

HOW TO ENJOY YOUR BIBLE

The Benefits of Daily Bible Reading

Intro: We've all seen the writing on a dirty car, "Wash me." Perhaps if God were to write something on our dusty bible it might say, "Read me."

Tonight I want to begin a series of lessons called "How to enjoy your Bible."

Gordon in his book, "Restoring your spiritual passion" suggests three key things we need to renew our passion for God each day: 1) a renewed vision of God; 2) a renewed sense of purpose; 3) a renewed feeling of partnership.

The first are clearly the result of a daily bible reading and meditation. Regrettably we sometimes make Bible study a ritual to trudge through rather than an experience to enjoy.

Is there really a way to enjoy studying your Bible each day? I believe that there is and I want to talk with you in the next few lessons about how to do that.

But one of the first things we need to do is find the motivation to commit to daily bible reading. I appreciate Doug's class where he has been urging you to focus on setting aside time each day for personal worship. Hopefully these lessons will reinforce and assist that goal.

Reading of the Scriptures is strongly stressed in the Scriptures themselves; and they make clear several things that can be accomplished through reading and meditating upon God's word day by day.

Daily Bible reading plays an important role in producing faith.

Listen to John's statement of purpose for writing his gospel:

Many other signs therefore Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name. (John 20:30-31)

And Paul's:

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ. (Romans 10:17)

What these verses emphasize is the role that spending time with the Scripture can do to produce faith in Jesus and the gospel.

Daily Bible reading plays an important role in maintaining faith.

God's people have always recognized the value of reading the word in public assembly as a way of maintaining the faith of God's people.

The synagogue service

And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read. (Luke 4:16)

For Moses from ancient generations has in every city those who preach him, since he is read in the synagogues every Sabbath.” (Acts 15:21)

The NT assembly

Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching. (1 Timothy 4:13)

Can you see the wisdom of maintaining faith simply by hearing God's word read again and again? The ancient people of God did.

Daily Bible reading enables us to be better-informed Christians.

It is the first step in gaining personal knowledge of the Scriptures. No real Bible study can take place without first a familiarity with the text of the Bible. Many Bible passages presuppose this truth. Interesting Jesus on two different occasions expressed surprise that God's people did not know what the Scriptures said about a matter:

And He answered and said, “Have you not read, that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, ‘For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh’? (Matthew 19:4-5)

But regarding the resurrection of the dead, have you not read that which was spoken to you by God, saying, ‘I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? He is not the God of the dead but of the living.” (Matthew 22:31-32)

It gives us fresh exposure to old truths we have learned and helps keep them in our minds.

We tend to forget what we do not occasionally review. Occasionally in a Bible class I'll comment about something said in another text, relying upon my memory as to the exact details. Every now and then I'll think as I say it, "I think I'm remembering it right." And I check myself and find out that that little bit of doubt was justified, since my memory was faulty.

We all forget.

Therefore, I shall always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you already know them, and have been established in the truth which is present with you. (2 Peter 1:12)

So we need the refreshers; but every time you read the Bible, you will see new things you never realized were there in those stories you read long ago!

It gives us a background for learning from others.

Paul often referenced OT events to draw out a lesson for NT Christians. He presumed that they would know about the examples of OT history.

Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. (1 Corinthians 10:11)

I learned years ago and we all need a "frame" upon which to hang the messages we're hearing from preachers and teachers, i.e. some big picture understanding so that we know where information fits into the bigger scheme of things.

Your familiarity with the whole of the Bible story enables you to relate the various passages in God's word to their historical & spiritual situation. Don't make everybody "spoon feed" you.

This makes it possible to enjoy preaching more, because you are familiar with illustrations and texts from the Bible as a whole.

It fills in the "gaps" that there may be in our public studies.

As a preacher I really do think of myself as having a great deal of control over the spiritual diet of the congregation, since I do most of the teaching. I often look over my outlines and think about what I've talked about and what I may have missed. I want to do like Paul: *"For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God. (Acts 20:27)*

However a preacher's best efforts or an eldership's best organization of classes will not assure that everything in God's word is covered.

Sermons may deal with needs of the church.

Special studies in Bible classes may neglect significant portions of the word, especially if they are topical.

But you can fill the gaps by your personal daily study.

Daily Bible reading provides the discipline for daily meditation and prayer that leads to renewed passion for God.

How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers! But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. (Psalm 1:1-3)

Reading the word will give us the thoughts for meditation about God and about ourselves. Thus, it lays the groundwork for effective prayer and renewed passion for God.

Reading the scripture has played a great role in spiritual revival.

Cf. Ez. 8:1-8 where God's people their return from captivity are gathered together and Ezra the priest is reading God's law to them and giving the sense--a marvelous sight

Later in this series I'll talk about how we can turn our daily Bible readings into fresh moments of praise and prayer to God.

Conclusion: By daily reading we experience the full benefits that the Scriptures were intended to give us.

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

The Scriptures are the most important document we possess on earth. You'll never regret the decision and the effort you spend in reading the Bible. Your knowledge will grow; your faith will grow; your ability to teach will grow; your life will be enriched as you learn God's will for your life.