

The Pastor and the Life of the Mind:

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As a pastor, you are accepting money from God's people to do a job. The core of that job involves the manipulation of ideas. Your first pastoral responsibility (as opposed to Christian or human responsibilities) is to understand ideas and to help others understand them. Your work will, or at least ought to be, primarily in the sphere of the mind.

Most likely, however, you will be separated from the academic environment. There will be no examinations to pass, no daily assignments to submit. You may even be ministering to people who do not value the life of the mind. You will be cast largely upon your own devices as you continue to improve yourself. Therefore, you must take responsibility for your own ongoing intellectual development. Here are some ways that you can do that.

I. Follow current events by

A. Conservative:

B. Non-conservative:

II. Stay abreast of cultural developments by reading

III. Subscribe to and read at least one theological journal:

IV. Continue to improve your biblical and theological skills.

V. Spend time reading authors who are wrestling with issues of culture and meaning.

VI. Spend time in imaginative literature.

VII. Read and learn to love good poetry,

VIII. Read history.

IX. At the purely mechanical level

X. To give your reading direction,