

Summer Reading For Us All!

Many years ago I challenged the teens of our church to read at least three great books during the summer. Then by the following summer, our elementary age kids caught the fever and began to devour books with an avaricious appetite. I would like to remind our college and career, young adults, middle aged and above to keep reading! C.S. Lewis said, "No book is really worth reading at the age of ten which is not equally (and often more) worth reading at the age of fifty and beyond." Research has shown that reading can work on the brain to help deter the affects of Alzheimer's disease. The brain is a muscle, therefore to prevent atrophy, we must exercise it. What better way to exercise it than to read? Character is formed in the early years of our life. What better way to reinforce the proper attitudes than to read classics, especially those reads that lift up our Lord and wholesomeness? Robert Pitman said, "It is the books we read before middle life that do most to mold our character and influences our lives."

Vartan Gregorian said, "The collaboration between the book and the reader is intimate, private. We must not forget that pleasure, discretion, silence, and creative solitude are the primary characteristics of a life of reading, its most tangible justification and most immediate reward. Solitude may appear now to be an unaffordable luxury, yet any book creates for the reader a place elsewhere. A person reading is a person suspended between the immediate and the timeless. This suspension serves a purpose that has little to do with escaping from the real world, the sin avid readers are most commonly accused of." As you read this summer may you escape the screaming demands of the nonconsequential and delve into timeless, transforming truth. Books have the power to transport, increase our creativity, and connect us to the wealth of human experience. Therefore:

1. Be transported.

Emily Dickinson likened reading to a frigate (sailing ship) that had the ability to take even the poorest of us to other places: "There is no frigate like a book, to take us lands away, nor any coursers like a page of prancing poetry. This traverse may the poorest take without oppress of toll- how frugal is the chariot that bears the human soul."

You need no expensive fare, just a library card or a few well-spent dollars at your local bookstore. I wonder if Paul's key that could unlock his prison door was a good book, because in the last days of his life he requested, "*The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments*" (II Timothy 4:13).

2. Increase your creativity.

Clifton Fadiman said, "When you read a classic you do not see more in the book than you did before; you see more of you than was there before." A truly good book has the ability to bring out the real you and turn on those creative juices. "*He that walketh with wise men shall be wise...*" (Proverbs 13:20).

3. Tap the wealth of human experience.

The Puritan, Thomas Brooks said, "Books may preach when the author cannot, when the author may not, when the author dares not, yea, and which is more, when the author is not." Rene' Descartes said, "The reading of all good books is like a conversation with the finest men of past centuries." Italo Calvina said, "A classic is a book that has never finished saying what it has to say." So, allow me to encourage you to read what great books, even the ancient books are still saying to us today.

Reading will give answers to important life questions. Victor Hugo, who wrote Les Miserables said, "It is from books that men derive consolation in the troubles of life." Reading provides comfort in knowing others have gone through similar experiences we have and survived and often conquered. One reason Ezekiel was a great prophet is because he placed himself into the skin of the people to whom he was writing: "*...and I sat where they sat...*" (Ezekiel 3:15). So, pick up a book and "sit where they sat."

- Pastor Pope -

[Back to Pastor's Word](#)