

# ACCA Classical Christian Education Suggested Reading List

List compiled by Brett Edwards

I have included my ratings of books (1 to 5 stars) that I have personally read. Books without a rating are books I have not read.

\*Titles with asterisk can be found in the ACCA library.

## 1. *Recovering the Lost Tools of Learning*\* by Douglas Wilson



"Public education in America has run into hard times. Even many within the system admit that it is failing. While many factors contribute, Douglas Wilson lays much blame on the idea that education can take place in a moral vacuum. It is not possible for education to be nonreligious, deliberately excluding the basic questions about life. All education builds on the foundation of someone's worldview. Education deals with fundamental questions that require religious answers. Learning to read and write is simply the process of acquiring the tools to ask and answer such questions.

A second reason for the failure of public schools, Wilson feels, is modern teaching methods. He argues for a return to a classical education, firm discipline, and the requirement of hard work.

Often educational reforms create new problems that must be solved down the road. This book presents alternatives that have proved workable in experience." – Amazon

Other classical Christian education books by Doug Wilson include *Repairing the Ruins* and *The Case for Classical Christian Education*

## 2. *Wisdom & Eloquence*\* by Robert Littlejohn and Charles T. Evans



"To succeed in the world today, students need an education that equips them to recognize current trends, to be creative and flexible to respond to changing circumstances, to demonstrate sound judgment to work for society's good, and to gain the ability to communicate persuasively. This book argues for returning to the classical liberal arts educational system so that students are prepared for lifelong learning." - Amazon

## 3. *The Seven Laws of Teaching*\* by John Milton Gregory



"John Milton Gregory's clear and concise presentation of the fundamental laws of teaching has been studied and applied in a variety of educational situations, from church schools to in-service programs of prestigious businesses. For generations,

teachers have benefited from the solid advice in this book. The frequent reprintings of this classic work, first published in 1884, testify to the timelessness of its contents. Educational fads come and go, but the basic principles of teaching and learning, those discussed in this book, are not subject to the winds of change.” - From the Back Cover

**4. *Desiring the Kingdom*\* by James K.A. Smith**

“Philosopher James K. A. Smith reshapes the very project of Christian education in *Desiring the Kingdom*. The first of three volumes that will ultimately provide a comprehensive theology of culture, *Desiring the Kingdom* focuses on education around the themes of liturgy, formation, and desire. Smith's ultimate purpose is to re-vision Christian education as a formative process that redirects our desire toward God's kingdom and its vision of flourishing. In the same way, he re-visions Christian worship as a pedagogical practice that trains our love.” – From the Back Cover

**5. *The Core* by Leigh Bortins**

"In a time when many parents are rediscovering the classical methods of education, whether at home or in the classroom, it is heartening to see more and more educators studying, applying, and refining these methods. This book by Leigh Bortins is admirable part of that project, and I commend it to you." - Douglas Wilson

**6. *The Abolition of Man* by C.S. Lewis**

“C.S. Lewis's *The Abolition of Man* purports to be a book specifically about public education, but its central concerns are broadly political, religious, and philosophical. In the best of the book's three essays, "Men Without Chests," Lewis trains his laser-sharp wit on a mid- century English high school text, considering the ramifications of teaching British students to believe in idle relativism, and to reject "the doctrine of objective value, the belief that certain attitudes are really true, and others really false, to the kind of thing the universe is and the kinds of things we are." Lewis calls this doctrine the "Tao," and he spends much of the book explaining why society needs a sense of objective values. *The Abolition of Man* speaks with astonishing freshness to contemporary debates about morality; and even if Lewis seems a bit too cranky and privileged for his arguments to be swallowed whole, at least his articulation of values seems less ego-driven, and therefore is more useful, than that of current writers such as Bill Bennett and James Dobson.” --Michael Joseph Gross

**7. *Beauty for Truth's Sake*\* by Stratford Caldecott**



“Much of the confusion and meaninglessness of the twenty-first century stems from the fragmentation of knowledge. Our postmodern times cry out for a return to wholeness. Enter Stratford Caldecott, who calls for renewal in education in *Beauty for Truth's Sake*. By reclaiming the classic liberal arts and viewing disciplines such as science and mathematics through a poetic lens, the author explains that unity is present within diversity. Ultimately, God is behind all truth.

This book will benefit parents, homeschoolers, lifelong learners, and readers interested in the history of ideas. It is appropriate for Christian college and university students and will play an especially important role in curriculum development.” – Amazon Description

#### 8. *The Great Tradition\** by Richard Gamble

“Frustrated with the continuing educational crisis of our time, concerned parents, teachers, and students sense that true reform requires more than innovative classroom technology, standardized tests, or skills training. An older tradition—the Great Tradition—of education in the West is waiting to be heard. Since antiquity, the Great Tradition has defined education first and foremost as the hard work of rightly ordering the human soul, helping it to love what it ought to love, and helping it to know itself and its maker. In the classical and Christian tradition, the formation of the soul in wisdom, virtue, and eloquence took precedence over all else, including instrumental training aimed at the inculcation of “useful” knowledge.

Edited by historian Richard Gamble, this anthology reconstructs a centuries-long conversation about the goals, conditions, and ultimate value of true education. Spanning more than two millennia, from the ancient Greeks to contemporary writers, it includes substantial excerpts from more than sixty seminal writings on education. Represented here are the wisdom and insight of such figures as Xenophon, Plato, Aristotle, Seneca, Cicero, Basil, Augustine, Hugh of St. Victor, Bonaventure, Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther, John Calvin, Erasmus, Edmund Burke, John Henry Newman, Thomas Arnold, Albert Jay Nock, Dorothy Sayers, C. S. Lewis, and Eric Voegelin.

In an unbroken chain of giving and receiving, The Great Tradition embraced the accumulated wisdom of the past and understood education as the initiation of students into a body of truth. This unique collection is designed to help parents, students, and teachers reconnect with this noble legacy, to articulate a coherent defense of the liberal arts tradition, and to do battle with the modern utilitarians and vocationalists who dominate educational theory and practice.” – Amazon Description

9. *Who Killed Homer?* by Victor Davis Hanson ★★★★★

“With straightforward advice and informative readings of the great Greek texts, the authors show how we might still save classics and the Greeks for future generations. *Who Killed Homer?* is must reading for anyone who agrees that knowledge of classics acquaints us with the beauty and perils of our own culture.” – Amazon Description

10. *Leisure: the Basis of Culture\** by Josef Pieper ★★★★★

“One of the most important philosophy titles published in the twentieth century, Josef Pieper's *Leisure, the Basis of Culture* is more significant, even more crucial, today than it was when it first appeared more than fifty years ago. This special new edition now also includes his little work *The Philosophical Act*.

Leisure is an attitude of the mind and a condition of the soul that fosters a capacity to perceive the reality of the world. Pieper shows that the Greeks and medieval Europeans, understood the great value and importance of leisure. He also points out that religion can be born only in leisure a leisure that allows time for the contemplation of the nature of God. Leisure has been, and always will be, the first foundation of any culture.

Pieper maintains that our bourgeois world of total labor has vanquished leisure, and issues a startling warning: Unless we regain the art of silence and insight, the ability for non-activity, unless we substitute true leisure for our hectic amusements, we will destroy our culture and ourselves.” – Amazon Description

Additional Books related to classical Christian Education:

- *Classical Education* by Gene Veith and Andrew Kern
- *The Well Trained Mind* by Susan Wise Bauer
- *How to Think about the Great Ideas* by Mortimer Adler
- *Towards a Philosophy of Education* by Charlotte Mason
- *Quadrivium* by John Martineau
- *The Liberal Arts: A Student's Guide* by Gene C. Fant Jr.
- *Education, Christianity and the State* by J. Gresham Machen ★★★★★
- *Crisis of Western Education* by Christopher Henry Dawson
- *Hard Times* by Charles Dickens ★★★★★
- *The Devil Knows Latin* by E. Christian Kopff ★★★★★