



Preaching Club Discussion Guide

Welcome to the

John Stott Centenary Project

2021 marks the 100th anniversary of the birth of John Stott.

We wanted to create an opportunity to be thankful, by finding a way to bring the heart of John Stott's ministry into the heart of this Langham Preaching ministry.

John Stott was a man of the word of God. He believed it, studied it, preached it, wrote about it and lived it. So we turned towards his little book, God's Word for Today's World, and decided to create a resource that could be used in our preaching clubs, or escuelitas, in as many heart-languages as possible.

We invite you to read this book, one chapter at a time, and then to gather with others (a) to watch each introductory video (using the website link or QR code provided; (b) to engage with these discussion questions; and (c) to pray for each other. We hope that by doing this together, you will be encouraged to keep walking with the word of God in today's world.

On behalf of the Global Leadership Team

Paul Windsor Programme Director

Introduction

To what extent are the observations which John Stott makes about the Bible relevant in your church context? Where would your observations be the same? Where would they be different?

Chapter One:

God and the Bible

- 1. 'The way of revelation' shows how God communicates through both his works and his words. Read the final paragraph of this section aloud to each other.
 - (a) How is this approach to the Bible different from the one taken in the holy writings of other major religions, or belief systems, in your context?
 - (b) What about traditions within Christianity, like Catholicism and Pentecostalism? How do they see the Bible and how is their view different, or the same, as the view expressed here by John Stott?
 - (c) Many of our preaching movements include 'Praying the Word' in the training process. How does this spiritual practice relate to what John Stott is affirming here?
- 2. John Stott's exposition of Isaiah 55 concludes with a call to humility: 'Nothing is more hostile to spiritual growth than arrogance, and nothing is more vital for growth than humility'. How can your preaching club become a community in which people grow deeper into humility?



Scan code or visit below link to watch video.

https://youtu.be/DacsZ6pXZzs

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Chapter Two:

Christ and the Bible

- 1. Why did God give us the Bible?
 - (a) Reflect on your own Christian journey in your own context. What have your responses been to this question at different points in your life?
 - (b) How does John Stott describe the purpose of the Bible in this chapter? In what ways do his observations further deepen your understanding?
- 2. Near the end of the chapter, John Stott uses a picture from Martin Luther: 'Scripture is the manger, or cradle, in which the infant Jesus lies.' Then his point is that we must not become so distracted by the cradle that we forget to worship the Baby.

However, in many religious contexts—Islam, for example—honouring the cradle, or reverencing the holy writings, is an essential part of our witness. In your preaching clubs, how can you help people to reverence the Bible, but still to worship the Christ?

3. At one point, John Stott writes, '(Jesus) looked back to the Old Testament, he looked on to the New Testament, but he authenticated them both'. What does this mean? To what extent is the Langham Preaching training helping you see this and understand it?

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Chapter Three:

The Holy Spirit and the Bible

- 1. 'All Christians know that the Holy Bible and the Holy Spirit are supposed to have something to do with each other' (John Stott). And yet the common experience is that Christians separate them from each other. When this separation happens in your context, what does it look like and sound like?
- 2. In the Langham Preaching training, one of the skills on which we focus is the ability to express the main idea of a biblical passage, often in a single sentence. What about this chapter? Imagine it as such a passage. How would you express its main idea in a single sentence?
- 3. The Word and the Spirit do belong together, in both the preparation and the delivery of the sermon. As a community of preachers in your preaching club, what are the practical ways in which you can honour both Word and Spirit in your journey as preachers together?

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Chapter Four:

The Church and the Bible

- 1. John Stott suggests that the reason why the church is in such 'a terrible condition throughout the world' is because of 'a famine ... of hearing the words of the Lord' (Amos 8.11). The Bible is being neglected.
 - (a) In what ways would you agree, or disagree, with John Stott's observation — from within the context of your own local church, or your denomination?
 - (b) Where there is a 'famine', with whom does the responsibility lie for its presence?
- 2. 'The Bible created the church, sustains the church, directs the church, reforms the church, unites the church and revives the church'.
 - (a) Which of these truths is one you long to see evident in your local church at the moment? Why? Are there steps you can take to help encourage this to happen, under God's hand?
 - (b) As a preaching club together, take the time to pray for each other's local churches. Pray that these six truths will become increasingly real in their lives.



Chapter Five:

The Christian and the Bible

- 1. John Stott affirms that 'the Bible is indispensable to every Christian's health and growth'. How do people view the Bible in your context? What steps can you take to help those you know who don't share this view draw nearer to what John Stott is affirming?
- 2. Jesus often teaches about himself in the Gospels. Today it is common to hear preachers talk about their own experiences and their journey. Is this wise? About what do we need to be cautious when this happens?
- 3. Since the Bible is 'God's self-disclosure, the divine autobiography', how do we help people grow more by discovering God through reading the Bible than by listening to the 'revelations' of men and women, even their revelations of God?



