

Read Through the Bible in 2010

In a year when everything in life seems shaky, you can find  stability in God's unchangeable Word.

Almost everything we buy today comes with an instruction manual. Even coffee at the local drive-in comes with a warning such as "Caution contents may be hot!" Whether or not we decide to read the manual is up to us, but at least it's there if we need it.

Wouldn't it be great if life came with an instruction manual? Well, actually, it does. It's called the Bible. Whether or not we read it is our choice, but God has made it readily available to us.

Proverbs 2:1 says about God's words: "If you accept my words and store up my commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding ... then you will ... find the knowledge of God" (NIV).

The study note for this verse from the *Fire Bible: Global Study Edition* explains it this way:

"Only by putting God's word into our minds will we learn to live wisely and righteously in our relationship with God. We can become victorious over sin with God's

commands in our hearts (Ps. 119:11); and Christ's word remaining with in us (Jn. 15:7; Jas. 1:21)."

But why the Bible? Why read it every day instead of the latest great book on the market or the newest how-to manual by the most popular speaker on television? Why is it important to consistently study the Bible?

Because there is only one book like the Bible. There are many books on many subjects, many speakers and many TV personalities, but there is no other book like the Bible. It is unique because of its *producer*, its *permanence*, its *power* and its *promise*.

Its producer. In the first chapter alone of Genesis the phrase "and God said" is recorded nine times. The same statement of authority appears 23 times in Malachi. Isaiah claimed divine inspiration 40 times, and Jeremiah includes at least 100 instances of "thus says the Lord."

In the first five books of the Bible, called the Pentateuch, there are 560 references to God speaking. Throughout the Old Testament God speaks 3,800 times. It is a book written by God. It is unique because it is God's book.

Its permanence. No other book has been as ridiculed, banned and burned as the Bible. But it has survived

the worst that men can do. The Roman Emperor Diocletian in A.D. 303 passed an imperial edict banning the Bible from the face of the earth, but less than 25 years later Constantine became emperor, became a Christian and ordered 50 hand-written copies of the Bible to be produced.

General Franco of Spain ground 10,000 Bibles to dust. William French philosopher Voltaire, a strict atheist, stood on his front porch and proclaimed that the Bible would be extinct in 100 years. About 100 years later the Geneva Bible Society bought his house and used it to distribute Bibles from the same front porch.

Men have tried to destroy it, but the Bible is unique because it has outlasted them all.

Its power. Something happens to us when we read the Bible. It is the Word of God. The eternal Word became the incarnate Word, the incarnate Word became the spoken Word, and the spoken Word became the written Word.

Hebrews 4:12 states: "For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."

Your strength and power to live a victorious, fulfilled life depends exclusively on how much of

the Bible

you plant in your heart and mind. If you let it, the Bible will work in

your heart. Descriptions of God's Word as a book of power include:

- Jeremiah 5:14: the Word is like a devouring flame
- Jeremiah 23:29: the Word is like a crushing hammer
- Ezekiel 37:7: the Word is like a life-giving force
- Romans 1:16: the Word is like a saving power
- Ephesians 6:17: the Word is like a defensive weapon
- Hebrews 4:12: the Word is like a probing instrument.

The Word is quick, alive and

life-giving. To the degree that you make it a part of you, you too will

be alive: "Man does not live on bread alone but on every word that

comes from the mouth of the Lord" (Deut. 8:3). The Bible is both a

shield and a sword, a shield for defense and a sword for the attack.

In the book of Joshua we are instructed:

"Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it

day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in

it. Then you will be prosperous and successful." (1:8) The Bible is

unique because it imparts strength to the reader.

Its promise. The Bible itself

states that it has been written about Jesus, as Psalm 40:7-8 reveals:

"Then I said, 'Here I am, I have come—it is written about me in the

scroll. I desire to do your will, O my God; your law is within

my
heart.'”

There is an overriding, continual,
central theme in the Bible: the birth, life, crucifixion,
resurrection
and imminent return of Jesus, and the relationship He desires
with you
and me.

This theme is discussed in the article “The Inspiration and
Authority of Scripture” in the *Fire Bible: Global Study
Edition*, the name for the international language editions of
the *Full Life Study Bible*, one of the few Pentecostal study
Bibles on the market:

“The inspired Word of God is the
expression of God’s wisdom and character and is, therefore,
able to
give ultimate wisdom and spiritual life through faith in
Christ (Mt.
4:4; Jn. 6:63; 2 Ti. 3:15; 1 Pe. 2:2).

“The Bible is God’s unfailing, true
witness to his saving activity for humanity, which he
accomplished
through Jesus Christ. For this reason, Scripture is
incomparable (i.e.,
it has no equal in literature or message) and forever
finished; its
truths and authority relate to and apply to all things of this
world
and life. No human words or declarations of religious
institutions are
equal to the Bible’s authority.”

The Bible is unique in its promise to
reveal to us the heart, person and character of God and how we

are to
live in our relationship with Him.

That is exactly the instruction manual
we need for our lives today. We need God's Word to be alive
and working
in us, guiding, directing and helping us daily.

This first month of the year is the perfect time to set your
goal of making God's Word part of your life every day in 2010!