



*Excellence in Preaching:  
Studying the Craft of  
Leading Preachers*  
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## Practical Principles from Today's Leading Preachers

### Simon Vibert Studies the Craft of Excellent Preaching

Simon Vibert, vice principal and director of the School of Preaching at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, has studied the work of today's leading preachers with an eye for discerning the dynamics of effective preaching. In *Excellence in Preaching: Studying the Craft of Leading Preachers*, Vibert profiles some of today's most well-known preachers, lifting out practical principles for sermons that are biblical, motivational and transformational.

Chapters include examples from world-renowned preachers like Tim Keller, John Piper, John Ortberg and Nicky Gumbel. Key takeaways include:

**Tim Keller**—*Be aware of cultural and philosophical challenges to the gospel.* “The goal of the sermon is faith, but that is often achieved by attracting people to the logic and persuasiveness of what is preached. Such preaching should make people curious, encouraging them to pursue things further and feel provoked to connect the dots for themselves” (p. 40).

**John Piper**—*Inspire a passion for the glory of God.* “Apply Bible truth through the head to the heart. Our preaching should be marked by ‘heat’ (passion) and ‘light’ (illumination). It is not enough to ‘teach the Bible.’ The preacher’s task is not complete until the message has affected will and emotions as well as intellect” (pp. 49-50).

**John Ortberg**—*Preach with spiritual formation in mind.* “Connect with the human heart in all its joys and sufferings, and bring people to God’s redemption center: the cross. Use simple, clear illustrations and make use of the arts (movies, music, etc.) if they can help you to amplify or apply your point well” (p. 102).

**Nicky Gumbel**—*Make much of Jesus Christ.* “Paint a big vision for God’s church. . . . All preachers . . . should have a vision for a Jesus-centered transformation, first of individuals, then of the church community and then outward to the wider world. For, without this vision, churches remain parochial and congregations wither and die” (p. 111).