



The Year of Living Biblically: One Man's Humble Quest to Follow the Bible as Literally as Possible

By A. J. Jacobs

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From the bestselling author of *The Know-It-All* comes a fascinating and timely exploration of religion and the Bible. A.J. Jacobs chronicles his hilarious and thoughtful year spent obeying?as literally as possible?the tenets of the Bible.

Raised in a secular family but increasingly interested in the relevance of faith in our modern world, A.J. Jacobs decides to dive in headfirst and attempt to obey the Bible as literally as possible for one full year. He vows to follow the Ten Commandments. To be fruitful and multiply. To love his neighbor. But also to obey the hundreds of less publicized rules: to avoid wearing clothes made of mixed fibers; to play a ten-string harp; to stone adulterers.

The resulting spiritual journey is at once funny and profound, reverent and irreverent, personal and universal and will make you see history's most influential book with new eyes.

Jacobs's quest transforms his life even more radically than the year spent reading the entire Encyclopedia Britannica for *The Know-It-All*. His beard grows so unruly that he is regularly mistaken for a member of ZZ Top. He immerses himself in prayer, tends sheep in the Israeli desert, battles idolatry, and tells the absolute truth in all situations—much to his wife's chagrin.

Throughout the book, Jacobs also embeds himself in a cross-section of communities that take the Bible literally. He tours a Kentucky-based creationist museum and sings hymns with Pennsylvania Amish. He dances with Hasidic Jews in Brooklyn and does Scripture study with Jehovah's Witnesses. He discovers ancient biblical wisdom of startling relevance. And he wrestles with seemingly archaic rules that baffle the twenty-first-century brain.

Jacobs's extraordinary undertaking yields unexpected epiphanies and challenges. A book that will charm readers both secular and religious, *The Year of Living Biblically* is part Cliff Notes to the *Bible*, part memoir, and part look into worlds unimaginable. Thou shalt not be able to put it down.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Amazon Best of the Month, September 2007: Make no mistake: A.J. Jacobs is not a religious man. He describes himself as Jewish "in the same way the Olive Garden is an Italian restaurant." Yet his latest work, *The Year of Living Biblically: One Man's Humble Quest to Follow the Bible as Literally as Possible*, is an insightful and hilarious journey for readers of all faiths. Though no fatted calves were harmed in the making of this book, Jacobs chronicles 12 months living a remarkably strict Biblical life full of charity, chastity, and facial hair as impressive as anything found in *The Lord of the Rings*. Through it all, he manages to brilliantly keep things light, while avoiding the sinful eye of judgment. --Dave Callanan

Amazon.com

Subtitled: "One Man's Humble Quest to Follow the Bible as Literally as Possible," Jacobs, or A.J., as his two-year-old son calls him, does just that. It is likely that no one *but* A.J. Jacobs could have accomplished such a feat. After all, his last book, *The Know-It-All*, chronicles his reading of the entire *Encyclopedia Britannica*, from A to Z. No one but a smart, witty, self-deprecating, nitpicky kinda guy would undertake two such daunting tasks, and complete them with grace, no pun intended.

Jacobs, a New York Jewish agnostic, decides to follow the laws and rules of the Bible, beginning with the Old Testament, for one year. (He actually adds some bonus days and makes it a 381-day year.) He starts by growing a beard and we are with him through every itchy moment. Jacobs is borderline OCD, at least as he describes himself; obsessing over possible dangers to his son, germs, literal interpretation of Bible verses, etc. He enlists the aid of counselors along the way; Jewish rabbis, Christians of every stripe, friends and neighbors.

In an open-minded way he also visits with atheists, Evangelicals Concerned (a gay group), Jerry Falwell, snake handlers, Red Letter Christians--those who adhere to the red letters in the Bible, those words spoken by Jesus Himself, and even takes a trip to Israel and meets Samaritans. Through it all, he keeps a healthy skepticism, but continues to pray and is open to the flowering of real faith. Jacobs is a knowledge junky, to be sure. He enjoys the lore he picks up along the way as much as any other aspect of his experiment. One of the ongoing schticks is his meeting with the shatnez tester, Mr. Berkowitz. He is the one who determines whether or not your clothes are made of mixed fibers, in keeping with the Biblical injunction not to wear wool and linen together. The two become friends and prayer partners, in only one of the unexpected results of this year.

In the end, he says, "I'm now a reverent agnostic. Which isn't an oxymoron, I swear. I now believe that whether or not there's a God, there is such a thing as sacredness. Life is sacred." Not a bad outcome. --Valerie Ryan

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. What would it require for a person to live *all* the commandments of the Bible for an entire year? That is the question that animates this hilarious, quixotic, thought-provoking memoir from Jacobs (*The Know-It-All*). He didn't just keep the Bible's better-known moral laws (being honest, tithing to charity and trying to curb his lust), but also the obscure and unfathomable ones: not mixing wool with linen in his clothing; calling the days of the week by their ordinal numbers to avoid voicing the names of pagan gods; trying his hand at a 10-string harp; growing a ZZ Top beard; eating crickets; and paying the babysitter in

cash at the end of each work day. (He considered some rules, such as killing magicians, too legally questionable to uphold.) In his attempts at living the Bible to the letter, Jacobs hits the road in highly entertaining fashion to meet other literalists, including Samaritans in Israel, snake handlers in Appalachia, Amish in Lancaster County, Pa., and biblical creationists in Kentucky. Throughout his journey, Jacobs comes across as a generous and thoughtful (and, yes, slightly neurotic) participant observer, lacing his story with absurdly funny cultural commentary as well as nuanced insights into the impossible task of biblical literalism. (*Oct.*)

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From [Bookmarks Magazine](#)

A. J. Jacobs, an editor at large for *Esquire* and author of the best-selling *The Know-It-All: One Man's Humble Quest to Be the Smartest Person in the World* (**1/2 Jan/Feb 2005), the book that required him to read the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* from A to Z, has a reputation as a "stunt journalist." In his latest effort, he offers a timely and, for the most part, engaging (if occasionally jumpy) memoir of his attempt at "living biblically." Critics enjoyed the book more for the humor inherent in the situations that Jacobs creates (think of him as a low-key Borat on a sort of spiritual pilgrimage) than any epiphany that comes of those experiences during his year-long quest. In sum, *Year* is entertaining, though maybe not the book for readers who want to see such a transformation recounted with the fervor of the true believer.

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Myrtle Anderson:

This book untitled *The Year of Living Biblically: One Man's Humble Quest to Follow the Bible as Literally as Possible* to be one of several books which best seller in this year, here is because when you read this reserve you can get a lot of benefit in it. You will easily to buy that book in the book store or you can order it by using online. The publisher in this book sells the e-book too. It makes you quicker to read this book, because you can read this book in your Smartphone. So there is no reason to your account to past this publication from your list.

Hope Giles:

In this period of time globalization it is important to someone to get information. The information will make anyone to understand the condition of the world. The healthiness of the world makes the information simpler to share. You can find a lot of recommendations to get information example: internet, classifieds, book, and soon. You will see that now, a lot of publisher that print many kinds of book. The actual book that recommended for your requirements is *The Year of Living Biblically: One Man's Humble Quest to Follow the Bible as Literally as Possible* this publication consist a lot of the information on the condition of this world now. This particular book was represented just how can the world has grown up. The vocabulary styles that writer make usage of to explain it is easy to understand. The particular writer made some study when he makes this book. This is why this book acceptable all of you.

Donald Wexler:

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