



Scouting the Divine: My Search for God in Wine, Wool, and Wild Honey

Margaret Feinberg

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A Bible full of ancient truths. A woman living a modern life. Join critically acclaimed author Margaret Feinberg as she invites readers on the spiritual adventure of a lifetime. In her quest to better understand what God wants to communicate through the Bible, Feinberg explores the symbols and metaphors within its stories. To discover these deeper meanings, she spends time with a shepherdess in Oregon, walks the fields with a farmer in Nebraska, explores a vineyard of California, and talks with a veteran beekeeper in Colorado. Along the way, she gains deeper insight about how Scripture applies to life today and discovers answers to puzzling questions. Do sheep really know their shepherd's voice? How often does a grapevine need to be pruned? What does it mean when a land is described as overflowing with honey? Feinberg, a popular author and speaker, was named one of the 'Thirty Emerging Voices' of Christian leaders under forty who will lead the church in the next decade, and one of the 'Forty under Forty' who will shape Christian publishing.

Scouting the Divine: My Search for God in Wine, Wool, and Wild Honey Details

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From Reader Review Scouting the Divine: My Search for God in Wine, Wool, and Wild Honey for online ebook

Bethany says

This book was an enjoyable read about the author's adventures throughout the US in places like Alaska, Colorado, and Nebraska as she explored the richness of the Bible's parables, metaphors, and historical events that reference the agrarian culture God's people lived in. For the vast majority of the Western world today, we live in societies that have no context or appreciation for the lessons and beauty of Scripture.

As the book's description puts it, how can we understand a land overflowing w/ honey if we buy our honey in a bear-shaped bottle at the grocery store? Or how do we appreciate what Jesus said about Him being the Good Shepard when our only exposure to them is at the local petting zoo, or how do we make sense of abiding in the vine and bear good fruit when we buy grapes from the store? As a Westerner who grew up in the mean suburbs of Orange County, CA, I can appreciate Feinberg's curiosity about missing the richness of Scripture by not having a context for it. Thankfully, she does the work of traveling and finding the experts to help her understand and unpack these biblical truths.

The book starts off with Feinberg's visit to a shepherding farm, where the bulk of the richness of Scripture's agrarian themes are explained in depth here. For me, this was the most enjoyable part of the book. I will probably update this review w/ some excerpts that I found beautiful as Jesus's role as the Good Shepard is poignantly and richly explained.

Feinberg eventually moves onto exploring farming and then heads to a beekeeper's farm, ending her trip to wine country in Napa Valley at a winery. As someone who spent some time at a few wineries on a tour last year in Sonoma County (just next to Napa), I enjoyed the additional insight she had into explaining the wine-making process. You'll gain deep appreciation for the industry when you find out that it usually takes at least 8 years for the planting of a seed to the bottle and the deep, strategic, endurance of a wine-maker, symbolizing the love God has for us, enduring w/ us through our journeys of the seasons of our lives.

The beginning of the book seems to be a stronger and better written portion of the book, but it's an easy read and helps you to be more thoughtful and appreciative of the God that loves us and His Son who leads us. Recommend.

Willie Krischke says

Margaret Feinberg visits a shepherdess, a beekeeper, a farmer and a vintner to understand the symbolism and references in the Bible. Feinberg really did her homework on this one; she is able to approach each of the "experts" with a list of good questions and emerge with productive, insightful conversations. It is surprising to realize how out of touch we are with the agrarian world in which the Bible was written; the depth and richness of its metaphors are mostly lost on us. It makes me wonder what the Bible would sound like if it were written today. Poetic metaphors about Facebook and Interstates, perhaps?

Feinberg's prose style can be overexuberant at times; she likes to chronicle what everyone was wearing, how their houses are decorated, and what they order at fast food restaurants, as well as peppering the text with phrases like "I could resist," "I found myself drawn to" and "I fell in love with," all of which invites the reader to skim. She moves sometimes with abrupt speed from unnecessary details to deep conversations about spiritual things, so don't skim too fast, however.

Of the four interviews, my favorite was the shepherdess. It feels like Feinberg moves more easily into spiritual insight, and is able to stay in that realm longer in that chapter. The revelation about giving God our best, not our most or biggest, is what I will remember about this book for years to come.

Robin O'Brien says

Wonderful book for Christians to read. A personal look at many of the trades referenced in the Bible. I now do and will continue to understand the Bible on a deeper level. My hat goes to this author who personally went to the location of these people and observed them and allowed them to speak from their hearts. Thank you Margaret Feinberg, her husband and all those who welcomed her into their lives allowing her to write a deeply, insightful book.

Denise Ballentine says

A thoughtful gentle read exploring the biblical motifs of shepherding, harvesting, honey, and wine. I enjoyed being taken along on her personal scouting journeys, and her thoughts about how these things were related to biblical times. She has a way of storytelling that helps us understand the meanings God was trying to convey to us.

Nicole says

Feinberg takes us on her journey to discover deeper meaning in the Bible through better understanding vineyards, shepherds, farmers, and bee keepers-- and their relationship with their vines, sheep, crops, and bees. There are four sections, and if I had my own copy of this book I would read one section at the beginning of each season. Not because they represent each season, but to spread out the analogies so I can read more slowly and savor the impact of each.

She includes a set of songs in the back of the book as a soundtrack to each section. I haven't listened to them yet, but I look forward to it.

Celia says

Insightful read that is beautifully written. Love how the author has taken what had to be an immense amount of learning and shared the most precious parts with the reader in a way that left me fascinated and delighted.

Sarah says

I'm maybe 2/3 of the way through, and I'm not going to finish. It's too bad b/c I really love the concept of the book, but it's just poorly executed. It's sloppy. Bummer.

Kathy Bailey says

A delightful book with insightful information on sheep, honey and wine that gives deeper meaning to mentions in the Bible.

Paul McDonald says

While a different flavor than some of Margaret's other books like Wonderstruck or Fight Back with Joy, Scouting the Divine invites you to join her on a pilgrimage. Our world is disconnected from the agrarian society of Biblical times, and Margaret takes us with her on her journey to understand the Bible better. How do shepherds care for their sheep? What can we learn from vintners about our own lives? What do bees have to teach us about the Promised Land? Scouting the Divine was like listening in to a relaxing conversation on a back porch, and I'm thankful Margaret took us along,

Amanda says

A very neat look at the Bible from a modern agricultural viewpoint. It's so true that we have very little personal experience with some of the agrarian references in the Bible and considering them makes the stories and promises that much more colorful and impactful. I've listened to a few author as narrator audio books I disliked, but Margaret is perfect for telling this personal narrative in her own voice.

Ana Cray says

I learned so much from reading this book!! Highly recommend!!

Lexi says

tried to read. too many adjectives.

Gary says

Wow Margaret Feinberg is a great writer. Her colorful and poetic descriptions of travels she made writing the book are truly delightful. Sometimes she describes the food she is going to eat and it makes me salivate. She has a wonderful gift to take parts of the world I have ignored and brought it to life. She visits a sheep herder, farmer, bee keeper, and a wine maker and brings a deeper understanding of their labor as it reflects on God. I look forward to reading more of her works.

Brian Christensen says

A great book weaving knowledge of wine, wool, harvest and honey with the images of those in scriptures. Plenty of insight into several passages that use those as a way to convey a spiritual truth.

Amy says

I loved this book. I rarely read non-fiction because I find a lot of it tedious. This book was far from tedious. The information was fresh and so interesting. I especially enjoyed the chapters on shepherding and winemaking. Feinberg does an amazing job of drawing parallels between the everyday responsibilities of these vocations and what is in scripture regarding them. I found that scripture that I have read many times suddenly came to life with new meaning for me.
