

Bible Reading That Does Little Good

by Bill Crews

1. **Reading just to read through the Bible.** Not everyone who reads through the entire Bible digests very much of it. Many think that some special blessing is to follow merely because they read the Bible through, and they often tell others how many times they have read “the good book” through. This is not said to dissuade anyone from reading through the Bible or to encourage anyone to never read the entire Bible. We should always read with a will to do God’s will — John 7:17.
2. **Reading just to be a daily Bible reader.** With many this is an end in itself, rather than a means to an end (such as to have a greater respect for, a greater understanding of, a greater knowledge of and a better foundation for doing the will of God).
3. **Reading haphazardly or reading randomly.** Many people, who have thus read the Bible most of their lives, have little conception of the plan and purpose of the Bible. Not because they never read it, but because they read it with no reasonable plan in mind. Wherever they chanced to open the Bible determined what they read.
4. **Reading without ever studying.** Surely anyone can cover page after page of reading material without ever understanding or remembering what he has read. Certainly we ought to read the whole Bible through, and we ought to read the Bible daily, but we must read the Bible systematically and with the intent of learning and doing God’s will. This will require planning, effort, studying, meditating.
5. **Reading in order to receive a blessing for merely reading.** Some have the mistaken notion that God will bless them simply because they go through the motion of reading. They fail to realize that the blessing must come through what they learn by reading and not from the mere act of reading. We must “*hunger and thirst after righteousness*” (Matthew 5 :6) and “*will to do the will of God*” (John 7: 17).
6. **Reading to receive notice or credit from men.** The primary reason some people read the Bible is because in their Sunday Bible class (or “Sunday school”) they are going to be asked if they were “daily Bible readers” the previous week and, perhaps, how many chapters they read (when I was a child, this was done in two churches, as I remember). No one wanted to have to answer “no.”
7. **Reading to prove something already believed.** Many in the various denominations do this. We ought to allow the Bible, and the Bible only, to determine what we believe in matters religious or spiritual. Faith comes by hearing the word of the Lord (Romans 10:17), but often people go to the Bible to find some proof or support for something they have already accepted as true apart from the Bible.
8. **Reading to prove someone else wrong.** Certainly sin and error should be identified and opposed, but the Bible should never be used to serve our own personal desires, such as a desire to prove others wrong and ourselves right. We should so read the Bible that we are able to teach others the truth (2 Timothy 2:2) and to give an answer to anyone who asks a reason for the hope that is in us ((1 Peter 3:15).
9. **Reading our favorite passages.** If our Bible reading becomes a mere matter of reading our favorite passages, we will understand little and profit less.

The Bible should be read prayerfully, diligently, steadfastly, consistently, thoroughly for the purpose of understanding and learning God's will for us that we might be able to both live by it and teach it to others.

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