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Stott's "The preacher's portrait: five New Testament word studies" (book review)

Michael Bain
Point University

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Book Reviews



Stott, J. (2017). *The preacher's portrait: five New Testament word studies*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans. First edition published 1961. 105 pp. \$10.00. ISBN 9780802875532

The Introduction discusses what a preacher is not, namely, prophet, apostle, false prophet or false apostle, babbler. The content of the book can be characterized as dealing with two questions. What is the responsibility of the preacher to the Word of God and its proclamation? How does one craft one's thought and life in such a way as to be able to preach God's Word?

A New Testament passage of scripture undergirds and informs each chapter. Chapter titles and subtitles are 1. A Steward The preacher's message and authority. 2. A Herald The preacher's proclamation and appeal. 3. A Witness The preacher's experience and humility. 4. A Father The preacher's love and gentleness. 5. A Servant The preacher's power and motive.

There are delightfully few typos. One was found in a footnote.

Let me illustrate the content of the book with one chapter. Chapter four applies the word Father to the task of preacher. Beginning with Matthew 23:8-10 Stott explains how the term Father should not be applied to the preacher as one who would claim too much authority. Then building on 1 Corinthians 4:14-17, Stott develops these themes: a father's relationship and affection, a father's understanding, a father's gentleness, a father's simplicity, a father's earnestness, a father's example, and a father's prayers. Every chapter has a similar structure and development. All are effective.

It is indicative of the mind of Stott that the extended discussion of the power of the preacher falls in chapter five, a servant.

Stott presumed an acquaintance with authors, the British church, and Western history which can no longer be presumed for a 2017 readership. Our language now uses shorter sentences and a different use of pronouns. Intelligent editing has updated the text.

This book belongs in every institutional and personal library seeking to support Christian ministries of any kind. Stott helps, informs, and challenges ministers of both genders in every type of ministry, whether preaching, teaching, youth, missions, and many more. All who aspire to teach or preach the Word of God, whether as career or volunteer, can profit from this book. Give one to your preacher, your Sunday School teacher, your spouse. This book is worth reading.

Reviewer

Michael Bain, Point University