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Book Review: The Collected Works of John Piper

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as he warns of the dangers of departing from God's view of marriage, desiring for them instead to experience the joy of gospel-centered marital romance.

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John Piper. *The Collected Works of John Piper*. Edited by Justin Taylor and David Mathis. 14 vols. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017. 8464 pp. £546.90/\$699.99.

Recognizing the deeply theological role embodied by pastors throughout history, a resurgence has taken place within local churches in recent years. This resurgence refers to the leadership of the church, men called by God, who serve specifically as pastor-theologians (for evidence of this resurgence see recent publications such as *The Pastor Theologian*, by Gerald Hiestand and Todd Wilson [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015], and *The Pastor as Public Theologian*, by Kevin Vanhoozer and Owen Strachan [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2015]). When one thinks of pastor-theologians *par excellence* in this generation, several names come to mind, and one that will always rightfully rise to the top is John Piper.



While now serving as Chancellor of Bethlehem College and Seminary, Piper served for over three decades as Pastor for Preaching and Vision at Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis. Piper has served his local church faithfully, and beyond that, he has blessed the church throughout the world by means of his many publications. Through his preaching and publications, Piper has proclaimed the message of the glory of God in all things for the joy of all the nations. While one could go to a book distributor and buy each of Piper's works, Crossway has now bundled these works together in a 14-volume set (with more volumes on the way in the future, depending on the pace of the author's publications in coming years).

This set brings together all of Piper's published writings from 1970 to 2015, featuring the latest editions of his books, along with hundreds of articles and chapters, compiled into one resource. New introductions are written by Piper himself for each volume, and a detailed index volume is included for topical reference across the whole set, allowing readers to reference Piper's use of Scripture, subjects, and persons. The editors explain their motivation in assembling these works into one set: "To read all of Piper's published writings individually would require the acquisition of more than one hundred volumes, along with tracking down dozens of older articles and reviews in obscure publications" (1:8). In terms of material quality, Crossway explains, "These high-quality volumes are printed in Italy on specialty book paper designed for maximum readability. Each volume features a durable, Smyth-sewn binding" (<https://www.crossway.org/books/the-collected-works-of-john-piper-hconly/>).

Beyond the beautiful design, these volumes contain theological treatises that deal with a number of topics essential to the health of the church. This set seeks to include everything John Piper ever wrote, resulting in forty-five books, sixty articles and reviews, twenty-three forewords, and forty-two chapters (this does not include his sermons and articles found online at desiringgod.org; 1:8). The basic ordering of these works is chronological, but some of the volumes have been arranged

thematically (1:9). The first eight volumes comprise his major books. The Swans Are Not Silent series (brief biographical sketches of various pastoral leaders) makes up volume 9. Volumes 10 and 11 contain all of Piper’s devotional writings, followed by all of his published poetry. Volumes 12 and 13 include all of Piper’s chapters and forewords, as well as reviews and articles for various journals (1:9–10). The final volume includes a year-by-year bibliography of Piper’s published work. This includes every edition of every book ever published, as well as Piper’s Sunday sermons preached at Bethlehem Baptist Church (1980–2013).

Obviously, a review of all of these works by John Piper cannot be written here; the amount of content is enormous. One can, however, note the impact Piper’s preaching and writing ministry has had on a generation. Piper’s message has reverberated with young and old alike, as his preaching and writing constantly calls his audience to get their minds and hearts around the text of Scripture. After nearly four decades of ministry we are even now seeing Piper’s reflections on the power behind his ministry, namely, the Spirit of God working in the people of God by means of the Word of God. His most recent publications, not yet included in this set (*A Peculiar Glory* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016] and *Reading the Bible Supernaturally* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016]), both focus on the validity of Scripture, as well as the way in which we should study it. This focus will remind people that power is not found merely in a person, but in the enduring Word of God ministered to a people by the Spirit. Any substantial and lasting change that comes from Piper’s ministry will be rooted in the way in which he relentlessly exegeted Scripture and applied it to the lives of people.

While certainly not an inexpensive set to purchase, this puts the entire writing ministry of one of the most influential voices of our era on our bookshelves. The message that “God is most glorified in you when you are most satisfied in him” (a proclamation included in virtually every one of his works) is a needed word as we behold the glories of God and recognize in his presence “there is fullness of joy” and at his “right hand there are pleasures forevermore” (Ps. 16:11). Because Piper’s message is not novel, it is needed for future generations, and this is a wonderful means of preserving his message and legacy.

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Tony Reinke. *12 Ways Your Phone Is Changing You*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017. 224 pp. £11.67/\$14.99.

I see it at stoplights. I see it during timeouts at my daughter’s basketball games. And I even see it when I stand in the back of the sanctuary during church services. When there’s a lull in the action, however brief, smartphones appear, and eyes are toward them.

But why must we check them so often? Is it because smartphones are such great tools for human flourishing or because they are evil taskmasters that make us less human with each use?

This is the dilemma with which Tony Reinke opens his book, and if you are like most people, the dilemma isn’t theoretical. Your phone *is* changing you. It’s

