

PERSPECTIVE

AUGUST 2021



servicing a church in villa rica

AN INTERVIEW WITH CHAD WILLIAMS

CONTENTS



ARTICLE 1
*Serving a Church in Villa Rica: An Interview
with Chad Williams*
Aron Menikoff & Chad Williams



BOOK HIGHLIGHT 3
What Do I Do Now That I'm a Christian?
by Sam Emadi
Recommended by Rachel Chandler



BOOK HIGHLIGHT 4
*Listen Up!: A Practical Guide to Listening to
Sermons*
by Christopher Ash
Recommended by Dustin Butts



BIBLE READING PLAN 5
Take Up & Read
August

Serving a Church in Villa Rica: An Interview With Chad Williams

Chad Williams is the lead pastor of HighView Church just west of us in Villa Rica. The church began in 2012 after Chad left a promising career at Chick-fil-A to plant a gospel work in his hometown. We have sought to encourage this congregation in a number of ways, and below, you can read more about Chad and HighView's story.

In 2021 we are thinking deeply about serving other churches. This passion is not new to us. Wherever we can, Scripture calls us to know, encourage, strengthen, and share with other churches. HighView is no different. Not only have we encouraged them, but they have encouraged us.

MVBC: How did you come to saving faith?

CW: I was raised by Christian parents and attended church regularly. It wasn't until I was 19 years old that God gave me a new heart that actually longed to know Him more and walk in obedience.

MVBC: Can you tell us a little bit about your family?

CW: I am married to Kalie, and we will soon celebrate our 10th anniversary together. We have two daughters—Lydia, who is four, and Raegan Naomi, who is six months. Kalie actually served in China as a missionary before we married.

MVBC: Did you always want to be a church planter/pastor?

CW: No, not really. My late grandfather was a church planter and pastor for 50 years before his passing, so I feel as if the seed of passion for church planting and a deep appreciation for church planters was instilled in me early. Before entering vocational ministry, I actually worked for a decade for Chick-fil-A as a Grand Opening Coordinator. Essentially I "planted" Chick-fil-A's for a living. Through that experience, I developed a love for starting things from scratch and developing a team of people.

MVBC: How and when did HighView Church come into existence?

CW: The planting process for HighView began in 2012, and we were formally constituted as a church in January of 2013. The church began with five people meeting in a small apartment and very little outside support of any kind. God was gracious to us, however, and through partnerships with churches like MVBC and networks like

GABN, we were able to establish incredible relationships that continue to this day. Those relationships were key to HighView Church's survival early on.

MVBC: You have a real desire to help Christians think about leadership. How do you think Christians can grow in this area?

CW: I think it begins with a deep desire to understand how fundamental leadership is to our role as men and women made in the image of God, to rule as vice-regents over creation. Leadership affects every aspect of our lives. I say this frequently from the pulpit, and I believe it is true: All of the sin, pain, heartache, brokenness, anxiety, depression, etc. we experience in our lives can be traced back to one man's failure to lead in Eden.

On the other hand, every ounce of joy, peace, rest, security, etc. that believers will experience both in this age partially and in the age to come fully, is tied directly to the God-man's willingness to lead and obey God, even to the point of death on a cross. Each of us has a representative—a leader we are identified with—either a fallen leader or the resurrected, triumphant leader: Jesus. My desire is to help Christians see that the Bible is not silent on leadership and, therefore, God's Word should challenge how our own views of leadership have developed.

MVBC: Have there been any unusual or surprising blessings to being part of a church from the very beginning?

CW: So many! Watching God show himself to be faithful over and over is one of the great joys of church planting. On so many occasions, God has provided for HighView Church in truly incredible ways, and being here from day one, you are constantly reminded of that.

MVBC: How has your church grown spiritually over the past few years?

CW: HighView Church has grown in its passion for making disciples over the past few years. Much of this, I believe, has come about through intentional focus on this biblical command. As our ability to make disciples has increased, the spiritual maturity of the flock as a whole has increased as well.

MVBC: Are there ways our association of churches, the Greater Atlanta Baptist Network, has been an encouragement to the work in Villa Rica?

CW: Honestly, it would not be possible to fully capture how pivotal GABN has been in the life of HighView. Through GABN, our church not only received generous

financial support to help our church get off the ground early on but even more than that, GABN gave us a like-minded family of Gospel-centered churches and pastors to belong to and work alongside. On a personal note, some of my closest friends in the world are GABN pastors, and for those relationships, I am forever grateful.

MVBC: How has God used Mount Vernon Baptist in your church's life?

CW: MVBC has been a key partner in the Gospel for us from very early on. Apart from providing much-needed financial support early on, the Elders and pastoral staff have been an open book, providing helpful counsel and support in so many practical ways. We have received wisdom on pastoral matters, governance questions, financial protocols, and general encouragement throughout our relationship with MVBC. Through these acts of service and examples of generosity, MVBC has been a long-lasting impact on the lives of everyone here at HighView Church.

MVBC: What encourages you about the work at High View, and what challenges are on the horizon?

CW: God has continued to bless HighView Church. Our church has been growing steadily for an extended season, and (Lord willing!) we are close to breaking ground on an expansion project that will give us a larger sanctuary and some much-needed classroom space. The challenge is to stay focused on our mission as a church as we begin to walk through this next season.

MVBC: How can our church be praying for you?

CW: Over the last year or so, our church has experienced a season of intense grief and loss. During that time, HighView lost an elder suddenly to a heart attack and a young child after a long battle with cancer. Pray for us as we continue to grieve and heal. God is faithful.

What Do I Do Now That I'm a Christian?

Written by Sam Emadi

Everyone's testimony is different. However Christians all have one thing in common: at some point in our lives, by God's grace, we recognized our dire need for a Savior and turned from our sin and towards a crucified and resurrected Christ for salvation. But then what? *What Should I Do Now That I'm a Christian?* by Sam Emadi is a short book that seeks to explain better what it means to follow Jesus.

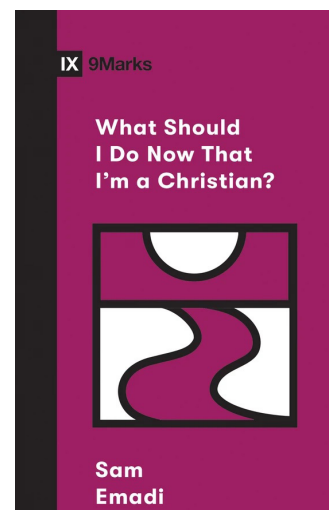
Emadi begins by reminding us that being a Christian is costly but worth it. He exhorts us to deny ourselves, take up our crosses, and follow Christ (Luke 9:23). It may be challenging, but the "costs pale in comparison to the joy of knowing God and being forgiven from all our sins" (13). This truth should propel us to follow Christ with joy.

The book revolves around specific things we should do once we have been saved. First, be baptized. As Luke records in Acts 2, Jesus commands Christians to repent and *be baptized*. We must obey Christ's command to profess our faith in him publicly. Baptism symbolizes our new life in Christ, and it is how the local church affirms our testimony and welcomes us into membership. This leads us to Emadi's next exhortation: join a church. Throughout Scripture, Christians are commanded to serve and love other believers. We do this by joining a local church. Joining and attending church regularly allows us to know and be known by those whom with we have committed to growing into Christlikeness (Heb. 10:24–25).

As we grow in Christlikeness, our personal and church life weaves together. Paul encourages fellow Christians at Colossae to feast on God's Word (Col. 3:16). We, too, must "nourish our soul with God's word"—in both a private and congregational setting. Both the Bible and the local church form our personal prayer life. We are called to pray, to "come before him and express our adoration...as well as our concerns..." (32). One of the sweetest gifts of the church is discipleship. Jesus never meant for us to embark on the Christian life alone: may we "bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2).

What Should I Do Now That I'm a Christian? by Sam Emadi is an excellent resource for new Christians or those who struggle to apply their faith to everyday life. In addition, the book serves as a great reminder that "he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6).

— RECOMMENDED BY RACHEL CHANDLER



Excerpts From the Book

1

"God saves us *into* a community, and he designed our relationship with him to include fellow brothers and sisters who are walking the same path of obedience. Being reconciled to God means being reconciled to his people."

— Join a Local Church, p.17

2

"As we obey Christ's command to love others and as he has loved us, the local church showcases to the world the love of Christ and the glory of the gospel."

— Join a Local Church, p.20

3

"In our local churches, we help one another rightly understand and articulate the gospel, we train each other to share the gospel well, we hold one another accountable to evangelize, we evangelize together, and we pray for another's evangelistic efforts. As we labor to be faithful in evangelism, we must remember that Jesus never meant for us to do it alone."

— Persevering to the End, p.44

Listen Up!: A Practical Guide to Listening to Sermons

Written by Christopher Ash

Our God is a speaking God. And that means his people must, by necessity, be a listening people. It is no surprise, then, that the Scriptures are filled with calls for the people of God to hear and to listen to his Word. At the heart of those commands is the call not only to listen but to listen well, not only to hear but to hear in such a way that we take to heart and heed the message. How we listen matters (Lk. 8:18). This is especially true when we gather together to sit under the preached Word each week.

But, what exactly does it look like to listen well to the preached Word? This is the question Christopher Ash takes up in his short booklet, *Listen Up!: A Practical Guide to Listening to Sermons*. The booklet is divided into three sections. In the first and longest section, Ash provides readers with “seven ingredients for healthy sermon listening.” The list includes a few more obvious ways to make the most of sitting under the preached Word, like expecting God to speak and listening actively in order to be sure the preaching is faithful to the text. But it also includes a few ingredients that might be less obvious to some, like hearing the sermon in church and laboring to be there week by week. Ash explains the importance of each ingredient and also provides practical steps for growing as a listener.

Were that all *Listen Up!* contained, it would be well worth your time. But, the final two sections of the booklet make it all the more valuable. The middle section is all about how to listen to bad sermons. These, Ash explains, come in three types: dull, biblically inadequate, and heretical. He provides sound, practical advice for listening to each type, calling us to listen humbly to dull but faithful preaching, to listen critically to biblically inadequate preaching without developing a critical spirit, and to stop listening if the preaching is heretical. The section ends with helpful counsel on how to get a better sermon. Ash then closes out the booklet with seven suggestions for encouraging good preaching that include being prayerful and thankful and also being constructively and supportively critical.

Because how we listen matters, I highly recommend *Listen Up!* I know of no other booklet like it and trust that it will help you grow as a listener and, through better listening, grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

– RECOMMENDED BY DUSTIN BUTTS

LISTEN UP!

A practical guide to listening to sermons



CHRISTOPHER ASH

Excerpts From the Book

1

“The way we listen is a life-or-death business. It is possible to have ears that fail to hear (Mark 8:18), to be ‘ever hearing but never understanding’ (Mark 4:12). Listening to sermons is a risky business: it can damage your health or take you closer to final rescue.”

– Why on Earth Do We Need a Book like This?, p.2

2

“Preaching is properly done only when the people of God in a local church gather. When we listen to an MP3 recording of a sermon, we are not listening to preaching, but to an echo of preaching that happened in the past.”

– Seven Ingredients for Healthy Sermon Listening, p.13

3

“Preaching that makes a church Christlike under grace takes a double miracle: the sinful preacher must be shaped by grace to preach; and sinful listeners must be awakened by grace to listen together week by week in humble expectancy. Only God can do this.”

– Seven Ingredients for Healthy Sermon Listening, p.23

AUGUST

These Scripture readings have been selected to help you prepare for the Sunday morning message. Take Up & Read!

August 1	Acts 19:1–7	August 17	Psalm 2
August 2	Ephesians 3:7–13	August 18	Psalm 95
August 3	Ephesians 3:14–21	August 19	Psalm 74
August 4	Ephesians 4:1–16	August 20	Psalm 96
August 5	Ephesians 4:17–24	August 21	Psalm 25
August 6	Ephesians 4:25–32	August 22	Psalm 100
August 7	Ephesians 5:1–14	August 23	John 11:38–44
August 8	Acts 19:8–20	August 24	John 12:27–36
August 9	Ephesians 5:15–21	August 25	Matthew 26:36–46
August 10	Ephesians 5:22–33	August 26	Luke 23:26–43
August 11	Ephesians 6:1–4	August 27	Mark 15:33–41
August 12	Ephesians 6:5–9	August 28	Luke 23:44–49
August 13	Ephesians 6:10–20	August 29	John 17:20–23
August 14	Ephesians 6:21–24	August 30	Acts 20:1–6
August 15	Acts 19:21–41	August 31	2 Timothy 4:9–18
August 16	Psalm 66		

***Sermons in bold**

TAKE UP & READ



Mount Vernon
BAPTIST CHURCH