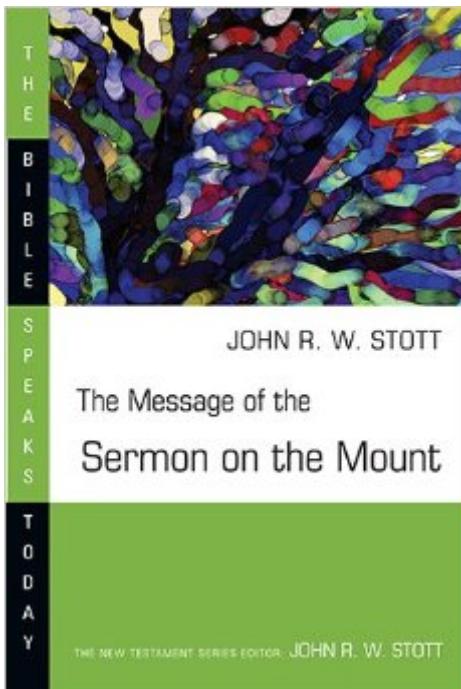


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# The Message Of The Sermon On The Mount (Matthew 5-7 : Christian Counter-Culture)



## Synopsis

"The followers of Jesus are to different," writes John Stott, "different from both the nominal church and the secular world, different from both the religious and the irreligious. The Sermon on the Mount is the most complete delineation anywhere in the New Testament of the Christian counter-culture. Here is a Christian value-system, ethical standard, religious devotion, attitude to money, ambition, lifestyle and network of relationships--all of which are totally at variance with those in the non-Christian world. And this Christian counter-culture is the life of the kingdom of God, a fully human life indeed but lived out under the divine rule." In this careful exposition of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, John R. W. Stott accurately expounds the biblical text and relates it to life today. Above all, the author says, he wants to let Christ speak this sermon again, this time to the modern world.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I read an older edition of this book that was titled Christian counter culture, but I'm sure that the content is largely the same. John Stott shares his insights as he guides us through the Sermon on the Mount. He calls us to radical devotion to Christ and His principles outlined in this famous portion of Scripture. He gives good historical meanings of many of the words in Greek and unlocks his mainly orthodox interpretation of the passage. He also sites historical comments from Calvin, Tolstoy, and Bonhoeffer as well as others. Although this is not an exegetical commentary in the strictest sense, it is readable and quite insightful into Christ's words.

I am preaching through the beatitudes right now, and next year, I plan on preaching through the rest of the Sermon on the Mount. I already had all the heavy duty technical books on this section of the Bible. So I really needed a book where the writer explained the text in a way that people could understand it. Stott's book fills that void. He masterfully explains and applies the text to life, and he always gives you something to chew on in digestible form. In addition to owning one or two technical commentaries on Matthew, I recommend picking up this little book if you are preaching or studying Matthew 5-7. Rev. Marc Axelrod

John R. W. Stott, *The Message of the Sermon on the Mount*. Christian Counter-Culture. Leicester/England and Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press. First edition 1978; regularly reprinted in this format since 1984. 238 pages. Although this book is, in the meantime, almost 30 years old, it remains as timeless as the Bible chapters on which it is commenting - and as a reminder of what a tremendous gift John Stott has been to the church in his role as teacher and author. His "Message of the Sermon on the Mount" has a number of characteristics which make it more or less ideal as a guide through three of the New Testament's most fascinating, but also most difficult chapters. The first of these characteristics is its intellectual plausibility and good sense: Stott nowhere speculates, never goes off at a tangent, but always gives a thorough, intelligent, well thought-out explanation of the text that takes account of opposing views but counters these with irrefutable arguments. The second characteristic is its theological orthodoxy, coupled however with broadness of scope, awareness of other positions and honesty in the face of difficulties. Stott is never dogmatically narrow-minded, but always loyal not only to the *ipsa verba*, but to the very spirit of the Biblical text - something that should warm every Christian's heart. A third characteristic is Stott's familiarity with the literature and his adeptness in providing apt quotes at just the right moment. And he does not limit himself here to other commentaries or to parallel Bible verses; there is a liberal sprinkling of pithy comment from Augustine and Chrysostom from the early church period, from the great reformers Luther and Calvin, and from more modern theologians and thinkers of various schools, e. g. Joachim Jeremias, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, A. B. Bruce, Alfred Plummer, even C. S. Lewis. And of course, Stott has read and digested Dr. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones's massive volume of sermons on Matthew 5 thru 7. A fourth characteristic would be Stott's balance between the more "evangelistic" type of approach and the social aspects of the Christian faith. And a fifth characteristic would be his insistence on the supremacy and sovereignty of Jesus Christ as the Son of God and only Saviour. If you are looking

for a book of "manageable" size on the Sermon on the Mount, and assuming you require a volume which is really faithful to the words of the text, you could do no better than turn to Stott's classic exposition. This is one of the absolute highlights of the "The Bible Speaks Today" series (which, in itself, has proved, in my opinion, rather uneven).

This is one of the best books I have ever read. It is very fundamental to Christianity as ABC. It covers why and how Christians are to be different from this world, from this "Culture". It gives reader a truly good overview on Christianity and Christian values and behavior. Even though it's written in 197.. , it's timeless. So don't worry to get outdated or something. Questions are common today as if they were yesterday. Read this book please. You won't be disappointed. (only if you're willing to accept challenge)

Stott almost always combines scholarship of a high order with practical/pastoral application. This is one of those books. I have had this book for a number of years, and it is a helpful resource for understanding about applying the Sermon. I have it on a par with Lloyd-Jones, but Stott is much more succinct. I also like D. A. Carson's treatment. The concept of Christians as a counter culture - a concept a bit dated in these days of churches that serve culture - is important. There ought to be a difference, and it ought to be based on "what did Jesus teach."

As a new believer, I found Stott's book to be a treasure. His elaboration of Jesus' basic teachings in the Sermon on the Mount of how He wanted his disciples (then and now) to think and act was very illuminating. Stott's choice of the term "counter-culture" for this manifesto seems very fitting since the details of the Sermon show how the believer's way is so at odds with the ways of the secular world. Stott writes with voice that is insightful and inspired. This is the first book of his that I have read and studied. It will certainly not be the last!

Excellent commentary! John Stott does a masterful job explaining the text, connecting the pieces the whole, and relating Scripture to real life. Most importantly, it touches the heart and increases your love for Christ! I highly recommend this book!

John Stott expounds the Sermon on the Mount and puts it in the context of a manifesto, or kingdom life, and relates it to a counter-culture. Stott explains how this Christian counter-culture would look and how the people in its community would behave both toward God and one another if they truly

followed Jesus' teachings. Stott sums it up well, "Probably the greatest tragedy of the church throughout its long and chequered history has been its constant tendency to conform to the prevailing culture instead of developing a Christian counter-culture." This book was originally published in 1978 when "counter-culture" was a buzz word yet the content remains not only relevant, but timeless.

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