

Title: Praying the Bible

Author : Donald S. Whitney

Category : Prayer

Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.”

Luke 11:1 ESV

I chanced upon this book from Crossway’s book recommendation received in my email. The title caught my attention because it is somewhat similar to our prayer retreat theme this year. When I read the short book introduction, this sentence struck me, “When you pray, does it ever feel like you’re just saying the same old things about the same old things?” I don’t know about you, but I do have this problem. And I thought this was certainly a book I would like to read. I suggested to the church library to get a copy. Later, I realised that our library has a copy and five persons had actually borrowed it. The first was way back in June 2016 and the other four, this year from April to August. Interesting borrowing pattern.

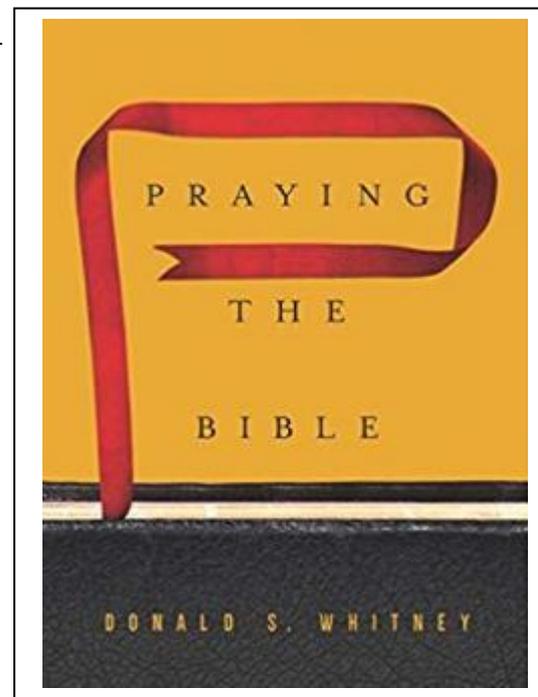
The author starts off with a very basic, yet thought-provoking question, “Since prayer is talking with God, why don’t people pray more? Why don’t the people of God enjoy prayer more?” And he answers his own question, “And the reason they don’t feel like praying is that when they do pray, they tend to say the same old things about the same old things.” I think this is certainly one major reason people are not too enthusiastic to pray.

To the author, the solution has to be fundamentally simple. Since God invites all His children to pray, then prayer must be essentially simple. If God invites and expects all His children, regardless of age, IQ, education or resources, to do the same thing – to pray – then prayer has to be simple. Sounds very logical to me.

He then proposes the solution of using the Bible to pray. And of course, the best place for learning to pray through a passage of Scripture is in the book of Psalms. For the rest of the book, he shows us how to use the Psalms to pray about our prayer needs. He also shows how to use the same methodology to pray other parts of the Bible, like the New Testament epistles and teachings, and even the narratives.

There is also a chapter for us to practice to pray using the method, and another chapter to evaluate our experience. I have tried it and it was a refreshing experience. Definitely something really good to know and use.

So, if you want to learn how to pray the Bible, this is certainly a book I will recommend you to read and, of course, practise. By the way, it is a very thin book (just to motivate you to read it)



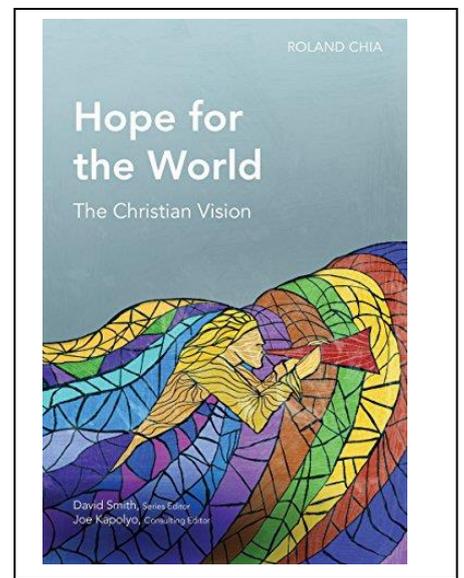
Title: Hope for the World: The Christian Vision

Author : Roland Chia

Category : Eschatology

“Waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ”

Titus 2:13 ESV



The book is small in size but large in insight. Hope is an integral aspect of human life and civilizations. The book contrasts hope with worldly optimism and points to secular utopian thinking and ideologies throughout history that fail to deliver what they promised. The book’s focal theme is the “blessed hope” of the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ. Understanding the Christian hope requires a panoramic view of history and what is to come.

The book describes the return of Christ as the pivot of eschatology (study of “last things”). The return of Christ realizes the long awaited telos or ultimate end in the linear timeline in Biblical eschatology. As the return of Christ is certain, so also is the certainty of the final judgement. Dr. Chia explains that the doctrines of the return of Christ and the final judgment are unique to the Christian faith in terms of end-point events in the worldview of history.

What I appreciate about the book is the way it organizes and explains the complex subject matter relating to eschatology in a systematic and concise manner. Dr. Chia explains the hope of Israel in the Old Testament and the foundations of Christian hope in the New Testament. Beyond cosmic eschatology (what is to happen to the world), the book also comments on individual eschatology (what is to happen to the individual, e.g. issues relating to heaven and hell). The book also honestly identifies aspects that God has chosen not to reveal in the Bible and the different theological views on them.

The impact of reading the book goes beyond simply gaining insights about eschatology to understanding the glorious plan of God in history and the significance of the blessed hope in our lives today.

This book is available for loan at our Resource Library.