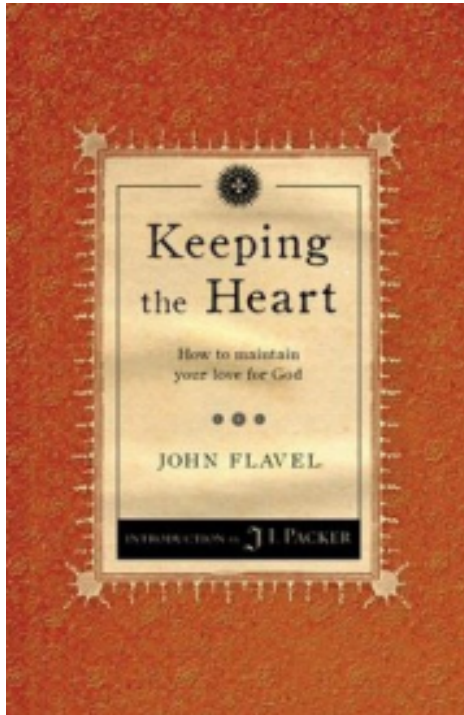


book of the month | April 2026

Keeping the Heart – John Flavel

It was such a blessing to read this book a couple of years ago. If you have not read it, I hope that this is the month you do.

John Flavel (1627-1691) was an English Puritan pastor. He wrote *Keeping the Heart*, which was originally titled, *A Saint Indeed*, or *The Great Work of a Christian Explained and Applied* as a pastoral letter to his church to help them obey the command of Proverbs 4: Verse 23: “Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flows the springs of life.”



This is the first EQ discipline: Shepherd your heart. Flavel works hard to teach his readers that their primary focus in their religious devotion needs to be the inner man. It is easy and common to focus on outward externals, but without the focus on shepherding their hearts to love and honor the Lord from their heart, these religious efforts can quickly devolve into Pharisaical hypocrisy. Flavel doesn't merely teach. The book is filled with practical examples that came from being personally aware of the difficulty and benefit of doing the heart work of keeping the heart pure unto God.

If you aren't used to Puritan writings you may be scared off at first. There is a cadence and vocabulary of writing that is a bit foreign to modern preferences. It is really OK to pause and look up a definition, and there isn't any pressure to read through a big chunk at once. Some things that I have found helpful are to read with a pen or pencil in my hand and when an introductory paragraph says there are 4 points I write out (1, 2, 3, 4) alongside in the margins where they appear. You may have to be content to read slower than normal, read out loud, or even follow along with an audio version. There have been so many faithful saints who have gone before us, and I am so thankful when I pick up and read someone who lived 400 years ago and expounds upon the same truths we know and love and need today.

Grace,
Tyler Azeltine

Suggested One-Month Reading Plan

(4 pages per day)

Week 1: Monday, March 30th - Sunday, April 5th

Introduction by J.I. Packer

Flavel's Introduction, 4 pages

What the Keeping of the Heart Supposes and Imports
2. Assign Some Reasons Why Christians Must Make This the Great Business of Their Lives

Week 2 : Monday, April 6th - Sunday, April 12th

3. Special Seasons in the Life of a Christian Which Require Our Utmost Diligence in Keeping the Heart

1. The time of prosperity
2. The time of adversity
3. The time of Zion's trouble
4. The time of danger and public distraction

Week 3: Monday, April 13th - Sunday, April 19th

3. Special Seasons in the Life of a Christian Which Require Our Utmost Diligence in Keeping the Heart

5. The time of outward wants
6. The season of duty
7. When receiving injuries and abuses from men
8. When we meet with great trials
9. The hour of temptation #1

Week 4: Monday, April 20th - Sunday, April 26th

3. Special Seasons in the Life of a Christian Which Require Our Utmost Diligence in Keeping the Heart

9. The hour of temptation, #2
10. The time of doubting and of spiritual darkness
11. When sufferings for religion are upon us
12. When we are warned by sickness that our dissolution is at hand

4. Improving and Applying the Subject