

Introduction:

1. We have just finished our ninth week in our Bible reading challenge. We are reading the entire New Testament (5 days a week times 52 weeks equals 260 chapters in 260 week days) in 2010.
 - a. Is it a good thing for us to read the Bible? Of course it is! Numerous passages say so.
 - b. Our kids have a song, "The more we read the Bible, the happier we'll be..." Do you believe it?
 - c. We have both young and old doing the Bible reading. And, even if you miss a few days, you can still pick up or catch up from where you left off. Or you can just jump right in where everyone else is. The important thing is that you read the Bible.
2. With that background, would it shock you if I told you that you shouldn't read the Bible this week?
 - a. That's right. Don't read your Bible this week.
 - b. Someone is thinking, "I knew it would happen! Max has finally lost his mind!" No, not yet. I don't want to discourage you from reading the Bible, but I do want you to question your motives in reading.
3. "But why would you say, 'Don't read your Bible this week?'" Here is why...

The Lesson:**I. Don't read your Bible this week.****A. To soothe a guilty conscience.**

1. Some read the Bible, not because they want to know God's will, but because they have committed some particular sin and feel that reading the Bible will make them feel better.
 - a. This looks at Bible reading the way a man with a hangover looks at an aspirin. It's a quick fix to make pain go away. "If I just read the Bible, I know I will feel better."
 - b. And, it is true that his conscience might be soothed and maybe he might feel better, but the attitude is similar to that which was found in Jeremiah's day, Jeremiah 6:14.
2. This person does not want to know God's will and doesn't seek to please God.
 - a. Reading the Bible like this won't bring him to the knowledge of the truth or salvation.
 - b. To him, the Bible is nothing more than a first aid kit that can be put away for months until he hurts himself again.

B. To receive the praise of men.

1. Some people read the Bible because they want to be praised for their knowledge. They have a thirst, not for God's will, but for eminence and admiration.
 - a. They flaunt their knowledge with an "I know more than you" kind of attitude.
 - b. Like the Pharisees of Matthew 23:5-7, they want to be known as scholars and big thinkers. To those persons, the Bible is a pedestal to exalt self.
2. They may read the Bible, but it does not profit them, 2 Timothy 3:7; James 4:10.

C. To randomly see what it says.

1. Many people read a little here and a little there, with no fixed goals for learning.
 - a. This is reading with no system or purpose and can become almost a superstition. The Bible is a good luck charm.
 - b. "I will let the Bible fall open to see what God says to me." It assumes supernatural guidance as pages fall open.
 - c. Combine these verses; see what you get, Matthew 27:15, Luke 10:37; John 13:27.
2. Would you read a letter from a friend in such a random manner? God's word has order and form, 1 Corinthians 14:33; 2 Timothy 1:13.

D. To focus only on favorite verses.

1. Some people have a favorite subject, or a pet doctrine, where they think they have the truth and everybody else is in error. Sometimes this man himself is the one in error!
 - a. This person reads and studies diligently to more finely tune his position. He may know little else of the Bible.
 - b. Or, a person may have the truth on a particular topic, and be so enraptured by that topic that he neglects all else.
2. Some people treat the Bible as their favorite toy.
 - a. This man can tell another all that the Bible says on baptism, but maybe can't tell about the Lord who commanded baptism.

- b. He can disprove all errors, but may have no love in his heart, 1 Corinthians 8:1. His motive in Bible study may be just to win debates. If that's all he has, that's not good.
- E. *To prove your practice is right.*
 - 1. I don't mean examining a practice to make sure it conforms to the word of God. That is a good thing, 2 Corinthians 13:5; 1 Thessalonians 5:21 (KJV).
 - 2. I do mean that attitude which goes to the Bible determined to prove that what I am doing is right—not to test and make sure—but to make my practice fit the Bible.
 - a. This attitude abuses the word of God, 2 Corinthians 4:2; 2:17.
 - b. The attitude of some is "If it takes the twisting and bending of scriptures, then so be it; the Bible will conform to my will!" The Bible speaks of that person in 2 Peter 3:16.
 - c. All the bending in the world cannot turn sprinkling into Bible baptism.
 - d. Try as hard as you want, an adulterous marriage cannot be twisted into an acceptable union pleasing unto God.
 - e. Distort the scriptures this way or that, boozing it up or getting down with drugs cannot be made acceptable to God.
 - f. God's word is supposed to be a mirror, James 1:23. Instead of seeing God's word as a mirror for the soul, he sees it as a picture to be painted the way he wants.
 - 3. The desire to do as a man pleases causes the reader to shrug off any teaching that is contrary to what he wants to believe. In seeking to please himself, he thoroughly displeases God and places himself in damnation where he will be forever lost.
- F. Don't read your Bible this week—or any week—for these reasons.

II. Why you should read your Bible this week.

- A. Here are six important things that you can gain from reading your Bible this week.
 - 1. To learn where you came from, Genesis 1:27.
 - 2. To learn why you are here, Ecclesiastes 12:13.
 - 3. To learn where you are going, Matthew 25:46.
 - 4. To increase your faith in Jesus, Romans 10:17.
 - 5. To please the God who loves you, Hebrews 11:6.
 - 6. To know and do His will, John 8:32.
- B. And, while we jumped all over the Bible to get those six things, did you know that you can get all six of those things just from your reading this week—in Colossians 1-4 and Luke 1?
 - 1. To learn where you came from, Colossians 1:16. Jesus created all things—including you!
 - 2. To learn why you are here, Colossians 1:23. God put you here to do His will, to be in the faith and continue in the faith!
 - 3. To learn where you are going, Colossians 1:5; 3:5-6. You are either going to heaven, or you are going to a place where the wrath of God will be poured out on you.
 - 4. To increase your faith, Colossians 2:6-7. To increase your faith is to be rooted and built up in Christ, established and abounding in your faith.
 - 5. To please the God who loves you, Colossians 1:10. When you walk in a manner that is worthy of the Lord, you are fully pleasing to Him.
 - 6. To know and do His will, Colossians 1:9; 3:17. It is God's plan for you that the more you read the Bible, the more you will be filled with the knowledge of His will, and the more you will be obedient to the name of the Lord.

Conclusion:

- 1. You really can learn from the Bible this week, can't you?
- 2. One more thing that you can learn from Colossians: You can learn that you need to be baptized so that Jesus Christ will take away all your sins, Colossians 2:11-13.