

take + read

Giles Cattermole invites you to read great Christian books

In the summer of AD 386, a young man lay weeping under a fig-tree in a Milanese garden.¹ Tormented by his failure to overcome his sinfulness, he cried out to God: 'Will you be angry for ever?' Suddenly he heard a child's voice, chanting. 'Take and read; take and read'.

He'd brought to the garden Paul's letter to the Romans. He picked it up, opened it, and read the passage his eyes first fell on. 'Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh.'²

Immediately he felt as though a light of confidence had poured into his heart, the darkness of his doubt had fled. This was the moment of his conversion. The beginning of a life for Christ that has perhaps had more impact than any other since. For this young man was Augustine, later bishop of Hippo in North Africa and perhaps the greatest of the early church fathers.

We're not Augustine. We're not likely to have the influence he did. And I don't want to encourage us randomly to open the Bible and read whatever we see first. Nor do I think we need to hear a mysterious voice telling us to read. The point is to take, and read, God's Word. It's God's Word that will convict us and change us. So let's take it seriously, study it, wrestle with it as we ask God to make it clear to us by his Spirit.

And to help us do that, we've launched 'take





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The apostle Paul wasn't too busy to read. In fact, getting hold of his books and parchments was one of his priorities.⁴ Busy-ness is about priorities: do we want to understand God's Word more, and apply it more in our lives? Or do we need to spend more time on Facebook or watch another DVD box set? And you'll only get more busy when you qualify - for many of you, you'll never have as much spare time as you do now!

And does it matter if you've already got books you still haven't read? Let's put it this way: if you don't have any unread books on your shelf, then you won't be able to read any! When you do find you've got a moment to read something, it'd be a shame to find there was nothing there to read. And it makes much more sense to have a selection of books waiting to be read, so you can pick up something that's appropriate to what you need there and then.

As a rule of thumb, if there's a chance you might read a book in the next ten years, and it's going cheap now, buy it. It doesn't matter if it does take ages before you get round to it; at least if it's on your shelf, there's a sporting chance you will read it. The one guarantee of not reading it is not having it available!

So that's why it's 'take and read'. You won't be able to read until you've taken. So take books, and read them. And pray that God will use them to help you understand his Word and his will, to help you grow in your love of him and his people, and to equip you better to live out your discipleship as a medic. ■

and read'. It's an invitation to read good books that will help us understand the Bible better. We've selected a range of readable, relevant books to cover the essentials for any Christian medical student, and we're selling them

cheaply to CMF student members! We'll

keep refreshing the list of books available - depending on what's published and what we can get at affordable prices - so do check the website for the latest offers.³

But however good the books and the bargains, many of you may still be reluctant to take them and read them. Perhaps you're too busy? Perhaps you've got too many books already?

REFERENCES

1. Augustine trans. Blaiklock EM. *The confessions of Saint Augustine*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1983, VII.xii.29
2. Romans 13:13-14
3. www.cmf.org.uk/students/tar.asp
4. 2 Timothy 4:13