



52 Weeks

Oscar C. Johnson

(452pp)

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52 Weeks is an instructional devotional that reflects on a variety of biblical themes.

Oscar C. Johnson's ranging devotional *52 Weeks* uses scriptural passages and edifying teachings to explicate Christian beliefs.

Organized into weekly sections, this topical book covers subjects like the meaning of sin, combating fear, and biblical views of suffering and persecution. The meaning and application of faith is also a point of focus. Daily devotions containing readings and reflections further break the subjects down, so that each topic receives seven days of focus in pursuit of deeper understanding. In total, this regimented work is designed to last for the period of a year.

In dancing between topics as diverse as overcoming prejudice, developing patience for one's self and others, and guarding against pride as it is defined by the Bible, the text proffers useful information for spiritual growth. Its handling of related scriptural verses is also strong. Still, its reflections are often more familiar and comforting than they are surprising. The audience is encouraged to be aware of God's help and to seek God's strength; they are counseled on the effects of pride and anger, as well as being told how to handle discouragement. These suggestions are amplified by reassuring notions, such as to trust God, not give in to fear, and to be humble, though these exhortations don't often move beyond faith adages—as of on the importance of showing kindness, giving grace to others, and being persistent in doing good.

In effect, the book functions like an accessible synthesis of theological perspectives. In addition to its self-improvement foci, it covers fundamentals like the Holy Trinity, resurrection, salvation, and Heaven and Hell. There are outside sources involved in some of this work, including multiple translations of the Bible. Indeed, when outside perspectives are represented, they result in some piquing material, as with that regarding trust as being fundamental to faith; on God's sovereignty and power; and about false humility that presents itself in the form of feigned submission.

Still, such widening moments are few and far between. Most of the book's reflections and opinions are personal ones, and its theological perspective sometimes seems narrow as a result. More distinguishing are notes on Johnson's scientific background, which are jumped from for involving discussions, as on the differences between scientific methods and biblical perspectives—as when Johnson contrasts the principle of Occam's razor with the faith values of discipline and persistence. Further, the passages are brief, and the book's language is direct, making individual topics accessible, if without resulting in a cohesive whole.

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EDITH WAIRIMU (May 20, 2022)

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