

Rid Your Heart of These False Motives for Reading Your Bible

Why do we read the Bible?

Have you ever asked yourself that question? Have you ever wondered why reading the Bible is so important for Christians?

There is one really good reason why we should read our Bibles.

It has been stated that the Bible is the most-sold book in all of history.

It has been called a history book.

A love letter from God.

While these statements may be true, in a sense, they are not the reason why we should make it a daily discipline to read the Bible.

If we approach the Bible as a best-seller, we insult the power of its words.

If we approach the Bible as a mere history book, we degrade the importance of its inspiration.

If we approach the Bible as a love letter, we fail to understand the purpose of why it was given to us to read.

The one really good reason to read your Bible is to get to know God.

This is the single greatest difference between Christianity and every other religion.

The god of every other religion is unapproachable,

unpredictable, and incapable of clearly defining his wishes. This unpredictable nature creates a great fear in the hearts of his followers. They can never know if they have pleased him or called his wrath down on their heads.

But Almighty God, chose to make Himself known to mankind, even as we are known by Him.

That thought is mind-blowing. How are you known by God?

You are known so intimately that no human could ever know another human being as intimately as God knows you. Before He created the world, He had already mapped out every detail of you in a book. He knows the number of hairs on your head right now. He knows every motive behind everything you say, do, or think.

He, in fact, knows you better than you know yourself, because we're so prone to allow our own rationalizations to deceive us.

God wants us to know Him this intimately.

And so, He gave us the Bible.

The Bible has also been called an instruction manual for life, but even that isn't the purpose of the Bible. God didn't give us the Bible to tell us how to live our lives; He gave us the Bible so we could get to know Him.

The more we get to know God intimately, the more we will want to glorify Him through our lives.

The more we seek to glorify God through our lives, the more we will want to keep His commandments and do those things He instructed us to do.

Keeping His commands, however, must always flow out of relationship with God.

And that's what the Bible comes down to:

Relationship

Getting to know God intimately so that our lives look more like Him, so that His light can shine brightly through our lives, so that our lives reflect His love and grace to the world.

So, how well do you know God? {eoa}

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Exclusive: New Pro-Life Campaign Humanizes the Victims of Abortion

With the pro-life movement fighting to strip abortion provider Planned Parenthood of federal tax dollars, the abortion issue has remained in the headlines. But too often forgotten in the battle over abortion are those most affected by it: the unborn

children whose lives are taken by abortion 2,537 times a day. To remind the nation of the injustice suffered by these hidden victims of abortion, the Pro-Life Action League is launching a new campaign, entitled "They Were Our Brothers and Sisters," premiering July 7-15 throughout the Chicago area.

At busy intersections, Pro-Life Action League volunteers will hold large signs featuring carefully selected images of abortion victims, with captions designed to evoke sympathy from passersby.

The most prominent of these new signs features a close-up of the face of a child aborted at 15 weeks, with large text reading, "His only baby picture." Other signs show the hands of an abortion victim at 11 weeks and the tiny foot of a child aborted at eight weeks, with captions reading "Ten perfect fingers," and, "She'll never learn to walk."

Eric Scheidler, executive director of the Chicago-based Pro-Life Action League, explains that, while the public display of abortion victim photos has been done before, the league's campaign is something new. "We combed through hundreds of abortion photos to find those that would most highlight the humanity of abortion's unborn victims. Rather than emphasizing the blood and gore of the abortion procedure, the emphasis has been shifted to the lost lives of these children."

Building on 18 years of experience showing abortion victim photos in public throughout the United States, Scheidler is confident this new campaign will make a difference. "Our new signs and literature invite viewers to consider abortion not just as a political controversy or moral question, but as a real, human tragedy, with victims who deserve our sympathy," Scheidler said.

"They Were Our Brothers and Sisters" kicks off in the Chicago area on July 7, with 24 stops over eight days. {eoa}

Stand in the Gap This Independence Day With This Prayer Focus

My, how time flies! The older we get, the quicker it seems to go. Here we are ready to celebrate another Independence Day, complete with family and friends gathering for summer festivities, cookouts, patriotic songs, parades, fireworks and other traditions.

It also marks the midway point through the year. Can you believe it? Seems like we just had an election and a change in administration, and here we are, halfway through 2017. Every day this year has been an adventure! Every day has brought its own challenges.

You never know what you'll find when you wake up each morning, so I make sure I greet the Lord first with, "Good morning, Lord. Thank you for this new day and that I am still here and You are with me." I have purpose. There is renewed purpose every day we remain on the planet. Part of that purpose involves our place in the world. Where should our prayer focus be today?

Our nation is a melting pot of many cultures, creeds and creatures. There is no other nation like it. It's a composite of many peoples, religions and conflicting philosophies, yet to our amazement, it has worked for over 200 years. To bring it all together in harmonious unity is nothing short of miraculous.

It had a turbulent beginning, struggled through the years with expansion, economic pressures, wars, diversity, cultural

challenges and crime. Yet it stands as the greatest nation in the world. Whether we agree on election results, foreign policy, the environment, use of our resources or position in the world market, it still stands. I believe it is so because it still has a divine purpose.

God is not through with America. As the “land of the free and the home of the brave,” its biggest challenges lie ahead. That’s why we need to look beyond our own little circles and expand our vision toward the bigger picture. It’s not just about “me and mine” anymore. It’s a global mandate.

Our Founding Fathers came seeking a new life and new opportunities but faced horrendous challenges. Many died even as they journeyed across the sea. Others did not survive the harsh winters. Still others came by force having been sold into slavery, and stripped of their own choices. But God sees the end from the beginning and knew the strength of the people who would become part of this land. They risked their lives, shed their blood and emerged as a vital part of this great country.

We read in Scripture that “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son” (John 3:16). Jesus did not stay in the security of His Father’s house, but left it to fulfill His global mandate. He expects us to do the same: “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations ...” (Matt. 28:18-20).

In the book of Revelation, John pens these words, “And they sang a new song, saying: ‘You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests unto our God; and we shall reign on the earth” (Rev. 5:9-10).

God’s kingdom is made up of all peoples. So too is our nation. Because it is, it has a unique purpose, and you and I have a

purpose in it. As conscientious people of God, we have a responsibility to fulfill that purpose. What could it possibly be?

We are a composite of many nations, peoples, tribes, colors, languages and creeds. Although this creates challenges, it also provides opportunity to share God's great love for all mankind. The gospel is a catalyst for love, understanding, harmony and unity. We can reach out with the love of God, carry His presence and be used to heal, deliver, set people free and bring the good news of His forgiveness and eternal life. Right here. Right now. The mission has come to our own doorstep. How do we do this?

We can start by joining the many intercessors who stand in the gap and pray for the nation to be all it can be—for the leaders, whether you like them or not. The Bible does not tell us to pray for the leaders we like, but for all those who have authority over us (See 1 Tim. 2:1-3).

You can look for opportunities to serve in your community. Every community has dire needs screaming for attention—whether it's the homeless, drug addicted, abused or abandoned children, unemployed or those seeking a better life in our country. Ask God to position you where you can do the most good to expand His kingdom.

Seek to find a group of like-minded believers with whom to fellowship and combine resources to spread worldwide revival. Be part of the solution, not the problem.

Continue to pray for more laborers for His harvest field and that the knowledge of God would spread as the waters cover the seas.

Finally, celebrate our freedoms this week, and while you enjoy the festivities, thank God that you can fulfill His purpose in this "land of the free and home of the brave." Right here. Right now.

Prayer Power for the Week Beginning July 2, 2017

This week, if you have joined the ranks of those who complain and criticize our nation and its leaders, repent. Ask God to forgive you and set your heart and soul to walking in harmony with His will for you and our nation. Continue to pray for our leaders, our allies, our military, our nation's youth, your neighbor, your family and God's kingdom to expand and bring revival around the world. Read Revelation 5:5-10, Matthew 28:18-20.

Group Says Indian Christians Want President Trump to Openly Defend Them

By all accounts, the meetings earlier this week between President Donald Trump and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi were productive, mutually beneficial and—as Vice President Mike Pence put it—historic.

But, there was one part of those meetings that was kept behind closed doors: the widespread persecution of religious minorities, particularly Christians, by Hindu extremists closely aligned with Modi's political party. Although the issue was brought up—more than once according to White House sources—it was never addressed publicly, and that has the Federation of Indian-American Christians “very disappointed” in the president.

The Federation of Indian-American Christian Organizations of North America (FIACONA) released the following statement following Modi's return to India:

FIACONA is happy to note that President Trump raised concerns about anti-Christian policies and the Hindu radical vigilantism carried out by Prime Minister Modi's supporters against innocent people across India in a private meeting with him Monday at the White House.

However, FIACONA is deeply disappointed that the president, who emphasized the need to eradicate Islamic radicalism in public, missed a historic opportunity to speak out openly against the devastating impact Hindu radicalism has on Christians in India.

Hindu radicals feel emboldened now that they know they could bleed the church and get away with it because no one would question them.

History would judge President Trump harshly for this omission to speak out openly in support of a 2000-year-old church that is bleeding in the hands of the man he hosted Monday at the White House.

American people fully understand the urgency in fighting radical Islamic fundamentalism; however, if that is done at the expense of fighting Hindu radicalism, which is posing an imminent danger to the well-being of Christians, it may not bode well for our nation nor will it be consistent with our long-time commitment to the values we so cherish.

Modi's government has been actively shutting down Christian worship places and social organizations at an alarming rate.

Christendom, which expected President Trump to be on the right side of the history, is seen as abandoning the lives of over 300 million Christians and other non-Hindus for short term gains.

The vulnerable Indian Christian population that has been bleeding under the radical Hindu extremism feels let down

by President Trump.

In Modi's India today, bigotry is masquerading as nationalism, creative freedom being proscribed, freedom of speech and expression being brutally crushed by the state and the Institutions of democracy slowly being undermined by Modi whom our president called a "true friend."

It is about time the U.S. administration realizes that the so-called bond based on shared ideals is increasingly becoming a thing of the past. The man who is presiding over this historic wrong in India cannot be a friend of anyone, let alone our president. The president's reluctance to openly speak for the persecuted church is a great concern for the American people who elected him to office. {eoa}

Why Israel Has a Divine Right to the Promised Land

In recent years, many authors and politicians have questioned the legitimacy of Israel's claim to its land. But Dr. Michael Brown takes it back to Scripture and argues that Israel does have a right to the promised land—though not for the reasons you might expect.

Lecrae Shares His Testimony in Gripping ‘I Am Second’ Video

Lecrae is the biggest Christian rapper there is—but he wasn’t always a Christian. Once upon a time, Lecrae was a lost young man, hurt by abuse and his father’s abandonment. He looked to rappers as his role models—but then found the greatest role model of all.

For King & Country Prays ‘O God Forgive Us’ in Touching New Video

Musical duo For King & Country are following up their smash hit “Fix My Eyes” with a new song of corporate repentance. Christian rapper KB even joins them for the bridge: “Yes, we have ignored You/So busy doing Your work that we forgot that this was for You.”

3 Women 'Mystically Betrothed' to Jesus

Three women married Jesus recently, vowing to be "consecrated virgins" unto their Savior.

The Detroit-area women partook in a ceremony where they became "mystically betrothed to Christ," according to Catholic canon law, *USA Today* reports.

"The focus is on how to be in the world, but not be of it, and (having) this understanding of your role as a bride of Christ, and reflecting your love of Jesus to the world," Karen Ervin, one of the women, tells *The Detroit Free Press*.

The ceremony was the first of its kind for the archdioceses of Detroit.

Consecrated virgins differ from nuns in that the virgins hold jobs outside the church. Their commitment to Christ means they will remain celibate for the rest of their lives.

The consecrated virgin ranks are few and far between. There are about 250 consecrated virgins in the U.S. and 4,000 worldwide, Judith Stegman, president of the United States Association of Consecrated Virgins, tells DFP.

But the decision is not for the faint of heart. According to Eternal Word Television Network:

The Consecration of a Virgin is one of the oldest sacramentals in the Church, and one of the fruits of Vatican II was the restoration of this profound blessing on virgins living in the world. The promulgation of this restored rite for laywomen was on 31 May 1970. Through this sacramental, the virgin, after renewing her promise of perpetual virginity to God, is set aside as a sacred person who belongs only to

Christ.

The acting agent in the Consecration is God Himself who accepts the virgin's promise and spiritually fructifies it through the action of the Holy Spirit.

This sacramental is reserved to the bishop of the diocese. The consecrated virgin shares intimately in the nature and mission of the Church—she is a living image of the Church's love for her Spouse while sharing in His redemptive mission.

The consecrated virgin living in the world embodies a definitive vocation in itself. She is not a quasi-religious, nor is she in a vocation that is in the process of becoming a religious institute or congregation. She is a consecrated woman, nevertheless, with her bishop as her guide. By virtue of the consecration, she is responsible to pray for her diocese and clergy. At no time is her diocese responsible for her financial support.

The ceremony dates to the early church, though faded in 1139, according to *DFP*. The ritual was restored in the 1970s.

The consecrated virgin living in the world, as expressed in Canon 604, is irrevocably “consecrated to God, mystically espoused to Christ and dedicated to the service of the Church, when the diocesan bishop consecrates [her] according to the approved liturgical rite.” The consecrated virgin attends Mass daily, prays the Divine Office, and spends much time in private prayer. She can choose the church-approved spirituality she prefers to follow, according to EWTN.

“I was very happy, very elated to be wedded to Christ,” virgin Theresa Jordan tells *USA Today*. “I felt aligned with His virginity, His purity and all of His sufferings. To be mystically espoused to Him, it was very joyful.” {eoa}

Election Integrity Commission Takes Up Its Mission

Wednesday, Vice President Mike Pence gave the launching orders to the Presidential Commission on Election Integrity, reiterating President Donald Trump's charge to the commission to produce a set of recommendations to increase the American people's confidence in the integrity of the election systems.

"The integrity of the vote is a foundation of our democracy," he said. "This bipartisan commission will review ways to strengthen that integrity in order to protect and preserve the principle of one person, one vote."

The vice president serves as the chairman of the commission, but it will be led in reality by its vice chairman, Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach. Wednesday's meeting was held via conference call. The commission's first official face-to-face meeting will be held July 19 at the White House.

Kobach told members a letter will be sent today to the 50 states and District of Columbia on behalf of the commission. Those letters will request publicly-available data from state voter rolls and feedback on how to improve election integrity.

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Have You Unwittingly Succumbed to This Hazardous, Occultic Trend?

People are always coming up to us and saying things like, "I'm a Leo. What does the Star Bible say about that?" Even some Christians still dabble in the evil, occultic practice of astrology.

Those "Leos" think that the astrological dates they see in the papers (for Leo, July 23 to August 22) , are correct, but they are a little behind the times. About 2,000 years behind.

You see, the dates are supposed to represent the dates when the sun is moving through the constellation Leo. Astrology fans believe that somehow the constellation Leo exerts some magical power on humans born during this time, so that a "Leo" has some special characteristics. These characteristics then form the basis for daily "guidance" pandered by astrologers.

So the first problem with astrology is that the actual dates when the sun moves through the constellation Leo have changed. The dates you see in the newspaper were determined when Julius Caesar was alive, over 2,000 years ago. A process called the precession of the equinoxes has moved the Leo dates back so that Leo now begins on August 11, not July 23. Also, the sun takes 42 days to travel through the constellation Leo, so the Leo dates actually are August 11 to September 21. Thus, most people who think they are Leos are really Cancers (real dates July 21 through August 10). But for all this time, the astrologers have been telling people they are subject to the magical effects of Leo anyway. God has made fools of them.

The second problem follows from the first, whether you are one of those actually born in Leo (born August 11 to August 22) or are a Leo the Crab born in Cancer (June 23 to August 10). If

astrologers can't tell the difference between a Cancer and a Leo for 2,000 years, how can they know anything else? In fact, while astrology has been used to control people for over 4,000 years, it has no real predictive power and is a demonic practice condemned by God in the Bible. Stay away from it!

The stars tell the story of Jesus, like pages in the Bible. It makes no difference which page of the Star Bible you were born under. What really matters is being born again of the Spirit. You are not a Leo or a Leo the Crab. You are a Christian.

God says, "For I know the plans that I have for you, says the Lord, "plans for peace and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope" (Jer. 29:11).

Don't miss God's good future by listening to astrology. {eoa}

Ron Allen is a Christian businessman, CPA and author who serves in local, national and international ministries spreading a message of reconciliation to God, to men and between believers. He is founder of the International Star Bible Society, telling how the heavens declare the glory of God, and the Emancipation Network, which helps people escape from financial bondage and co-founder with his wife, Pat, of Corporate Prayer Resources, dedicated to helping intercessors.