

WHY READ THE BIBLE?

“Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.” —JOHN 17:3

It's the beginning of a new year, a time when many of us make New Year's resolutions with great intentions, but they always seem to peter out. Perhaps this year some of us have decided to spend more time reading the Bible, which is a wonderful resolution, but why exactly do we read the Bible and can we keep it up?

There are those who will say reading the Bible helps them in their time of need. Others think it would be good to know what God has to say about moral ethics and values; others, out of a sense of responsibility, feel they should read the Bible, and still others want to know more of the history of God. As valid as those reasons are, they are not the primary reason the Bible was given to us.

From beginning to end, all of Scripture points to Christ. In John 5:39-40, Jesus said to the Jews who were persecuting Him, “You diligently study the Scriptures, because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.” The primary reason the Bible was given to us is so that we may come to know Christ.

To illustrate, we can buy a brand new Lexus convertible and read the manual from front to back. We can memorize it, put it to song, meditate on it, chew it up and digest it, but unless we apply what we have learned in the manual to the car itself it won't do us any good. We read the manual because it all points to the car, and we want to know our car in

order to experience its features. By the same token, the primary purpose in reading the Bible is to come to know Christ, and not just intellectually but experientially.

It isn't knowing the Bible that will save us, nor attending church or even working in ministry. It is Jesus Christ alone who saves, and by reading our Bibles and genuinely seeking to know Him, the Holy Spirit will bring alive the truths of Scripture into our hearts. Can we keep it up? To experience Christ is to know Him, and that, says Jesus, is eternal life. It is a living and active relationship with Him, in which the Spirit works in us, giving us an ever increasing hunger and thirst to know Christ better. The written Word becomes the Living Word, and when we nurture that relationship with Christ, making time to read our Bibles is no longer a resolution we try our best to keep, but it becomes an integral part of our lives.

PRAYER: Dear Father, thank you for your Holy Spirit who reveals the truths of Scripture. I long to know You more, and thank You for the Bible not only as the written Word, but the Living Word.

TO REFLECT UPON: Am I reading my Bible with an ever increasing desire to know Christ better?