



NEW LIFE

BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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"For the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev 1:9)

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The Benefits of Disciplined Reading of God's Word and Sound Christian Literature

By Rev Jack Sin, pastor of Maranatha B-P Church, Singapore

Jer 15:16 says, *'Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts.'*

Introduction

You are exactly what you are except for the books you read and the people you meet (and what the Holy Spirit does in a redeemed life). Think about it. Reading as a good habit is on the decline and it is slowly substituted by the watching of the TV, surfing the net, playing computer games, Ipod and even handphone games or SMS.

Why read?

Readers are leaders and they are generally far better equipped in life and in the service of the Lord as effective Christians, teachers in the church, in the Christian Education Department, Neighbourhood Bible Class, fellowships or any department of the church. They will be knowledgeable people whose minds are far more alive, active and awake through their lives. Intelligence and mental energy will be stimulated and will continue growing, bright and sharp into old age (combating dementia). Regular reading enlarges the ability to think, and increases powers of expression. Avid readers of Christian books are in a better position to understand, withstand and defend the false teaching of the days so that they do not fall prey to the avalanche of errors of these last perilous days. The word of God well read is an anchor in the lives of the elect and the church (Ps 119:105). Christian reading boosts spiritual discernment. Readers of good books are greatly helped in deep trials and barren times because they are given a clearer view of how God deals with His people that will see them through to victory in life's trials and tribulations.

The author enjoyed reading good edifying books and will often invest in a good Christian book for the nourishment of the soul as we will do for good food for the health of our bodies. We are encouraged to see some especially children and youths reading (but some are engrossed with novels and romantic stories only). Deborah and Josiah Teh of our church are two examples of godly children who are reading the bible and other Christian books well and they are delightful children to talk to. We are training Sean to read aloud bible stories and he is getting better now and is able to pronounce clearly more words (Sally Anne is reading well and others too).

The author likes to give people a good relevant Christian book for their birthday and pray that it will be a blessing to their souls as they read them. Note also that Jas 1:22 says, *'But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.'*

The Advantages of Reading

It has been said that disciplined and avid readers generally have these advantages:

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- Know more, write better and can concentrate better.
- Are quicker to appreciate and understand other themes and subjects.
- Have an easier time in processing new information.
- Have a better command of the language, vocabulary and better expressions in their speech and conversations with others.
- Have more interest to do well in a wide variety of subjects.
- Develop an ability to understand events and other people better.
- Acquire the ability to sift through information faster and to understand how facts can fit into a whole.
- Tend to be more flexible in their thinking and have creative thoughts.
- Able to handle inter personal communication better.

And with the explosion of information in the world today, avid readers can stay well informed with relative ease.

Tips on effectual reading

Consider the following to read more effectively:

1. Consider the pace and at the time of the day that suits you best (i.e. one book a month or more in the morning or night time).
2. **Read and think carefully.** Let good Christian books give you the food for thought. Assess what you read. Think and muse it over it in your spare moments. Is it true and relevant or is there something to avoid? Write down your thoughts if any in a book when you learn new phase, fact or word and use it the next time you can (i.e. how one may improve his vocabulary).
3. **Read and talk about it.** Share with others the impressions that you have about the book and make recommendations on books to others. This will greatly enrich your spiritual conversation and it is one of the best ways to test and share your knowledge in your mind.
4. **Read and write about it and be challenged.** Let a good Christian biography like William Carey, Adoniram Judson or David Brainerd fire you up. Let a doctrinal book (i.e. on Calvinism or end times) lead you to understand God better (i.e. the case for Christ). Let **a devotional book stir self-examination and greater consecration and service to Christ.**
5. **Read systematically and widely.** Do not read only one genre of book (e.g. fiction or science only) so that your knowledge is not lopsided. Read a full range of vital topics in theology, church history, OT or NT books apologetics, ethics, prayer, worship, economics, youth, marriage etc.
6. **Read always with a pen or pencil and write down key points and lessons learnt.** Short notes are better than long memories. Always have a book *'on the go'*. However little time you may have to spare in any week, try to read even if only a few pages. Once broken, the reading habit takes a longer time to recover (1 Tim 4:13).
7. Your first priority throughout life is to read and meditate on God's Word. **Other reading must never displace Bible reading time.** Only the Word is infallible and authoritative, and all other books are good only as they promote Bible understanding and sound application and true knowledge (2 Tim 2:15).

Spiritual Merits of reading the Bible

Paul says in 2 Tim 2:15, *'Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth'*.

There is great spiritual benefit in reading the whole Bible often is that we become familiar with the historical cultural and geographical context of every book in the Bible and we learn so much more about God and His plan for our lives. This familiarity of Scripture gives us the ability to recognize truth in its context so that when passages we read of being taken out of context, we are aware of it. Thus we will not be what Paul says, *'That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and...*

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fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive' (Eph 4:14).

There are many new precious lessons we would discover if we would make time each day to read the Bible with deep interest. **We would discover truths about God and His will for us and that our inclinations for sin would be less for the Bible will keep us from sin or sin will keep us from the bible** (Psa 119:9-11). Our strength to do good things for the Lord would increase (1 Pet 2:2; Eph 3:3-5, 16, 17). Our patience in difficult times would be maintained (Acts 20:32; Ephesians 4:1-3). Our contentment would increase in the Lord (1 Tim 6:6). Our peace of mind would multiply (Phil 4:6-9; Psa 85:8). Our love for God would be stirred as well as our joy (Heb 10:24; Gal 5:22-23). We would desire to be more consecrated to our Creator (Psa 31:23; Psa 73:25; Deu 6:5-9) to see and to obey Him.

In addition to this, we would learn and obey what the will of the Lord is (Eph 3:3-4; 5:17). We may also learn many things about the Bible that we have not learnt and improve our spiritual life. Set a time each day for the quality reading and studying of God's precious words.

What is one thing that is most likely to get in the way of your Bible reading? Is it television, video games, ipod, Xbox, playstation, phone calls, SMS, computer surfing, sleep or just plain lazy? Discipline yourself by God's grace and make time for the Bible and read it regularly. The author would strongly encourage anyone who is beginning a daily Bible reading programme to persevere and complete it for your spiritual benefit and God's glory.

Let us make Bible reading a top priority in our lives this year. Note the great benefit is usefulness for reading the word in 2 Tim 3:16-17 which says, *'All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works'*.

When something is important enough to us, we will make sure it is done first with zeal and vigour. If we give Bible reading first place and be blessed by it, we will schedule the necessary time needed for it. Set aside quality time of about 30 minutes every day to achieve it for your souls' benefit.

Pray to God for wisdom

Above all, ask **God for His guidance, grace and discipline**. Ask Him to help you and ask Him for wisdom to attain this goal of daily Bible reading. He has promised to give to those who ask for it! (Jas 1:5) Read the Bible every day. Start with the gospels on the life and ministry of Christ or the Pauline or universal epistles, read the prophetic books and be exhorted by Daniel, Jeremiah, Ezekiel or Isaiah. Enjoy reading and be enriched by the Psalms and read also the other poetic books in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes as well. Reading God's word is a small investment of time for something so important and eternally beneficial. Start today a journey of reading the Bible in its entirety systematically. A fruitful reading should be completed in one sitting if possible and meditated upon for application. Try reading it out aloud and relish it every day, improving your English as well.

Conclusion

1 Tim 4:13 says, *'Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine'*. The Bible is compared to life giving milk and meat that we need daily for our nourishment. It is food for our soul or else the spiritual man will starve without it. The Bible is compared with spiritual nourishment and we will wither without it (Acts 20:32; 1 Pet 2:2). The Bible, Word of God, is the seed of spiritual life. If there is no interest in Bible, there is no evidence of lasting spiritual life in us (Lk 8:11; Jas 1:18; 1 Cor 4:15). We cannot answer God for our hope without it (1 Pet 3:15; Acts 17:11). We cannot be approved of God without it (2 Tim 2:15). It is sound biblical doctrine will save those who hear it when we know it and share the gospel with them (1 Tim 4:16).

If we love God, we should be interested in listening to God's word on the Sabbath when His word is preached to us, engage in personal reading of the Bible, Christian fellowship and daily prayer as well.

WELCOME TO NEW LIFE B-P CHURCH LONDON

Our worship services begin promptly at **11.00 am and 4.00 pm.**

Please stay back for Bible Study and fellowship lunch after the morning worship and for tea after the evening service. Do invite your friends to come to Church.

Worship Services			WELCOME
Morning	Today: 08/03/2009	Next Week: 15/03/2009	We extend a warm welcome to all worshippers this Lord's Day. We like to welcome Maureen, Shoji, Meeha and Vishala to our worship services last Lord's Day.
<i>Chairman:</i>	John Poh	Joey Seow	
<i>Preacher:</i>	Pr Gervase Charmley	Eld George Chew	
<i>Message:</i>	The Ladder of God	The Meaning of the Cross	
<i>Text:</i>	Genesis 28:12-13	1 Corinthians 1:18-25	
<i>Organist:</i>	Anthony	Joy	
Evening			
<i>Chairman:</i>	Joey Seow	Jonathan Kim	
<i>Preacher:</i>	Pr Gervase Charmley	Eld George Chew	
<i>Message:</i>	The Two Commissions	House Cleaning	
<i>Text:</i>	Matthew 28:11-20	John 2:13-22	
<i>Pianist:</i>	Sophia	Hubert	
Other Duties			NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS
	Today: 08/03/2009	Next Week: 15/03/2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calling of Resident Minister: Continue to pray for the Lord's calling for a resident minister. The church leaders are calling Rev Timothy Ki to serve as resident minister. Pray for Rev Ki for his visa application. • Evening Service – Change of Time: Please note that the next Lord's Day evening service will commence at 3pm (instead of the regular time at 4pm). • No Prayer Meeting: Please note that there will be no Prayer Meeting & Bible Study next Saturday, 15 Mar. • Church Easter Camp – 10 to 13 April: More details will be made available later. If you would like to assist with the church camp, please see John. • Pray for those who are sick: Douglas (knee pain), Maria (ankle and joint pain), Constance (left heel pain), Anthony (recovery from collarbone fracture), Margaret (cough) • Pray for those who are seeking employment: John • Pray for Journey Mercies: Douglas (Ghana) • Pilgrim Tabernacle 4th Ladies Conference, 9 May: This will be held at Eldon Road Baptist Church, Wood Green, starting at 10am. Please contact sis Kim Eng (Tel: 020 8368 8080) for more details.
<i>Ushers</i>	Jonathan / Yetta	Daniel / Sharon	
<i>Sunday Sch:</i>	Hannah	Hannah	
<i>Lunch:</i>	Maureen	Constance	
<i>Washing-up:</i>	Volunteers	Volunteers	
<i>PA Crew:</i>	Lee Wei	John	
Appointments of the Week			
Fri 13 Mar	7:30pm	Young Adults Fellowship: Bible Study – Survey of the Old Testament	
Sat 14 Mar		Prayer Meeting & Bible Study: No Prayer Meeting & Bible Study	
Last Week's Worship Service Collections			
Offering:	£851.70	YAF: £42.00 Lunch: £38.51	
Answers That Wait			
<i>Adapted from "In Green Pastures" by J.R. Miller, D.D.</i>			
<p>The day may come to us, as life's meaning deepens, when we shall cry to Christ and he will not seem to hear. Whenever this experience may come, let us remember that Christ's silence is not refusal to bless. There may be some hindrance in ourselves, and a work of preparation is needed in us before the blessing can come. Instead of doubting or blaming the Master, we should look within ourselves and ask what it is that keeps the answer waiting. When we are down lower in the dust of humiliation, when our weak faith has grown stronger, when our self-will is gone and we are ready to take the blessing in God's way and at his time, the silence will be broken by love's most gracious answer.</p>			