

2018 Reads List

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Happy New Year to all. Here is an abbreviated reads list for 2018.

!!! The Uninvited Companion: God's Shaping us in His Love through Life's Adversities, Kindle Edition will be available for free at Amazon.com January 1-5, 2019.

Please pass this announcement and reads list on to whomever you wish. Thanks for helping me get the word out.

Please send me titles you benefited from and/or enjoyed recently. I am always on the hunt for good reads. Thanks!

Scott

The Map Is Not the Journey: Faith Renewed While Hiking the Alps Richard Dahlstrom

I really enjoyed reading this book early in 2018. I plan to revisit it later in 2019. Dahlstrom is a pastor in the Pacific Northwest of the US. He and his wife took a year long sabbatical with a good chunk of it spent hiking the Alps. This book is about lessons learned along the way. Good reflections to be considered. I recommend this book for all who resist the idea of sabbatical and for those who want a fresh look at life.

The Father, Son and the Spirit: The Trinity and John's Gospel Andreas J. Kostenberger and Scott R. Swain. This is part of the New Studies in Biblical Theologies series. It is a deeper dive into the topic of the Trinity described in John's gospel. Very worth your while. I find Kostenberger's works on John's writings thorough and enlivening.

Mansions of the Heart: Exploring the Seven Stages of Spiritual Growth by Thomas Ashbrook

I read this book as a requirement for completion of my second year of spiritual direction training. I went into the book very hesitant (i.e. grumbling that I had to read it). By chapter two I was all in. Ashbrook has one of the clearest, more trinitarian definitions of spiritual formation I've yet found. From that grounding he handles Teresa Avila's material superbly. I have been very intrigued by the topic of stages of faith development and implications of spiritual growth for later in life. Ashbrook provides a tremendous guide book (Critical Journey by Guelich and Hagberg is another fine resource). I highly recommend Ashbrook's book as it focus' on the relational elements of later stages of walking with God. As Ashbrook states, and I agree, the typical church only knows how to guide people to the third mansion/stage. The third stage/mansion is the stage of productivity - when we are busy for God - and usually finding a false identity in all that activity. Is that all there is in life with God? Absolutely not, this is only stage 3 after all!

Rest: Why you Get More Done When you Work Less Alex Soojung-Kim Pang

It may simply have been the timing of when I read this book, but I really benefited from it. I found it stimulating and thought provoking. As far as I can tell, the author is not a Jesus-follower so this book is devoid of the typical evangelical lingo and perspective, which I actually found refreshing. My opinion is that Pang misses the mark a bit in the end - the purpose of rest is not merely utilitarian for the sake of getting more stuff done, rather it is to make space for deeper communion with God and relationship with others, and of course we will do better work too. That being said, this is one of my recommended reads for the year. Just make sure you can read it leisurely.....

Essentialism: The Discipline Pursuit of Less Greg McKeown

The book is an aid to focusing on the most important areas of life and work towards greater impact. McKeown has some very engaging questions, some of which I am still pondering. I read this right after reading Pang's *Rest* and so there was obviously a little comparison going. This book felt not as well conceived, a little rough in the flow, not as engaging. On the other hand, I have friends who were deeply effected by this book - so I would give this a very close look if this topic intrigues you.

What Do You Really, Really Want?: Discovering What Matters Most And Taking Action To Achieve Your Important Goals Kevin Stebbings

Seeing a theme here? I find that the older I get the more I want to and need to focus on key areas of life contribution. Early years of adulthood are for casting the net wide and finding your place. Later years are for focusing so as to have the greatest influence. Stebbings is a life coach in Keith Webb's CRM network. This book is brilliant in that it portrays in narrative form what a skilled life coach will do for you. But that is merely an aside in the book. The questions this coach asks and the clarity the coachees gain along the way are likely questions you are asking too. Well worth the time as you might be struggling with focus, saying "no", email avalanche, physical and relational well-being - you know, the life stuff where tend to get frustrated in life. I gained some great ideas along the way.

The Sacred Slow: Holy Departure from Fast Faith Alicia Britt Chole

Chole is a spiritual director, speaker and retreat facilitator. This book outlines a series of guided sessions she leads others through. Chole often has great questions to ponder. I found her study on the word "listen" fascinating (chapter 7). This book could be a help if you find yourself stuck in areas she addresses - such as your image of God.

The Checklist Manifesto: How to Get Things Right Atul Gawande

A BI colleague enthusiastically told me of Gwande's writings. I grabbed this book and devoured it - fascinating. I have in turn enthusiastically told others and have received some side-ways looks of skepticism (as in "you are a geek" type of looks). Gwande is an MD. He has seen the areas of his profession that can be done better, reducing unnecessary infection and other human error in the surgery room. So he wondered if what the FAA does for pilots (quick, clear, efficient check lists) would work in his medical arena. I found his stories captivating and his findings worth listening to as he argues for

how it can impact all industries. This is a well written book. I plan to read some of his other writings.

Sidney and Norman: A Tale of Two Pigs Phil Vischer

Phil Vischer of Veggie Tales fame wrote this delightful, fun children's book about two pigs - one self-assured and pretentious, the other self-doubting and afraid. One day they both are called to God's "office." What happens next?

Saint Athanasius: The Father of Orthodoxy F. A. Forbes

Fascinating little read on this key church father whose influence remains and a glimpse into the dynamics of the church at that time (297-373 AD).

Venice: A New History Thomas F. Madden

I received this as a gift. Madden is a great writer. Though this book is on the entire history of Venice (I had no idea how large of an empire it was in the region), it really is a regional history. Engaging read. Madden has also written extensively on the history of Christian Crusades.

The Natural History of the Long Expedition to the Rocky Mountains (1819-1820)

Howard Ensign Evans This is about the Stephen Long expedition to Colorado. It was fun to read about places I know well along the eastern Plains and front range of CO long before there were any established communities besides Native Americans.

Tip of the Iceberg: My 3,000-Mile Journey Around Wild Alaska, the Last Great American Frontier Mark Adams The author follows the Harriman exposition of 1899 that included Merriman (co-founder of NGO) and John Muir. Adams has written a number of very popular travel books. This is a fun look into the peculiar world of Alaska, and the time in history around Muir and others.

If you have not yet read these titles I recommended in years past, I still HIGHLY RECOMMEND them. I spent chunks of time rereading these books this year:

- Formed for God's Glory Kyle Strobel
- Delighting in the Trinity Michael Reeves
- Called to Be Saints Gordon T Smith
- The Spirituality of Wine Gisela H.. Kreglinger