

### Case for Christ (Lee Strobel)

Lee Strobel was an investigative reporter for the Chicago Times and an atheist. But as he applied his journalism skills to the question of Christianity's claims about Jesus and the Gospel, he found compelling evidence that opened a door through which the Holy Spirit created faith. In Case for Christ, Strobel provides a comprehensive defense that refutes arguments against the divinity of Jesus. After reading the book, you will have a much firmer understanding of what we believe about Jesus and a greater ability to defend and explain those beliefs.

### The Circle Trilogy – Book One: Black (Ted Dekker)

I (Pastor Mike) always describe this novel as a combination of The Chronicles of Narnia and the Matrix – though I have seen neither of those two movies. It is not hard at all to pick up on the spiritual themes in these books. Evil, grace, forgiveness, baptism, love, angels and demons, the word of God and the power of God. If you are looking for a quick read to get lost in The Circle trilogy will help open your eyes to biblical images.

### The Circle Trilogy – Book Two: Red (Ted Dekker)

See above

### The Circle Trilogy – Book Three: White (Ted Dekker)

See above

### Counterfeit Gods (Tim Keller)

Pastor Tim Keller serves a large Presbyterian in New York City. In Counterfeit Gods, Keller reveals the heart's tendency to put something besides God at the center of our lives and identifies the trap of many of today's most common idols like success, money, children, and true love. Keller also demonstrates how these counterfeit gods cannot simply be removed, they must be replaced by something more satisfying and complete: Jesus. Reading the book will help you see the areas of your life (and our culture) where something besides God is the dominant influence while also proclaiming the Gospel to call you back to God.

### The Narrow Road (Brother Andrew)

This book will amaze you with the courage of a missionary to take the Gospel into some of the most dangerous places on earth. You can't read this book and not be challenged by the potential power of prayer. The book also includes countless profiles of persecution around the world and the faithful perseverance of many brothers and sisters in Christ in the midst of that persecution. The first person I (Pastor Mike) gave this book to will soon leave for Indonesia with his wife and two children to live and work and look for opportunities to share the truth about Jesus in a country where Islam is the dominant religious belief.

### Passion and Purity (Elisabeth Elliot)

Without a doubt, every mother should read this book with their teenage daughter. The autobiography follows Elisabeth as her relationship develops with acquaintance, friend, fiancée, and husband. The back cover emphasizes these themes: loving passionately while remaining sexually pure, whether or not to marry and who is the right one, the man's and woman's role in relationships, putting God's desires ahead of personal desires, and how far is too far. An easy way to have difficult, yet extremely important, conversations and a wonderful resource that helps single people and married people alike bring faith in God and obedience to God into their relationships. The story of Jim and Elisabeth is amazing in itself and the applications are endless!

### Prodigal God (Tim Keller)

Pastor Tim Keller provides a quick, but profound application of the well-known story of the "prodigal" son from Luke Chapter 15. Keller does a wonderful job of highlighting the beauty of the Gospel by walking us through the two opposite extremes of two sons who are both lost to their father. Prodigal God helps pull us back from absolute freedom/licentiousness on one side and angry resentment/legalism on the other side to see the love of a Father who is willing to give up everything to restore a broken relationship with His children.

### Unplanned (Abby Johnson)

Another autobiography, Unplanned follows a Planned Parenthood employee and leader as she leaves her position and becomes an advocate for life-affirming decisions and organizations. The story is told on a personal level while taking you behind the scenes of the controversy and debate surrounding life vs rights issues. As author Abby Johnson struggles with the ugly realities of abortion, she also has to address her own past and allow God's grace to accomplish its work in her before she can begin to extend it out to others.

### What They Need to Hear (Klemet Preus)

In a series of letters to his dying father-in-law, LCMS Pastor Klemet Preus does a great job of explaining the truths of our Lutheran faith. What They Need to Hear will walk you through what we believe in a very conversational manner while also modeling (and providing the content) for how we can share our faith with family and friends.