



25 Books That Changed My Life

Ryan Atkins

I am always on the lookout for my next book and am frequently asking others what they are reading. Each of the following books came at just the right time in my life to provide inspiration, perspective, and insight. I have separated them into the four categories of books that I generally stick to: **faith, self-help, business, and history**. Additionally, I have added categories for books about **manhood** and **eternal perspective**. I would love to hear if you end up getting a chance to read any of these.

Want to listen to one of these for **FREE**? [Follow this link](#) to pick up a free audiobook.

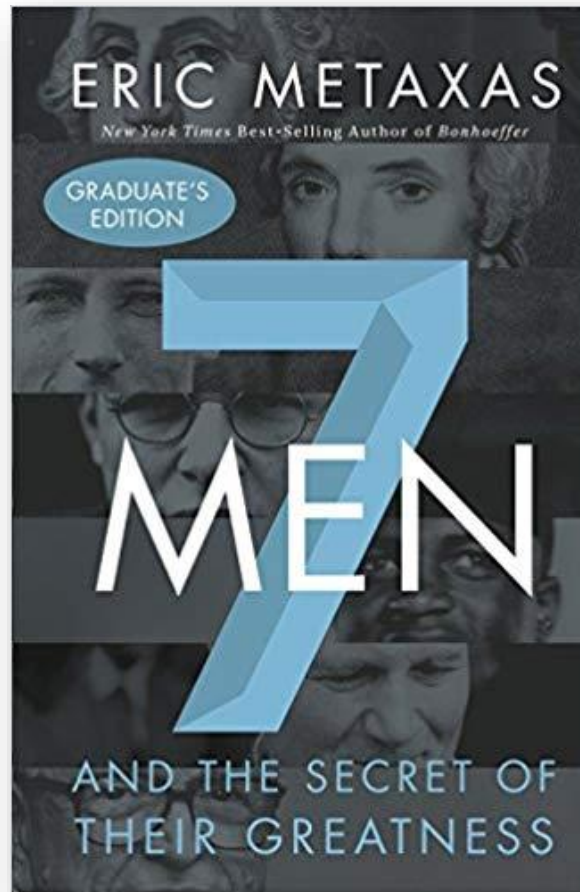


Genre:

Manhood

Though it's been years since I suited up on the athletic field, having a coach fire me up about being a man and inspiring me to take meaningful action is what I discovered by poring through the pages of the following books. There are countless men in history whose examples continue to carry throughout generations. I want to be a student of their words and actions.

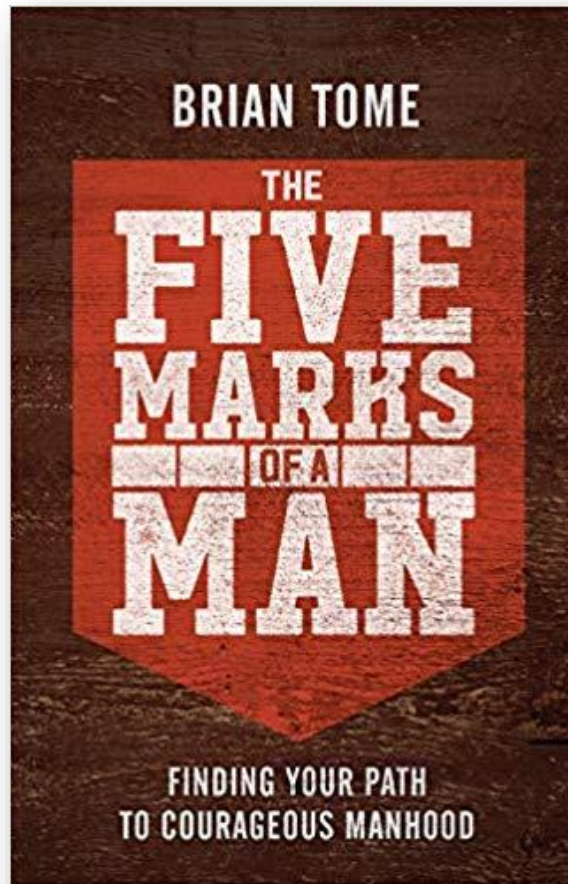
Manhood



7 Men
And the Secret of Their Greatness
Eric Metaxas

These masculine examples throughout history both inspire and challenge. Wilberforce, Liddell, and Bonhoeffer were my favorites.

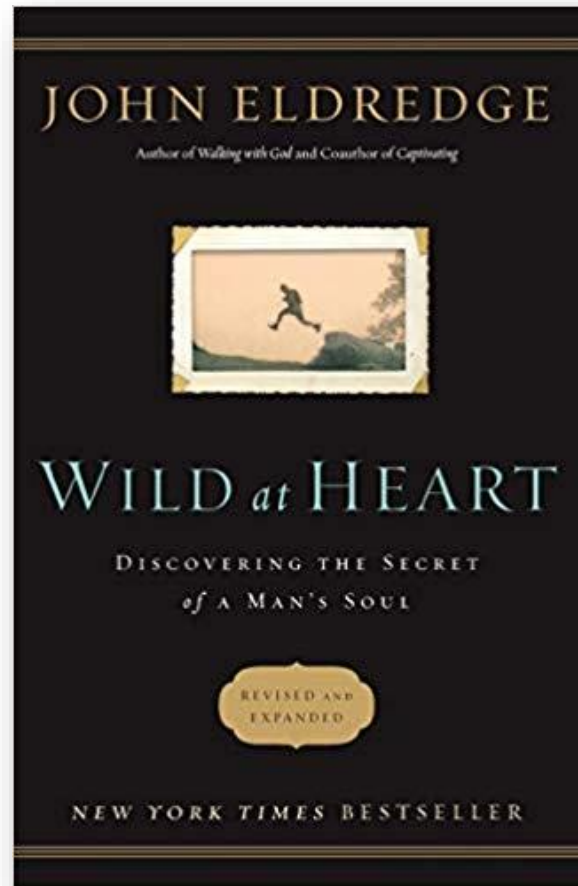
Manhood



The Five Marks of a Man:
Finding Your Path to Courageous Manhood
Brian Tome

An excellent blueprint for training the next generation of men, while reminding me to “play the man” in my own world as well.

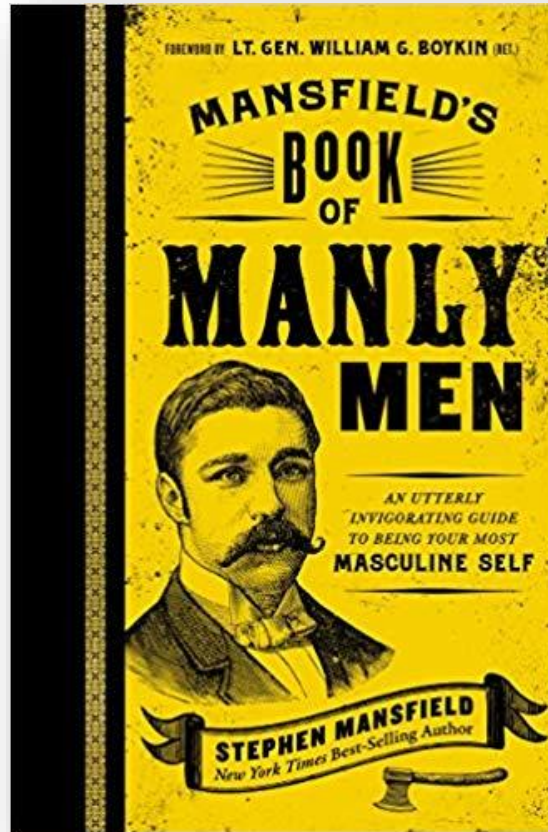
Manhood



Wild at Heart:
Discovering the Secret of a Man's Soul
John Eldredge

This book speaks to the three areas every man needs to be in motion: a battle to fight, an adventure to live, and a beauty to rescue.

Manhood



Mansfield's Book of Manly Men:
An Utterly Invigorating Guide to Being Your Most Masculine Self
Stephen Mansfield

A call to reclaim honor, integrity, and manliness by examining the virtues, habits, disciplines, duties, and actions of the titans of history.

Genre:

Faith

If I were to pick one book in the Bible as my “favorite” it would have to be the book of Acts. Outside of Scripture? I have been able to gain great insight from the following books on the necessity of rest, how to hear God’s voice, dealing with suffering, how to properly measure success, etc.

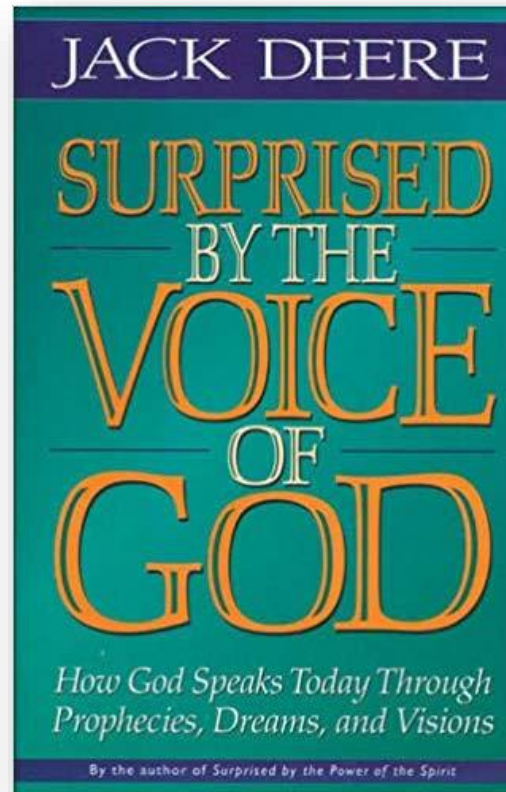
Faith



24/6:
A Prescription for a Healthier, Happier Life
Matthew Sleeth, M.D.

A powerful, timely message on the necessity of rest in order to properly balance a chaotic life.

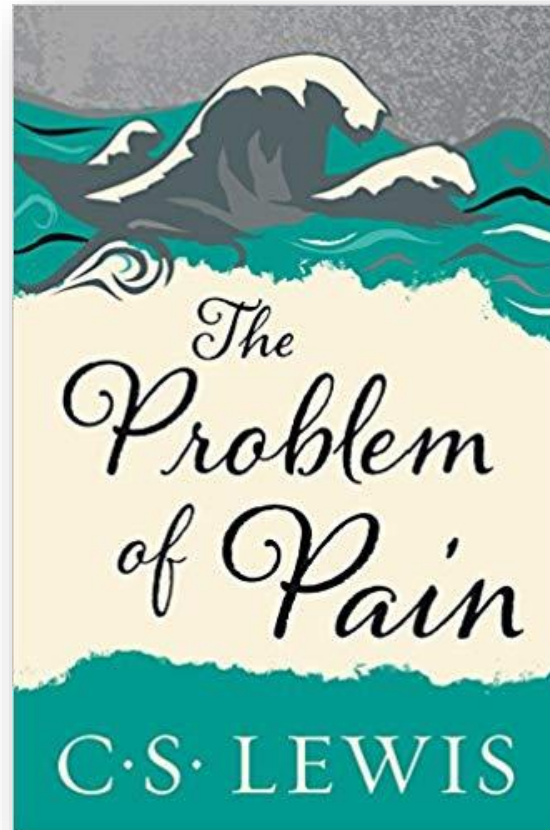
Faith



Surprised by the Voice of God:
How God Speaks Today Through Prophecies, Dreams, and Visions
Jack Deere

A thorough study on how to implement hearing God's voice. Includes many encouraging testimonies.

Faith

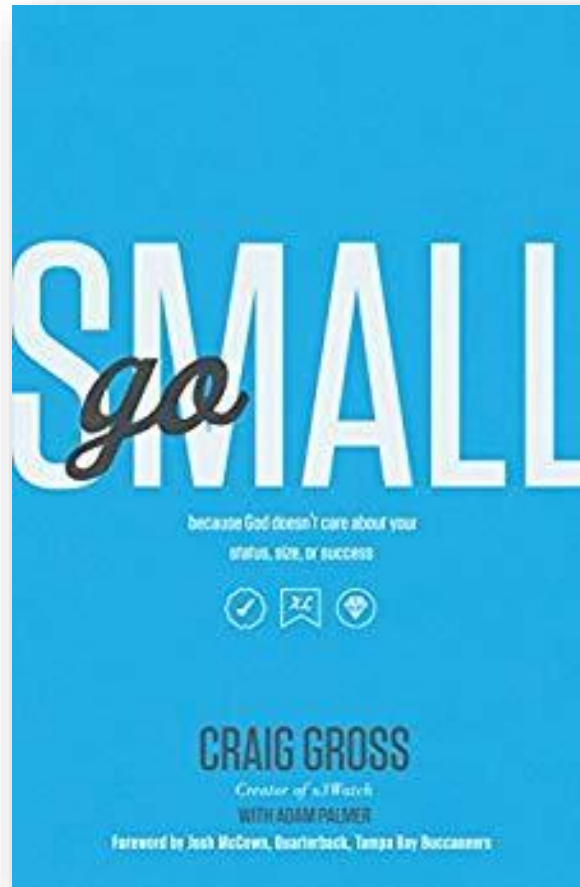


The Problem of Pain

C.S. Lewis

No other book has been more helpful in shaping my understanding of suffering and how to keep proper perspective in order to push forward.

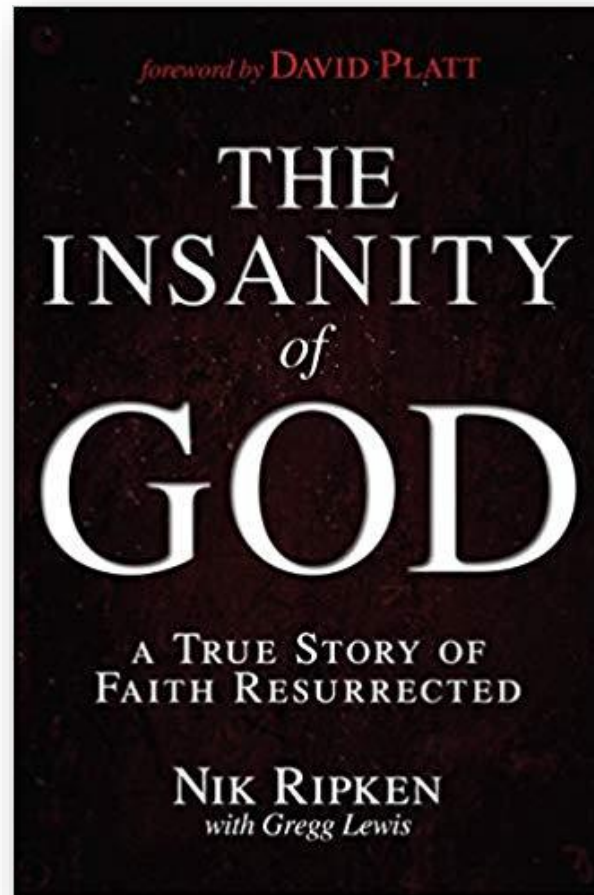
Faith



Go Small:
Because God Doesn't Care About Your Size, Status, or Success
Craig Gross

My biggest takeaway: God measures success in a vastly different way than we humans do.

Faith



The Insanity of God:
A True Story of Faith Resurrected
Nik Ripken with Gregg Lewis

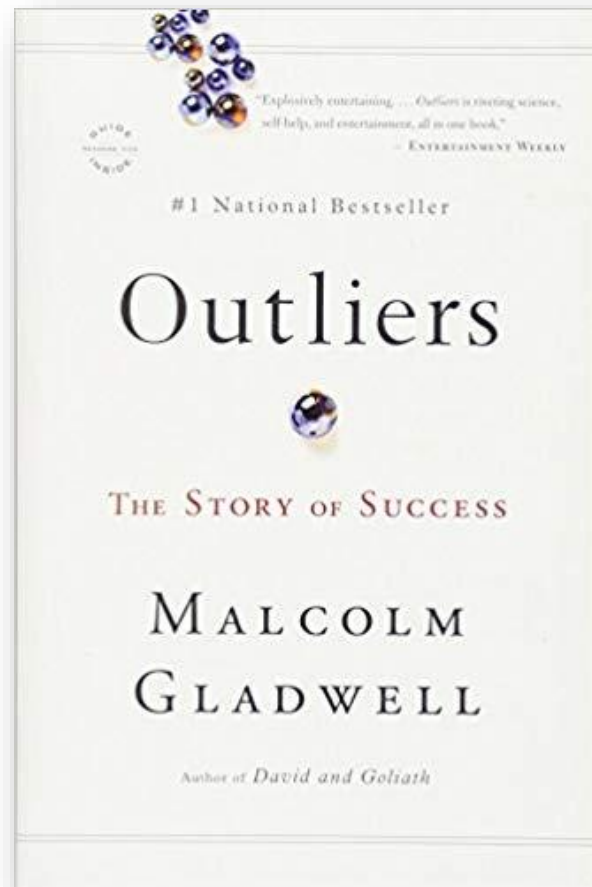
This thrilling look at the persecuted church shows the lengths that many people throughout the world have to go to in order to live out their faith. Inspiring tales of heroes throughout the Middle East and beyond.

Genre:

Self-Help

I always appreciate a book that makes me think differently or spurs me toward purposeful action. These books drive home intentionality, thinking differently about “success,” and how to approach time and money with a radically new mindset.

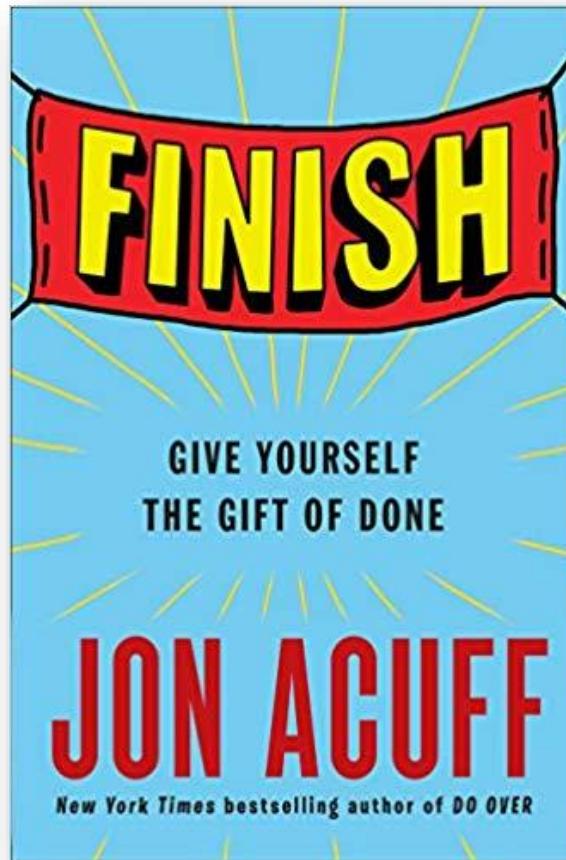
Self-Help



Outliers:
The Story of Success
Malcom Gladwell

After reading this, I was motivated both to push harder to take advantage of opportunities that I have while also vowing never to use the phrase “self-made” ever again.

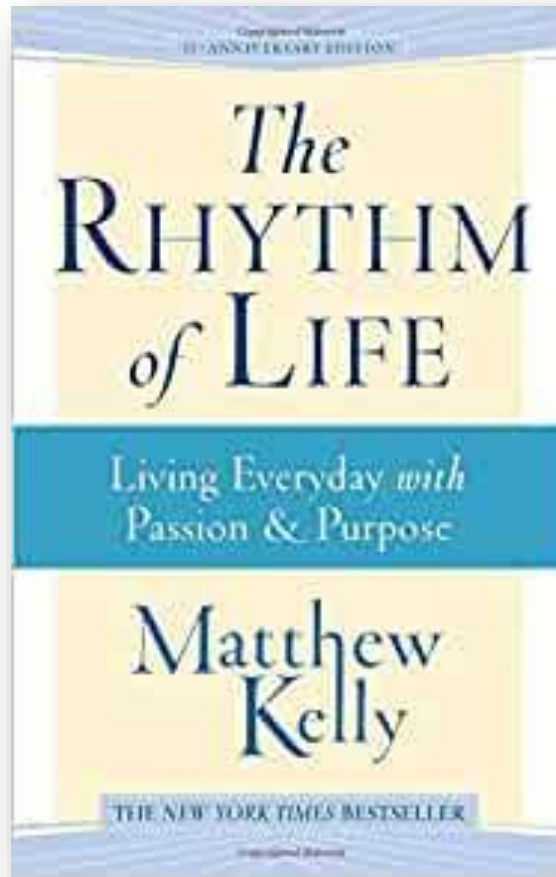
Self-Help



Finish:
Give Yourself the Gift of Done
Jon Acuff

Proven strategies for productivity from the exact book that motivated me to write the bulk of my memoir.

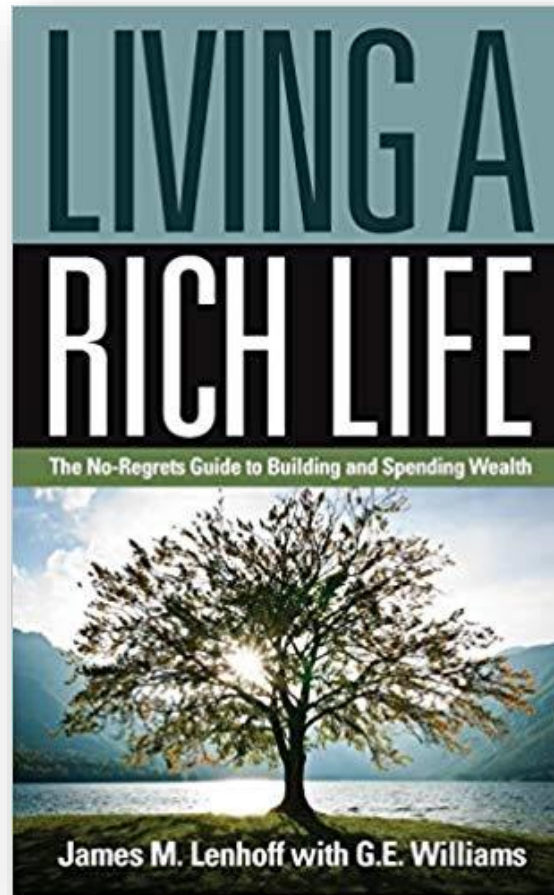
Self-Help



The Rhythm of Life:
Living Every Day with Passion & Purpose
Matthew Kelly

I re-read this book annually while mapping out my upcoming year to remind myself of the priceless nuggets throughout.

Self-Help



Living a Rich Life:
The No-Regrets Guide to Building and Spending Wealth
James M. Lenhoff with G.E. Williams

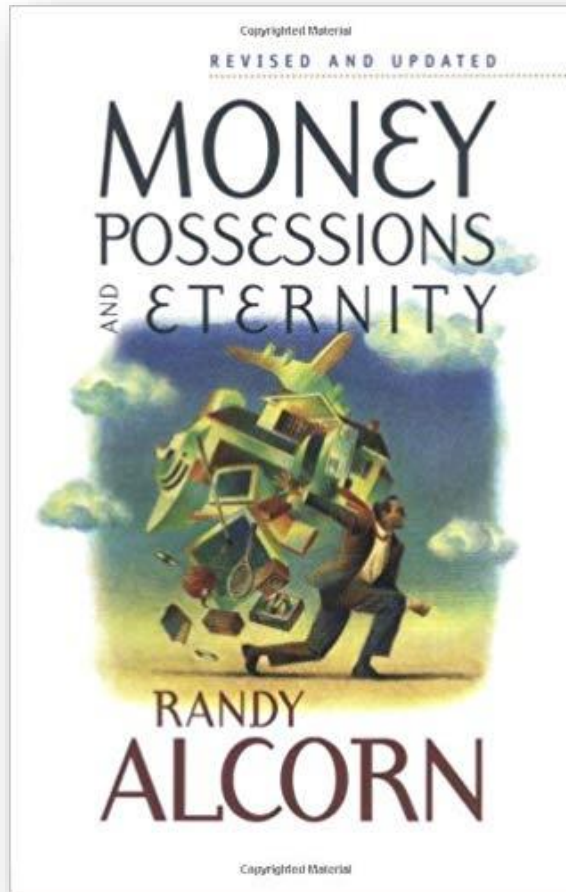
The theme of this guide is to “change the conversation about money.” Easy to implement strategies such as the “abundance fund” make this book a powerful resource.

Genre:

Eternal Mindset

The most impactful way that I have been able to hold onto sustaining hope has been to keep a perspective that stretches far beyond my short time here on earth. These books tackle money, marriage, near-death experiences, etc., in the context of how it all relates to what God has to say about our true home in heaven.

Eternal Mindset

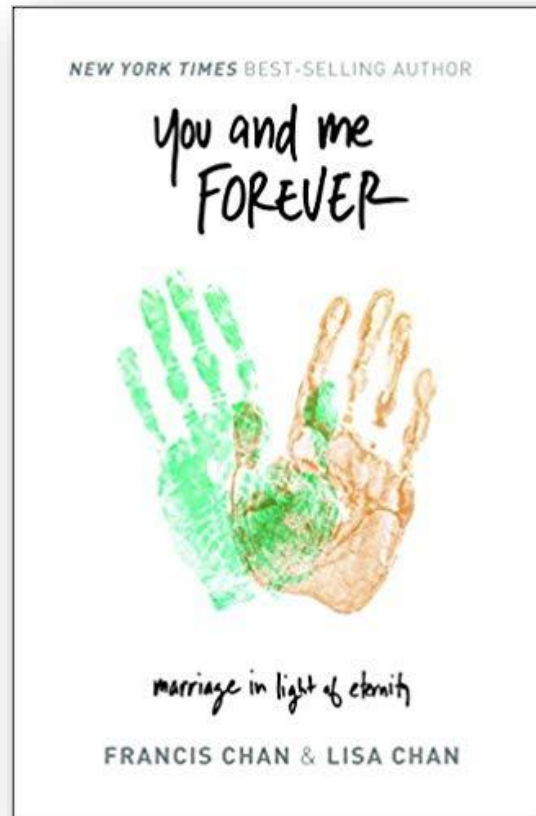


Money, Possessions, and Eternity

Randy Alcorn

How much of an impact will our financial decisions have on our experience in life after death? Way more than I assumed!

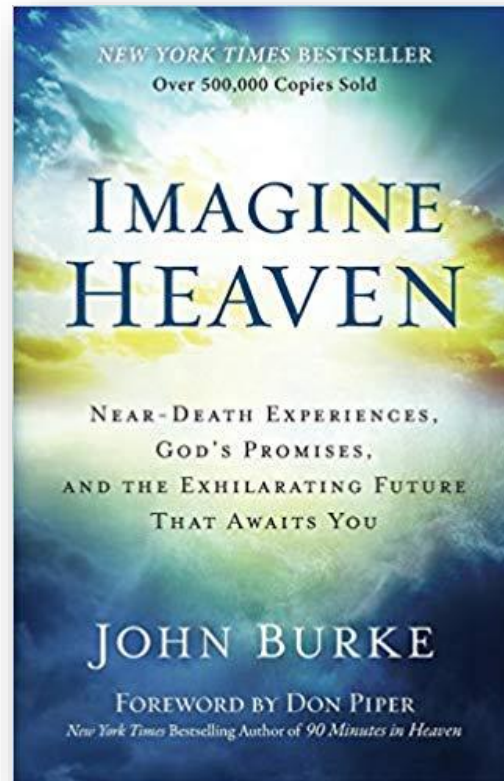
Eternal Mindset



You and Me Forever:
Marriage in Light of Eternity
Francis Chan & Lisa Chan

Stephanie and I dove into this to provide some perspective on marriage as newlyweds. It was pivotal in shaping that direction and vision of our marriage.

Eternal Mindset



Imagine Heaven:
Near-Death Experiences, God's Promises, and the Exhilarating Future that Awaits You
John Burke

This study of near-death experiences and the Bible had me questioning what may have been going on during my multiple hospital stays.

Eternal Mindset



All Things New:
Heaven, Earth, and the Restoration of Everything You Love
John Eldredge

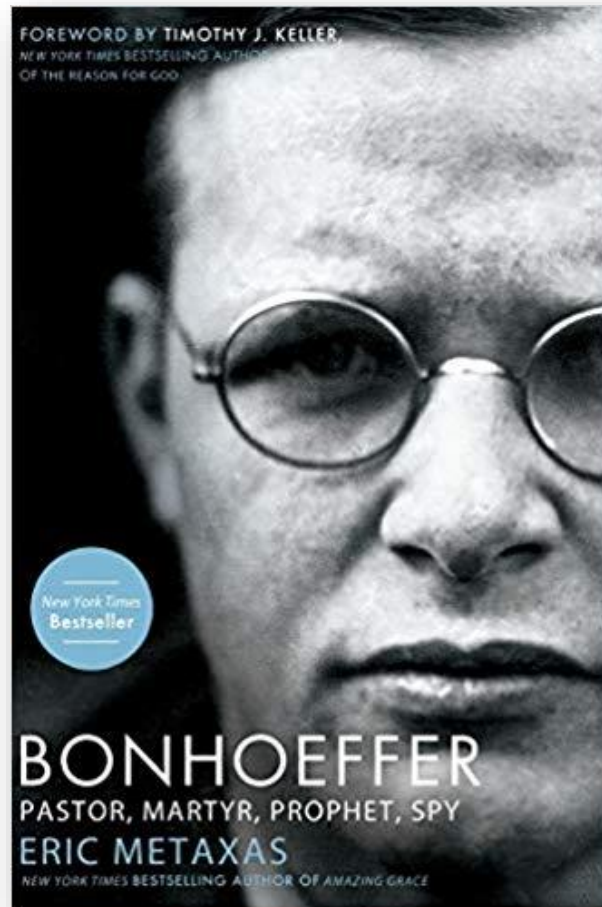
There is no better way to be free of the fear of death than to fixate on the paradise that God has lavishly prepared for us to enjoy for eternity. Restored relationships. Seeing Jesus face-to-face. Perfect bodies with endless time to enjoy the vast beauty of creation of God. I can't wait. This book makes the concept of a bucket list feel completely unnecessary.

Genre:

History

My fascination with history was sparked as a teenager but making the effort to learn more outside the classroom did not start until several years after college.

History

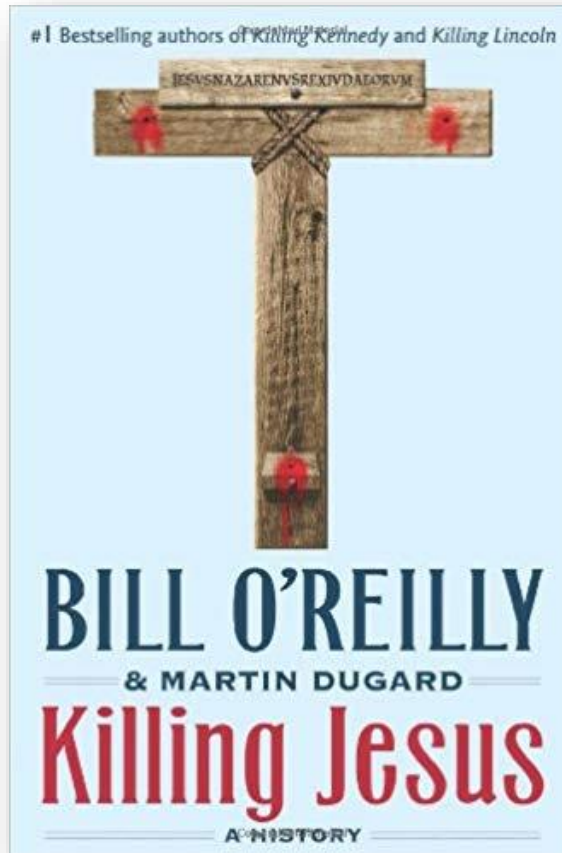


Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy **Eric Metaxas**

This book was a beast (600+ pages) but it kept me glued to the inspirational actions of one of the first people to speak out against Hitler before joining the undercover assassination plot. History. Suspense. Inspiration.

This book covered all the bases.

History

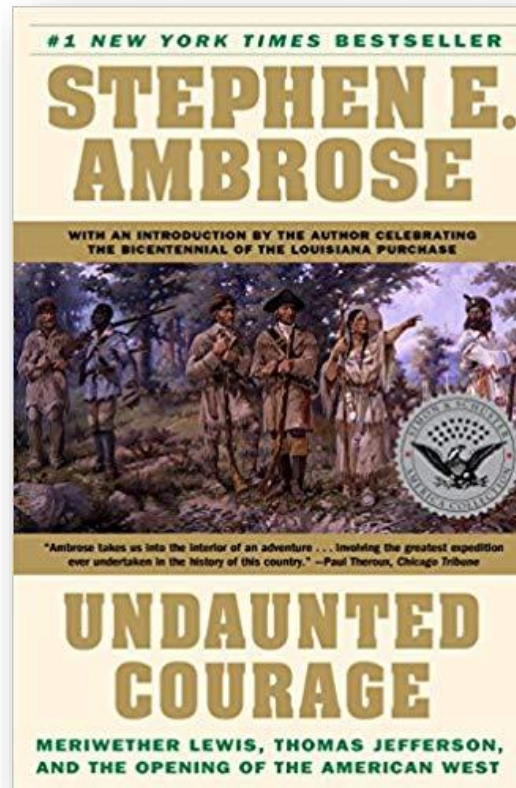


Killing Jesus: A History

Bill O'Reilly and Martin Dugard

The Gospels are great, but what about the surrounding climate in first century Israel? Rome? This piece provides an excellent look at the build up to the trial of Jesus through the lens of the world he had inserted himself into.

History

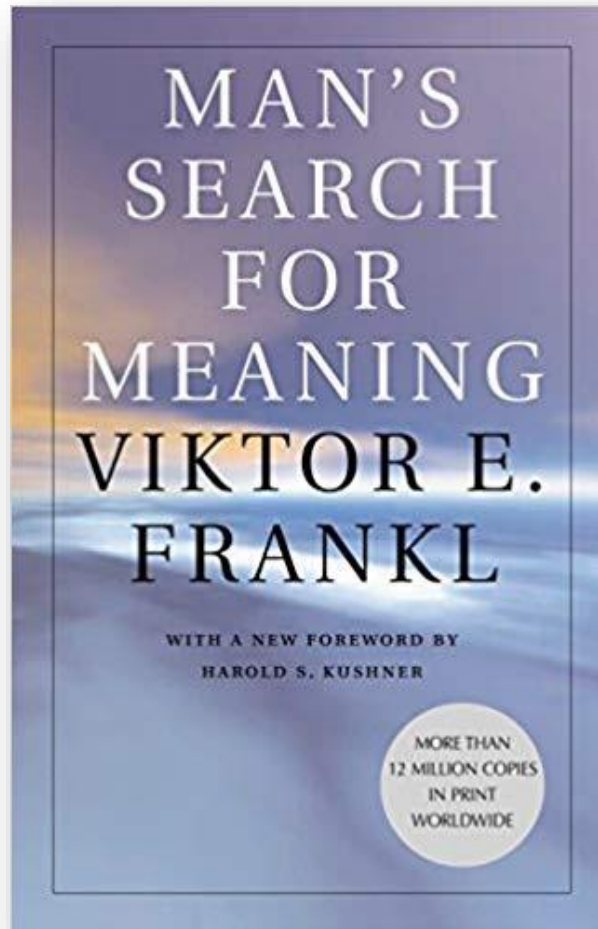


Undaunted Courage:

Meriwether Lewis, Thomas Jefferson, and the Opening of the American West Stephen E. Ambrose

We would be hard-pressed to find a person these days as widely versed in botany, geography, medicine, astronomy, anthropology, and ethnology, with the physical fitness to journey across the unsettled continent and the vision and intellect to record it all to be preserved in history, as Lewis and Clark were described in this book.

History



Man's Search for Meaning
Viktor E. Frankl

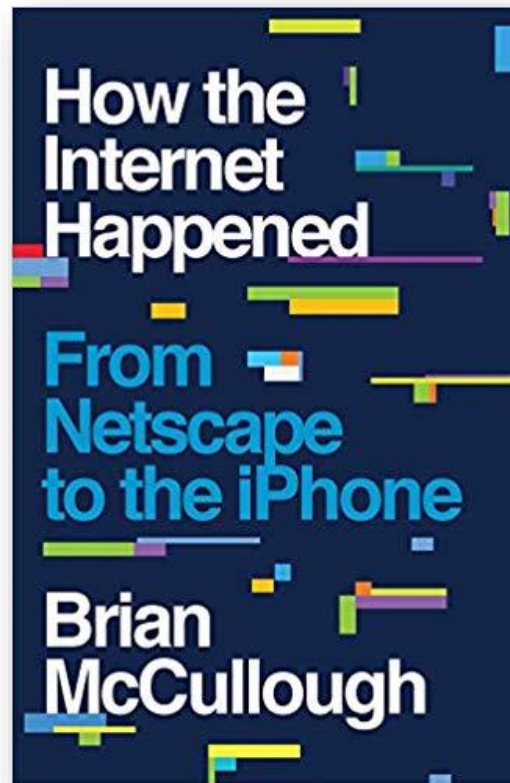
Viktor Frankl's exposé on life in a Nazi concentration camp peels back the curtain to unpack how humans respond in the most excruciating circumstances. This book radically altered the way I have understood the concepts of hope and living with purpose.

Genre:

Business

Reading about companies that have changed how the world operates is fascinating to me. I always appreciate the in-depth lessons in business, history, risk, finance, and psychology. The sampler I share here is a perfect combination of my favorite topics in business: entrepreneurship, real estate, and personal finance.

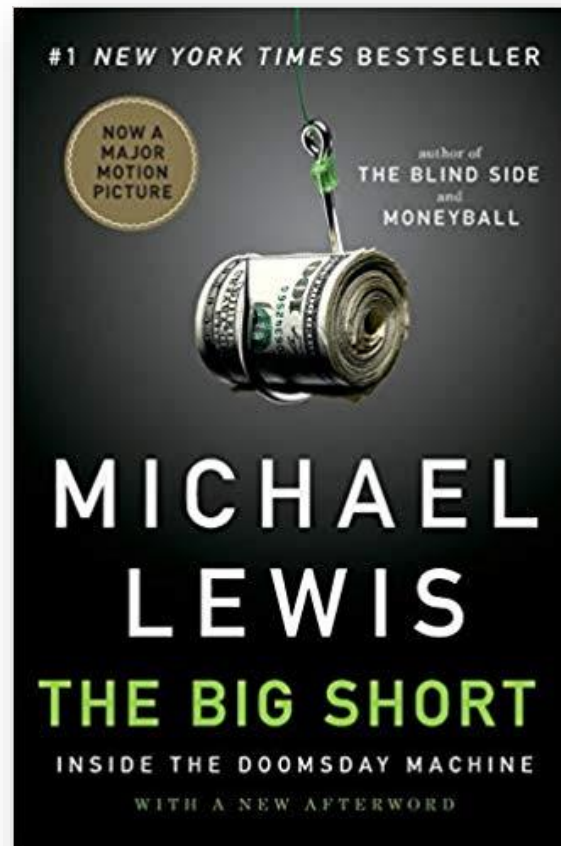
Business



How the Internet Happened:
From Netscape to the iPhone
Brian McCullough

Reading about the early days of Google, Amazon, Facebook, and Netflix was a fascinating rundown, and quite a nostalgic throwback to growing up in the 90s.

Business

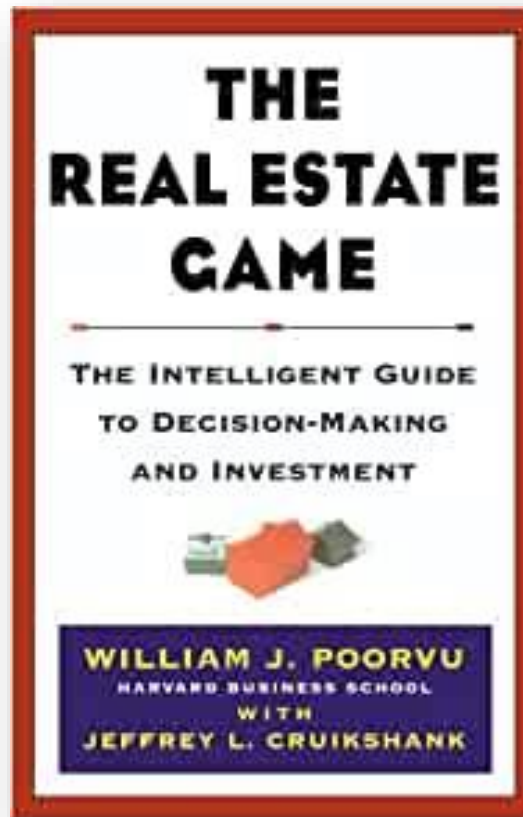


[The Big Short: Inside the Doomsday Machine](#)

[Michael Lewis](#)

Fascinating to learn the inside story of a small team of investors who foresaw the impending doom of the stock market crash and profited as a result. This firsthand glimpse into the arrogance, greed, and carelessness on Wall Street proved to be an enlightening experience.

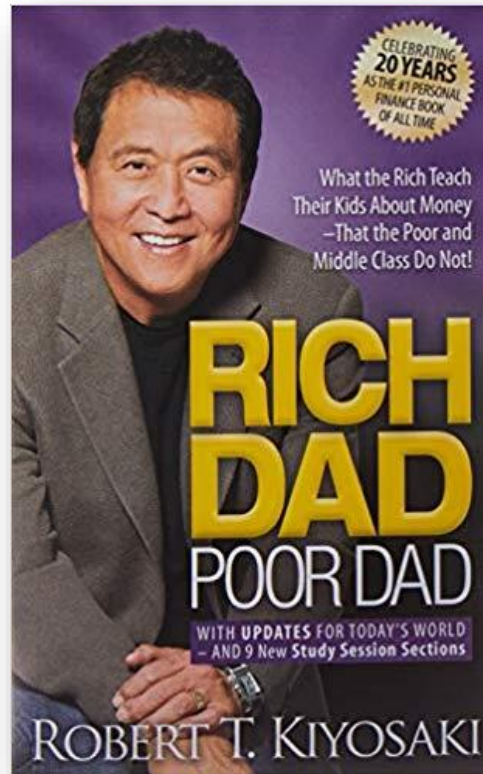
Business



The Real Estate Game:
The Intelligent Guide to Decision-Making and Investment
William J. Poorvu with Jeffrey L. Cruikshank

A fun approach to real estate that emphasizes real people as case studies, rather than concepts alone.

Business



Rich Dad, Poor Dad:

What the Rich Teach Their Kids About Money – That the Poor and Middle Class Do Not!

Robert T. Kiyosaki

This is an uber popular personal finance book for a reason. Kiyosaki isn't afraid to go against the grain of commonly held financial principles.



*Want to listen to one of these books for **FREE**? [Follow this link](#) to pick up a free audiobook*

About the author



Ryan Atkins is a speaker and blogger sharing a message of faith and hope. After a car accident in 2009 literally flipped his world upside down, he came to understand the secret of living a life of meaning even in the midst of tragedy. Paralyzed below the neck, Ryan has learned that physical limitations only tell a fraction of the story. He has made it his mission to learn what it means to live with purpose and how to implement these practices. He is passionate about encouraging others to do the same.

Ryan opens up with his community on his blog, FlatOnMyBack.com. Launched in 2013 to share insights and physical progress with family and friends, it quickly expanded and opened doors for speaking engagements at numerous churches and schools. He has also been featured in interviews for USA Today, LittleThings.com, and University of Cincinnati magazine; among other various news segments.

In addition to speaking and writing, Ryan has developed and led a mentorship program for high school boys focused on authentic manhood and spiritual awakening. He is an avid reader, college basketball junkie, and lover of all spicy foods. He first had his eye on his wife Stephanie in their second-grade classroom. They reconnected 13 years later following Ryan's accident and married in 2016. They reside in Cincinnati, Ohio.