



## Luther on the Christian Life: Cross and Freedom

By Carl R. Trueman

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Martin Luther’s historical significance can hardly be overstated. Known as the father of the Protestant Reformation, Luther has had an enormous impact on Western Christianity and culture. In *Luther on the Christian Life*, historian Carl Trueman introduces readers to the lively Reformer, taking them on a tour of his historical context, theological system, and approach to the Christian life. Whether exploring Luther’s theology of protest, ever-present sense of humor, or misunderstood view of sanctification, this book will help modern readers go deeper in their spiritual walk by learning from one of the great teachers of the faith.

John Newton is best known as the slave trader turned hymn writer who penned the most popular English hymn in history: “Amazing Grace.” However, many Christians are less familiar with the decades he spent in relative obscurity, laboring as a “spiritual doctor” while pastoring small parishes in England. In the latest addition to Crossway’s growing Theologians on the Christian Life series, Tony Reinke introduces modern readers to Newton’s pastoral wisdom by leading them through the many sermons, hymns, and—most importantly—letters that he wrote over the course of his life. Considered by many to be one of the greatest letter writers of all time, Newton has valuable insights to offer modern Christians, especially when it comes to fusing together sound doctrine, lived experience, and godly practice.

Widely recognized as a pillar of 20th-century evangelicalism, J. I. Packer has had a profound impact on millions of Christians living today. Now in his late eighties, Packer still exerts an enormous influence on pastors and laypeople around the world through his many books, articles, and recorded lectures—works that overflow with spiritual wisdom related to the Christian life. In the latest addition to Crossway’s growing Theologians on the Christian Life series, well-known pastor Sam Storms examines Packer’s legacy when it comes to the Christian and sanctification. Whether exploring Packer’s insights into prayer, Bible study, the sovereignty of God, or the Christian’s fight against sin, this accessible book offers readers the chance to learn from the best of Packer’s thinking on what true godliness really entails.

The importance of Dutch theologian Herman Bavinck to Reformed theology is difficult to overstate. Bavinck's comprehensive four volume systematic theology, *Reformed Dogmatics*, is a modern classic that has influenced countless pastors and theologians over the past 100 years. In *Bavinck on the Christian Life*, scholar John Bolt brings the great Dutch theologian's life and work to bear on following Jesus in the 21st century. By practically applying Bavinck's systematic works to the Christian life and looking at the life of the man himself, this book shows the direct connection between robust theology, practical holiness, and personal joy.

John Owen is widely hailed as one of the greatest theologians of all time. His many works—especially those encouraging Christians in their struggle against sin—continue to speak powerfully to readers today, offering much-needed spiritual guidance for following Christ and resisting temptation day in and day out. Starting with an overview of Owen's life, ministry, and historical context, Michael Haykin and Matthew Barrett introduce readers to the pillars of Owen's spiritual life. From exploring his understanding of believers' fellowship with the triune God to highlighting his teaching on justification, this study invites us to learn about the Christian life from the greatest of the English Puritans.

Part of the Theologians on the Christian Life series.

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**Editorial Review**

Review

“If you think you know Luther, read this book. It is a remarkably edifying and illuminating piece of work. Displaying the interests of a pastor and the rigor of a historian, Carl Trueman provides us with an analysis of Luther on the Christian life that is as ‘human’ as the German Reformer himself. Yet it’s far more than Luther on the Christian life. It’s one of the very best summaries of Luther in context.”

—**Michael Horton**, J. Gresham Machen Professor of Systematic Theology and Apologetics, Westminster Seminary California; author, *Core Christianity: Finding Yourself in God's Story*

“Carl Trueman has pulled off a tremendous feat: he’s not only given us a volume that is scholarly and historically nuanced while still accessible and refreshingly contemporary; he’s also managed to capture the brilliance and boldness of Martin Luther in a relatively short space. Trueman is to be commended for presenting a Luther who is unlike us in so many ways, and yet a Luther from whom we can learn so much.”

—**Kevin DeYoung**, Senior Pastor, University Reformed Church, East Lansing, Michigan

“This book illustrates again why Martin Luther remains a nearly inexhaustible resource. Trueman explains why Luther can be such a perceptive, encouraging, human, and even humorous guide to the Christian life. Especially important is Trueman’s clear communication of why the cross of Christ grounded Luther’s approach to almost everything and why a ‘theology of the cross’ might powerfully motivate believers today as well.”

—**Mark A. Noll**, Francis A. McAnaney Professor of History, University of Notre Dame; editor, *Protestantism after 500 Years*

“Trueman gives us not only Luther’s theology, but Luther as a theologian, which in turn connects with us as theologians. We learn from Trueman’s insight into Luther that theology isn’t just what we know about God, or even how we know it, but is intimately connected to who we are. Trueman gives us Luther—constipation, wit, contradictions, and all. We also finally get a theological apologetic for a robust sense of humor.”

—**Aimee Byrd**, author, *Housewife Theologian* and *Theological Fitness*

“It is no easy task to write a small volume summing up the theology and significance for the Christian life of Martin Luther. Yet Trueman has done it superbly with aplomb and verve. Highly recommended as an excellent introduction to a remarkable Christian and human being.”

—**Michael A. G. Haykin**, professor of church history and biblical spirituality, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

“This book takes us on an engaging, enjoyable tour of the thought of one of Christianity’s most influential theologians. Writing with wisdom and accessible style, Trueman gets to the heart of Luther’s theology, showing how his teachings in areas like law and gospel, justification by grace through faith, and the means of grace connect with the everyday Christian life of believers. Trueman’s insightful scholarship and clear writing give us a wonderful introduction to Luther’s thought. I highly recommend it.”

—**Justin S. Holcomb**, Episcopal Priest; Professor of Christian Thought, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary; coauthor, *Rid of My Disgrace* and *Is It My Fault?*

“In this compelling book, we encounter an arresting portrait of Luther the pastor, a full-blooded man who knew the spiritual and physical joys and pains of life and the formidable daily challenges of being a Christian

in a fallen world. In elegant, bracing prose full of pastoral and theological insight and leavened with his characteristic humor, Trueman both keeps Luther in his time and engages us in conversation about how the German doctor speaks to ours. Trueman's profound exploration of one of the great writers on the Christian life challenges all of us to cancel our tickets for journeys of self-exploration and self-expression to pursue something more authentic. From a distance of five hundred years, Luther tells us that the story is not about us; it's about what God has done for us."

—**Bruce Gordon**, Titus Street Professor of Ecclesiastical History, Yale Divinity School; author, *Calvin*

"This book deftly combines deep historical learning with sage pastoral wisdom to present us with an unaccommodated Luther—one who is sure to surprise as well as offend those only familiar with sanitized portraits of the Wittenberg Reformer. But this is the Luther that we need, for it is the real Luther—not the fictions of hagiographers—who has the most to teach us about the Christian life. Both new and longtime readers of Luther will derive much benefit from Trueman's book."

—**Scott R. Swain**, president and James Woodrow Hassell Professor of Systematic Theology, Reformed Theological Seminary, Orlando, Florida

"Eminently readable, humorous, and always with an eye to the church today, Trueman brings us into Luther's world, devils and all, and shows us the centrality of the cross and the objective power of God's Word for Luther's understanding of the Christian life. Most importantly, we meet Luther on Luther's terms. His high view of the liturgy and sacraments stands alongside his more familiar views on the authority of Scripture and justification by faith alone. All those interested in Luther or the Reformation need to read this excellent book."

—**Carl Beckwith**, Associate Professor of History and Doctrine, Beeson Divinity School; author, *Hilary of Poitiers on the Trinity*

## About the Author

**Carl R. Trueman** (PhD, University of Aberdeen) is the Paul Woolley Professor of Church History at Westminster Theological Seminary and pastor of Cornerstone Presbyterian Church (OPC) in Ambler, Pennsylvania. He was editor of *Themelios* for nine years, has authored or edited more than a dozen books, and has contributed to multiple publications including the *Dictionary of Historical Theology* and *The Cambridge Companion to Reformation Theology*.

**Stephen J. Nichols** (PhD, Westminster Theological Seminary) serves as the president of Reformation Bible College and chief academic officer of Ligonier Ministries. He is an editor of the Theologians on the Christian Life series and also hosts the weekly podcast *5 Minutes in Church History*.

**Justin Taylor** (PhD, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary) is the executive vice president of book publishing and book publisher at Crossway. He has edited and contributed to several books including *A God-Entranced Vision of All Things* and *Reclaiming the Center*, and he blogs at *Between Two Worlds*—hosted by the Gospel Coalition.

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