The shadow Bible

By [James F. McGrath](#)
August 17, 2011

[A commenter on a recent post mentioned the experience of highlighting substantial parts of a work by Nietzsche while working on an essay. Years later, he found the text and tried reading those parts he hadn't highlighted, to see what was in the sections that he *didn't* find significant at the time. He then went on to ask if a similar experiment has ever been done with the Bible](#).

I'm not aware of something of this sort ever having been done. But I think it would be instructive. What if we took John 3:16 and Isaiah 53 and Genesis 1-3 and whichever other texts typically serve as memory verses and slogans and proof texts, and covered them over for a while – not as a sign of disrespect for them, but as a sign of respect for the rest of the text. What if we took the time to focus on the passages we never read, the ones which, even if we might not actually say so, in practice at least we consider less important, less interesting, less meaningful?

Should someone put together a "Shadow Bible Project" – a reading group to focus on drawing attention to the portions of the Bible left in the shadows even (perhaps in particular) by those who regularly extol the Bible? Those who claim to revere or cherish the Bible have huge blind spots regarding its content (as [Pete Rollins' post I linked to earlier today illustrates](#)). But there are also passages that no one focuses on. [Like the one I mentioned on Sunday, which the youth leader at my church asked me about](#). The choice of proof texts is arbitrary. What would the Bible come to mean if covered over the favorite passages, and had no choice but to discuss [Exodus 4:24-26](#)?

Originally posted at [Exploring Our Matrix](#).