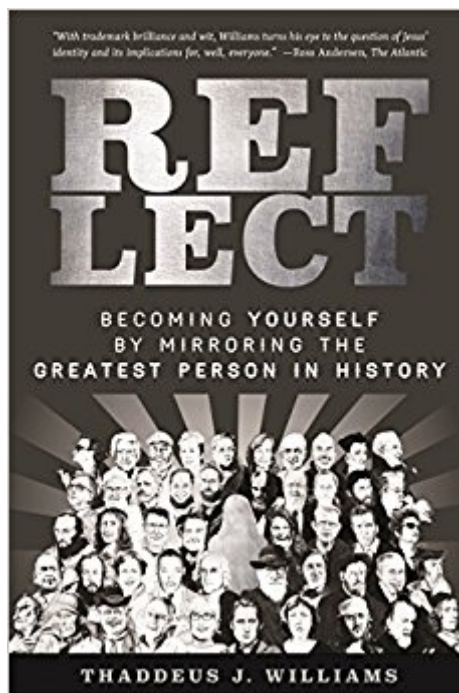




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REFLECT: Becoming Yourself By Mirroring The Greatest Person In History



Synopsis

What's the most important thing in the universe to you? What, more than anything else, permeates your thought life, pulls your heart strings, and propels your actions? Don't fool yourself. That supreme something-whatever it may be for you-is shaping the person you are becoming, for better or for worse, turning you into someone radiant and full of life, or making you a dim and weightless ghost of yourself. But what if we worshipped Jesus? Not the imaginary Jesus invented by televangelism, consumerism, fundamentalism, mysticism, or some political ism, but the actual Jesus we meet in the New Testament? How can he, unlike any other object of worship, enlarge our intellects, our emotions, our actions, our relationships, our imaginations, our whole selves? Drawing from science, literature, art, theology, history, music, philosophy, pop culture, and more, Thaddeus J. Williams paints a fresh and inspiring vision of how we become most truly ourselves by mirroring the Greatest Person in History.

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Customer Reviews

“Williams has written a marvelous book that points readers toward authentic worship, faithful living, dedicated discipleship, and a love for Jesus Christ. Readers who take time to reflect on REFLECT will find a book that is brilliant, creative, wide-ranging, insightful, readable, challenging, and filled with wisdom. It is a genuine joy to recommend this outstanding book. I encourage readers to buy two copies and give one to a friend!”
—David S. Dockery, President, Trinity International University; coauthor of *The Great Tradition of Christian Thinking*
“Want to become more Christlike? Worship Jesus Christ. Why? Because we become what we worship. This logic fuels

REFLECT, a winsomely written and thoroughly contemporary discipleship manual. At a time when our culture's authenticity-obsession is leading individuals down find yourself dead-end paths, Williams rightly focuses our attention on Jesus, the source of everything truly authentic. This insightful and timely book reminds readers that becoming Christ-like is not about looking inside yourself or leaning on legalistic rules; rather, it's about getting to know, learning to love and bowing the knee to the glorious Christ.

• "Brett McCracken, author of *Hipster Christianity: When Church and Cool Collide* and *Gray Matters* • With trademark brilliance and wit, Williams turns his eye to the question of Jesus' identity, and its implications for, well, everyone.

• "Ross Anderson, *The Atlantic* • Williams is a renaissance man who loves Jesus and loves life. His wide-ranging passions are on full display in this exceptional new book, written with theological clarity, infectious curiosity, and an artist's touch. Featuring insights from Dorothy Sayers, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, David Foster Wallace, and many more, REFLECT paints a vivid picture of what it means to worship Jesus and why it matters. The book is a brilliant resource for twenty-first century people seeking to live meaningfully in a world where meaning is harder and harder to find.

• "Barry H. Corey, President, Biola University; author of *Love Kindness* • Many works can raise the right questions; very few provide the right answers. And, even fewer do so in a way that provokes application and change. Williams practically grapples with and answers the defining issue facing the church and culture today: What is man? His answer is directional, yet not dogmatic; informed, yet not pedantic; fresh, yet not trendy; faithful, yet not frothy; joyful, yet not juvenile. Williams understands and communicates how our lives can reflect (and must reflect) Christ in the entirety of his integrated multi-faceted humanity. Far from being yet another generic collection of spiritual disciplines or pious admonitions, this volume basks in the glory of Christ, and this propels us (with Williams' thoughtful nudging) to be transformed so that we become authentic transformers unto the Good, Beautiful, and True. This volume is at once sound, practical, doxological, loving, and encouraging, and shall be a prime resource for my university and graduate students.

• "Jeffery J. Ventrella, Senior Counsel, Senior Vice-President, Training, Alliance Defending Freedom; author of *The Cathedral Builder: Pursuing Cultural Beauty* • Williams convincingly and winsomely destroys the notion that a person can be non-religious, observing from historical testimony and everyday observation that everyone nurtures a god-concept, an all-important object of devotion that shapes all of life in significant ways. Not only are all people religious, all of life is religious, so it is crucial in our own lives to imitate the habits and practices of Jesus Christ. The book is beautifully written and gracious; the author knows how to write a page-turner with a father's warmth and scholar's insight. Along the way, he provides a more

robust picture of Jesus, the God-man, than will have occurred to most of us. Yet Christ is revealed as much more than mere moral exemplar. Williams knows, and presents to us, the Jesus who is the Way, the Truth and the Life. It is my honor and delight to commend this unique and original work.

•

• "Joseph Boot, Founder of the Ezra Institute for Contemporary Christianity in Canada; Director of the Wilberforce Academy, London UK; Senior Pastor, Westminster Chapel, Toronto

• Williams speaks of a radical change in his life, how he slowly came to appreciate the wonderfully diverse ways in which creativity is part and parcel of what it means to bear the Creator's image . . . and to multiply the net beauty in the universe.

• This book is a wonderfully diverse and creative example of how to imitate Christ, bearing the Creator's image, and thus to add to the beauty of the universe.

• "Peter Jones, Executive Director, truthXchange; Scholar in Residence, Westminster Seminary, California; author of *Capturing the Pagan Mind*

• REFLECT is a fascinating book of vignettes on values and key character traits. You will bounce back and forth hearing the many voices of people from an array of life's vocations who have reflected on life with care

• and you will learn much.

• "Darrell L. Bock, Executive Director for Cultural Engagement, Howard G. Hendricks Center for Christian Leadership and Cultural Engagement; Senior Research Professor of New Testament Studies, Dallas Theological Seminary; author of *Jesus, the God-Man*

• When I picked up Williams's REFLECT, I had no idea what an astonishing, absolutely unique treasure I was about to read. I know Williams, and he (as flawed as we all are) practices what he preaches. The motivating problem is something that our vastly ignorant population simply does not get

• that we all worship something and we become like what we worship. This is the scary and sober truth, and if people got ahold of this, they would think much more seriously about their ultimate source of transcendence and meaning. And Williams rightly identifies Jesus and the religion he founded as the only game in town. And he proves it by taking seriously the question, what if we really intended to become like Jesus in several key areas of his life and our lives. Williams draws on an impressive combination of scholarly works and popular culture, and he seems comfortable in both worlds. What results is a completely unique book that must receive a wide circulation. So, please, get a copy, and after you have read it, buy copies for your friends and get into groups to discuss the ideas contained therein. It will definitely be worth your time.

• "J. P. Moreland, Distinguished Professor of Philosophy, Talbot School of Theology; author of *Love Your God with All Your Mind*

• Williams connects the dots between one of the church's most neglected practices

• the imitation of Christ

• and one of our generation's deepest questions

• personal identity and meaning. REFLECT is a creative, winsome, and entertaining book that will help all different kinds of readers understand what it means to follow and

worship Jesus in our current cultural moment.

• "Gavin Ortlund, Associate Pastor, Sierra Madre Congregational Church (CA), and writer for The Gospel Coalition

• "No one can fathom the depths of Jesus' truth, wisdom, or virtue. Yet this book brings profound features of Jesus' character to bear on our existence. Those who want to live life the Jesus-way should read this rewarding work by Williams.

• "Douglas Groothuis, Professor of Philosophy, Denver Seminary; author of *Philosophy in Seven Sentences*

• "This fine book on worshiping and imitating Christ is written with great verve and theologically informed insights drawn from art, film, literature, philosophy, science, and much more. It is a creative, clarifying resource that helps show what loving the Lord with heart, soul, mind, and strength looks like in today's world.

• "Paul Copan, Professor and Pledger Family Chair of Philosophy and Ethics, Palm Beach Atlantic University; author of *A Little Book for New Philosophers*

• "Williams understands that the greatest problem of humanity is a worship problem. We worship the wrong things and neglect or reject true worship of the one true God. With keen insight into human nature, philosophical precision, theological clarity, creativity, and humor, Williams leads the reader on an enjoyable journey of fruitful intellectual exploration. Atheists, skeptics, and believers alike, will benefit from this thought-provoking book.

• "Erik Thoennes, Chair of Undergraduate Theology, Biola University; Pastor at Grace EV Free of La Mirada, CA; author of *Life's Biggest Questions*

• "This is a remarkable addition to the imitation of Christ literature. Williams wants us to think, feel, act, love, elevate, create, and transform like Jesus. Behold! REFLECT is seriously thoughtful, emotive, active, loving, engaging, creative, and transforming. It is itself a model of his own thesis. It is on the top of my list of discipleship books, and I cannot recommend it highly enough.

• "Brian Mattson, Senior Scholar of Public Theology, Center for Cultural Leadership; author of *Restored to Our Destiny*

• "Williams has written a brilliant book that deftly weaves together theology, philosophy, history, science, art, literature and pop culture all with equal ease. Imagine Radiohead meets Jonathan Edwards! And he does all this while demonstrating that following Jesus Christ is not only of supreme worth but brings supreme satisfaction to the hungry soul. This book is both an apologetic for the Christian faith and a faithful guide to the all-encompassing enterprise of being a Christ follower. Read and REFLECT!

• "Scott Christensen, Pastor, Summit Lake Community Church (CO)

• "The term 'Christian' has come to connote a particular historical or theological persuasion that sometimes crowd out the original meaning, which Williams recovers and reanimates in this thoughtful, practical book. To be a Christian is not merely a static state but also a lifelong process of imitating Jesus. In this book, Williams shows us, quite simply, what it means to be "and to keep becoming" a Christian.

• "P. Andrew Sandlin, Founder and President, Center for Cultural Leadership

• "Williams has written a

book of which I can give the highest praise possible: it made me want to be more Christ-like. In describing discipleship that is both thoughtful and emotional, rationale and aesthetic, Williams encourages a walk with God that will both bring joy to those following Christ and bring others to see the source of that joy. REFLECT provides an engaging and contemporary message for an authentic life lived for Christ, rooted in a long tradition of Christian reflection from Calvin to Bono. Readers will be richly rewarded by reading this unique perspective on reflecting Christ in all parts of life. •

• "Myron S. Steeves, Dean, Trinity Law School, Trinity International University • "Christians all agree that living like Christ is important, but it's hard to do when you don't know what that really means. Williams gives readers a comprehensive and captivating understanding of this call, one that engages every aspect of your being in the task of following Jesus. • "Aaron Armstrong, Brand Manager for The Gospel Project, LifeWay Resources; author of *Awaiting a Savior* • "Few people today, inside or outside the church, know who Jesus really is and what he actually taught. Williams's new book enlightens that darkness. Williams proves himself a worthy successor to the late Dallas Willard in emphasizing Christ's superior intelligence, his right emotion, his loyalty to the Scriptures, his servant leadership as the best form of power, and the significance of his death and resurrection. This is a book we've all needed for a long time! • "Howard Ahmanson, President, Fieldstead and Company • "Williams lays out a masterful picture of Jesus that, like a prism, shows us Christ in dazzling Technicolor and what human life was always meant to be. I particularly appreciate that the author is refreshingly practical as he veers from the mere theoretical into the realm of knowing and mirroring Jesus in everyday life. This book offers us a banquet of sumptuous answers to those mystifying questions about the elusive meaning of life where those starving for clarity of purpose can gorge to their satisfaction. I recommend everyone to read this book. Those who do will forever be transformed. • "Tyler Geffeney, International Director, Ratio Christi • "REFLECT is both an insightful and enjoyable book. Williams has the rare ability of writing in a winsome and enjoyable fashion, but also with depth and clarity. I get to teach and speak to many students. REFLECT is going to be one of the top books I recommend for those who want to become the person God has designed them to be. • "Sean McDowell, Assistant Professor, Biola University; author of *A New Kind of Apologist* • "Williams is one of the most exciting theological voices writing today. In this book his prodigious command of multiple disciplines, from literature to art to philosophy to law to theology, is on full display, all in service of equipping us to REFLECT Jesus in our everyday lives. For those seeking a resource to become better disciples themselves or disciple others, your search is over. • "Gabriel N. E. Fluhrer, Minister of Discipleship, First Presbyterian Church, Jackson (MS); author of *Solid Ground* • "REFLECT is a book about the big

questions in life—where we find our identity, our meaning, our purpose. While most people search within to find the answers, Williams shows us that the answers we seek can only be found in the One who transcends us, created us, and came for us. All who want to grow in their understanding of how Jesus' life and character bear weight on our very own will enjoy digging into this very helpful and timely book.

• Chris Poblete, Pastor and Church Planter, King's Cross Church, Rancho Santa Margarita (CA); author of *The Two Fears*

• C. S. Lewis said that "walking and talking are two very great pleasures." I have walked and talked with Williams through the years. I have a sneaking suspicion that REFLECT will become just that for our meaning-seeking generation, a well-worn companion to walk and talk with through life. Williams' wide-ranging, integrated, and melodic treatment of everything from pop culture and the arts to philosophy, theology, and biblical exegesis will empower us to become more fully ourselves by beholding the beauty of Jesus. I invite you to grab a copy and a tasty beverage with your closest friends, pull up a chair and talk awhile.

• Aron McKay, Pastor and Church Planter, The Table, San Clemente (CA)

• REFLECT is a rollicking, sweeping survey of humanity's quest for meaning, featuring an eclectic collection of historic luminaries from philosophy, science, religion, and pop culture. Managing this troupe is literary ringmaster Thaddeus Williams, who's as comfortable quoting Bono as he is invoking apostle Paul. With equal parts logic, emotion, and humor, Williams directs his chorus—and in turn the reader—to reflect The Greatest Person in History. It's a fresh, challenging, and ultimately rewarding book—unlike any other I have ever read.

• Stan Jantz, Executive Director, Evangelical Christian Publishers Association; coauthor of *GodQuest*

• The Christian life is about Christ. Williams paints an attractive vision which understands that following him ought to be holistic and driven by love. Eminently readable, creative, and expansive in scope, this book is to be well recommended in introducing important themes in an accessible and integral way.

• Gray Sutanto, University of Edinburgh

Thaddeus J. Williams (Ph.D., Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam) serves as Assistant Professor of Theology at Biola University in La Mirada, CA. He has also taught literature at Saddleback College, jurisprudence at Trinity Law School, philosophy at L'Abri Fellowships in Switzerland and Holland, and ethics for Blackstone Legal Fellowship and Federalist Society in Washington, DC. He is the author of *Love, Freedom, and Evil: Does Authentic Love Require Free Will?* (Brill, 2011). Thaddeus is a frequent speaker at churches and conferences and resides in Orange County, CA, with his wife and four kids.

Through the years many books have left me feeling deeply inspired. Similarly, many books have left me deeply challenged. I can count on two hands the books that have done both. Dr. Thaddeus Williams' REFLECT: Becoming Yourself by Mirroring the Greatest Person In History is one such work. Mirroring the life and ministry of Jesus, author Dr. Williams masterfully balances invitation and challenge with winsome and artistic flare. His wide-ranging, integrated, and melodic treatment of everything from pop culture and the arts to philosophy, theology, and biblical exegesis will empower you to become more fully yourself by beholding the beauty of Jesus. Across the spectrum of orientation to Jesus, from disillusioned doubter to devout disciple, REFLECT will leave you wanting more from life. Time will tell if REFLECT will become the generational classic I believe it to be. Highly recommend!

Amazing book. Best foundation any parent can give their children.

For those who are strong in their faith or those who are struggling ã this is a thoughtful, well organized, clever, and seriously academic work that engages everyone with whom I have shared it. Even though the subject of the book is centuries old, that the text references long dead scientists, teachers, philosophers and artists ã this is a piece of writing that is clearly about the future. YOUR future. Our future together. A worship workshop intent on growing and nurturing a stronger community. It fuels me creatively and gives me hope that we aren't working at cross purposes with the entire universe. I found it to be impressive and inspiring throughout. It also serves as a timely reminder that ã Jesus cared about facts and evidence and, if we worship him, so will we. ã Here are a few quotes from the book from those who not only worshipped Jesus but also helped seriously advance chemistry, astrophysics, astronomy ã some of whom were shunned by the church for their devotion to the facts and evidence of their art: ã Science is a religious task, the disclosure of the admirable workmanship which God displayed in the universe. ã Christians gave us the Royal Society ã the first professional society of modern scientists ã with its charter that advanced scientific inquiry ã to the glory of God and the benefit of the human race. ã And some Galileo for good measure: ã I don't believe that the same God who endowed us with sense, reason, and intellect had intended for us to forgo their use. ã And now from the author himself: ã The fruits of intellectual inquiry, wherever we find them, grow from the conviction that truth exists and can be known. Take an axe to the existence of truth and you no longer have education, you have propaganda. ã Seems like a sentiment tailor made for the times. This book came highly recommended to me. I highly

recommend it to you.

How would I describe this book? Is it theology, spiritual-formation, christian living? Yes, yes and yes. I once read that the fruit of the Spirit is singular in Galatians 5:22 because they are not fruits but fruit; one fruit with multiple facets. To have one is to have them all. REFLECT, Becoming Yourself by Mirroring the Greatest Person in History by Thaddeus J. Williams is very helpful towards that end. Integrating the characteristics of Christ in an authentic way to bring Him glory, the author shows, is God's design for our lives and God's means to bring it about. Each chapter; Reason, Emote (passion), Flip (holiness), Love, Elevate (grace), Create, Transform could stand on their own. The author provides many notes and challenged my thinking and preconceptions in an engaging and stimulating manner. Like a good friend speaking to my doubts and intimidations he leads me to the place where I can see for myself. There is much food for thought in each progressive chapter. There are many quotes that I could give but my favorite came from the last chapter Transform, "Jesus is not a sum; he is a fully integrated Person. Every one of his attributes can be used as an adjective or adverb to describe any other attribute." The author also kindly provides a REFLECT log you can copy from his book or download from his webpage. It is a suggested tool that he has used for 10 years and it is sort of a check list or inventory to help you to reflect on the status of your journey. If purchase this book I would recommend buying two. You will get part way through and think of others you would love to share this journey with. If you lead a small study or prayer group this would make an excellent addition to your times together. I love to meditate on scripture; this book would, in my mind, fall under Micah 6:8 "He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God." I am very grateful to The Weaver Book Company for providing me a copy of the book for an unbiased review. I am hopeful for the book's success and looking forward to a study guide. I will be using this in my small group.

This book is a masterpiece. This is a must read for believers and non-believers alike. It is thought provoking, inspiring, engaging, and challenging. I have been recommending this book to all my friends and I will continue to do so. Do yourself a favor and buy this book today!

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