

4 Big Reasons You Should Read the Bible More Often

If you've been a Christian for a while, then you've been told, encouraged, and even begged to read your Bible regularly, preferably every day. But you may not have been told why.

Here are four reasons to read your Bible regularly.

1. Reading the Bible Draws You Closer to God

God reveals Himself to us in many ways, including the world around us. As Paul wrote, "The invisible things about [God]—His eternal power and deity—have been clearly seen since the creation of the world and are understood by the things that are made" (Rom. 1:20).

But the primary way that God reveals Himself to us is through the Bible. The Old Testament shows us that God created us in His image, loves us, and, even though we rebelled—and continue to rebel—against Him, wants us to be reconciled to Him. Time and time again in the Old Testament, God demonstrates that He is patient with us and faithful in keeping His many promises to us.

The New Testament tells the story of Jesus and the early days of the Christian church. At the beginning and end of his gospel, the disciple John explains why the New Testament was written. He describes Jesus as the Word of God, who "became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). John and the other New Testament writers recorded some of what Jesus said and did so that, in reading it, "you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (John 20:31).

The more you read the Bible, the better you get to know God. The better you know God, the more you want to communicate with

Him and follow Him.

2. The Bible Is the Perfect Handbook for Daily Living

David describes God's Word as "a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Ps. 119:105). Whatever path you're on, the Bible can show you the right steps to take. It's the perfect how-to guide for living, for reasons that include:

- **Wisdom:** The Bible is loaded with wisdom. Solomon, who prayed for wisdom and used it to lead Israel, provides a wealth of sage advice in several Old Testament books. The Gospels records the teachings of Jesus, whom even critics consider a teacher without equal.
- **Commandments:** The Old Testament includes the Law, much of which is commandments on living a life that is pleasing to God. Many of Jesus' parables gave a fresh perspective on these commandments to counter false interpretations that had arisen over time.
- **Rationale:** In addition to providing sound rules for living, the Bible explains why God gave us these rules.
- **Consequences:** Why should you follow God's instructions? The Bible is loaded with stories of people who did or didn't and the consequences of their actions.

In his second letter to Timothy, Paul writes that the entire Bible "inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Speaking of being equipped for good work...

3. Reading the Bible Regularly Improves Your Behavior

Regular Bible reading improves your behavior. In fact, Scripture engagement—or the frequency with which you read your Bible—is a more reliable prediction of moral behavior than traditional measures of spirituality, such as church attendance and prayer.

This revelation comes from research conducted by Arnold Cole, Ed.D. and Pamela Caudill Ovwigho, who lead the Center for Bible Engagement and have conducted online surveys of over 100,000 people. Their statistical analyses reveal that, controlling for other factors—such as age, gender, church attendance and prayer—Christians who read the Bible four or more days a week have lower odds of abusing alcohol, having sex outside of marriage, viewing pornography and gambling. Significantly lower odds. Here are the findings:

- Getting drunk: 57 percent lower odds
- Having extramarital sex: 68 percent lower odds
- Viewing porn: 61 percent lower odds
- Gambling: 74 percent lower odds

Reading your Bible more often not only makes you less likely to engage in risky behavior but also increases the likelihood that you will share your faith and disciple others. Christians who read their Bibles at least four days a week are more than two times (230 percent) more likely to share their faith and disciple others than Christians who read their Bibles less frequently.

4. The Bible Encourages and Strengthens You

When you are stressed out, struggling, down, frustrated, discouraged, angry or suffering, you probably aren't terribly interested in learning more about God, getting advice on what to do, or improving your behavior. You want comfort. Reassurance. Strength. Peace. Hope.

Whatever you need, and whenever you need it, the Bible provides it. Sometimes called "God's love letter to us," the Bible reminds us throughout that God created us in His image and loves us deeply, even when we wander or run away from Him.

No Surprises Here

The fact that reading the Bible regularly can have such a

positive impact on us shouldn't surprise us. After all, God's Word is described as "living and active" and sharp enough to "divid[e] soul and spirit, joints and marrow" (Hebrews 4:12, NIV). James says that "the engrafted word" can "save your souls" (James 1:21, MEV) and God says in Isaiah that His Word "shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it" (Isa. 55:11).

The Bible is a very good gift from a very good God. {eoa}

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