

CHRISTADELPHIAN BIBLE POSTAL COURSETutor's Name: Date: Student's Name: Ref No.: **LESSON 37 • DAILY BIBLE READING**

Reading: Psalm 119:89-112

The Bible is like a deep well of clear water - a well so deep that you can never reach the bottom of it. You will never come to the time when you feel you know' it all, and there is no more need to read God's Word.

Look at how people received the Word of God.

THE BEREANS IN GREECE

"...received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so, therefore many of them believed" (Acts 17:11,12)

PAUL WROTE TO THE THESSALONIANS:

"When ye received the word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God"

(1 Thessalonians 2:13)

How carefully we should read this book!

God is speaking to us in the Bible! It brings us a hope of life through the gospel.

The Bible and Jesus

Jesus, of course, had only the Old Testament. But how well he knew it! In every problem and difficulty, he went straight to the Word of God for an answer. Look at these examples:

1. When the Pharisees asked him whether it was right for a man to divorce his wife, Jesus went straight back to the story of Adam and Eve in Genesis. He said to them: "From the beginning of the creation God made them male and female." You can read his full answer in Mark 10:5-12.
2. When Jesus was alone in the wilderness, the temptation came to him to go the way which was easiest for him, instead of going God's way. He overcame these wrong thoughts by answering them with words from the Book of Deuteronomy, and each time he said: "It is written ..."
3. When soldiers came to arrest him, Jesus knew that death would follow. He went without struggling, because, he said, "the scriptures must be fulfilled" (Mark 14:49), and the Scriptures foretold his death. All through his life, Jesus was fulfilling what was written about him in the Old Testament.

Growing in the knowledge of Jesus

Peter tells us to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18). We can only get to know Jesus by reading about him, and each of the four gospels tells the story of what Jesus said and did, and how he gave his life for us.

Other books in the New Testament help us to understand about all that Jesus did for us in dying on the cross, and how we should live a new life in Christ.

But it is not possible to understand these things without reading the Old Testament too. The very first verse of the New Testament (Matthew 1:1) speaks about "Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham". We have to go back to the Old Testament to find out who these men were, and why Jesus is called their son.

Jesus read the Old Testament; we must read it, too

We need to read every day

The apostle Paul tells us how vital the reading of the Scriptures is to our lives:

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable (useful) for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Timothy 3:16,17).

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God provides us with the food that our bodies need day by day. Jesus reminded his disciples of this when he said to them:

"Behold the fowls of the air: they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?" (Matthew 6:26).

In the same way, our new life in Christ will grow if it is fed - and the food it needs is the Word of God.

It would be disastrous if we were to go without food for a week, and then try to make up by eating a whole week's food at once. In the same way, we need to feed our minds with God's Word every day. If we do that, it will build up our understanding of His ways, and we shall grow in grace and knowledge.

Reading the whole of Scripture

Some parts of the Bible, like the Psalms and the gospel stories, are a joy to read. But other parts tell grim stories of wickedness and warfare, and we do not enjoy reading them so much. Other chapters have long lists of people and places, and we may well wonder why they are there. But, as we have read in 2 Timothy 3:16, all Scripture is profitable. Men and women have many different needs, moods, circumstances and experiences and the Scriptures satisfy them all.

From the first verse of Genesis to the last verse of Revelation, the Bible is the inspired Word of God. If we were to choose for ourselves, we would only read the pleasant chapters. We would never come to understand some of the most important teachings of the Bible: the wickedness that is in man, the great holiness of God and the reverence and obedience He demands from us.

The need for a plan

To make sure we cover the whole of Scripture, we need to plan our reading.

Have you been using your Bible Planner? If not, it is time to start now! It will take you through the Bible in an interesting way, and the notes in the Bible Reading Notebook will help you to understand what you read.

And when you have finished working through the planner - what then?

Then, you will be ready to do your daily reading from a little book called THE BIBLE COMPANION, which is on this disc. This reading plan will take you through the Old Testament once, and the New Testament twice each year, and you will feel you are really beginning to know your Bible.

Remember, too, that Christadelphians all over the world read daily from this plan; all are seeking to grow in understanding the Word of God, so you are not alone in your reading.

SOME PRACTICAL POINTS

How to read It is a good idea, when you sit down to do your daily Bible reading, to read the day's chapter straight through first, to find out what it is all about. After you have read it, shut your eyes and say to yourself, "What have I just read?" Sometimes you will remember quite clearly; sometimes you will find it difficult. Then you need to read the chapter through again.

Remember - every word of Scripture is important!

Other helps to Bible reading

If your Bible does not have marginal references or maps, or is set out in a different way, it does not matter - you still have the Word of God. However, for those who do have these extra helps in their Bibles, the following notes will help you to use them:

a) Margin references

Some Bibles have margin references, and these can be a help. You will find a small letter or number by a word: and that letter or number can be found in the margin. Here it will give you a chapter and verse which is connected with what you have just read. Look it up. It will help you to understand the chapter you are reading.

b) Chapters and verses

Unlike any other book, the Bible is divided into verses as well as chapters. The chapters and verses were put in many hundreds of years after the Bible was completed. They are certainly a help in finding your way about.

But they are not always helpful. Sometimes they cut a story in two, as in the story of the transfiguration in Matthew 16 and 17. The last verse of Chapter 16 reads, "There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his Kingdom. "

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Jesus is talking about the vision of the Kingdom which was given to three of his disciples, Peter, James and John. Chapter 17 begins, "And after six days, Jesus taketh Peter, James and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart". So when you begin to read Matthew 17, you need to look back in the last verse of Chapter 16 first.

It is always a good idea to look at the 'context' (or surrounding verses) of the chapter you are reading, to see what went before and what comes afterwards.

c) Use your maps

Some Bibles have maps at the back. When you read about an event happening at a certain place, find that place on your map. If you do this each time a town, river, mountain or lake is mentioned, you will come to know the land of Israel a little better. You may understand the story better, too.

For example, when you read Luke 2 (Step 1, day 3 in your Planner) you will find the towns of Nazareth, Bethlehem and Jerusalem all come into the story. Now look at the map, and you will see that it is quite a journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem, but Bethlehem and Jerusalem are near to each other.

Read your Bible prayerfully

Whenever you sit down to read your Bible, ask God for His help in understanding His Word. There is a verse in Psalm 119 (verse 18) which is a prayer. It says:

"Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law."

We need God's help in understanding, and He is always ready to give it - so do not forget to ask!

Hearing and doing

God will teach us through His Word. But reading it is not enough. James tells us we must be "doers of the Word, and not hearers only" (James 1:22). Jesus speaks of some who called him "Lord, Lord", but they did not do what he said they should. Read Matthew 25:31-46.

Now find Matthew 7, and read the story in verses 24-29 about the two men who both built the same kind of house. The man who hears the sayings of Jesus, and does what he says, is like the wise man who built his house on a rock.

Come to the Bible with a humble mind

God has said:

"To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word" (Isaiah 66:2).

God will teach the man who comes to Him with a lowly mind, ready to learn: He will have nothing to do with the man who thinks he knows it all!

Summary

READ THE BIBLE

every day. Make sure your reading covers all the books of the Bible.
with an open mind, letting it teach you.
carefully. Think over each verse and make sure you understand it.
prayerfully. Ask God to help you to understand what you read.
with a humble mind, trying to find out how God wants you to live.

Chapters to read: Psalm 19; Psalm 119:1-40; Mark 8:34-38

A verse to learn: Psalm 119:33,34

"Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end. Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart."