to my family and then I leave there and drive to the church building for an elder meeting for worship service.

And when all of those three are sort of combined and you're doing church on TV and you're working from home and you're doing family life, it feels like all three of them are less than optimal. And I don't know that I would have thought that theoretically or in the abstract, but kind of living through it. It is, I think, challenging.

So I feel that even though there's more kind of downtown, there's not commute time, working from home. We don't have to worship at home now. Our church is open and smaller and can do the social distance.

- That's really good. And I would just say, and then you guys can chime in any last thoughts before we move on, that we need to know ourselves, our gifts, our interests. We need to know our wives also.

Maybe I'm thinking in particular, any men listening in ministry or pastoral ministry that we need to know our wives and some of them are wonderfully likemantic, easygoing, others, maybe they run a really tight ship in the home, but also maybe wound tighter themselves. Those aren't pejorative expressions. We need to know and not assume that we can be the sort of person or husband or father that we see someone else being, or whether that's a good example or bad example.

Over time, my wife and I somewhat seriously have had different people that are off limits. Like, you cannot compare me to this person who is so obviously a much better father than I am. Like, he's just off the charts, or he's buying all the groceries, cooking all the meals.

Yes, I'm talking about you, Jason Halapalas. Okay, you can't compare me to that. That's abnormal.

And then I'll say, but this person who doesn't allow his family to be in the house when he's watching football because it's his time. Okay, I'm not that. So we're just set some of those off limits.

But I think one of the things that people, people can give me too much credit. Yes, I hope that I work hard and maybe have the ability to work quickly in some ways. But you have to remember many of the things that I'm doing have a public face to them.

So the productivity, I'm writing, I'm speaking, podcast, so much of what I'm doing has a public face to it. So you're seeing the productivity where someone whose ministry is walking with someone in a intense counseling situation for two hours every week for two years, you're not gonna see that. And it's every bit as important or more important than the things that I'm doing.

So we just need to understand that our ministry, whether that's public or private, vocational or not, doesn't need to look like everyone else's. Any last words from you guys? No, I wanna hear about your commentary practice. Okay, here we go.

(gentle music) Commentaries, we've had also requests from 2000 of our listeners. Would you talk about commentaries? Let me give this as a preface, and I'll turn it to you guys to talk about some, we can go a number of different directions. You can talk about individual authors that, hey, if they write a commentary, you should get it.

We can talk through some of the series. I know that not everyone, probably most of the people listening, this aren't pastors, but a lot are, or do Bible studies of one kind or another. And then we can talk about resources that we might use to evaluate commentaries.

Here's my one comment of preface, and that is to say, I'm amazed at the different patterns that different pastors use with commentaries. Every pastor is going to use a commentary. Some of them lean on them very heavily.

Others lightly, I think it's certainly wise to not start with your commentaries. That can be a way to get the commentaries to do all the work for you. Unless, sometimes I'll go to them quickly if I'm at an impasse right away.

This message will go one of two different directions, depending on what this verse means, and I'm kind of stumped, so let me make sure I get my bearings. But generally, you want that to be at the end of the process. I have typically been the type of guy who will zero in on three or four commentaries I really like.

And then after that, I find that they're saying all the same things, but I could name several men that we all know, good preachers who tell me that they have 17, 21, I mean, they have, two dozen commentaries they use every single week. And if there are people feeling pressure to do that, let me be your Christian freedom that you don't have to do that. What's your practice when you guys have prepared Bible studies, or I know both of you have done preaching before, what's your practice with commentaries and then take us through some of your favorites, Colin? - Well, I'm gonna make a couple overall comments, and then I'm gonna mostly focus on asking you guys, questions because I feel like I have a lot to learn here.

One of the most helpful things for me has been to ask the question up front of who's the audience, this commentary. And also, listen to that question I have for you guys, do you go by series or do you go by author? Typically people go by author, but they buy by series. So that can be really confusing.

I'd love for you guys to walk through that as a pastor and then as a publisher, what people should do there. But there's such a variety of what you're looking for in terms of the audience. And I think that's also my main frustration with commentaries is that a lot of commentaries are used by pastors, but they're written by academics and they apparently have been written for other academics.

I know that's not true of all commentary writers and it's not true of all series, but that's the most consistent frustration I run into is that I'll dig in and I've learned a lot about the history of interpretation of this passage. I will learn a lot about some of the particular problems that are presented, but I haven't really learned a lot that I find to be actionable for people. It's sort of a, oh, that's interesting and that's probably important for a

scholarly discussion.

But I'm really not sure how I'm supposed to translate that. And now I'm not just looking for homiletical commentaries here, I understand that's what I'm saying, there's differences there, but it's just weird that the market is with pastors and teachers and yet so often the academics are writing to each other. So you're set up for a difficulty from the very beginning with commentaries.

That's one that I've just consistently struggled with, even as somebody who tries to keep my biblical languages functioning and so I appreciate the commentaries that we'll still use. I mean, I'm not usually gonna find a lot of insight from a commentary that isn't using the biblical languages. So that's important for me there, but that just makes the academic problems a little bit more, more onerous.

So let me put in a plug for DA Carson's commentary on the commentaries. This was my first resource, it has been my first resource pretty much whenever I'm teaching from a new book and I don't usually get a chance to preach 37 messages of the same book. So I'm usually popping in to a series or I'm lecturing at a college or something like that or I'm writing a book on something.

So Carson's commentary on commentaries, which gives me a range of the theological perspectives, the quality of the writing, the audience of okay, this is for academics, this is for pastors, this is a really good series, this is a good series, but this is a bad, this is a bad version edition in there. So that's my big plug. And I think, I mean, we're lucky that some of the more is dynamic or exciting books of the Bible like Romans have had so many of our best biblical commentators like Doug Moo turned to them and I've really benefited from that.

So that's one commentary that stands out to me, but on the book of Romans, it'd be hard to go wrong. You've got some real depth there. You also have some history.

So I'm wondering, I'll turn it back to you first, Kevin and then Justin, I would love to get your broader perspective on putting together these series and what that would look like also or what that's looked like in the SV Study Bible, which I need to say, when I'm teaching short messages and I need something quick, the SV Study Bible is the place that I go for that stuff or if I'm, especially if I'm just leading a home group and I have to turn something around quickly, it's amazing how much really great material I can just get out of the SV Study Bible that Justin was the editor for and I don't have to dig through all those commentaries. But Kevin, my main question would be old versus new. So the new commentaries have the advantage of, they've got cutting edge trends and they also will be able to survey a lot of the old ones so you'll get more bang for your buck.

But then the new commentaries also might have been distracted by reacting to a couple

centuries of material that's really unhelpful, whereas say a Reformation era commentary is dealing more with the text itself, which is actually what you wanna be preaching. So what's your thought on new versus old? - Yeah, well that hits on my number one frustration with commentaries and you already alluded to it. Some of the commentaries I have, I feel like fully a third of the book could be excised.

If we simply established the person whose name is on the book, wrote the book. Okay, Paul wrote that. - Yeah, yes.

- And the book as we have it is more or less the book that the author wrote. - So form and source criticism basically. - Yes and all the other related types of criticism you spend so much on did the person really write it? Did it come to us in this form? All the different layers of the tradition.

And as a pastor on very rare occasion should you go into that material and most pastors, hopefully every pastor in evangelical church is going to take those things for granted, not because we haven't done our homework but that's gonna be a starting point. So that is in Hebrews. - Even Hebrews, it doesn't really do you anything.

I mean, you spent a lot of time speculating over who wrote Hebrews, where does it get you? - I mean, I always use this illustration in my preaching class about not preaching all of your issues from seminary that I was at University of form church, very well educated church across the street from university. My first series that I did there was on Ephesians and I just felt like, man, these are academic people. I gotta do something about the Pauline authorship of Ephesians.

And you know what everyone's thinking there in the pews? Well, it says Paul to the church in Ephesians. All right, I'm tracking with you, pastor. I'm buying that.

So it's not that you might not say a word but for most congregations, the vast, you are not going to have to get into that. And that's frustrating with commentaries. And to your point, the older commentaries, when you get closer to the Reformation, Calvin's not gonna spend time on that, mercifully for most of us.

There's an important place for those criticism. We need some academics who are dealing with that but most people leading Bible studies and pastors, a little bit of that goes a really long way. So I don't think I've bought, I haven't bought a single complete commentary series.

I haven't chosen to build my library that way but I go through each time I'm teaching or preaching on a book. I will look at Carson's book, Trimmer Longman has a companion volume for the Old Testament. Best commentaries is an amazing website which compiles those reviews.

It looks at Ligonier's reviews, DG's, the Asiring Gods reviews. It sort of, it has a

mathematical formula. Anyways, I mean, it is amazing.

It will give you that website, dozens and dozens of commentaries. It gives you a number rating. Or if you take that with a grain of salt, it gives you where you can buy them.

Is it pastors, devotional, scholarly? It's a wealth of resources. Would you guess, I bet you could guess of thousands of commentaries on their site which currently has the highest ranking, a hundred out of a hundred. Which, give me which volume? - Which author and volume? - Yeah.

- Author and book. - Doug New on Romans? - That's very high. - No, it's gonna be my guess as well.

- Carson on John. - Okay. - That was another good guess.

- Carson on John. Which is an amazing commentary because, and I just got done preaching through John and definitely the most helpful commentary. I mean, Calvin is always up there too.

But because Carson is pretty concise, I mean, for John, I mean, I have it right here. I don't know if it's 500 pages or so, but I mean, it could be four times as long. He gets to the point.

He's a good writer. He brings out theological issues without being distracted by them. Oftentimes, the academic sort of commentaries that then tack on, here's four homiletical points, I think.

With all due respect, you're not preaching sermons. These are, they just don't work. So I appreciate Carson doesn't try to do that in a formulaic way, but there's always things there.

So I have lots of series that I find helpful, that pillar commentary series is invariably helpful. - The white and blue. - The white and blue one.

Yeah, PTO Brian is another one, get his stuff. - He's got the Closians Ephesians in that series, I mean, the NICNT, the International commentary series, the New Testament, the Old Testament. So the New Testament is kind of reddish, pinkish hue, and the Old Testament is greenish blue.

The format of that is so good. You know, they're somewhat, you know, you have to use some discernment, depending on who wrote what volume, but I love the layout as compared to the word biblical commentary series, which I tweeted last week because one of the, they look like the socks that I was wearing. But the Old Testament, again, is kind of turquoise and the New Testament is green.

There are some excellent, excellent volumes in there. And then there are some that are

less evangelical. My biggest complaint is the format is so difficult.

They're cramming way too many words on a page. It goes through-- - The format itself is good for your sanctification. - Oh, no, so the format really does make a difference.

The NIGTC, Greek one that is also published by Erdmans and that's the one that Biel has the revelation commentary series in sort of a toe-pish cover to it with some purple accents. - I didn't know we were going to get fashion in-- - Well, we have to. And then I'm gonna mention just a couple more and then we'll go to Justin.

The, for preachers, the one that Crossway does on preaching the word that Arken Hughes is the series editor, really good. Now they tend, since they're sermons, they're big, thick books. And so sometimes it's hard to get through everything, but I used Phil Reikens on Exodus, which invariably is very helpful.

Had some good illustrations. Phil and Rick Phillips have done one for a number of years, Reformed Expositors' commentary series. That's also good.

For people who are saying, okay, I haven't been to seminary. I don't know the Greek in Hebrew. What's a good, but still substantive, lay-level commentary series? Either the Tyndale New Testament commentary series.

There's also one for the Old Testament or the Bible speaks today that's taught, used to edit. Those are very good. They're by competent scholars, but they're easy to use.

They get to the point. There are lots of other series that I can mention. It's hard.

We're gonna give Caleb a lot of work and-- - Good luck, Caleb. - Linking to some of these series. But Justin, we turn it over to you.

Clean up what we've missed and we'd love in particular. How do you view this from the publisher side of things? Do we need more commentaries? - Yeah, I think that we do, and we need the right kind of commentaries, I think. You guys have been lamenting the more academic ones that try to cover every base.

And I think there's a historical reason for that, that evangelicals needed to show that they could compete at that level of ideas, that the Orthodox position actually was tenable. And so I think there's a place for that. It just has a limited place for a working pastor trying to feed his sheep each week.

I think that if we can find the best commentators in the world who also know how to preach, which is different from saying writing a preaching or application commentary, but I think about people like Don Carson. Don has preached extensively through the gospel of John. Tom Schreiner would be another one.

He would be, I think the top of my list right now in terms of commentators, because I

never have to, never gets distracting, never goes off on strange rabbit trails, is always clear. It has a worshipful sense about him, masterful of being concise and being theologically oriented at the same time, but Tom has preached at his local church through the book of Revelation and then wrote the commentary for Crossway on Revelation. And I think that shows when somebody's preached through it and then comments on it at the same time.

Yeah, a couple of other my favorite commentators would be Frank Teelman, and we've mentioned Doug Mu. And I think John Stott is always worth consulting. - Yeah, that's right.

- Nobody can say it quite as concisely. Nobody sees how a text breaks out beautifully into three parts as he does. - Well, that's true.

I can't read Stott before I do my sermon outline, 'cause once I read Stott, it does seem like, that is the outline. How could there be another outline? It's so clear. - And Kinder, I think, would be an Old Testament counterpart.

Again, in terms of the conciseness, I think the longer you're at this, the more you value somebody who's able to say things in a compact way and say a lot, versus anybody can take 25 pages to expound a text, but can you do it in one paragraph, like a packer, a stutter, a kidner? Let me just put in a little plug, and I know that I'm biased because I work for Crossway, but we are publishing a 12 volume set, the expository ESV commentary. And I just read through Eric Orttland's commentary on Esther. - How many Orttland's are there? - Believe it or not, yeah.

- It's a five different Orttland's. - Yeah. - Ray, Janney, Dane, Eric, and Gavin.

- Are there others? There's only one other. There's only the daughter sister. - Yeah, their sister has not published it.

- When she can do something, come on. - Yeah, a remarkable family, but I really, really like that book. I mean, it was concise.

It doesn't get into kind of all sorts of historical, textual, critical stuff, but I think if you're preaching through the book, it would give you what you need to know. And then it has comments on preaching, so it doesn't try to do, hey, here are five things to mention in your sermon, but some orientation for preachers in terms of redemptive history, application. So I thought it's really nicely done.

The latest New Testament one, Bob Yarbrough does Romans, Andy DeCelida's first Corinthians, Dean, Orttland's second Corinthians, Frank Teilman does Galatians. So some great commentaries. I think that's a really nice niche one where you could actually own the whole set because the whole Bible's done in 12 volumes.

Or with some of these, you might try to own the whole set. They just, a lot of the commentary series aren't yet complete. - Yeah.

- And Trita Miller hasn't been done. New International, I don't think has been done. So, - Don Carson, we know you're listening.

- Keep working on those commentary. - Yeah, Don. - We need you.

- We need you, Don. - Justin, I'm glad you mentioned that. I feel like that crossway commentary series, and again, it's all black, real handsomely done, right? I just, we think in our colors.

- Passion. - Yeah, fashion. I think it's flown under the radar.

I have to admit that I think I have the volumes that have been done, maybe not that most recent one, and they're on my shelf and it looks very nice. And I was preaching through Daniel in the spring, winter, and I thought, oh, there's Daniel. And I pulled out, and I forget who did it.

It was very good. It was very well done. And I thought, I admit I haven't paid much attention to this because it is different.

You get one volume and it's got several different books in there. But listeners out there, that's a very, Justin's right, it is a very good series to get with good reliable evangelical commentary. And it looks really nice on your shelf, which leads me to a related question.

Maybe our last one on commentaries. Do you guys have, we mentioned the ESV Study Bible. Do you have one volume commentaries? Again, it's hard to get the kind of depth that you might need in preaching through a book, but there are times that you just want to be able to pull off one, you just want to get one volume to say, give me a quick answer to this question that I have, or just make sure I'm not misreading this text from Ezekiel.

One volume commentary is that you find helpful. - I don't use many anymore. And we've actually thought about doing them, but the study Bible has kind of supplanted, I think the one volume commentary is.

But back in the day, and I don't have it in front of me, so I don't know if it was the late '80s, early '90s, IVP did a number of, a nice reference set really, like an IVP theology of dictionary. - Those are great, those are really great. New Bible commentary.

- But there's one volume one, and then there's a Bible commentary one, but it's just nice to just get in their glance. And I think another resource to know about is Net Bible, which is its own translation, but they have extensive, and it's free online, you can get a print version as well, but extensive commentary about the Greek, the Hebrew, but textual

variations. I'm working on a sermon as we speak for this Sunday and going in there and on a particularly tricky verse in the Greek, it's helpful just to see here are the five or six options, and at least what not to say.

That's where I find commentary sometimes helpful is not looking for what should I say about this passage, but what are some things where I'm not emphasizing a word in the English that's not really there in the Greek or somebody who knows Greek a lot better than I do, can help me see various pitfalls and where I shouldn't be going and instead of where I should necessarily. - I still think Matthew Henry is a great one volume commentary, it's in public domain, you can get online, but to have the book on your shelf. I mean, there's often a nice sentence or two or turn of a phrase, there are things that you can use in a sermon.

And again, just to make sure you're kind of on track, people don't know the history of that, the used to be Impyrites and Services in addition to the preaching of the word, which might run an hour, they would consecutively read through the Bible and they might read through a chapter or two at a time. And there would be a just very brief sort of orienting kind of comment to that passage, not the sermon, we would think it to be a sermon before the sermon today, but of course, you have to remember they didn't have small group Bible studies, they didn't have the abundance of resources that we have, so it's not that we need to recreate what they did, but those were Matthew Henry's prefatory comments as they would read through large chunks of scripture. So it was meant to be digested by the congregation, but it wasn't meant to be a sermon on the text.

And I still find those to be helpful. Colin, any other ones we've missed? - Kind of surprised nobody's brought up the commentary on the New Testament use of the old test. - I was going to right there.

- All right. - I mentioned it, saving something for others. (laughing) - That is from Carson and Beel, are they the only two? - Yeah.

- Editors? - Yeah, okay. So that consistently beneficial, I can say studying with Dr. Carson, are the many things I benefited from there. It was certainly his emphasis on deliberate use of the New Testament writers of the Old Testament, that there is a method to what can appear to be madness.

And that commentary is absolutely golden for helping you to see how the, how's it, as Don would say, how the whole Bible holds together. - Yeah. - So that's one of the just big shout out there.

(gentle music) All right, we got 10 minutes left. We got a hard stop because my kids get done with their various after-school activities. And as we already established, I'm a dynamic, wonderful father.

So we do wanna talk about such an important topic. It's so big, but we'll limit ourselves to 10 minutes. Our friend and crossway acquisitions editor, Samuel, James, wrote a good, provocative and important piece over the weekend.

If you're not, you know, acquainted with Samuel, he really should. He's a good writer. He's very thoughtful.

He's younger than all of us for shame. But the piece was called, "Which enemy, which doorstep?" Colin, give us your quick summary of the piece and why you think it's important. You texted it to us and said, you know, yes, exclamation point or something like this.

- Well, you know, I'm working on multiple different, I've been talking with our friend, Trevin Wax, about his concept of multi-directional leadership that leaders have to recognize threats coming in from multiple directions. As I've been talking with Trevin about this, realized that my 2015 book, Blind Spots, Becoming a Crageous Compassionate Commission Church, is really similar to that. Recognizing multiple directions where churches and Christians can go wrong and recognize how those threats need to be addressed.

That's what Samuel's article, I think, does, is help people to understand, and I'll just give you an example of what this looks like. Okay, let's say that you're really worried about the trends in the academy, in the media, in major cities and in corporations, especially in the West, including the United States. Let's say you're really worried about their obsessions with social justice and things along those lines, diversity, inclusion, on and on and on.

I wanna say, yes, I'm worried about that as well. And I can see how college students and people working in these Fortune 500 companies and any of us being subjected to this while watching sports and on and on and on our politics, this is a major, major, major factor. What I can't quite understand is why somebody can't recognize that that is a threat, what at the same time, it is also true that racism continues to be a major problem in this country, or like we talked about at the beginning of this podcast that sin inside of the church, the moral character of our leaders is proving to be deficient.

This is what Samuel gets at in the article, is to recognize that there are meta-cultures, things that all of us are dealing with and all of us have to confront, then there are micro-cultures, that could be our neighborhood, our community, our particular church. It could be the case that your particular church is really struggling with racism, while at the same time, somebody else's church does not struggle with that, but they're really worried being in a college town, for example, that their young people are being indoctrinated into forms of critical theory that are really undermining their faith. I think we all need a really heavy dose of recognizing that just in the United States, with 330 million people, and all kinds of different meta and micro-cultures, that some of us are gonna be called to

tackle different issues with different levels of urgency.

I think if we recognize this with each other, it might help us to collaborate instead of merely treating each other's issues, as if they don't matter compared to ours. It's possible, and I think Samuel helps us to see this, it's possible that there are many problems that are urgent and that different people will be called to them at different levels of urgency depending on their place and their station. That's my basic summary.

Justin, is that accurate of your colleagues and add your perspective to it? - Yeah, I think that's an accurate summary, and maybe I'd just read two quick quotes and then turn it back to Kevin to how he wants us to kind of wrap it up or respond. But he says in there that two things can be true at the same time, but in different places and because of different things. That's such an obvious statement, it seems like it should hardly need to be written, but it's really an important point.

He points out that we tend to confuse what is most depicted with what is most real. And then a third thing that struck my eye, a media age upends many things, but one of its first is place. If TV and radio dislodge political awareness from its local roots and biased it toward the nation, the internet burned the root entirely.

In the world shaped by the internet, all eyes are trained on what is national and global. Narratives are useful to the degree that they paint in broad strokes and give a sense of omnipresent problems. So I think both of those are important sides of, we have geographical divides, we're talking about national versus local, but sometimes we just wanna say only this part of it's true and this part isn't when both things can be true at the same time, just in different places and in different ways.

- I should say, Kevin, that going back to last week's conversation, I think that gives people a sense for how we approach the issue with Grace Community Church and John MacArthur's. That there are multiple things can be true. You could personally disagree with the church's decision, you could personally advocate for Christian freedom, the conscience of the church just to make different decisions.

And you could agree that this is a particular example of government overreach and you're really concerned about where this trend is going. We just really need to understand that those things can all be true at the same time. - And it's important for us then, this sounds so cliché, I hate to say it this way, but to listen, and I mean not in a meta way, I mean what we've, people wouldn't know this about, what we've been doing with some of our friends on emails and things, it's helpful to say, okay tell me what do you see because things that can seem to be mythical or blown out of proportion in one place can be very real concerns.

So one person may say, look, are there real, I mean, are there really neo-Confederates running around? Are there really Confederate sympathizers? Are there really people with

the lost cause, mythology, front and center, is that really happening? And it may not be really happening in what one person sees, and it may really be happening and be a big deal somewhere else and conversely, and see this is where I think we, I'm interrupting myself, we all tend to have some things that we think everybody knows that that's wrong. And so if you feel like everybody knows that racism is wrong, or everybody knows that looting is wrong, nobody's really for that, well, not everybody does know those things. And so it's not always that we're blind to the things we might not, because we don't care about them, we might be blind to them because we assume that everybody already thinks a certain reasonable way about them when in fact that's not the case.

So we might not give attention. I've tried to be very forthright about this in some of my writing, just to hopefully maybe set an example of let's just be honest with ourselves. I know by my, having grown up in a public school, having grown up in the Reformed Church in America, having very often been the right most tent peg in places that I've been, I know that my spidey sense is more attuned to departures on the left.

So I need to be reminded, it is possible. And I learned this at various times in pastoral ministry that there is a sort of default position, which is unhealthy among conservatives, which says if there is a more conservative position on something, because I know that liberalism is bad, if there is a more conservative position, I can find that is the safest place to be. No, not always.

And sometimes what may seem to you to be conservative actually isn't, it's just something else that owns the libs. So all of this to say, Samuel's article is an important piece of common sense, but it's more than that. It's a necessary reminder when we talk about the most contentious issues of our day, whether it's sex, gender, race, ethnicity, that even among people where we could all sign the same doctrinal statement on these things, we just need to have our eyes open and try to learn from one another and realize what you're seeing may not be what everyone else is seeing and there may be legitimacy to those critiques.

We are at our hard stop and hopefully you have finished mowing your lawn or gone on your perambulation for the day, your daily constitution, or the dishes or the dog or what have you because we are done and we look forward to seeing you next week. Thank you, Justin. Thank you, Colin.

And again, if you can subscribe on one of the many platforms that's helpful and leave a review, if it's a good review, if it's a bad review, then I would just forget that you've even listened to us at all, but if you like it, that does help us out. So thank you very much and we look forward to seeing you next week, Lord willing. And until then, glorify God and join forever and read a good book.

(gentle music)

(buzzing)

[buzzing]