

## Interview Questions

### *Encountering God's Heart for You: 365 Devotions from Genesis Through Revelation*

#### **1. How did this book come about, and what's the significance of the title?**

My previous book for Bethany House is *A Woman's Guide to Reading the Bible in a Year*. It came out in late 2013, and since then it's been used by thousands of women. So Andy McGuire, the acquisitions editor for that book, asked if I would be interested in writing this one.

*Encountering God's Heart for You* contains 365 short daily devotions that take women through the Bible, from beginning to end. So throughout the course of the book, women will encounter God—who He is, what He does, how He loves—and I think it's so important for everyone to learn to read the Bible for the purpose of getting to know God. But as I say in the introduction, my prayer is that women will not only discover God's heart for them but also discover and develop their own hearts of love for Him.

#### **2. Who would you say the book is for?**

I think it's for any woman who wants to get into the Word, whether she is new to the Bible or wants to rediscover portions of the Word again. Some will read the Bible chapters each devotion comes from, and some will read only the quoted Scripture verse at the start before reading the devotion itself, and that's fine. One of my daughters happened to come over soon after I had received my advance copy of the book. When she opened it, she exclaimed, "Oh, I could do this!" She's told two friends about it, and they're planning to read through it together.

#### **3. The book is a little different from many daily devotionals. Explain the differences to us.**

- It goes straight through the Bible from beginning to end, with devotions from all 66 books of the Bible, and they're divided up according to the divisions of the Bible: the OT law, history, poetry and wisdom, and prophecy, and the NT Gospels, history, letters, and prophecy. Of course it doesn't touch on every chapter or verse of the Bible, but it does provide a clear picture of the whole story of the Bible.
- The devotions don't follow the traditional pattern—an anecdote or story, a Scripture that makes a related point, and a life application. Instead, I tried to use anecdotes and stories to introduce the teaching of the day's Bible passage. Sometimes the devotion is simply a retelling of a Bible event and a one-sentence takeaway thought. There's plenty of application too, but the real focus throughout the book is what the Bible shows us about God. I think application always flows more naturally out of knowing Him first.

#### **4. How long did it take to write, and what was the process like?**

It took nine months, and it was a challenge! I knew it would be a long process because as an editor I had worked on 365-day devotionals by others. I started by deciding how many OT and NT devotions there should be, and then roughly how many each book of the Bible should have. I went through each book and listed potential passages to use, so as I wrote I would have choices. At the start of every new Bible book, I took time to decide what the Scripture and main thought for each one would be, and I entered those into my manuscript document.

My husband had health issues about the time I was starting into the NT, and ultimately I had to request a one-month extension on my deadline, which I've never done before. I had a wonderful prayer team that kept me going with notes and encouragement too, and I could at times feel the Spirit pushing me along.

**5. How do you handle topics where Christians differ, such as the meaning of baptism or communion, women’s roles, or end-times events?**

I always try to stay close to what the words say, and sometimes I might note the cultural context. I also may acknowledge that Christians have varying views. My goal is to get women into the word; I’m not trying to promote a particular point of view.

**6. What did you personally take away from writing the book?**

I was awed, really. I learned the value of immersing yourself in Scripture, really seeking to understand. When we do that, we’re confronted by God himself. I often felt overwhelmed—by what a treasure the Bible is, by God’s plan, by the importance of obedience, by the person of Jesus Christ, by the value of the church and each believer, by the reality of life with God forever.

**7. What is your personal Scripture reading plan?**

Twenty years ago I was invited to join a group of women to read through the Bible in a year and meet weekly to discuss what we had read. From that experience I learned the value of reading daily or at least consistently, and the value of reading the whole Bible and reading whole books at one time. Like everyone, sometimes I struggle to stay in the Word daily, but I have found that I get really hungry to hear from God, to be with God, if I miss too many days.

If I’m reading through, I like to alternate OT and NT books. My adult class at church does book-by-book, chapter-by-chapter studies, so I read and think on whatever we’re studying. I also like to search out what Scripture says about topics that pop up and interest me.

**9. Any last thoughts?**

I recently read an article in a leadership journal bemoaning the fact that so many Christians aren’t spending much time with the Bible and wondering what to do about it. Several new programs were suggested as answers. But I’ve read articles just like that one for years. I also recently heard a speaker say that if we want to hear from God in the Bible, we need to give up our commonly held story about the Bible: “It’s so big, it’s so old, it’s confusing, it’s boring” . . . and on and on. I think she nailed it. Give up that story—which isn’t true anyway—and actually read the Bible! You’ll be so surprised what you discover.