

Young Calvinists “Talking Points” - June 22, 2013  
“Are You a Reformed Reader?”

A. Introduction

- a. **Thanks for the opportunity** to speak to you about a subject dear to my heart - books & reading!
  - i. I have a position that allows me to pursue this passion - librarian at the PR Seminary. “SB” book review rubric - “Bring the Books”
  - ii. And a blog: WordPress - “cjts3rs”
- b. **My purpose** tonight is simple: encourage & motivate you to be greater and better readers.
  - i. **NOT** to embarrass anyone or make them look stupid if they are not readers or struggle with reading.
  - ii. **NOT** to advance myself and make myself look smart b/c I love reading.
  - iii. **BUT** to help you become good readers - **Reformed readers!**
- c. I want to start with a **survey/questionnaire** - a few questions, etc. to help guide us (separate sheet).
- d. **Additional questions:** does Bible talk about books/reading (Eccles.12:12; Acts 19:19; 2 Tim.4:13)? Why does God care if we read? What distractions/hindrances to reading do we experience? Who should read more - young men or young women? Why?

B. 1st, let’s talk about **WHAT A REFORMED READER IS - basic principles** (a theology of reading - T.Reinke book *Lit! A Christian Guide to Reading*).

- a. Start with your own **input from the survey** - What comes to mind when I say “Reformed reader”? How does one become a Reformed reader?
- b. Based on these comments, let’s list a few things about what makes one a Reformed reader (Yg.Calvinist):
  - i. **Grace!** God’s sovereign, saving grace! Unbelievers read too, but grace changes your heart & life (conversion). Delivers us from sin, a heart & mindset set against God, Christ; from the desire to fill our minds with spiritual trash, etc. Gives us the ability to read properly - **Reinke, p.33**
  - ii. The **Word of God** - the Bible. “Reformed” means reformed according to the Word of God! The **standard** by which we do everything, including reading. Forms our minds, desires, etc. **Reinke, p.26**

- iii. **Christ** - all we do is from Him, for Him, to Him! To imitate Him, to look to Him, to pursue Him, to please Him in all our reading. \*Col.2:8-10

C. 2nd, let's talk about **what this means specifically for our reading**. Reformed readers read a certain way & read certain things.

a. Reformed readers **read the Word of God!** That's the **priority**. Nothing more important!

- i. How many of us are doing this? **Daily devotions**, with family and personally?
- ii. Give a passage from Scripture that teaches this - **\*Ps.119:9ff.**

b. Reformed readers use the Word of God to **discern!**

i. Learn to **apply Scripture** to our reading, both in terms of **what** we read & **how** we read.

- 1. The **antithesis** - reject & accept, approve & disapprove!
- 2. \*Reinke, p.35 & \*1 **Thess.5:21-22 & Eph.5:1-14**

ii. Let's talk about **WHAT** we should be reading.

- 1. What are books/types of lit we should **reject**? Fiction/novels? All secular stuff? Romance? Content with violence, sex, cursing? History? What about fantasy lit, science fiction, etc.? H.Potter? Hunger Games? Magazines - sports, etc.?
- 2. Does **common grace** enable us to read secular lit? If not, what then? God's creation of man, **providential gifts** He gives.
- 3. Is there a place for reading for pleasure? entertainment?  
**\*A.Jacobs new book: *The Pleasures of Reading.***
- 4. What type of lit should we **approve & pursue**? **Christian lit** - what types? fiction? Narnia? theology? practical? what kind?

c. Reformed readers read to **grow spiritually!** Read books/magazines/lit that **edify**, build us up in our faith and walk with Christ.

i. **Read narrowly!**

- 1. Start within **our own circle** of influence & teaching: RFPA books, "SB", "BL", pamphlets. How many of you do?
- 2. Branch out to other Reformed lit - theology, Chr.living, church history. Lots available!

ii. **Read widely!**

1. Go further outside our circle - read **broader Chr. lit.** - church history, classics, doctrine - evangelical, even things contrary to our faith.
2. Read in **areas that interest you**, where you “are at” in your Christian life (needs) - single, marriage, family, etc.

D. Next, let’s talk about some things we can do to **IMPROVE** our reading.

- a. **Make time**-find time in your schedule.
- b. **Limit time** in other areas: TV, video games, sports, leisure, etc.
- c. **Start slow & easy** - don’t take on too much too soon. Then **build up!**
- d. **Start a book list** of things you want to read. **To help guide:** visit bookstores; check online stores, subscribe to book blogs, review sites, etc.
- e. **Read books on reading!** Like the ones I have referred to: Reinke, Jacobs
- f. **Start your own library!** Begin gathering good books.
- g. **Join/start a book club!** Join with others to force yourself to read, discuss, grow.
- h. **Write book reviews** for the “SB” and “BL”! Get free books and commit to reading & reviewing.

E. Finally, let’s list some **BENEFITS** of being a Reformed reader.

- a. **Honor the Lord** of our salvation. Live in harmony with His grace, using our gifts.
- b. **Develop ourselves spiritually** in grace and knowledge. 2 Pe.3:18 By doing so we better fulfill our purpose in life in all areas - work, marriage, family, church, school.
- c. **Prepare ourselves** for future service and future trials.
  - i. Through reading we will be better prepared for our place in the kingdom and for the sufferings God has planned for us - afflictions and persecution.
  - ii. Young men, to be leaders in the church, home, & schools!
- d. **Become better witnesses** of Christ and His gospel. Through reading we will be better equipped & more confident to talk to people about God’s Word and works.