

The Imperfect Pastor: Discovering Joy in Our Limitations through a Daily Apprenticeship with Jesus

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Dear Pastor,

Desire burns within you. You've trained and dreamt of doing large things in famous ways as fast as you can for God's glory. But pastoral work keeps requiring your surrender to small, mostly overlooked things over long periods of time.

You stand at a crossroads. Jesus stands with you. You were never meant to know everything, fix everything, and be everywhere at once. That's his job, not yours.

So what now? Let the apprenticeship begin.

Zack Eswine

(PhD, Regent University) is the lead pastor at Riverside Church in Webster Groves, Missouri, and the director of homiletics at Covenant Theological Seminary. Zack and his wife, Jessica live in St. Louis, Missouri, with their three children. For more information, visit ZackEswine.com.

Lead Pastor, Riverside Church, Webster Groves, Missouri; author, *The Imperfect Pastor*

"The Imperfect Pastor might be the most helpful and profound book I've read in years. If you're in pastoral ministry, grab a copy."

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Matt Chandler,

Lead Pastor, The Village Church, Dallas, Texas; President, Acts 29 Church Planting Network; author, *The Mingling of Souls* and *The Explicit Gospel*

"It's hard to imagine a book packed with more grace and insight into the extraordinary life of the ordinary pastor. So I'll quit trying and just read Zack Eswine's *The Imperfect Pastor* again. No one today shows more insight into the perils and joys of everyday ministry in the local church—a refreshingly honest and beautifully written meditation."

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Mark Galli,

Editor in Chief, *Christianity Today*

"I wish I'd read this book twenty-five years ago when I first began to consider pastoral ministry. The ground Zack covers is vital for novices and senior pastors alike. He steers us well clear of dangerous ambitions, absurd expectations, and corrosive work patterns. But he does so with wit, self-deprecation, and deeply felt realism. Eswine reignited in me a love for the Perfect Shepherd who has the extraordinary grace to include imperfect shepherds in his kingdom work. This should be on everyone's must-read list!"

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Mark Meynell,

Associate Director (Europe), *Langham Preaching*; author, *A Wilderness of Mirrors*

"Zack Eswine has done it again. In *The Imperfect Pastor*, he extends the hand of brotherhood to every minister of the gospel. Too many weary soldiers guard the front lines; Eswine reminds us all that Christ is our guard and defender, and that strength in him is our strongest place."

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Lore Ferguson Wilbert,

author, *Handle with Care: Why Jesus Came to Touch and How We Should Too*

"This book needs to be read by every pastor, to rescue us and call us back to what matters. The expectation of large, famous, and fast ministry in a post-Christian culture can be a destructive burden. Zack's wisdom is a healing balm bringing needed grace to help us minister with patience and endurance."

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Peter Boyd,

Pastor, Shore Presbyterian Church, Auckland, New Zealand

"This is simply the best book on pastoral ministry I have ever read. In an upside-down ministry world that idolizes stardom and size, Zack opens our eyes to the only things that really matter. Prayerfully read and reread this beautiful, poignant meditation and you will discover joy and true greatness in the midst of your extraordinary, ordinary life."

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Ken Shigematsu,

Pastor, Tenth Church Vancouver, bestselling author, *God in My Everything*

"Zack Eswine pokes his prose into a very sensitive area we pastors and leaders hate to discuss: the amount of people who come to our churches, the size of the offering, and the number of social media followers we have can be the Nielson Ratings we draw our sense of identity and esteem from. As painful as this truth may seem, this is not a book filled with condemnation but rather winsome encouragement. I could feel Zack's arms around me as God used him to point the way forward-toward a path of healing and hope."

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Bryan Loritts,

Pastor for Preaching and Mission, Trinity Grace Church, New York City; Founder and President, The Kainos Movement; Editor, *Letters to a Birmingham Jail*

"*The Imperfect Pastor* is a refreshing reminder of what ministry is all about: walking with Jesus, recognizing our own desires and limitations, and reflecting a listening presence, hopeful patience, and restorative purpose. Zack's personal experiences related to the ups and downs of ministry, along with his contemplative approach to spirituality, will challenge and encourage anyone who seeks to minister in the name of Jesus."

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Wendy Der,

Director of Mobilization in Mexico, *Avance Internacional*

"Here is wisdom reminiscent of the gifted preachers of another era, but expressed in the sound and tone of today. Here is pastoral theology written, preached, and lived out in the very real and checkered life of Zack himself. Here is humane and godly counsel. You should read this book!"

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Leighton Ford,

President, Leighton Ford Ministries

Other Books

On Pastoring, "Ministry is harder than I thought it would be ..." No pastor is ever fully prepared for the ministry. For pastors just starting out, those needing a little rebalancing, or those growing tired in the trenches, a handbook on the basics is a welcome relief. In On Pastoring, veteran pastor H.B. Charles gives 40 quick chapters on the practical aspects of pastoral ministry. Covering the devotional life, spiritual leadership, and public ministry of the pastor, he provides advice on topics like: Avoiding pastoral risk factors Prioritizing your family Equipping and leading leaders Caring for the sick and grieving Guarding your heart in the pulpit Conducting funerals and weddings Being a pastor means wearing many hats, weathering lots of pressure, and bearing great responsibility. Let H.B. Charles be a trusted advisor as you do the hard work of shepherding a flock of God

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