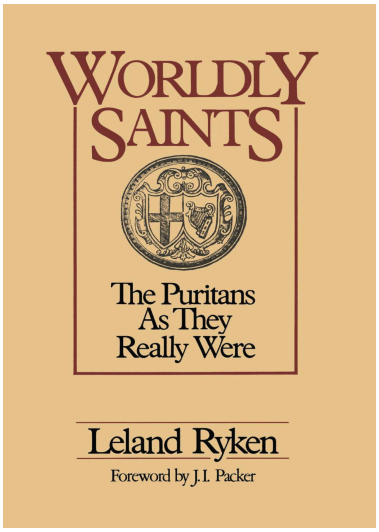
Worldly Saints

The Puritans As They Really Were

Leland Ryken



"So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31). This command must impact every part of our lives: our work, our marriages, our spending, our parenting, our learning… everything. Nothing in our lives can remain untouched. Many Puritans thought and wrote carefully about what obedience to this command should look like. In *Worldly Saints*, Leland Ryken uses the Puritans to help us think about obedience in our own lives.

I have found that reading about Christians from another era helps reveal areas where I am more influenced by my culture than by the Bible. A fish doesn't know it's wet. These Christians sought to please the same God I do while facing many of the same concerns in a different time and culture. Their perspective can help us see what we otherwise miss. That is this book's superpower. The Puritans had weaknesses too. Our perspective can help us recognize some of their blind spots, just as theirs can expose our own. They had many strengths worth learning from and make excellent mentors and examples. Ryken makes this study accessible, practical, and even fun to read.

Worldly Saints is an excellent introduction to the Puritans, Christians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries who sought to bring all of life under the authority of Scripture. Ryken includes many quotations from their own writings, allowing us to hear directly from them about work, marriage and sex, money, family, preaching, education, and more. Smedly recommended this book during his sermon on marital intimacy. I recommend it too, for that reason and many others.

Suggested One-Month Reading Plan

Approximately 15–20 minutes a day

Week 1: November 1–8

Foreword and Preface
1. What Were the Original Puritans Like?
2. Work
3. Marriage and Sex

Week 2: November 9–15

4. Money
5. Family
6. Puritan Preaching

Week 3: November 16–22

7. Church and Worship
8. The Bible
9. Education

Week 4: November 23–29

10. Social Action
11. Learning From Negative Example: Some Puritan Faults
12. The Genius of Puritanism: What the Puritans Did Best

At their best, the Puritans joined a serious pursuit of holiness with delight in God and gratitude for His gifts. Their confidence was in Christ's righteousness, and their obedience was a response to His grace. The grace that saves us also trains us to live godly lives (Titus 2:11–14). Reading this book, I found opportunities to imitate their godly maturity in my own life. I also hope that this introduction to the Puritans leads you to benefit from the many great books they wrote over the centuries, many of which we have on the booktable.

Read with your Bible open. The Puritans did not always apply Scripture rightly, and Ryken devotes a chapter to their failures. Some of their rules, including restrictions on Sunday activities, went beyond what Scripture requires. We can learn from their mistakes as well as their faithfulness.

I want us as a church to read this book together in November and put what we learn into practice. Read with an aim learn, think, and change. May God grow GBC to better glorify Him in all our lives. *-Jacob Hantla*