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Scharf's "Relational preaching: Knowing God, his word, and your hearers" (book review)

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Book Reviews



Scharf, G. (2017). *Relational preaching: Knowing God, his word, and your hearers*. Revised and Updated. Carlisle, Cumbria: Langham Preaching Resources. 257 pp. \$19.99. ISBN 9781783682140

Without question, the topic of relationships and how it interconnects and affects lives are inexhaustible. In the area of pastoral interactions an intimate, relational connection exists when it comes to preaching. Greg Scharf explores the subject of relational preaching and its role in the triangular connection between *knowing God, His Word, and your hearers*. This book is an invitation to assess and strengthen relationships through use of Scharf's reflective devotion. The resource covers a span of 113 days which can be revisited yearly. Three relationship areas become the substance of this book: 1) God, 2) Scripture, and 3) our listeners. Under each day is a devotional uniquely distributed to align with each of the three relationship areas. The meditations open with written Scripture, a contemplative message, and a closing prayer. At the back of the resource is a handy categorized Old and New Testament scripture index.

Relational Preaching is a resource intended for pastors to use as a personal devotion. The overall purpose of Scharf's book is to provide a resource dedicated to reinforcing relationships influenced by the message received, heard and preached. However, the book can easily be used as a resource for individuals (i.e., theologians, teachers, etc.) who wish to strengthen his or her relationship with God, Scriptures, and their listeners. The book's initial chapter opens with the author's definition of relational preaching. Relational preaching consists of three relationships that influence the preacher's life: "our relationship with the triune god, our relationship with Scripture and our relationship with our listeners" (p. 1). *Relational Preaching* emphasizes the need to increase the attentiveness to these three relationships. Scharf believes preaching is reinforced when care is devoted to these relationships.

Notably, while the book is intended for individual pastoral study, this resource could be expanded to include personal study for individuals who desire a meditative devotion that centers on relationships that fortify the messages preached to hearers. The richness of Scharf's resource is direct, easy to follow, transformative, and a great devotional resource to add to one's library.

Reviewer

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