



Ask for the old paths...  
...and ye shall find rest for your souls.

Jeremiah 6:16



## 2019 FALL BIBLE STUDY

REDEEMER CHURCH OF WATERFORD  
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## Introduction

It says here that a Puritan is a person with strict moral beliefs, especially about pleasure. They say that Puritanism was fanatical, joyless, judgmental. They say they were obsessed with making rules, they were patriarchal, haunted by the fear that someone, somewhere may be happy.

Who were the Puritans? Is the reputation deserved? And is there anything they had that you and I might need?

**John Piper:** “When I think of the Puritans in my experience, I don’t think mainly academically. I think of a lineage of friends. I don’t live my life in search of new ideas. I live my life in search of help. I need help! I need help to know God. I need help to love Him. I need help to kill my sin. I need help to be a more kind person. I need help to be a better husband. I need help to be a better father. I need help to figure out life!

“I find help in that rare author who really, really knows his theology; really knows how people are saved, and how God is glorified, and how biblical theology fits together, and how sanctification works, and what’s the role of the Holy Spirit, and how sin is conquered. They really know their Bible, but they seem to be really in touch with my gut needs.”

**Kevin DeYoung:** “I was an aspiring, wannabe minister. I was a college student and then I was a seminary student, so the effect of the Puritans was to give me this vision for what ministry could be like. Ministry lived under the authority of Scriptures and for the glory of God.”

**Mark Dever:** “They were such utterly serious and joyful Christians. They weren’t distracted by their phones. They were concentrating on the Word their lives depended on.”

**John Piper:** “And so there is something about these Puritan pastors, with these giants of Owen and Edwards, that knew their Bible, knew their God, knew their salvation, knew their sanctification, and knew their hearts, and knew MY heart in a way that they feed me. So when I think about them, I don’t just think about influences. I think: I love them! I love them!

The Puritans had a gift for living in two worlds at once: they kept one eye always on eternity even as they lived their lives entirely for the Lord in this life.

## Chapter I The Dawn of Puritanism

Puritanism doesn't have an exact birthdate, and it doesn't have a specific expiration date either.

- The term *puritan* was first used in the 1560s
  - To be a Puritan was to swim against the tide.
  - Puritanism attracted the truly convinced
  - The Puritans wanted to see the Reformation go on – to see the church grow in holiness
  - The Puritans were a movement within the British churches of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth centuries
  - The Puritans were “the hotter sort of Protestants” who wanted things to be pure.
  - The term puritan came to be used generally for people who had complaints about the Church of England in the 1580s and it continued to be used widely until the end of the Seventeenth century
  - “Men who were determined to purify the church in its worship, doctrine, in its very substance.” Jeremy Walker
  - “Zealous Christians identified with them because the Puritan ideology was Reformation all through, from start to finish.” J. I. Packer
  
- **How did Puritans and Puritanism come to exist in the first place?**

For centuries the church in Europe had been governed by the Pope from Rome. John Wycliffe from Oxford had attacked the abuses of the church, and called for the Bible to be translated from Latin into a language everyone could understand.

- John Wycliffe was a Fourteenth century scholar at the University of Oxford in England who had a passion for seeing the Bible in English.
- He is in many ways a trailblazer for at least English translation and English access to the word of God.
- “The Morning Star of the Reformation”
- The Catholic Church is set against this desire to have the word of God available, accessible for the common man and woman.
- Wycliffe is burned by the Catholic Church

In 1526, William Tyndale's English translation of the New Testament reaches England from Germany. It had been pronounced heretical in England, so copies had to be smuggled into the country. It wasn't the first Bible in English, but it was the first to be translated directly from the original Hebrew and Greek, instead of from Latin. It was the first to take advantage of the printing press.

- The Puritan age flows out of the work of William Tyndale
- England became a nation of “the Book,” and that in large measure is because of Tyndale
- In Germany, Luther is doing what Tyndale is doing in England: bringing the Bible into the hands and hearts of the people of the country

- Tyndale's prayer: "O God, open the eyes of the King of England."
- Henry VIII eventually endorses Tyndale's translation
- Tyndale is a man of courage, a man whose confidence is in God, and there is a holy fearlessness in the things that he says.
- Tyndale is a part of the Puritan stream in that he is wedded to the glory of God, moved by the fear of the Lord that frees him from the fear of man in large measure, and allows him to pursue the glory of God regardless of his personal expense.

Henry VIII has his own reasons for wanting a different kind of Church in England. His book attacking Martin Luther had won Henry praise from the Pope, and the title "Defender of the Faith."

- As Henry's wife Catherine of Aragon grows older, he becomes concerned that she will not be able to provide him a male heir, and he seeks an annulment of their twenty-four year marriage from the Pope. The Pope refuses.
- In 1526, he begins an affair with Anne Boleyn
- In 1533, with Anne six months pregnant, Henry lost patience with the Pope and broke with the Roman Catholic Church, banished Catherine from court, and declared himself married to Anne Boleyn.
- In 1534 Parliament passes "**The Act of Supremacy**," declaring Henry VIII "Supreme Head of the Church of England."
- The separation from Rome opens the door for those who have wanted reform to go much further.

Thomas Cranmer is taken by Henry VIII from the halls of Cambridge and made the Archbishop of Canterbury, and right into the midst of the King and his politics. Cranmer was very influenced by Luther's ideas. Cranmer sees an opportunity to bring these Reformation ideas into his home country of England.

Henry VIII dies in 1547 and his 9-year-old son Edward becomes king. He was the first English monarch to be raised as a Protestant. Unlike his father, he seemed to have genuine Christian convictions. With Cranmer as his advisor, Edward cements the separation from Rome, abolishes clerical celibacy and the mass, and establishes Protestantism in England.

Edward dies in 1553 at just 15-years-old. A plan is set in place to make Lady Jane Grey, Edward's cousin, Queen. That decision was disputed, and Roman Catholics and Protestants began a tug of war not only for the throne, but for the spiritual heart of the nation.

Nine days after Edward's death, Lady Jane Grey is deposed by Edward's Roman Catholic half-sister Mary. She was merciless. She wanted to make England Catholic again. She executed Jane and her husband. During her five-year reign, Mary had more than 300 religious dissenters burned alive.

Thomas Cranmer, who is now out of step with the monarch, is arrested. The Queen forces him to witness the martyrdom of Bishops Ridley and Latimer. It has such an impact that Cranmer recants his faith, but almost immediately he repented. In 1556 Cranmer was burned at the stake.

It was this omnipresent threat of death under the reign of Queen Mary that made Puritanism spring into life. 800 Protestants fled from England to the continent, spending time with John Calvin

and Henrich Bullinger. Later, when Elizabeth I became Queen in 1558, and it was safe to return to England, these exiled Protestants came home, bringing with them a newly acquired theological depth, and a zealous commitment to implement a fulsome, robust kind of reform in England.

These Puritans believed that Elizabeth's "Religious Settlement" smacked of compromise and did not go far enough.

In 1559, Elizabeth passes the **Act of Uniformity**, mandating that the Anglican Prayer Book must be used exclusively in the public worship of the Church of England. Those who refused were subject to fines.

- The Puritans saw a church that wasn't being shaped by Sola Scriptura (Scripture Alone); they saw things within the Church of England which they believed could not be justified from Scripture.
- The Puritans feared heresy more than martyrdom.

The Puritans believed that **all of life should be lived to the glory of God.**

The good news that Jesus Christ had lived a perfect life, and then died a sacrificial death in their place and on their behalf, transformed life for them on a daily basis.

This trust in Christ wasn't merely intellectual for them.

It was deep. It was rich. It was emotional.

## Chapter II The Marks of Puritanism

### *The Crucial Distinctions Between Puritan Belief and Roman Catholic Belief*

The Puritans effectively took the baton from Reformers like Tyndale, Luther, and Calvin and they shared with them the Five Solas of the Reformation. We are saved by Grace Alone (Sola Gratia) through Faith Alone (Sola Fide) in Christ Alone (Solus Christus) to the Glory of God Alone (Soli Deo Gloria) and Scripture Alone (Sola Scriptura) was the highest and only authority.

Roman Catholicism says that salvation comes through Grace PLUS the sacraments, Faith PLUS good works, Christ PLUS the Church, Scripture PLUS the authority of tradition.

This view that Scripture alone must be the highest authority, not the tradition of the Church or our feelings, was foundational. Ephesians 6: Scripture is the Sword of God's Spirit. Nothing could be more powerful than the Scriptures.

### **The Particular Distinctives of Puritan Belief**

1. *The Trinitarian Nature of God*: the electing grace of the Father, the dying love of Jesus Christ, and the applicatory work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of sinners.
2. *The Church is Crucial to the Purposes of Christ*: whatever their view of church government, they were seeking to gather genuine Christians together in the church.
  - a. *Will-Worship*: worship according to the human will; the Puritan view of the church was that it is the household of God, the pillar and ground of the truth; as such, it is not for us to decide what the church is, what it looks like, how it acts, what it does. It is for God to say, and for us to obey.
  - b. *Two Principles of Worship*:
    - i. **The Normative Principle**: whatever God has not expressly forbidden is permitted
    - ii. **The Regulative Principle**: whatever God expressly requires is commanded and must be pursued
      - “The Crown Rights of the Redeemer” to rule His own Church: the underlying principle of the authority of Christ in His Church. Any insistence on something that was contrary to the Scripture was an imposition that was contrary to the will of God;
      - The plainness and simplicity of worship so that the people might understand, and that God might be glorified through the Word.

3. *The Necessity of Personal Conversion*: it is possible to claim to know God without truly knowing God, to be part of an external institution without belonging to the Kingdom of Heaven. It is not enough to have the external label of Christianity. They are concerned that the life that is in Christ to be known in the souls of the men and women.
  - a. Before the foundations of the earth you have been set apart to reflect God in Christ's knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, something you cannot do by yourself.
  - b. The absolute sufficiency of Christ as a Savior: all the glory for our salvation goes to God alone. This is the joy and good news we're made for, and therefore this is truth worth living and worth dying for.

#### 4. *The Fearsome Power of Preaching God's Word*

John Preston: "There is not a sermon which is heard, but that it sets us nearer heaven or hell." The Puritans believed that God had spoke it through His word, and it was crucial that what He had said in His word should be faithfully communicated.

The Puritans encouraged note taking on their sermons and to brood over them and to pray over them during the week before the next sermon.

"The Uses" – the application of Scripture through the sermon: "moments of shifting in your chair as the cutting edges are getting close."

##### a. **The Characteristics of Puritan Preaching:**

- i. *Puritan preaching impacted the affections*: Holy Spirit produced emotions. Jonathan Edwards wanted to raise the affections as high as possible so long as they are raised with truth and so that they are in accord with the truth being spoken;
- ii. *Puritan preaching is extraordinarily serious*. You'll never find a joke – ever – in one single Puritan sermon. In (Jonathan) Edwards, you will look in vain for personal testimonies: he doesn't talk about himself;
- iii. *Puritan preaching is saturated with the Bible*. God was always big, and issues were always earnest and eternal;
- iv. *Puritan preaching is with urgency*. The Puritan preacher "talks in a way that says, 'This man has something urgent to tell me,' and that feeling is sustained throughout the sermon;
- v. *Puritan preaching is plain in style*, not ornate or esoteric;

- vi. *Puritan preaching is reverent.* You would have known that you were in the presence of a man who is in the presence of God. A true reverence that was evident in the way that he handles the text, that the preacher is concerned not to introduce anything of his own notions, but rather to discover what God has said.
- vii. Puritan preaching is clear and logical: they had the ability to speak God's word in a way that the people listening to could understand and be affected by it.

**b. Criticisms of Puritan Preaching**

- i. *Long-windedness:* they realized that doctrine needed to be unpacked, and they took their time in unpacking it. It would be very good for us to develop longer attention spans for the words of life
- ii. *Promoted introspection:* they did not encourage morbid introspection, but with their precision, the effect on some people can be a burden when they meant it to be a lifting of the soul.
  1. The pursuit of personal holiness was at the head of the list for the Puritans because they believed that their conformity to Christ-likeness brought glory to God;
  2. They emphasized holiness in a way that many people in our day are afraid to emphasize; "I sometimes think that our definition of legalism is anyone who takes holiness more seriously than I do." [Kevin DeYoung]
  3. There were individual Puritans who were very strong on the issue of godliness which came out through their application in their preaching because they wanted to ensure that God's people did not just know the Bible, they don't just know the truth in the Bible, but they wanted God's people to also live out what God was saying in the Bible.

## Chapter III The Architects of Puritanism

### *William Perkins*

Probably the greatest theologian of the sixteenth century, and the main architect of the young movement, was **William Perkins**. Born in 1558 in the quaintly named village of Marston Jabbett, William was known for his recklessness, drunkenness, and profanity. While he was a student in Cambridge, he overheard a woman in the street telling off her child by saying, "Hold your tongue, or I'll hand you over to drunken Perkins!" He was so humiliated that, apparently at that very moment he began to really think about the things of eternity.

- Perkins was not only trained in Cambridge, but he also ministered there;
- Out of his ministry came the 'second generation Puritans' who took the Puritan movement into the seventeenth century;
- Apart from being a preacher, he was a prolific writer; his writings laid the solid foundation for the Puritan movement;
- He was an unapologetic predestinarian, but taught it in a very pastoral and winsome way;
- As a student he would go to the prisons and preach to the prisoners every week, and when some of them were sentenced to death for their crimes, he would accompany them and speak with them and pray with them before they were executed;
- Perkins wasn't just an 'egghead preaching to eggheads' in a rarefied academic environment;
- He was a man who spoke to the common people and, like his Savior, the common people heard him gladly.

Perkins died from kidney stone complications in 1602 at the age of only 44 yet his influence persisted through his writings and the students he taught at Cambridge, men such as **William Ames, Thomas Goodwin, Richard Sibbes**.

### *Richard Sibbes (1577-1635)*

Born in Tostock, England, Sibbes grew up in a normal working-class home. He was not good with tools, but he was a good student, so his parents sent him to school more than they normally did the kids in that day. He got a sponsor that took him to St. John's College in Cambridge where he was a student from 1593 until he graduated and then became a Fellow of the College, eventually becoming a Senior Fellow and that became his adult life: he taught.

He remained in the Church of England and was respected by people both inside and outside the Church of England. He was a very godly man who spoke in respectful ways to people, even to people who disagreed with him. He had a persuasive power that was sometimes lacking in people in the Church of England.

Sibbes never sought simply to change the behavior of his listeners, but always seeking to get under the superficial level of his listeners' behavior to deal with the desires, the loves, the inclinations that *drive* the behavior.

His power was not in the originality of his thought; he was not a 'theological clarify' in the way William Perkins or William Ames were. Sibbes was very much used by God as a popular orator. He apparently had a stutter when he spoke which tended to make him speak in small phrases rather than sort of John Owens who spoke in long, Latinate sentences that had dependent clause after dependent clause. His power was in his presentation of the truth, not so much in the difference in the substance of what he said from what his peers were saying.

Sibbes was known as the 'Heavenly Doctor.' Hardened sinners around Cambridge would avoid going to hear Sibbes for fear they would get converted, whereas the 'bruised' sinners called him the 'honey-mouthed sweet dropper' because of the sheer sweetness of how he proclaimed the beauty and glory and graciousness of Christ.

*Gloria Furman:* "In following Jesus, I have lots of confidence that He is able to save me, and able to forgive my sin, He is able to deliver me. What I personally struggle with sometimes in moments of doubt is His willingness. To think, 'Is He powerful enough?' That's the easy answer: 'Yes.' 'Is He willing?' My fearful heart says, 'I hope so.' Richard Sibbes really helps me with this:

"There is more height and depth and breadth, there are greater dimensions  
in love and mercy in Christ, than there are in our sins and miseries.  
And all this is gloriously revealed in the gospel."  
Richard Sibbes

"To think that the ultimate demonstration of Christ's power is also the ultimate demonstration of His willingness at the cross is profoundly humbling and emboldening at the same time, that I can go to Him because He is *that* willing to save me."

In 1603, James I became King. He was known to hold Calvinistic views, so the Puritans were really hoping their situation would improve.

The Puritans meet the new king in 1604 at the **Hampton Court Conference**. The King agrees to produce a fresh translation of the Bible, the King James Version, which would be largely based on Tyndale's earlier work.

The Puritans wanted a Presbyterian form of church government, one which would make bishops redundant, and if bishops lost power in the church, James realized he also would lose power in the church. James demanded that all clergy conform to the liturgy and government of the Church of England.

When the Puritans objected, the King threatened to 'harrie (harass) them out of the land, or else do worse!'

### *William Ames (1576-1633)*

Over the next five years, nearly 90 ministers were suspended from office. One of them who was ejected from Cambridge University and fled to the Netherlands, became one of the greatest Puritan theologians of all time, William Ames (born in Ipswich, England in 1576)

For the Puritan, correct theology was essential. You can't love a God you don't know; you can't live for a God you don't understand; and nor do you want to live an entire life for a Jesus that *you* imagined, and *you* created.

For the Puritan, theology was never the destination. It was to be an applied science, something that was 1) understood and then 2) lived upon, and in those two things then the experience flows. Two of Ames's books show this balance:

- *The Marrow of Sacred Divinity*, which was very influential on the continent and in the American Colonies. Ames was quoted more often by the American Puritans than Luther or Calvin.
- *Conscience: With the Power and Cases Thereof Divided into Five Books*, a book we call casuistry where we take the truths of Scripture and we bring them down to Christian ethics and every area of life. It was a book written by a pastor to shepherd folks who really didn't understand how to live out theology.

In these two books we have a well-rounded picture of Puritanism. The Puritan was a person who had a high and holy view of God, the kind of view that makes them want to be careful with doctrine; but also, to take those doctrines and to bring them down to every aspect of the human life.

### *The Puritan View of Recreation and Leisure*

In 1618, King James publishes **The Book of Sports**, which ratcheted up a dispute between the Puritans and the aristocracy, many of whom were Roman Catholics. The dispute was over what was permissible on the Lord's Day. In this book, the King actively encouraged certain sports on Lord's Day afternoons in direct contravention, the Puritans believed, of God's Holy Word.

"The Puritans seem like kill-joys only to people who do not share the Puritan view of what constitutes fun. For people who enjoy getting drunk, people who don't get drunk are kill-joys." [Leland Ryken]

By and large, the Puritans wanted to emphasize what you *ought* to do on the Lord's Day, so we ought to worship, we ought to engage in family worship, we ought to be spending time in the word, we ought to be with God's people, we ought to be sitting under the teaching of God's word. The Lord's Day is not a day of restraint as much as it is a day of great spiritual freedom. It is not a day of what I *can't* do, but what I *can* do. [Kevin DeYoung]

The keeping of the Lord's Day holy is crucial. It doesn't have to be a doldrum sort of day. It's a wonderful day to spend together with your church family in your home, welcoming others in, as well, so that the means of grace can be shared. [Rosaria Butterfield]

The Puritans had a much more adequate view of recreation than false stereotypes claim. Whereas in our churches, and from the pulpit, leisure is a subject of neglect, the Puritans frequently wrote on the

subject, and not infrequently there were sermons on the subject. The Puritans enjoyed such varied leisure activities as fishing, hunting, swimming, ice skating, archery, music, and reading. They were not deprived of recreational activities. [Leland Ryken]

We have an indulgent idolatrous view of recreation. Satan is going to snarl his way into our world more powerfully through our sense of entitlement about recreation than almost anything else. We want to keep ourselves on a very short leash, and the Puritans set an excellent example for that. [Rosaria Butterfield]

This dispute over the *Book of Sports* was one of the leading causes of the English Civil War, and that's because there was much more at stake than sports on the Lord's Day. The issue was this: should governments be allowed to pass laws which are in opposition to Scripture? Should the voice of the King carry more weight than the voice of God?

## Chapter IV The Scattering of Puritanism

In the 1620s, some of the Puritans decided to leave England. Charles I had come to the throne in 1625. In the first few years of his reign, the Puritans and Parliament strongly opposed his royal authority. By 1629 Charles took the unprecedented step of dissolving Parliament altogether. The Puritans – probably quite rightly – interpreted that as a hostile act toward themselves and their religious practices.

### *Puritanism Comes to the New World*

So, it wasn't long before 102 passengers, together with a crew of about 30, boarded an aging merchant ship called the Mayflower. But these Puritans had to turn back twice because the ship they were traveling with – the Speedwell from the Netherlands – started leaking. The rumor was that it had been deliberately holed by someone onboard who was terrified of starving to death on the far side of the Atlantic.

But finally on September 6, 1620 the Mayflower set sail for the New World. The journey across the Atlantic was miserable. Two people died before they finally reached Cap Cod, and that was only the beginning.

- *“What primarily took them there was their desire for religious freedom.”* [Conrad Mbewe]
- *“They were driven by a deep concern for the purity of the church. They wanted to see the purity of a reformed church take the form of a pure, Christ-centered community and civil government. You can say in one sense, they came for religious liberty. It was their liberty that they cherished, to have the freedom to live before Christ in **a church purified in doctrine**, and to demonstrate **lives purified in obedience to Christ**, and **a civil order** that would reflect those theological convictions.”* [Albert Mohler]

For those Puritans that remained in England, things only got worse. In 1625 when Charles I became King, his marriage to Henrietta Maria – a devout Roman Catholic – sparked immediate fears among Puritan ministers that the new King intended to lead England back to Rome. Suspicions only grew in 1629 when he appointed his advisor William Laud as the Bishop of London. By 1633, the very devout Roman Catholic Laud became Archbishop of Canterbury. According to one historian, Laud was the greatest calamity ever visited upon the English church.

- *“William Laud is notorious in history for his strong and at times violent opposition to the Puritan movement. As an archbishop he had the right to demand uniformity, and when he did, the Puritans – who couldn't accept with a clear conscience some of the things he was introducing into the church, because they felt they were clearly unbiblical – they were persecuted. Some of the Puritans left England. Others stayed and were persecuted. Some suffered a worse fate. We have accounts of godly men who, because of disagreeing with Laud, had their ears cropped or had a brand put on their face.”* [John Snyder]

Hounded by Laud's agents, many Puritans immigrated. Many Puritans headed to the Netherlands where men like **William Teellinck** and **Gisbertus Voetius** were already leading a Dutch reformation which became called the **Dutch Further Reformation** which was aiming to do something very similar in the Netherlands to what the Puritans were aiming to do in England.

Other Puritans, however, headed for New England. In 1630, John Winthrop led the first large scale immigration of Puritans, settling in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. During the decade that followed, some of the most celebrated preachers in England, including John Cotton, Thomas Hooker, and Thomas Shepherd joined 13,000 immigrants who sailed to New England. One such Puritan was John Eliot.

### *John Eliot and the Mission to the Native Americans*

John Eliot was born in 1604 in England, but it is his life in America he is known for. He migrated to Boston and took the pastorate of a church in Roxbury and he was pastor there for 60 years. 40 of those years he is the sole pastor. Eliot, and other pastors, were concerned about evangelism with the native Americans. In fact, the Massachusetts Charter had statements in it that declared that one of the reasons that they settled in the region was to reach out in evangelism.

The real problem was the language barrier. The Indians in the region did not speak English, they spoke Algonquin. And so Eliot took it upon himself to learn Algonquin, using the assistance of a young Indian man. Eliot eventually became proficient in Algonquin, writing a grammar for the Algonquin language because at the time there was only a spoken language, not a written language.

Eliot describes his first effort to preach in the language without a translator, and he says the first sermon in the Algonquin language was pretty much a failure. The people were distracted. They weren't interested in what he said, and as soon as he finished the sermon they dispersed. But he wasn't discouraged. The second time he preached in their language, there was a very different result: they hung on his words, they stayed after the sermon, they asked questions about the Living God, and they wanted to know how to find a cure for the disease of their souls. It was the beginning of a great missionary effort.

Eliot devoted ten years of his life to translating the Bible into the Algonquin language. When it was published, it was the first Bible published in the New World.

“Prayer and pains (hard work) through faith in Christ Jesus will accomplish anything.”

### *The Puritans and Higher Education*

In 1636, these New England Puritans founded Harvard University, the oldest institution of higher education in the United States.

- “Puritans get a bad rap. They come to us through Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *Scarlet Letter*, they come to us through Arthur Miller’s play *The Crucible*, and they come to us from the intellectual elites who basically saw the Puritans as backwoods, superstitious, anti-intellectual people.” [Stephen Nichols]
- “The Puritans were about what some of them called ‘a practical divinity.’ They did not depreciate scholarship. Eventually Puritans would give birth to some of the greatest theological institutions on the planet – including in the United States Harvard University – but they never believed that true scholarship could be separated from true holiness.” [Albert Mohler]

- “One of the things the Puritans were not was uneducated and highly emotional. Now their affections were moved. Richard Sibbes would talk about ‘raising the affections;’ but it is in the context of guys who are deeply studied in Hebrew and Greek and Latin. They all have the finest university education that could be gotten in the world. You had to have a certain amount of education to be in the Anglican ministry, and then on top of that, if you are going to be devoted to changing the church by preaching, you will certainly be giving yourself to the arduous study of God’s word, as these men were marked by.” [Mark Dever]
- “The reason Harvard College was established was to make sure that an orthodox Christian ministry would be perpetuated in what they called the *new* England, in the New World. Sadly, very shortly thereafter, in a frighteningly short amount of time, Harvard lost its orthodoxy, and heterodoxy began to move in, first in the form of an incipient theological liberalism. By the next generation – by 1701 – you have very concerned people in New England – and the Puritans again, largely to replace Harvard with a more orthodox college, formed what they called the Collegiate School, which later became the Yale College – Yale University. In both cases, it was Puritan love of learning, but not love of learning abstracted just as an academic discipline, but love of learning first of all to make certain that the word of God was rightly preached.” [Albert Mohler]

### *Puritanism in Scotland*

Meanwhile, back in England, the persecution of Puritans by William Laud continued. His barbaric treatment of men like **William Prynne**, who had his face branded with hot irons and his ears cut off, recalled the nightmarish persecutions of Queen Mary.

The persecution extended north into Scotland where Laud tried to enforce Anglican liturgy on Scottish Presbyterians, on men like Samuel Rutherford (1600-1661).

- “Just like people will say that Jonathan Edwards is the greatest theologian ever in America, so also people will regularly list Samuel Rutherford and very often Thomas Haliburton (who are buried side-by-side at Saint Andrew’s in Scotland) as the two greatest Scottish theologians.” [Ligon Duncan]
- In **Samuel Rutherford** we find the rare combination of the precise mind of a theologian, but also the passionate heart of a poet. When you read his descriptions of Christ, when you read his descriptions of the love of Christ for His church and His church for Him, that imagery reminds me a lot of the Song of Solomon.
- Rutherford went to the University of Edinburgh and graduated at age 23. He became the professor of what we would call today Humanities. He gets married, and things go along well for awhile until there is a scandal. We don’t know the exact nature of that scandal; all we know is that it was connected with the marriage. But we do know that it sent Rutherford reeling. He began to consider the problem of his own soul and to seek the Lord in earnest. He said that this was the period that God worked in his heart and he was brought to a true knowledge of God through the work of Jesus Christ.

- As a Christian, Rutherford began to become very serious about the study of theology, and at age 27 we find that he has been ordained and appointed the minister of a small church in the south of Scotland in Anwoth. As a pastor he says that he rose every morning at 3:00 am to meet with the Lord for his own soul, but also to plead for his people: *“I would plead for a fair meeting betwixt Christ and my people.”*
- *“When I think of Rutherford, it’s not that towering intellect that I think of, but the tender heart that he has because of the afflictions that he has experienced. He has a famous statement that I think captures how in his despondency he completely trusted in Christ. If you can think of the image of a spider hanging from a web, he says, ‘I hang by a thread, but it is of Christ’s spinning.’ This made him a sympathetic counselor to people who are dealing with deep despair, depression, and despondency.”* [Ligon Duncan]

**Recommended Reading:**

- *Letters of Samuel Rutherford*, Banner of Truth, 1973.

## Chapter V The Waxing and Waning of Puritanism

King Charles's refusal to work with Parliament, and the continuing persecution by William Laud, was disastrous for them both. In 1641, Parliament called for Laud's imprisonment. The trial was overseen by none other than William Prynne, the man whom Laud had disfigured a few years earlier. Unsurprisingly, Laud was kept in the Tower of London for several years and eventually beheaded. Then in May 1642, the King himself was forced to flee London.

- Charles leaves London for a mixture of reasons: political, religious. But the great issue that dominated the whole landscape was *the issue of religious freedom*. [Ian Hamilton]
- From London, Charles goes to Hull. He tries to raise an army. He ends up in Oxford. But the English Civil War rages for about three years; there is a short respite, and then it rages again. The early days of 1642 were very portentous days, because they forecast a conflict that was going to last in England for the better part of the next two decades, first between Crown and Parliament, then between Lord-Protector and Parliament, then between Lord-Protector and those who wanted to restore the monarchy. [Ligon Duncan]

Against the backdrop of the [English] Civil War, more than 100 Puritan leaders assembled at Westminster Abbey to revise the **Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England**. But as they worked, they decided to write an entirely new confession. They spent ten years writing the **Westminster Standards** and other documents.

- The Westminster Standards are a series of documents that were written in the middle of the 1640s. The Westminster Assembly was essentially a Parliamentary advisory committee that was called by the Parliament. They met in London in the summer of 1643. They wanted to see a church that was brought into closer conformity in worship, in doctrine, and in life to the reformed churches on the continent and also, as it happens, in Scotland. [Sinclair Ferguson]
- They were brought to Westminster Abbey. They did most of their work in this wonderful room in the Abbey called The Jerusalem Chamber. There for a few years these theologians and churchmen worked on these standards. When we think of the Westminster Standards, it's **the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Westminster Shorter Catechism, and the Westminster Larger Catechism**. And there is a fourth standard, sometimes called the forgotten standard, and it is **the Public Directory of Worship**. [Stephen Nichols]
- What they came to agree upon and write down has proved to be a remarkably useful expression of Christian doctrine that all of our churches, whether we are all the way there to Presbyterian or Reformed theology or not, all Bible-believing churches would do well to have some familiarity and spend some time studying it. [Kevin DeYoung]

The Puritan leaders at Westminster agreed on Reformed, Calvinistic theology. But while a majority of Puritan leaders wanted a national Presbyterian church, a minority believed that each local church congregation should have the right to govern itself independently. These men later set out their distinctive views in the Savoy Declaration of 1658 [September 29, 1658] under the guidance of men like Thomas Goodwin and especially John Owen. Similarly, men of Baptist conviction set out their own distinctive confession of faith in 1677, later published in 1689 (The London Baptist Confession), all the while stressing the fact that they shared a great deal of common ground with their Presbyterian brothers.

- I've heard people say before, 'I have no creed but the Bible,' which is in itself a creed. We believe in *Sola Scriptura*, that the Scriptures alone are our final authority, but we don't believe in *solo Scriptura*, or as some people refer to it: *nuda scriptura*, which is to say, we don't believe in the Bible apart from everything else. The *sola* means that it is our final and absolute authority. [Kevin DeYoung]
- The idea of what the Reformers were about is, Scripture alone is our authority, but we also have the gift of the Holy Spirit to the church over the millennia. And we have through this many folks committed to Scripture, committed to the authority of Scripture, trying to understand the word of God, and pooling those

teachings of the word of God into creeds in the early church: the Apostle's Creed. The Nicene Creed, the Chalcedonian Creed. These creeds are not contrary to Scripture; they are pooling together all of those teachings about the person of Christ and putting them into a systematic statement. The same thing is true of the Reformation: we have these confessions and catechisms. They are not contrary to Scripture. They are building on Scripture, they are centered on Scripture, they are governed by Scripture. [Stephen Nichols]

- The reason we have creeds and confessions is because we want to say, 'We believe in Scripture and this is what Scripture teaches.'
- Creeds and confessions are a way to say to others, 'Here is what I believe.' We in our age are always dealing in vagaries and ambiguities. We don't press in like these [Westminster] Divines did to be precise with our words, to define our terms, to be careful in how we are wording things. The Westminster Standards do that as well as anything. [Kevin DeYoung]

In 1648, Oliver Cromwell and his New Model Army defeated the Royalist forces.

- Cromwell himself showed some characteristically Puritan qualities. He chose soldiers on merit rather than on social class. Before each battle, he and his army prayed – and prayed at length. One observer said that Cromwell's clothes were so plain they looked as if they were made by a bad country tailor. And when it came time for his portrait to be painted, he insisted, against the custom of the day, that he be painted as he actually was, without flattery; warts and all, he said.

In 1649, the defeated King, Charles I, was executed for treason. Famously, given that his execution was in January, the King asked to wear two shirts so that his shivering wouldn't be mistaken for fear as he ascended the scaffold and laid his neck on the block. As the axe fell, Cromwell realized that his new Republic was vulnerable to reprisals from both Royalist and Roman Catholic soldiers in Ireland. He defended his nation without hesitation, some would say brutally. His army went after their opponents, losing around 2,000 of their own army, and killing about 5,000. The Parliamentary reconquest of Ireland was indeed brutal, and Cromwell is still a debated and hated figure in Ireland today. The extent to which Cromwell, who was in direct command for the first year of the campaign, was responsible for the atrocities, is still being debated. Some historians argue that the actions of Cromwell were within the then accepted rules of war, or were exaggerated or distorted by later propagandists. These claims have again been challenged by others, so Cromwell is still a very enigmatic figure today.

- I think Cromwell is a true Christian, and he is a Christian of his time. We're not excusing sin in Cromwell, but there is a caricature of Cromwell that is simply not fair. In part, it is the imposition of a modern standard or expectation on an entirely different world. So while we might still ask questions, we have to look at the character of the man, we need to look at the bigger picture, and in many respects, you'd have to call Cromwell a liberal by the standards of the day. When you look at some of his other concerns, at his behavior militarily and politically, I think you would have to say this is not an unenlightened man but, by the standards of his own time, a peculiarly enlightened man: his defense of liberty, his concern to ensure liberty of conscience, you see a very different side of his character, and that has to be acknowledged as well. [Jeremy Walker]

The Monarch was dead. The Monarchy for the present appeared to be over. Oliver Cromwell was offered the Crown, but turned it down, and led England into a Republic. A new commonwealth was created – a Puritan commonwealth – with Cromwell guaranteeing tremendous religious freedoms. Puritans suddenly found themselves in a highly unfamiliar situation: they were in a position of power. For example, John Owen (1616-1683), who had been forced to leave Oxford in the face of William Laud's violent opposition, was made Vice-Chancellor of the University, previously a Royalist stronghold.

- John Owen is an important figure in late Puritanism. Puritanism, insofar as it is a movement to purify the Church of England, Owen checks out of in the 1640s. He initially is more Presbyterian in the way he wants to move things, but he reads Cotton, and Cotton just changes his mind. Owen sees, and I think

appropriately, the responsibility that Jesus in Matthew 18 gives to the members of the congregation. He begins moving in that direction, and that is going to cut him off from the mainstream of what would technically be called the Puritan Movement. [Mark Dever]

- Here's what I want to say about Owen that I think is typical of the Puritans, but Owen is superlative: it isn't just that there's this theology and piece and there's this experiential piece that come together. It's something about the Bible. Paul says in Romans 8:6, 'The mind of the flesh is death and the mind of the Spirit is life and peace.' That phrase 'mind of the Spirit' [τὸ φρόνημα τὸ πνεῦματος]: Owen wrote a whole book on that phrase. It's called *The Grace and Duty of Being Spiritually Minded*. When I preached on Romans, I probably devoted ten minutes to that phrase as I was moving through. Owen wrote a book on it. And when you read the book, you realize, why is he doing this? Why did he take this one phrase – spiritually minded or mind of the Spirit – and think he would need to write a book about it? Who would do that? Who does that today? Nobody does that. Owen felt like, if you don't have that – you die! And if you have it – life forever and peace! What could be more important than to be spiritually minded, and who thinks about it?! When you're done reading that book, I sit there and I say, 'I don't think I've ever read the Bible before. When he's done with that text, and then with text after text after text, illumining that text, those texts are not arbitrarily used, they are contextually sensitive, and they are pulsating with life and with insight into God, and Christ, and Spirit, and salvation, and sanctification, and history, and me. They are just pulsating in such a way that I say, 'I don't think that I've ever learned how to meditate yet.' That's the effect of Owen. [John Piper]
- Owen had an inquisitive mind and produced in writing volume after volume of very careful consideration and Owen just applies himself to it and produces a huge body of learning. [Mark Dever]
- Later in Owen's life, when Charles II is now on the throne and the Puritans are no longer in the ascendancy politically, John Bunyan is coming down from Bedford to preach early in the morning outside of London, and John Owen is going out to listen to Bunyan preach. Owen moves in exalted circles, and it is said that King Charles II asked Owen, 'Why do you go to hear that tinker prat? Why do you go to listen to that manual laborer chatter? Owen is said to have replied, 'Your Majesty, if I could preach Christ the way that tinker preaches Christ, I would willingly relinquish all my learning.' And that I think shows you the heart of the man: 'I want to exalt Christ.' That's what he consecrates his learning to, and the better he can do that, the more ready he is to sacrifice anything else he is and has. [Jeremy Walker]

The Puritan Commonwealth under Cromwell was short lived. It lasted only a decade before he died, but his work was done. As one historian put it, Cromwell "had shattered the throne which threatened the liberties of England and the Church which was incapable of admitting the rights of conscience" [Robert Forman Horton, *Oliver Cromwell: A Study in Personal Religion*, 1897].

When the throne was restored, as it was soon to be, it now had a Parliamentary basis, which meant that its power would be limited by the will of the people.

In 1660, Charles II, the son of the executed king, took to the throne. Once again, Monarchy in England was restored and with it, more persecution of the Puritans. Charles II had promised to preserve liberty of conscience, but Anglican loyalists, driven by revenge, pressured the King into restoring religious conformity.

In 1662, a new Act of Uniformity was established. Puritans were compelled to use the new Anglican Book of Common Prayer in its entirety, or else leave the ministry. That's exactly what many of them did. More than 2,000 ministers refused to take the oath, and either resigned or were expelled from the Church of England.

- Perhaps one of the saddest days in all of church history, August 24, 1662: **The Great Ejection**, when some 2,000 Puritan preachers were ejected from their pulpits because they would not sign the Articles of Uniformity prescribed by Charles II. These men were willing to give up their pulpits and walk away from their ministries because of what they believed. The trouble with preachers today is, nobody wants to kill them anymore. The Puritans were so strong in the faith and willing to stand against the current of the day.

They were a different generation. They were willing to die if need be for what they believed. [Steven Lawson]

And then, to make matters worse, in 1665 Charles passed what became known as the infamous Five Mile Act. It forbade clergyman from living within five miles of a parish from which they had been expelled, unless they swore an oath never to resist the King, and swore to obey the 1662 Prayer Book.

This persecution lasted for 25 years. It cost some of the most famous Puritan pastors not only their livelihood, but also their liberty, and in some cases their lives.

- Jeremiah Burroughs (1599 – 1646): *The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment*
- Richard Baxter (1615 – 1691): *The Reformed Pastor*
- John Bunyan [1628 – 1688]: *Pilgrim's Progress*

Mercifully, the immediate persecution of Puritans by the State was suspended when William and Mary became King and Queen of England (1688). It was the so-called Glorious Revolution. Finally those of Puritan principle had greater freedom to gather and to preach. At last they were tolerated, that is, able to establish their own churches and to meet as their Scripture-bound consciences required. It wasn't the end of their battles, but it was at least the end of the open hostility of the State. But as the flames of persecution died, so did the spark within the movement.

## Chapter VI

### The Reawakening of Puritanism

There is some debate about exactly where the Puritan story ends. Some say in 1689 when William & Mary declared toleration; some say in 1704 when John Howe died. But then again, Matthew Henry lived on until 1712. Others say we should include Jonathan Edwards as the last Puritan, and he lived until 1758.

But generally speaking, Puritan scholars agree that in the early eighteenth-century Puritanism as a movement died, with the exception of a few men like Jonathan Edwards and others. But since that time, there have been a number of flashes of the old Puritan spirit. We might call men from Edwards on, who have a Puritan-minded outlook in their theology and their way of life, puritans with a small “p.” And many of those still live today.

#### *Jonathan Edwards (1703 – 1758)*

A colonial minister whose life spanned from 1703-1758. He ended his life – very briefly for six active weeks – as President of what was then the College of New Jersey. Today it is Princeton University. He is not among that first, or even second, generation of Puritans that settled the New World, but I firmly believe Edwards is a Puritan. [Stephen Nichols]

Mark Knoll (former McAnaney Professor of History at the University of Notre Dame, now Research Professor of History at Regent College) said *Edwards’ piety* lived on in the revivalist tradition and *Edwards’ theology* lived on in academic Calvinism, but *his God-entranced worldview didn’t live on*. That may be a little of an overstatement, but that’s why Edwards is so rare, so precious: a God-entranced worldview. The word worldview doesn’t quite capture it. That sounds academic and head oriented. It’s a God-entranced heart, and a God-entranced stomach, and a God-entranced ears and eyes; all of life and experience is God-entranced. [John Piper]

#### *George Whitefield (1714 – 1770)*

*Time like an ever-rolling stream bears all its sons away*. We are in a stream of time. When you are talking about Puritanism and what comes after Puritanism, you are looking at both continuity and discontinuity. And by the time you are talking about Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield, you are talking about the first of the Great Awakenings which cannot be explained without the Puritan devotion and preaching and Puritan theology. George Whitefield’s theology is also an extension of that Puritan theology. George Whitefield’s concern for the Christian life is an extension of that. [Albert Mohler]

One of the sermons Whitefield preached a number of times is a great sermon called *The Almost Christian*. He would walk into these Anglican churches, and who is he going to say are the “almost” Christians? Those people over there? Those Presbyterians over there? Those heathen in the other lands? Whitefield gets up into the pulpit and he says, “*Anglicans* are almost Christians!” Being an almost Christian is not being a Christian at all. You can be baptized, you can be in a church, you can be a member of a church and not be a true Christian; you’re just an almost Christian – and that’s no Christian at all. It was about the gospel. It was about preaching the gospel with passion because (how does the hymnwriter put it?) “Wash me Savior lest I die!” Without the gospel there is no hope. [Stephen Nichols]

*Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834 – 1892)*

Charles Haddon Spurgeon had the benefit of the library of his grandpa and it comprised a lot of Puritan works. He was quite a genius in terms of his own mind, and consequently he devoured the Puritan works. And out of his reading of them grew his own appreciation, first of all, of the Reformed faith. [Conrad Mbewe]

And thus, when the young Charles Spurgeon begins to preach, what you hear is Puritan theology, Puritan devotion coming out of a nineteen-year-old in Victorian England. When you look at Spurgeon, there was no one more committed to a practical divinity than Spurgeon. That's one of the reasons Spurgeon was loved by the masses of London because he wasn't speaking ethereal doctrine removed from their lives. He was talking about a practical Christianity based upon the unquestioned truth of God's word and the transforming power of the gospel. That explains why Spurgeon never wavered in his doctrinal orthodoxy. It's because he had been incubated in Puritanism and that meant in the word of God, and in the understanding that this not merely some kind of spiritual witness; this is the very word of God to be lived, to be preached, to be taught. [Albert Mohler]

*Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1899 – 1981)*

Few people have a greater effect upon resurrecting our current knowledge of the Puritans than Martyn Lloyd-Jones. [Ligon Duncan]

Martyn Lloyd-Jones is one of the most recent people to have been described as the last of the Puritans. But the same was said of Spurgeon, and perhaps of others before them. Why are they called "the last Puritan"? Why do people in their day think that here you've got the Puritans reborn, at least temporarily? It's not because they are living in the past, but because they are animated by the same spirit and committed to the same principles. In each case there will be differences. There are some things that are present that were lacking in the Puritans, and some things that are lacking that were present in the Puritans, and that in part is a function of where they are in history and their particular circumstances. But it is that same concern at root: the fear of the Lord, that awed adoration of the God of creation and salvation, and that His being and doing conditions all that we are and all that we do. And where you have a man that is governed by that principle, who is possessed of that spirit, you are always going to have the last of the Puritans. [Jeremy Walker]

"He and I worked closely together on a number of things; the original English Puritan Conference is one of them. Our relationship was remarkably happy and cooperative considering that he was the Welshman with this low view of Anglicanism, and I was an Anglican with my own thoughts about alternatives to Anglicanism in English Christianity. That's who he was. He preached to up to 2,000 people a Sunday morning and evening for 20 odd years, I think it was, at Westminster Chapel (London). And there is no question that he was the most outstanding evangelist, apologist, and quite simply preacher in all modes of preaching that England produced during the twentieth century. I was privileged to hear him in the flesh, and it is a heritage that I value enormously and have tried to bear in mind just about every time I have personally prepared a sermon." [J. I. Packer]

Charles Haddon Spurgeon said of John Bunyan, "The man is a walking Bible. Prick him anywhere and he bleeds Bibline." That, in a synopsis, is the legacy of the Puritans. They were Bible men. They were walking Bibles. They knew their Bible. They spoke the Bible. They preached the Bible. They used the Bible to

interpret the Bible. They used the Bible to illustrate the Bible. They used the Bible in their counseling. They used that Bible to cure the ills of mankind. Start to finish, they were walking Bibles. Whether in the pulpit, out of the pulpit, wherever they went, they were Bible men. They bled Bibles, and by that Spurgeon meant that the Bible came oozing out of their pores. That was Martyn Lloyd-Jones. That was Spurgeon himself. But those men are alive and well on planet earth today. They are scattered. Most of them are not known. They are pastoring smaller churches in obscure places. But they are known in heaven, and they are carrying the mantle of the Puritans in this day. We owe such a debt to them. Martyn Lloyd-jones was one of those men who kept that alive in his day. He reintroduced us to the Puritans. He really is a connecting link for us, passing down these riches to this generation. [Steven Lawson]

There are lots of other men through the world today who are leaders in their churches: Asia, South America, Korea, and in Africa: Zambia and Kenya, who are standing in that tradition and having nation transforming influences because the ethic and the piety and especially the truths of sanctification, justification are being proclaimed and applied by these men so that Puritanism is a very living reality in the world, and a growing reality today. [Geoff Thomas]

#### **Recommended Reading:**

*A Divine and Supernatural Light, Immediately Imparted to the Soul by the Spirit of God, Shown to be Both Scriptural and Rational Doctrine*, Jonathan Edwards, 1734

[[https://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/articles/onsite/edwards\\_light.html](https://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/articles/onsite/edwards_light.html)].

*A God-Entranced Vision of All Things: Why We Need Jonathan Edwards 300 Years Later*, John Piper, 2003

[<https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/a-god-entranced-vision-of-all-things-why-we-need-jonathan-edwards-300-years-later>]

*The Almost Christian*, George Whitefield [<http://www.biblebb.com/files/whitefield/gw043.htm>].

*The Puritans: Their Origins and Successors*, Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Banner of Truth, 2014.

## Chapter VII

### The Legacy of Puritanism

The Puritans weren't perfect. Like all of us, they were flawed. They had weaknesses. They had blind spots. And they would be the first to tell us to get up off our knees if we were tempted to worship them as our spiritual idols (Revelation 19:10; 22:9).

"It's discouraging when your heroes are found to have serious clay feet. I probably don't even know what John Owen's serious clay feet were, but I love [Jonathan] Edwards and read so much about Edwards that I know that Edwards owned at least one slave, probably more over the sequence of his ministry there. I know that, to try to ameliorate things in my mind, she was the first slave member of the church there in Northampton. But that's discouraging because you could wish that the principal issues that, in the New Testament, eventually overcame the temporary allowance of slave holding in the New Testament – nobody was kicked out of the church for being a slaveholder in the New Testament. That's a serious issue. But seeds were being sown by the Apostle Paul in the way he spoke to slave masters, and by him in the Book of Philemon – seeds were being sown that together with the "neighbor love" command, and "do unto others as you would have them do unto you – would eventually overcome any sense that slavery was a Christian ideal, or to be tolerated. And Edwards didn't go there.

"I think the effect that should have on me is not to say, 'Oh, nothing he wrote is of any value anymore.' I could get really bent out of shape right now and start talking about today's blindness: like I think the church today is responding to abortion that probably in 100 years will be looked upon the way racists responded to slavery in early America. Meaning – we're not taking it as seriously as we should. They are killing babies! So it's going to be called a blind spot. And I'm going to be indicted. I lose sleep over this! What should I be doing more than I am doing for the cause of life and justice for the unborn.

"So, all that to say, I hope that the volumes of John Piper's writings someday will not be thrown in the garbage dump because of my sins. I think I have seen some true things. If they haven't gone as deep in me, sanctified me as fully as they should, then let posterity say that. Let them write the dark side of John Piper, but oh I hope they will see that there were true things he said!

"Now that's the way I then go back and look at Edwards. I cannot deny that Edwards saw glory. That seeing glory did not produce a fully formed image of Christ in him discourages me, but when I look in the mirror, who am I to say, 'Well, people should listen to me right now while I'm talking because I've been fully formed!' So, I can't write off what Edwards showed me about God; I see it in the Bible. So my prayer is that I will learn from his mistakes; learn vastly more from what he saw of truth, and perhaps grow just a little smidgen beyond where he was, although even if I am less tolerant of slavery than he was, I think Edwards outshines me in holiness in so many ways.

"I don't know if it helps, but I think of sanctification as kind of like an octopus. Eight arms, and each of those arms as a different spiritual quality or virtue or fruit. And you can have a wonderfully mature arm of kindness and a really shriveled arm of discernment with regard to other people's stupidity, because you're way too generous. And as you look at everybody's octopus, some arms are really, really growing and wonderful, and other arms are not. So when I think of Edwards, that arm was not well formed. But oh my, what he saw and what he was in so many areas was remarkable." [John Piper]

“We see that Jonathan Edwards, Jr. – Edwards’s son – who also went on to be a college president and a minister – he’s one of the first writers of anti-slavery literature in New England. And so we see that as he grew up an Edwards and was impacted by Edwards, we see some of that doctrine of understanding the nature of humanity and just compassion – we see that coming out even in Jonathan Edwards’s son.” [Stephen Nichols]

“Reading the accounts, you don’t find a lot of those who were genuine believers tended to give love and care to the slaves whom they owned. And they even sought their salvation. And so a number of them would be taken to church. There would be a section in the church that was primarily for the slaves, but they got to hear the gospel, a number of them got converted, a number of them became actual preachers, and consequently there was an entire new movement of the Christian faith in the areas where the slaves tended to live, and so on.” [Conrad Mbewe]

“But perhaps even more helpful for us are thinking about, not the flaws that we can so easily see and all recognize in them, but what might be some tendencies that they had that we might have to be on guard against also. I think there are some things in Puritan preaching, as much as we laud it, that we wouldn’t want to emulate in our day. If people hear, ‘The Puritans preach an hour,’ then I have to preach an hour, in most contexts, that’s not going to be the right move for somebody to make. I think the ways that some Puritans could preach 200 sermons on the Book of Job, is generally not the best model for us to follow. The way that some of the Puritans might take weeks and weeks and weeks on one particular verse...you have to be exceptionally gifted. Lloyd-Jones could do it – 20<sup>th</sup> century Puritans – but most of us mere mortals can’t do that. We want to be careful that when we see they are models, we don’t think that because we like the Puritans that whatever they did is the way we must do it. I think that one of the ways we look at history as Christians is we try to love our neighbors as ourselves – that means the neighbors who have gone before – and it doesn’t mean at all that we gloss over really serious mistakes or fumbblings. But it does mean we try to understand why people thought what they did, what was going on around them, why they might have come to those conclusions. It’s easy, and can be self-serving, to come with our own twenty-first century mindset and say, ‘Why didn’t you act like me?’ or to think presumptuously, ‘I would have gotten this all right’ when with everything around them it was just so difficult for them to get some of these things right in the way that we might see issues of diversity or race or ethnicity or inclusion. Again, its not to excuse or to say that’s not a big deal, but it is to want to understand them in their own moment, rather than expecting them to live in a moment they didn’t live in.” [Kevin DeYoung]

So the Puritans undoubtedly had blind spots. But of course, every era has different blind spots. And that means the Puritans can help us today to see some of our own if we are willing to listen.

“We’re so far from the depth of the Puritan’s commitment to the Word of God. That is the great, great gift they gave to us. Also, the fact that their preaching was theologically rich, and so should all preaching be because if you’re explaining the Bible, you are giving theology. Theology simple means propositional truth and in every passage of Scripture, the preacher must draw out the divine truth that is there – the divine propositional truth that is there – and proclaim that. Theologically exposition is really the truest and purest kind of preaching and that is what they did.” [John MacArthur]

“What we need today is the piety that the Puritans had. And by piety I mean godliness – a heart for God. It wasn’t just a head knowledge to the doctrines of grace; not just a head knowledge of systematic theology, as critically as important as that is. The Puritans understood the necessity of

sanctification. They understood the necessity of the truths of theology to take root in their heart and in their life, and for their to be a distinctiveness about the way they conducted themselves.” [Steven Lawson]

“They cultivated a depth of understanding – a biblical depth – and a sensitivity of soul that only comes through a lifetime of concentrated devotion to God, and paying the high cost of really applying that regardless of the cost to yourself. Its that Christocentric holiness that I find invaluable.” [John Snyder]

“They had a robust understanding of sin along with a comprehensive understanding of Christ’s mercy. Culturally speaking, evangelicals need to be hungry for the Puritans, because they are strong on the very things that most of us are very weak on.” [Rosaria Butterfield]

“Are you interested in knowing the Bible? Are you interested in knowing Christ? Do you want someone to attend to the care of your soul? Then you are going to want to get to know the Puritans.” [Kevin DeYoung]

“The Puritan understanding of the essence of Christianity is a relationship, a communion with the living God who has given you a new heart and that’s how you follow Him.” [Gloria Furman]

“I think it was the love of the Word of God that drove them. It made them love the God of the Word. John says in First John 2 if you’re a spiritual child you know the Father, if you’re a spiritual young man you know the truth and you overcome the evil one, but if you’re a spiritual father, you know Him that is from the beginning. That goes behind the theology to really knowing God. And I think what we find out in reading the Puritans is, they didn’t just know about God; they didn’t just know the facts, or the characteristics, or the attributes of God and the history of God’s work in the world. They knew God. They went to that spiritual fatherhood level where they were communing with the living God.” [John MacArthur]

“They were men who had given themselves to the study and application of Scripture. They were men who had realized that the worship of God is utterly central to our lives, and that that worship should be governed by God Himself. And so I sometimes think that the principle that was so obvious to the Puritans – how does God want to be worshipped – would be like a cold shower in the middle of the night to many churches today. It has never crossed their minds.” [Sinclair Ferguson]

“We have too much of empty motivational preaching which is just saying, ‘We can do it! We can all do it! C’mon! Let’s do it!’ There is no depth. There is no real doctrinal instruction. And consequently, we can really learn, even here in Africa, from the preaching of the Puritans.” [Conrad Mbewe]

“I think the biggest impact on the Puritans today – what it should be – is that we can never minimize sin, and we can never dismiss sin by simply saying, ‘That is who I am.’ [Rosaria Butterfield]

“When I go into my library, I can pull a Puritan book down and I can sit at the feet of some of the godliest and wisest pastors the Western hemisphere has ever known. They help me. They put courage into my soul when I’m ready to despair. They show me with clarity the way forward in obedience. And they do that in a way that is always attached to Christ, so the motivation is there. The Puritan is the kind of a friend that I don’t feel that I can journey very far without their companionship.” [John Snyder]

“In our day and age when it seems that the value is placed on a whiplash reaction, or a viral trend, something that comes off really fast off the cuff, we do well to sit and think, and think long and hard,

about what we're about to say, and to think deeply about every word that goes into what it is we're going to say." [Gloria Furman]

"I think one of the main reasons most of the Christian books most people read today are so nearly worthless is they are just thin. And what the Puritans had was a kind of superpower that we just don't have. It's called patience. They could stare and stare, and stare and stare and stare at something in a way that we are not used to doing in our intellectual fast food age. We want to know, 'Give me cash value. Can I have this in one sheet? Pros and cons. What's the bottom line?' You could have the bottom line in the relationship with your wife and really miss the whole thing. There is something about that relationship with your wife. There's something about your relationship with a friend. There's something about your relationship with God. And the Puritans, because of their patience, they expressed that in warm, devotional language that's clear and moving. And that's been found by generation after generation after generation." [Mark Dever]

"And if the younger generation don't get to enjoy these treasures, the next generation is going to be shallower, weaker; it's going to be lacking in theological muscle, and we're not going to have then such robust, wholesome, rounded, pastorally-rich theology preached in, taught, believed in our churches." [Michael Reeves]

"In moments in my life when I have especially needed encouragement, I found encouragement like none other from reading the Puritans. When in times in my life I have needed to have a model for how to translate Christianity into practical terms of faithfulness, I found the greatest models amongst the Puritans. The next thing may be the most surprising. When I have found myself curious, either for myself or for others, about emotional conditions, and I have found help just about nowhere, I found help in the Puritans. The Puritans understood what we would call depression. The Puritans understood fear. The Puritans understood exhaustion. But more than that, they understood Christ. They understood the gospel. And because of that, they understood that biblical, authentic Christianity speaks to every single Christian under every condition, and in that I have found the greatest encouragement." [Albert Mohler]

"We have this over inflated view of our self in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It's everywhere around us. And we are foolish to think that we are immune from that in the church. So as I understand who God is, I begin to see who I am." [Stephen Nichols]

You have to wonder whether our current situation is analogous to the one that gave birth to the Puritans. Puritanism was born in a moment when Reformed theology was taking hold in Christian circles; so are we. The printing press made the gospel much more mobile than it ever had been, just as the internet and social media are doing now. The movement gained strength when Christians were kicked out of their jobs, forced to resign, and were increasingly persecuted, just as they are now. The Puritans were motivated by an increasing disquiet at the way Christianity was being misrepresented by leaders in the State church and in the highest ranks of government. That same disquiet grows in many Christians today. And just as William Perkins trained a generation of preachers, so today there seems to be a growing number of preachers trained in a variety of different environments, a new generation of Reformed Christians, pastors, and theologians.

"I think part of what made the Puritans what they were was persecution. They had to earnestly contend for the faith, and therefore they had to drive themselves deep into the Word of God to make

that contending for the faith effective and powerful, with integrity that is true to what the Word of God taught. In church history we find that whenever a doctrine came under assault, the church crystalized it; the church reacted by fighting back, and that forced them to think more deeply about that doctrine, and they came to the defense of it. And generally speaking that's how the flow of doctrine goes through church history: truth is attacked, it is defended, it is solidified, its put in a creed, and the church moves to the next issue. So, persecution tends to drive clarity in doctrine. It tends to expand the defense of doctrine. So I think it's the best thing that could happen, in many ways." [John MacArthur]

"I'd love to see an upsurge in passion for holiness. I think it is there in a lot of younger pastors, but I think another branch are much more eager to look hip, look cool, look like they've watched the latest thing, they can use the latest lingo. And frankly, while that makes audiences laugh, and think you're kind of cool, it doesn't do much eternal good. It won't make any difference in five years, twenty years, thirty years. What will make a difference in people's lives when they are dying? That you were cool? Give me a break! That will not make any difference! They will want you at their bedside if they know you have been walking with God, if you've been spending time in the presence of the living God and can say something to them in their need when their kid is dying, when their wife is dying. When you can say something, because they've seen you authentic in the pulpit dealing with the Bible faithfully. And I just think the Puritans...they tasted like that, they just tasted like that. They weren't glib. They weren't trying to be fitting in to their culture." [John Piper]

"So often today the word *gospel* is front and center. And that's where it belongs. It is the good news of God to sinners. The good news *of* Christ. The good news *who is* Christ. But if we are gospel people, then we are God's people. We are Christ's people. We are to use the Apostle's language: we are bondservants of God, bondservants of Jesus Christ. The gospel is not some narrow thing. The gospel is not constrained. You cannot shut God off from this room of life, or that aspect of personality, or this bit of your character. When God saves a sinner, God saves the whole sinner. And so if you say, 'I am a gospel man,' you're God's man. God's man in Christ. You are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. And that must set you on the route to ask, 'What does God desire of me here? What has God given for me to be here? How can I render to God that of which He is worthy?' Paul's language in Romans 12: 'I beseech you, therefore brothers, by the mercies of God in Christ' You offer yourself because of what God in Christ has done for you, everything that He is in Himself, everything that He has become to you by grace, you are asking, 'Lord, what can I now give?' And there can be no restrictions on that. You cannot fence off any part of the church, and any aspect of its life, of your own soul – your own existence – any aspect of your life. To say that you are a gospel man or woman, and then to hold back from pursuing the effects of that through all of your redeemed humanity individually and corporately, is really to make a nonsense of what we describe as salvation. It is and must be all or nothing." [Jeremy Walker]

One of the things I most admire about the Puritans is their ability to keep eternity always in view. They knew that being ready to die is the first step in learning to live. They knew that they were living with one foot in each world: this present world, which will pass away, and an eternal one which will never perish, spoil, or fade. They knew what it was like to be a pilgrim on a journey toward a new world. In fact they said that the day of a believer's death is better than the day of his birth, so much they were looking forward to being with Jesus forever. Moses never lived to enter the promised land. And most of the leading Puritans in England never lived to see the religious freedom they longed for. When they died,

many of their bodies were banned from English churchyards and buried in Nonconformist cemeteries like the cemetery called Bunhill Fields. There is a cost to wielding God's word, the Sword of the Spirit. It's double-edged. But in the Puritan mind, it is worth paying the price – even the price of one's life – in order to live *Soli Deo Gloria*, in order to live with a good and clean conscience before God.

In *The Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan there is a character called Valiant-for-Truth. Right at the end, as he dies, he says, 'My marks and scars I carry with me, to be a witness for me, that I have fought God's battles who will now be my rewarder.' And then, it suddenly gets very personal, because at that point he offers the hilt toward us. As you go on reading, he holds out the sword of God's word to *you*. He says, 'My sword I give to him that shall succeed me in my pilgrimage.' And knowing what you know about how hard the pilgrimage will be, and what opposition may come, the question is,

'Will you take it?'