LIFE APPLICATION BIBLE STUDIES: JOHN

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Category: Reviews

Tyndale have produced an interesting set of Bible Study notes based on the New Living Translation and I've been casting my eye over the volume for the Gospel of John. As far as I can tell, these guides are not yet available in the UK, but you can order them from the Tyndale Website.

These are not scholarly or academic Bible studies and scholars and academics may be inclined to shoot them full of holes, but that's what scholars and academics do. From my perspective, this is an excellent group Bible study guide for the Gospel of John. It will give people plenty to think about and the questions for group and individual reflection are well thought through.

The first section of the book is the Text of John in the NLT with notes from the Life Application Study Bible. Regular readers of this blog will know that the NLT is my favourite translation for Bible reading. I like the idea of having the text of Scripture and notes in the guidebook. All too often in group Bible studies one individual turns up with a big authoratative translation with lots of notes and proceeds to dominate the discussion by pointing out interesting and obscure differences between the texts. There is a place for discussion of translation differences, but in a group Bible study, the idea is to hear what God is saying in the here and now. Having everyone working from the same text and with shared notes is, to my mind, excellent.

The notes Life Application Study Bible notes are a mixed bunch, some I found very helpful, others less so - but a book of this sort is never going to keep everyone happy. You would not want this as your only commentary on the Bible, but for the most it works well for the market it is aimed at.

The second half of the book is a series of thirteen Bible studies with questions and space to write your answers. I think these would make excellent group studies though I'm not quite conviced that they would work so well for an individual. If an individual was to study John, I'd want to see them use a couple of translations and perhaps a more detailed commentary (John: An Introduction and Commentary (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries), for example).

If I were leading a home group that was studying a New Testament book and if these guides were available in the UK, I wouldn't hesitate to order a bunch of them.