

Read Any Good Books? by Sinclair B. Ferguson, The Banner of Truth Trust, Carlisle, PA: 1992 (5 Quotes selected by Doug Nichols)

1. Renewing the Mind Essential.

The Christian faith is a faith of the mind. Faith is not a mindless activity; it involves understanding the gospel. Not that it requires a high IQ in order to be a Christian, but the *renewing* of the mind (Rom. 12:1-2) is essential for the transformation of your life. (page 3)

2. Faith Is Related to Reading God's Word.

The Christian faith involves knowing God. In its very nature it is a faith that is related to reading, understanding and obeying God's Word. It is inevitable that active Christians have often been prolific readers, and frequently prolific writers. (page 3)

3. Reading Exposes Us to the Church Worldwide.

By reading we expose ourselves to the ministry that Jesus Christ has given to the whole church. Paul's principle (expounded in Ephesians chapter 4) is that the ascended Christ gives a variety of gifts to the church. He thus displays His own glory in His people, both in their character and lifestyle. (page 5)

4. Reading Helps Us to Grow in the Gospel.

When, in the mid-seventeenth century the Westminster Divines wrote about the necessary characteristics of preaching, they emphasized that the listeners should be able to see how the teaching in the sermon came specifically from the text which was being expounded. We need to be able to do that too, so that our faith may be grounded in the Word of God and not in the word of man. In this way we will also be able to say to others, "Come and look at what Scripture says."

The most helpful Christian writers and the best theologians will always be those who work with the text of Scripture and faithfully expound it. Reading a balance of biblical teaching and systematic exposition we will grow in our understanding of the gospel and develop a biblical spirit as well as a biblical mind. (page 12)

5. Read Books about Church History.

We should also read...books about the important events and periods in history of the church; books that cover the whole history of the church in some kind of overview fashion. Why are books on church history so helpful? Because we all have the rather perverse inclination to assume that we are the centre of the world and that our style of Christian thinking and living is identical with the best in every age of the church! But when we read church history we discover that we are making the same mistakes as our

forefathers; or perhaps making theological and practical mistakes they avoided! (page 13)