

Give Me The Bible



Sermon Outlines On Reading And Studying The Bible

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To God Be The Glory!

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Give Me The Bible

Table Of Contents

The Problem Of Biblical Illiteracy	3
Why I Read The Bible	6
Why I Believe The Bible	11
Why I Love The Bible	15
Why I Obey The Bible	17
Why I Study The Old Testament	19
How I Read The Bible	22
How I Study The Bible	25

Give Me The Bible

The Problem Of Biblical Illiteracy

INTRODUCTION

1. A growing problem is one of **biblical illiteracy**...
 - a. Not just by those in the world
 - b. Also in the church
 - **“Americans revere the Bible - but, by and large, they don't read it. And because they don't read it, they have become a nation of biblical illiterates.” - George Gallup and Jim Castelli**

2. **How bad is it?** Consider these results from various surveys...
 - a. Fewer than half of all adults can name the four gospels
 - b. Many professing Christians cannot identify more than two or three of the disciples
 - c. 60 percent of Americans can't name even five of the Ten Commandments
 - d. 82 percent of Americans believe “God helps those who help themselves” is a Bible verse
 - e. 12 percent of adults believe that Joan of Arc was Noah's wife
 - f. A survey of graduating high school seniors revealed that over 50 percent thought that Sodom and Gomorrah were husband and wife
 - g. A considerable number of respondents to one poll indicated that the Sermon on the Mount was preached by Billy Graham
 - **“Increasingly, America is biblically illiterate.” - George Barna**

[**Biblical illiteracy** is like a poison, wreaking havoc in the lives of individuals, in our churches, and in our communities. To understand how, consider...]

I. THE POISON OF BIBLICAL ILLITERACY

A. ITS EFFECT ON INDIVIDUALS...

1. God's people have always been destroyed by lack of knowledge - **Hos 4:1,6**
2. Where there is lack of God's Word, the people faint - cf. **Am 8:11-13**
 - a. In ignorance they make the wrong choices
 - b. When they stumble, they do not know where to turn
3. Without a knowledge of God's Word, a person has...
 - a. No real direction or guidance in life - **Psa 119:105**
 - b. No true joy or peace in life - **Psa 119:111,165**
- **How many lives are being destroyed, how many people are stumbling through life, because they do not have the light of God's Word guiding them?**

B. ITS EFFECT ON CHURCHES...

1. Churches languish for lack of teachers; teachers are few for lack of knowledge - **He 5:12**
2. Churches are led astray by false teachers and false doctrine, for how can the ignorant know what is false? - cf. **2Pe 2:1-3**
- **How many churches are “dying on the vine”, or into wholesale apostasy because their members cannot discern between truth and error?**

C. ITS EFFECT ON COMMUNITIES...

1. Our standards of morality are skewed, where good is evil and evil is good - cf. **Isa 5:20**
 - a. We slaughter the innocent (abortion), sparing the guilty (no capital punishment)
 - b. We reward the wicked (movie stars, entertainers), depriving the good (teachers, etc.)
 - c. Divorce is made easy, adultery looked upon lightly, fornication “an affair, a relationship”, homosexuality an alternative lifestyle
 2. The effect of such things destroy our families and communities
 - a. Evil (pornography, promiscuity) is allowed to spread in the name of “freedom”, ripping families apart
 - b. Children are deprived the kind of parenting that is their God-given right
 - c. Leading to juvenile delinquency and greater evils
- **Consider how the moral fabric of our nation and others in the world is becoming unraveled when “everyone does what is right in his own eyes” - cf. Judg 21:25**

[The **poison** of Biblical illiteracy has infected and sickened our people, our churches, and our communities. Is there an **antidote** to this poison? Indeed there is...]

II. THE ANTIDOTE TO BIBLICAL ILLITERACY

A. DAILY DEVOTIONAL BIBLE READING IN PRIVATE...

1. The truly blessed person feeds upon the Word of God daily - **Psa 1:1-3; 119:97-98**
 2. A systematic practice of prayerful Bible reading as part of a daily devotional...
 - a. Will bring a person closer to God
 - b. Will gradually increase one’s understanding of the Word of God
 - c. Will offer strength, comfort and hope that only the Scriptures provide
- **Are you willing to do your part, everyday, in stamping out Biblical illiteracy?**

B. FREQUENT IN-DEPTH BIBLE STUDY WITH OTHERS...

1. The faithful Christian realizes the value of mutual edification - **He 3:12-14; 10:24-25**
 2. Churches often provide the opportunity for Christians to study together
 - a. In their Bible classes on the Lord’s day, during the week, and in their homes
 - b. Where they can benefit from the knowledge of other Bible students
- **Are you willing to participate in such activities to stamp out Biblical illiteracy?**

C. PARENTS ACCEPTING THEIR GOD-GIVEN RESPONSIBILITY...

1. God gave the responsibility of spiritual training to the parents - cf. **Deu 6:6-7; Ep 6:4**
 2. Church may provide assistance with their children’s classes, and yet...
 - a. Parents should not abdicate their responsibility to the church
 - b. Parents should be very much involved in the teaching programs of any church
- **Are you willing to accept your parental duties to stamp out Biblical illiteracy?**

D. PREACHERS FULFILLING THEIR DUTY TO THE WORD...

1. Preachers are to give heed to the Word, and to preach the Word - **1Ti 4:16; 2Ti 4:1-5**
 2. We should expect preachers to be “men of the Book”
 - a. Preaching and teaching the Word of God, providing exposition of the Scriptures
 - b. Not entertaining us with “pop theology” and “pop psychology”
- **Are you willing to require that preachers proclaim the Word to stamp out Biblical Illiteracy?**

CONCLUSION

1. I was encouraged to prepare this study reading an article by **Albert Mohler** ([The Scandal of Biblical Illiteracy: It's Our Problem](#))
2. I thought his concluding paragraphs to be especially on the mark...
 - a. “Churches must recover the centrality and urgency of biblical teaching and preaching, and refuse to sideline the teaching ministry of the preacher. Pastors and churches too busy--or too distracted--to make biblical knowledge a central aim of ministry will produce believers who simply do not know enough to be faithful disciples.”
 - b. “We will not believe more than we know, and we will not live higher than our beliefs. The many fronts of Christian compromise in this generation can be directly traced to biblical illiteracy in the pews and the absence of biblical preaching and teaching in our homes and churches.”
 - c. “This generation must get deadly serious about the problem of biblical illiteracy, or a frighteningly large number of Americans--Christians included--will go on thinking that Sodom and Gomorrah lived happily ever after.”

Are we willing to get “deadly serious about the problem of biblical illiteracy”? I hope the rest of the lessons in this series (“**Give Me The Bible**”) will encourage us to do so...

Give Me The Bible

Why I Read The Bible

INTRODUCTION

1. Perhaps you have heard people say things like...
 - a. “Oh, you don’t read the Bible, do you?”
 - b. “Why, the Bible is just another book; you ought to read...”
2. Perhaps you have heard...
 - a. A teacher degrade the Bible before his or her students, ridiculing those who read it
 - b. Those who are proud to have a Bible on their bookshelf, but only as one book among other “greats” of literature
3. But the Bible is more than simply one of the “greats”; it is **unique**...
 - a. Meaning “one and only”
 - b. Meaning “different from all others; having no like or equal”

[Our purpose in this lesson is to review ways in which the Bible is **unique**, truly “different from all others; having no like or equal”. For example, the Bible is...]

I. UNIQUE IN ITS CONTINUITY

A. HERE IS A BOOK THAT WAS WRITTEN...

1. **Over a long period of time**
 - a. About 1600 years
 - b. A span of 40 generations
2. **By approximately 40 authors from every walk of life**
 - a. Moses, political leader trained in the universities of Egypt
 - b. Peter, fisherman
 - c. Amos, herdsman
 - d. Joshua, military general
 - e. Nehemiah, cup bearer to the king of Persia
 - f. Daniel, prime minister in the courts of Babylon
 - g. Luke, physician
 - h. Solomon, philosopher king
 - i. Matthew, tax collector
 - j. Paul, rabbi and tentmaker
3. **In different places**
 - a. Moses in the wilderness
 - b. Jeremiah in a dungeon
 - c. Daniel on a hillside, and in a palace
 - d. Paul inside prison walls
 - e. Luke while traveling
 - f. John in exile on the isle of Patmos
 - g. Others in the rigors of a military campaign
4. **At different times**

- a. David in times of war
- b. Solomon in times of peace
5. **During different moods**
 - a. Some writing from the heights of joy
 - b. Others from the depths of sorrow and despair
6. **On three continents:** Asia, Africa, Europe
7. **In three languages:** Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek
8. **With subject matter involving hundreds of controversial topics,** such as:
 - a. The origin of man and the universe
 - b. The nature of God
 - c. The nature of man, sin, and man's redemption

B. YET THERE IS HARMONY AND CONTINUITY...

1. For example:
 - a. "The Paradise Lost of the book of Genesis becomes the Paradise Regained of Revelation." - **Geisler and Nix**
 - b. "Whereas the gate to the Tree of Life is closed in Genesis, it is opened forevermore in Revelation." - **ibid.**
2. **Compare the continuity of the Bible** with any other writings of men
 - a. Imagine what you would have it you took just ten authors...
 - 1) From one walk of life, one generation, one place, one time, one mood, one continent, one language
 - 2) Speaking on just one controversial subject
 - b. You would have a conglomeration of conflicting ideas, not harmony!

[The Bible is truly **unique**, one of a kind, in its continuity. It is also...]

II. UNIQUE IN ITS DISTRIBUTION

A. THE TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE...

1. One of the first major books translated
 - a. E.g., the Septuagint version of the OT
 - b. Translated into Greek in 250 B.C.
2. Between 1950-1960, 3000 Bible translators were at work
3. "By the end of 1993, the whole Bible had been translated into 337 languages; 2,062 languages have translations of at least one book of the Bible." - **Guinness Book of World Records (1998)**

B. THE CIRCULATION OF THE BIBLE...

1. As of 1804 - 409 million copies
2. As of 1932 - one and a third billion copies
3. "The world's best-selling and most widely distributed book is the Bible, with an estimated 2.5 billion copies sold, 1815 - 1975." - **Guinness Book of World Records**
4. "No other book has known the anything approaching this constant circulation" - **The Cambridge History of the Bible**
5. As said of the words of God, "Their voice has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world." - **Ro 10:18**

[You would think that if a person were sincerely seeking truth, he or she would give serious

consideration to a book that has drawn so much attention! The Bible is also...]

III. UNIQUE IN ITS SURVIVAL

A. ITS SURVIVAL THROUGH TIME...

1. Though written on material that perishes...
 - a. ...having to be copied and recopied for hundreds of years by hand
 - b. ...its style, correctness, or existence did not diminish
2. Compared with other ancient writings, the manuscript evidence of the Bible:
 - a. Is greater than any 10 pieces of classical literature combined!
 - b. Is sufficient to ensure that we are reading the words of the original

B. ITS SURVIVAL THROUGH PERSECUTION...

1. Many have tried to burn it, ban it, and otherwise outlaw it
 - a. From the days of Roman emperors
 - b. To the present Communist-dominated countries
2. For example:
 - a. In 303 A.D., the Roman emperor Diocletian issued an edict to stop Christians from worshipping, and to destroy their scriptures
 - b. Only 25 years later the Roman emperor Constantine called for 50 copies of the Bible to be prepared at the expense of the government!
3. How true is the statement: “All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and its flower falls away, but the word of the LORD endures forever.” - **1Pe 1:24-25**

C. ITS SURVIVAL THROUGH CRITICISM...

1. “Infidels for 1800 years have been refuting and overthrowing this book, and yet it stands today as solid as a rock. Its circulation increases, and it is more loved and cherished and read today than ever before. Infidels, with all their assault make about as much impression on this book as a man with a tack hammer on the pyramids of Egypt.” - **H. L. Hastings**
2. “No other book has been so chopped, knifed, sifted, scrutinized, and vilified. What book on philosophy or religion or psychology...has been subject to such a mass attack as the Bible? With such venom and skepticism? With such thoroughness and erudition? Upon every chapter, line and tenet? And yet, the Bible is still loved by millions, read by millions, and studied by millions.” - **Bernard Ramm**

[Next, consider how the Bible is...]

IV. UNIQUE IN ITS TEACHING

A. A BOOK OF PROPHECY...

1. “It is the only volume ever produced in which is to be found a large body of prophecies relating to individual nations (more than ten in Isaiah alone), Israel, all the peoples of the earth, certain cities, the coming Messiah and His kingdom.” - **Wilbur Smith**
2. There is no other book of religious antiquity which provides so many explicit prophecies:
 - a. So distant in the future
 - b. Which came to pass

B. A BOOK OF HISTORY...

1. The Old Testament “embodies the oldest history writing extant” - **Cambridge Ancient History**
2. The Hebrews are the only race of people that can give such a clear and accurate picture of their origins
3. “...in all of my archaeological investigation I have never found one artifact of antiquity that contradicts any statement of the Word of God.” - **Nelson Glueck**

C. A BOOK OF PERSONALITIES...

1. The Bible deals frankly with the sins of its characters, even its heroes:
 - a. **Adam and Eve** - putting off responsibility on to others
 - b. **Noah** - drunkenness
 - c. **Abraham** - cowardice, lying to save his skin
 - d. **Moses** - disobedience to God
 - e. **David** - lying, adultery, murder
 - f. **Peter** - denying the Lord, causing division through hypocrisy
 - g. **Churches** - divided, arrogant, materialistic
2. The Bible has the habit of telling it like it was, and is unique in its portrayal of its key personalities

[Finally, we briefly note that Bible is...]

V. UNIQUE IN ITS INFLUENCE

A. UPON THE LITERATURE OF THE WORLD...

1. “If every Bible in any considerable city were destroyed, the book could be restored in all its essential parts from the quotations on the shelves of the city public library” - **The Greatest English Classic**
2. “The Bible's influence is impossible to ignore. There are more than a thousand biblical references in the works of Shakespeare alone. John Milton, Herman Melville, Ernest Hemingway all drew on the Bible, too. Then there's Rembrandt, Chagall and Da Vinci, who all put the Bible on canvas. Even the Declaration of Independence alludes to the Bible. But it's not just history -- the Bible is in pop culture as well. The movie ‘The Matrix’ is so full of Biblical references people have written entire books about it.” - **Sean Alfano, The Bible As Literature**
3. “I consider an intimate knowledge of the Bible an indispensable quality of a well educated man.” - **Dr. Robert Milikan**, former President of the California Inst. Of Tech. And Nobel Peace Prize winner

B. UPON THE WORLD ITSELF...

1. Our **judicial system** is based upon many of the principles found in the Bible
2. Our **standards of morality** owe much to the Judeo-Christian ethic
3. “The fundamental basis of this nation’s law was given to Moses on the Mount. The fundamental basis of our Bill of Rights comes from the teaching we get from Exodus and St. Matthew, from Isaiah and St. Paul. I don't think we emphasize that enough these days. If we don't have the proper fundamental moral background, we will finally end up with a totalitarian government which does not believe in the right for anybody except the state.” - **Harry S. Truman**
4. “I think for any educated person, it's absolutely essential to know something about the Bible. Whether a person is a believer or not, the Bible stands at the foundation of our form of

civilization.” - **Bart Ehrman**

C. UPON MANY GREAT PEOPLE...

1. “The Bible is worth more than all other books which have ever been printed.” - **Patrick Henry**
2. “It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible.” - **George Washington**
3. “It has been my custom for many years to read the Bible in its entirety once a year.” - **John Quincy Adams**
4. “I believe the Bible is the best gift God has ever given to man. All the good from the Savior of the world is communicated to us through this book.” - **Abraham Lincoln**
5. “The Bible is a book in comparison with which all others are of minor importance, and which in all my perplexities and distresses has never failed to give me light and strength.” - **Robert E. Lee**
6. “The New Testament is the very best book that ever was or will be known in the world.” - **Charles Dickens**
7. “No man, educated or uneducated, can afford to be ignorant of the Bible... A thorough understanding of the Bible is better than a college education.” - **Theodore Roosevelt** (cf. **Psa 119:97-100**)
8. “Within the covers of this one single book, the Bible, are all the answers to all the problems we face today. If only we would read it and believe.” - **Ronald Reagan**

CONCLUSION

1. This lesson has not been an effort to prove the Bible to be the Word of God...
 - a. Though its continuity and fulfilled prophecy are certainly evidences of it
 - b. But to show it to be **truly a unique book** (“different from all others; having no like or equal”)
 - c. That it’s **uniqueness is reason alone** for everyone to read the Bible
2. Of course, I personally believe that what has made it so **unique** is...
 - a. **Its origin** - it comes from the mind of the One True God
 - b. **Its process of revelation** - it came by the work of the Holy Spirit, who guided the many writers and made their works harmonious
 - c. **Its central message** - that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the Son of God who is the only Lord and Savior of mankind
3. Because of its **uniqueness**, I believe it may be rightly stated:

“If you are an intelligent person, you will read the one book that has drawn more attention than any other, IF you are searching for the truth.”

- Quoted by Josh McDowell

In my own search for truth, I have read through the Bible many times and continue to read it daily. Are you searching for the truth? Do **you** read the Bible?

In our next study, I will offer reasons **“Why I Believe The Bible”**...

Note: Much of the material for this lesson was taken from **“Evidence That Demands A Verdict”**, Vol. 1, by Josh McDowell.

Give Me The Bible

Why I Believe The Bible

INTRODUCTION

1. In our previous study, we offered reasons to **read the Bible...**
 - a. Its unique nature: Continuity - Distribution - Survival - Teaching - Influence
 - b. Sufficient reasons for anyone searching for truth to read the Bible
2. But what reasons are there to **believe the Bible...?**
 - a. Our study will offer several reasons to take it seriously
 - b. The examples will be few, but illustrative
 - c. Links are provided to assist in further study

[I can think of at least five reasons to believe the Bible, i.e., evidences of inspiration, starting with its...]

I. SCIENTIFIC FOREKNOWLEDGE

A. EXPLAINED...

1. In the Bible there are statements related to astronomy, cosmology, medicine, meteorology, oceanography, etc.
2. Mentioned thousands of years prior to scientific discovery of these truths
3. Discovered in modern times with the aid of scientific instruments
4. The writers of the Bible could have known these facts only through divine inspiration
5. Such evidence of inspiration confirms the Bible's claim to be from God the Creator

B. EXAMPLES...

1. Stars too great in number to count - **Gen 15:5; Jer 33:22**
 2. The roundness of the earth - **Isa 40:22**
 3. The suspension of the earth in space - **Job 26:7**
 4. The currents in the seas - **Po 8:8**
 5. The springs in the seas - **Job 38:16**
 6. All nations of one blood - **Ac 17:26**
- **More examples can be found by searching [here](#)**

[Perhaps even stronger evidence for the divine inspiration of the Bible are the many...]

II. FULFILLED PROPHECIES

A. EXPLAINED...

1. Prophecies in the OT foretold events in detail beyond the scope of human speculation
2. How did the writers do it? They attributed it to God!
3. God declared such evidence was proof of His existence and superiority over men and all heathen gods - **Isa 41:21-24; 42:8-9; 46:8-11**

B. EXAMPLES...

1. Prophecies **concerning nations**

- a. The fall of Babylon, written two hundred years before it occurred - **Isa 13:17-22**
 - b. The fall of Egypt, that it would be destroyed more by civil war - **Isa 19:1-4**
 - c. The fall of Nineveh, with its utter desolation - **Zep 2:13-15**
 - d. The fall of Tyre, with its becoming a place for the spreading of nests - **Eze 26:1-5**
 - e. The destruction of Jerusalem, fulfilled in 70 A.D. - **Mt 24, Mk 13, Lk 21**
 2. Prophecies **concerning Christ**
 - a. Alluded to by Jesus - cf. **Lk 24:44-45**
 - b. It has been stated there are 332 prophecies fulfilled in Christ - **Henry Liddon**
- **More examples can be found by searching [here](#)**

[The Bible's trustworthiness is often confirmed in ways that can be checked, especially in the area of...]

III. ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONFIRMATION

A. EXPLAINED...

1. The Bible purports to be a book of history, describing **real people, nations, events**
2. Discoveries by archaeologists confirm the historical accuracy of the Bible

B. EXAMPLES...

1. Cities in Abraham's time (Ur, Haran)
 2. Ancient empires once doubted (Hittites)
 3. Cities in ancient Israel (Jericho, Shechem, Dan, etc.)
 4. The house of David and Solomon's temple
 5. The census at the time of Jesus' birth
 6. Lysanias, tetrarch of Abilene
 7. The Pavement (Gabbatha) in the court of the tower of Antonia
 8. The politarchs in Thessalonica
- **More examples can be found by searching [here](#)**

[The Bible's trustworthiness is often questioned because we do not have the original manuscripts. But we have good reasons to believe that we have reliable copies, thanks to the science of...]

IV. MANUSCRIPT ATTESTATION

A. EXPLAINED...

1. A bibliographical test is applied to all ancient documents, such as:
 - a. Julius Caesar's Gallic War
 - b. Histories of Tacitus
 - c. Annals of Tacitus
 - d. The New Testament
2. The purpose - to establish the likelihood that copies are:
 - a. Faithful representatives of the original manuscripts
 - b. Free from changes, errors, or collusion by copyists
3. Questions raised in **the bibliographical test** include:
 - a. How many copies of the document in question are available?
 - b. Where were the copies found?
 - c. What time has passed between the original and earliest copies?
 - d. What variances exist between the copies?

B. EXAMPLES...

1. **How many copies of the NT manuscripts are available?**

- a. Over 4,000 Greek manuscripts; 13,000 copies of portions
 - b. Compare with other ancient writings: Caesar's Gallic Wars (10), Annals of Tacitus (2), Livy (20), Plato (7), Sophocles (100)
 2. **Where the copies of NT manuscripts found?**
 - a. In various places: Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Turkey, Greece, Italy
 - b. Such diverse locations make collusion very difficult
 3. **What time has passed between the original and earliest copies of the NT?**
 - a. Several papyri fragments of the NT have been dated to within 50-100 years
 - b. Complete NT Greek manuscripts were copied within 300-400 years
 - c. Compare the time span with other classical histories:
 - 1) Histories of Thucydides - 1300 years
 - 2) Histories of Herodotus - 1350 years
 - 3) Caesar's Gallic War - 950 years
 - 4) Roman History of Livy - 350 years (and it is a fragment)
 - 5) Histories of Tacitus - 750 years
 - 6) Annals of Tacitus - 950 years (and there are just two manuscripts)
 4. **What variances exist between the copies of the NT?**
 - a. Only 1/2 of one percent is in question (compared to 5 percent for the Iliad)
 - b. Even so: "No fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith rests on a disputed reading...It cannot be too strongly asserted that in substance the text of the Bible is certain: especially is this the case with the New Testament." - **Sir Frederick Kenyon**, authority in the field of New Testament textual criticism
 5. **The NT has the strongest manuscript attestation of any ancient document!**
 - a. "The evidence for our New Testament writings is ever so much greater than the evidence for many writings of classical authors, the authenticity of which no one dreams of questioning. And if the New Testament were a collection of secular writings, their authenticity would generally be as beyond all doubt." - **F. F. Bruce**
 - b. "After trying to shatter the historicity and validity of the Scripture, I came to the conclusion that they are historically trustworthy. If one discards the Bible as being unreliable, then he must discard almost all literature of antiquity." - **Josh McDowell**
 - c. "One problem I constantly face is the desire on the part of many to apply one standard or test to secular literature and other to the Bible. One needs to apply the same test, whether the literature under investigation is secular or religious." - **ibid.**
 - d. "Having done this, I believe one can hold the Scriptures in his hand and say, 'The Bible is trustworthy, and historically reliable.'" - **ibid.**
- More on this can be found by searching [here](#)

[Finally, there is a **more subjective reason** to believe the Bible, based on...]

V. PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

A. EXPLAINED...

1. Those who read, believe, and obey the Bible will receive evidence of its inspiration
2. As Jesus stated: "If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority." - **Jn 7:17**
3. In other words, "He shall have evidence, in the very attempt to do the will of God, of the truth of the doctrine." - **Albert Barnes**
4. "He who in his heart says, 'Thy will be done, give me light and I will walk in it,' will find that Christ is just the teacher demanded by his soul, and that the gospel meets his soul's want.

Jesus will so meet the wants of his soul that he will be satisfied and will know the doctrine, that it comes from him who made the soul.” - **B. W. Johnson**

3. As stated in a familiar proverb: “The proof of the pudding is in the eating”

B. EXAMPLES...

1. The Bible has transformed the lives of millions of people
 - a. It has motivated them to become missionaries, even martyrs
 - b. It has spurred them to care for the sick, the poor, the hungry, even enemies
 - c. It has made them better spouses, parents, friends, neighbors, workers
2. For one willing to obey the Bible from the heart, there is:
 - a. Peace to calm the troubled heart - **Jn 14:27; 16:33; Php 4:7**
 - b. Joy to lift our spirits - **Jn 15:11; 1Pe 1:8**
 - c. Love which casts out fear - **1Jn 4:18; Jn 15:9; Ep 3:19**
 - d. Hope for facing the future - **Jn 11:25; Re 14:13**
3. As a believer more than 50 years, I have found the Bible to be:
 - a. A source of guidance, wisdom, and peace with God and man
 - b. Worthy of my lifelong trust and obedience

CONCLUSION

1. The reasons **I believe the Bible** are both objective and subjective...
 - a. The objective evidence includes its scientific foreknowledge, fulfilled prophecies, archaeological confirmation, and manuscript attestation
 - b. The subjective evidence is seen in its impact on our lives and the world in which we live
2. I hope this brief survey of reasons to believe the Bible will encourage you...
 - a. To read the Bible
 - b. To believe the Bible

Again, follow the links above to search for more information on evidences related to this subject. In our next study, I wish to share reasons as to “**Why I Love The Bible**”...

Give Me The Bible

Why I Love The Bible

INTRODUCTION

1. In this series (“**Give Me The Bible**”), thus far we have explored...
 - a. The Problem Of Biblical Illiteracy
 - b. Why I Read The Bible
 - c. Why I Believe The Bible
2. But I don’t just read and believe the Bible, **I love the Bible...!**
 - a. It is my favorite book
 - b. It is my constant companion when I travel
 - c. I read it daily, with the goal of reading through it at least once each year

[Like the Psalmist, I love the Word of God (cf. **Ps 119:97-104**) Why? First of all, because...]

I. THE BIBLE GAVE ME NEW LIFE

A. THE THEME OF THE BIBLE...

1. Is God’s plan for the redemption of man from sin
2. Beginning with promises made in Genesis - **Gen 3:15; 12:1-3; 22:18**
3. Fulfilled with the coming of Jesus Christ - **Ac 3:25-26; Ga 3:16**

B. THE GIFT OF THE BIBLE...

1. It tells us how we can be reconciled to God - **Ro 5:8-11**
2. It reveals the gospel whereby we can be saved - **Ro 1:16; 1Co 15:1-4**
3. A gospel with both commands and promises - **Mk 16:15-16; Ac 2:38-39; 3:19; 22:16**
4. Through the Word of God, I was given a new life in Christ - **1Pe 2:22-23; 2Co 5:17**
 - a. Freedom from the guilt of sin by the blood of Christ- **Ep 1:7**
 - b. Freedom from the power of sin by the Holy Spirit - **Ro 8:11-14**
 - c. The opportunity to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ - **2Pe 3:18**
5. As Jesus promised, I was given the opportunity for an abundant life! - **Jn 10:10**

[I became a Christian early in life (at 13 years of age). For more than 45 years, I have sought to live as the Bible directs. I therefore love the Bible **because of the benefits I receive as...**]

II. THE BIBLE GUIDES ME THROUGH LIFE

A. DURING MY YOUTH...

1. **I was inspired by young role models in the Bible**
 - a. Joseph, who resisted temptation - **Gen 39:9**
 - b. Daniel, who purposed in his heart to do what was right - **Dan 1:8**
 - c. Shadrach, Meshach, Abed-nego, with faith in the face of fire - **Dan 3:16-18**
 - d. Timothy, who served as an example despite his youth - **1Ti 4:12**
2. **I was given wise counsel from:**
 - a. Proverbs - encapsulating the wisdom of Solomon - **Pr 1:1-4**

- b. Ecclesiastes - the meaning of life and how to live it - **Ec 11:9-10; 12:1**
- c. Jesus - regarding the proper priorities in life - **Mt 6:33; 16:26**
- d. The apostles - showing me how to live for Christ - **1Co 11:1; 2Pe 1:5-11**
- 3. **With the Bible as my guide...**
 - a. I avoided many of the pitfalls that plague youth (immorality, materialism)
 - b. I made good choices involving life (friends, marriage, family, work)
- 4. **And whenever I stumbled, the Bible...**
 - a. Offered me grace and forgiveness in Jesus Christ - **1Jn 1:9; 2:1-2**
 - b. Gave me encouragement to get back up, to press on - **Php 3:12-14**

B. INTO MY OLD AGE...

- 1. **I am inspired by aged role models in the Bible**
 - a. Moses, who at 80 accepted a new calling - **Exo 7:7; cf. Psa 90:10**
 - b. Joshua, who starting at 80 led Israel for 30 years - **Josh 24:29**
 - c. Caleb, who said "Give me this mountain!" at age 85 - **Josh 14:6-12**
 - d. Daniel, who continued to serve God and man into his 90s - **Dan 6:1-3,10**
 - e. Anna, who though 84 continued to serve God with prayers and fasting - **Lk 2:36-38**
 - f. Paul the aged apostle, who continued to write letters and travel - **Phm 1:9,21-22**
- 2. **I continue to receive wise counsel from:**
 - a. Proverbs - always increasing in understanding - **Pr 1:5-6**
 - b. Ecclesiastes - always reminding me what is important - **Ec 2:24-26; 9:9**
 - c. Jesus - always keeping my priorities straight - **Lk 10:40-42; 12:22-40**
 - d. The apostles - guiding my life as a disciple of Christ - **Php 4:4-9**
- 3. **With the Bible as my guide...**
 - a. I can face the future with confidence - **2Co 4:16-18**
 - b. I can look forward to what the Lord will provide - **2Ti 4:6-8**
- 4. **And as this life comes to an end, the Bible...**
 - a. Offers me the hope of the resurrection - **1Co 15:50-58**
 - b. Promises a heavenly city, a new heavens and earth - **He 13:14; 2Pe 3:13-14; Re 21:1-7**

CONCLUSION

- 1. Yes, I love the Bible, because it...
 - a. Introduced me to God and His Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ
 - b. Taught me the way of salvation through an obedient faith In Jesus
 - c. Guides me to experience abundant life now, and receive eternal life hereafter - **Ps 119:105**
- 2. And so I concur with sentiments expressed by two great men...

"I believe that the one chief reason that I have been kept in happy useful service is that I have been a lover of Holy Scripture. It has been my habit to read the Bible through four times a year; in a prayerful spirit, to apply it to my heart, and practice what I find there. I have been for sixty-nine years a happy man; happy, happy, happy." - **George Muller**, who established orphanages in England

"I am profitably engaged in reading the Bible. Take all of this Book that you can by reason and the balance by faith, and you will live and die a better man. It is the best Book which God has given to man." - **Abraham Lincoln**, 16th president of the United States

Many people love the Bible. Don't you? I hope I have encouraged you to truly love the Word of God...

Give Me The Bible

Why I Obey The Bible

INTRODUCTION

1. In this series (“**Give Me The Bible**”), thus far we have explored...
 - a. The Problem Of Biblical Illiteracy
 - b. Why I Read The Bible
 - c. Why I Believe The Bible
 - d. Why I Love The Bible
2. But it does us no good to...
 - a. Read the Bible
 - b. Believe the Bible
 - c. Love the Bible
 - **If we are unwilling to obey the Bible!**

[To drive this point home, let’s first take a close look at...]

I. THE NECESSITY OF OBEDIENCE

A. AS TAUGHT BY JESUS...

1. **Necessary to enter the kingdom of heaven - Mt 7:21-23; Lk 6:46**
 - a. It is not enough to believe in Jesus as Lord
 - b. Not even to do many things in His name
 - c. We must do the will of His Father in heaven
 - d. We must do what Jesus says!
2. **Necessary to qualify as good soil - Lk 8:15**
 - a. It is not enough to hear (read) the Word of God
 - b. Not even to initially do what the Word says
 - c. We must receive the Word with good and noble hearts
 - d. We must bear fruit with patience!
3. **Necessary to be faithful disciples of Christ - Mt 28:18-20**
 - a. It is not enough to simply believe in Jesus
 - b. Not even to be baptized into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
 - c. We must be disciples of Christ (i.e., adherents)
 - d. We must observe (do) what He says!

B. AS TAUGHT BY HIS APOSTLES...

1. **Necessary in order to be saved - He 5:9**
 - a. Jesus is the author (source) of eternal salvation
 - b. But for those who obey Him!
2. **Necessary to avoid God’s wrath - Ro 2:4-11**
 - a. The goodness of God is designed to lead one to repent
 - b. The righteous judgment of God is coming, a day of wrath!
 - c. Eternal life is for “those who keep on doing good” (NLT)
 - d. Indignation and wrath is for those who do not obey the truth!

3. **Necessary to avoid eternal destruction - 1Pe 4:17; 2Th 1:7-9**
 - a. What will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel?
 - b. Vengeance in the form of everlasting destruction!

[Of course, we must understand that obedience does not earn or merit salvation (cf. **Ep 2:8-9; Tit 3:4-7; Lk 17:10**), but obedience is necessary nonetheless. Especially so when one considers...]

II. THE BLESSINGS OF OBEDIENCE

A. AS TAUGHT BY JESUS...

1. **Enables one to withstand the storms of life - Mt 7:24-27**
 - a. It is not enough to hear the sayings of Jesus
 - b. We must both hear and keep His says
 - c. Only then will we be blessed to stand strong against the storms of life!
2. **Qualifies one to be in the family of God - Lk 8:21**
 - a. It is not enough to simply listen to the Word of God
 - b. We must both hear and do it
 - c. Only then will we blessed to be a member of the family of God!
3. **The key to blessedness (joy) - Jn 13:17**
 - a. It is not enough to know what Jesus teaches
 - b. We must do what He teaches
 - c. The blessedness (joy) of following Jesus is in the doing!

B. AS TAUGHT BY HIS APOSTLES...

1. **Delivers from the bondage of sin - Ro 6:16-18**
 - a. We are slaves to that which we obey
 - b. When one obeys from the heart the doctrine of God, they are set free from sin!
2. **Purifies one's soul - 1Pe 1:22-23**
 - a. Obeying the truth purifies our souls
 - b. It leads to being born again by the Word of God
3. **Saves and blesses one's soul - Jm 1:21-25**
 - a. The Word has the potential to save our souls
 - b. But we must doers, not hearers only
 - c. Again, the blessedness (joy) is in the doing!

CONCLUSION

1. **Why do I obey the Bible?** Because obedience is necessary...
 - a. If we truly love Jesus - **Jn 14:15**
 - b. If we want Jesus and His Father to abide in us - **Jn 14:21-24; 15:10**
 - c. If we want to truly know the Lord and experience the love of God - **1Jn 2:3-5**
2. Again, such obedience is not an effort to earn or merit salvation...
 - a. Salvation is by grace through faith, not of works - **Ep 2:8-9**
 - b. But grace does not preclude obedience done in faith - **He 5:9**
 - c. We obey the Word of God, not to earn salvation, but to receive salvation!

As Jesus stated on one occasion: “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!” (**Lk 11:28**). Are you keeping (obeying) the Word of God in order to be blessed...?

Give Me The Bible

Why I Study The Old Testament

INTRODUCTION

1. What benefit is the Old Testament (OT) to the Christian today...?
 - a. Is the Christian under the OT as a system of justification?
 - b. Is the OT authoritative regarding the work, worship, and organization of the church?
-- **If not, why even bother with reading and studying the OT?**
2. It is true Christians are not under the OT...
 - a. Gentile Christians were never under the OT (or Old Covenant)
 - 1) The Old Covenant was made with the Israelites at Mt. Horeb (Sinai) - **Deu 5:1-2**
 - 2) Not even Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, etc., were under the Old Covenant - **Deu 5:3**
 - 3) Thus Gentile Christians were not required to be circumcised or keep the Law - **Ac 15:1-29**
 - b. Jewish Christians have been delivered from the OT law
 - 1) Through the body of Christ - **Ro 7:1-6**
 - 2) By His death on the cross, Jesus brought the OT covenant to an end - **Ep 2:14-16**
 - 3) It served to lead the Jews to Christ, a purpose fulfilled - **Ga 3:23-25**
3. Unfortunately, some conclude from this that we need not read the OT...
 - a. I have known Christians who had never read through the OT once
 - b. I have heard some who will not attend services if a study or sermon series is based on the OT
-- **“Why bother, if we are not under the OT?”, is the reasoning of some**
4. Is that the proper attitude of Christians toward the OT? This attitude...
 - a. Is wrong, contrary to the teaching of the NT itself!
 - b. Deprives the Christian of a wonderful source of peace and comfort
 - c. Prevents the Christian from gaining wisdom and understanding concerning the life that now is, and that which is to come!

[To help us to appreciate the value of the Old Testament, let's begin by asking...]

I. WHY STUDY THE OLD TESTAMENT?

A. WRITTEN FOR OUR LEARNING...

1. Note carefully what Paul wrote in **Ro 15:4**
 - a. Things “written before” (i.e., the OT) were “written for **our** learning”
 - b. The OT was written and preserved especially for the Christians’ benefit!
 - c. The OT provides “patience and comfort”, that we “might have hope”!
 2. The OT provides a record of God’s faithfulness, how He kept His promises:
 - a. To Abraham and the nation of Israel
 - b. To judge the wicked and avenge the righteous
 - c. To forgive the penitent, and protect the humble
- **The history of the OT is intended to give us hope that God will keep His promises to us!**

B. WRITTEN FOR OUR ADMONITION...

1. Paul reminded the Christians at Corinth of Israel's fall in the wilderness - **1Co 10:1-10**
 2. Note carefully what he says in **1Co 10:11**
 - a. The events described may have happened to Israel
 - b. But "they were written for **our** admonition..."
 - c. Again, the OT was written and preserved especially for the benefit of Christians!
 3. Other NT writers often appealed to the OT in admonishing Christians
 - a. The writer of Hebrews, in exhorting Christians to remain steadfast - **He 3:12-19**
 - b. James, in encouraging Christians to be patient in their suffering - **Jm 5:7-11**
 - c. Peter, in warning of false teachers and scoffers - **2Pe 2-3**
- **The history of the OT is intended to serve as a warning to Christians!**

C. MAKES ONE WISE REGARDING SALVATION IN CHRIST...

1. Paul noted that Timothy had known the "Holy Scriptures" since childhood - **2Ti 3:14**
 - a. When Timothy was a child, the only scriptures available was the OT
 - b. So Paul clearly had the OT in view
 2. He said the OT is "able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" - **2Ti 3:15**
 3. How is this possible? The OT provides:
 - a. The fall of man and the rise of sin
 - b. The background and development of God's scheme of redemption
 - c. Hundreds of Messianic prophecies which describe what to expect when He comes
 4. One cannot hope to fully understand such books of the New Testament like:
 - a. Hebrews, without an understanding of the Levitical priesthood
 - b. Revelation, without an understanding of OT prophecy and apocalyptic literature
- **If one is to be wise concerning salvation in Christ, studying the OT is imperative!**

D. PROFITABLE TO MAKE ONE COMPLETE...

1. Paul writes of the benefit of "All Scripture", which includes the OT - **2Ti 3:16-17**
 2. Therefore the OT is profitable for:
 - a. **Doctrine** - such as the nature of God, man, and sin
 - b. **Reproof and correction** - the need for repentance
 - c. **Instruction in righteousness** - how to live godly lives
 3. The apostles often appealed to the OT concerning Christians' conduct:
 - a. E.g., **Ro 12:19-21; 2Co 6:16-7:1; 9:7-10**
 - b. E.g., **Jm 2:20-26**
 - c. E.g., **1Pe 3:8-12**
- **There is much we can learn from the OT about truth and righteousness!**

[Should the Christian study the Old Testament? Of course! Along with the NT, it was written "that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." (**2Ti 3:17**)

To not read and study the OT is to deprive one of much admonition, learning, wisdom, and instruction that God intended for His children! In encouraging others to study the OT, let me offer...]

II. SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDYING THE OLD TESTAMENT

A. INCLUDE IN YOUR BIBLE READING PROGRAM...

1. Do not limit your daily Bible reading to just the New Testament
2. I encourage one to read the whole Bible through each year, both OT and NT

- a. One might start with Genesis and end with Revelation
 - b. Others prefer both OT and NT concurrently throughout the year
- **The important thing is make the OT a part of your regular study of the Bible**

B. USE A MODERN TRANSLATION...

1. I grew up on the KJV, had no problem with the NT, but found the OT extremely difficult
 2. In high school, I began reading the NASB, and the OT came alive for me!
- **I personally recommend either the NKJV, ESV, NASB**

C. TAKE ADVANTAGE OF STUDY BIBLES, SPECIAL CLASSES...

1. Study Bibles provide historical background, maps, drawings, etc. (e.g., ESV)
 2. If your congregation offers classes or sermons in the OT, take them!
- **Don't be like some who won't attend when the subject is from the OT**

D. GIVE FOCUS TO PSALMS, PROVERBS, AND THE PROPHETS...

1. Certainly all of God's word is of great value
 2. But one might appreciate the value of the OT more quickly, by giving attention to:
 - a. **The Psalms** - as a great source of comfort, peace, and drawing near to God, especially in troubling times
 - b. **The Proverbs** - as a great source of practical wisdom for everyday living
 - c. **The Prophets** - as a great source for learning about the righteousness, justice, mercy and love of God
- **This is not to suggest that we neglect the other parts of the OT**

CONCLUSION

1. Should we only study Scriptures pertaining to the covenant under which we live...?
 - a. Should Israel have discarded Genesis, and the first nineteen chapters of Exodus? No!
 - b. Should we discard the gospels, since Jesus lived and died under the Old Covenant? No!
2. Neither should we ignore the OT, for it provides...
 - a. The background and setting of the NT
 - b. Much in the way of admonition, learning, comfort, hope, even wisdom concerning salvation!

Be careful not to neglect that which was written and preserved for **OUR** benefit...

“For whatever things were written before were written for OUR learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.” -Ro 15:4

“Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for OUR admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.” - 1Co 10:11

And remember that...

*“ALL Scripture is inspired of God, and is profitable...”
2Ti 3:16*

Give Me The Bible

How I Read The Bible

INTRODUCTION

1. In this series (“**Give Me The Bible**”), thus far we have covered...
 - a. The Problem Of Biblical Illiteracy
 - b. Why I Read The Bible
 - c. Why I Believe The Bible
 - d. Why I Love The Bible
 - e. Why I Obey The Bible
 - f. Why I Study The Old Testament
2. In the final two lessons, I want to share thoughts related to...
 - a. How I Read The Bible
 - b. How I Study The Bible
3. For many years I have engaged in daily Bible reading...
 - a. Most years, reading through the Bible entirely
 - b. Every time I find reading the Bible a pleasurable and beneficial experience

[You might say that I have developed the habit of daily Bible reading. I’ll go further and say that I am positively addicted! How does one read the Bible with such enjoyment? First, it helps to remember...]

I. WE NEED TO CREATE A GOOD HABIT

A. THE ROLE OF HABITS...

1. We either have good habits or bad habits
2. If we have not developed the **good** habit of daily Bible reading...
3. Then we have developed the **bad** habit of NOT reading the Bible daily!

B. THE REALITY OF TIME...

1. As illustrated by James, our time on earth is brief - **Jm 4:14**
2. If we have not developed the **good** habit of daily Bible reading...
3. ...our time on this earth will one day catch up with us
 - a. We will have spent our lives on this earth without utilizing the benefits provided by daily reading of God’s Word
 - b. Many will have to face God having never read through His Word **once!**

[Assuming that we all desire to develop **the good habit** of daily Bible reading...]

II. WE NEED TO CREATE A POSITIVE ADDICTION

A. WHAT IS A POSITIVE ADDICTION...?

1. Usually when we hear the word addiction, we think of **negative addictions**
 - a. Which is simply another phrase for **bad habits**
 - b. Such as smoking, swearing, drinking, gambling
 - c. When something bad for us:
 - 1) Becomes “second nature”
 - 2) We do it without much effort or thought

- d. We become dependent on it, either emotionally or physically
- e. When we try to do without it, we experience various degrees of discomfort
- 2. **Positive addiction** is when you become dependent upon a **good habit**
 - a. For example, exercise can become a positive addiction
 - 1) Those who have made exercise a pleasurable and frequent experience soon become “addicted” to it
 - 2) So that if they go a few days without exercise, they feel uneasy, depressed, irritable
 - 3) Of course, if they go without exercise long enough, the discomfort will eventually pass
 - b. So a positive addiction is a habit which is:
 - 1) Good for you, either physically, mentally, or spiritually
 - 2) A source of pleasure and satisfaction
 - 3) One that should you neglect it, begins to give you “withdrawal pains”

B. WHY CREATE A POSITIVE ADDICTION TO BIBLE READING...?

- 1. It will help you maintain the practice of reading the Bible
- 2. Should a few days go by without reading the Bible, the “discomfort” experienced will help motivate you to get “back on track”
- 3. Most people who have tried to read the Bible daily and did not keep it up...
 - a. Never experienced a positive addiction to reading God’s Word
 - b. Rather than a pleasurable experience, it was a chore
 - c. So when they fell behind in their goals, there was little motivation to catch up

[Having explained what I mean by “positive addiction”, here are some thoughts on...]

III. HOW TO CREATE A POSITIVE ADDICTION FOR BIBLE READING

A. PRINCIPLES ARE THE SAME FOR CREATING ANY ADDICTION...

- 1. You must make the experience a pleasurable one
 - a. This is where many people fail when it comes to “exercise”
 - b. Going about it the wrong way, the daily workouts are painful and miserable
 - c. Therefore any excuse not to exercise prevents them from keeping it up
- 2. The same applies to reading the Bible
 - a. To many, they try to do too much too soon
 - b. The experience soon becomes little more than “marking a checklist”

B. SUGGESTIONS RELATED TO BIBLE READING...

- 1. **Make Bible reading a pleasurable experience**
 - a. An addiction requires a pleasurable habit
 - b. The goal: “I rejoice at Your word As one who finds great treasure.” - **Ps 119:162**
- 2. **Start slow, with small goals**
 - a. Many try to start by reading through the Bible in one year
 - 1) An admirable goal, but most never make it past Exodus or Leviticus
 - 2) Before Bible reading has become a positive addiction, they run into difficult passages of Scripture
 - 3) They are like beginning joggers who try to run a mile the first time out
 - b. I would recommend starting with making the New Testament a yearly goal
 - 1) This requires no more than a chapter a day
 - 2) The material is easier, more edifying at the outset

- c. Once you have read the New Testament in a year a couple of times
 - 1) You might read through the Old Testament one year
 - 2) Then begin reading through the entire Bible each year
3. **Begin each session with prayer**
 - a. Like that found in **Psa 119:18**: “Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from Your Law.”
 - b. This puts us in the most receptive frame of mind - cf. **Jm 1:21**
4. **Read slowly, carefully**
 - a. This prevents reading without comprehending what you read - cf. **Ps 1:1-2; 119:15-16**
 - b. Reading **out loud**, as though you were reading to someone else, often helps
5. **Make use of Bible study aids**
 - a. Especially a Bible dictionary, and Bible maps
 - b. Don't observe the “pass over”, passing over...
 - 1) Words you don't understand
 - 2) Names you don't know
 - 3) Places unfamiliar to you
 - c. Every time you do, there is that much more of the Bible you don't understand, don't get anything out of it
 - d. Take a moment to look them up in the references
6. **Discuss what you read with others**
 - a. Encourage others to follow the same program of reading
 - b. Share your discoveries, the passages that encourage you
7. **Read with the intention to do what it says**
 - a. Otherwise, you are wasting your time! - **Jm 1:22-24**
 - b. The true joy comes in the application of God's Word (another “positive addiction” to develop) - **Jm 1:25**
8. **End each session with prayer**
 - a. Like that expressed in **Ps 119:5-6**
 - b. Or the one found in **Ps 119:10-11**

CONCLUSION

1. Following these suggestions, the practice of reading the Bible becomes one of great joy:

“I rejoice at Your word as one who finds great treasure.” - Ps 119:162

2. Done on a regular basis, a **positive addiction** for daily Bible reading quickly develops which helps one to keep up this wonderful habit
3. I hope that in some way I have encouraged everyone...
 - a. To begin if they have never done so
 - b. To continue if they are doing so
 - c. To try again if they tried in the past and failed

For there is so much to gain, and there is so much to lose...!

Give Me The Bible

How I Study The Bible

INTRODUCTION

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 - a. The Problem Of Biblical Illiteracy
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 - d. Why I Love The Bible
 - e. Why I Obey The Bible
 - f. Why I Study The Old Testament
 - g. How I Read The Bible
2. In this final lesson I wish to share thoughts related to **studying the Bible**...
 - a. To ensure proper comprehension
 - b. To avoid misapplying the Bible
3. Not all Bible study proves profitable...
 - a. We must handle the Word of God properly - **2Ti 2:15**
 - b. Some twist the Scriptures to their own destruction - **2Pe 3:16**

[This is not a definitive treatment of Bible exegesis, but a few thoughts that I keep in mind as I study the Bible. First, in a positive vein, with regards to...]

I. SEEKING COMPREHENSION

A. BASIC STUDY PRINCIPLES...

1. **Study the Bible the way it was written**
 - a. The Word of God was revealed book by book; shouldn't we study it the same way?
 - b. Many limit the bulk of their Bible study to topical studies or certain texts
 - c. This increases the possibility of taking things out of context
 - d. Truth requires **considering all** that God has revealed - cf. **Ps 119:160**
 - e. Words, phrases, passages, should be studied in the context of their respective books
 - f. “The Word of God well understood and religiously obeyed is the shortest route to spiritual perfection. And we must not select a few favorite passages to the exclusion of others. Nothing less than a whole Bible can make a whole Christian.” - **A. W. Tozer**
 - g. “The Bible is a harp with a thousand strings. Play on one to the exclusion of its relationship to the others, and you will develop discord. Play on all of them, keeping them in their places in the divine scale, and you will hear heavenly music all the time.” - **William P. White**
2. **Study both privately and corporately**
 - a. Some study only when at church (**corporately**)
 - 1) Unprepared to truly benefit from their studies with others
 - 2) Unlikely to know when others may misinterpret or misapply the text
 - 3) “We have become so accustomed to hearing preachers or expositors, as important as that is, that many in the process have abandoned the grand privilege of personally hearing from God's Word daily.” - **Ravi Zacharias**
 - b. Some study only by themselves (**privately**)
 - 1) Not appreciating assistance from others - e.g., **Lk 24:44-45; Ac 8:30-31**

- 2) More likely to fall prey to misinterpretation or false teaching
3. **Study with the proper spirit**
 - a. With meekness, humility - **Jm 1:21; Ps 25:9**
 - b. This why I believe the bulk of one's study should be in the form of daily devotional reading, accompanied with meditation and prayer - **Ps 86:11; 119:33**
 - c. "Reading the Bible without meditating on it is like trying to eat without swallowing."
- **Anonymous**

B. BASIC STUDY TOOLS...

1. **Good translation**
 - a. Accurate, but readable
 - b. Word for word translations preferred; thought for thought suitable for comparison
 - c. Suggested: ESV, NKJV, NASB (word for word); NLT (thought for thought)
2. **Readable layout**
 - a. Font size - suitable for reading (for me, that means at least 10 point!)
 - b. Paper - minimal ghosting or bleed through (text visible from other side)
 - c. Paragraph vs. verse by verse (personal preferences may vary)
 - d. The layout of the text on paper should be easy on the eyes and comprehension
3. **Dictionaries, maps, study Bibles**
 - a. To look up the meaning of words, geographical information
 - b. If we don't know the meaning of a word, we won't know the meaning of the text
 - c. A good grasp of geographical information enhances Biblical understanding
 - d. Beware of study Bibles with notes by one person, or a particular theological bias
 - e. Suggested: ESV Study Bible, NLT Study Bible
4. **Markup tools**
 - a. Many have found writing marginal notes, highlighting words or phrases helpful
 - b. I like to highlight as I read, with a [Zebra Eco Zebrite Double-Ended Highlighter](#)
 - c. For notes, many recommend this pen: [Pigma Micron Pen #005 0.2mm](#)

[Other study tools are certainly available, perhaps best recommended by a mature Christian. Now for some thoughts related to how we might avoid misapplying the Bible...]

II. AVOIDING MISAPPLICATION

A. BEWARE OF REACTIONARY THEOLOGY...

1. This terminology is one of my own making
2. Studying the Bible, but mostly in reaction to false teaching
3. To prove others wrong, rather than to learn what is right for oneself
4. Applying texts based on usefulness in making a religious argument
5. We should study to learn and obey truth first, then to examine and expose error

B. BEWARE OF CONCORDANCE THEOLOGY...

1. Another terminology of my own making
2. Studying the Bible with an overdependence of a concordance
3. Assuming scriptures listed under a similar topic are necessarily related
4. Applying texts without contextual considerations
5. We should study the context first, then words in their particular context

C. BEWARE OF CONFUSING THE COVENANTS...

1. The Bible speaks of two covenants - **Ga 4:24-26**
 - a. One first and old, the other second and new - **He 8:7-13; 9:15; 12:24**
 - b. The latter being better, coming of force when Jesus died - **He 7:22; 8:6; 9:15-17**
2. Failure to distinguish leads to much confusion
 - a. Many appeal to OT to justify worship and practice
 - b. Christians live under the new covenant of our Lord and Savior
3. Some examples: Sabbath keeping, instrumental worship, separate priesthood

D. BEWARE OF NOT SEEING THE FOREST FOR THE TREES...

1. Developing doctrines based on a few select passages
2. Often ignoring other passages which contradict their conclusions
3. Some examples: Calvinism, pre-millennialism, full preterism

E. BEWARE OF ROOT FALLACIES...

1. Supposing etymology determines meaning, that words are defined by their roots
2. Not necessarily; words are defined by their usage, which may be quite different
3. English example: **nice** (from Latin, **nescius**, meaning ignorant!)
4. Greek example: **church (ecclesia, called out)** - properly defined as assembly, congregation
5. We must be careful to define words as used in their historical setting

F. BEWARE OF IGNORING DIVERSE MEANINGS...

1. Assuming that a particular word or phrase means the same in every place
2. Words often have more than one meaning
3. English example: **run** (has at least 28 different meanings!)
4. Hebrew example: **spirit** (has at least 9 different meanings)
5. We must let the context define how a word or phrase is to be understood

G. BEWARE OF NOT WAITING FOR THE CONCLUSION...

1. Developing doctrines based on statements midway through the discussion
2. Which may contradict the author's own concluding statements
3. I see this especially involving Paul's lengthy and difficult arguments - cf. **2Pe 3:15-16**
4. Example: Concluding that God predestines some to be lost, when God desires to show mercy on all - cf. **Ro 9:15-24** with **Ro 11:32**; cf. **1Ti 2:4-6; 2Pe 3:9**

H. BEWARE OF MISHANDLING PROPHECIES...

1. Interpreting prophecies literally when they may be fulfilled figuratively
2. This was the mistake of the Jews in Jesus' day regarding the nature of the kingdom
3. The apostles needed divine interpretation to understand OT prophecies - **Lk 24:44-47**
4. We do well to let the NT interpret OT prophecies; where the NT is silent on OT prophecies, we should be cautious and not dogmatic in our interpretations

CONCLUSION

1. For the person willing to study the Bible carefully, there is great reward... - **Ps 1:1-3**
2. "The Bible is...as necessary to spiritual life as breath is to natural life. There is nothing more essential to our lives than the Word of God." - **Jack Hayford**

I pray that this series of outlines will encourage you to let the Bible transform your life!