

Why Should We Read The Bible?

Series: Roadmap For Christian Living

How much do you read the Bible?

Do you feel that you know your way around the Bible?

What Does The Bible Say?

10 “But he knows where I am going. And when he tests me, I will come out as pure as gold. 11 For I have stayed on God’s paths; I have followed his ways and not turned aside. 12 I have not departed from his commands, but have treasured his words more than daily food. (Job 23:10–12 NLT)

Do you live your life by God’s words?

Why study the Bible?

I meditate on your age-old regulations; O Lord, they comfort me. (Psalm 119:52 NLT)

Such things were written in the Scriptures long ago to teach us. And the Scriptures give us hope and encouragement as we wait patiently for God's promises to be fulfilled. (Romans 15:4 NLT)

The Bible offers us comfort and hope.

It seems so wrong that everyone under the sun suffers the same fate. Already twisted by evil, people choose their own mad course, for they have no hope. There is nothing ahead but death anyway. (Ecclesiastes 9:3 NLT)

The Bible gives us guidance about relationships, marriage, conflict, money, parenting, work, citizenship, and even leisure.

8 Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. 9 Stand firm against him, and be strong in your faith. Remember that your family of believers all over the world is

going through the same kind of suffering you are. (1 Peter 5:8–9 NLT)

For you are the children of your father the devil, and you love to do the evil things he does. He was a murderer from the beginning. He has always hated the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, it is consistent with his character; for he is a liar and the father of lies. (John 8:44 NLT)

He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross. 15 In this way, he disarmed the spiritual rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross. (Colossians 2:14–15 NLT)

The Bible helps us not fall for Satan's and culture's lies.

If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. 6 But when you ask him, be sure that your faith is in God alone. (James 1:5–6 NLT)

The instructions of the Lord are perfect, reviving the soul. The decrees of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple.

(Psalm 19:7 NLT)

Reading the Bible will give you wisdom.

How Can You Obey?

Pick a time to read the Bible each day.

Get a good study Bible to help with context.

Ask yourself two questions:

What does the Bible say?

How can I obey?

Additional Notes:

If you would like to use your home to disciple others, check out our training at www.crosswaveschurch.com/host. Cross Waves has produced short videos to train you how to use your home to reach others for Christ. So please check it out.

Notes:

Talking Theology comes from an article at <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justin-taylor/why-abba-does-not-mean-daddy/>.

Explore:

Their work of faith made them an elect people, for they turned to God from their idols and trusted Jesus Christ. Their labor of love made them an exemplary and enthusiastic people as they lived the Word of God and shared the Gospel. Their patience of hope

made them an expectant people, looking for their Saviour's return.

In these verses, Paul related the second coming of Christ to their salvation. Because they had trusted Christ, they looked for His return with joyful expectancy and knew that they would be delivered "from the wrath to come" (1 Thes. 1:10). Paul repeated this truth in 1 Thessalonians 5:9–10, and he amplified it again in 2 Thessalonians 1:5–10.

When they worshiped idols, the Thessalonians had no hope. But when they trusted "the living God," they had a living hope (see 1 Peter 1:2–3). Those of us who have been brought up in the Christian doctrine cannot understand the bondage of pagan idolatry. Before Paul came to them with the Gospel, these people were without hope and "without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12). Read Psalm 115 for a vivid description of what it is like to worship an idol.

Christians are “children of the living God” (Rom. 9:26). Their bodies are the “temples of the living God” (2 Cor. 6:16), indwelt by the “Spirit of the living God” (2 Cor. 3:3). The church is “the church of the living God” (1 Tim. 3:15); and for His church, God is preparing “the city of the living God” (Heb. 12:22). The living God has given us a living hope by raising His Son Jesus Christ from the dead.

Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). The Bible exposition commentary (Vol. 2, p. 162). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Explore:

Principles About God’s Guidance Found in the Bible

1. Read the Old Testament and the New Testament

Nobody is guided by the Holy Spirit in a way which is contrary to the clearly-revealed teachings of God in the Bible. We should make ourselves aware of God's teaching which he has given to us in the Bible.

2. Christians should actively seek God's will

Many of the best examples in the Bible, of people seeking God's will, are linked to prayer. If we want to be guided by God we should be praying to him for guidance.

David is an example of a biblical character who looked for guidance in God's Word. Psalm 19:7–14; 119.

3. Every Christian is responsible to God

No matter how much help we may receive from other Christians we are each directly responsible to God for discovering his will for our own lives. God has given to each Christian his own Spirit and this Spirit will make known God's will to us.

“The Counselor, the Holy Spirit ... will teach you all things.”

John 14:26

Water, M. (2001). Bible Promises made easy (p. 39). Alresford, Hampshire: John Hunt Publishers Ltd.

Explore:

Biblical Theology. Study of the Bible that seeks to discover what the biblical writers, under divine guidance, believed, described, and taught in the context of their own times.

Relation to Other Disciplines. Biblical theology is related to but different from three other major branches of theological inquiry.

Practical theology focuses on pastoral application of biblical truths in modern life. **Systematic theology** articulates the biblical outlook in a current doctrinal or philosophical system. **Historical theology** investigates the development of Christian thought in its growth through the centuries since biblical times.

Biblical theology is an attempt to articulate the theology that the Bible contains as its writers addressed their particular settings.

The Scriptures came into being over the course of many centuries, from different authors, social settings, and geographical locations. They are written in three different languages and numerous literary forms (genres). Therefore analytic study leading to synthetic understanding is required to grasp their overarching themes and underlying unities. Biblical theology labors to arrive at a coherent synthetic overview without denying the fragmentary nature of the light the Bible sheds on some matters, and without glossing over tensions that may exist as various themes overlap (e.g., God's mercy and God's judgment; law and grace).

Yarbrough, R. W. (1996). Biblical Theology. In Evangelical dictionary of biblical theology (electronic ed., pp. 61–62). Grand Rapids: Baker Book House.

Explore:

While the Book of Job teaches us much about human suffering, we also learn a great deal about Satan and his relationship to God. The first two chapters of Job demonstrate that although Satan is in rebellion, he is still accountable to God.

Originally an angel of God, Satan became corrupt through his own pride (2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6). Ever since his rebellion against God, Satan has been God's enemy as well as ours. In fact, the Hebrew word for Satan means "Adversary." In the story of Job, Satan remained true to his name by accusing Job and afflicting him with all kinds of suffering. However Satan's power is not equal to God's. Although Satan attempts to hamper God's work,

he is limited by God. As much as he may wish to be a god, Satan still remains answerable to God.

In addition to being accountable to God (1:6), Satan, as a created being, is finite. He is not all-powerful, and he can only be in one place at one time (1:7). Therefore, his fellow fallen angels must aid him in his evil work. Of course, Satan can tempt us, but he cannot know what is in our minds or foretell our future (1:9–11). Most important, he can do nothing without God's permission (1:6–12). Because God actively restrains Satan (1:12, 2:6) and promises that He will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we can bear (1 Cor. 10:13), we can be confident that with God's power we can overcome Satan. Although we live in a fallen world, Satan does not have free reign to do whatever evil he wishes. God is still, and always will be, sovereign.

It was Satan who planned and implemented Job's suffering. God may have allowed Satan to test Job for a time. But in His time

God Himself delivered Job from suffering, restored him, and blessed him even more than before (42:10). Even through Satan's evil plan, God had accomplished His good purposes. The relationship between Job and God was tested, and it withstood the test. God's love had won; Satan's accusations were answered. It was finally clear to all that God was both sovereign and compassionate. Through the experience, Job learned to appreciate God's gifts to him even more (42:1–6).

Radmacher, E. D., Allen, R. B., & House, H. W. (1997). *The Nelson Study Bible: New King James Version* (Job 1:21). Nashville: T. Nelson Publishers.

Explore:

The Old Testament identifies the ability to reach informed intellectual decisions as a form of wisdom. In this case, wisdom

refers to the ability to make the decision that leads to the best possible outcome. An example of this type of wisdom is 1 Kings 3:16–28, where Solomon must discern the true mother of an infant. Most of the wisdom recorded in the Bible is associated with this form of wisdom. For example, the material in Proverbs is designed to guide readers in making good choices when faced with various conundrums.

This form of wisdom is practical and eschews purely intellectual pursuits. As Brevard Childs noted, “As a minimal statement of a complex and varied phenomenon, wisdom sought to understand through reflection the nature of the world of human experience in relation to divine reality. The function of wisdom within Israel was essentially didactic and not philosophical” (Childs, Introduction, 574). James Crenshaw highlights the aim of biblical wisdom when he writes that “[t]he sages ... insisted on the intellect’s capacity to assure the good life by word and deed. By using their intellectual gifts the sages hoped to steer their

lives safely into harbor, avoiding hazards that brought catastrophes to fools” (Crenshaw, “The Concept of God,” 6; see also Harrington, *Wisdom Texts*, 6).

This type of wisdom is also manifest in government in ancient Israel. Second Samuel 14, 16, and 20 demonstrates that wisdom was a desirable asset for the governance of towns. Solomon’s request for wisdom reflects the belief that monarchs must be wise. Kings throughout the ancient world frequently relied on wise men who acted as royal advisors. Thus, wisdom is also one of the attributes of the Messiah (e.g., Isa 11:1–10; compare Van Roon, 212–13).

Speculative Wisdom in the Old Testament

The book of Ecclesiastes presents the words of the Teacher or “Qoheleth”—a Hebrew title that probably means “one who gathers people for instruction.” This teacher pushes biblical wisdom beyond knowledge used to make life choices; in

Ecclesiastes, wisdom takes on a more speculative level that seeks to understand the purpose and profit of life itself.

However, in spite of his superlative wisdom, the Teacher is unable to find a satisfactory answer to these questions through observation and experimentation. Although he notes some benefits of the more practical forms of wisdom (e.g., Eccl 10:10), his speculative investigations fail to produce answers, leading him to conclude that nothing makes sense (הֶבֶל, hevel, often translated “meaningless” or “vanity”). He thus affirms traditional notions of wisdom.

The Evolution of Wisdom

Notions of wisdom and the role and identity of sages in ancient Israel did not remain static. Toward the end of the Old Testament period, wisdom was increasingly associated with scribal sages. By the time Sirach's grandson translated and introduced his grandfather's work, the words of his prologue

“show that wisdom had become literary and learned in character, with primary sources in the law, prophets, and ‘other books’ (see Sir 24:23, 33; 38:24; 39:1–3; 44–50)” (Van Leeuwen, “Scribal Wisdom,” 31). The Wisdom of Solomon actively criticizes views reminiscent of some speculative statements in Ecclesiastes, perhaps again to balance Ecclesiastes’ claims (Wisdom of Solomon 1:16–2:24).

Wisdom in the New Testament

Although wisdom is less prominent in the New Testament, it occupies a significant place in the teachings and person of Jesus.

Jesus and Wisdom

The New Testament presents Jesus as a teacher—a role often associated with the wise in the ancient world. This connection is apparent in Jesus’ use of parables to instruct—teaching methods also used by sages (see Prov 1:2–7; Mullins, 336–337).

However, there is far more to Jesus’ teaching than simply the

adoption of wisdom forms—which prophets in Old Testament times also used to convey their message. The content of Jesus’ teaching is not constrained to wisdom by His use of parables; it is also prophetic and priestly.

Jesus as Wisdom

Proverbs personifies wisdom as a woman who woos young men in competition with the personified folly. The young men must choose between the two. Proverbs also presents Woman Wisdom as being intimately involved in the process of creation, aiding God as He created the cosmos. Proverbs thus implies that wisdom is built into the very fabric of the universe.

Some scholars have connected personified Wisdom in Proverbs with Jesus’ involvement at creation. Terence Mullins, for example, claims that wisdom is personified by Jesus twice in the New Testament (Luke 7:35; 11:49; compare Mullins, “Jewish Wisdom Literature,” 335). However, many commentators also

see Proverbs 8 lying behind Col 1:15–17 and John 1:1–4 (compare Beale, “Colossians,” 855). If this passage does bear such connotations, Beale notes that “Paul would be affirming that, whereas the fullest manifestation of earthly wisdom in the Old Testament was the Torah, now the Messiah is the greatest expression of divine wisdom on earth, the former pointing to the latter” (Beale, “Colossians,” 855).

However, although the New Testament does identify Jesus as the “wisdom of God” (1 Cor 1:24), it does not directly use the language of Prov 8. Thus, the New Testament authors appear to be making a general association between Jesus and wisdom rather than specifically appealing to Prov 8 (see Van Roon, “Relation,” 207–39).

Wisdom in Paul’s Writings

Paul addresses wisdom in 1 Cor 1–3, specifically associating it with the Greeks in contrast to the Jews. He does not detail

precisely what constitutes the wisdom the Greeks were seeking; he simply notes that it finds the notion of the crucifixion to be foolish and so stands at odds with God's wisdom. The wisdom in this passage differs from the type found in earlier Jewish thought and the Old Testament, instead reflecting aspects of traditional Greek philosophy.

Wisdom in James

Wisdom in James reflects Old Testament notions that wisdom is a practical gift from God that benefits its bearer in living in this world. As in the Old Testament, James distinguishes between divine wisdom and earthly wisdom (Jas 3:13–17). The sentiments of Jas 3:13 adhere closely to the fundamental identification of wisdom in the Old Testament as obedience to God's commands (Deut 4:6).

Shields, M. A. (2016). Wisdom. In J. D. Barry, D. Bomar, D. R. Brown, R. Klippenstein, D. Mangum, C. Sinclair Wolcott, ... W. Widder (Eds.), *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

Question 1 of 5

How should we refer to God? How would you define reverential fear as found in 1 Peter 1:17?

Question 2 of 5

Can you think of a time in life when God used a particular Bible passage to guide you through a difficult situation? If so, describe the situation and the passage God used to direct you.

Question 3 of 5

What is the main reason Christians should study the Bible?

Question 4 of 5

Are there any books of the Bible that you find particularly interesting and would like to study? List your top three and why you find them interesting.

Question 5 of 5

Do you currently have a time picked out for daily Bible study? If so, when is it? If not, what time do you believe would work best for you? Do you have someone to hold you accountable in this area?