

How You Can Take Your Bible-Reading Experience to the Next Level

“Bibles are ubiquitous. And Bible reading is in freefall.”

That’s the problem Bible publisher Paul Caminiti faced. Zondervan, where the former pastor worked, was the world’s leading Bible publisher. But research showed that despite the fact that most households had at least four Bibles, people weren’t engaging deeply with the Scriptures. In response to that research, he tells Dr. Steve Greene on a recent episode of the *Greenelines* podcast on the Charisma Podcast Network, he knew he had to do something—and he did. Caminiti, now senior director of mobilization for the Institute for Bible Reading, helped create *Immerse* (Tyndale)—a brand-new Bible-reading experience.

While still at Zondervan, Caminiti set up what his team called “the Bible bunker,” a war room of sorts. After that, he says, he and some of his colleagues took a two-year tour in which they engaged with scholars, pastors, Christian thought leaders and psychologists about people’s Bible-reading behavior.

And a conversation with author and pastor Philip Yancey put the problem in a nutshell. “The reality is, the modern church created an entire culture around Bible McNuggets and assumed they were nutritious,” Yancey told him.

The verses and chapters added through the years to make the Bible more readable, Caminiti says, are actually an artificial framework forced over the Bible that can unintentionally keep people from accessing everything God has for them there.

Caminiti’s team found multiple problems with people’s engagement with the Bible that boiled down to three main

barriers, he says. “Barrier No. 1 is we read the Bible in fragments. Barrier No. 2 is we read the Bible outside of its historic context ... But here’s the third barrier. ... We read the Bible in isolation, and Bible reading has become something of a solo sport.”

Immerse, the product that eventually resulted from all this research, prayer and consultation, was created with the idea of producing “something that was as close to the heart of the original Bible as we could,” Caminiti says. “We’re aware that people are struggling. And what we believe is that people want to do better by the Bible. There was a survey done about five years ago; people were asked, ‘What do you need most from your church?’ And 87% of them said, help me understand the Bible in depth—like 9 out of 10 people.”

For much more about *Immerse* and how this new Bible experience can take you deeper into God’s Word, listen to this entire episode of *Greenelines* here. And be sure to subscribe to the *Greenelines* podcast for more inspiring, informative stories like this one. {eoa}

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