



Futureville: Discover Your Purpose for Today by Reimagining Tomorrow

Skye Jethani

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Want to see the future? It is brighter than you think.

What we believe about tomorrow determines how we live today. As Christians debate how to faithfully engage with our rapidly changing world, our vision of the future has never been more important.

But rather than providing a clear sense of purpose for our lives, popular Christian ideas about the future steal it from us by saying our work in the world, apart from ministry, has no eternal value. Is it any wonder why young adults are less interested in church, or why a culture desperate for meaning and hope dismisses our message?

In *Futureville*, Skye Jethani offers us a vision-shifting glimpse of the world of tomorrow described in Scripture. He reveals how a biblical vision of the future can transform every person's work with a sense of purpose and dignity today.

Futureville is a smart, inspiring call to cultivate the order, beauty, and abundance that reflects the heart and vision of God for our world.

Futureville: Discover Your Purpose for Today by Reimagining Tomorrow Details

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Author : Skye Jethani

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From Reader Review Futureville: Discover Your Purpose for Today by Reimagining Tomorrow for online ebook

John Bishop says

Once again, Skye challenges believers to rethink how we relate to God, this time in terms of our future, both on earth and in His Kingdom.

Joan says

I think Jethani has great insight into how Christianity got to where it is today in America with respect to modernity, evolution, and then the emphasis on a "safe evacuation" from this earth. He proposes a path between evolution (Christians trying to make progress) and evacuation (Christians safely getting out of this world) with resurrection (our work counts for today and forever). Our view of the future, impacts what we do today. I really liked his section on beauty and art. Anyone who questions the validity of a Christian who wants to do art needs to read this book. I also appreciated his section on the Christian and business or marketplace. It helped me understand the parable of the talents, for example. A book worth reading, see my full review at <http://bit.ly/1bIOC4v>.

Martijn Vsho says

I really enjoyed this book! Jethani does a great job in showing how our ideas of the future impact the present. He looks at two common Christian interpretations - evacuation (escapist eschatology) and evolution (progress eschatology) - and shows their problems. He instead argues for resurrection (renewal eschatology). God will renew the earth instead of destroying and creating a new one. This has huge implications for today. In speaking about this, I especially appreciate Jethani's practical approach. He talks about vocation and gives practical examples along the way of what this looks like. He also grounds his book in the Bible and has many personal stories to share as well.

Overall a great read!

Jennifer Grosser says

My brother had checked this book out from the library and it was lying on a counter when I picked it up, intending just to read a couple of paragraphs while waiting for the next activity with my brother's children on my week of vacation. Even though I've already read Jethani's "With" and found it helpful for myself and now use it in mentoring young adults, I didn't anticipate finishing this book this week. After all, I was here to spend time with my brother's family, and I had already started two OTHER books this week.

It didn't take long for me to decide a few things, however: 1) I should prioritize this book because I could take the other two books with me, and 2) this might need to be part two of my mentoring--and possibly recommended reading for the next online Bible study I will be leading next month.

The book is very readable, Jethani uses effective and memorable illustrations to make his points (I was particularly taken by the polymorphic cosmos idea), and his ability to crystallize vocation into three main types is helpful. I do wonder, though, which type of vocation Jethani sees as his. And I'm still not sure in which category to place mine, either.

Tommy Grooms says

In Futureville, Skye Jethani has written a beautiful book positing that many of the problems that plague the modern church can be attributed to an inadequate vision of the future God promises. He offers healthier takes on the Bible's view of vocation, order, beauty, and abundance that provide hope in the here and now: edifying chapters that I know I will be returning to from time to time for refreshment.

Kevin Bennie says

Just finished this book and I would highly recommend it! Skye writes with clarity and great theological and scriptural grounding. There are a few things he doesn't address that I wish he had but you can't do it all in one book ?. His resurfacing and addressing the theology of vocation is worth the book alone! I'll put some of my favorite quotes in the comments ?? #orderbeautyabundance #vocation #getafterit

JillT says

LOVED LOVED LOVED! I will never need to write a book on my views of what the kingdom of God looks like, because Skye Jethani has done it so elegantly, beautifully, and humbly.

Rose F says

Futureville presents an analysis of the ways in which a person's view of the future — whether one sees it as hopeful or not —can play a role in relationships and expressions of faith. It's a strong premise, the author makes good use of metaphor and uses world history effectively to set up his points. He makes a good case for the idea that there is more to life and the Christian faith than either "winning souls" or battling for social change. He challenges Christians to view their daily lives, skills, and talents as important and relevant to God.

My Thoughts

This book starts out brilliantly and had me excited in a way that I haven't been about a Christian book in quite some time. Jethani opens with a discussion of the 1939 World's Fair and segues from that into Walt Disney's Tomorrowland, then progresses to a metaphor between those and the City of God found in Revelation. The author's use of history and metaphor in the first half of the book is worth a read in and of itself, but I was disappointed in the book as a whole.

It starts to lose me about halfway through, but there are still some strong points, like this quote from chapter 6:

"Young people, perhaps more than previous generations, have a strong sense of their specific callings. They believe God has called them into business, the arts, government, the household, education, the media, the social sector, or health care, and they are often very committed to these venues of cultural engagement. But when their specific callings are not acknowledged by the institutional church, and instead only our common callings or the goals of the organization are extolled, the young are unlikely to engage. Rather than embracing the fullness of the Christian life comprising multiple facets—highest, common, and specific callings—the church unknowingly communicates that following Christ is a tension between sacred callings and secular work. You must sacrifice your specific, secular calling to do more of the sacred work the institutional church says really matters. This guilt-laden message is one a young, jaded generation is much less likely to tolerate. It is interpreted as a self-serving power play by church leaders even if, like me, they never intended it to be...Does this mean the institutional church should stop emphasizing our common callings or its evangelistic mission? Absolutely not! Rather, it is vital that the church rediscover the God-given dignity of all callings and how they fit together. It is not the pastor's task to wrestle more people away from "secular" engagements in order to help him accomplish "sacred" work, but to erase these categories in the lives of those he leads in order that Christ might come to reign over all parts of their lives."

That quote is at the heart of what I think this book is about. I say I think because the second half of the book doesn't deliver on the promise laid out in the first. I found myself re-reading passages, convinced I'd "missed something" as I struggled to follow the author's points.

I can't point to anything that I don't like, other than a disappointing second half. I'm not sure I agree with all of the author's arguments, but I can't say more than that because the text is obscure and disjointed. I'm not 100% sure I'm interpreting the author's message accurately.

I will be posting more quotes and discussion of Futureville later this week, so follow my blog if you're interested.

Overall

I'll give the book 4 stars because there's enough of interest to make the second half worth picking through even if the overall effect is lackluster. I feel like it doesn't quite deserve four, but I can't bring myself to put it in the category of "just okay," either. This book is worth your time if you go into without stellar expectations.

Disclaimer: I received a free e-book copy of this text from publisher through the BookLook Bloggers in exchange for my honest review.

Nicholas says

This book has been hailed by pastors and church leaders I know as a great statement about the church. They rave about the insights and wisdom they have received from this book. I think I read a very different book.

I am not a fan of Skye Jethani. I have tried to be a fan. I read *With*, and disliked it. I have listened to too many

of his sermons, and disliked them. I have listened to his sermons again and reread his books and I still come to the same conclusion. Skye Jethani is your doctor who tells you everything you agree with about your condition but gives you no real solutions. This book not only continues that theme but takes a turn to mock, misrepresent, and create cartoon versions of people who disagree with Jethani's theology not just his premises.

The idea of this book is that the church has failed to properly communicate the hope that we as Christians have in our future as well as push the idea that our work on the Earth is pointless. Jethani then points to several theological beliefs as the culprits of this crime against God's word. It is clear that Jethani holds a different theological view than those he blames for the problems he identifies.

The thing that frustrated me here was how Jethani went about presenting his case and the beliefs of the theological groups he blames for the problem. At no time in the book did Jethani site a single example of teachers of the views he disagrees with teaching, presenting, or promoting the problems he points to. He did not have a single quote or book reference that made his case. Jethani instead created caricatures of the people who hold views different from him stating that they believe this or they believe that. Really? Where do you see that? What specific person who holds that view has ever taught that? I would argue those who hold the theological views he attacks are nothing like the picture he creates and would be shocked at the accusations Jethani makes against them. Take note that these attacks are nearly half the book.

I do not say this because I hold different views from Jethani on these theological issues, I agree with him on some, but he seems to have done no research and is writing from prejudicial ignorance. While he may be right in the sentiment that Christians tend to separate spiritual and work life he attacks false images of what created it. In essence he adds to the issue by giving permission for us to attack different theological views without being informed as to the truth of what those beliefs hold. This tactic is used to pit the young Christian generation against the older generation pointing out how they failed the church and need to be stopped. How sad.

After putting up his straw men Jethani then falls back into his standard writing of point to a problem, then pointing to it again, then pointing to it again, and then pointing to it one more time so we all know there is a problem while never presenting a clear answer to the problem. This is lazy and does not help any in the conversation of moving the American church forward to Christ. Add to this his poor research, misrepresentation of other believers, and the fact that scripture is rarely mentioned in the book (how do you expect to return the church to its core) and once again Jethani has created a Christian pop-culture hit.

I do take issue with what Jethani says is to blame for the problems he states in his book much like I did with his book *With*. Jethani gives us a shallow reason for the problem which detracts from deeper issues that we need to address personally about where we put our relationship with Jesus. Is the reason we don't connect Jesus with our daily lives because of some academics push of theological ideas or is it because we don't want to give up portions of control in our lives? Maybe we listen to our culture too much and seek relevance more than Jesus presence?

I worry for the church because the solutions we seek and praise are shallow ways of ignoring our bigger issues. Let's stop seeking christian-pop hits and start reading our Bibles so we can be like Mary and sit at the feet of Jesus regularly.

Dan Williams says

Great book and insightful.

David says

The time spent reading this was well worth it. It was an easy read, in the sense that the writing is accessible, but the concepts are well-worth deeply pondering. Jethani looks at the future as revealed in Scripture and looks at the various ways we tend to approach our lives here and now in light of that understanding of the future. If we misunderstand our future, we misunderstand our purpose. And if we misunderstand our purpose, we get a lot of things wrong in this life.

Some people look to evacuation - the main point is to get through this life and get to the next life with God (and bring as many people along as possible). Others look to a progressive future - the glorious future promised is one we can create ourselves if we simply keep working. Jethani reminds us that the Scriptures point us to something else - a redeemed future. While there are definitely things in this world that will pass away, there are some that will likely remain - those things that bring God honor and glory. And while we will never be able to obtain that promised future by our own actions (only Jesus at the final Resurrection can accomplish that), we are still commanded to live out the gospel in all areas of life.

So, how do we do this? What are the things we can do here and now that will exist into eternity? Jethani breaks those down into three categories: beauty, order and abundance. When we work to bring beauty to the world, we are awakening the hope of the ultimate Beauty; when we bring order to our own area of influence, we are fulfilling the command to subdue the earth; when we create abundance, we are able to share the blessings of God with one another. In each of these areas, we join God in bringing His Kingdom here.

I finished this book with so much greater hope for the future and joy in anticipation of what that will be. I highly recommend it.

Daunavan Buyer says

Jethani is a powerful author. His books, including this one, are poignant and they speak to many issues that get to the heart of what we are seeing in our churches today. Futureville is a vision for both the new creation and hope that we have as followers of Christ and it is also an invitation to embody those principles in our lives now. This book is filled with stories and personal experiences. I highly recommend it.

Benjamin says

One of the important books for reforming Evangelicalism, of course the author won't be listened to, but hey his ideas are good.

Steven Hinkle says

BEAUTIFUL CHURCH

For sometime I've dreamt about a different kind of church. I've had my moments of wanting to walk away from her and try it my own way. I didn't. I continued to dream of a church that lived and loved like Jesus and brought restoration to the broken. Even now as I search for a pastorate, I long for and dream for the beautiful and for it to show up in and out of the church. Skye Jethani in his book Futureville not only challenges the individual but the church as well to plan for a better today by reimagining tomorrow. Tomorrow is our hope and our purpose is to share glimpses of the beauty in the "ordinary brokenness" of our worlds.

It didn't take long for me to want to read more when Jethani began sharing how many fail to see the church as relevant to their lives. After several years of working with and teaching young people, I have found that many of them are ready to walk away. We were all created in the image of God and desire meaning and significance, but the problem is how we (or the church) look at the future and our place in the world today.

He spends much of the book giving a well laid out timeline as to how the church's focus has changed. At one time, the focus emphasized evolving to a better tomorrow through acts of social justice and making a difference in the world. He also portrays the church's obsession on evacuating – the end times and separation from this world. Both are shown not as evils but rather how both should be working together for good. Left alone they miss the proper future focus.

His book culminates with the possibility that the church should embrace everyone's story and place in the world – an encompassing vision and mission beyond social justice or clergy calling. The church is called to celebrate and encourage each other's gifts and "garden patches."

My favorite illustration in the book shares part of Nelson Mandela's prison or wilderness chaos story. Mandela could see the beauty of home from his prison cell but could not reach it. Instead of giving up hope, he brought beauty to the prison by cultivating a small patch of ground into a beautiful garden. This act of incarnation rather than evolution or evacuation is how beauty came to his chaotic world.

The church with a proper future focus will then celebrate personal value and every man and woman and the part they play in our world today. Jethani shares that "our faith affirms the God-given value of every person." He devotes one chapter (probably one of my favorites) to the churches need to affirm the calling of the artist. He suggests that "perhaps Jesus would say, 'Why do you bother them? They are doing beautiful things for me.'"

This book was a needed reminder to every reader that the church can be a beautiful place if she sets her sights on affirming everyone's place in their world. The beauty of the church is her diversity and remembering that "everyone's story matters." I highly recommend this book, especially for those pastors who do want to make a difference rather than garner praise or a paycheck.

Thomas Nelson provided me a free copy of this book in exchange for this review which I freely give.

Jonathan Storment says

Another great book from Jethani

I appreciate everything Skye Jethani has written. One of my favorite authors...he's honest and hopeful, pastoral and prophetic, with great insights and even better stories.
