

# OpenTheo

## Life and Ministry with Kevin DeYoung

August 11, 2023



### **Life and Books and Everything** - Clearly Reformed

Don't skip over the preposition. This special episode is an interview with Kevin, instead of an interview by Kevin. Not long ago, Tom Groelsema, one of the pastors at Christ Covenant, took the evening service to interview Kevin. This was not Kevin's idea, but he was grateful for the opportunity to share about life, and books, and everything for his congregation—and now for this podcast as well.

### **Transcript**

Greetings in salutations. Welcome back to Life and Books and Everything. Kevin DeYoung, Senior Pastor at Christ Covenant Church in Matthews, North Carolina.

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You can find them online. [Crossway.org](http://Crossway.org), and our sponsor, [DesiringGod.org](http://DesiringGod.org), Gonson and Resources from John Piper and many others. We are going to start with, I guess you would call the fall season, and the next couple of weeks have some new things planned, and I'm excited about the guests that we have lined up.

So this episode, you can think of as a summer, end-of-summer bonus episode, or maybe a pre-episode before we get into the fall. And this is an interview. How do I introduce this? It's actually an interview with me.

This took place at an evening service a few months ago here at Christ Covenant. Some people on staff and other people at the church said, Kevin, you interview people on your podcast, and when guest preachers come in or do a conference, sometimes you take time to interview them. We'd be interested in someone interviewing you.

So Tom Grossama, our executive pastor here, good friend here, took the better part of an evening service to ask me questions about life and books and everything. And perhaps something there will be useful or helpful or at least interesting. So here we go.

Well, let's pray before we spend this time with Kevin. I'll pray that it will be a blessing to church, but especially glorify God as we get to ask him questions and hear from him. So let's pray.

Father in Heaven, thank you for the privilege just to gather as your people the second time on this Lord's Day. And we're going to hear from your word in a little different way tonight, not through a sermon. But through testimony, through counsel perhaps to our church.

We're grateful Father for Kevin, for the pastor that you've given us here at Christ Covenant Church, for not only how he blesses us week by week, feeding us with your word. But Lord, for the blessing that he is to the broader church community, the evangelical reformed world. And we pray God that tonight, Lord, we will be built up and encouraged as we hear from him.

But also Father, we pray that you will be glorified through what we hear through answers that are given. Thank you for your work in his life. And we pray these things in Jesus name.

Amen. Just to say at the outset that I want to thank the congregation for the questions that you've submitted. I've shaped some of these myself, but we've got a couple of dozen questions, a little bit more than that actually.

And just thank you for the questions that you submitted and tried to work as many of them in as possible to the questions that we have tonight. So Kevin, let's begin tonight by just having you share. Where you grew up, your family schooling, and then of course, how you met Tricia and how you guys met and your family got started.

Well, thank you. Thank you. It feels a little strange.

But I do this for the Faithful Conference and interview someone and then my podcast, I'm interviewing people. So it's different to be on the other side, but great job so far. Remember, we may never do this again.

Yeah. And I'll try to be brief, which is hard for pastors, so you can get lots of questions. I was born in Chicago, Illinois, and grew up for the first number of years in South Holland, which is the South suburb, South Holland, Illinois.

And you'll hear in some of these places, some of the Dutch places that have been, though South Holland is a very different community, still a nice community, but very different than when I was born there in 1977. And my dad has had, he's retired now, and he had two careers. His first career was in, I guess you say secular radio.

He worked for different commercial radio stations in Chicago and was pretty successful at that. And then in 1985, he felt a call. He had gone to seminary for one year, and my

dad's very, very smart, but I think Greek just did him in.

It wasn't the path he wanted to take. He was into this radio stuff. But he had always kind of had this radio side, ministry side.

And then in 1985, we moved to Michigan, where he worked for Words of Hope, which is in Grand Rapids and is a radio missionary organization with the Reformed Church in America. So, stateside, obviously, but he traveled way more than I travel. He traveled all the time, and I traveled to easy places.

He went to hard places all over the world doing radio missionary kind of work. So, I grew up mostly in Grand Rapids in Genesin, Michigan, which is a suburb of Grand Rapids. Went to Genesin public high school and then went to Hope College from 1995 to 1999.

That's in Holland. We have an ever-growing population of Michiganders here who understand how the hand works. This is Michigan.

It's shaped just like a hand. And so, Grand Rapids over here, Holland over here, unlike Michigan, East Lansing and Lansing there in the middle of Detroit over here. The Hinter lands up here, the bridge.

So, these are all the people who, the Ubers, the UP, and here were the Trolls because we live under the bridge, under the Mackinac Bridge. So, I then went to Gordon Conwell, theological seminary on Boston's North Shore. And that's where I met Tricia.

She was at Gordon College. I was at Gordon Conwell. The two haven't been officially together for some time, but the namesake there speaks of how they used to be one and the same, but they're about two miles away from each other.

This story before, but her roommate was dating a seminary guy and I knew that and then I saw her with them and I just had in my head, Gordon Conwell is fairly big. And Gordon Conwell is a little different than RTS. There might be women there training for pastoral ministry, which is not what I agreed with.

And so, I just had in my head, oh, maybe she's a seminary student here and she's training to be a pastor. She may be very sweet. That's just not going to work.

But then when I first met her and she said, I'm Tricia Beebe, I go to Gordon College. The light bulb just went, oh, the college. Wow.

And the seminary students had a very bad reputation, well deserved, at the college for being sort of, you know, vultures who swooped in there and, oh, do you like to see my Greek flashcards? And I'm sure you want to be a pastor's wife. But she had, I guess, noticed me and I had noticed her and then we both went only one time. There was a singles group that just started and we both went one time thinking that the other person

might be there.

And lo and behold, we were there and I sat next to her and I like to tell the story that we were reading through the passage of Scripture and she was, oh, so she just forgot where she was reading the passage. But I just, it really, I had seen her before, but from the first time I got Tricia Beebe, I'm a student at Gordon College. I can honestly say, no day since then.

I stopped thinking about her. So we went on just a few dates and then we're separated for the year because she was studying, she did a study abroad here at Oxford. And so we spoke on the phone.

We didn't have cell phones then and got to know each other that way and got engaged for a year and then got married. All right, so how long have you been married? 21 years. 21 years.

Yep, January 5, 2002. Great. Tell us also about your ministry prior to coming to Christ Covenant Church, where you've served and what those churches might be.

So I graduated from Gorn Conwell in 2002 and looked at a variety of different options and ended up taking a call to be the associate pastor at First Reform Church in Orange City, Iowa. Not named because there are any oranges there, but named after William of Orange from the Netherlands. So there you go.

I went to college in Holland, Michigan. I was born in South Holland, Illinois. I went to Orange City, Iowa.

And it's a town of about 5,500 people and our church had about 1,000 people. So, yeah, it was like one-fifth of the town was in the church and there were 12 other churches in town. It was a very church community.

And I was actually pastoring with my pastor that had been my pastor when I was a kid. He left in sixth grade and I remember when he announced he was leaving for another church and our families were close and I was, I was, I was teary and I was sitting there and he was tall, taller than me and wearing a robe probably at the time. And he, he said, Kevin, someday you're going to be pulpit supply for me.

I didn't know what pulpit supply meant. I thought, how many supplies are in the pulpit? What do I, you got tissues there? You got erasers? I don't know what you have, but that seems like an honor, I guess. And then he said, someday you're going to be a preacher and you're going to preach.

So, it was the Lord's providence that all those years later, that was in sixth grade when he left. And it wasn't a straight line from there that every day I thought I'm going to be a pastor. But the seeds were planted then that, maybe this is something that I would want

to do.

And so all those years later, he was still at that church. He had left from Jenison to go to Iowa and he was still there as a senior pastor. And so I came as the associate pastor was there for two years and then moved to East Lansing.

So I had interned at this church in East Lansing. It's about, East Lansing is about an hour and a half away from where I grew up, but they were in, the churches were in the same classis, the classis, that's just the presbyteria, that's what's called in the Reformed church. And so I knew of this church and knew of the pastor and he had retired in 2002.

He planted the church. He was there for 36 years. And then he retired and then they looked for a couple of years and then I came in 2004.

So I served there at University Reformed church until I came here in 2017. It's already been six years and loved being here. Right.

Can you share with us, that's kind of your physical journey into ministry and calling and so on, but could you just share something with us about how you came to know Christ and your spiritual awakening in the Lord? Like many of you had the great privilege of growing up in a Christian home and like you here especially tonight, we always went to the evening service, going to Sunday morning, went to Sunday evening, at Sunday school, we did youth group. I would say if church was open another time, we would have had to be there too. And I just didn't think about it.

And so grateful for that upbringing. We often still joke as a family that I mean one of those times where we just thought really do we really have to go was January 1986 when the Bears were in the Super Bowl. We're Bears fans and my dad was just convinced if we skip church he will make them lose.

So we didn't skip church. We did leave right at the benediction. And the Bears have not won a Super Bowl since.

So I don't know but we can still relive those glory days. So I grew up in a Christian home and have the great privilege of parents that love each other and loved us and our siblings and by God's grace. I have an older brother, two younger sisters and they're all married and they're in church and walking with the Lord.

And yeah, I hope to give that same legacy to my kids. So did you ask about what else calling? Just oh, okay, so I joined the church when I was in fourth grade which was young for our church. I remember going with my dad to some other church in town that was having a... It was probably a church looking back now.

It was that church, you know where it is. It was by the Genesis and Meyer that had the Jesus saved sign that was like right on the corner. I think it's been demolished then.

They were having a traveling evangelist and this is probably... I don't remember what he said. I probably look back now and think find some theological problems because it was the sort of church. This is not exaggeration.

I don't mean to make... but they would have like on the marquee one time world smallest evangelist. It was that kind of like, I'm not sure what your... this was not the world smallest evangelist but it was that sort of church. And I... to use Wesley's words I felt my heart strangely warmed.

I didn't understand it all. I was eight or nine years old but really for the... That's the first time I can recall thinking I'm a sinner and I need Jesus to save me from my sins. And so I went to my parents.

I said I want to join the church. And I said well, let's... why don't you... why don't you think about that for a few months and come back and see. I just said one that... I mean he was pretty young and wanted to make sure I knew what I was doing.

I didn't know what I was doing but I did come back a little bit later. And I met with my pastor for all the kids who have just gone through the class that's done and they're going to be here next week. All of our catechists.

So I had to do the catechism, the Heidelberg catechism but one on one with my pastor. That was really, really scary. But he was really kind and walked through that and then I had to meet with all of the elders.

There was probably six or seven of them and give my profession of faith. Like I said it wasn't a straight line that... wow I was just upward climb all of that. It was a normal kid and there were lots of times I didn't think about ministry.

I probably shouldn't admit this but my parents will tell you there was a time I said I think I'm either... I think maybe a pastor or a comedian. Wasn't sure which one of those two I should be. I hope that you all find a little bit of the... but more of the pastor side I hope.

And by the time I went to college I was really into the political science vein and I worked for a summer with a political science professor and volunteered on some campaigns for a time and was really knee deep into the political science department. And that is still a part of my life that is a avocation, a sort of hobby and I am interested in those things. But at least for my sense of calling after a couple of years of that and just seeing at least for me and it's an admirable calling but I just saw for me... I don't want to try to sell something.

I want to proclaim what I know God says in his word to be true. And there were some older students at Hope College who pointed me to Jonathan Edwards and my dad had given me a copy of Calvin's Institutes. I didn't think I would ever read but just said go and take them and I still have the copy and his name is Lee and it says Lee Dyeong and

then I just... that's my middle name so I just wrote Kevin Lee Dyeong and now they're mine and I could claim them.

But it was really in between my freshman and sophomore year. So I arrived at Hope College. It's not like a covenant or a Grove City or it's not a conservative Christian school.

There was really kind of an awakening going on at the time and there was a good chapel program and lots of Christians but a lot of what you got in your classes was pretty liberal and by no means would your fellow classmates be Christians. And so I remember talking to three guys on my dorm my freshman year and I was really... there was one guy who was a nominal Christian, one guy who was a hedonist, not the good John Piper kind but the original kind of hedonist who said... he just wanted to have sex. That's what he was living for and another guy who was into crystals and watched Ricky Lake.

True. And they asked me all these sorts of questions. You know the typical questions.

What happened to people who have never heard? How can you believe in hell? What's this thing about predestination? They were just... it was like three on one and I went back and I thought I need to know better what I believe and why I believe it. And there are those two little books by Paul Little, Intervarsity Books, Know What You Believe, Know Why You Believe It. I read through them.

I outlined them. I highlighted them. I read them through twice and learned and then I thought I want to... maybe I can go from 101 to 201.

And so I took those Calvin's Institutes which was a bit of a jump really. But it's no exaggeration to say that that changed my life because I did the math and I saw there were 1500 pages. And I saw, okay, I do five pages a day.

I can miss some days here and there. I can get through this in a year. And so I did that.

Lots that I didn't understand. And then I did it with a newer translation for another year. And just in two consecutive years went through that and that shaped so much of who I am and how I think.

You've been talking about... So send your kids to college with Calvin's Institutes as the lesson. There you go. You've been talking about major influencers in your life.

Do you have a person or two that... You may be answered this already, but in the past has been somebody that you would go to for advice, counsel, wisdom. And is there somebody today that's still part of your life that you can... Anyone living. So I have lots of dead friends.

And so Calvin really cut my teeth on Calvin, the seminary students here know how much

I like. Turretin that I sort of go to, very dense and very distinguished. He's always distinguishing between points.

And so I read through lots of Edwards. I read anything I could get my hands on that had banner of truth on the spine. So Lloyd Jones was certainly a key influence, the famous Welsh preacher from London from the last century.

His preaching and preachers. I sometimes tell young men that one of the signs is not infallible, but one of the signs of maybe a call to ministry. If you read that book and you find your heart saying, this is what I want to do with my life.

And so I remember, I remember the cottage I lived in in college reading that book, eating something that would be embarrassed. I mean, I've always eaten. My poor mom, it's not her fault.

I've always eaten poorly. So I was probably eating pickles and powdered donuts. I wasn't pregnant either.

Sitting there reading Lloyd Jones. So Lloyd Jones would be a huge influence. He's older now.

He's not with the Lord yet, but he's in his 80s. David Wells is one of the reasons I went to Gordon Conwell. His book, No Place for Truth, God in the Wasteland just really shaped how I think about church ministry and cultural context and the role of truth and theology in the life of the church.

So he was a real mentor and I took as many classes as I could from him at Gordon Conwell. And I have lots of people that I continue to speak to. Of course, I love my parents and speak to both of them.

The pastor that I succeeded at in East Lansing, Tom Stark was a kind of mentor in the faith when I was a young man and passing the baton to me when he was there for 36 years. Usually if you're at the founding pastor and you've been there for 36 years, the next guy's an interim and doesn't stay very long. So by God's grace, I was able to be there for 13 years.

And there's a lot of guys, some my age and some older guys. So I would count Mark Deaver and Ligon Duncan and C.J. Mahaney and John Piper, people that have been kind when I have ministry questions or life questions who will talk to me and give me good counsel. Tom Gross and I was a good friend.

Yes. Just one more question of kind of about heart devotional life. Could you describe that for us? What your devotional life is like? You know, how do you work your way through the Bible prayer? It's fasting part of it, just kind of the wide range of things that usually feed our soul.



Yeah, I've done a lot of different ways of going through the Bible. Sometimes slowly, sometimes just blitz through and read as many chapters as you can to get a sense for it. Most often I've done a different reading plans that get through the Bible in a year.

A few years ago, I switched to a plan that does Psalms and Proverbs twice and then gets through the rest of the Bible in two years. So that's been good to slow down and rather than four or five chapters a day, it's three chapters a day. So I do that and make my way through the Bible.

I try to start with a few, five, ten minutes of priming the pump. So I just have in my head a category trying to read either books about the past or books from the past. So often, like I did with Calvin's Institute, there's a good example.

I've tried to keep up similar disciplines like that over the years. So I've made it through really long books or really big systematic theologies or things just by doing the first five or ten minutes and make it through a few pages. Or it might be some classic.

So that's one way to kind of, I don't wake up just feeling like, I'm on fire for the Lord. So I do that and pray. I usually pray and walk because otherwise I get sleepy.

And so when it's cold, yes, I'm a wimpy southerner now. It's 40, it's so cold out. I'll walk on my treadmill upstairs otherwise when I can walk outside and I'm also 45 now.

So I wake up and my back hurts and everything and my knees hurt. I got to walk for a while just to not be achy. So I usually do my prayers like that and try to pray through some different categories or different people on that list.

And then we'll try to round out with a little scripture memory. Though maybe like many of you, some of you are probably better than I am at this. I often find I get to January 1 and I got a great plan for scripture memory that goes to like March.

And then I'm trying to remember all the things that I, all the verses I had memorized and get sort of bogged down. And I've just learned even if you forget the verses, it's not even, it is about remembering them, but more than that scripture memorization is about the discipline of slowing down to just recited. Even just writing out by hand verses can have that same discipline of slowing down.

And then fasting periodically, not often. We do need to ask a question or two about your family. One of your children talked to me today and said you should ask, you know, who's favorite child is.

But I know who told you that. She was convinced that it would be her. I said I'm not sure you want to take that risk.

So we won't do that. But nine children, what do you enjoy doing together as a family?

What possessed you? Well, I could ask that too, yes. What do we do for fun? Yeah, what do you, what do your family like to do together? We survive.

We like to survive. It is with the age range of Ian, who's 19 at NC State, or willing, he's coming home at the end of this week, because he finishes his first year in exams all the way down to Susanna, who's two. I think that's her name.

And we're trying to potty train. So we got one in diapers and one in college. You know, it is a chaotic house.

It's a loud house. I think with that age range, it's hard to ever have all of us doing something at the same time. But we like to laugh.

We like to be outside. We have been known to do relay races around the house. I like to go swimming.

I like to show my kids historical things. They're good sports for that. But, yeah, games.

We watch sports, play sports. The kids are old enough that they can, you know, group off and play some games on their own or try to rope in the parents sometimes. And they'll tell you that dad is always telling them to pick up their shoes.

So that's fun. Did you know that from the get-go that you wanted nine children? No. We, Tricia and I both come from, we're one of four siblings.

And that used to be a large number. And we did talk when we were dating that we both wanted to have kids, and we both wanted to have a big family. I don't know that we gave specifics.

I think we both had in mind, certainly four, probably more than four. So I think since five, we started saying that's probably the last one. And then when we moved here and we had seven, thought that was, but then we, and there's no announcements coming at the end of this.

But then we said, wow, we really should, you know, we should probably have a North Carolina kid. And we'd probably have another one. So it just kept, they just kept coming.

It's how it happened. And, you know, they say you should have one more child than you think you can handle. We had five or six more than we think we can handle.

And some, we're just hoping the aggregate average, you know, that our parenting or sometimes will just cut our loss and some of the, let's just invest in some of these, we still got a chance here. Now we're, we love all of our kids obviously and are thrilled. And it is a lot of work and it's very tiring.

And we often, Tricia and I often say to each other, let's, let's remind ourselves there will

be, I know some of you, the empty nesters will say, you know, getting out the tissues. You enjoy these days. They go so fast.

The years go fast. The days are very long sometimes. But Tricia and I say, let's remember someday when we're empty nesters, although by then someone will be back probably.

Let's remind ourselves, we'll look back and think, how did we do that? And part of it was you don't have the same energy, but we're already finding that. But we'll also say that was as crazy as it was. What a sweet time to have all of that craziness under one roof.

And then there's other blessings that you have to have more time just the two of you and grandkids and all the rest. Oh, you're a rich man. Very, very much.

Yeah. I just got one more hobby question and we'll shift over more ministry kinds of things. You enjoy sports I know.

So did you go out playing sports? What are your favorite teams? What do you enjoy watching today? I grew up being very bad at most sports. And I was I think though safe to say the most athletic person in my family, which is a knock on the rest of the family. But I love playing almost anything.

And I played almost everything. I played soccer and it wasn't any good at that. I did baseball.

I struck out in tee ball. It really happens. Just, you know, it's on the tee and I'm just hitting the plastic part that.

And so I played one year of football in eighth grade and had lots of bruises. And as I say, I realized that while I was on defense because I didn't like being hit, which would be one thing of us on offense, but I was on defense. And that's so I realized I don't you don't want me to hit you and I don't want to hit you.

So we'll just go different ways. I played basketball wasn't great at that. I really liked running.

So running was the one thing I was mildly average at. And realized that with hard work, I could be the worst of the pretty good. And that was better than I was at other sports.

So I've always loved running and I loved I watch almost any sports. I like watching golf. I've played three rounds of golf in my life.

People always say you go golfing. You can't be that. No, I am really I cannot.

The ball does not leave the ground. You know, you take practice swings. I take practice.

I have to pretend it was a practice swing because I'm not hitting the ball. And I look, I don't know. I'll try that again.

So I'm really bad at golf. I'll watch golf. I watch almost anything being from Chicago, born in Chicago.

So my kids ask me now, Dad, why do I like the bears? They're awful. Why did you do this? Why do I like the white socks? Well, born on the south side of Chicago inherited all my dad's team. So the bulls, the black hawks, the white socks, not the cubs, and the bears.

And then being in East Lansing, Michigan State. And, you know, I can cheer for Panthers. They've not been very good.

Happy for them to can cheer on NC State Wolf Pack. They have some of my most precious gifts right now, my son, and \$25,000. So where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

That's right. Good. Okay.

To ministry kinds of things. You love books. You even have a podcast.

Life, books, and everything. How did you develop a love for books? You have a favorite author? You've touched upon a few folks already. Let's start there.

Well, this may be some encouragement to kids, but also to parents. Sometimes people say, Kevin, I bet you were that kid. You couldn't get them outside.

You just were a bookworm. You read through hundreds of books as a kid. Not true.

That was not me. I mean, I was, I did well in school and I could read and I, so I was a good student. But I was never, I was not the kid who just had a passion for reading.

I would rather be playing sports. I'd rather be doing something outside or playing old school Nintendo or something when I was growing up. So I did not learn to love to read until I was in college.

I think by the end of my time in high school, I started to, you know, education is wasted on the young because you're assigned all these great works of literature and great things. And then years later you wish, oh, I wish I had time now to read these things. I didn't appreciate.

But it was when I was in college and I told this story before just a short version in between my freshman and sophomore year of college, I worked with this seminary professor out in the hinterlands of Colorado. No electricity, no indoor plumbing. It was absolutely beautiful, but we had to go into town, charge our batteries, use an outhouse.

It was very primitive, but beautiful. We were working on a national government textbook. It was me, another student, and this single professor.

I don't, probably, want to let you do that today. So out there, I was terribly homesick. I lost all sorts of weight and I didn't have a lot to lose.

And we just had, there was, there was no one. And there was one other student who didn't, he was into playing magic, the card game. Some of you understand what is this.

I had nothing to do. There's no TV, no nothing. And that's how I learned to love to read.

There was nothing else to do. And I worked all day on this national government textbook. And then at night, by Kerasene Lance, I read and I was reading Calvin's Institute.

When we went into town, I found a church history book and I started, I can read these old, I've heard about these people. My parents told me about John Calvin. I can read him for myself and I had started the end of my freshman year to do that.

And I loved to read. And really since then, still to this day, those were the worst three months of my life. I wanted to be home every single day.

And the Lord undoubtedly used that to absolutely change my life that I would love to read. And so since then, any time I have a spare moment on a plane waiting in line. I mean, one of my great fears in life is to be trapped somewhere and not have a book, you know, at an office or in line somewhere or on a plane or in the bathroom or somewhere and not have a book to read.

So I'm just always reading books, love books. And so you never know kids out there. If you don't like them now, you may yet come to be the person who can't get away from books.

Of your own books that you've written. Oh, I read them all the time. That's right.

There you go. Do you have... Which one was maybe the easiest or most enjoyable to write? One that would be most difficult or agonizing to write? Certainly the one I enjoyed the least was the one on homosexuality. I had written so many things.

I'd written a bunch of blog posts on homosexuality and sermons and I thought the book would be... All right, I've written a bunch of stuff. Just get these 10 or 12 things together and there and have chapters. But it didn't work like that.

I needed to rewrite everything. And even doing the research and reading about homosexuality in the Greco-Roman world, that was very, very dark. And I did not like... That's the only book I've worked on that I did not like doing.

You know, one of the ones I loved writing the book, it's not one of the better selling

books, but the good news we almost forgot on the Heidelberg Catechism because I grew up with the Heidelberg Catechism. And so that was a real labor of love to write a devotional commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism. I liked writing the biggest story, Bible story book, story Bible story book Bible.

I never know what it's called. Was fun and difficult because it's 104 chapters and each one is about 500 words and each one has its own sort of narrative arc. So I thought that would be easier and that turned out to be much harder than I thought.

I did that over a few consecutive summers just chipped away at that. But I really like writing. There's lots of authors who like having written.

I do enjoy the craft of writing and thinking about words and reading and even the footnotes and all of that. I just marvel at so many of you who are good at practical things like fixing lawnmowers and cars. My wife hangs up the pictures in the house and does the thing.

I'm the opposite of a handyman and I look at all that and think, oh, that's really, I don't know how to do that. That's too hard to figure out. But for some reason if I think about a book, I think, oh, I want to get to the bottom of that and I want to read and I want to write.

And it's a great privilege that this church continues to allow me to do that with a significant part of my ministry. One of the books that you wrote, Crazy Busy. I think sometimes you're crazy busy.

So what does a week in kind of a ministry week in the life of Kevin DeYoung look like? Yes, I am busy though. Many of you work just as many hours or more. I mean, our best church leaders here will work a full-time job and they'll give their time and volunteer to be on committees and serve in all sorts of ways.

So lots of you are busy with things. But a normal week, if there is a normal week, Monday I will do my podcast in the morning and on the other weeks I'll write an article. So I often write for world or I'll write for some other place.

But that's Monday morning as a podcast or writing an article. Usually in the middle over lunch I'll go on a run and I'll come home and Monday afternoon. I'm starting to look at the sermon, trying to get Nathan some information to plan the service.

I'm looking over stuff for RTS. I've now taught through all the systematic theology classes. I'll teach at RTS.

So it's a lot less work than putting together just staying one week ahead of the students to put together two or three hours of lecture. So when I was doing that it meant some late nights on Monday night, late nights on Tuesday night. I think it's a little bit of

breathing room.

Tuesday is meeting day. So Tuesday is where staff meetings, staff prayer meeting meet with you, meet with Barry, meet with my other direct reports that I have. Have a staff book discussion, have every other week a pastor's lunch.

If I don't have a lunch I'll put in some, a pastor's lunch I'll put in somebody else there. People from, you know, some of you or somebody else on staff who wants to meet with me. So Thursday is, or Tuesday is, it's not unusual to have 11 meetings or something.

Just get all the meetings. And then Tuesday night is often church, ELT or session. Wednesday morning I teach my RTS class.

Come back Wednesday afternoon. There's always emails to do. Maybe chip away at some long term writing projects.

I'm writing sort of a mini systematic theology that I've been trying to do, you know, a thousand words a week and keep progress on that. And Thursday is a half day of meetings in the morning. Meet with pastoral interns maybe.

Have a half hour slot of prayer there where I pray through the membership list. So Barry gives me, you know, a list of maybe 40 members and then a couple of elders, a couple of deacons, couple of missionaries, couple staff people, couple of CDS people and just at least to pray through and see your picture. And some of you don't look the same as your picture does anymore.

None of us do. And then Thursday afternoon is hopefully really buckling down on sermon. Friday is all clear for sermon and Saturday.

I'll just say is ostensibly my day off. I'm not great at that. So do better than I do.

But at least I'm home and, you know, I went to a track meet yesterday and, you know, finding hours here and there to finish up the sermon and get ready for Sunday. This past week I traveled twice so that put everything into a compressed time frame. How do you determine in terms of preaching, that's a big part of your ministry, how do you determine what it is that you want to preach on so often have series running but kind of what's in your thinking as you're looking ahead.

It's not as spiritual maybe as one might hope meaning it's not often that I'm thinking here's what the church really needs right now. If I sense that, you know, there's maybe a little bit of that with the seven churches in Revelation. That's a good series to give a church and just get the different sort of strengths and weaknesses of any church.

But I don't feel like I'm smart enough or discerning enough to know. Here's what the 1500 people at Christ Covenant need right now. So I think more prosaically just going

back and forth between some Old Testament and some New Testament.

Are you in narrative? Are you in poetry? Are you in prophetic books? Are you in epistles? Just trying to balance between Sunday evening and Sunday morning. I think that I think I'm probably, you know, I said this before, I think there's some preachers who are really good at taking the familiar and just giving a great devotional, inspirational application, illustration. I think I'm better at taking the unfamiliar, hence Leviticus or even the parts in Genesis and explaining, ah, I didn't see how this all connected.

So I really like being able to, I think I'm a teacher preacher and I like being able to find those places and those passages that people say, ah, I didn't know how this fit together quite what this meant and now I understand the word more than I used to. Good. I do want to ask one question about clearly reformed because that's a growing, new or growing ministry that's part of your ministry.

And can you just tell the folks about that what it's like, what its mission is in case they're unfamiliar with it? I'm a young.org, kdy.org, I'll go to the same place. Ah, thought of this name, this is a ministry that's been around for about a year now. And ah, clearly reformed is, it has a double meaning, but on the one hand I think who I am and what I do, well that guy's clearly reformed.

But I also hope that it maybe speaks to sort of my bread and butter and that's, I guess if I hear feedback from people often, as I travel other places, ah, often the word clarity comes out. Thank you, you made that clear, I could understand that. So it's making big things clear to people.

So that's the name of it. It's ah, so Barry Peterson who you know is the executive director of that and now he's bringing in some other people to work part time and help with it. And so if it looks very big and impressive, that's because of the work that Barry and Elbert and others have done, ah, not me.

Really, it doesn't take very much of my time because it's really a way to collect at this point all sorts of things that I'm doing in all sorts of disparate areas. And so it's bringing it into one funnel that here you can get conferences and blogs and articles and sermons and over 15, 20 years you can get it all there. So clearly reformed is that website, there's also some initiatives we want to do, like making some explainer videos.

We made one on the doctrine of simplicity, we'd like to do more like that. Clearly reformed is also hosting a conference, maybe some of you have seen this called Corum Deo Pastors Conference. It's going to be right here hosted at Christ Covenant next March during the CDS Spring Break.

And ah, John Piper's coming, Carl Trueman is coming, a whole bunch of other people, HB Charles Jr., so Joel Biki, lots of people. So we expect that that conference which is aimed



at pastors, ah, clearly reformed is working with Christ Covenant obviously to put that on. But I appreciate you asking the question, I didn't tell you to ask the question, but it does give me an opportunity to at least hopefully make clear to folks, clear, ha ha ha.

That absolutely 100%, I'm first of all this local church pastor, that's what I love doing, that's what I wake up thinking about. In fact, I just told Barry and some of the other people working with clearly reformed. I said you're going to have to get the vision and run with it, because if I wake up in the morning and that's the first thing I'm thinking about, then that's not the right thing.

So I love being a local church pastor, the other things I do, even teaching at the seminary, flow out of that, I'm meant to be a compliment to that, but this is my calling, and this is my heartbeat. Great. Let me give you, ah, you got any theological questions? Yes, oh, I want to just shoot a few that, if you can just give a, you know, one and a half minute answer to you, okay? Um, Mars Hill podcast, what could we learn from it as a congregation, it's a church? How many of you listened to that rise and fall of Mars Hill? So, yeah, a number of you, so Mars Hill, there was a Mars Hill in Grand Rapids that Rob L was the pastor of, and that's not this one, this was the Mars Hill in Seattle, where Mark Driscoll was the pastor and grew to be 10,000 people, and then this is about the rise in the fall.

And that was, for a time, it was top 10 in the world or something on iTunes, I mean, it just was a phenomenon, this podcast. I stopped listening, I didn't listen to all of it. At first, I really liked it, and I thought, okay, I don't agree with everything and all the angles here, but I think there's some valuable lessons from the podcast.

The more it went on, it seemed to me to be more slanted, not defending Mars Hill or Driscoll or what happened there. I'd only, you know, I met Mark Driscoll a couple of times and hardly know him and don't know him, but I was concerned by, not the critiques, but by some of the assumptions behind some of the critiques. So, your question, what can you learn? There's certainly things to learn from it about if a pastor becomes unaccountable, if a pastor becomes the sense of entitlement, if there's no one who will stand up to a pastor, if you don't really have shared leadership.

I'd like to think that Presbyterianism helps guard against that, but, you know, Presbyterians can be rotten pastors too. So, there are certainly some leadership lessons and some ways to see some mistakes that they made. And yet, my concern as the podcast went on is sometimes it seemed to be the culprit was Reformed theology or the culprit was Complementarian theology.

The culprit were certain theologies that I don't think, like that were the culprit. And in some of the stories, because though I didn't know Mark Driscoll well, some of the stories intersected with some things that I did have first-hand knowledge of. Some of the things in the gospel coalition, some of the things that happened and some of the ways that

things happened.

Not the point to get into here now, but I, there were some more details and more nuances and some different ways of even understanding some of the history that was told there. So, certainly there are some valuable lessons to learn. I would just say, listen with discernment.

Yeah. Could you share with us if you would recommend us to watch the chosen or not? Oh, do I have to answer that one? I haven't seen but, you know, a few clips as they, as comes up on YouTube or something. I've read a lot about it.

What I've read is that it's very well done. It's well acted. It's well designed and conceived and has sort of the world building framework of popular serialized TV shows that build and that by and large it's, well, I mean, it's presenting, obviously, a sympathetic view of Christ.

So, I understand some of you may watch it and find it personally edifying. I don't direct people to watch it. I am enough of a Presbyterian to have concerns about the second commandment.

And while I don't think it's absolutely wrong that any sort of artistic representation of Jesus, there are, you know, pictures of Jesus in the biggest Bible story book. He's green and it's obviously not a picture of him. I actually think the more realistic portrayals we make of Jesus, the danger it can be because video images are so powerful.

So, it's not that I would have a concern that anyone here is worshiping the actor or venerating the actor, but it does, you know, some of you grew up with that painting of the very tunic-looking Jesus, that the Walter Selman painting of, you know, Jesus, even one of my kids, and why did Jesus have long, blonde curly hair? Likely not. So, we grow up, when we get those images, images are so powerful, we start to see that's what Jesus looks like. And even though these are more culturally attuned and appropriate in the chosen, I'm concerned with that, that if you pray to Jesus and you're thinking of that Jesus portrayal that's been so powerful.

And then the other thing is video comes at us in a way that we don't even realize. Discursive, that is, logical, writing, reasoning can still be deceptive, of course, or still to be discerning, but it comes at us through different sort of faculties. Meaning, when we watch something, every camera angle, every musical score, every close up, it's all communicating something.

It's all getting us to feel something. And in order to be good drama, you have to imagine a lot of things that the text doesn't tell us. And invariably, something written for a textual reading presented in a visual format is taking a lot of liberties with the text, in ways that we don't always realize.

So, I'm not saying go burn your copies of it, but I would say with caution, and personally, I don't direct people to watch the chosen, even though I understand that some people have found it beneficial, I would say that half hour in your Bible would probably even be more beneficial. Just a three more questions for you. Just one's a kind of a broad pastoral one.

But how would you go about counseling someone, and I'm not thinking about counseling setting, but how would you counsel someone who struggles with a besetting sin? So they fight it, they want to overcome it. It just doesn't seem to improve sometimes. A couple of things, I'll try to be brief.

So, one, three things. One, you have to believe that you can make progress in life. That God has given us his spirit, and greater is the one who is in us than he who is in the world.

If we don't believe that progress is possible, if we just have a kind of spiritual failureism, I'll never get any better. It's not possible for me to be holy. I'm just supposed to wallow in being a failure and praise God for my justification.

So, one, you have to believe that God by his Holy Spirit can do more than you ask or imagine. Two, sort of the other side of the coin is to realize that we do have the remaining indwelling sin. And we are never going to make as much progress as we would like.

There is always going to be elements of besetting sin. And then third, maybe most importantly, you could maybe guess those first two, but I've said this before, we have to fight our besetting sins. And this is really channeling a lot of Piper, but with promises, with greater joy.

That is, it's not enough to say stop, stop, stop, don't do it. That's why the Christian life is a fight of faith. You're fighting to believe in something better.

So the example you've heard me give before Matthew 5, 8, blessed are the pure in heart, they shall see God. How do you fight if a besetting sin is in the category of lust or pornography or just second glances? Well, you can just tell yourself, stop, stop, stop. But you need to fight that because Satan in that moment, Satan is promising you.

This is going to make you feel good. And sin does make us feel good for a moment, so you need better promises. So blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.

You fight to believe. Seeing God in this life and in the next life is better than what I want to see over here. I have to believe that.

God means to give me a sight of beauty, of pleasure, of blessing, of joy. And this is a better promise than this false promise. So you have to fight the sin, the pleasure that sin

promises with the real lasting pleasure that God promises.

It's very helpful for us, I think. What is the biggest issue do you see facing the PCA today and if a lot of confidence in the PCA where it's heading by God's grace? I love the PCA and I say to some of my conservative friends who are concerned, and I understand I have concerns too, I say, there is a lot worse places to be in the PCA. There aren't many problems I would trade.

So yes, there are issues, but on the whole I'm bullish on the PCA. I'm not trying to throw my previous denomination under the bus, I met Jesus there, but when people left our church and they went to another town, I would say do not go to our denomination, do not look for a church from our denomination unless you know from one of us that it's good. And I would flip that and say if you go somewhere else, start by looking for a PCA churches.

Yeah, there's some that I'd probably say, and that's maybe not the one I would go to, but I think you start with the default that the PCA churches are good and faithful and the layers of things that we're disputing are important. So I'm encouraged and I'm optimistic about where the PCA is heading. I think our struggles are, you know, this is the 50th anniversary of the PCA.

It's a very young denomination. There are still people alive who are at that first general assembly in December of 1973 at Briarwood in Birmingham. So in a lot of ways we've changed generations.

I wasn't born when the PCA started, but that generation, it's still young enough that what does it look like to pass the baton in ways, it's always a challenge that it's not 1973, and they didn't have everything right in 1973. They were undoubtedly would have been more people wrong on racial issues in southern Presbyterian churches in 1973 than hopefully is the case now. So I think race will continue to be a difficult issue for the PCA.

How do we, I think the PCA has done well to own and acknowledge sins in the past without going down some critical race theory path that just makes that the rubric by which we analyze everyone and everything all the time. So I think that that issue is not going to go away because that's an American issue that's almost always probably going to be with us and certainly from a southern Presbyterian denomination will be with us. I think the issues almost always come back to the authority of scripture in different ways.

It's not so much that you have people who will say, well the scriptures aren't an errand. You know, those people I trust aren't going to get ordained in the PCA if they say that. But it gets more subtle than that.

Okay, the Bible's authority, yes, the Bible's all true, but can we really trust the Bible? Or are there so many interpretations that we can't really be clear on what the Bible says?

Or what if this person who's associated with the wrong things, they say it, maybe we shouldn't listen to it? Or what if this person has claimed to have had a bad experience with this sort of teaching, then maybe this teaching is suspect. And so I do have fear that some places were pulling away from actually doing due diligence to say what does the text say rather than being distracted by, well who said it? Where did they say it? Why did they say it? I don't trust their motives for saying it. Look at how bad things came from them saying it, and we're not actually coming back and saying yes, but what does the Bible say about this? I think that's going to be an issue in the 10, 20 years ahead.

Okay. Last question. If, how would you like to see Christ covenant different three years from now? If there's a place where we could grow or you kind of have a vision for something out there, what might that look like? I feel like I'm not great on some of the, I feel like the vision question, I think I do better with the sort of people I want us to be, the sort of spirit, the sort of things we want to learn.

Christ covenant is such a big place that for better or worse, some people like that senior pastor doesn't just have a specific road map. Other people I think would really welcome, here's the one, two, three things we're going to do. So that's just an apology for the bad answer I'm going to give as our last answer.

You know, I said at our leaders meeting last year, a few different priorities that I think. So one, certainly we have a lot of ways to continue to grow in outreach and evangelism. And that's, you know, when you, see, you have Presbyterian, you have a largely well educated, you have a pastor who likes to think about a lot of theological stuff and teach stuff.

You have people who have a very mature congregation, many of whom have been Christians for a long time. All of those things are great and all of those things make outreach and evangelism more difficult. So it may never be the very best thing that we are as a congregation, but we do want to get better at it and we don't want to use that as an excuse.

So just thinking and Eric's bringing lots of energy and enthusiasm and ideas that will really help us, but just thinking about, in keeping with your own personality, your own calling, your vocation, how do we think about others and think about bringing Jesus to other people? So I hope we grow in that community. I think we all are, since that there's a lot of good community that happens here. People love each other, care for each other, and also since it's a really big place.

And the new model, some of you it's all you've had, but some of you have been around a while, the new model that we went to with the Sunday school and the different offerings that you can go to and the pastoral communities with elders. There's a lot of strengths with that. And I know that some of you feel the loss of, oh, it was really nice when I came on Sunday and it was the 30 and 40 year olds or it was my demographic and these were,

so I think we're still trying to figure out how to make up for some of that middle space.

I forget if Derek or one of the pastors said this in one of our meetings, but you got big church and you got small groups and then, but there's sort of the middle. I got these 12 or 15 people in my small group. Well, what's the middle, 50s or hundreds or meals? So I think I'd love to see us grow in that way.

And then one of the things that we say here is that we're a resource church and that's been language ever since the beginning. Harry Reader will tell you that. It sounds sort of like we're full of ourselves.

I don't mean it that way, but the PCA came to Harry and said plant a church and he passed it. He passed through this little church that Bernie and Pat Lawrence were a part of that was barely hanging on and became the pastor there and said plant a church to plant a presbytery, be the flagship church in Charlotte, be a resource church. And that's a God's story and by his grace that's what Christ Covenant has become and to whom much is given, much is required.

We have so much. We got this facility. We got a school.

We have 70 acres. You got to realize, especially people who come from overseas, but almost from anywhere, they just can't believe this place. I don't just mean the physical place, so that's part of it.

But they can't believe that there's this many new members. They can't believe that there's as many people on a Sunday evening. You've heard me say before, there are more presbyterians in this church on Sunday than in all of England.

That's not an exaggeration. So we have amazing pastors who are doing so many things better than I do. We got amazing women's ministry, children's ministry, elders, deacons.

We have tons of amazing people and resources and budget and missions. So we don't apologize for that. And we don't have to, you know, flagulate and safe shame on us for having a nice thing or no.

But how can we always be thinking? What do we have to give others? How do we serve others? How do we think for those who aren't here yet? How do we conceive of ministry and life for people who haven't come here? Because at some point you weren't here, most of you. But you are here. So how do we make space, not just physical space, but emotional space, relational space.

It's very easy to think, I got my 10 friends here, I'm all set. Thank you. Keep preaching some good sermons.

It's good. Nathan, you got the music coming, great. But we need to think bigger than

that and more than that.

Great. Let's thank Kevin for sharing himself. Let me close us in prayer and then following that we'll stand and end with the doxology.

So let's pray together. Father, we praise you for just the opportunity to hear from our pastor tonight. We thank you Lord for the gifts that you've given to him and how we are so deeply blessed by his ministry to us.

We do thank you as he ended tonight, just reminding us of all the blessings that we have of not only the blessing of our senior pastor, but many staff members, a wonderful facility, just resources beyond compare. And we pray, God, that you would find us faithful. And so we pray, God, that we be loved by your spirit, by your word, and faithfully proclaim the gospel to our community, and to those that come.

We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Thanks for listening.

Hopefully there was something in there that might be helpful or edifying and do stick around that in the next couple of weeks. We'll be recording and then releasing our first episode for the fall. And after that, it should be a regular cadence of about every other week here on Life and Books and everything.

So until next time, glorify God, enjoy him forever, and read a good book. Thank you.