

## INTRODUCTION

John Piper authored this set, but we have served as the general editors. Our task has been to edit and assemble the standardized, definitive collection of his publications to date. The following questions and answers seek to provide an orientation to these volumes by briefly introducing the author and explaining our rationale for the project, the nature of its contents, and some of its features.

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### WHO IS JOHN PIPER?

The son of a traveling evangelist, John Stephen Piper was born on January 11, 1946, in Chattanooga, Tennessee. That summer, Bob Jones College moved from Cleveland, Tennessee, to Greenville, South Carolina, and the Pipers, who were happy fundamentalists, moved with the school. John graduated from Wade Hampton High School in 1964, and then earned his bachelor's degree from Wheaton College (1964–1968), his divinity degree from Fuller Theological Seminary (1968–1971), and his doctorate from the University of Munich (1971–1974). For the next six years, he taught biblical studies at Bethel College in St. Paul, Minnesota (1974–1980), before becoming senior pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church in downtown Minneapolis, Minnesota (1980–2013).

In December of 1968, John Piper married Noël Henry. They have four sons, one daughter, and twelve grandchildren.

Piper has served as the founder, cofounder, or an early influencer or founding member of several organizations, including the Council of Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (1987), *Desiring God* (1994), the Passion conferences (1997), The Gospel Coalition (2005), *Together for the Gospel* (2006), Bethlehem College & Seminary (2009), and the CROSS Conference (2014). Since his transition from local pastoral ministry in March of 2013, Piper's primary teaching, speaking, and

writing have happened through *Desiring God*. He also has served part-time as chancellor and professor for Bethlehem College and Seminary.

Piper's stated mission for his life, and the purpose of his writing and speaking ministry, is "to spread a passion for the supremacy of God in all things for the joy of all peoples through Jesus Christ."

### WHY COLLECT PIPER'S WRITINGS IN ONE SET?

The years of work that have gone into collecting this set have been guided by the conviction that these writings have already been used of God for over four decades to equip, convict, instruct, and edify the church, and to glorify the worth and excellence of God's name. We pray that the result of assembling into one place all of Piper's writings—not only all of his books but also all of his other published pieces—will be an ongoing means of grace for the body of Christ.

To read all of Piper's published writings individually would require the acquisition of more than one hundred volumes, along with tracking down dozens of older articles and reviews in obscure publications. By editing, assembling, and standardizing these volumes in one definitive set, we hope to provide convenient access to the work of a proven and trustworthy teacher.

## **WHAT WRITINGS ARE INCLUDED IN THE *COLLECTED WORKS*?**

Our basic criterion for selection has been to include *everything* that John Piper has written for publication in printed books, magazines, and journals. The result is forty-five books, sixty articles and reviews, twenty-three forewords, and forty-two chapters—totaling around three million words (all of this is in addition to his sermon manuscripts and online articles already available, free of charge, at [desiringGod.org](http://desiringGod.org)). For further information on what is included and excluded, see the introduction to the annotated chronological bibliography in the final volume of this set.

## **WHAT TIME PERIOD DOES THIS COVER?**

The time period covered in these first thirteen volumes of Piper's *Collected Works* begins in 1970 (with his first published book review, as a seminary student) and extends through 2015.

## **WHAT EDITIONS OF THE BOOKS ARE USED?**

Some of Piper's books have gone through multiple expanded and updated editions. A couple of books have been retitled. In this collection, we have included the latest version of every book that Piper has written.

## **ARE THE BOOKS INCLUDED IN THE *COLLECTED WORKS* ONLY THOSE PUBLISHED BY CROSSWAY?**

No. Crossway, as the publisher of this set, has worked out an arrangement with the other four publishers—Multnomah, Baker, B&H, and Christian Focus—to include all of the books that John Piper has published through 2015.

## **WHAT WAS JOHN PIPER'S ROLE IN THE PRODUCTION OF THESE WORKS?**

In addition to granting approval for any significant changes in wording, Piper wrote a fresh preface-essay for each of the first thirteen volumes, identifying the origin and motivation for the works,

common themes, and suggestions for reading them. These substantive reflections for this set offer a unique personal retrospective on Piper's writings.

## **WHAT WAS THE EDITORIAL PHILOSOPHY?**

The entire collection was edited line by line to provide reasonable consistency in formatting, to make occasional clarifications (with Piper's approval), and to update sources. We have tried to minimize major redundancies among the writings. For example, a number of the chapters in *The Justification of God* were originally published as academic articles. Rather than reprint both, we have included only the final book version. Or, as another example, the chapters in *Brothers, We Are Not Professionals*, were originally published in a denominational magazine. They are included here only in their final book version. To see a comprehensive tracking of Piper's publishing, year by year, please consult the final volume.

In terms of providing the reading with the original context and background for the various writings, we have leaned on Piper's new prefaces, along with the original frontmatter for each book. The major exception comes in volumes 12 and 13, where we seek to provide an introductory footnote for Piper's non-book writings (reviews, articles, chapters, forewords) in order to provide explanatory background information.

## **ARE THE WRITINGS PRESENTED IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER?**

Yes and no. The basic order is chronological, according to original publication dates, but we arranged some volumes more thematically. The two books in the first volume, *Love Your Enemies* and *The Justification of God*, are Piper's first two books and also his most technical and academic. The next two books, comprising the second volume, are *Desiring God* and *The Pleasures of God*. Piper published one book between these two, but we determined that these two foundational books fit naturally together as their own volume. The thematic arrangement should be fairly obvious in other volumes. For example, the six books of eighteen historical

biographies in The Swans Are Not Silent series make up volume 9. Volumes 10 and 11 contain all of Piper's devotional readings, followed by all of his published poetry. Volumes 12 and 13 include all of Piper's chapters and forewords, as well as reviews and articles for journals and magazines, with all of the items presented chronologically within their category.

## **WHAT ABOUT FUTURE WRITINGS FROM PIPER?**

Sometime in the indeterminate future, when Piper's writing production comes to a conclusion, we plan to publish several additional volumes to complete the set. Our expectation is that the complete set would be sold as one unit, and that the second half would be available for separate purchase for those who would like to supplement this current edition of the *Collected Works*.

## **WHAT IS IN THE FINAL VOLUME AND WHY DOESN'T IT HAVE A NUMBER?**

The *Collected Works* contains thirteen volumes of Piper's writings. The final additional volume includes a year-by-year bibliography of Piper's published work, including every edition that was published. In addition, all of Piper's Sunday sermons from his pulpit ministry at Bethlehem Baptist Church (1980-2013) are listed in chronological order. This final volume also contains the indexes to the entire set, allowing readers to reference Piper's use of Scripture, subjects, and persons. We have decided not to number this volume, but rather to replace it when we publish the full and final edition of the *Collected Works*. Thus, the first volume in the second half of this set will begin as volume 14.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

As editors, we are grateful for our respective employers, Desiring God and Crossway, for allowing us the time to work on this massive project. In particular, we want to acknowledge the herculean efforts of editor Laura Talcott, who cheerfully and diligently worked on little else for several years and

managed to bring it all to completion. We also would be remiss not to thank John Piper for his gracious leadership, friendship, encouragement, and support.

*Soli Deo Gloria.*

David Mathis and Justin Taylor  
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