

book of the month | July 2026

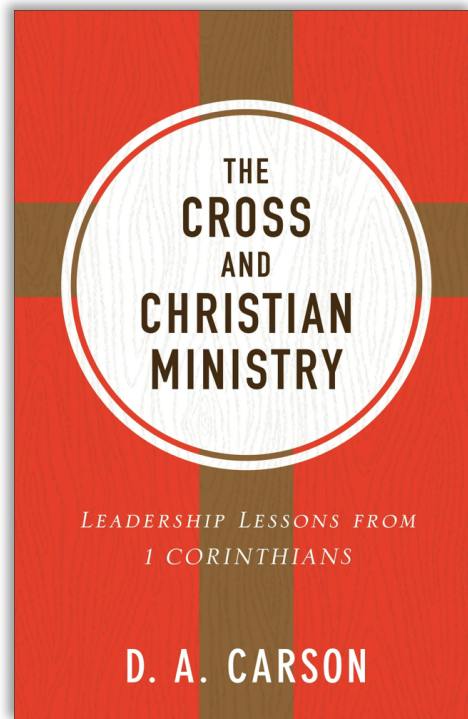
The Cross and Christian Ministry

D.A. Carson

As Smedly continues to walk us through 1 Corinthians on Sunday mornings, we are learning again just how much the cross of Christ must influence our view of leadership in the church and the ministry that leaders accomplish. This month would be a great time to read D.A. Carson's short book, *The Cross and Christian Ministry: Leadership Lessons from 1 Corinthians*. Smedly has recommended it a few times as he has taught.

Please go ahead and pick it up from the book table and read it this month as a body. I believe that if we do that, it will help the text from 1 Corinthians that Smedly is preaching more deeply and permanently impact the way that GBC views, implements, and responds to leadership and ministry in the church.

Carson's aim is to show that the cross is not only how we are saved. It is also the test and standard of all vital Christian ministry. As he puts it, "The cross not only establishes what we are to preach, but how we are to preach. It prescribes what Christian leaders must be and how Christians must view Christian leaders. It tells us how to serve and draws us onward in discipleship until we understand what it means to be world Christians."



Across five short chapters, Carson exposites Paul on the cross and preaching (ch 1), the cross and the Holy Spirit (ch 2), the cross and factionalism (ch 3, where Smedly is right now), the cross and Christian leadership (ch 4), and the cross and the world Christian (ch 5). One short chapter a week and you are done.

Suggested One-Month Reading Plan (Average 5 pages per day)

Week 1: Monday, July 6th – Sunday, July 12th

Preface, 2 pages

1. The Cross and Preaching, 35 pages

Week 2: Monday, July 13th–Sunday, July 19th

2. The Cross and the Holy Spirit, 28 pages

3. The Cross and Factionalism, 10 pages

Week 3: Monday, July 20th–Sunday, July 26th

3. The Cross and Factionalism, 18 pages

4. The Cross and Christian Leadership, 21 pages

Week 4: Monday, July 27th – Sunday, August 2nd

4. The Cross and Christian Leadership, 7 pages

5. The Cross and the World Christian, 26 pages

Do not read the subtitle and assume this book is only for elders, deacons, or teachers. It is for them, and every leader at GBC would do well to read it, and all who follow leaders should understand it. So in short, this book would benefit everybody at GBC. Carson himself insists that "what is required in some sense of all believers is peculiarly required of the leaders of believers. There is a difference of degree." So every leader or aspiring leader needs to read this. All at GBC would benefit.