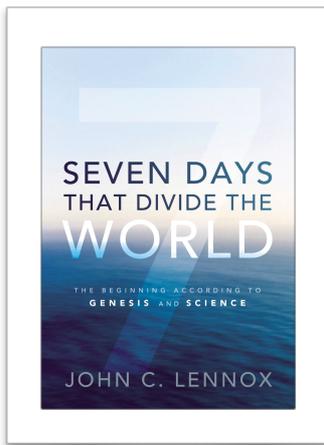


## Time for some Summer reading?

With the long warm months ahead, (we hope), and Wimbledon sadly off the cards, have you considered getting stuck into a good Christian book that encourages, challenges and edifies you? I've asked a few folk to recommend a book for this summer and each has written a review to give you a taster. You'll find information for where to purchase the books from, or alternatively if you're having having trouble please do speak to Anne Kavanagh. May God bless our summer reading!

Aëlla

### 1. **Seven days that Divide the World** - John Lennox, recommended by Lily Cater.



'Seven Days that Divide the World' is a brilliant book that explores the relationship between the story of Genesis and the modern, scientific view of creation. We are led to believe the scientific worldview that the Earth is 4.5 billion years old, but if we, as Christians, believe this does that mean we are denying the authority of Scripture? Can I trust both evolutionary science and Genesis? And how should we interpret the six days in which the Bible says Earth was created in?

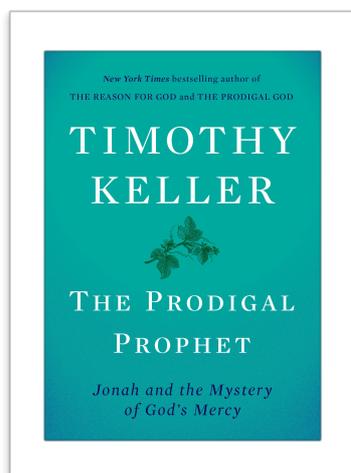
John Lennox answers these fundamental questions with thorough explorations of Scripture, modern world views and relatable examples from history. By presenting an accessible and profoundly interesting read, Lennox offers us simple but faithful interpretations of Genesis that suggests that Christians can heed modern scientific knowledge whilst still staying loyal to the Bible. But he moves on from a simple response to the controversy and develops his works to insist that Genesis isn't supposed to be a scientific textbook; it teaches us far more about God's intention for his wonderful creation than it does of the simple matter of the age of the Earth. 'Seven Days that Divide the World' is an engaging insight to a scientifically savvy, theologically astute but -most importantly- scripturally faithful interpretation of Genesis.

*Available from,*

Amazon UK

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/SEVEN-DAYS-THAT-DIVIDE-WORLD/dp/0310494605>

## 2. The Prodigal Prophet - Tim Keller, recommended by Bernice Watts



I'd like to recommend a book by Timothy Keller called 'The prodigal prophet: Jonah and the mystery of God's mercy'. I like Tim Keller's gentle style of writing in other books; easy to follow, engaging and thought provoking, and I was curious to see what angle he would put on this famous story about Jonah.

It is a remarkable book. Most of us are familiar with the basic events around Jonah's rebellion, the ship caught in a storm, the big fish and the tree under which Jonah later sits, waits and watches what would happen to the people of Nineveh.

In this book, Keller delves deep into the heart of Jonah and draws truths out that I had not noticed before and that was a total eye opener to me. What is God trying to say to Jonah? What is his response? How does it point to Jesus? What can we learn from it? And why does the story about Jonah end with such a cliffhanger?

Nineveh was part of Assyria, one of the cruellest and most violent empire of its time. Even so, God showed mercy to them. He said that the Ninevites did not 'know their right hand from their left', i.e. they were lost in a spiritual fog. He challenged Jonah to show compassion on a city that was a threat to his people. This turned out to be a painful and uncomfortable experience for Jonah. Keller says that if our compassion is going to resemble God's, we need to abandon our cosy world, step out of our comfort zone and show that same love and compassion to 'others'. Keller also deals with contemporary issues; cultural exclusions, racism, nationalism. It explains how our Christian identity is received, not achieved.

This is a great book to read this summer! It isn't too heavy and the language flows easily. Tim Keller provides a deeper understanding of a familiar Bible story and you will be amazed when you read it.

*Available from,*

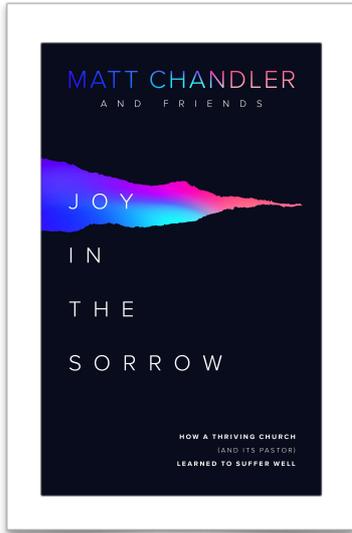
10 of Those

<https://www.10ofthose.com/uk/products?q=the+prodigal+prophet>

The Good Book Company

<https://www.thegoodbook.co.uk/the-prodigal-prophet>

### 3. Joy in the sorrow - How a Thriving Church (and its Pastor) Learned to Suffer Well - Matt Chandler and friends, recommended by Anne Kavanagh



For last October's special guest service on the topic of 'Pain', there were some new books on the church bookstall. Leafing through the first few pages of this one I was pleased to find it was immediately accessible and engaging – no complicated words or deeply complex theological arguments, but stories about real people and real lives.

In the opening chapter, Matt Chandler describes the pain of watching a family suffer the loss of a loved one, and his decision to delve deep into learning about how to serve those suffering. The chapter closes with the moment when he suddenly becomes a sufferer himself.

Subsequent chapters are written by members of his church who share their own experiences of different kinds of suffering. What stands out for me is the honesty of people in recognising their own weaknesses and failings, but also their awareness of the overwhelming love and grace of God in meeting them and sustaining them through their trials; these they attribute to the power of God's word and the faithful prayers and support of their church family. Above all, each chapter bears testimony to God's faithfulness in nurturing them through their trials and afflictions, conveying a powerful sense of joy in their sorrow. The book is punctuated with updates on Matt's own journey through ongoing recovery and Matt concludes the book urging us all to 'run to Him' who accomplishes His good work in our lives.

Far from being a depressing read, I found each story spoke of growth in each authors' walk with God; hope borne out of new understandings of God's walk with us, even through the valley of the shadow of death; and how he surrounds us with fellow Christians to accompany us through dark days. When I first read this book, bizarrely I didn't make any connection to my own situation. At that time, my husband Mick had just undergone major surgery for cancer with the prospect of chemotherapy to follow. I had more time than usual to myself, so read the book unusually quickly (for me). It's only now looking back, that I realise how the stories had such a positive impact on me and kept my spirits up through the past nine months of Mick's recovery. I know there will be times of suffering ahead, but I also know that in the words of an old hymn 'He will hold me fast'.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.hymnal.net/en/hymn/h/577>

*Available from*

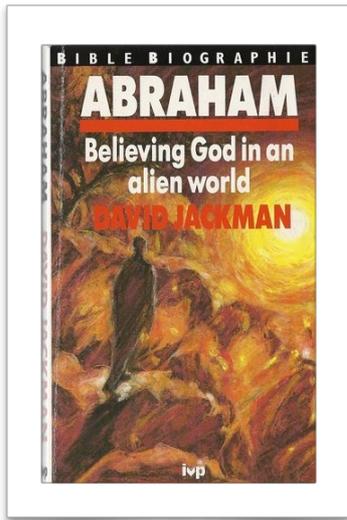
The Good Book Company

<https://www.thegoodbook.co.uk/joy-in-the-sorrow-1>

Amazon UK

[https://www.amazon.co.uk/Joy-Sorrow-Thriving-Church-Learned/dp/1784983829/ref=tmm\\_pap\\_swatch\\_0?\\_encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr=](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Joy-Sorrow-Thriving-Church-Learned/dp/1784983829/ref=tmm_pap_swatch_0?_encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr=)

#### 4. Abraham - Believing God in an alien world - David Jackman, recommended by Aëlla Gage



Now I confess this is a bit of a golden oldie, but if you can get a copy (see below) you'll find it is most definitely golden! The back cover reads

*'If anyone committed himself to believing the bare words of God, it was Abraham. When God said 'Go', he went. His pilgrim faith seems daunting in its challenge. Yet there is something approachable and ordinary about him. His progress, like ours, reveals failure and inconsistency, weakness and sin. But God shaped Abraham into the person he had chosen him to be - someone who believed God in an alien world.'*

The New Testament encourages us to see Abraham as the great founding example of faith. God promised to bless an ageing, nomadic, childless man and his wife with a land, countless descendants and through his family, to bless all nations on earth! Abraham was on journey learning to trust God even though his circumstances seemed to deny God's promises could ever come true. How does this encourage us? Wonderfully God is faithful and his promises were fulfilled, ultimately in our Lord Jesus Christ. So as we trust in Jesus, like Abraham, we are called to a life of faith, trusting God's promises, despite our circumstances. We have much to learn from Abraham.

What I love about this book is Jackman's slow paced, penetrating insight into the Genesis 11-22 storyline coupled with challenging and encouraging pastoral reflection. It really is a book you could use as part of your daily Bible reading and would be a huge encouragement! Everyday I found pots of pure gold; The sheer grace of God who calls, dealing with fear, learning from sinful choices, patience when God seems silent, trusting that God will deliver in God's way, not our way...this is terrific stuff for building a maturing faith and I encourage you to try and get a copy and be blessed by it!

*Hopefully available from*

Amazon uk

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Abraham-Believing-Alien-World-biographies/dp/0851104983>

World of Books

<https://www.worldofbooks.com/en-gb/books/david-jackman/abraham/GOR003198360>

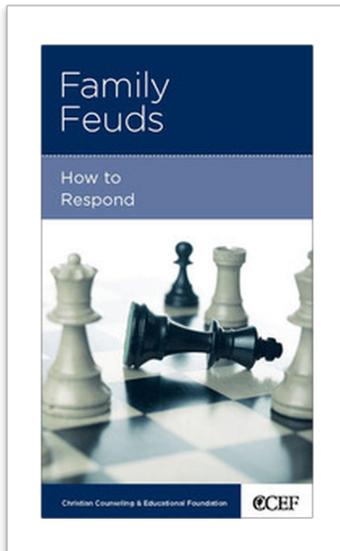
Ebay UK

<https://www.ebay.co.uk/i/383114754424?chn=ps>

Abe Books

[https://www.abebooks.co.uk/book-search/author/DAVID-JACKMAN?cm\\_sp=brcr-\\_-bdp-\\_-author](https://www.abebooks.co.uk/book-search/author/DAVID-JACKMAN?cm_sp=brcr-_-bdp-_-author)

## 5. Family Feuds - How to Respond - Timothy S.Lane recommended by Aëlla Gage



One additional recommendation! A short but helpful *booklet* thinking about how to respond as a Christian to challenging family relationships. Lane begins,

*'Do you dread family get togethers and vacations? Do you often regret the way you talk and act around your family? Do you avoid your family? Maybe some of these words sound familiar to you:*

*"I'm a grown woman, but I act like a child around my family and bicker with everyone."*

*"I know it shouldn't bother me, but my parents always favour my brother over me."*

The aim of the booklet is to encourage and challenge Christians to live with God at the centre of family relationships; not allowing our identity and significance to be defined by family but by our new life in Christ. Not allowing anger, hurt or bitterness to dictate relationships but by Christ's cross to live lives of humble forgiveness and love shaped by God's mercy. This little booklet doesn't say everything, but it's a helpful starting point. Its call to change is rooted in the gospel of grace and is full of practical steps and pastoral intelligence. A great reminder of the God who transforms his people and calls us to show the gospel of His grace in the hardest of places, including family feuds.

*Available from*

10 of Those

<https://www.10ofthose.com/uk/products/8192/family-feuds>

Amazon UK

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Family-Feuds-Respond-Timothy-Lane/dp/1934885371>