

Should Christians Read Through The Bible?

by Wayne Goff

Various experts were quizzed over the question of annual Bible reading plans. Every year professed disciples of Christ feel the *urge* to read through the entire Bible, and find a reading schedule to follow. But the question remains about how much good it does to read the entire Bible through on a regular basis. Here are some of their observations:

“If a reading plan motivates you, use it. But if it becomes a chore that deters you from Scripture, don’t get caught up in the method; remember the reason.” [Rachel Barach, general manager, BibleGateway.com].

“I’m hesitant to prescribe when or how much people should read. It’s important to grasp the big story and how each smaller story (including ours) fits in. The time required depends on the person. There is no one-size-fits-all.” [Kevin Scott, acquisitions editor, Wesleyan Publishing House].

“It’s a good thing for every Christian’s ‘bucket list,’ but I’ve never been a big fan. Most people never get past February; they hit Leviticus and give up...” [Whitney Kuniholm, president of Scripture Union USA].

What Should I Do?

First, every Christian must realize the necessity of proper Bible study. The oft-quoted, simple but profound statement: “*Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*” (Rom. 10:17) cannot be ignored! If you do not study God’s Word at all, or very little, then your faith will vanish!

At the same time, studying God’s Word out of guilt, or out of obligation, or out of necessity is not very fruitful. If one **resents** the time spent studying the Bible — whether it’s to complete a Bible class lesson, or in conjunction with a follow-up on a sermon, or even to teach a Bible class yourself — then that very resentment will act as a *mental barrier*, hindering proper understanding and personal application. None of us respond well to that which we are forced to do!

On the other hand, heaven is the stated **goal** of every Christian! It is the “*one hope of your calling*” (Eph. 4:4)! Simply put, it is the *motivation* for what we do as Christians! So when we view Bible study as a *mind-transforming* event that makes us more God-like, and more suitable to our heavenly home, it becomes a much desired thing. Paul urges us all to “*be renewed in the spirit of your mind*” (Eph. 4:23) as we “*put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness*” (Eph. 4:24). We **become** what we think about. So if we **think** on God’s Word, then we will *become* more like Him! That’s a wonderful thought, and a mighty motivation.

Can I Do It?

Each one of us needs to find a *method* of Bible study that suits us. The expert who said there is not a “one-size-fits-all” method was exactly right. Some love to read, and they do it often, and well. Others learn more by listening, or by hearing and doing. Nearly all of us learn well be *seeing* what we learn as well. I know that I am a very visual learner. So I have always used visual aids in my preaching and teaching. So analyze your personality and find a method that fits you.

An average reader can read the entire Bible in about 72 hours! But *reading* it, and *comprehending* it are not necessarily the same thing. Just the same, there is value to reading an entire Bible book through. Again, as another expert said, “Feasting on whole books and getting immersed in the narrative is healthier than snacking on Bible McNuggets” [Glen Paawu, Bible Publisher].

As someone has said: “The Bible is not a museum piece to be admired at a distance and dusted now and again. It is a treasure to be polished. It is a tool to be used. It is a light to be shined. It is a mirror to be viewed. It is a sword to be sharpened. It is food to be digested.” So study God’s Word and learn to make it a loving habit. It is good for the soul.

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