

Why and How should I read the Bible? - (Alpha 6) – Sunday 12 February 2017

Notes for Home Groups

Introduction

Perhaps surprisingly, worldwide, more than 100 million Bibles are sold or given away every year! The Bible is so popular and sales so large that it is excluded from book best seller lists in order that other books have an opportunity! Yet, most people when asked say they have not really read the Bible. Can you explain this? What's going on here?

1. Christians believe that the Bible is 'the Word of God', and for most, it is the primary way in which God speaks to us. What is the Bible? What does it encompass and of what is it comprised?

a. The Christian Bible comprises 66 books written by at least 44 different authors. It encompasses several types of literature; books of Law, History, Poetry and Wisdom, Prophecy, Letters and more. Obviously, Job is a very different type of literature from Exodus and from Revelation. Try categorising some of the well-loved books.

b. What relevance do you think knowing what type of literature you are reading has upon your understanding of it?

2. Read 2 Timothy 3: 10-17

a. What does Paul say that Timothy's reading/knowledge of the scriptures will give him/make him?

b. This passage states that all scripture is God-breathed, or God-inspired in some translations. How important is this? On a scale of 1 up to 10, how would you rate the importance of setting time aside every day to read some scripture? Does your current daily schedule correspond to your answer?

c. Paul recommends that Timothy views the scriptures (the Bible) as a sort of 'Manual for Life'. How practical a suggestion is this for your life today in the 21st century? Is there anything essential missing from this 'manual'?

3. Read Psalm 1: 1-3 and Psalm 119: 105

a. This short passage emphasises the need and benefits to be drawn from 'meditating' upon the Word of God, the implication being that it's meaning may not be at first apparent, or perhaps, there is more to be drawn from the passage than your first impression. Have you experienced, after giving a Bible passage some thought, the

passage suddenly 'coming alive'? What do you think actually happened? Was this a good and beneficial experience?

b. Are there benefits from reading and meditating upon the Bible in the company of fellow Christians? If so, what are they? Is the church doing enough for you to support/promote the personal/group reading of the Bible? If not, what more should be offered?

4. Daily Bible Reading notes

a. Compare amongst the group the type of daily notes each member is currently (or not) using. What might the benefits or drawbacks be for occasionally changing your supplier of daily notes? Are the group aware that there are several good daily notes that are available free (in hard copy or to download)? (See sheet distributed in church this week)

b. There are a myriad of resources available to aid the reading and understanding of the Bible. Perhaps some of the group could discuss/recommend those that they have found helpful.

5. Difficult passages within the Bible

There are passages which many find difficult to understand, passages/accounts which are (today) shocking, passages which we might wish were not there at all. These same passages are the ones which non-believers use in their argument against God and the Bible.

a. How do we, how should we ourselves respond to these passages?

b. Does further reflecting on your answers to question 1b help or hinder?

c. How should the church (our church) discuss and explain these passages; by special teaching or on Sunday morning? Or some other way?

Prayer

Loving Father, as we read the Bible, help us to understand it. Send your Holy Spirit to us to make its message clear. May he also touch our consciences so that we see what you want us to do in obedience to your word. For Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.