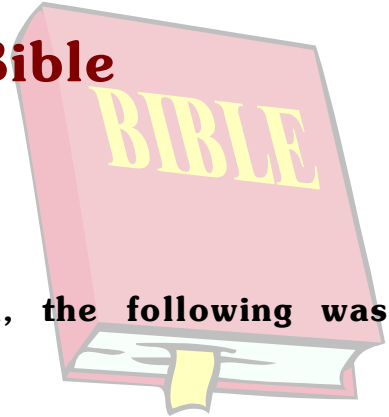


Introduction to the Bible



Introduction

1. Based on an October, 2000 Gallup Poll, the following was determined in regard to the Bible:

OVERALL:

- A. Readership has declined from the 1980's from 73% to 59% today.
- B. Those who read the Bible at least once per week has decreased from 40% in 1990 to 37% today.
- C. Only 16% of Americans read their Bible daily, 21% weekly, 12% monthly, 10% less than a month, and 41% rarely or never read it.

RELEVANCE OF THE BIBLE:

- A. 65% of Americans agree that the Bible answers all or most of the basic questions of life. Only half of those who believe this, read it at least weekly. 28% say they rarely or never read the Bible.
- B. The more educated regard the Bible as a less comprehensive guide to life than the less educated (46% with a postgraduate degree vs. 72% with a high school education of less).
- C. 35% say they are "very interested" in learning more about the Bible, 40% somewhat interested and 24% have no interest in learning more about the Bible.

WHAT IS DISTINCTIVE ABOUT BIBLE READERS?

- A. See Overhead Chart of percentage breakdowns by category.

OTHER FINDINGS:

- A. Favorite book: Psalms (13%) NOTE: The book of Joseph received less than 1%.
- B. 40% believe that the whole Bible (Old and New Testament) was written several decades after the death of Jesus. (Barna Research)
- C. 30% weren't sure which Testament the prophecies of Isaiah were in. (Barna Research)

2. Some Basic Bible Facts: (See charts)

Why Should We Read the Bible?

A member of the church invited her friend to a meeting of the church one night. The next day at lunch, the member asked, "well, what do you think of our services?" "Oh" replied the visitor, "I enjoyed it but it was really different. I noticed so many with Bibles who, every time the preacher mentioned a verse, they looked it up. We don't do that in our church, we trust the pastor. Don't you all trust your preacher?"

One of the very distinguishing marks of difference in the Lord's church and denominationalism is this very thing. We use the Bible.

We should want to read the Bible because:

1. **That is how we learn of God**

Proverbs 2:1-5

2 Tim 3:14-17 But you must **continue in the things which you have learned** and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are **able to make you wise for salvation through faith** which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

A. Under the Law of Moses the scriptures were to be read!

- 1) **Exodus 24:7** - Moses read the law to the people
- 2) **Deuteronomy 17:18-20** - The Kings were instructed to read it
- 3) **Deuteronomy 31:11** - It was to be read publicly
- 4) **Joshua 8:34-35** - Joshua read the law publicly at Mt. Ebal
- 5) **Nehemiah 8:1-8** - At the rebuilding of the walls, the law was read

B. As we read through the pages of the Old Testament, we see that only those nations, kings, people, that read and learned of God were blessed.

C. There are three categories of leaning: SEE CHART

2. **To maintain spiritual life**

Matt 4:4 But He answered and said, "**It is written**, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.' "

Job 23:12 I have **not departed from the commandment of His lips**; I have treasured the words of His mouth More than my necessary food.

3. To be sure of the truth

1 Peter 4:11 If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God....

Acts 17:11 These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.

1 Thess 5:21-22 Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil.

A. Jesus fully expected the Jews of His day to have read and known the scriptures. Notice what He says in a few passages:

- 1) **Matthew 12:1-5** - The Pharisees accused Jesus' disciples of breaking the law. Jesus referred them to two OT examples.
- 2) **Matthew 19:3-12** - The Pharisees tried Jesus by asking Him about divorce. He answered them by saying "Have you not read...."
- 3) **Matthew 21:12-16** - After Jesus cleaned the temple out, children were praising Him. The chief priests and the scribes questioned Him about it. Jesus began his answer with "Yea: did you never read...."
- 4) **Matthew 21:42** - Jesus just told the parable of the wicked husbandmen. Then He asked, "Did you never read in the scriptures....."
- 5) **Matthew 22:31** - Jesus was asked about the resurrection. He answered by saying "Have you not read...."
- 6) **Luke 10:25-26** - Jesus was asked about inheriting eternal life. He directed the man's attention toward the law.

B. We can know how to answer people when we know the truth. Jesus said:

John 8:32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

4. To avoid sin

Ps 119:11 Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You!

John 17:17 Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.

1 Cor 15:34 Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame.

Hosea 4:6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; Because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.

Hebrews 5:12-14

A. We can't avoid sin if we can't identify sin. God tells us sin is lawlessness (1 John 3:4). We need the Bible to learn what is contrary to God's law in order to be pleasing to Him.

5. To come to Christ

John 5:38-40 But you **do not have His word abiding in you**, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe. You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.

Matthew 11:28-30

A. The words of Jesus and His words only will judge us!

John 12:48 He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him--the word that **I have spoken** will judge him in the last day.

Conclusion

1. **It is truly sad that the majority of people do not feel it necessary to actively read the word of God to know Him and to know what one must do in order to be saved.**
 - A. **The greatest of all books, the best selling book of all time, the book that just about every person has a copy of, is the least read book of all.**
2. **Could it be that the great prophet Isaiah's words of long ago are still needed today?**

Isa 34:16 "Search from the book of the LORD, **and read.....**"

3. **I want to encourage you to come to Christ by accepting what the Bible teaches about Him and what He teaches us to do in order to be saved.**

Invitation

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