

# Why Christians Should Read Fantasy

**“Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of time, because the days are evil.” - Ephesians 5:15-16**

Christians have a high calling, to be holy as God is holy (1 Peter 1:14-16). I'd say that's a pretty high calling... one I certainly don't think about nearly as much as I go about my daily life. When I consider the reality of my own life, it can be easy to slip into cycles of overthinking every mundane thing I do and the constant question, “Is this worthwhile?” Especially when I consider my enjoyment of reading and writing fantasy books. It's not even real, is it worthwhile?

Well, dear reader, I believe it is, and here is why.

- **Created to Create**

“So God created man in his own image,  
in the image of God he created him;  
male and female he created them.”

- Genesis 1:27

God created humans to reflect His own self. From the moment of Creation, humanity was created by God to reflect their Creator, to “be holy” as God is. While humanity has since fallen, our duty to the Lord has not changed, and, through the sacrificial death of Christ for the forgiveness of our sins, redeemed man can once again pursue this high calling from the Lord.

“God created man in his own image” and what do we see our Lord doing first? Creating. Man, created in God's image, is creative. We see it in our buildings, our infrastructure, our farms, and our art. Everywhere man is, he subdues, he creates, and he uses all that the Lord has given him to create for the glory of God and the good of those around him.

Why would writing be outside of that scope? Books are part of the creative outlet the Lord has graciously given to us. Music, artwork, dance, and books, all are gifts that can be used to glorify God and create as He has created us to do. So, enjoy the work the Lord has enabled us to do!

- **We are Finite.**

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.”

- Exodus 20:8-11

God is infinite, He is inexhaustible, without any limits of power. Humanity is finite, exhaustible, and limited. The Lord graciously gifted us with rest, because He knows the limits of our bodies, and our need for sleep, relaxation, and stillness. While it is good to be productive, focused, and hardworking, it is just as good to rest well.

Books, and art in general, provide an excellent medium for such rest. While books are not void of messages to consume, they allow our bodies to break from hard labor and enjoy something meant for consumption. They allow us to relax while edifying our minds and keeping us from being lazy.

Because the reality is, we can rest poorly, and this is not honoring the one who blessed us with rest. It is not restful to scroll endlessly on our phones, it is restful to enjoy the fantastical world painstakingly crafted for our enjoyment.

- **Called to enjoy**

“I perceived that there is nothing better for them than to be joyful and to do good as long as they live; also that everyone should eat and drink and take pleasure in all his toil - this is God’s gift to man.”

- Ecclesiastes 3:12-13

The book of Ecclesiastes is a humbling reminder of the fleeting life of man, and how the wisdom and providence of God transcend our human understanding. Ecclesiastes sums up its message with this verse, “The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.” (Ecclesiastes 12:13) Within that, enjoy what the Lord has blessed you with. This includes your time of rest, the creativity of man, and those books on your TBR shelf.

However, just because enjoying a good book is honoring the Lord, does not mean that you can enjoy *any* book. Just as many other good things have become twisted in the fall, books can be both edifying or twisting. Christians should carefully choose which books they read, always being careful to guard themselves and live “upright and holy lives” (Titus 2:12). Here are a few guidelines for discerning if that next book is a wise choice...

- **Does it meet the standard of Philippians 4:8?**

“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.”

- Philippians 4:8

That doesn’t mean a book should be void of any difficult topics, morally gray heroes, or negative character arcs, but it does mean that the central moral message should all point to what is true. Books that openly convey sin as good should not be consumed. Books that praise evil and condemn good should not be read. These books do not encourage you as Philippians 4:8 demands.

Does that mean that you shouldn’t read books from opposing perspectives? Certainly not, but how those books are handled should impact whether you decide to read them or not. If you are simply reading a book to enjoy a book, then reading books that encourage a sinful

worldview shouldn't be consumed. If you are reading the book to elaborate on why it is wrong, to instruct others, or to write a review, there is certainly space for such reading.

But the reality is, we should above all guard our hearts. We are much more susceptible to sin than we give ourselves credit.

- **Do Not Cause Yourself to Sin**

“And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.”

- Matthew 5:30

A Christian should never take sin lightly, and should never take temptation lightly. Know yourself, your temptations, and where the threshold lies for yourself. Air on the side of caution, better is it to deny yourself than to slip into sin. Each Christian will have to determine for themselves what is too much, and you should prayerfully consider what is too tempting for you.

Perhaps you're reading this and feel like it's too much of a burden to think through all this. First, take courage, our salvation does not rest in our ability to order our lives in a holy way. We cannot do that, but Christ did. He lived a perfect life, but took our sin upon Himself on the cross, so that we are no longer slaves to sin, but are freed to live righteously for Christ (Romans 6:18).

But, isn't reading supposed to be an escape? This is where I want to encourage you, Christian, not to fall into the lie that reading is an escape. Certainly, it is relaxing, it is enjoyable, and it can be a good break from the weight of life. But it is never an escape, and it is never an excuse to indulge in sinful or tempting words. Instead, we are called to live our lives holy for the Lord, which includes every single aspect, including our choices in books.

“Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy.’”

- 1 Peter 1:13-16

So, reader, enjoy that book for the glory of your Lord and Savior!

In Christ,  
Lydia MacClaren

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