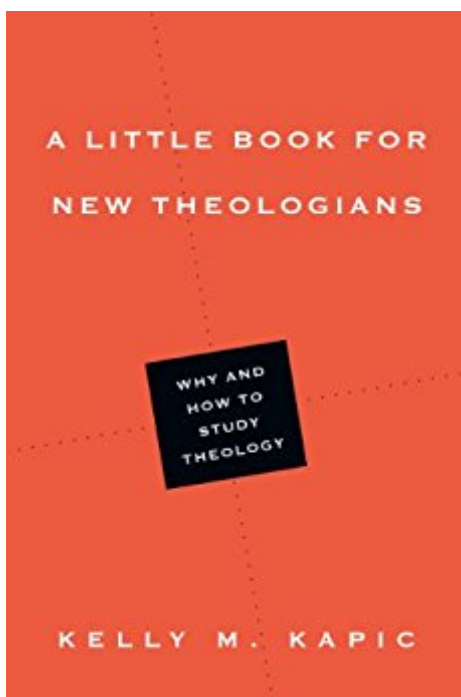


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# A Little Book For New Theologians: Why And How To Study Theology



## Synopsis

Whenever we read, think, hear or say anything about God, we are doing theology. Yet theology isn't just a matter of what we think. It affects who we are. In the tradition of Helmut Thielicke's *A Little Exercise for Young Theologians*, Kelly Kaptic offers a concise introduction to the study of theology for newcomers to the field. He highlights the value and importance of theological study and explains its unique nature as a serious discipline. Not only concerned with content and method, Kaptic explores the skills, attitudes and spiritual practices needed by those who take up the discipline. This brief, clear and lively primer draws out the relevance of theology for Christian life, worship, mission, witness and more. "Theology is about life," writes Kaptic. "It is not a conversation our souls can afford to avoid."

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## Customer Reviews

A LITTLE BOOK FOR NEW THEOLOGIANS by Kelly M. Kaptic is a great biblical introduction for any theologian. Kaptic defines theology as "an active response to the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, whereby the believer, in the power of the Holy Spirit, subordinate to the testimonies of the

prophets and apostles as recorded in the Scriptures and in communion with the saints, wrestles with and rests in the mysteries of God, his work and his world." By defining theology and expounding upon it in this way throughout the book, it is clear that all believers in Christ are meant to be theologians. We all do theology because we all think about God. Theology is very relevant to our lives. The book is separated into two parts. In the first part Kopic covers why anyone should study theology. There's some great discussion about knowing and enjoying God and theology as a pilgrimage. The second part of the book covers the characteristics of faithful theology and theologians. The highlight of this section was the chapter on doing theology as part of a community. This means allowing voices of past theologians to speak into our study, as well as being a part of the body of Christ and learning from other believers in their theological pursuit. The book is titled A LITTLE BOOK FOR NEW THEOLOGIANS, but it's a great book for all believers whether they're just jumping into their study of who God is, or if they've been following Jesus for several years. It's a short book, but it's packed full of wisdom that will lead to a humble pursuit of knowing God. I received this book for free for review from Intervarsity Press, and the opinions contained in this review are completely my own

Theology, the study of God, is practiced by everyone. We all have ideas of God and so we are all theologians. As many have noted, the question is whether we are good or bad theologians. Kelly Kopic in his short book articulates a clear vision of how to study God rightly. His emphasis on a 'lived theology' underscores perhaps the most important of all lessons for a new theologian: all theology is practical. Theology is informed by the community of believers - past and present - and refined by 'doing' the Christian life, though always grounded in and tested by Holy Scripture. Perhaps the most impactful chapters were the ones on prayer and suffering/justice. Kopic reminds us in the chapter on "Prayer and Study" that only through prayer can we prevent theological studies from becoming cold and detached; through prayer we ensure our studies lead to a closer relationship with God as opposed to merely learning about Him. In "Suffering, Justice, and Knowing God," Kopic points us to the truth of Jeremiah 22:16 - we know God by defending the poor and needy. Our Triune God has concerned himself with a broken and sinful human race. And while salvation comes only through the work of Jesus Christ, we are all called to imitate our Creator through our concern for the helpless. Kopic keeps before us the glorious greatness of God along with His merciful nearness to creation. Whether you are new to seriously studying the one, true God or you have multiple degrees in theology, "A Little Book for New Theologians" will encourage you in, as William Perkins called it, the "science of living blessedly forever."

I bought this little book to use with my kids, as a supplement to our homeschool curriculum. I'm enjoying it myself, too, for its easy, conversational style and the quotes interspersed with the text. I admit that I chose this book over others because my son worked for Mr. Kapic while attending Covenant College. :) But now that I've begun reading it, I know the book was worth every penny. And I understand why so many Covenant students adore having Dr. Kapic as an instructor!

For years, Helmut Thielicke's *A Little Exercise for Young Theologians* has initiated budding theologians into the art of doing theology and being a theologian. It is in the spirit of this brilliant book that Kelly Kapic has written *A Little Book for New Theologians*, which dispels any misguided notion of theology as a dry, academic exercise done by intellectuals in their isolated, ivory towers. Drawing from Scripture and a chorus of theologians through the ages, Kapic shows that theology arises out of the drama of relationship with God and the journey of our life with Him and each other. Theology involves reason and logic, to be sure, but theology involves the whole person (intellect, emotion, imagination, will) as we seek to understand and perform our faith with the company of saints. To know God is not just to know about God; it is know him personally and to respond to his Word and Spirit by doing justice, enacting joyful obedience, and walking humbly in the way of Jesus. This may be a little book, but it is bulging with wisdom. It is an essential book, not just for new theologians, but for seasoned theologians too, all of whom need these salient lessons in why and how to study theology.

This book is a great start for anyone desiring to go deeper in theological studies. Read it as you are hearing instructions from an older friend, cautioning against the pitfalls of pride yet always encouraging you to seek more and learn more. This book is an easy read yet full of great information, and is backed up with large amounts of relevant scripture.

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