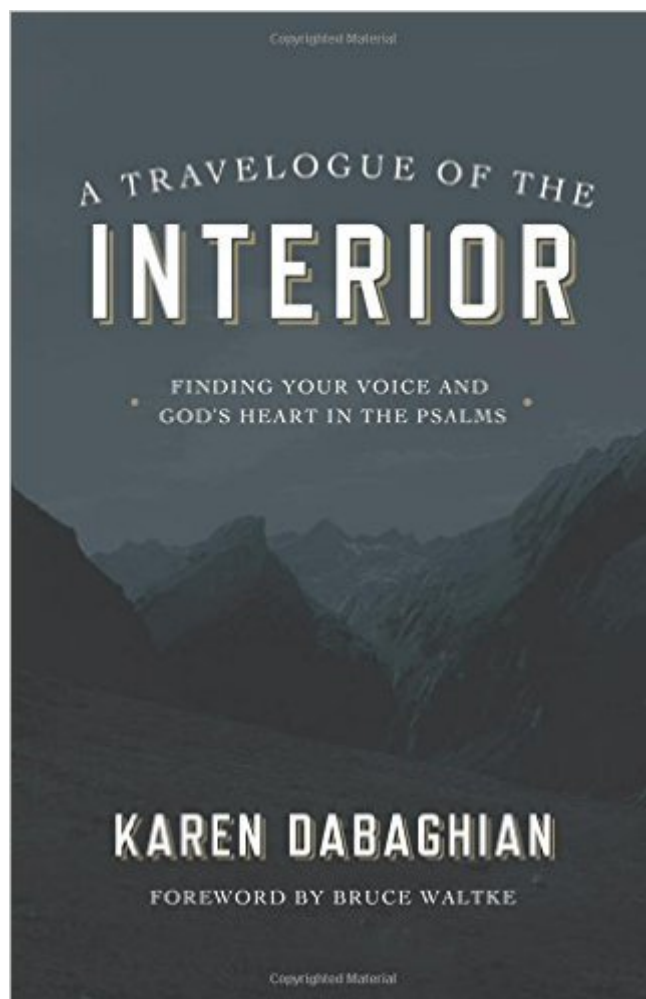


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A Travelogue Of The Interior



Synopsis

Most travel tales begin and end with the book in your hand. Not this one. As Karen Dabaghian shares the adventure of her year in the Psalms, you'll embark on an ancient journey for those hungry to know God more intimately. The Psalms were the hymnbook of the Hebrews, Jesus, and the early church. Today, we tend to pluck a verse here and there for a word of encouragement, but we have lost the Psalms as a guidebook for spiritual formation. You can rediscover the Psalms as a traveler. Explore the terrain where your interior life and the Word of God intersect. Begin speaking to God with raw honesty. Listen as God replies with personal, life-giving words. Above all, discover at the feet of the poet-king how to "taste and see that the LORD is good."

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Customer Reviews

* I received this book from the publisher via NetGalley to review. A Travelogue of the Interior was all that I had hoped for and then some. Not an amazing start to my review but straight forward if I say so myself. From what I gathered from the synopsis this book was something I knew I would glean rich and insightful spiritual gems, I was not disappointed. The author outlines the book in such a way that you are taken along for the ride in her journey but she welcomes the reader to join her in her adventure in the book of Psalms. Right from the start she invites the reader "to read a psalm a day, unpack it and write a poem in response". An invitation to join her adventure down the river of Psalms and hopefully discover yourself along the way. There are several chapters that explore subjects such as lament, sin, prayer and thirsting after God, among others. I mention these because

they spoke to me the most. Oh, and one more which explores gender and how especially women struggle with how we (and the world) view women. I constantly highlighted many sections and even added a few of my own notes. This quote really resounded within me, a section referring to being a parent: "I let them go because it is good for them, and it is good for me. I let them go because that is, after all, part of what parenting is, a daily, sometimes gut wrenching decision to entrust our children to God and teach them that they belong not to us but to God. To instruct them and then give them opportunities to discover on their own that God uniquely made them to reflect God's image in the world, that they are capable of following God wherever He leads." There were parts of the book that I related to only because I have journaled and spent the time doing the spiritual digging. I love reading books that reaffirm the journey that I often wonder if others have walked or experienced. When I do come up to similarities like my own I am both encouraged and spurred onto higher heights. I know that many people will grasp the spiritual truths and prompts while reading this book, I most certainly did. There was a moment, well, perhaps more than a moment that I almost abandoned the book. I had my spiritual feet shook a bit and I had to reassess to continue or not. I like being honest in my reviews and life and I cannot pass this up. The author has a scientific approach to creation and mentions with much obscurity and refers to "evolution" in one of her chapters. I about did an internal flip and my heart and mind starting reacting and I was having a battle with her using "that" word. After all, we all know that you don't say bomb on a plane and I couldn't help thinking of that analogy when I saw the word evolution in a Christian book no less! I promptly looked her up on the internet and was in a righteous huff while looking up her name and what the Christian community is saying about her. Truthfully I couldn't find anything other than her blog. Suffice to say, she is unclear in the book exactly what she is really trying to say about creation. I don't think she is saying that we weren't created by God and etc but I had to let it go and figure that it isn't up to me to challenge her or to get into a huff and abandon the book. It is well worth the ruffling of the feathers and truthfully I got over it. The love and genuineness of her life and walk with the Lord clearly comes through her writing and right now in my life, that is enough. My last thoughts is if we are to avoid any ideas or personal theories out there that are different from ours; we as Christians might as well stay home, never turn on our tv or turn on our computers. There are all kinds of people and certainly Christian brothers or sisters that might have an opinion or belief that differs from our own. I realized after my initial reaction and letting it go and carrying on with the book, I learned many spiritual truths in my doing so. I love when a book challenges you and then you see the Word or the Lord in a fresh and new way. That is how I felt by the time I finished the book. I plan to buy a Psalms journal and do exactly what the author did and invite the Lord along for

the ride.

Some books are best read slowly and reflectively. This is one of them. Karen Dabaghian was invited by her pastor to attend a course he was running on David's Psalms. Participants were to study them along with the corresponding narrative in 1 and 2 Samuel, then write their own poems of lament and praise in response. She expected to feel out of her depth, but it turned out to be an amazing and enlightening time of personal growth. Dabaghian is convincing in her appeal that we should all write poetry. She believes that if she can rise to the challenge, anyone can. She wishes poetry were not the 'exclusive domain of the intellectual elite', because this scares ordinary folk from believing that we too may capture the ebb and flow of our lives, if we only dare try. Each reflective chapter ends with a beautiful and heartfelt poem which almost does encourage me to have a go. Here are just a few of her interesting musings inspired by the Psalms.

- 1) She ponders the chicken and egg conundrum with regards to faith and works; which comes first? We assume that God has a master plan which we need to figure out like clues in a mystery novel, but what if the process is actually more malleable, and our perspectives and desires shape God's heart, as well as the other way around?
- 2) She challenges us to consider our motives to be sure why we even want to worship God. Is it because He gives us good things, or simply because of who He is? And she looks at the problematic aspects of using exclusively male terminology when referring to God.
- 3) If joy is the sensation we have in the presence of God, then what if the term 'worship' simply covers the spontaneous things we do in response to this. It would follow that these will be way different for everyone.
- 4) She tackles what I think of as 'the big question' stemming from what seems to be taken as a given in many Christian books. What does the prolific phrase, 'God told me...' really even mean? Since people generally agree that it's not audible conversation, could our personal feelings be signposts along the way? They seemed to be springboards for David in his writing.
- 5) Then she gets into another 'big question' about sin. Could it be hardwired into our cells and tissues, making it impossible to ever completely squelch? I took notice because I'd just finished reading a science article which told me our selfish impulses are wired into the brain. But even if this is true, isn't it what the Gospel is all about? I have to say, it's refreshing to see a Christian author tackle the sacred cow of creationism versus evolutionism, making us wonder whether it's even worth arguing about.

There were personal lessons for me too. At first as I read, I got the impression that Karen might be the sort of person I hate to find myself stuck with in small groups. Just from random remarks she made, I pictured her as the type who monopolises sessions with questions and comments while others can't wedge a word in. There's usually at least one in every crowd. I might be totally wrong here, but my

feelers were waving. Yet as I got used to her style, I came to love her depth, honesty and wisdom. Even as our methods of approach may be different we're pretty similar in many ways. Personal doubts about our own worth, depression and feelings of floundering may be common to all types of personalities, although we wouldn't believe it of others who appear to be going along just fine. I love the appreciative way she writes about her family and friends. What are my favourite parts of this book? Honest, probing quotes, such as, 'The only thing we could safely say when asked, "What would Jesus do?" is "Probably some option I'm not even considering at the moment."' Overall, the beautiful, over-arching sense of God watching over our lives, not so that He can fix what is broken, but simply because He delights in us. Kudos to Karen Dabaghian for writing this, and I hope she has more to come. Thanks to David C. Cook and Net Galley for my review copy.

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