

Ten Reasons to Read Every Day

John Piper

So, I have ten reasons that I believe this — ten reasons to make Bible reading, Bible understanding, Bible memory essential to the Christian life. Resist feelings of self-sufficiency that say, “I don’t need the Scripture every day.” Here are my ten reasons.

1. Scripture saves.

Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers. (1 Timothy 4:16)

Salvation has happened to God’s people, salvation is — at this moment — happening to God’s people, and salvation will happen completely at the resurrection of God’s people, and it is happening now by means. Paul says to hold fast to the teaching and thereby save yourself. God saves us daily by Scripture.

2. Scripture frees from Satan.

You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. (John 8:32)

And the context is that Jesus is showing the Jewish leaders that, though they think they are not slaves, “You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father’s desires” (John 8:44). Satan is your enemy, young Christian. He is a thousand times stronger than you are. So, John writes to the young believers,

I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one. (1 John 2:14)

This is our only hope for defeating a supernatural enemy. Every time Jesus was tempted by the devil (Matthew 4:1–11; Mark 1:12–13; Luke 4:1–13), he struck back with “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Ephesians 6:17), and he had it memorized, so he didn’t have to carry a book in the wilderness.

3. Scripture imparts grace and peace.

May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. (2 Peter 1:2)

Knowledge of God gained through Scripture is not identical with grace, but Peter says it is a means of grace. If we want to be made peaceful and powerful through divine grace, Peter says, it happens “in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.” That knowledge is found in one place: Scripture.

4. Scripture sanctifies.

Jesus prayed,

Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. (John 17:17)

Sanctification is the process of becoming holy — that is, becoming more like Christ and like God, who is perfectly holy. This is not optional. Hebrews 12:14 says, “Strive . . . for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.”

We do not become perfect in this life, but we do become holy. God sanctifies his people. And Jesus prays to his Father, “Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.” It could not be plainer, or more important.

5. Scripture gives joy.

You received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit. (1 Thessalonians 1:6)

His delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law, he meditates day and night. (Psalm 1:2)

Life without joy is unbearable. The Christian life is a life of many afflictions. But in them all, God sustains joy, and he does it by the Scriptures.

6. Scripture protects us from destructive error.

Until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God . . . so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine. (Ephesians 4:13-14)

How do young Christians stop being leaves blown around by cultural and theological winds and opinions? Answer: “the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God” — knowledge that they experience not as the opinion of man, but as the word of God. That is found in one place: The Scriptures.

7. Scripture is the hope of heaven.

And what I mean by this is that full understanding, full enjoyment of the truth of Scripture, will be experienced only in heaven.

Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known. (1 Corinthians 13:12)

The knowledge of God — all the fullness that a created being can properly comprehend and enjoy — will not be withheld from us indefinitely. The frustrations of our present limitations of understanding and enjoyment will be removed. How fitting it is, then, that we be ever growing now in what will be our final joy in the age to come.

8. Scripture will be resisted by some.

The time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching but having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions. (2 Timothy 4:3)

In other words, we need to know the Scriptures so that we are not taken off guard or knocked off balance or led away by false teachers. We need to receive the Scriptures regularly to be ready to meet those who refuse to receive the Scriptures.

9. The right handling of Scripture is approved by God.

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth. (2 Timothy 2:15)

It is a precious thing to be assigned to do a very important task, and then to find the master worker approving of what he is asked you to do. We are all assigned in some measure to handle the word of God. And what a wonderful opportunity to be pleasing to the Lord.

10. Scripture gives and sustains life.

Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God. (Matthew 4:4)

Spiritual life — eternal life — just like physical life, must be fed, not by bread, but by the word of God. If you think that you have eternal life as a kind of vaccination against hell, which needs no nourishment, you do not know what spiritual life is.

So, there are ten reasons for why young believers should resolve with all their might — all the might that God gives them — to make reading and meditating on and understanding and memorizing the Scriptures essential, nonnegotiable, in their Christian life.