



Sproul, R.C.

The Barber Who Wanted to Pray

Illustrated by T. Lively Fluharty

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Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth

New Jersey

Anyone who knows anything about R. C. Sproul is well aware of his affinity for Martin Luther. So it should come as no surprise that Sproul would pen a book about the Reformer. What may be a bit surprising is that he penned a children's book, which, for all intents and purposes, is a condensed version of Luther's *A Simple Way to Pray*.

The Barber Who Wanted to Pray is a beautifully illustrated (see photos below) tale about the McFarland family. The McFarland's are staunch Christians who sit down every evening for Bible study, Scripture memorization, hymn singing, and devotional prayer. One night, after the devotions had ended, Mr. McFarland's daughter Delaney asked her father how she could pray better. Mr. McFarland then proceeds to tell her the story of Peter the Barber's encounter with Martin Luther. He had asked Luther the same thing and Luther responded by writing *A Simple Way to Pray*.

Luther's advice was profound in its simplicity. He recommended learning the Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6:9-13), the Ten Commandments (Exod. 20:3-17), and the Apostles' Creed. But rather than merely repeating these articles of faith he suggested praying *through* them. By actually thinking about each verse, sentence, clause, or part of the prayer, commandments, or creed, one is able to pray unceasingly to God. In reflecting on what these things say about God we're given material to engage in something fresh and exciting every time we approach God in prayer.

It's really good advice and something that I'll certainly be implementing with my daughter. What kid shouldn't know the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the Apostles' Creed? I'll substitute the Nicene Creed for the Apostles' Creed though, since it's more comprehensive and specific to the orthodox Christian faith.

My only issue with this book was some of the rhetoric. Talk of Luther being "brave enough to stand up for the truth of the gospel of Jesus, as no one had since the days of the apostles," and "no one [having] so much courage as he" (14), as well as his "recover[ing] the gospel from darkness" (16) is a bit dramatic. Admiration can easily turn into idolatry if not kept in check. But other than this I'd recommend this book to anyone with kids. If they're old enough to read then they'll do fine on their own, and if they're not reading yet they'll do fine with some parental assistance.

Here are a few samples of the artwork in this book:

