

Don't Kill This Child

Andrew Robert

AuthorHouse (Jul 13, 2017)

Softcover \$16.95 (198pp)

978-1-5049-1966-1

Don't Kill This Child reaches high to inspire Christians to bring more of God's work into the world.

Pastor Andrew Robert's *Don't Kill This Child* is a buttoned-up, scripture-heavy guidebook for discerning God's plans for a Christian's life.

The work presents a series of steps—such as seeking God prayerfully with a “renewed mind” and working through the fear—for advancing toward realizing one's purpose, drawing from the notion that God has a plan for each person. It is still an individual's job, the book claims, to give “birth” to that plan in their lives. The steps are presented through a series of lessons, which read like sermons, that tackle each idea in turn.

The book examines the whole range of discernment—from an initial inspiration to carrying out a plan—and the fear and doubts that always come with big changes. This methodical structure transforms the work's sermonizing into a helpful how-to. Writing is clear, with good transitions and an engaging use of the second person point of view.

Drawing heavily on scriptural references, each chapter chooses a focus text which is then supported by other passages. The biblical approach here is conservative and often literal.

The book's overarching metaphor of birth is an inspirational one, sympathetic to the reality that finding a divine purpose is both challenging and a process. Its perspective is supported with a wide range of images and texts. The book draws particularly consistently from the works of the prophets, most heavily from the book of Jeremiah, and shines in its use of Hebrew Bible scriptures, which stand on their own and offer their own truths.

Biblical stories are effectively transformed into teaching moments and are fleshed out: characters have their feelings explored, their struggles highlighted, and their possible thought processes engaged. For example, the book considers the rise of King David, then explores the idea of being a hero, all in the chapter “Recipes for Successful Birthing.”

The consistent reliance on scriptural texts becomes a hindrance, though, squeezing out potential room for the use of real-world examples of people making life changes or decisions. Some of the work's human feeling is lost in the process.

Each lesson could stand nicely alone, thanks in part to their sermon-like qualities. Taken together, the book's lessons become repetitive, though. Every lesson follows the same pattern, leading to narrative redundancy. There is little that links chapters together beyond the overarching metaphor of birth. The resultant drag stands in the way of the overall message.

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JEREMIAH ROOD (October 26, 2017)

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