



A Godward Heart: Treasuring the God Who Loves You

John Piper

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A Godward Heart: Treasuring the God Who Loves You John Piper To Satisfy Your Soul — with God

John Piper invites you to experience deeper intimacy with God through these thought-provoking and soul-enriching meditations. Whether you are just discovering the divine richness of Scripture or have long been a passionate student, you'll find a deeper understanding of God and renewed insight for your journey.

A Godward Heart: Treasuring the God Who Loves You Details

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From Reader Review A Godward Heart: Treasuring the God Who Loves You for online ebook

christianchicklit says

Some Powerful Meditations To Reflect Upon

John Piper is an amazingly talented preacher, teacher and author. He has written many books to bring people to a deeper knowledge and relationship with God. His latest book is titled: A Godward Heart: Treasuring The God Who Loves You. This book contains "50 Meditations For Your Journey". Some meditations in this book were very thought-provoking and insightful. Others seemed to be a random collection of thoughts that cover a variety of topics including such issues as suffering, voting, slavery, tweeting, nudity, Abraham Lincoln, etc.

Each chapter is very short (approximately 3-4 pages) and many of the chapters would be a great devotional. Some of the exceptional sections in this book included:

Chapter 4 – Although many might claim that it was cruel of Jesus to let Lazarus die and put Mary and Martha through grief, Jesus' goal was much bigger. It was to magnify the glory of God through that experience. Most people think that love is whatever puts human value and human well-being at the center. "Love is doing whatever you need to do, even to the point of dying on the cross, to help people see and savor the glory of God forever and ever." Regarding Paul's thorn, God told him that it was more loving for Paul to value the glory of His power than it was for Him to take away his thorn. God's love is not defined by what brings them relief or what they want but what brings out the glory of God in your life. That's a powerful thought!

Chapter 5 asked some very harsh questions. Is the deepest basis of my joy God's greatness or my greatness? And, I more satisfied praising him or being praised?

Chapter 7 highlights the fact that Jesus knew exactly how He would suffer (being spit on, beaten, treated unjustly, etc.) but He chose to intentionally walk into that suffering knowing exactly what He would face in order to fulfill the scriptures. What incredible grace in the way that He walked through His suffering.

Chapter 14 provides a great reflection on why Christians suffer losses. There is a very sweet discussion of how John explained this whole passage to his daughter, Talitha, so that she will understand that when hard things come her way that it is just a test.

Some of the other chapters didn't resonate as strongly with me. Chapter 16 is about CS Lewis' and Robert Louis Stevenson's relationship with their fathers. They were both atheists growing up and had strained relationships with their fathers. There is no specific scripture mentioned in this chapter but it shows how their fathers continued to support them financially, even when they were quite rebellious. Another chapter discusses the importance of voting...even when the outcome doesn't go our way. I was completely baffled by the chapter on "The Rebellion of Nudity and the Meaning of Clothing". And, I disagreed with some of the points in a chapter about the ways that enjoyment can become idolatrous. While I think there are good cautions to the words that he writes, Piper doesn't really leave space for anything to be enjoyed that doesn't specifically magnify God. Although I think we should be grateful for the blessings that God has given to us, sometimes I think it is ok to just enjoy a hot fudge sundae. I am not sure that my enjoyment of a hot fudge sundae becomes "idolatrous when it does not desire that Christ be magnified as supremely desirable through the enjoyment". And I don't believe that this "runs the risk of magnifying the gift over the giver". Another principle Piper states is that "enjoyment is becoming idolatrous when it is not working a deeper capacity for

holy delight”. Again, I think it's okay to enjoy a hot fudge sundae even if it is not doing anything to make me more holy.

Overall, this book had some fabulous meditations that were very thought-provoking. I think each reader will find some true gems to appreciate. In the very beginning of the book, Piper states that he put together collections of short meditations in this book since “his life has been changed as much by paragraphs as by books”. I appreciated the short chapter format and many of the meditations were powerful reflections for me.

I received a complimentary copy of this book from the Blogging For Books program from WaterBrook Multnomah in exchange for this fair and unbiased review.

Tom says

A nice addition to devotional time

First thing to know is that this isn't a themed book that takes an idea and builds on it chapter by chapter. Instead it is a collection of short chapters covering many themes. Being a Piper book, you do see the focus on satisfaction in God and the glory of God throughout. Also in typical Piper fashion, he breaks down a verse or a subject into detail that you might never before had considered. The only parts that I didn't think fit was the chapter on Abraham Lincoln and on some non-Christian poet. Otherwise, a very nice add to one's devotion time.

Jerry Hillyer says

Title: A Godward Heart

Author: John Piper

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[Disclaimer: I was provided with a preview copy of this book in exchange for my fair and unbiased review of this book. I am not required to give a positive review, but an honest one. I promise nothing but honesty in all of my reviews.]

I have read John Piper books in the past. Once I even used a video series he produced and hosted called Don't Waste Your Life. I have listened to sermons and followed his public pastoral career insofar as he is an outspoken proponent of the modern resurgence of Reformed Theology. So with some interest I have followed his debates with NT Wright concerning justification and the apostle Paul. I even follow him on Twitter.

Every time I venture into some of Piper's work, I go in with a positive attitude hoping against hope that he will write or speak with uncharacteristic simplicity. Yet every time I am finished with his work I remain or have grown increasingly frustrated. This book left me with no different feeling. I think if you are a proponent of Reformed Theology, a staunch Calvinist, or a member of Piper's church you will love this book because it falls in line with everything one would expect from Piper: consistent Calvinism, consistent putting down of those who are not Calvinists as a lesser brand (if at all) of Christian, and a strange view of God's sovereignty that makes God the responsible agent for every scourge and plague that has ever haunted humans on this planet. Despite their protestations to the contrary, Calvinists cannot escape the fact that at the end of every page they do in fact put responsibility for everything directly into the lap of God and in so doing they mitigate human responsibility. They will tell us differently, but any thinking person can see through these two incompatible ideas. This is not mere paradox in the Biblical sense. It is simply nonsense. Either I am the problem with the world and therefore responsible entirely or God is. It cannot be both.

There are two glaring problems with this book. The first is, in my view, a profound misunderstanding of what it means for God to be sovereign. I'm not so certain we can make a case from Scripture that God is the ultimate responsible agent for all the calamity in the world and all the personal suffering we as human endure. The idea that because God knew something would happen he must therefore have ordained it (and yet somehow metaphysically remains excluded from responsibility for it) is preposterous and certainly not the sort of deity any of us can worship let alone respect. We are not puppets, there are no strings, and God's sovereignty is not in any way diminished because I am a free agent who makes choices for which I am responsible. This philosophical (not biblical) idea pervades every single page of this book and, in my opinion, renders it impotent. If I'm a person without Jesus and I read a book that says Jesus is somehow responsible for my suffering, I will not in any way be inclined towards Jesus.

Piper writes, "I'm not saying that foreknowledge is the same as preplanning" (23, e-book). But that is exactly what he's saying. He constantly uses the word 'ordained'. There is a difference between these two. The only problem is that Piper himself blurs the line or simply ignores it. I wish I had found more encouragement and hope in this book, but as someone who cannot subscribe to Piper's view of sovereignty, I was left feeling frustrated and angry. I disagree that sin and wrath were planned in order to bring about the cross; I think the cross was necessary because we brought about sin of our own free choice (23, e-book; I think a fine example of this is found in chapter 13, "Does God Lie?" where Piper contends that God 'ordains that lying happens' [55]. I am simply at a loss as to how a Holy God can ordain sin at any level whatsoever. If God is so sovereign, why didn't he 'ordain' a world where there is no suffering? I fail to see how he would receive less glory in doing so.)

The second major problem is the manner in which Piper 'uses' Scripture in the book which, again, contributes to a profound misunderstanding of God's sovereignty (and much else besides). The problem is that he rarely analyzes or comments upon large swaths of Scripture within the larger framework or context of a book. Now, it's true that Piper quotes a lot of Scripture in the book. But it's also true that there are a lot of ellipses, a lot of one-offs, and a lot quotes that merely serve his Calvinist agenda. I understand full well that the nature of this book is to provide meditations on various things, of which Scripture is, at times, the thing being meditated upon. I do not think, however, that gives us license to ignore context. Truth be told, we can make Scripture say just about anything we want when we are meditating on a single verse at a time. I have never been a fan of proof-texting and yet that seems to be key to the substance of this book.

There are times when I was shaken awake by Piper's observations--on the few occasions when he did happen to focus on a larger portion of Scripture. Take for example his thoughts on the Ten Commandments found in Exodus 20: "I suspect that the reason the Ten Commandments began with the commandment 'You shall have no other gods before me'...and ends with the commandment 'You shall not covet' is that they are essentially the same commandment, one focusing on what we should desire (God) and one focusing on what we shouldn't (anything else more than God)" (166). I think there are times in the book when the reader really will be astounded and drawn into a deeper understanding of what God has done in Jesus.

I also found his thoughts on 'The Rebellion of Nudity and the Meaning of Clothing'. I think it would have been nice if he had drawn a little from 1 Corinthians 15 and tied in his thoughts on Genesis with Paul's thoughts on Resurrection, but the chapter is still outstanding even without the tie-in.

So what shall I say about this book? Is there anything necessarily un-biblical about it? Is there anything in it that is going to bring dishonor to the God Piper is seeking to bring honor to? Well, it's a struggle for me personally because I in no way, shape, form or other buy his view of God's sovereignty. I think if a Christian who adheres to a Calvinist theological perspective reads this book they will be happy that John Piper found 12 different ways that enjoying life is actually sinful and can lead to idolatry. I think if someone who buys into a Reformed theological perspective reads this, they will be happy with all his talk about God's sovereignty and the theological hoops one has to jump through to arrive at his views. I think if you are an ultra conservative traditionalist you will be happy with Piper's ideas about marriage, submission, watching television, voting, and raising children.

I think if you are not a Calvinist or Reformed or Traditionalist Christian you will be extremely frustrated with chapters like "If God Wills Disease, Why Should we Try to Eradicate It?" (40) and chapters 1-8 (among others.)

For a non-Reformed, non-Calvinist, non-traditionalist like myself--one who puts his faith in Jesus and has put all of his hope eggs in the grace basket, who recognizes God is somehow Sovereign, and who is a sinner who daily repents--this was a terribly frustrating book. It left me at times terribly hopeless and angry that someone who is obviously well educated can say the things about God that he says and maintain a straight face. There is undoubtedly someone for whom Piper's words will resonate deeply, and for that I praise God. There are others, I'm afraid, who will be utterly disgusted by this book and will find it very difficult to honor the very God Piper is hoping will be honored.

It's too bad that, in my opinion, Calvinism is the lens through which Piper has chosen to view God, the Scripture, and humanity. And I disagree that deep inside Piper is the happy, jolly Calvinist he claims to be (see chapter 20).

1/5 stars

Hannah Sedgwick says

This book was great! There were some chapters I enjoyed more than others but every chapter was filled with God glorifying importance. It's easy to understand and there's great stuff within the pages of this book.

JPaul says

Piper says, "There are many things in the world that keep us from seeing the true light of Christ, just like city lights keep you from seeing the stars ". The daily meditations in this book point beyond the low lying distractions and call the reader to pursue the beauty that lies beyond. The beauty of Christ in His Word and in His works. I've found it helpful to read a chapter (which are all quite brief), prior to my morning Bible study. I have typically found my mind and spirit more alert and eager to meet God in His word.

NinaB says

Another great book by John Piper. It's a collection of devotional essays, perhaps summaries of his past sermons. It consists of short chapters with simple explanations of certain Bible passages that are meant to give us a more grandeur view of God, and how that knowledge can help us in everyday life. He certainly succeeded in convincing me and I'm grateful to him for that.

Jeremy Barker says

A Godward Heart is intended in some sense to be a devotional book. In reading a few other reviews I've seen criticisms that it doesn't really succeed on that front.

In some ways I can see why people would say that.

It does not follow the line of traditional devotional books in walking through a text or leaving you with a simple boiled down truth to guide your day. I've never been a big fan of those books, though there's nothing wrong with those. They are many times incredibly helpful.

A Godward Heart does have a little bit of a different feel. The book is a collection of 50 short chapters designed to draw your thoughts to "treasuring the God who loves you." They are short essays on a whole host of topics from how Christians should vote, to the question of "does God lie?", to how to love neighbors of other faiths, to the concept of hero-worship and the "celebrity pastor."

He also walks through a few challenging or thought provoking scripture passages like Galatians 4:18, 1 Chronicles 10, Zephaniah 3, Psalm 96:7, and more. Not exactly the most common devotional passages.

The book would best be utilized as a quick read to set your mind thinking for the day. These short "meditations" are useful for just that - meditating. They are food for thought. Not a snack for quick consumption, but something that will set you going for hours throughout the day.

If you're familiar with John Piper's work you'll know that his hallmark is drawing people into big thoughts about God. He is gifted at drawing people to delight in God, who he is and what he has done.

If you are looking for that, then you'll find much here.

So here are my words about what the book is about or you can listen to the author explain for himself:

<http://vimeo.com/77060994>

DISCLAIMER: I received a free evaluation copy of this book. I did not receive any monetary payment nor was I required to write a positive review. I hope my comments about the book will help you evaluate whether or not the book is worth purchasing and reading.

Jon Kenney says

About the Book

If you are at all familiar with Pastor John Piper or any of the books he has written, the subtitle of this devotional is something you'd come to expect from him. Always pointing his readers, church family and thousands across the nation to the glory of God, Piper continues the challenge in these pages of asking the reader to treasure God supremely. This devotional is pulled from different sources of sermons, articles, books and more that Piper has written. It was then collected into these 50 short chapters on many different topics. You might remember reading some of Piper's previous devotional works like A Godward Life (books 1 & 2), or Life Is A Vapor among others.

I'm not a huge fan of devotional books, but I have to admit that I found myself deeply moved by the truths found in scripture and then communicated within many of these devotional chapters. Piper makes no apology for writing a devotion book as he states upfront, "One of the reasons I put together collections of short meditations is that my life has been changed as much by paragraphs as by books." He also goes on to note clearly that just because he wrote these words, they are fallible and only scripture can be found perfect.

My words are not Scripture. They are not infallible like God's words. But my earnest aim in all I write is to be faithful to God's written Word in the Bible."

One of the gifts Piper has is to be able to encourage and teach his reader how to take the truths of Scripture and then apply and implement them into their own life and circumstances. Through out this book you can see this in every devotion. Because each chapter is completely different from the next, it makes those implications and insights from Piper that much more appreciated.

Some of the many topics included in this book are: God's Word getting personal, glorifying the grace of God, discerning idolatry, reflections on God's truth and sovereignty, you can be godly and wrong, spiritual depression and much more.

My Thoughts

I really enjoyed this short book and found a lot of value in these devotions each day. This would be a great book as a gift for a friend or family member who is looking for a different type of devotional that is not thematic but still foundational for every day living. The importance of being in God's Word on a daily basis cannot be valued enough. If you are struggling with being in the Word every day, use this book as a tool to encourage you and to help form the habit.

I highly recommend this great devotional book and hope you enjoy it as much as I have!

Edythe Hamilton says

John Piper has written a collection of short meditation devotionals. "For reasons not entirely explainable, God can make a single paragraph life changing."

Each of the fifty chapters has different verses from the Bible that Mr. Piper interprets. His references are geared toward strengthening one's faith in their walk with God. The chapters are short but powerful. The majority of the chapters are only three to five pages with a few chapters at six pages.

Mr. Piper made an interpretation in Chapter 9: Covering the Chasm, "The man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed (Genesis 2:25). Now there is shame. Why? Because the foundation of covenant-keeping love collapsed. And with it the sweet, all-trusting security of marriage disappeared forever." He explains that the first sin affected the trust between Adam and Eve, causing the security to be broken.

My favorite section comes from Chapter 41: Does Anyone Standing by the Lake of Fire Jump In? When speaking of non-believers, Mr. Piper makes a very good point when he makes the statement, "...whatever he

believes or does not believe, when he chooses against God...He is not...preferring the real hell over the real God. He is blind to both.”

Also included is Chapter 48: Creating Pointers to the Greatness of Christ. This chapter is in relation to social media. He uses Twitter to tweet verses from the bible. He feels it may deter someone from following idols and encourage them to read about God’s goodness. “In spite of all the dangers, Twitter seemed like a risk worth taking.”

John Piper has written a meditation book covering numerous topics that we deal with every day. Each of the fifty meditations are notated with verses from the Bible. As I read this book, I read verses before and after the referenced verse in my own Bible. I recommend this book for those wishing to seek more understanding in their walk of faith. It would also benefit Bible study groups.

I received this book free from Multnomah Publishing for this review.

Mark Lickliter says

Piper is always good! This was vintage Piper, and there was good variety here!

Joel Jackson says

In "A Godward Heart" John Piper provides a series of meditations that allow the reader to ponder faith and the issues of this world as they pertain to faith. Usually, books of the meditation variety fail to interest me as they tend to be fairly trite and fail to dig deep into Scripture or into the issues being written about. Piper shows himself as an intelligent Christian who invites readers to also engage their faith in an intelligent manner.

Piper provides meditations on specific Scripture passages such as Psalm 119:65-72, I Corinthians 13:4-7, Ephesians 5:25-27, Acts 16:4 and John 1:7. Each of these passage is approached in a manner that honors the text and seeks to help readers ponder their faith and apply their faith.

Piper also explores aspects of the biographies of various notable Christians such Abraham Lincoln, C. S. Lewis, and G. K. Chesterton. The exploration regarding Lewis is particularly interesting as he compares Lewis' faithless upbringing and eventual conversion to the life of Robert Louis Stevenson who grew up a believer, but forever left his faith behind.

One of the most intriguing meditations was "Putting My Daughter to Bed After the Bridge Collapsed," which explores the question of where is God in the midst of the suffering in our world. Piper also explores topics related to how we love our Muslim neighbors, how to be a Christian in our media driven world, Marriage, God as Creator, Grace, Redemption, Hell, and a number of other topics.

Overall, these meditations certainly bless and allow the reader to delve into the mystery of faith through the mind and the heart. The only caution for readers who lean toward the Arminian doctrines is that Piper himself leans toward predestination and related theologies. Not a reason to ignore these wonderful meditation, just a theological caution. We all should consider many angles when approaching faith and Piper does so here, but very solidly lands in the pre-destination camp.

I received this book as part of The Crown Publishing Group's Blogging for Books program.

Susan says

I was able to read A Godward Heart: Treasuring the God Who Loves You thanks to the Multnomah

bloggers' program. The author is John Piper, and over the past few years I've seen things by Piper pop up on Facebook. He's a pastor, and he always seems to have meaningful, "meaty" things to say. This book was no different, and I really enjoyed it. It was typical of Piper's "non-fluff" style and consists of 50 short devotions on a wildly divergent range of topics. I do mean divergent — we veer from a meditation on a specific verse to thoughts on a bridge that collapsed in his city to thoughts on C.S. Lewis and Robert Louis Stevenson.

I enjoyed that these devotions were short, because most invited deep thought. A few quotes and thoughts I liked -

"If God and his word are your highest values — your greatest desires — then whatever helps you know them and experience them deeply will be good — not easy, and maybe not even morally right (like slander from your adversaries), but good in the sense that God ordains it to give you what is absolutely best — the illumining effect of God's infinitely valuable word." (I also have to love another writer addicted to the dash) "We cannot answer every why question. But there is always this answer: My faith is being tested by the Lord who loves me and will help me. And our Lord never wastes his tests. Whether we believe this truth is, in fact, part of the test."

One chapter has an interesting discussion on "Does anyone standing by the lake of fire jump in?" Piper brings up the popular (and irritating, in my opinion) instance of people saying, "Well, if (fill in the blank) means you'll go to hell, then I don't even want to go to heaven" or "I'm going to hell for saying this, but I don't care ...". Really? Piper goes into things said in the Bible about hell, and points out "No one wants this," regardless of glib things they may say.

Jim says

"A Godward Heart" has many great and encouraging words. Right from the beginning, Piper explains the reason for writing this book is that he believes that a life can be changed by short meditations (paragraphs) as much as by books. I agree with him. Sometimes our hearts are hungry, and yet we are short on time or are tired and won't make it through a long chapter, but this is do-able even if you are tired or short on time, as they are short (3 to 4 pages).

I love the words of endorsement that Nancy Leigh DeMoss gives regarding this book, and I would like to quote here as it is spoken so perfectly. She states: "A Godward Heart is a fresh invitation to seek the Lord, to sit at the feet of the savior, to savor Him as your greatest treasure, and to find deep satisfaction for your soul as you drink from His well that never runs dry."

Another thing I like in this book, as well as others by Piper, is his transparency. I like real and Piper is real.

If you are used to the many self-centered books among Christian material, this book may actually seem foreign to you, as it is not about you! This book is Christ-centered and ultimately about doing all we do for the pleasure of God, which by the way, will automatically bring the most pleasure to your Christian walk (as a side benefit not a goal).

I recommend using this book as a devotional for 50 days or just reading a short meditation when you have a couple minutes throughout your day. I can't say all his meditations are equal, especially if you are new to Piper's writing style and themes. Therefore, I think my being familiar with other writings by Piper made this book more enjoyable. There were a few meditations I just didn't quite get where he was going with them or even why they were included, but I moved on to the next meditation.

As for rating this book, I would give it 3.5 stars (if allowed). Otherwise, I gave it 4 stars, which was a little generous, but 3 stars would have been too low of a rating for this book.

Read it, enjoy it, and if you are new to Piper, let this be a primer. Get his other books and you'll start seeing the knowledge and wisdom of this godly man.

I received this book for free from WaterBrook Multnomah Publishing Group for this review. I was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I have expressed are my own.

Ken Peters says

This book contains 50 short devotionals written to turn a reader's heart toward God. I found some to be more pertinent to where I'm at than others. Some seemed like a razor-sharp scalpel, while others simply seemed interesting. But all of them were clearly God-glorifying and encouraging.

Heather King says

Most of John Piper's books are hefty tomes of deep theological thought, and he has become one of my favorite scholars and authors. This little volume, A Godward Heart, is neither a devotional nor a theological treatise. It is, as he describes, a series of "meditations for your journey." The book doesn't have one particular theme. Instead, Piper collects previous essays and short writings about a variety of Christian topics and offers them together in this book.

It accomplishes Piper's goal of directing our hearts to God. When you want to look to Him, want to meditate on godly things and consider His Word, this book allows you to do just that in a few short minutes at a time. For those who like to listen to the brief videos called "Ask Pastor John" where John Piper is asked questions about anything from Scripture commentary, to marriage advice, to political issues, to Christian leadership, this will feel like the written form of that. In this book, you'll find short writings on everything from nudity, to loving Muslims, to commentary on specific Scriptures, and why Satan hurts Christian people.

I loved the brevity of the chapters, the ease and accessibility of the writing and the chance to sit down in a few short minutes (so important for a young mom with kids!!) and meditate on godly things.

I received this book free from the publisher. I was not required to write a positive review and the opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255 : "Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising."
