

What if the Bible Doesn't Make Sense?

Recently, I've seen my faith shifting. Especially in how I approach the **Bible**.

There are a lot of parts of the **Bible** that just don't make sense to me. In the past, I've had the following responses:

- Avoidance—pretend it doesn't exist, hoping it will go away.
- Assume the misunderstanding was ignorance on my part.
- Make up an answer that will work with my theology.
- Hide my confusion, afraid that I might have found a flaw in my faith.
- Decide "it must be cultural" and not look for further answers.

Lately, I've been approaching those problem Scriptures differently. When something doesn't make sense to me, I own it. I think my view of God is finally big enough that I'm willing to admit that I don't always understand, and that doesn't negate His existence.

The fun thing is that when I admit my lack of understanding, I open myself up for answers. For example, there is a verse that has always confused me:

"You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you" (John 15:3, NIV).

When I looked it up to talk about it in this blog post, I discovered something interesting—"clean" in this context means "pruned," as in having all your wild and unnecessary branches cut off. This is the state a vine needs to be in regularly to bear much fruit. It is cyclical, much like our bathing rituals. So this gives so much more meaning to the next verse:

“Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.”

I have a new spiritual discipline—allowing questions. There are parts of the Bible we just don’t understand. We can easily throw them at “cultural differences” and ignore them, but I find that it is a joy to bring those questions to God and ask Him what He means. After all, there were a lot of things written that never made it into Scripture—these are the words that God passed down to us. They are here for a reason.

On a similar but separate thought, I wonder how much of our Scripture interpretation (and question avoidance) has been done through the lens of Christendom (when being a Christian was part of the political and cultural norm) that covered the Western world for nearly 2,000 years. We really do live in a world that no longer accepts the Judeo-Christian worldview as the “right” one. Today, our world looks a lot like the New Testament world. I think now is the right time to ask these questions. They won’t separate us from God or even the church, but they might help the church reach out to those who don’t know Jesus easier.

What are some of your troublesome questions from Scripture?

Kim Martinez *is a regular contributor to Ministry Today magazine’s blog. She is a writer, speaker and ministry coach. You can hear more from her at .*