

Newton on the Christian Life: To Live Is Christ

By Tony Reinke

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John Newton is famous for his legendary hymn "Amazing Grace." Many have celebrated his dramatic conversion from a life in the slave trade to his eventual work to end it. But often overlooked are Newton's forty years as a pastor ministering to parishioners and friends unsettled by the trials, doubts, and fears of life.

Newton is perhaps the greatest pastoral letter writer in the history of the church. He took up his pen day after day to help others fix their eyes on Christ, which, he writes, is the underlying battle of the Christian life. Through a careful study of scores of letters, Tony Reinke brings together Newton's brilliant vision of the Christian life in one accessible place.

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Editorial Review

Review

“Through Newton’s words and Tony’s words—one voice—God does eye surgery on the heart, so that we see Christ more fully. And *more fully* means seeing him as *more precious*. And *more precious* means *more powerful to heal us and change us*. Relentlessly focused on the sweetness and the greatness of Christ as the Savior and Satisfier of our souls, over this book flies the banner of John Newton: ‘None but Jesus.’”
—**John Piper,** Founder, desiringGod.org; Chancellor, Bethlehem College & Seminary

“Here is mastery! As the Lord Jesus Christ, crucified and reigning, was the life-giving focus of the Evangelical Revival, and as George Whitefield was its supreme awakener, and John Wesley its brilliant discipler, so ex–slave trader John Newton was its peerless pastoral counselor and perhaps the greatest Christian letter writer of all time. In his 768- footnote digest of the spiritual wisdom in Newton’s thousand-plus published letters, along with his published sermons and hymns, Reinke distills a vast flow of pure honey for the Christian heart. This is a book to read over and over again.”
—**J. I. Packer,** Board of Governors' Professor of Theology, Regent College

“Linger long here. The depths and riches within these pages are truly rare and answer what your soul most hungers for: life in Christ. I will be returning to this book many, many times over.”
—**Ann Voskamp,** *New York Times* best-selling author, *One Thousand Gifts*

“*Newton on the Christian Life* is a magnum opus (though Tony still has plenty of time to surpass it). A bold project, beautifully done. You know *about* John Newton; now you can be pastored by him. You will feel known by him. You will be encouraged that your struggles are like his and his congregants. And you will discover again that huge helpings of the beauty and love of Jesus are the perfect antidote for our self-consumed lives.”
—**Ed Welch,** counselor; faculty member, the Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation

“The Christian life is *Christ*, as John Newton clarified so helpfully. If you are still treating Christianity as a strategy for your own self-improvement, this book will not satisfy you. But if you have despaired of yourself and are now clinging only to Christ, this book will refresh you. Newton’s practical counsel, brought vividly to life again by Tony Reinke, will lead you into the green pastures and beside the still waters that are, at this moment, awaiting you in your all-sufficient Savior. For some readers, this book may just become the most important book, outside the Bible, they will ever read.”
—**Raymond C. Ortlund Jr.**, Lead Pastor, Immanuel Church, Nashville, Tennessee

“Best known for the iconic hymn ‘Amazing Grace,’ John Newton deserves to be equally known for his tremendous corpus of spiritual letters. In them, Newton’s gifting as a pastoral cardiologist with few peers is on full display. Many of the main struggles and joys of the human heart have not changed. And, as Reinke ably shows, Newton’s advice, given in a world somewhat different from ours, is still potent and relevant. Very highly recommended.”
—**Michael A. G. Haykin,** professor of church history and biblical spirituality, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

“Newton’s pastoral letters are a unique and rich resource for Christians today, and both of us owe them a debt too great to describe. However, they constitute a notoriously difficult body of work in which to navigate. Many a time you can remember some gem you have read in these letters but now can’t locate. Here

we have a guide to Newton's main themes and topics, as well as considered treatments of many of his most valuable letters. This is a welcome tool for Christian growth and discipleship."
—**Tim and Kathy Keller,** Redeemer Presbyterian Church, New York City

"This book is worth every minute of your time, whether or not you have any interest in John Newton. Reinke brings out Newton in all his cheer to minister to readers. The result is a Christ-exalting manual for growth into Christian joy, freedom, and fruitfulness. No, more than a manual, this is a work of beauty to be read again and again."
—**Michael Reeves,** President and Professor of Theology, Union School of Theology, Oxford, England; author, *Delighting in the Trinity*, *The Unquenchable Flame*, and *Rejoicing in Christ*

"John Newton mentored his young friend William Wilberforce into politics, which eventually led to the abolition of the British slave trade. To this day, Newton's letters continue to disciple generations of Christians. This book draws together Newton's key life lessons in a way every Christian can apply. As a state governor, a former member of Congress, and a Christian in public service, I am reminded by Newton that we are never more valuable to our society than after we have been humbled by the amazing grace of God."
—**Mike Pence**

"Reinke takes us well beyond the hymn 'Amazing Grace' to explore John Newton's stirring pastoral ministry and soaring vision of the believer's life in Christ. I am delighted to recommend this book."
—**Thomas S. Kidd,** Distinguished Professor of History, Baylor University; author, *The Great Awakening: The Roots of Evangelical Christianity in Colonial America*

"This book, by one of the brightest writers in contemporary evangelicalism, examines the life lessons of a hymn writer, a freedom fighter, and a gospel preacher. Even if you don't think you like church history, you will love this book. Reinke ties Newton's life and thought to practical applications for every believer. I encourage you to read and savor anew the grace that saved wretches like us."
—**Russell D. Moore,** president, The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention; author, *Onward*

"You may think you are acquainted with John Newton: converted slave trader, pastor, writer of the hymn 'Amazing Grace.' Get ready to meet the man you only think you know. Reinke guides us on a tour of Newton's theology through his life and letters. This book is pastoral theology at its finest. Newton was a man captured by Christ, exalting Christ, and caring for God's people by pointing them to Christ and him crucified."
—**C. J. Mahaney,** Senior Pastor, Sovereign Grace Church of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky

"Although he authored what would become America's best-loved hymn, John Newton's contemporaries thought his best gift was letter writing. Rarely, if ever, has so much wisdom, love, sanity, balance, genuine affection, and wonderfully down-to-earth-because-full-of-heaven practical counsel been expressed in letters written in the English language. Underneath them all runs knowledge of the Word of God, a devotion to the Son of God, and a love for the people of God. Newton makes us feel, even two centuries later, that he was writing for us, and that he knew us well. Reinke has done the whole church a service by recovering Newton's letters from obscurity. *Newton on the Christian Life* is a taste of spiritual manna that will make us want to read the letters of Newton for ourselves."
—**Sinclair B. Ferguson**, Professor of Systematic Theology, Redeemer Seminary, Dallas, Texas

"This book presents valuable lessons from the ministry of John Newton. His perception of grace permeated his theology, his thinking, his experience, his hopes, his ministry, and even his dying. As Reinke writes,

grace was ‘the air he breathed.’ Here we catch glimpses into the workings of Newton’s heart as he focused unreservedly on living for and through the Lord Jesus Christ.”
—**Marylynn Rouse,** Director, The John Newton Project

About the Author

Tony Reinke is a journalist and senior writer for desiringGod.org. He is the author of *Lit!: A Christian Guide to Reading* Books; *Newton on the Christian Life*; and *12 Ways Your Phone Is Changing You*.

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.

John Piper (DTheol, University of Munich) is the founder and teacher of desiringGod.org and the chancellor of Bethlehem College & Seminary. He served for 33 years as the senior pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and is the author of more than 50 books, including *Desiring God*, *Don’t Waste Your Life*, *This Momentary Marriage*, *Bloodlines*, and *Does God Desire All to Be Saved?*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Neil Turner:

The knowledge that you get from Newton on the Christian Life: To Live Is Christ could be the more deep you searching the information that hide within the words the more you get thinking about reading it. It does not mean that this book is hard to comprehend but Newton on the Christian Life: To Live Is Christ giving you buzz feeling of reading. The copy writer conveys their point in particular way that can be understood by means of anyone who read it because the author of this reserve is well-known enough. That book also makes your vocabulary increase well. So it is easy to understand then can go to you, both in printed or e-book style are available. We recommend you for having this kind of Newton on the Christian Life: To Live Is Christ instantly.

James Wendler:

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Michele Fernandez:

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