

Is the Bible Your Treasure Book?

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I, too, like a lot of pastors well-intentioned used to encourage and exhort my church: Read your Bible. Read your Bible. Read your Bible. Read your Bible. We even would have printed in our bulletin McCheyne's reading schedule so we all could be reading the same thing together. And then one day God just showed me the foolishness of that. I discovered that there's not one text of Scripture that commands me to read it. Not one verse. You'll search your concordance in vain to find it. But you will find exhortations and commands to study it, to meditate on it, to muse, to think about it, to hide it in your heart.

But why no command to read? Because just reading the Bible is insufficient. It has some benefit - I don't want to discourage you from reading a chapter a day to keep the devil away, because that's how most of us read. But that's not what you need. That's not interacting with Jesus.

You don't read your Bibles to gain information either. Now we need information. We need knowledge. But that's not the purpose of why God gave you a Bible. He gave you a Book so that you might know Him, interact with Him, and see His greatness towards you. And when the Lord showed me that, it revolutionized my Bible reading.

Up till that, I have to confess, I studied the Bible like most of us do - to learn; to learn more facts, to gain knowledge. And that's about all that happened. I could impress people with that knowledge, but that's about the only thing that happened. I could certainly help somebody by giving them a verse. And I don't demean that or try to minimize that, but it usually had no power, no life. Why? Because it was just coming from my brain.

And when the Lord showed me that I'm to open this Book not with the intent of just learning knowledge and facts about Him, but I am to open this Book to hear Him! To see Him! To experience Him! This Book became a treasure. It no longer was my textbook. It was my treasure.

And so, I get up in the morning and I open my Bible and I now read to see this big God. I read to see just how big and great this God is because I know today the enemy's going to come and he's going to lie to me about my God. He's going to try to persuade me that my God is not as good as He claims to be, not as gracious as He claims to be, not as great as He claims to be, nor is He as glorious as He says He is. Therefore, I need to see it for myself. I need to experience the glory. I need to experience His greatness, His vastness, His omnipotence. And oh yes, His great grace toward me, and His goodness.

And so now I get up in the morning and I read not just to see how big He is, but how big He is to me and towards me. That's what Jesus is saying. "If My words abide in you..." It's the means by which we interact, but there's yet another and necessary thing. Because once again, even studying and meditating on the Word of God apart from the Holy Spirit, there will be no help. It will be black ink on white paper.