

# The View from the Press Box

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## Tim's Favorite Christian Books



Thought I would share some of my favorite Christian books that I have read over the last 20 years or so. There are lots of books I have read but at the moment these are my favorites. I am sure I will find some new ones to add to this list in the future. I hope you can be inspired to not only read your Bible but to add some other spiritual reading material to your life to build your foundation upon the rock. The quote 'Rock solid' didn't begin with football.

### 1. 'The Bible'

My favorite Christian book of all time is the Bible. I like the Revised Standard Version for reading. If I am going to memorize scripture I will use the Old King James Version. If you try to memorize in the newer versions of the Bible they just don't sound right to me. Think about John 3:16. To me there is just one way John 3:16 should be memorized and quoted and that is from the Old King James Version.

### 2. 'Prayer'

This book by Ole Hallesby is a classic. The original edition was printed in 1931. Ole Hallesby was one of Norway's leading Christian teachers and devotional writers. During World War II he was imprisoned for his resistance to the Nazi regime. There are so many quotable quotes in this book. I will give you just one from the pages of this 209 page little book. *"We are moved to pray every time the Spirit of God, which is the spirit of prayer, emphasizes anew to us our helplessness, and we realize how impotent we are by nature to believe, to love, to hope, to serve, to sacrifice, to suffer, to read the Bible, to pray and to struggle against our sinful desires. It often happens that we slip out of this blessed attitude of helplessness before God. Our former self-conceit and self-sufficiency reassert themselves. The result is that we fail again to grasp the meaning of helplessness. Once more it fills us with anxiety and perplexity. Everything becomes snarled again. We are not certain of the forgiveness of sins. The peace of God disappears from our lives. Worldliness, slothfulness and lack of spiritual interest begin to choke our spiritual lives. Sin gains the victory again in our daily lives, and an unwilling spirit works its way into the service we render toward God."* Someone gave me this little book years ago and I am so glad they did.

### 3. 'Shepherd in Combat Boots'

This book was written by William L. Maher in 1997 about Father Emil Kapaun. The Wichita Eagle Beacon a couple of years ago had several articles on Father Kapaun who grew up in Pilsen, Kansas which is north and east of Wichita. Kapaun High School in Wichita is named after Father. Early in the Korean War the Chinese forces surrounded troops of the 1st Cavalry Division. Trying to escape, the American soldiers warned catholic Chaplain Emil Kapaun to leave. However, he refused to leave his wounded comrades and became a POW. His decision marked a turning point in the inspiring life of this young priest. Kapaun's faith and courage on the battlefield and in prison set an

example for hundreds of young American captives. When they were starving, he stole food for them from the guards. If the men needed encouragement, he defied prison rules and prayed with them. When the communist guards mocked his faith in God, the chaplain publicly defended his beliefs. When Kapaun became sick, the communists denied him medicine and watched him die in their vermin-infested "hospital." However, they could not extinguish the memories of how he served other prisoners. The Army awarded the chaplain the Distinguished Service Cross and the Vatican named him "Servant of God." This book is a well-documented biography of an extraordinary person. The part that really got my attention in this book was where Father Kapaun said the Mass everyday as best he could in the POW camp and even the Protestants came to Mass and said the Holy Rosary. So I personally memorized the Rosary prayers and say them once a day. If it was good enough for the guys in a POW camp under duress it is good enough for me to learn and say them. Although in the Methodist Church we say 3 of the 5 prayers already so it didn't take much memorization work.

#### 4. 'Life of Christ'

This book by Bishop Fulton J. Sheen was written in 1958. When I first saw the book here several years ago it intrigued me because I remembered Fulton Sheen on television when I was young. This book also has so much knowledge in it. Following is a quote from the book, *"Many individuals disclaim responsibility for the faults and failings of a collective group such as a team, nation, business, church etc. For example when there is corruption in government individuals often deny that they are involved. The more sinless people are, the greater they disclaim all relationship to those that are sinners. Their argument is that since they are not responsible for the mistakes of society, they are not involved. Actually the contrary is true in those who are most sinless. The greater the sinlessness, the greater the sense of responsibility and awareness of corporate guilt. The truly good man feels the world is the way it is because in some way he hasn't been better! As the more healthy are better able to minister to the sick, so too the more innocent can better atone for the guilt of others. A lover would, if possible, take on the sufferings of those he loves!"* Bishop Fulton Sheen makes a man think. I saw this book in our public library the other day so I know it is still around. You won't read this one overnight. There is just too much to absorb in a short span of time.

#### 5. 'Heaven is for Real'

Surely everyone has read this book by Pastor Todd Burpo and Lynn Vincent? This book has been in lots of conversations lately. This book is so much like Jesus. Jesus came to divide us from those who believe in him from those who don't. This book is doing the same thing. Those who believe the story is real from those who don't believe it is possible. *Heaven Is for Real* is the true story of the four-year old son of a small town Nebraska pastor who during emergency surgery slips from consciousness and enters heaven. He survives and begins talking about being able to look down and see the doctor operating and his dad praying in the waiting room. The family didn't know what to believe but soon the evidence was clear. Colton said he met his miscarried sister, whom no one had told him about, and his great grandfather who died 30 years before Colton was born, then shared impossible-to-know details about each. He describes the

horse that only Jesus could ride, about how "really big" God and his chair are, and how the Holy Spirit "shoots down power" from heaven to help us.

6. 'Rediscover Catholicism'

Matthew Kelly is a motivational speaker who works with fortune 500 companies and he has written several books. Seventy percent of Roman Catholics don't go to Mass and Matthew Kelly thought it was time somebody tried to do something about it. This book is awesome. Whether you are Protestant or Catholic there are many things you can learn from this book and get inspired to move to action. The following was one of many great quotes from this book. *"The mission of the church is to share the Gospel, and to teach encourage and challenge people to become more like Jesus Christ. So how is it that we can belong to a local church community with almost no outreach to the unchurched and under churched in the area, with very few people becoming markedly more Christ-like and not think there is a problem?"* I am going to give you one more quote from the book because this is another really good one. *"We have a vacuum of leadership in the world. People don't follow titles and authority. They follow courage! They will respond like people dying of thirst who have just been offered a cool drink of water. No one is born with courage. It is an acquired virtue! You learn to ride a bike while riding a bike. You learn to play football by playing football. The Bible says, 'Don't be afraid.' Most people are hungry for the truth, but we are afraid to give it to them. (John 8:32) Where did the Saints of the Church get courage from? Prayer! I've never met a prayful coward!"*

7.