

Preparation for G55 -- Books That Changed My Life

"As we travel through life, there are certain books that mold and remold us, and though we may not have read the books for a long time, we remain, nonetheless their work. No book ever crosses the path of our destiny without leaving some mark upon it forever.

"Sometimes books influence our beliefs or imbue us with so much knowledge that our intellect is forever shaped. More important to me are those books that provide a mystic transport to another reality. Equally important are those books that give pure drug-like pleasure and relaxation, allowing us to escape reality in times of stress. Whether they are profoundly philosophical or provide an endless adventure, books provide us with a means and system to leave the prison of our aloneness and enter alternate worlds of infinite possibility."

- Craig Becker on his Web site Bibliomania - Cliff Pickover: My Favorite Books

Summer is upon us and our thoughts are turning to summer reading. But in this Small Group Ministry session, our thoughts will turn instead to books we've already read. As the quote above makes clear, there are many ways books can influence us. In this session, we will be recalling those books that have had a major impact in our lives. These can be books of *any* genre -- children's books, fiction, fantasy, classics, science fiction, nonfiction, religious works, poetry ... anything.

Don't be daunted by the words "a major impact"! A book doesn't have to cause a huge change in your outer life to have had a major impact on you. Think about books you've found yourself reading over and over again. Think about those books you've recommended to everyone you know. Think of books that changed the way you see the world or altered the way you think about a particular topic.

Perhaps several titles immediately come to mind. Jot them down. But continue to think about this all week because you may be surprised at what comes up.

If you've ended up with a very long list, try to narrow it down to the two or three books most important to you. Then think about what impact each of these books had on you at the time you first read them and how they helped you become the person you are now.

If you wish, bring one of your selected books to the meeting. You might choose a short passage that was the most affecting or interesting to read aloud.