

# Book Reviews

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### **The Way of the Wild Heart** by John Eldredge (Nelson Books)

The premise of John Eldredge's latest book is simple—"acting as a true Father, and you his true son, God is now raising you up as a son." Intentional training and initiation is the mode presented by which boys are raised into men. Like every book on men, Eldredge bemoans what is lacking in our churches today. But different from most other books is his plan to correct what has been lost.



Having once been adamantly against Eldredge's approach to men, I came to this book with my doubts. I still find his theological foundations to be weak at times but improved over *Wild at Heart*. God the risk taker of Wild at Heart gives way now to God the warrior in *The Way of the Wild Heart*. The constant hunt for a wound in need of healing also wears on me, but that may be because I am blessed with a great earthly father.



What are you reading that other Texas Baptists would find helpful? Send suggestions and reviews to [books@baptiststandard.com](mailto:books@baptiststandard.com).

This book probably was under many Christmas trees recently, and I believe that is a good thing. Eldredge's clarity in describing his understanding of the stages of manhood is helpful and thought-provoking. His openness with his own life as a son and as a father is engaging. Many fathers will benefit from the chapters following the description of each man-stage, which detail how to intentionally raise your own son.

The strength of this book is in Eldredge's faithfulness to point men to God as their Father. You may have grown up in a home and currently attend a church that is full of males but devoid of men. God is ready and able to love you and raise you as his son.

Unfortunately, the weakness is tied to the strength. Lacking,

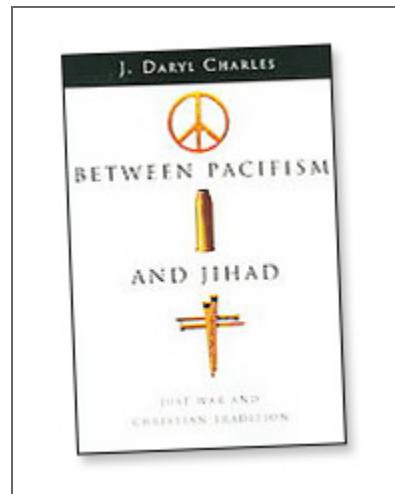
aside from some quick references, is the role of Scripture in becoming a man. The reader gets the opinion that there is more to learn about being a man from movies like *Lord of the Rings*, *The Kingdom of Heaven* and *The Lion King* and mountain climbing than from God's word. We need to be men, and we need to learn from others' examples, but priority of place must be given to Scripture.

Paul Duncan, pastor

Mambrino Baptist Church

Granbury

***Between Pacifism and Jihad: Just War and Christian Tradition*** by J. Daryl Charles (InterVarsity Press)



In these tumultuous times of terrorism, violence and warfare, how is the believer in Christ to think about such subjects? Does the Bible speak about war and peace and whether or not it is right to engage in military affairs? What about Jesus' teaching to "turn the other cheek"? What have thoughtful and intelligent Christians generally believed about war and the use of force through the centuries that can inform our modern worldviews?

Daryl Charles, associate professor of religion and ethics at Union University, states that instead of starting with the unbiblical assumptions of peace being "the absence of war," we must think with a more biblical foundation—peace is a state of justice and righteousness. When injustice is done, we must use biblical moral reasoning and love of neighbor to shun the extremes of stand-back, isolationary pacifism and self-righteous, excessive militarism.

Charles also explores the differences in what the Bible teaches about dealing with personal conflicts and understanding the proper functions of governments and authorities.

"When justice is done, it brings joy to the righteous but terror to evildoers" (Proverbs 21:15).

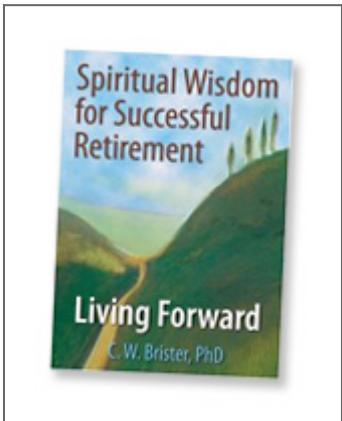
Greg Bowman

Minister to students

First Baptist Church

Duncanville

***Spiritual Wisdom for Successful Retirement: Living Forward*** by C.W. Brister (Haworth Pastoral Press)



Upon retirement, my father moved to 50 acres and built his dream home. Two years later, we walked through his pasture, and I asked how he was enjoying his retirement. He stopped, looked me in the eyes, and confessed, "I feel ... worthless."

I wish I had this book then. It could have guided me to understand, and better help with, my father's crises and issues of retirement. I also could have shared the book with him—and countless church members sharing his journey—for it is written not just for ministers/caregivers, but for retirees and their companions.

The book takes on important issues like the loss of one's employment identity, signs of depression and the reality of death. Fortunately, it is not just descriptive, for it provides hope-filled suggestions concerning family, faith, friends and other sources of help.

At 158 pages, this book is a pleasurable journey through information, suggestions and anecdotes, but its greatest strength is that C.W. Brister walks in retirement himself and shares from his own experience and heart.

Karl Fickling, coordinator

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