



# Confessions of a Prodigal Daughter

*Sarahbeth Caplin*

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In a bittersweet twist of fate, I started out “too Jewish” for my Catholic friends in elementary school, but not Jewish enough for the kids I met at summer camp, with their youth group logos and wristbands. In Israel, I didn’t feel I had the right to call myself Jewish at all. Now I was too Christian for Jews everywhere, but still too Jewish to completely fit in with my new bible study friends.

In my most pessimistic moments, I wonder if I’ll never fit in anywhere, with anyone. It’s interesting because Christians are called to be pariahs, to go against the ways of this world. But I am a special kind of pariah.

## Confessions of a Prodigal Daughter Details

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## From Reader Review Confessions of a Prodigal Daughter for online ebook

### Sarah Anne Carter says

“He’s unique, this Jesus. And God willing, I will continue pursuing him until the end, no matter how difficult it gets.”

Confessions of a Prodigal Daughter is a memoir of a woman who grew up in a Jewish home but felt the appeal of Christianity in college. The journey to Christianity was long and had many bumps in the road. The book shows the true struggle that she faced both internally and in her relationships.

The author asked me to review this book through my blog. The synopsis of Confessions of a Prodigal Daughter sounded interesting and I agreed to receive the book in exchange for a fair review.

Growing up in a Jewish home, Sarah followed some of the rules, but she wasn’t expected to be a perfect Jew. Every once in a while, she would have a cheeseburger and would feel guilty, but would still do it. She had friends who were Christians, so she knew some of what they believed. She bristled when people would wish her a “Merry Christmas” since they didn’t celebrate Christmas. In college, she meets people, including a boyfriend, who start showing her authentic Christianity and she eventually finds herself converting. It’s not a simple process, though, because she feels she can’t tell her family or Jewish friends.

I found this book very interesting. Sarahbeth (her new name after becoming a Christian) is very honest in her internal struggles converting from Judaism to Christianity. This book is for any adult who enjoys memoirs, especially people of faith or are interested in faith.

Read more here: <http://sarahannecarter.com/confession...>

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### CJ Scurria says

A young female torn between two different worlds: The Hebrew culture life she grew up in and the "Christian" one. This book describes the true journey of that woman and how she became a Modern Jewish person that believes in Jesus.

Contained in this book is a personal memoir of a wonderful story. To read of how she had grown always wondering about that other life that she one day turned to and believed in the savior is very encouraging. Not only does this book tell her life but very profound messages about the everyday believer as well.

While the life of being a believer is not perfect, Sarahbeth points out that we must always look to the one that has our life in His hands and depend on Him. To always look for truth and be a "real Christian" not one that just goes to church every week to consider that is all to this life.

She also challenges that we must also look back to the roots of our faith, where it all began during the time of Jesus. When the word "Christian" did not exist and the people (who were Jewish including Jesus) had to go through great trials and experience things that many of us can only imagine or even wish for.

This book is very well-written and is a story that must be read. Though I personally believe that only mature teens should read it this is a tale that has to be told. This book presents to us a need that we must all have.

That we must be like the disciples of Jesus. Ones who followed Jesus by living selflessly, confessing and repenting, and be like outcasts to the world's ways. While Sarahbeth's story is special we have each a calling to this life.

As the book puts it, "Christians are called to be pariahs, to go against the ways of this world. But (she) is a special kind of pariah."

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### **Lu Ann says**

Sarabeth was raised Jewish all her life... albeit not strictly Jewish. She had experiences in her young life which made her want to avoid Christians. She held little regard for them. However, she attended public schools so was exposed to many Christian attitudes and traditions.

She decided at seventeen she would become a Jewish Rabbi and was determined to do so even into college. During her college years she had experiences which led her to question her Jewish faith.

This is a works of Sarabeth and her testimony and musings of her life in High School and College that led to the biggest change in her life ever.

She ends her story at her life at the present time.

The questions and challenges she has experienced can be an inspiration to others. It can also cause Christians to question, "Am I truly a Christian?"

"Do I strive to live my life as Christ did His?"

"Through my words and actions, do I strive to lead others to Christ or do I cause them to turn away?"

I found her memoir interesting and perhaps it is because I truly find others lives and experiences memorable. I truly care about my fellow being.

Either way, many of us will benefit fro reading this book.

This was given me by the author for an honest book review, of which I have given.

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### **Natacha Guyot says**

It was difficult to put this book down before reaching the end. I loved it. I had wanted to read it for a long time and it went beyond my expectations. My spiritual path isn't the same as the author's but a lot of her experiences resonate with me. I like how Sarabeth talks about the questioning and the doubt that can happen. Her style is very compelling. I highly recommend this book!

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## **Heather Huffman says**

I can't say enough about this book or the author's writing style. You don't realize you're reading; you're just sucked in. Sarabeth writes with a refreshing honesty. She is keenly observant and her honesty is unwavering, whether she's talking about her first god being her hair, her first kiss, or the suicide death of a friend.

One of my favorite lines from the book: "I believed that heaven was real, and hell was for Hitler."

And just a page later: "Part of me thought how foolish to think I knew everything when I was barely old enough to vote. The other part of me longs to remember what that kind of certainty feels like." I can identify with that. And really, that's what I love so much about this book. For someone who feels so alone in her journey, I can identify with her journey of faith. Sure, mine came from a different angle, but I still felt a connection with this writer and the path she'd walked. And the aspects of her journey that I didn't share made me think about my own in a new light.

Whatever your faith, I highly recommend this book. It's an excellent read by a likable and talented author. I will definitely be checking out her fiction work in the near future.

\*I was offered a free copy of this book in exchange for an honest review. It in no way affected my opinion. I'll be gladly purchasing her other books now!

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## **R.M. Green says**

Sarabeth Caplin has written a very thought-provoking, poignant and honest account of her journey from the religion of her Jewish heritage to becoming a heartfelt follower of Jesus Christ in her book, 'CONFESSIONS OF A PRODIGAL DAUGHTER'. She describes fully the stress that was brought upon her by her Jewish family, her overwhelmingly Catholic community and her Jewish and Christian friends alike, and she writes in such a way that she enables you to feel both her joy - and her pain.

I could definitely relate to her struggles, as I went through a similar journey seeking a 'faith that I could feel' of sorts. In my own life I was raised Baptist, I dabbled in the Muslim and Yoruba religions rooted in Africa, as well as Catholicism until The Lord led me to my non-denominational Christian beliefs I hold dear today, therefore I could definitely relate to her experiences of rejection and/or intolerance very well. Ms. Caplin takes you by the hand and walks you through each stage of her journey, allowing you to not only see how God nudged her along, but how He worked in her life to make it all possible, much like putting together the pieces of an immense puzzle. The timeline threw me off a little at times as she referred to things and people spoken of previously, but all in all, a very well presented and interesting read. I also learned a lot about the Jewish culture and rituals, and how the Jewish religion and Christianity really go hand-in-hand more than most realize, and I appreciate this knowledge to the fullest.

Bravo, Ms. Caplin!

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## **Linda Caddick says**

ENJOYABLE INSIDE STORY OF FAITH AND CONFLICT

This is the story of Sarahbeth's personal spiritual journey, candidly told in a way that keeps you reading on as you follow her struggles to merge her Jewish upbringing with her belief in Jesus as the Messiah. Her confrontational manner shouts from the pages, bringing the Jewish trait 'chutzpah' immediately to mind. Keenly critical of 'Christianeze' – the sugary terminology so prevalent among Christians, as well as of the abrasive way Christianity is often presented, she is equally scathing at times of the faith she grew up with, yet always remaining fiercely protective of her Jewish heritage. She is not so much caught in the middle as 'having one foot permanently in both worlds' as she puts it.

This book provides interesting insights into Jewish family life, which gentile Christians will surely find fascinating, given that we are 'joined at the hip' with our Jewish brethren. Though Sarahbeth resolves many of her issues as her testimony progresses and an emerging spiritual maturity is evident, she remains caught in the tension of her dual allegiance.

She writes in a casual, conversational style which makes for relaxing reading, with frequent flashes of humour lightening even the darkest of her days. Her honesty is engaging and by the end of the book one knows her quite well and cannot help liking her.

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### **Erik McManus says**

Honestly, I wasn't a big fan of this one. It was basically a 140 some page testimony. Nothing against a religion of any sort, this book just could not hold my attention. The author had an interesting time discovering her thirst for more when it came to Jesus and being a Jewish Christian and it was hard for her because she was raised as a Jew. The whole time she is talking about her journey, she is so worried about what her family will think when they find out that she is converting to Christian.

Her writing style was funny at parts because it would read as if she is making a sarcastic joke to you but it wasn't enough to save the whole story for me.

There was one line that I did really like.

It would hurt, but isn't it always better to be disliked for who you are than loved for who you are not?

This is a wonderful message to give people. You should never hide who you are to feel loved. This was one of her hard-hitting truths that she stuck by when she told her parents about her conversion.

I think I would recommend this book to someone who is interested in hearing more about other people's religious testimonies. It wasn't my style of book but I took a shot and read it anyway.

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### **John Dizon says**

*Confessions of a Prodigal Daughter* by Sarahbeth Caplin is an autobiographical story of a personal journey of a Jewish girl irresistibly drawn into the Christian faith. She describes her feelings towards Jesus as those towards the 'bad boy' her parents warned her to stay away from. After her 'coming of age' Bat Mitzvah ceremony, she is filled with turmoil while living near a Catholic community whose cultural influences strongly conflict with her own. Christmas becomes a time of conflict as the commercial overdrive and the Scriptural interpretations cause more dissonance than any other time of year. Yet it sets the author on a

journey that hundreds of thousands of Jews and non-believers alike will be able to learn from.

Caplin's estrangement from Judaism was a gradual process through which she sought to broaden her horizons as a young woman. At first it was over the dating game, becoming romantically attracted to those of other faiths. Next it was the realization that Orthodox fundamentalists would not allow her to become a teacher (rabbi), causing her to switch to the Reformed sect (which she considered 'cafeteria' Judaism). After trips to the Holy Land and upon graduating high school, she remained torn between her loyalties to her people and her growing knowledge of the Truth of Christ. Finally her experiences at the Jewish Student Center at the Hebrew Union college was where she finally came to a spiritual crossroads.

The Epistles point out that the things of God are meant to confound the wise, and this appears to be the keynote that resonates throughout the author's narrative. The Talmud is an enormous lexicon that provides legal definitions of the teachings of the Torah, and they are mirrored by the Catholic catechisms and the great libraries of texts that define that faith. When Jesus admonishes the Teachers of Law, He vents His anger on those who makes the rules and regulations too great for followers to abide by. Most of those who reject Christ are stymied by the miracles that cannot be explained by logic or science. It is the leap of faith that brings us into Jesus' embrace, and Caplin's testimonio is all about making that leap and having no regrets thereafter.

*Confessions of a Prodigal Daughter* by Sarahbeth Caplin is an essential tale of one woman's search for truth and refusal to buckle under the status quo. For fellow believers and doubters alike, as well as women's literature readers alike, this is one you won't want to miss.

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## **Leila Tualla says**

Ever get the feeling that some serendipitous moments are more divine interventions? Or maybe that's me. I've been "chasing" Jesus almost my whole life. I've read every book in the New Testament, and managed only to make it through Numbers in the Old Testament. When I look back to my past for reflections, I can pinpoint where I felt Him the most, and the days where my doubts and fears won me over.

It's a bit - and I'll use the word, weird here, as I have no other words right now - weird to read someone else's musings and simultaneously say, "that's me," and "that's so not me." I read *Confessions* in one sitting and Sarahbeth is witty, and honest, and incredibly curious about her faith - both her place in Judaism and her eventual path to Christianity.

I suppose if I was born Jewish, with the same fervor in finding Christ, I would have penned almost exactly this story. Except, I'm not. Growing up in the Philippines, you were either Catholic or a Muslim. I remember being introduced to a few Baptists when I moved to Texas. As an adolescent girl who wanted to fit in, I noticed that most of my counterparts were Southern Baptists. I wasn't a "Christian." Because of my ignorance - you were either a Christian (Baptists) or not - I deflated anything Catholic related. I remember in college being 'saved.' Nevermind, that I had grown up in the Church, did the religious classes for communion, and confirmation - rite of passages for a Catholic kid. Also, glaring obvious that I've pointed out to several Southern Baptists who have tried to convert me, that I didn't realize that there were two Jesus Christs in history. She counterpointed by saying, I'm not a true Catholic then, if I didn't know the names to ALL the Saints.....There are thousands, let me tell you, and I promise not knowing all of them is not a basis to determine if you're a "good Catholic" or a "bad Catholic."

I know nothing about my faith. I still equate my collegiate year in 2004 as the moment I felt at peace with the

world and my place in it. It's funny that Sarahbeth said her literal "come to Jesus" moment happened on the bathroom floor of her dormitory. Mine was on a stairwell, bottom floor of my dorm, overlooking the campus gym. Not exactly the perfect setting for both of us to begin our spiritual journey. I also remember the hypocrisy of Evangelicals and the "Christian" culture. I felt the pull of being torn. That no matter what I do, how many questions I ask, I will never be good enough to warrant a place at His table.

I'm digressing. This story isn't about my walk in faith. It's Sarahbeth's. But I feel so connected to her that her story might as well be mine! While I didn't grow up wanting to be a Nun (her case, a Rabbi), I often felt out of place in high school and college. Where my friends partied and experimented, I only wanted to drink from His cup and know so much more about Christ. He really is someone worth knowing. He is worth loving.

Him.

His Words.

His way of life, of living and being should be looked at, read over, poured and thought about, and followed - especially in today's glaringly hypocritical Christian culture. We're not all worshipping the same way, but love looks like Him. Is Him. Somewhere in our society, we pick up pieces that we like, and throw away the ones that we don't.

Thank you, Sarahbeth for your story. Your pilgrimage and testimony of a faith is something that most of us 'cradle Christians' take for granted. I truly believe in this divine intervention and that Confessions of a Prodigal Daughter isn't just your memoir, as much as it is stories and reflections on some of us who lost the spring in our spiritual step, and waiting until we can come back home again.

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### **Kim says**

I labeled it Which way Should I Go cause Sarahbeth didn't know whether to stick with her Jewish faith or "convert". Reading Sarahbeth's story I felt her pain in each time something had happened and she lost a friend. I can't imagine growing up Jewish and then losing friends due to my faith or wanting to be a Rabbi like Sarahbeth had been though. Sarahbeth thank you for sharing the story of your journey of faith. I am like you and care what people think about my faith even though I am a Baptist I don't go to church and I know I should and always afraid what my friends would think. Your story gives me courage to want to go to church and not let anything get in the way. I can't get over you were either "To Jewish" or "To Christian" that made me laugh when I read those parts. This book made me laugh and also parts of it I wanted to cry and just give Sarahbeth a hug. I feel any girl struggling with their faith should read this book and it might help them so they don't have to hide or feel like they are the only ones. I read this book basically in one sitting. Once you start to read you just want to continue and see what happens next. 5 star rating for me.

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### **Anne West says**

Religious memoirs make me nervous. The debate between Jewish and Christian makes me even more nervous. And the people stuck in the middle of this debate are the ones I pity.

This author shares her sincere and honest journey as one of those stuck in the middle of this debate. I do believe she touches on the very issue so many have in their respective religions, even being raised in the religion that we practice as adults.

This is an honest read with questions and opinions cutting to the core. Those questions and opinions that the

rest of us are too scared to voice. Great read

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### **Paul C. says**

In a short and fast-paced read, blogger-and-author Sarahbeth Caplin does us a favor in producing a book which simultaneously tells a story while challenging modern evangelicalism in some of its ugliest forms. The book having both moments of "deepness" as well as lightheartedness, I would recommend Confessions of a Prodigal Daughter as long as you're open-minded and if you're ok with an occasional use of profanity.

Though in some areas I may be on a different track theologically than Caplin, I find those moments when she challenges modern Christianity to be refreshing as her objections certainly have merits. I feel that when we try to de-Jew the Bible we may actually be popping a vein of Scripture. When we make Christianity to be wholly Western we are doing an injustice to the New (and Old) Testament.

One quote I found golden is this: "Jews, who are no strangers to suffering, don't overly theologize pain. ... It's okay to not have answers. Sometimes emphasizing, not theologizing, is the most Christ-like response" (p. 108).

If you are a Christian who is "faint at heart" you may not like Caplin's occasional use of profanity (I personally didn't care) or her candidness at moments. I appreciated her frankness about topics that may at times be candy-coated or explained away in Christianity. This book makes you think, and it's a good thing for Christians to never stop thinking.

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### **Stephanie Void says**

This is an intense story of one young woman's lifelong spiritual journey.

Sarahbeth starts out devoutly Jewish and by the end of the book, she is a devout Christian considering becoming a chaplain. How does it happen? Read and you will see. If you have ever wanted to see how another person views God and religion, pick up this book. I really, really enjoyed it and read it much more quickly than I expected to.

It was extremely easy to read, having a sort of intimate feel to it, like a journal. As someone who grew up in an area where the Jewish religion is scarce, I found it interesting to read about the Jewish customs she grew up with. It was fascinating to read about her journey to Christianity and her struggles with how her family would react to her transition, then the peace she eventually found.

Recommended!

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### **Lydia Thomas says**

I give Confessions of a Prodigal Daughter by Sarahbeth Caplin 5 out of 5 stars.

I have mad respect for Sarahbeth Caplin. I read a post on her blog a little over a year ago – something about marriage not being a reward for singles in the church (I am paraphrasing, but you get the idea) -and I've been following her ever since. In addition to writing one of the most thought-provoking blogs I follow, she has also authored some fantastic YA/NA novels that grapple with heavy topics, and a collection of poetry. (I

have yet to read her newest, *A Stunning Accusation*, but it's on my list).

I think Sarahbeth Caplin is a brilliant writer, so naturally, I went into *Confessions* with high expectations. I wasn't disappointed.

*Confessions of a Prodigal Daughter* details Caplin's captivation with the God-man, Jesus, a taboo interest in her Jewish family, and her questions about how Christianity and her Jewish heritage can work together, if they can work together at all. She doesn't shy away from the cost of following Jesus, especially as it plays out in her life.

I can't overstate how incredibly important this book is, especially for those of us from a heritage of Protestant Christianity, who really don't know anything different, and who have really not experienced any kind of discomfort for the belief that God became man in the person of Jesus to restore us to Him. (Oh, I know we think we have...) Although I am certain she would not say she's been persecuted, Caplin's journey of following Jesus has been far less comfortable than most of ours, but unlike most of us, she doesn't seem to think it should be easy. (Mind-blowing, I know).

If you're looking for a challenging read about a young women's faith identity, I highly recommend *Confessions*.

That being said, if you read this book, or any of Caplin's writing, you will encounter some frustration with Evangelical Christianity. Being a second generation Evangelical (and deeply proud of that heritage), Caplin's work does raise defensiveness in me from time to time, and if you're from a similar background, it will in you as well. That's okay: we don't always have to agree with each others' conclusions to recognize and respect an important voice. Caplin's is such a voice. Don't miss out on her story because it's not yours, or what you think it should be.

While this may not be a happily-ever-Christian book, Caplin brings around again and again to what really matters: Jesus. Caplin freely admits, "My story of faith is—and continues to be—a process where I learn a little more, backslide and contemplate giving up, take sabbaticals from prayer only to realize I miss God and come crawling back, and come close to brushing up against some truths while struggling to comprehend others...I continue pressing on because, as confusing as Christianity can be, I still believe Jesus is a man worth knowing. A man worth living for."

(Can I get a witness?)

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