

BEGINNER'S GUIDE: BASIC BIBLE READING

There are certain regular practices that every new Christian should get accustomed to if he or she wants to experience all that God has to offer. Those practices include:

- Bible Reading
- Prayer
- Church Attendance
- Sharing your Faith, and
- Obedience to God's Word

This study explores the basic practice of Bible reading, how to read the Bible, and how through that reading you can experience significant changes in your life.

Do you want to experience all that God has in store for you? The gateway to much of that experience is in the scripture. The Bible says of itself: "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work" (II Timothy 3:16-17).

I was once asked by a young Christian why he couldn't hear God speak. He said that he didn't have time to read the Bible but wanted to hear God speak. I told him, "If you aren't listening to what God has already said in the Bible then why would He have anything else to say to you?"

As you learn to read and love the scripture you will find a treasure of wisdom and help for everything you need in life.

READING THE BIBLE EDUCATES US

Read: II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:3-4; Deuteronomy 30:11-14

The Bible presents itself as historical and factual, not a book of philosophy. We should therefore treat it as such.

(II Timothy 3:16-17)

The writers of the Bible were not philosophers trying to communicate a new way of living. They were average men who God inspired to write accounts of his plan to redeem man from the ravages of sin. The Bible is an historical document, telling the history of God's relationship with man.

Read chapters 3 and 4 in the book of Genesis. What does it tell you about man's nature?

The Bible presents itself as the inspired Word of God. As such, it has authority to instruct you in every area of your life.

(II Peter 1:3-4)

Because the Bible is inspired by God it carries God's authority. It is through God's authority that we are able to live transformed lives. No other book or writing in history has the authority to change us the way the Bible has.

How has reading the Bible changed you so far? What ideas or lifestyle habits have you already changed in your first experiences with the Bible?

The Bible presents itself as truth. The Bible is accurate and trustworthy for every topic that it addresses, therefore, we should trust it.

(Deuteronomy 30:11-14)

Since God is the Creator of all things—even us—it stands to reason that God is trustworthy when He has something to say in the Bible about our lives.

In your reading of the Bible so far, what do you see in its pages that are relevant to your life? Will you trust it?

KNOWING THE BIBLE CHANGES US

Read: Romans 4:23-24; 15:4; II Timothy 3:16-17; John 17:17

Because the Bible is historical and factual it has many examples in its pages that we can apply to our lives.

(Romans 4:23-24; 15:4)

The Bible is not simply a book of philosophy or stories. The objective of the Bible is to provide life-changing transformation for the person who trusts its truth. Throughout the Bible there are many examples to follow to help us become all that God wants us to be. You get to know the Bible by reading it!

As you read the stories about Jesus in the New Testament, what stands out to you about Jesus' character that you want to emulate?

If we trust the Bible as inspired and authoritative then we can experience personal transformation facilitated by its pages.

(II Timothy 3:16-17)

When we say the Bible is inspired it means that its words come from God who inspired certain writers to write them down for our benefit. When we say it is authoritative we mean that the Bible carries God's authority to transform us since it comes from God.

How can you express your trust in the Bible to transform you? How can you act upon what you read in the Bible to help change your life?

The Bible can help us become people of truth.

(John 17:17)

The Bible can help us become people of truth because the Bible is truth. When we trust its words as coming from God we can change our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors to make our character more in line with God's truth.

Do you want to become a person of truth? Why? What can you do today to express your trust in God's truth?

SHARING THE BIBLE CHANGES OTHERS

Read: Matthew 28:19-20; James 1:21-25; I Corinthians 11:1

When we share the Bible with others it can help change their lives.

(Matthew 28:19-20)

Every Christian is called by God to share his word with others. When we teach others to observe his commands we are sharing his word, his truth. Just as your life is changed by God's word, so too you can help change others by sharing what you know from the Bible.

Have you recently told anyone about your experience with Jesus? Telling others about Jesus can be life changing. Who will you share with today?

Our Bible reading is incomplete unless we allow it to work a change in our lives.

(James 1:21-25)

Imagine if you studied for a career in school but forgot everything you learned. Where would you career be? Your schooling would have been a waste. So too, the Bible has many things to teach us. As our lives change, others see that and it can have an impact on them as well.

What do others see in your relationship with Jesus that they would like to have? How can your life transformation be an example to others?

By becoming people of truth, guided by the scriptures, we can live as an example to others of how God can change a person's life.

(I Corinthians 11:1)

Your life might be the only Bible that some people read. Therefore, how we live our lives in front of others is important to helping them see the light and truth of Jesus.

How are you trying to imitate Christ today? Do you know of any other Christians whom you would feel confident in imitating their way of life?

