

**An Introduction to Jonathan Edwards**  
By Bret Hicks  
August 4, 2018

## **Introduction – *Sinners in the Hands of An Angry God***

So that, thus it is that natural men are held in the hand of God, over the pit of hell; they have deserved the fiery pit, and are already sentenced to it; and God is dreadfully provoked, his anger is as great towards them as to those that are actually suffering the executions of the fierceness of his wrath in hell, and they have done nothing in the least to appease or abate that anger, neither is God in the least bound by any promise to hold them up one moment; the devil is waiting for them, hell is gaping for them, the flames gather and flash about them, and would fain lay hold on them, and swallow them up; the fire pent up in their own hearts is struggling to break out: and they have no interest in any Mediator, there are no means within reach that can be any security to them. In short, they have no refuge, nothing to take hold of; all that preserves them every moment is the mere arbitrary will, and uncovenanted, unobliged forbearance of an incensed God.

The bow of God's wrath is bent, and the arrow made ready on the string, and justice bends the arrow at your heart, and strains the bow, and it is nothing but the mere pleasure of God, and that of an angry God, without any promise or obligation at all, that keeps the arrow one moment from being made drunk with your blood. Thus all you that never passed under a great change of heart, by the mighty power of the Spirit of God upon your souls; all you that were never born again, and made new creatures, and raised from being dead in sin, to a state of new, and before altogether unexperienced light and life, are in the hands of an angry God.

The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider, or some loathsome insect over the fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked: his wrath towards you burns like fire; he looks upon you as worthy of nothing else, but to be cast into the fire; he is of purer eyes than to bear to have you in his sight; you are ten thousand times more abominable in his eyes, than the most hateful venomous serpent is in ours. You have offended him infinitely more than ever a stubborn rebel did his prince; and yet it is nothing but his hand that holds you from falling into the fire every moment.

O sinner! Consider the fearful danger you are in: it is a great furnace of wrath, a wide and bottomless pit, full of the fire of wrath, that you are held over in the hand of that God, whose wrath is provoked and incensed as much against you, as against many of the damned in hell. You hang by a slender thread, with the flames of divine wrath flashing about it, and ready every moment to singe it, and burn it asunder; and you have no interest in any Mediator, and nothing to lay hold of to save yourself, nothing to keep off the flames of wrath, nothing of your own, nothing that you ever have done, nothing that you can do, to induce God to spare you one moment.

## A Brief Biography of Jonathan Edwards

**1703** Jonathan Edwards born in East Windsor, Connecticut on October 5.

**1716** Admitted to Yale

**1720** Graduates from Yale (as valedictorian) and studies there for the ministry

**1721** Edwards begins to have intense religious experiences.

**1722** Serves as pastor of a New York Presbyterian church for eight months

**1723** Edwards writes about Sarah Pierrepont, his future wife

They say there is a young lady in [New Haven] who is beloved of that almighty Being, who made and rules the world, and that there are certain seasons in which this great Being, in some way or other invisible, comes to her and fills her mind with exceeding sweet delight, and that she hardly cares for anything, except to meditate on him--that she expects after a while to be received up where he is, to be raised up out of the world and caught up into heaven; being assured that he loves her too well to let her remain at a distance from him always. There she is to dwell with him, and to be ravished with his love and delight forever. Therefore, if you present all the world before her, with the richest of its treasures, she disregards it and cares not for it, and is unmindful of any pain or affliction. She has a strange sweetness in her mind, and singular purity in her affections; is most just and conscientious in all her actions; and you could not persuade her to do anything wrong or sinful, if you would give her all the world, lest she should offend this great Being. She is of a wonderful sweetness, calmness and universal benevolence of mind; especially after those seasons in which this great God has manifested himself to her mind. She will sometimes go about from place to place, singing sweetly; and seems to be always full of joy and pleasure; and no one knows for what. She loves to be alone, and to wander in the fields and on the mountains, and seems to have someone invisible always conversing with her.

**1724** Elected a tutor at Yale

**1726** Called to Northampton church as assistant minister to grandfather Solomon Stoddard

**1727** Marriage to Sarah Pierrepont

**1729** Death of Solomon Stoddard

**1731** Delivers Public Lecture at First Church, Boston

**1734** Beginning of Great Awakening in Northampton

**1737** Edwards publishes *A Narrative of Surprising Conversions*. The preface is written by the famous hymnwriter Isaac Watts, and the work brings international attention to the Great Awakening and to Edwards.

**1740** Whitefield briefly joins Edwards in revival preaching during the height of the Great Awakening.

**1741** Preaches sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" at Enfield, Connecticut on July 8.

**1741** Edwards publishes *Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God*, which gives an outline of how to judge a move of God's Spirit, and serves as a defense of the Great Awakening.

**1742** Sarah Edwards has an intense spiritual experience which lasted about two weeks, and which almost left her physically overwhelmed. However, even during this experience, she continues to carry out her regular duties in the house and church. Edwards sees all of this as a prime example of the Awakening, and reports the experience in *Some Thoughts Concerning the Present Revival of Religion*.

**1742** Writes *Some Thoughts Concerning the Present Revival of Religion*

**1746** Writes *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections*

**1747** Death of David Brainerd at Edwards' home. Edwards biography of Brainerd is used by God to spark many to an increased love of God and an interest in missions to the unreached.

**1748** Beginning of dissension in Edwards' church. The seeds of this were due to Edwards' handling of some sinful behavior on the part of some young people within the congregation.

**1750** Farewell Sermon at Northampton. Although the formal reason given was over a disagreement about the nature of the Lords Supper and its proper recipients, the real seeds were due to the problems which arose from the way Edwards handled the sinful conduct of the

young people in 1748.

**1751** Settles in Stockbridge as pastor to settlers and missionary to Indians. During this time he will write many of his great philosophical works.

**1754** Writes *Freedom of the Will*, a defense of the doctrine of total depravity and the sovereignty of God in salvation.

**1755** Writes *Nature of True Virtue* and *The End for Which God Created the World*

**1757** Chosen president of College of New Jersey (Princeton)

**1758** Inaugurated president at Princeton

**1758** Finished *Original Sin*, which was being printed as Edwards lay dying of smallpox.

**1758** Dies on March 22 of smallpox resulting from a smallpox inoculation.

**1765** Samuel Hopkins, a disciple of Edwards, publishes *Nature of True Virtue* and *The End for Which God Created the World*.

## **A Methodology for Encountering Edwards**

I recommend beginning with shorter sermons, which are easier to understand, and do not take long to read. Then progress to longer works, and finally to the philosophical works. We will follow a similar order today.

### **Christian Knowledge**

(Volume 2, page 158)

(Last paragraph of section I and all of Section II)

#### **Comments prior to the reading**

I selected this reading because in the church today there is a lot of misunderstanding of this point. Many today ask “Which is more important, the heart or the head?” Yet, the question in itself shows the precise nature of the problem. We want one or the other; Edwards tells us we must have both.

#### **Intro: Explain structure of Edwards sermons: Text, introductory comments, Doctrine statement, exposition, application**

Divinity comprehends all that is taught in the Scriptures, and so all that we need know, or is to be known, concerning God and Jesus Christ, concerning our duty to God, and our happiness in God. Divinity is commonly defined, the doctrine of living to God and by some who seem to be more accurate, the doctrine of living to God by Christ. It comprehends all Christian doctrines as they are in Jesus, and all Christian rules directing us in living to God by Christ. There is nothing in divinity, no one doctrine, no promise, no rule, but what some way or other relates to the Christian and divine life, or our living to God by Christ. They all relate to this, in two respects, viz., as they tend to promote our living to God here in this world, in a life of faith and holiness, and also as they tend to bring us to a life of perfect holiness and happiness, in the full enjoyment of God hereafter

But I hasten to the Second thing proposed, viz., To show what kind of knowledge in divinity is intended in the doctrine. Here I would observe:

1. That there are two kinds of knowledge of the things of divinity, viz., speculative and practical, or in other terms, natural and spiritual. The former remains only in the head. No other faculty but the understanding is concerned in it. It consists in having a natural or rational knowledge of the things of religion, or such a knowledge as is to be obtained by the natural exercise of our own faculties, without any special illumination of the Spirit of God. The latter rests not entirely in the head, or in the speculative ideas of things; but the heart is concerned in it: it principally consists in the sense of the heart. The mere intellect, without the heart, the will or the inclination, is not the seat of it. And it may not only be called seeing, but feeling or tasting. Thus there is a difference between having a right speculative notion of the doctrines contained in the word of God, and having a due sense of them in the heart. In the former consists speculative or natural knowledge of the things of divinity; in the latter consists the spiritual or practical knowledge of them.

2. Neither of these is intended in the doctrine exclusively of the other: but it is intended that we should seek the former in order to the latter. The latter, even a spiritual and practical knowledge of divinity, is of the greatest importance; for a speculative knowledge of it, without a spiritual knowledge, is in vain and to no purpose, but to make our condemnation the greater. Yet a speculative knowledge is also of infinite importance in this respect, that without it we can have no spiritual or practical knowledge; as may be shown by and by.

I have already shown, that the apostle speaks not only of a spiritual knowledge, but of such knowledge as can be acquired, and communicated from one to another. Yet it is not to be thought, that he means this exclusively of the other. But he would have the Christian Hebrews seek the one, in order to the other. Therefore the former is first and most directly intended; it is intended that Christians should, by reading and other proper means, seek a good rational knowledge of the things of divinity. The latter is more indirectly intended, since it is to be sought by the other, as its end.

### **Comments after the reading**

In this selection, Edwards shows that we must have both a head and heart knowledge. RC Sproul refers to this doctrine as the primacy of the head and the primacy of the heart. The answer to the question which is more important or which is primary, the answer is **both**. This is not a contradiction, for they are primary or first in different senses.

The head is primary or first because it is the gateway to the heart. There is no way to truly engender and sustain religious affections without going through the head. True affections come from the heart, but it is impossible to get directly at the heart; we must go through the head. This is what Edwards means when he says “Yet a speculative knowledge is also of infinite importance in this respect, that without it we can have no spiritual or practical knowledge”.

Yet, the heart is primary because it is the goal in our knowledge. If knowledge stops at our head and does not reach our heart, it is of no use. This is why Edwards says “for a speculative knowledge of it, without a spiritual knowledge, is in vain and to no purpose, but to make our condemnation the greater.” True spiritual knowledge of Christ arises not from the head, but from the heart. Even Satan has rational knowledge of God; yet it is of no avail, for he does not love this knowledge, but fears it (James 2:19).

Thus, what is needed in the church today is the balance found in Edwards. The end, or goal of all spiritual instruction is heart knowledge and change; our preaching must be aimed at the heart. Yet, we must realize that the gate through which we get to the heart is the head. If we attempt to bypass the head we will not get true religious affections from the heart, but mere sappy emotionalism, which will not produce true conversion or lasting change in the individual.

### **Discussion**

**A Reading Selection from Jonathan Edwards's The Religious Affections  
Submitted by Bret A. Hicks**

Introductory comments:

The book *The Religious Affections* was taken from a series of sermons Edwards preached during the latter part of the Great Awakening.

The purpose of these sermons was to help people know the nature of true conversion, and to help them grow in their walk with Christ.

I will only be reading small excerpts of this lengthy book. I will read a small section and then we will discuss it. Then I will read another section.

Edwards wrote a "doctrine" for each sermon he preached. His doctrine for this series was "True religion, in great part, consists in holy affections."

A few words about terms:

Religion – By this Edwards means true Christianity – not a "dead system" as we sometimes do.

Affections – By this Edwards means a deep inner desire that motivates us to love or hate something. He relates the affections to the inclination or will – they make us choose or reject something. Edwards speaks a lot about the difference between understanding (mere mental knowledge) and affections (a great desire for or against something)



Who will deny that true religion consists in a great measure, in vigorous and lively actings of the inclination and will of the soul, or the fervent exercises of the heart? That religion which God requires, and will accept, does not consist in weak, dull, and lifeless wishes, raising us but a little above a state of indifference: God, in his word, greatly insists upon it, that we be good in earnest, “fervent in spirit,” and our hearts vigorously engaged in religion: Romans 12:11, “Be ye fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.” Deuteronomy 10:12, “And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord the God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul?” and chap. 6:4, 6, “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy might.” It is such a fervent vigorous engagedness of the heart in religion, that is the fruit of a real circumcision of the heart, or true regeneration, and that has the promises of life; Deuteronomy 30:6, “And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.” If we be not in good earnest in religion, and our wills and inclinations be not strongly exercised, we are nothing. The things of religion are so great, that there can be no suitableness in the exercises of our hearts, to their nature and importance, unless they be lively and powerful. In nothing is vigor in the actings of our inclinations so requisite, as in religion; and in nothing is lukewarmness so odious. True religion is evermore a powerful thing; and the power of it appears, in the first place in the inward exercises of it in the heart, where is the principal and original seat of it. Hence true religion is called the power of godliness, in distinction from the external appearances of it, that are the form of it, 2 Timothy 3:5: “Having a form of godliness, but denying the power of it.”

### **Questions:**

1. How important are the affections to Edwards?
2. What does Edwards mean when he says “That religion which God requires, and will accept, does not consist in weak, dull, and lifeless wishes, raising us but a little above a state of indifference”?
3. What is the difference between the Devil and a believer? Is it knowledge? Or is it affections for the things believed?

And though true grace has various degrees, and there are some that are but babes in Christ, in whom the exercise of the inclination and will, towards divine and heavenly things, is comparatively weak; yet everyone that has the power of godliness in his heart, has his inclinations and heart exercised towards God and divine things, with such strength and vigor that these holy exercises do prevail in him above all carnal or natural affections, and are effectual to overcome them: for every true disciple of Christ “loves him above father or mother, wife and children, brethren and sisters, houses and lands: yea, than his own life.” From hence it follows, that wherever true religion is, there are vigorous exercises of the inclination and will towards divine objects: but by what was said before, the vigorous, lively, and sensible exercises of the will, are no other than the affections of the soul.

**Questions:**

1. According to Edwards, do all believers have the same degree of affections or desire for God and the things of God?
2. Could Edwards conceive of a true Christian who had no passion for God, His Word, His Kingdom, the Church, other believers, etc.?
3. Could Edwards conceive of a true Christian who was neutral towards sin, depravity, wickedness, etc.?
4. What if someone professes to know Christ, can answer all of our questions correctly, yet displays no desire for God or His Kingdom? What would Edwards say of their conversion and relationship to God?
5. How would Edwards respond to the “Jesus as Savior” vs. “Jesus as Lord” controversy of recent years?

If true religion lies much in the affections, hence we may learn, what great cause we have to be ashamed and confounded before God, that we are no more affected with the great things of religion. It appears from what has been said, that this arises from our having so little true religion. God has given to mankind affections, for the same purpose which he has given all the faculties and principles of the human soul for, viz., that they might be subservient to man's chief end, and the great business for which God has created him, that is, the business of religion. And yet how common is it among mankind, that their affections are much more exercised and engaged in other matters, than in religion! In things which concern men's worldly interest, their outward delights, their honor and reputation, and their natural relations, they have their desires eager, their appetites vehement, their love warm and affectionate, their zeal ardent; in these things their hearts are tender and sensible, easily moved, deeply impressed, much concerned, very sensibly affected, and greatly engaged; much depressed with grief at worldly losses, and highly raised with joy at worldly successes and prosperity. But how insensible and unmoved are most men, about the great things of another world! How dull are their affections! How heavy and hard their hearts in these matters! Here their love is cold, their desires languid, their zeal low, and their gratitude small. How they can sit and hear of the infinite height, and depth, and length, and breadth of the love of God in Christ Jesus, of his giving his infinitely dear Son, to be offered up a sacrifice for the sins of men, and of the unparalleled love of the innocent, and holy, and tender Lamb of God, manifested in his dying agonies, his bloody sweat, his loud and bitter cries, and bleeding heart, and all this for enemies, to redeem them from deserved, eternal burnings, and to bring to unspeakable and everlasting joy and glory; and yet be cold, and heavy, insensible, and without regard! Where are the exercises of our affections proper, if not here? What is it that does more require them? And what can be a fit occasion of their lively and vigorous exercise, if not such a one as this? Can anything be set in our view, greater and more important? Any thing more wonderful and surprising? Or more nearly concerning our interest? ..... But is there anything which Christians can find in heaven or earth, so worthy to be the objects of their admiration and love, their earnest and longing desires, their hope, and their rejoicing, and their fervent zeal, as those things that are held forth to us in the gospel of Jesus Christ? In which not only are things declared most worthy to affect us, but they are exhibited in the most affecting manner..... So has God disposed things, in the affair of our redemption, and in his glorious dispensations, revealed to us in the gospel, as though everything were purposely contrived in such a manner, as to have the greatest possible tendency to reach our hearts in the most tender part, and move our affections most sensibly and strongly. How great cause have we therefore to be humbled to the dust, that we are no more affected!

**Questions:**

1. Does Edwards think most people display great desire for the things of God?
2. What does Edwards think most people display a true affection for? What are the things people have a passion for today?
3. Does Edwards think we should have more affection for the things of this world or the things of God?
4. Does Edwards think that we should be greatly affected when we consider the things God has revealed to us and done for us?

If it be so, that true religion lies much in the affections, hence we may infer, that such means are to be desired, as have much of a tendency to move the affections. Such books, and such a way of preaching the word, and administration of ordinances, and such a way of worshipping God in prayer, and singing praises, is much to be desired, as has a tendency deeply to affect the hearts of those who attend these means.

**Questions:**

1. How does Edwards think we can increase our affections for God and His kingdom?
2. Is there anything you can think of that Edwards does not include in this brief list?
3. How regular are most of us at these “exercises”? If we truly desire to get closer to God, what must we do?

## Jonathan Edwards Theology of Revival and Awakening

Edwards view of Divine Sovereignty and human responsibility and means in revival

### Divine Sovereignty

- Sovereignty of God is central and foundational
  - *The Sole Consideration, That God is God, Sufficient to Still All Objections to His Sovereignty;*
  - *God Glorified in Man's Dependence*
  - *The Justice of God in the Damnation of Sinners.*
- Man utter inability to save himself or cause others to turn to Christ
  - *Man's Natural Blindness in the Things of Religion*
  - *Justification By Faith Alone*
  - *God Makes Men Sensible of Their Guilt*
- "It is from diminutive thoughts of God, that you think He is obliged to show mercy to you when you seek it, though you have been for a long time willfully sinning against Him, provoking Him to anger, and presuming that He would show you mercy when you seek it."
- The nature and contrivance of our redemption is such, that the redeemed are in every thing directly, immediately, and entirely dependent on God: they are dependent on Him for all, and are dependent on Him every way."

### Human responsibility and means

- Humans must still actively avail themselves of the means God has provided
  - *The Manner in Which the Salvation of the Soul is to Be Sought*
  - "We should be willing to engage in and go through great undertakings, in order to our own salvation."
  - "There is a work or business which men must enter upon and accomplish, in order to their salvation. Men have no reason to expect to be saved in idleness, or to go to heaven in a way of doing nothing."

Edwards understanding of revival and awakening

- Revival occurs when "the Spirit of God began extraordinarily to set in, and wonderfully to work amongst us."
- However, although means could not produce revival, not attending them could lessen the likelihood of revival or abate its continuance.
- Contrast with Finney's idea that "Revival is no more a miracle than a crop of wheat" and that employing the proper means would always produce revival.

## Edwards View of How to Judge the Validity of A Revival or Awakening

### *The Distinguishing Marks of A Work of the Spirit of God – lecture given at Yale*

- Nine tests which can NOT be used to judge a revival
  - 1) the work is carried on in an extraordinary way (as long as it is still within Scriptural bounds)
  - 2) the work produces extraordinary effects on the bodies of men
  - 3) the work produces a great deal of talk about religion
  - 4) the work produces great effects upon the imagination of the people
  - 5) the work proceeds because of the example of others or through the use of means
  - 6) the subjects of the work are guilty of great imprudence and irregularities in their conduct
  - 7) the work has the work of Satan intermingled with it
  - 8) some who were thought to be subjects of the work later fall away
  - 9) the work is promoted by the preaching of the law and the terrors of hell
  
- Five Scriptural tests from 1 John 4 to judge the validity of a revival
  - 1) it increases the esteem and honor of Jesus Christ
  - 2) it operates against the interest of Satan and His kingdom, especially by producing holiness
  - 3) it increases men's regard for Scripture
  - 4) it produces a love for and discernment of truth in the people
  - 5) it produces love for God and man

### *The Revival of Religion in Northampton in 1740-1742*

- “the good estate of individuals is not chiefly to be judged of by any exactness of steps, and method of experiences, in what is supposed to be the first conversion; but we must judge by the spirit that breathes, the effect wrought upon the temper of the soul in the time of the work and remaining afterwards.”
- In short, the test of true regeneration in the individual, and of true revival and awakening in the corporate body, is not any outward effect on the body, but a true change in lifestyle and conduct, a new longing for God and His ways. Where these are evident over a long period of time, the Spirit of God has been at work, and where they are absent, the work is by some force other than the Spirit of God.

## Why I Think Jonathan Edwards Is Important for the Church Today

Edwards has a God-Centered theology that is sorely lacking in the church today

- This is central to Edwards life and thought; he was consumed with a grand vision of God
- See especially *The End for Which Created the World* – Creation exists for the glory of God
- For Edwards all reality is in God, and He is the center of all existence
- This view has been almost completely lost in the modern church which has placed man, his needs, his desires at the center, and moved God to the periphery (health and wealth Gospel, how we conduct worship, etc.)

Edwards advocated and practiced a rational, experiential theology

- Remember *Christian Knowledge* – the to the heart and experience is through the mind
- Consider his great philosophical writings
- The mind is central in Christian discipleship; it is the gateway to true experience of God
- Yet remember that the goal is not the mind but the heart – the seat of affections
- He led the Great Awakening – full of experience
- He and Sarah had great experiences of God's Spirit at work
- Today these two aspects have been torn apart – we have separated what God joined together
- This is especially important as we consider revival and awakening. Edwards can help us discern true and false revivals.

Edwards represents a finely balanced theology and approach to the Christian life

- Edwards was not a one note thinker – he studied and taught the whole counsel of God
- Edwards was balanced, not emphasizing one aspect over the other, but holding biblical teachings in balance
- We live in a time where too many focus on one aspect, doctrine or experience with much greater emphasis than the Scripture would give to it. Edwards can help us be balanced in our thought because his teaching covers such a broad range.

## **A Brief Annotated Bibliography for Further Study on Jonathan Edwards**

### **Writings by Jonathan Edwards**

**Edwards, Jonathan. *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, 2 vols.*** Peabody: Hendrickson, 1998; reprint of 1834 (Hickman) edition originally published in Great Britain.

This is the best single affordable collection of writings by Jonathan Edwards. All of Edward's major writings and sermons are contained in these volumes, along with his miscellanies, resolutions, and introductory material. The volumes are widely available and reasonably affordable. However, the font size in the volumes is small and can be difficult to read.

\_\_\_\_\_. ***Jonathan Edwards on Revival (Containing A Narrative of Surprising Conversions; Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God, and An Account of the Revival of Religion in Northampton in 1740-1742).*** Carlisle, Pa: Banner of Truth, 1965.

This is a nice small volume of Edwards' three major writings on revival and awakening. This is a great place to look if you want to understand Edwards' views on the actual nature of revival and awakening, and gives a good history of some examples of what occurred in the Great Awakening. Edwards' views on these subjects are the most thoughtful and balanced I have ever read on the subject, and the modern church desperately needs to understand what he actually thought to help us evaluate supposed revivals and awakenings and outpourings of the Spirit today.

### **Writings/materials about Jonathan Edwards**

**Gerstner, John. *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards (taped audio series distributed by the Institute for Theological Studies).*** Grand Rapids: Outreach, Inc., 1986.

This is a lecture series (consisting of 25 approximately 45 minute lectures) given by John Gerstner, who was RC Sproul's teacher and mentor, on the life, thought, and ministry of Jonathan Edwards. Before his death, Gerstner was one of the greatest living Edwards scholars. These tapes provide an excellent introduction to Edwards, and formed the core of my early exposure to Edwards writings and thought.

**Marsden, George. *Jonathan Edwards: A Life.*** New Haven: Yale Press, 2003.

This is now considered by many to be the best single biography on Edwards. Marsden is an excellent historian who is an evangelical. He clearly respects Edwards, but is not afraid to show problems and inconsistencies in Edward's life and thought. This large biography takes a while to read, but is full of great information to help the reader understand Edwards, which in turn can provide greater insight into his writings.

**Piper, John. *God's Passion for His Glory: Living the Vision of Jonathan Edwards.*** Wheaton: Crossway, 1998.

This book contains an extended introduction to the life and thought of Edwards, including both a brief biography, and a summary of some key ideas arising from Edwards theology. The last half of the book is the text of Edwards' treatise *The End for Which God*



*Created the World*, including very helpful explanatory notes by Piper. John Piper is a modern disciple of Edwards, and much of his thought is a conscious updating of the thought of Edwards. Piper's commentary will help you understand this important, but difficult, writing of Edwards. This is a great way to begin reading Edwards' later, more philosophical, writings.

#### *Materials I Have Written on Jonathan Edwards*

All of these papers I wrote for seminary are available to be downloaded on our church website. Simply go to the section for the "Hall of Church History" under the teachings section. The specific links for each paper are also included below.

#### ***Asleep in the Light – Why the Modern Church Desperately Needs to Rediscover Jonathan Edwards.***

This was a paper I wrote for my seminary class on Jonathan Edwards. It gives my reasons for thinking that Edwards' thought is very important for the situation confronting the modern church. I also give an overview of how I would recommend people begin to read Edwards – which writings and sermons to read first, and which ones to wait until a basic understanding of Edwards has been attained.

#### ***The Concept of "Seeking" in the Theology of the Apostle Paul and Jonathan Edwards.***

This was a paper I wrote from my seminary class on Jonathan Edwards. It deals with the specific questions of whether unbelievers can really seek God, and if so, in what sense.

#### ***Jonathan Edwards: His Theology of Revival and Awakening.***

This was a paper I wrote for my seminary class on the Classic Writings for Personal Devotion. In it I try to summarize Edwards' thought on revival and awakening, both personal and corporate. It includes my understanding of Edwards' thought on the relationship between Divine Sovereignty and human responsibility and action in revival and awakening, his views on how to judge if a revival was really a work of the Spirit of God or if it was merely a product of human emotion and activity, and his understanding of how Christians grow in their Christian walk.

#### ***Revival: A Comparison of the Theology of Jonathan Edwards and the Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship.***

This was a paper I wrote for my seminary class on the Church history from the Reformation to the present. In it I had to compare and contrast the thought of Jonathan Edwards and the leaders of the "Toronto Blessing" on revival. I discuss the theology of each on the Divine Sovereignty and human responsibility/action in bringing about and sustaining revival. I also address the theologies on the subject of unusual physical manifestations during a revival. If you would like to understand how Edwards would probably have viewed several modern purported revivals, this is my understanding from his writings.