



Storylines: Your Map to Understanding the Bible

Mike Pilavachi, Andy Croft

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Six overarching themes that flow throughout Scripture—Jesus, Covenant, Presence, Kingdom, Salvation, Worship—demystify the Bible and make it fun to read.

Let's face it—folks don't spend as much time reading their Bibles these days. It's complex and can be hard to understand. Pastors and youth leaders are concerned about low biblical literacy levels in their churches and groups. Reading this book is like having a chat with your best friend ... who also happens to be a Bible scholar. In this case, Mike Pilavachi and Andy Croft.

With a thorough discussion of each of the six themes, as well as a summary of the Bible and a discussion of how it came to be in its present form, readers of all ages will read the Bible with new eyes!

Storylines: Your Map to Understanding the Bible Details

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From Reader Review Storylines: Your Map to Understanding the Bible for online ebook

Brian Stevenson says

Summary:

Excellent book! Perfect for teens and adults that are growing in their faith. The authors introduce us to the books of the Bible, cover the basics for interpreting scripture, and take us on a journey through the Bible covering six essential threads: Jesus, Covenant, Presence of God, Kingdom of God, Salvation, and Worship. I was amazed and how skillfully they made complex theological concepts really simple to understand.

Chapter 2 – The Jesus Thread

Andy & Mike follow the Jesus thread through the Old Testament. It was fascinating to see it weave through Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Joseph, Moses, David, and the Major/Minor prophets. The typology and recapitulation is incredible.

Chapter 3 – The Covenant Thread

Andy & Mike first talk about the "Peace Treaty". It's an ancient near east ceremony to "cut a deal" or to make a covenant. This covenant was customarily initiated by a conquering king who would usually outline the terms in three sections: 1. The benefits, 2. The obligations, 3. The penalties. God begins the covenant with his people starting in Genesis 12 with Abraham. God renews this covenant with Moses on Mount Sinai. And again, God repeats his promises to King David. Time after time, God's people keep messing things up and God has to keep renewing it.

Second, Andy & Mike talk about the "The Marriage". When God brought Israel out of Egypt he declared, "I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God." Throughout the rest of the Bible, the imagery begins to look more and more like a marriage. The prophet Hosea was told to marry an adulterous woman and love her no matter what she did. She was unfaithful, yet Hosea remained faithful. God said to Hosea, "I will show my love to the one I called 'Not my loved one', I will say to those called, 'Not my people', 'You are my people'; and they will say, 'You are my God'" Another prophet, Ezekiel, began to prophecy about how God raised up Israel, married her, and loved her unconditionally. Yet, Israel prostituted herself, and God remained faithful.

Finally, Andy & Mike talk about the "The Will". This is where they unpack the "New Covenant". God didn't water down any of the original obligations or penalties of the previous covenant. If he did, he would cease to be a Holy God. Rather, he made the new second covenant with himself! Jesus fulfilled all the obligations of the original covenant AND paid the penalties due to us because of our disobedience to the original covenant! What's left? The benefits!!! We call that grace.

Sunflower says

What I really enjoyed about "Storylines" was the very casual, layman approach to understanding the Bible that makes this both an entertaining and informative book about the major themes that are found throughout

the Bible.

Filled with personal anecdotes, discussion questions at the end, a "paperchase" after each chapter that provides specific verses to further explore the biblical themes that are shared, several appendixes that provide even more in depth information from how the Bible was brought together, discussion of verse to verse studies and character studies, I was really impressed at both how informative and just really entertaining "Storylines" is.

More than just a "handbook", I particularly enjoy the personal anecdotes that the authors shared and the light conversational style that "Storylines" is written in, really just shows that there is so much to the Bible that is offered.

Although the themes are lightly touched on, this does not take away from the reading, but instead, the authors touch on topics such as sin, and grace, and our Father's presence to name a few that had me really glued to each page, and finding myself surprised for a "small" book of 208 pages, that they manage to share so much about not just the "Bible itself" but each storyline that it is broken down into such as, what they called, "The Jesus Storyline", for example.

I highly recommend this refreshing and casual, but, in depth look at the Bible and find yourself looking at the Bible in not only a new way, but at the same time reminded of God's everlasting message that is found through His word.

Nicole says

Might be good for someone new to this idea, I ended up skimming it. Chapters are by theme

Jennifer says

I went into this book not having any idea as to what to expect. I have tried reading books that were recommended to me in the past that were about the Bible and I honestly found those books often harder to understand than the Bible itself. That was not the case with Storylines. I was pleasantly surprised with this book! I found it very interesting and hard to put down. Storylines addresses 6 overall themes that run throughout scripture- Jesus, Covenant, Presence, Kingdom, Salvation, and Worship, revealing the need for and the glory of Christ in all of those themes. The book is not only informative but very entertaining, full of personal anecdotes of the authors which made for some very fun reading. The thing that I appreciated the most about Storylines is that the authors use a very down-to-earth, casual, layman approach written in conversational style. The entire book was very easy to understand and it brought out some parallels in scripture that I had never recognized. For instance, it discussed the parallels between Noah and Jesus, Abraham, Isaac & Jesus, Joseph & Jesus, Moses & Jesus, and more. In Chapter One, the authors wrote about how Jesus said to a bunch of Pharisees "You diligently study the scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life" (John 5:39-40). Since Jesus biography had not yet been written we know he must of been talking about the Old Testament. In bringing out the parallels of Jesus and the Old Testament people, the authors show that Jesus appears hidden all over the Old Testament.

Storylines was not written to be a substitute for reading the bible but rather a book that gives you desire to dig deeper into scripture, and it honestly does that. There is a "paper chase" after each chapter that provides specific verses for you to further explore. Included is also wonderful information on how to study scripture for yourself. This would be a great book to use in a group study as it has thought provoking discussion questions at the end of each chapter. If you are struggling with reading scripture, have lost your desire to read God's word, or need a boost of encouragement to push you deeper into Gods word, then I would highly recommend reading Storylines!

Mandy J. Hoffman says

MY REVIEW:

Storylines is a refreshing look at the Bible and the story of God's love that weaves it's way through from beginning to end. Andy and Mike explain the Bible in an overview of six stories. Their humor was fun and enjoyable and made the book feel like a relaxing conversation with friends. I appreciated the fresh look at what these six story lines mean to us here and now and how these two men use examples we can relate to in order to make it come alive in our own minds.

I would have rated this book with five stars if it hadn't been for one red flag on page 23 where it reads as if baptism plays a part in our actual salvation. It is only one sentence, but still I believe one needs to exercise discernment in reading and hence I will recommend this book but with this caution. However, the rest of the book is wonderful and gives many examples that make the Bible come to life. In fact, I also have marked several pages that grabbed my attention and helped clarify in my mind a Biblical truth.

This book is frank on matters and because of that I recommend this to only adults and older teens. While it's directness is not meant for younger readers, it will most likely help you understand the Bible in ways you have not before. *Storylines* is a cool glass of lemonade on a warm summer day!

BOOK OVERVIEW:

Across our nation, thousands upon thousands of people, especially young people, are biblically illiterate. Many give up trying to read the Bible at all—confused and intimidated by its length and complexity. In their new book, *Storylines: Exploring the Themes of the Bible* (David C Cook, March 2010), Mike Pilavachi and Andy Croft address this issue head on by providing readers with the keys to unlocking their understanding.

Intended for beginners, rather than biblical scholars, *Storylines* explores the six main themes of the Bible—Jesus, Covenant, (Divine) Presence, Kingdom, Salvation, and Worship—and takes an exciting journey into the “big pictures” of Scripture. On the way, readers will also uncover amazing truths about the Person to whom all Scriptures ultimately point.

“We believe the six major motifs we investigate in *Storylines* are the strong cords that will bind together readers’ understanding of Scripture, helping them grasp the central ideas before delving into the details,” say authors Pilavachi and Croft, leaders of the U.K.’s biggest Christian youth event, Soul Survivor. “We hope the book we’ve written will make a massive impact on readers’ lives; we know that it has deeply affected ours!”

Storylines is topped and tailed by an overview of Scripture’s content—a concise summary of the Bible in 20

pages!—and a brief history of how the Bible came to be in its present form. In between, each chapter focuses on one “thread” and closes with a “paperchase” that summarizes how that particular theme develops through Scripture. Throughout the book, readers will encounter Old Testament characters and events who anticipate the fullness that came in Christ and is being worked out in the world through the gift of the Holy Spirit to the church.

With a youth-friendly style, Storylines is a handy and much needed resource for pastors and youth leaders concerned about low biblical literacy levels in their churches and groups. Older Christians will also find it lively and refreshing as they, too, trace the threads that run through the Bible. The future sequel to Storylines, Lifelines, will be a journey through big ideas in Scripture—biblical values and life management issues such as generosity, sexual morality, and anxiety—to equip readers for living.

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Olivia Sussex says

Very interesting and clear way of looking at the Bible, p solid.

Kelley says

I would recommend this book to youth who are just discovering God’s Word and will benefit from the study of the important themes found in this book. The authors write in a way that is very conversational and makes religious terms and themes understandable and fun. I liked looking at the Word through the lens of the themes they take you through and feel like overall it is an enriching, quick read.

Hannah Joyce says

This is a really great book that covers the basics of the christian faith

Matthew Miller says

I can vividly remember a Christmas morning growing up when my parents read us the story of Jesus’ birth from Luke before we were allowed to open presents. I knew that was Christmas but it had no connection to me and I really wanted to open presents. The authors teach how to look throughout the entire Bible and to find God’s storylines, how they connect to us, now. From Old Testament to New, it’s not just nice Sunday School stories to forget but the way in which God demonstrates who He is. The authors do a good job of being readable without being shallow. The footnotes and questions for each chapter are really good too.

Jt says

fun read

MrBReads says

I write this review fresh from reading a 1-star review which complained that the book was 'patronising'...words fail me.

The first thing to say is that this book is not intended to be a purely academic, formal study of the Bible. I read it first 8 years ago as a fairly new, teenage Christian and loved it! The book reads like a Mike Pilavachi preach with the usual mix of self-deprecating (and indeed self-elevating!) tongue-in-cheek humour whilst at the same time unlocking some of the Bible's key threads. I have finished reading now partly to prepare a study for a youth group, but I found it incredibly helpful for myself! The aforementioned reviewer described this work as 'patronising' and 'hopefully intended for someone much younger than me', and yet I have found in my ten years as a Christian that the most powerful truths are most often those which in my weaker moments I can feel that I've graduated beyond. This book brings many of those 'simple' yet beautiful truths out and I can only heartily recommend it!

Jules says

An incredible book! Accessibly written without being condescending. The chapter titled "The Bible in 20 Pages" is not meant to be all encompassing, but it gives a new (and old) Christian a way to quickly place events they read or hear preached about in the meta-narrative of the Word. It then follows some major themes from the OT through to the New. Worship, Jesus, Covenant, Salvation, Presence, and Kingdom are all briefly yet satisfactorily examined. The final chapter explains how the bible was collected and canonised. It is an incredible resource for new Christians and connected a few things that I had never noticed before. I've read it twice and I'll read it again. Great gift, great tool. I would love to go through the book with new Christians. The only thing I would change is to put the last chapter (on the origin and canonisation of scripture) first, but this is minor, and there are reasons to keep it at the end.

Elaine says

Hoping this was aimed at a much younger audience than me! Patronising to say the least.

Amydeanne says

I was really expecting a chapter by chapter description of the Bible, but got something much more valuable than just facts. They present some basic information about the old and new testament but make it connect and help you realize what is there. Storylines gave me enough information to dig into my Bible without

getting lost.

I LOVE LOVE LOVE the Appendix A - The Bible in 20 pages. It was a fantastic overview for someone like myself who knows the stories, but not necessarily in order. I am not a Bible student of any means other than just learning it with God's help, so seeing it without the whole text-bookish value was a bonus for me. As well, the way it was presented is fantastic for new Christians who want to understand the Bible better and see the whole picture.

Storylines is:

Intended for beginners, rather than biblical scholars, Storylines explores the six main themes of the Bible--Jesus, Covenant, (Divine) Presence, Kingdom, Salvation, and worship--takes an exciting journey into the "big pictures" of Scripture.

Now as I've gone through Storylines, I have tears in my eyes and feel my heart rejoicing with the understanding and connection that Andy and Mike present in here. It's filled in some of the gaps of my understanding of the Bible. It was sorta like someone said to me "Helllllllllllooooo you know this! See the connection!" I totally got it! So thank you! Even someone who has loved the Lord for a long time can find joy in this book!

I totally recommend this amazing study on the Bible for those of us who are in need a more complete picture. It's meant for the average person who wants to understand more and dig a little deeper in the bible to learn the relational side of the story!

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