



The Prodigal Church: A Gentle Manifesto Against the Status Quo

Jared C. Wilson

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This book is not a tired rant.

This book is not a reactionary diatribe.

This book is a gentle manifesto against the status quo.

In *The Prodigal Church*, Jared Wilson challenges church leaders to reconsider their priorities when it comes to how they -do church- and reach people in their communities, arguing that we too often rely on loud music, flashy lights, and skinny jeans to get people in the door.

Writing with the grace and kindness of a trusted friend, Wilson encourages readers to reexamine the Bible's teaching, not simply return to a traditional model for tradition's sake. He then sets forth an alternative to both the attractational and the traditional models: an explicitly biblical approach that is gospel focused, grace based, and fruit oriented.

The Prodigal Church: A Gentle Manifesto Against the Status Quo Details

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From Reader Review The Prodigal Church: A Gentle Manifesto Against the Status Quo for online ebook

Chris Land says

This is a must read for all who love Jesus and His church

Andrew says

Wilson's most personal book, and a really helpful one that comes from his heart for churches and Christians. I highly recommend it and especially the last chapter.

Smooth Via says

Wilson has some solid critiques of the attractional church model. However, he makes the mistake of equating his own personal experience inside the attractional church with inherent problems with the model in general. To the contrary, many of the problems he assumes are inherent with the model have not been present in my own experience with the attractional church. Furthermore, many of his critiques would also readily apply to churches that I would not classify as attractional at all. But perhaps the biggest weakness is that he does not put forth a compelling alternative model (at least not clearly).

Josh says

Maybe more like 4.75 stars. Incredibly important for the church, in the church's current moment; also so helpful and encouraging. This book addresses a few key things about church life and worship I haven't really seen addressed quite the same way anywhere else (yet).

Kent says

Largely a critique of the attractional church model of ministry, the author, himself a pastor within the model for some years, explains how he came away from that kind of model and how the church really needs to focus on the gospel. (The gospel is not just for new Christians; seasoned saints need it, too. It not only justifies us, it sanctifies us as well.) He explains that though many of the attractional church's goals are good, those who are honest within the movement/model recognize that their methods are not helping them to reach their goals.

There are many great insights in this book, including the truth that if all you're preaching are how-to sermons, you are really preaching law and not grace. And the law you preach enslaves, while the grace you're not preaching is what brings freedom and holiness. "The 'dos' can never be detached from the 'done' of the finished work of Christ in the gospel, or else we run the risk of preaching the law" (85). Our thirst for relevance and our rush to application to "my life" often overlooks the importance of lifting up Christ and his

work before our people, of lifting up the grace of God often before our people, because knowing what Christ has done and seeing God's glory through the preached word is necessary for being transformed into the image of Christ (2 Cor 3:18). The whole chapter on this is excellent, as are most of the other chapters.

Curt Mize says

Epiphany inducing. This is the most winsome, loving, and hopeful critique of the attractional church model in existence. Not only does Wilson diagnose the problem with so many of our churches, he offers a clear way forward. This book is for anyone who feels trapped on the exhausting hamster wheel of church programming, and just can't do it any more. There's hope in these pages.

Tom Robson says

Such a helpful, and at times painful, critique of the attraction all church model, and all of us in our temptations to rely on worldly wisdom to win people to something.

Jay Lloyd says

Truth wort reading.

Every pastor should read this book. Being a Christian begins with grace is sustained by grace and concludes in grace. Thank you for sharing your journey and observations.

Tyler Cox says

In "The Prodigal Church" Jared Wilson has written a gentle manifesto against the status quo of the attractional church. This is one of most important books I've read on the church. He argues against pragmatism and consumerism in the church and argues for a more Gospel centered view of the church. I thought his analysis on the legalism of many attractional churches was on point. The irony is that in an effort to (sometimes rightly) oppose the legalism of more traditional churches they have created their own legalism by emphasizing the self. They don't say "thou shalt not" but rather "thou shalt", which is still legalism. If all people in church hear is how they can pull themselves up by the bootstraps and be all they can be with Jesus randomly tacked on the end, it causes what Wilson calls spiritual whiplash. Moreover, if someone comes to a church for material reason, then they have not been won to Christ...they have been won to "stuff." Some noteworthy quotes:

"If the message that Jesus died and came back to life isn't compelling enough to draw people, the enticement of winning a car (for example) is not going to work. Anyone who believes on Christ because they were attracted to stuff has been won to stuff, not Christ." (105)

"A good theology of worship helps us understand that worship begins not with asking, 'What would move people?' or 'What would engage people?' but by recognizing that authentic worship beings with God, not with us" (97)

"(In the attractional church) Sin is recast as problems, baggage, brokenness, all real and true things but none is quite getting at what sin really is - a cancer deep inside all of us the is a hideous offense against the holiness of God" (29)

"To hear a lengthy appeal to our abilities culminating in an appeal to our utter inability, can cause spiritual whiplash" (27)

Timothy Bandi says

Amazing

If you were ever a part of this church(The "attraction all style-church. e.g. -Purpose Driven Life, Willow creek , or seeker other seeker models) at some point, this book will be a life changer! Thank you Jared and glory to Jesus!

Aaron Loy says

As a church planter and now coach and network leader who works with pastors and church planters, I found this book to be invaluable, timely and surprisingly gentle while remaining unflinchingly prophetic. I wish I could make every church planter read this before they set out.

Nate says

One of the most important books in print.
<https://entreatingfavor.com/bookrevie...>

Jason Kanz says

I have read most of the books authored by Jared Wilson and each time, I am convinced that his voice needs to be heard by the church. His passion for the gospel is an unquenchable fire. His most recent book, The Prodigal Church: A Gentle Manifesto Against the Status Quo (2015, Crossway) is no different.

The Prodigal Church reflects Wilson's heartbeat. In essence, he writes with conviction to encourage the church to return to its gospel roots, again and again. He rightly shows how the response to legalism in the church can not be an attractional model, but one grounded completely in the finished work of Christ. The church exists not to beat people up, not to glorify the self, and not (primarily) to provide tips for self-improvement. The church exists to glorify God and make much of Jesus and his finished work.

Although the whole book is a clarion call for "gospel wakefulness", to draw from another Wilson book, the fourth chapter, "the Bible is not an instruction manual", was my favorite. In this particular chapter, he shows the reader that the primary purpose of the Bible is not a manual for better living. It is a story of a God who relentless pursues His children, ultimately bringing them to Himself through His son Jesus. On page 80, Wilson wrote, "I will go so far as to suggest to you that not to preach Christ is not to preach a Christian

sermon. If you preach from the Bible, but do not proclaim the finished work of Christ, you may as well be preaching at a Jewish synagogue or a Mormon Temple. Ask yourself, as you look over your sermon outline or manuscript, 'could this message be preached in a Unitarian church?' Ask, 'did Jesus have to die and rise again for the stuff to be true?'" This one quote represents the lifeblood of this book.

The message of salvation by grace alone through faith alone in the finished work of Christ alone must be the heartbeat of the church. We have no hope in programs or personalities. Wilson understands that and communicates it wonderfully in this important book.

Hopson says

Helpful book that respectfully pushes back against the attractional megachurch movement.

John says

This is one of the best books I've ever read.
