

RT Kendall: Why So Few Believers Read Their Bibles Today (and Why We Should)

It is sadly true that today, most Christians—whether liberal, evangelical or charismatic—*do not know their Bibles*. It does not help that less and less expository preaching exists today throughout the world. Topical or motivational preaching has largely dominated the airways in our day. Not that there is anything wrong with topical or motivational preaching. The best of God's servants have done it and still do. But a key component of expository preaching is a high view of Scripture. One is hardly motivated to preach chapter by chapter—not to mention verse by verse—if they do not believe the Holy Spirit inspires every word.

One of the greatest adjustments I have had to make—and am still having to make—is to *assume nothing* when I preach and when I write. I must keep in mind that many of my hearers and readers—thank God for the exceptions—will need my help to grow in their understanding and knowledge of Scripture.

It is a new generation, somewhat like the new Pharaoh who did not know Joseph (Exodus 1:8). There was a time when all Egypt rejoiced in Joseph and his family, but that era did not last. There came a new pharaoh that owed Joseph nothing, a new generation that did not appreciate Joseph—indeed, a generation who felt threatened by Joseph's legacy.

It is much like that today. So many people in the church do not know their Bibles because they do not often read their Bibles. Not only that, church leaders themselves often do not know their Bibles; neither do they urgently encourage Bible reading. Worst of all, there is an ever-increasing number of people in the pulpit and pew who have not been persuaded by

the inner testimony of the Holy Spirit that the Bible is the Word of God.

This is how we know that the Bible is the Word of God: by the inner testimony of the Holy Spirit. There are those who have tried to lean on the so-called “external” proofs of Scripture—archaeology, testimonies of people who say what the Bible has meant to them and so on. These external proofs will not totally persuade. Only the Holy Spirit totally persuades. And because there has been a diminishing of the knowledge of the Holy Spirit in our day, it is not surprising that many people are “tossed to and fro” by “every wind of doctrine” (Eph. 4:14, ESV).

God would not send His Son to us and then allow what He came to do to be forgotten. That is why we have the Bible. God gave us our Bibles. Are you thankful for the Bible? If ten God gave us Bibles, does He not want us to know what’s in them?

The degree to which we believe the Bible is infallible, reliable and faithful often determines how much we care to read it. Mind you, the church being in a deep sleep has resulted even in many advanced Christians being dormant in their Bible reading. As I said, I can recall a day—in my lifetime—when *laymen* knew the Bible so well you could say people read their Bibles, but they also memorized large portions of them. Such a practice has virtually perished from the earth today. I’m sorry, but even many preachers do not know their Bibles. Some only turn to the Scriptures when they need a sermon!

I would plead with every person who reads these lines to have a Bible reading plan, preferably one that will take you through the Bible in a year. It means reading approximately four chapters a day. Doing this 1) keeps you in the Word and 2) gives you what the Holy Spirit will call to your remembrance later. One promise concerning the Holy Spirit is that He will call to remembrance what Jesus taught (John

14:26). Some say, "What I need is to be slain in the Spirit." I say: If you are empty-headed when you fall, you will be empty-headed when you get up. There will be nothing in your head of which the Holy Spirit can remind you!

We need the Bible and the Holy Spirit! Scripture needs to be applied and the Holy Spirit will do that as we read the Word, and heed the anointed preaching of God's Word.

 *Adapted from Word and Spirit by R. T. Kendall, copyright 2019, published by Charisma House. Rather than keeping God's Word and the Holy Spirit apart, the author shows you why they are both needed and how the Holy Spirit applies His Word to your life and prepares you for what's ahead. To order your copy, click on this link.*

Prayer Power for the Week of Nov. 3, 2019

This week, renew your commitment to hide God's Word in your heart by reading it daily and memorizing key verses. Read the Bible prayerfully and ask the Holy Spirit to apply what you need to your life. Continue to pray for our nation and its leaders. Declare that righteousness will prevail in this land. Remember our allies, those serving as first responders and in our military, and their families. Ask God for wisdom for upcoming elections. Pray for those who are suffering loss through wildfires and other harsh weather conditions. Read: 2 Chronicles 7:14, Matthew 25:3, Ephesians 4:14. {eoa}