27 Books Christian Teens Should Read

A PROJECT OF THEREBELUTION.COM AND

BRETT HARRIS
“Give yourself unto reading. The man who never reads will never be read; he who never quotes will never be quoted. He who will not use the thoughts of other men’s brains, proves that he has no brains of his own.” — Charles Spurgeon

This is not a list of teen books. This is a list of books teens should read.

You also won’t see any “student versions” on here. That’s because I believe teens can read the same versions grownups are reading.

This list is drawn from my own personal reading as a young adult. I read most of them in junior high or high school and the rest as a twentiesomething.

I have excluded dozens of good books from this list in order to highlight only the best books I’ve ever read — those books whose impact was deep and lasting.

— Brett Harris, Co-Author of Do Hard Things
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An honest look at one of the Bible’s greatest heroes — a man after God’s own heart who stumbled often but returned to God with a melted heart for pardon and help. Walter Chantry is a masterful writer and biblical scholar. Great devotional read.

David by Walter Chantry

“Only one life, twill soon be past, only what’s done for Christ will last.” John Piper has written more than 50 books. This may be the best. Every young person on earth should read and re-read it. The title really does say it all: Don’t waste your life.

Don’t Waste Your Life by John Piper

What will heaven be like? Randy Alcorn presents a thoroughly biblical answer that will transform a young person’s perspective on life, ignite an eager longing for heaven, and inspire them to live in light of eternity while serving faithfully on earth.

Heaven by Randy Alcorn

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**THOUGHTS FOR YOUNG MEN** by J.C. RYLE

A timeless classic for young men and young women. This short book by J.C. Ryle addresses special dangers facing young adults, provides powerful biblical counsel, and suggests some general rules of conduct every Christian should follow. Must-read.

**OUTLIERS** by MALCOLM GLADWELL

*The Story of Success*

An in-depth and thought-provoking look at why certain people succeed and others don’t, *Outliers* is a foundational must-read for young people who want to make an impact on their world. Highly recommended. #1 *New York Times* bestseller.

**MIRACLES** by ERIC METAXAS

*What They Are, Why They Happen, and How They Can Change Your Life*

This faith-building and mind-blowing read will deepen a young person’s view of God and heighten his or her sense of awe. Eric Metaxas offers compelling evidence that miracles are not only possible, but are far more widespread than most of us imagine.

**JUST DO SOMETHING** by KEVIN DEYOUNG

*A Liberating Approach to Finding God’s Will*

Pastor Kevin DeYoung teaches Christians how to make God-honoring decisions without the use of dreams, visions, flocks, impressions, open doors, random Bible verses, casting lots, liver shivers, writing in the sky, etc. Short, easy, life-changing read.
TOTAL TRUTH by Nancy Pearcey
Liberating Christianity from Its Cultural Captivity

Our culture sends teenagers the message that faith is a private matter only—personally comforting but publicly irrelevant. In this Gold Medallion Award winning book Nancy Pearcey makes the passionate case that Christianity is truth for all of life.

MERE CHRISTIANITY by C.S. Lewis

A powerful apologetic for the Christian faith from one of the most important writers of the 20th century. Young people who would like to see their faith defended with clarity, precision, and splendid prose, should grab this book immediately.

SWITCH by Chip & Dan Heath
How to Change Things When Change is Hard

We all have things we’d like to change about ourselves and our world. Brothers Chip and Dan Heath bring together decades of research to shed light on how lasting change happens and how we can overcome obstacles that stand in the way.

WHEN PEOPLE ARE BIG AND GOD IS SMALL by Ed Welch
Overcoming Peer Pressure, Codependency, and the Fear of Man

“In God I trust; I will not be afraid. What can mortal man do to me?” So sings the Psalmist. But quote that verse to a high school student and they’ll tell you the “fear of man” can prove a formidable obstacle. Ed Welch provides biblical solutions for all ages.
The answer to teenage apathy isn’t working harder at a list of do’s and don’ts — it’s falling more in love with God. And once you encounter His love, as Francis Chan describes it, you will never be the same, because God’s love changes everything.

**CRAZY LOVE BY FRANCIS CHAN**

*Overwhelmed by a Relentless God*

A collection of gripping martyr stories from throughout church history, *Jesus Freaks* is a faith-building and perspective-shifting read for all ages. Their stories deserve to be told. And those who read them will never be the same again. Highly recommended.

**JESUS FREAKS BY DC TALK & THE VOICE OF THE MARTYRS**

*Stories of Those Who Stood for Jesus*

This 1,264-page “giant” should be perched on every Christian teenager’s shelf for when they have questions like, “Are there errors in the Bible?” or “How do we know that God exists?” or “Can Christians lose their salvation?” and many, many more.

**SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY BY WAYNE GRUDEM**

*An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*

Arguably the greatest missionary story of modern times, this powerful book introduces readers to the life and testimony of martyr Jim Elliot, including his time in high school and college. A life-changing look at a passionate young man of God.

**SHADOW OF THE ALMIGHTY BY ELISABETH ELLIOT**

*The Life & Testament of Jim Elliot*
Since the age of twelve, Zach Hunter has been working to free men, women, and children bound in slavery. This inspirational little book invites young people to discover their own passion and shows them that anyone can change the world.

This classic from the 1800’s is widely considered one of the best books on Christian living ever written — and has certainly stood the test of time. J.C. Ryle joins C.S. Lewis and John Piper as the only authors to land two titles on this book list.

It’s easy for American Christians to forget how Jesus said His followers would actually live. He said they would leave behind security, convenience, and even family for Him. And in Radical, David Platt challenges all of us to actually live that way.

This book would make the list even if I wasn’t related to the author. Dug Down Deep is an engaging and powerful look at how the truth of God’s Word can transform an apathetic church kid into a student with a burning passion to truly know God.
**WHEN I DON’T DESIRE GOD** by John Piper

*How to Fight for Joy*

Perhaps John Piper’s most practical book to date with five entire chapters devoted to practical application and proven strategies in the fight for joy in God. This is a remarkable resource you will find yourself dipping into again and again.

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**7 HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PEOPLE** by Stephen Covey

*Powerful Lessons in Personal Change*

One of the most influential self-help books of the last century, Stephen Covey’s seven habits encompass time management, teamwork, cooperation, and communication, as well as the lost practice of self-renewal. Every teen should adopt these habits.

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**THE REASON FOR GOD** by Timothy Keller

*Belief in an Age of Skepticism*

Pastor Timothy Keller uses literature, philosophy, anthropology, pop culture, and intellectual reasoning to explain how belief in a Christian God is, in fact, a sound and rational one. For young people *The Reason for God* provides some intellectual bedrock.

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**THE WORLD IS FLAT** by Thomas Friedman

*A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century*

Young adults are growing up in a brave new world — and award-winning *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman is here to introduce them to it. *The World is Flat* is a helpful and engaging primer on how technology is “flattening” the globe.
**The Fight** by John White

*A Practical Handbook to Christian Living*

A thorough, well-balanced, and practical guide to the ins and outs of Christian life. A proven resource for new believers or veteran saints, *The Fight* addresses faith, prayer, temptation, evangelism, guidance, Bible study, fellowship, and work.

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**Thriving at College** by Alex Chediak

*Make Great Friends, Keep Your Faith, and Get Ready for the Real World*

Written by a seasoned college professor and mentor, *Thriving at College* covers the ten most common mistakes college students make—and how to avoid them. A practical guide for launching into responsible, fruitful adulthood for the glory of God.

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**The Screwtape Letters** by C.S. Lewis

An entertaining primer on social interaction that every young person should read — but with caution. Dale Carnegie’s advice is less about winning friends and more about being popular, which are not the same thing. Still, strongly recommended.