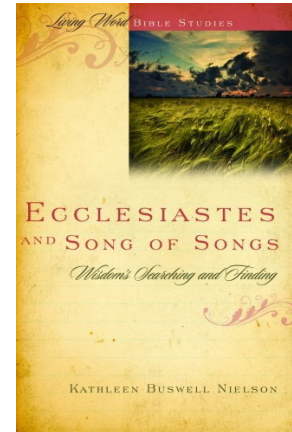


Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs: Wisdom's Searching and Finding **(Living Word Bible Studies)**

Book Details:

- Author: Kathleen Buswell Nielson
- Category: Bible Studies
- Publisher: P & R Publishing (2009)
- Format: Spiral bound
- Page count: 177
- ISBN#: 9781596381490
- List Price: \$12.99
- Rating: Highly Recommended



Review:

I have not read many women's Bible studies. But from what I have seen, I can surmise that many deal with all sorts of things beyond the plain text of Scripture. Kathleen Buswell Nielson in her studies, sticks to the text of Scripture and teaches women how to grapple with and understand the text. Her study, *Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs: Wisdom's Searching and Finding*, is part of her own series, the Living Word Bible Studies originally written with her own ladies' class in mind.

The book is a spiral bound book but nicely done with a deluxe softcover that is nice to hold. It opens up flat which makes it more suitable for jotting down notes in the ample spaces provided during the studies.

The book begins with an introduction to the two books to be studied, and then an introduction to poetry, where Nielson makes some insightful comments. "If God inspired so much poetry in these books... then it must be important and good for us to take in the poetic form with understanding and enjoyment." (pg. xv) She also points out that the hallmark of Hebrew poetry – parallelism, is uniquely suited for translation, as rhyme and meter won't as easily be conveyed in a receptor language.

Then Nielson gives an introduction to each book followed by a series of lessons followed with five days of home work (questions and answers with assigned reading). With Ecclesiastes she sides with the view that the "Preacher" is Solomon, this is "an educated guess", based on the available evidence. She sees the "Preacher" as being on a journey towards faith "with higher and lower voices pulling back and forth until the resolution at the end" of the book. (pg. xix) The study questions are insightful and take one beyond the confines of the individual book itself, often referencing other verses and encouraging a practical application of the passage being studied.

For Song of Solomon, Nielson aims to take the Song literally first and then to use marriage as the key to applying the book more broadly and to be "spurred on in our love for God, who loves us so amazingly in Christ Jesus." (pg. 131)

The book includes a "Notes for Leaders" section which stresses the primacy of the text, the role of the church, and other more practical matters. A suggested outline of both books is included along with suggested memory passages. She then gives a note on translations and a list of recommended study helps.

I was quite impressed by the quality of the scholarship revealed in this little book. It would make the backbone of a great study for women (or men even), on these two OT Wisdom books. Nielson's approach is both devotional and scholarly, and aims for the hearers to apply the knowledge gained. This is a faithful study and should prove to be a blessing and a help for women's Bible studies or Sunday School classes. I am happy to recommend this work.

Author Info:

Kathleen Buswell Nielson holds M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in literature from Vanderbilt University and a B.A. from Wheaton College. She has taught in the English departments at Vanderbilt University, Bethel College (Minnesota), and Wheaton College. She is the author of numerous Bible studies, as well as various articles and poems. Kathleen has directed and taught women's Bible studies at several churches, speaks extensively at women's conferences and retreats, and serves on the board of directors of Focus on the Family. Kathleen is

married to Dr. Niel Nielson, president of Covenant College in Lookout Mountain, Georgia. Kathleen and Niel have three sons.

Disclaimer:

This book was provided by P & R Publishing for review. The reviewer was under no obligation to offer a favorable review.

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