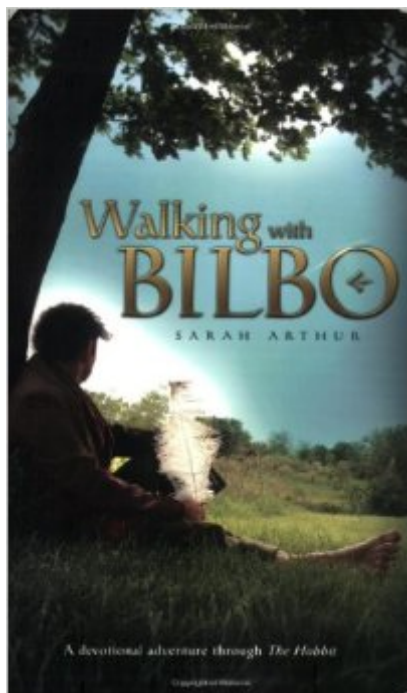


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Walking With Bilbo: A Devotional Adventure Through The Hobbit



Synopsis

2005 Logos Bookstores Award winner for Best Youth Book The author of *Walking with Frodo* takes readers on an adventure of faith with this devotional that relates themes from J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* to living the Christian life. Unlike the fateful quest Frodo was asked to carry out, Bilbo's journey came as an unexpected adventure. Readers will be reminded that God chooses us to be unlikely heroes in the adventure of life.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Walking with Bilbo, by Sarah Arthur, is a wonderful little devotional book. Arthur does a very nice job of tying themes from J.R.R. Tolkien's, *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* (LOTR) to the Bible. She has a levelheaded approach and doesn't try to force analogous ideas between Bilbo's journey and that of the Christian faith, but instead, she uses common sense and her own knowledge of Biblical stories and concepts to create this inspiring devotional. I was concerned (before reading the book) that Arthur might make dubious conclusions about Christian concepts within Tolkien's work--but she doesn't. Tolkien didn't intend for his work to be completely allegorical, and she understands that. Essentially, Arthur acknowledges that in all great stories, one can find Biblical themes. Arthur (who is an "unabashed Tolkien junkie" - to quote the back cover) simply focused on *The Hobbit* (and LOTR) to write a solid devotional. A good devotional should inspire the reader to read the Bible more, and *Walking with Bilbo* will likely do just that. What if I haven't read *The Hobbit*? Can I still enjoy *Walking with Bilbo*? It is probably not essential that one has read *The Hobbit* or *The*

Lord of the Rings to enjoy this devotional, but familiarity with the characters and events in those books will enhance one's understanding of the references to them in *Walking with Bilbo*. Although the devotional predominantly revolves around Bilbo's experiences in *The Hobbit*, Arthur references characters from LOTR as well. For example, in Chapter 3, page 24, of *Walking with Bilbo*, Arthur paraphrases a quote from LOTR. Arthur writes, "As Sam says toward the end of *The Two Towers*, no one remembers the tales in which the characters give up and turn back." Arthur analogizes Sam's (Samwise Gamgee, for those of you who haven't read LOTR or seen the movies) statement to the concept that Christian faith sometimes requires a person to not "play it safe": i.e., once you follow Jesus, "there's no going back to life as it was before" (24). Certainly, the reader could understand that concept without having read LOTR (or having seen the movies), but familiarity with LOTR adds depth to one's understanding of Arthur's discussion. So, to sum it up, one could enjoy this devotional without knowledge of *The Hobbit* and LOTR, but I think it best that one has read those books before reading *Walking with Bilbo*.

Layout of the book: There are 22 chapters, each with a different theme. It is very easy to read one chapter per day (or more), as the chapters are about 7-9 pages long. The book is less than 200 pages long, and it includes a "Quick Reference Guide" in the back for terms that are used in *The Hobbit* and LOTR. Each chapter begins with a short quote from *The Hobbit*, and then Arthur's discussion of the chapter's topic. She incorporates scripture into her discussion very well, and I found many of the devotions applicable to my life. At the end of each chapter, Arthur includes a "Going Further" section, followed by recommended scripture passages to further one's devotional time. Although I read it alone, I think *Walking with Bilbo* would make a great group devotional (especially for *Hobbit* or LOTR fans!).

Conclusion: If you are a fan of *The Hobbit* and LOTR, and you are one who believes that reading the Bible is an essential part of your Christian walk, then you will likely enjoy the devotional, *Walking with Bilbo*. It will challenge you to think more deeply about matters which concern all of us. I recommend it. ***NOTE*** In exchange for my honest review, Tyndale House Publishers provided me with a complimentary copy of the book. In no way was my receipt of the book contingent on a favorable review. My review is my own opinion.

In *Walking with Bilbo*, Sara Arthur explores the parallels between our daily Christian lives and the adventure that Gandalf invited Bilbo to take. Each chapter begins with a quote from *The Hobbit*, a relate-able story that is relevant to today and the parallel between that and Bilbo's journey, a Bible verse that relates, questions to help the reader in "going further" and a list of Scriptures that correlate to the topic of the chapter (i.e. "The Word on Accepting the Job, The Word on Being

Chosen, The Word on Being Wise in God's Eyes). I read through the first two or three chapters, just to see how they were and I really enjoyed the ability to correlate The Hobbit and Bilbo's Journey to The Bible and our Christian journey. The chapters are laid out well and I love that there are questions at the end and Scriptures to dig deeper. I think this is an excellent addition to the library of anyone (especially YOUTH) who enjoy Tolkien and The Hobbit.

I think I liked Ed Strauss' *A Hobbit Devotional: Bilbo Baggins and the Bible* better, but this one was also an excellent read and very enjoyable. Each chapter will take you 5-15 minutes to read (depending on how fast of a reader you are), and includes a bit of "Hobbit" story in (naturally) chronological order. After the story part, it goes on to an application, some questions to consider, and five or more Bible passages related to the topic. There are a total of 22 chapters. The questions are amazing (they WILL leave you thinking!). Chapter titles include (among others) "Plans Go Astray," "Help Un-looked For," "Stick to the Path," "True Identity," and "Where Your Treasure Is." The book is full of excellent writing, and I would certainly recommend it for "Hobbit" fans of both the movie and the book! **Tyndale sent me this book for free as part of the blog tour that I signed up for. I was not required to review it positively. All opinions are my own. **

With the release of Lord of the Rings years ago and the long-awaited, recent release of first in The Hobbit trilogy, author Sarah Arthur (of *Walking With Frodo* and *Walking Through the Wardrobe*) has once again taken pop cultural movies (based on classic fiction) and related it to the Christian faith. I was skeptical at first but intrigued. I've read other devotionals and studies that twist movies themes and occurrences to vaguely connect with the Christian faith but from the start *Walking with Bilbo* was different. By the third chapter (I read one a day), I was in love with this devotional. The chapters easily tie the books to Christianity but the author went well beyond the obvious and deep into The Hobbit and Lord of the Rings with vignettes about both classics and Tolkien's life and writing career. While Arthur suggest strongly that her readers should make their way through The Hobbit (at least) but even without re-reading it, a basic familiarity of the story's plot (or watching the movie) will give the reader the gist. I was incredibly intrigued by the insight the author had and the points she chose to make in comparing The Hobbit and Bilbo's story with Christianity. More than anything else, the thought-provoking questions at the end of each chapter led to further introspection rather than just pat questions often found for group discussion. It is my opinion that Sarah Arthur did her readers an amazing service in this book. She has taken us on a trip through Middle Earth and deepened our Christian faith at the same time. She has helped Tolkien fans find a common ground between

fantasy and faith and helps them find Christ in the process. This is a devotional/study guide that everyone, from women's groups to pre-teens can understand and enjoy.

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