

## Interview for “Beyond Adam and Eve: 50 Things You Need to Know BEFORE You Get to Heaven!” by Marion H. Williams

Today, Tyler R. Tichelaar of Reader Views is pleased to be joined by Marion H. Williams, who is here to talk about her new book “Beyond Adam and Eve.”

*Marion earned a BS in Finance from Virginia Tech and an MBA from the Columbia Business School. She was a Finance Manager for Pfizer Pharmaceuticals in New York City before moving to Georgia with her husband. They have two wonderful daughters.*

Tyler: Welcome, Marion. I’m glad you could join me today. Will you begin by telling us what made you first decide to write “Beyond Adam and Eve”?

Marion: About seven years ago I started attending a Bible study. It was really the first time that I had read the book of John in depth. We then moved on to the letters of Paul. There are so many absolutely beautiful passages in these books and I started jotting them down on 3x5 cards. I also started learning interesting things about various Biblical characters. I soon realized I really wanted my daughters to know all of this information before they reached adulthood. I was going to put my collection of scripture passages, prayers, and interesting Bible facts in a loose-leaf binder and make copies for each of my girls. This way they would have something tangible, which would hopefully help them along their journey, especially in a crisis situation. Several very sad events had occurred in our community and they reinforced how important it is to have something to turn to for comfort and strength.

It didn’t take long for me to realize I was the weakest link in my class but surprisingly many of my classmates didn’t know much more than I did about the Bible. I thought maybe other adults would also enjoy this information. One day the idea came to me of St. Peter greeting me at the gates to heaven and asking a few simple questions. I didn’t know the answers and I started to panic and the idea of putting together an entire book was born!

Tyler: I understand the book is largely in question and answer format. Will you tell us a little bit about the structure of the book and the different sections of it?

Marion: The first section is broken down into 20 questions on the Old Testament and 30 questions on the New Testament. It’s structured so that the question is on one page, allowing time to reflect on the answer before the page is turned, revealing the answer. There are about twelve more questions that cover a wide range of topics from the Bible to church traditions. Then there are two sections on Bible scripture—verses that can be memorized as well as entire passages, which anyone would find very meaningful and helpful in everyday life. I also included a chapter on some beautiful

prayers I had collected over the years. The book concludes with some review quizzes and some Bible searches.

Tyler: Why do you think people find the Bible difficult to study and will welcome “Beyond Adam and Eve”?

Marion: The Bible is a huge book to digest—just the number of pages is daunting! The material is also overwhelming and often confusing. Many of us have attempted to plow through it but in time become discouraged. My book is meant to be a fun way to get introduced to the Bible; each answer has its Biblical source listed to encourage readers to open the Bible and read the story in its original form. The chapters on scripture are meant to bring an understanding of the depth and beauty of the writings in the Bible. Just reading them should make one feel good! Hopefully readers will want to read and learn more on their own. Also, the book presents a manageable amount of information so learning about the Bible will be a successful venture rather than a frustrating one.

Tyler: Will you give us an example of a couple questions?

Marion: I find particularly interesting Question 1 from the Old Testament portion, which is “Do all Christian Bibles have the same number of Old Testament books?” Another interesting fact I learned comes from Question 21 from the New Testament section: “After Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus in the Garden, there were only 11 disciples. Did another person ever replace him?”

Tyler: Marion, what information in the book have readers told you they most appreciate?

Marion: Readers consistently tell me they appreciate the surprising facts and the insight the book provides on topics they thought they knew everything about. Many also comment on the uplifting and peaceful tone of the selected prayers and scripture passages.

Tyler: What is an example of a topic everyone thinks they know about where they are surprised to learn more?

Marion: The story of Noah has a few interesting twists. In particular, the actual dimensions for the ark are listed right in the Bible. The directions even include leaving space for air to circulate near the top of the boat. Many people are surprised at the detailed directions and at the actual size.

Tyler: How did you decide what to include in the book? Are there really 50 things? How did you decide what to leave out? What would #51 have been?

Marion: After I decided to expand my collection of stories and facts, I analyzed several topics to see if I really understood them. For instance, most of us know the story of Jesus’ birth. But do we know where to find it in the Bible? How many times is the story told? Is the story always the same? Another example would be the question on the Last Supper. Many of us know Jesus and his disciples were celebrating Passover at the Last Supper. But do we know why Passover is so important? Do we know what a Passover meal consists of? My book answers these questions and presents insights on other favorite stories and traditions of the Christian faith.

I limited the content of the book to 50 basic questions so readers would not be overwhelmed with material. The goal is to get people interested in learning more about the Bible and to have fun in the

process. There are probably thousands of details we could know but most of us don't have the time or the memory power to remember them all. But I am currently working on a sequel for the next 50 things, which will encompass some more intriguing yet basic information.

Tyler: Marion, do you have a favorite Bible scripture, or is there a passage you think is generally unknown but of great value to readers?

Marion: One of my favorites, which I believe is relatively unknown to many of us, is Hebrews 11:1, which states, "Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see." It's such a great definition. Another one, which is a wonderful reminder during difficult times, is from Philippians, Chapter 4, which states, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Tyler: Marion, I consider myself quite knowledgeable about the Bible. No one will play Bible trivia with me because I always win. Is the book limited to beginners at studying the Bible, or is there information that would be helpful to people who have already read the Bible many times?

Marion: Many of my friends who are quite knowledgeable about the Bible have read it and have told me they enjoyed quizzing themselves and were even stumped by a few questions and several of the Fun Facts. They also felt the scripture passages were a wonderful collection for daily reading.

Tyler: Has "Beyond Adam and Eve" been used by any churches or Bible study groups, and what responses have they given you?

Marion: Since the book and the curriculum were just published and only became available in November, they have not yet been used. However, several churches are planning on putting the class on their calendar for next year. A few are adult only classes and some will be a parent/child mix. In fact, the upcoming Lenten season is a good time to focus on learning about the Bible and would be a great time to offer a class. The summer would also be a wonderful opportunity for a parent/child interactive class. And, a few friends who home school their children thought the book and study guide would be a great addition to their religion studies.

Tyler: What do you think makes "Beyond Adam and Eve" stand out from the many other Bible reference books, catechisms, and Bible dictionaries that have been published?

Marion: There are four major differences that make "Beyond Adam and Eve" distinct from other Bible handbooks. One, the question and answer format offers an interactive way to learn many of these interesting facts. It's a great way to pass the time on road trips or as a family game night. Or a few questions can be read every evening before bedtime. It's not meant to be read once and put on the shelf. It's formatted so you can easily check your own memory and someone else's. Two, it contains biblical references for each question as well as for the numerous scripture passages. Hopefully this will encourage readers to open up their own Bibles and read even more. Three, prayers and scripture are included for readers to turn to as often as needed. By re-reading these chapters, one will become more and more familiar with a few of the inspirational writings in the Bible. And lastly, the book is written in a simple concise manner, which should make it enjoyable for all ages. It would make a great gift for confirmations, marriages, birthdays, and holidays such as Easter and Christmas.

Tyler: Marion, why do you feel an understanding of the Bible is so important? Even if a person is not a Christian or interested in religion, what value does the Bible contain for a reader?

Marion: From a purely secular point of view, knowing Bible stories and scripture is important to understand works of art, literature, music, and human nature. In fact, the sequel, currently in progress, touches on this very topic. There are countless pieces of artwork that are based on biblical stories, which without knowledge of are not nearly as meaningful. The same is true for numerous English phrases whose origins have biblical references, an example being “having the patience of Job.”. Insight into human nature can be gained by reading Proverbs where bits of wisdom are as helpful to today’s society as they were when they were written, thousands of years ago.

Tyler: Marion, would you mind sharing with us how studying the Bible has changed your life?

Marion: For me, I grew up being encouraged to live by the Golden Rule—that is to treat others the way that you would want to be treated. Being ethical, kind and compassionate was always stressed. We went to church fairly regularly and I have always had a strong faith in God. But I have to admit, I really had never read much of the Bible. Then, when I started studying the Bible, I began to realize its depth of wisdom and its level of detail on how to live one’s life. Reading certain passages can really bring a sense of peace and comfort regardless of how one’s day has been—whether stressful or stress-free. I never knew where the meaningful and powerful verses were; I certainly have not found all of them, but at least I have started and know where to begin to look!

Tyler: Marion, would you let our readers know more about your website and where they may purchase copies of “Beyond Adam and Eve”?

Marion: The book, which is available in hardback and soft back, and the eight-week Curriculum Guide are both available on Amazon as well as on the Barnes and Noble websites. If you would like to contact me, please do so through my website, [www.50ThingsandBeyond.com](http://www.50ThingsandBeyond.com). My website also provides 50 To Do Lists to help you efficiently manage many aspects of your life, freeing up more time to do the things you really want to do such as learning about the Bible, enjoying your family and friends, and appreciating the wonderful world around us! Thank you Tyler for taking the time to talk to me; your questions were wonderful and very insightful.

Tyler: Thank you, Marion. Before we go, will you ask us what you think is the hardest question in your book? We’ll leave it up to our readers to find the answer, rather than give it to them. Maybe they’ll go buy your book to find the answer.

Marion: Well, some questions may be challenging because the reader is familiar with the topic but cannot recall the specifics. But other questions are difficult because the reader may never have been exposed to the subject. So from that perspective, I would say the hardest question would be “What are the fruits of the Spirit and how does one receive them?”

Tyler: Thank you, Marion. That should stump at least a few people. I hope you sell lots of books over the upcoming holiday season—“Beyond Adam and Eve” should make a great Christmas present.