



Preaching Biblical Wisdom in a Self-Help Society

Alyce McKenzie

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The shelves at the big bookstore chains are lined with cracker-barrel wisdom manuals, such as *Don't Sweat the Small Stuff* and *Life's Little Instruction Book*. Schools display brightly colored, slogan-filled posters to help them teach "the six pillars of character." Many people are going to their local New Age emporium to purchase energy-harmonizing crystals and to sign up for past-life regression seminars.

Alyce McKenzie reminds us that this is a new flurry of an old activity: the search for wisdom, for help in finding the principles that can guide our lives and shape our character. The question for those who proclaim the gospel is simple: by whose wisdom will our people live?

The wisdom books and genres of the Bible, long neglected, are now the subject of avid scrutiny by biblical scholars. They've turned up the shining insight that the Bible, both Old and New Testaments, is brimming with materials that axe the ancestors of contemporary slogans and self-help manuals. This is indeed good news! We have proverbs and instruction every bit as vivid and compelling as "Don't sweat the small stuff" -- and far more aware of the depth, complexity, and mystery of life in God's world.

McKenzie demonstrates how Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and other biblical wisdom can provide fruitful opportunities to preach to those who are hungry for wisdom, and often unaware of the richness and depth of the Bible's wisdom tradition.

Key Features:

- Provides an alternative to shallow catch-phrases that parade in our culture as wisdom;
- Helps preachers harvest the biblical gems that are the ancestors of contemporary slogans and self-help manuals;
- Lets preachers tap into a rich vein of instruction on life that has withstood the test of theological reflection and life experience.

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