2015

Gosnell's "The Ethical Vision of the Bible: Learning Good From Knowing God" (Book Review)

Rory Patterson
Liberty University

*The Christian Librarian* is the official publication of the Association of Christian Librarians (ACL). To learn more about ACL and its products and services please visit [http://www.acl.org/](http://www.acl.org/)

Follow this and additional works at: [http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/tcl](http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/tcl)

**Recommended Citation**

Patterson, Rory (2015) "Gosnell's "The Ethical Vision of the Bible: Learning Good From Knowing God" (Book Review)," *The Christian Librarian*; Vol. 58 : Iss. 1 , Article 28.
Available at: [http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/tcl/vol58/iss1/28](http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/tcl/vol58/iss1/28)

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ George Fox University. It has been accepted for inclusion in *The Christian Librarian* by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ George Fox University. For more information, please contact arolfc@georgefox.edu.
The Ethical Vision of the Bible: Learning Good From Knowing God,  
ISBN 9780830840281  

Reviewed by Rory Patterson, Associate Dean, Planning, Administration, & Operations,  
Jerry Falwell Library, Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

Gosnell starts the preface by indicating his intended audience: “This book is written for students ... who want a gentler orientation to biblical issues” (p. 9). Gosnell does this in part by not using names in the text when introducing ideas and theories, but putting them in the lengthy endnotes. In addition, when Gosnell defines a term, he immediately considers how it is expressed in life. He further simplifies his presentation of theories by ending each chapter with a “Summing It Up” box in case the reader did not understand the fuller explanation in the chapter, a list of reflection questions to help with application of the ideas, and several citations for further reading.

Gosnell’s analysis of the ethics of Scriptures comes from the relational view of biblical studies, rather than the more normal theological statements. Gosnell defines biblical studies as clarifying one passage by looking at how other passages address the same ideas, and considering the writer’s and audience’s relationships with God at that time. This is in contrast with theological reading which looks at a passage as if it stands alone, providing commands for life and theological positions.

Gosnell arranges the book as a walk through the Scriptures. He introduces how biblical studies looks at the Scriptures, then has three chapters on the Pentateuch, one chapter each on Proverbs and the Prophets, two chapters on Gospels, and two on Paul’s writings. He ends with a summary of applying the ethics of the Scriptures lived out in a thinking relationship, instead reading the Bible to find lists of things to do or avoid. Together with the Scripture index, this layout enables an introductory level of biblical reading alongside theological or devotional reading of Scripture. This book is recommended for what Gosnell labels it, a gentle orientation for students to biblical ethics.