

## READING THE BIBLE EVERY YEAR

### Introduction

- A. Text: **Psa. 1:1-3**.
- B. Outsiders are often amazed at how much members of the churches of Christ “know about the Bible.”
- C. Yet, it is possible to talk as if we know a great deal about the Bible without really knowing the text itself — and our real level of understanding of the Book of God may not be as full as it appears.
- D. We may fail, even after many years, to have an adequate working knowledge of *the Bible as a whole*.
  - 1. “And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able” (**1 Cor. 3:1,2**).
  - 2. “For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil” (**Hb. 5:12-14**).
- E. One reason for this may be our failure to *read the entire Bible on a regular basis*.
- F. There is much to be said for having a plan for reading the Bible from cover to cover every year.

### I. WHAT WE LOSE WHEN WE DO NOT READ THE BIBLE COMPLETELY

- A. We need to know not only details about certain parts of the Bible, but the Bible as a whole.
  - 1. If we are not careful, our Bible study methods will cause us to lose sight of the forest as we look at the individual trees.
  - 2. Without reading the Bible completely through on a regular basis, it is difficult to have a comprehensive, overall knowledge of the book.
- B. Here are some possible consequences when we fail to expose ourselves regularly to the entire Bible:
  - 1. We will have less knowledge of the story of the Bible as a whole.
  - 2. We will have less knowledge of the theme of the Bible: the scheme of redemption, the plan through which God brought salvation into the world.
  - 3. We will have less knowledge of the overall structure of the Bible, how it is put together.
  - 4. We will have less knowledge of the different kinds of literature in the Bible: history, poetry, prophecy, gospels, epistles, etc.
  - 5. We will have less understanding of how the parts of the Bible relate to one another: history/prophets, gospels/epistles, Acts/epistles, etc.
  - 6. We will have less understanding of how the Old Testament is related to the New Testament, and how knowing the Old Testament helps us understand the New Testament.
  - 7. We will have less knowledge of the relationship of individual books to one another: Luke/Acts, Colossians/Philemon, etc.
  - 8. We will have less knowledge of basic Bible history, the background of the various books, etc.
  - 9. We will have less knowledge of the basic contents of each of the books of the Bible.
  - 10. We will have less knowledge of the larger context of the Bible.
  - 11. We will have no “framework,” no “pegs” on which to hang our individual bits of Bible knowledge.
- C. The most serious consequence of failing to acquaint ourselves with the Bible as a whole is that we will

not be able to *use* the Bible skillfully.

1. "Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (**Eph. 6:17**).
2. "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (**2 Tim. 2:15**).

## II. THE NEED FOR REPEATED EXPOSURE TO THE ENTIRE TEXT OF THE BIBLE

- A. Learning the Bible as a whole is somewhat like brushing a dog's coat: it is the patient, repeated "going over it" that gets the job done.
- B. Repeated reading of the entire Bible is really the only way to remember both the location and the context of passages that we frequently need to use in helping those around us.
- C. Repeated reading of the entire Bible is the best way to hold onto our memory work from the Bible.

## III. SOME SUGGESTIONS CONCERNING A DAILY BIBLE READING PROGRAM

- A. We should formulate our daily Bible reading plans with determination — and make sacrifices to keep worldly matters from interfering.
- B. A set time each day to accomplish our personal Bible reading is best.
- C. There are a number of different Bible reading plans and schedules available.
- D. When we "fall behind," it is probably better simply to get back on track, rather than try to make up all the readings we have missed.
- E. Bible reading ought to be accompanied by prayer. We need to pray for:
  1. An honest and obedient attitude.
  2. Understanding of the text. Cf. "Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from Your law" (**Psa. 119:18**).
  3. Help in using what we know to serve others.

## Conclusion

- A. Daily Bible reading is, of course, no substitute for intensive study of the Bible — but periodic reading of the whole Bible would seem to be the necessary starting point for Bible study.
- B. Young Christians, as well as other, need to read the Bible regularly — it is never too early to begin forming the habit of daily Scripture reading - **2 Tim. 3:14,15**.
- C. We need to be a "people of the Book."
  1. God's word is the food whereby we grow: "As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby" (**1 Pt. 2:2**).
  2. God's word is the light whereby we are guided: "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (**Psa. 119:105**).
- D. No matter how much we know "about" the Bible, there is simply no substitute for knowing the Bible itself - **2 Tim. 3:16,17**.