

**Title:** Read Your Bible

**Text:** Romans 12:1-2

**Date:** September 13, 2020

For years I have made it my goal to read the entire Bible over the course of a year. When I was in college, I became acquainted with a man who maintained the practice for nearly 70 years. He was a storehouse of godly wisdom. I wanted to be like him, so I adopted his habit. I try to avoid being legalistic in the matter. My goal isn't to complete a religious chore. My desire is to interact with the Lord, and to allow His truth to change me. From Scripture, I am convinced that the road to spiritual maturity travels through the pages of the Bible. Believers grow into Christlikeness as they allow their minds to be transformed by what the Lord says (Romans 12:1-2). So, my daily times in God's Word are simply an opportunity for me to expose myself to the fresh, spiritual oxygen of heaven. I read the Bible, not from a pretext of duty, but from a passionate delight. I am convinced that several benefits will come my way when I cherish God's Book.

### **Joy**

So many people are sad today. They are unhappy with their job, family, friends, and general lot in life. I believe much of this dismay comes from what people are consuming. They watch movies and TV shows which uphold an unrealistic posh lifestyle. They scan social media daily, and they are tempted to compare their lives to the image others project. In the end, discouragement takes root, because the mind has been programmed by the sour value system of a fallen world. A remedy is found in the Bible. Jeremiah said, "Your words were found, and I ate them. Your words became a delight to me and the joy of my heart" (Jeremiah 15:16). If you want to be happy, have a daily time in God's Word. It can build the right perspective, and brighten your personality.

### **Protection from Sin**

Each day every believer will be tempted to sin. Opportunities to think, say, and do things which go against God's character abound around every corner. God's people must be prepared. Daily prayer is a defense against sin (see Matthew 6:13), but so is daily Scripture reading. The Psalmist said, "I have treasured your word in my heart so that I may not sin against you" (Psalm 119:11). When our minds are programmed with God's principles, we will be less susceptible to sin. Jesus knew this. That's why He was prepared to combat Satan's temptation with memorized Scripture (see Matthew 4:1-11). The Devil knows this as well. That's why he has always worked to discourage people from taking God's revealed Word seriously (Genesis 3:1).

### **Wisdom**

According to King Solomon, wisdom is the most important commodity in life. He told his son, "Wisdom is supreme—so get wisdom" (Proverbs 4:7). If wisdom is so important, we must ask, "How can one get it?" Well, Scripture guarantees that God will respond to requests for wisdom (James 1:5), but it also indicates that we can get it from God's Word. The Psalmist said, "The revelation of Your words brings light and gives understanding to the inexperienced" (Psalm 119:130). If you apply yourself to regularly reading, studying, memorizing, and obeying Bible

truth, you will gain wisdom. You can count on it! God will give you the ability to think, act, and live skillfully!

### **Correction**

Few like to be told that they're wrong. I remember when I first learned how to drive a manual transmission. For months, I ground the gears when I shifted, not realizing the harm I was doing to my car. When a friend pointed my fault out to me, I was a bit peeved. Later I was thankful. His instruction saved me from harming my transmission. Mature Christians have a similar gratitude for spiritual correction. They know they aren't perfect, and they understand how unaddressed sin can hold them back (Hebrews 12:1). They address their shortcomings, so that they can spiritually flourish. The Bible is a great source for receiving such improvement. Paul said the Word of God is "profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting" (2 Timothy 3:16). When we regularly read and heed what the Bible says, we experience deliverance from debilitating deficiencies.

### **Sanctification**

Bible reading also does something to sanctify us. When its principles begin to take hold of our thinking patterns, our lives are gradually changed. In time, we begin to look drastically different than others. Our values, speech patterns, and general demeanors change. The Bible calls this resultant state "sanctification" (1 Thessalonians 4:3). It is the condition of being set apart from the world's way of living unto the Lord's way of living. Jesus taught that the Bible is a primary means of undergoing such change. When He prayed for us, He said, "Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth" (John 17:17). If you want your life to be free of the toxic talk, emotional chaos, life-dominating hangups that characterize many people in our world, commit yourself to consuming God's Word. It will sanctify you!

### **Role Models**

A final benefit of Bible reading is the way in which it gives us examples of people who were faithful to the Lord. Paul knew this. That's why he once said, "For whatever was written in the past was written for our instruction, so that we may have hope through endurance and through the encouragement from the Scriptures" (Romans 15:4). Regularly reading and reflecting upon Bible narratives can build us up. Every time I'm tempted to be impatient, I think about the perseverance of Joseph. When I'm tempted to sin, I think about the result of David's failure. If I become discouraged over the evil in our corrupt world, I think of Daniel's faithfulness in Babylon. The Bible blesses us with examples for our spiritual encouragement and endurance. Read it!

When I was a young believer, I received a study Bible for a gift. The study notes helped me understand a book which had previously seemed like an enigma. The appendix contained a Bible reading plan. If one followed the schedule, he or she could read through the Bible in a year. I soon began following the guide. I have since read through the Bible on a number of occasions. My experiences have taught me that there is a lot to be gained from systematically reading Scripture. Of itself, the Word of God says the same thing (Psalm 19:9-11). The Bible is a beneficial book. When we read it, remember it, and rely upon it, many blessings come our way.