

The Best Book You've Never Read

Curious, this book called The Bible. Curious, because while believers claim it as God's Word, most of us don't actually read it. Jennifer Pollard, writing in *Business Insider*¹, has pointed out that during the last half century, sales figures for the Bible are a massive 3.9 billion copies sold. Still, although the Bible remains the most published book, as time goes by, fewer of us are reading it. A Pew Research Study has found that among American adults, only 35% report reading the Bible at least once per week. Remarkably, those who claim to read the Bible once a week are outnumbered by those say they seldom, or never, read the Word. That number stands at 45%.³ One explanation as to why we don't read the Bible is offered by Jeff Anderson in *crosswalk.com*. Among the reasons, he offered were: It's an optional book; church leaders don't expect us to read it; or our parents didn't read it. However, it is Anderson's reason number seven that stands out for me: "Bible Bullies."⁴ According to Anderson, Bible Bullies are those who repeatedly tell believers, in both direct, and subtle ways, that we possess neither the intelligence nor the educational training to understand the Bible. In other words, we're not smart enough.

For some of us, this is all the motivation needed for avoiding the reading of God's Word. You can imagine how much traction this excuse would gain if students told their teachers that the reason the class reading assignment was not completed, was because they had been told they were not smart enough to read *Moby Dick*, *To Kill A Mockingbird*, or *Of Mice and Men*.

To be in the know

The prospects of becoming a Christian, or continuing to live as one, are very remote if we read God's Word sparingly. We can know no more about God and His plan of redemption than He reveals in His Word. Revelation 1:1 declares that God the Father gave the revelation of the Messiah to His Son, Jesus, who presented the revelation of the plan of redemption to the angels, who gave it to John the Revelator on Patmos. And, John passed this revelation of hope, through the Lamb of God, to us. If we're not reading the Word, how might we, in Paul's words of 2 Tim 2:15 show ourselves approved unto God?

To Know Jesus

Our only true source of information on the living and dying and living again of the Jesus, our Savior, is the Bible. Jesus, Himself, said in John 5:39 that we are to "Search the Scriptures ... they are they which testify of me." We learn in Acts 17:11 that the believers in Berea were more receptive to the gospel preached by Paul, because they searched the Scriptures for themselves on a daily basis.

To Make it Today

As to the question, is reading the Bible essential to the development of our Christian character, we're best advised to allow the Bible to speak to our



Joyful are people
of integrity,
who follow the
instructions of the
Lord.

Joyful are those
who obey his laws
and search for
him with all their
hearts.

Psalm 119:1, 2

read daily portion of God's word.
If we had but one
passage of
Scripture to
offer clarity on
the essential
nature of the
Bible to our
growth in
Christian faith,
Psalm 119 is
replete with
insights.

- Psalm 119:9 tells us that a young man cleanses his way, by heeding God's word.
- In verse eleven, we're reminded that the word of God in our hearts will aid against sinning.
- Verse twenty-eight notes that God's word will strengthen us.
- According to verse fifty, the word of God provides us with life.
- Those in need of a lamp to guide the way in a world of darkness can easily find their light in God's word, we are told by Psalm 119:105.
- God's word can direct our victorious steps, says verse one hundred, thirty-three.
- And, we have the assurance from Psalm 119:160 that the whole of God's word is truth.

As He taught the disciples how to pray, Jesus said in "the Lord's prayer," "...give us this day our daily bread." We know, based on our study of the word, that Jesus is the Word of God (See John 1:1). We are further aware, from John 6:35, that Jesus is the "Bread of life." Since Jesus is the Word, and He is the Bread, it is a fact of life eternal that our daily bread is the word of God. Therefore, we must eat the bread from heaven, God's Word, on a daily basis.

The nourishment needed to fuel our transformation from what we once were, to what we are becoming in Christ Jesus is found in the Bible.

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1 Polland, J. (2012). The ten most read books in the world, infographic.

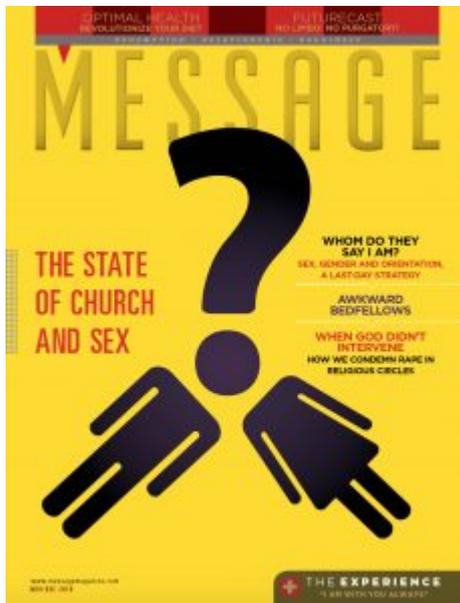
BusinessInsider.com

2 *ibid*

3 Geiger, A. (2017). 5 facts on how Americans view the bible and other religious texts. Pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/04/14/5

4 Anderson, J. (2017). 8 reasons we don't read the bible. Crosswalk.com

5 Geiger, A. (2017). 5 facts on how americans view the bible and other religious texts. Pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/04/14/5



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