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### Engage With Scripture in a Whole New Way

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# Engage With Scripture in a Whole New Way

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What's the difference between studying the Bible and engaging with it? With the upcoming release of the Abide Bible, Taylor University professors Dr. Phil Collins and Dr. Steve Bird, along with 33 other Taylor-connected contributors, want to show that connecting with Scripture on a deeper level can make all the difference in your spiritual walk.

## The Vine and the Branches

The concept for the Abide Bible sprouted from the [Taylor University Center for Scripture Engagement](#). Run by Collins and Bird, the Center promotes active spiritual growth through engagement with the Bible and studies ways to make scripture engagement a more prominent part of our lives.

Almost three years ago, a representative from [Thomas Nelson publishers](#) approached Collins about the possibility of collaborating on the publication of a special Bible that would focus on specific techniques to help readers engage with Scripture in unique ways. After many God-given meetings and encounters with industry professionals, that project is now a reality. The [Abide Bible is available for pre-order now](#), with an April 7 release date.

Studies have shown that most Christians struggle to apply what they read in the Bible to their daily lives. According to Collins, reading the Bible alone does not tend to bring about change in a person's life. "The core to our growing spiritually is by reflecting on Scripture. Reading just doesn't do it. It's the process of reflecting—dwelling, meditating, slowing down and reflecting. That's where we meet Christ. Nothing else impacts our growth like that."

"The problem is, even though we're told that the way we grow as a Christian is to pray and read your Bible, we're not taught how to do it in a way that brings about transformation," he said.

Based on Jesus' words in John 15 where He speaks of abiding in Him so that He may abide in us, the primary goal of the Abide Bible is to help readers abide in Christ by learning to engage with Scripture. The Abide Bible utilizes five techniques to help readers deepen their understanding and experience of Scripture, including journaling, praying, contemplating, picturing, and connecting with works of art that illustrate a story or passage. Each technique gives readers the opportunity to slow down, absorb sensory details, and engage with the context of the passage.

## A Community Effort

These engagement tools are presented as sidebars in the biblical text, with short blurbs explaining each method as it applies to the passage on hand. This may sound similar to a study Bible, but Dr. Greg MaGee, associate professor of [Biblical Studies](#) and contributor to the Abide Bible, says otherwise. "The fact that you have sidebars and extra materials is familiar from study Bibles, but the type of sidebar and extra material are very distinct ... not just intellectual engagement and understanding, but really spiritual engagement and communion with God as you engage with Scripture. That's the focus."

In total, Collins and his team wrote around 2,500 of these entries that appear throughout the Bible. The volume of work required for this undertaking called for a large team of willing writers knowledgeable in Scripture to help bring it to life. Collins reached out to 33 fellow Taylor faculty and staff, retired professors, alumni, and even current students, all of whom responded with enthusiasm.

In addition to the 2,500 engagement sidebars, the authors worked on introductory material for each book of the Bible as well as a section explaining the concept and ideas behind Scripture engagement and how it relates to the Abide Bible.

One of the highlights of the Abide Bible are the 80 works of historical Christian art selected by Taylor art adjunct Susan Nace. These images are intended to provide a visual connection to the events in the corresponding passage. This allows readers to truly see what is going on, bringing out details which can help strengthen their understanding of the passage and connect it to their own lives.

Thanks to the hard work of each contributor, the Abide Bible is now available in the New King James Version. It will also be printed in July in the New English Translation, with plans for more versions to be produced in the future.

# Changing Lives Verse by Verse

MaGee feels the Abide Bible is an important addition to the ever-growing list of different types of Bibles. Its sole focus on Scripture engagement makes the Abide Bible distinct among the masses. “I think we all hope it’s just something that really helps people read the Bible in a new way,” he said. “It’ll help us be less rushed, less superficial, less academic. We hope it will reignite some excitement about studying the Bible and get people out of the rut they’re in, or maybe just help them get into a routine to begin with.”

The Abide Bible is a beautiful undertaking covered in God's fingerprints. From chance meetings with the right people at the right times to the amount of enthusiasm and interest from all of the contributors, it is clear the Abide Bible is a special project destined to change lives. No matter the financial success or sales numbers of the Bible, Collins and his team are proud to have created a tool to help fellow believers around the world engage deeply with the life-changing power of Scripture.



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