



# Library Lines

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## TOP 15 NON-FICTION BOOKS OF 2015

By Tony Reinke

### 1. Randy Alcorn, *Happiness* (Tyndale).

Alcorn's new book is an encyclopedic; nearly 200,000-word survey of everything the Bible explicitly has to say about the theme of joy/happiness. Happiness is a survey that pulls in dozens of Greek and Hebrew words, and hundreds of quotes from the most important preachers and theologians in church history. Alcorn is like a prosecuting attorney, stacking evidence to prove the essential role of happiness in the Christian life (and to disprove the longstanding joy/happiness dichotomy). Not everyone will enjoy such an encyclopedic ride, but I do, and I find this to be the most compelling book of 2015. **Honourable mention on the affections: David Murray: *The Happy Christian*.**

### 2. D. A. Carson, editor, *NIV Zondervan Study Bible* (Zondervan).

The new Study Bible from Zondervan will draw immediate comparison to the ESV Study Bible, my 2008 book of the year. In a side-by-side comparison of hardcovers, the Bibles are nearly identical in trim size, thickness, and page count. But the NIVZSB is strikingly heavier (76oz compared to 67oz), and the notes are a bit more extensive (1.87m words compared to 1.63m). For this project, Don Carson assembled a team of the greatest minds in the field of biblical theology to create an unprecedented Bible that focuses on key themes in biblical theology as they develop from Genesis to Revelation, culminating in 28 thematic essays in the back. The book does not neglect book outlines and introductions and verse-by-verse comments that you would expect in any good study Bible, but the real value is for readers who want to watch certain themes unfold, a value that may be a little less obvious for readers of the printed Bible. (The Logos digital version seems superior because readers can search the notes on targeted themes—like messiah, temple, sonship—and read the Bible canonically from note to note.).

**3. John Frame, *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology* (P&R).** This 900-page summary is the fruit of John Frame's decades of service to the church as a Christian philosopher. This is a seminary-level survey of the most influential thinkers like Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Tertullian, Athanasius, Augustine, Aquinas, Calvin, Luther, Locke, Edwards, Hegel, Marx, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Sartre, Barth, Lewis, Kuyper, Van Til, and many others. John Frame writes in the preface: "You won't find in this book many (if any) new interpretations of the philosophers and theologians. I have followed, for the most part, the consensus interpretations, because I want to mainly assess the impact that each thinker has had on the consensus. But in this book there will be many evaluations of thinkers that I suspect will be found unconventional. My whole idea is to expose the fact that the history of philosophy and theology is nothing less than spiritual warfare in the life of the mind" (xxvi). The study of philosophy, for the Christian, is not a game, and Frame knows it. The entire book is written in the earnest vigor of a battle between truth and falsehood. This book is mind-girding.

**4. Thomas Schreiner, *Commentary on Hebrews* (Holman).** Bible commentators are becoming skilled at moving from the micro-lens to the macro-lens—from small details of exegetical precision to broader conclusions of biblical theology—in order to show how a particular book contributes to the development of key themes in redemptive history. In 2015, this move even appeared in one established commentary series that previously overlooked biblical theology (see the new NIGTC volume on Romans). Now arrives the inaugural volume in a groundbreaking new series from B&H: *The Biblical Theology for Christian Proclamation Commentary*. Schreiner, whose whole-Bible biblical theology was my book of the year in 2013, is exactly the right man for this

inaugural volume on Hebrews. Here is a careful commentary that zooms in and then pans out very naturally, and concludes with 60 pages of rich theological conclusions. On every level, this is a wonderful new Bible commentary in a series that promises to light a new path forward in rethinking the genre.

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### Mark Your Calendar!

**2016 CLAO Annual General Meeting and Spring Conference**  
Saturday, May 7  
9 a.m.—3:30 p.m.

Salvation Army Guelph Citadel  
1320 Gordon St., Guelph, ON

**Guest speaker: Sharon Dow**

Register online or view the conference brochure and workshops at [www.cla.o.ca](http://www.cla.o.ca).

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