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Is That Really Jesus Calling? How the Subjectivity of Sarah Young Draws People from Scripture

by J. Greg Sheryl

In 2004, Thomas Nelson published a devotional book titled *Jesus Calling*.¹ The book consists of daily devotionals, in the purported “words of Jesus” Himself, as perceived through a contemporary “listener” Sarah Young. Each devotional includes Scripture references below the day’s “words from Jesus.”

Jesus Calling has several companion volumes, such as *Jesus Calling, Women’s Edition*; *Jesus Calling, Teen Edition*; and *Jesus Calling: A 365-Day Journaling Devotional*. All three of these are the same book as the original devotional, despite different titles. There is also *Jesus Calling - 365 Day Perpetual Calendar*; *Jesus Calling: Devotions for Kids*; *Jesus Calling Bible Storybook*; and a *Jesus Calling Devotional Bible*.² Young has also written two other adult devotional books: *Jesus Lives*,³ marketed as “A Companion to *Jesus Calling*,”⁴ and *Jesus Today*.⁵

Christian musicians Sheila Walsh and Matthew West have endorsed

Jesus Calling.⁶ There is a *Songs Inspired by Jesus Calling* CD featuring 12 performances by contemporary Christian musicians. Another CD, *Jesus Calling:*

Instrumental Songs for Devotion, features instrumental arrangements of 10 contemporary Christian songs.

The *Jesus Calling Devotional Bible* includes devotional selections from both *Jesus Calling* and from *Jesus Lives*. A subsequent devotional book, *Dear Jesus*⁷ also borrows from the earlier *Jesus Calling*.⁸

Although *Jesus Calling* simply gave some Scripture references at the end of each day’s devotion which might be suggested by the devotional message for that day, her subsequent three books provide both the Scripture text and references at the end of each devotional.

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