

# The Life-Giving Word



## Why do preachers always talk about reading the Bible?

I mean it's an ancient book, full of hard ideas, and those names—Aminadab. Who names their kid Aminadab? And don't forget the "begats," I mean "Hezekiah begat Manasseh." Come on! Who reads that stuff anymore?

Hardly anybody. And that's a tragedy.

It may be difficult to believe, but people struggle to find their way in the world because they don't read the Bible.

The Bible teaches us what God thinks. It shows us who we are, what we can become, and how to do it to please God and prosper in things that matter.

Reading the Bible provides answers humanity needs—you need—to live well and make this world a great place.

*Bible reading provides spiritual nourishment and strengthens your connection to Christ.*

Let me share three reasons why to read the Bible often.

## Scripture Lights Your Path

The first reason: *Bible reading **lights** your path.*

As the psalmist affirmed: "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Psalm 119:105).

Dark ideas flood the world. Shady behavior tempts you. Murky morals melt many men. Prospects are dim, hopes are depressing, and behavior is shadowy. People like you and me choose poor actions and tempt us to join them.

Read the Bible and you find bright ways to behave. Vivid, practical morality to guide you. Intense joy, intelligent choices, lively and smart deeds to do.

Life goes better with Bible reading.

## Scripture Shapes Your Life

The second reason you should read the Bible often: *Bible reading shapes your life.*

As the apostle Paul said to his young colleague Timothy: “All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that the person of God may be proficient, equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Like Timothy, I need help to serve God in a harsh world. The help comes when scripture rebukes me, corrects my behavior, or trains me in what’s right to do.

You know what’s wrong in your behavior because you read about it in the Bible. You feel comfort and joy when other people moan and grieve because the Bible taught you where your best interests lie—with God and among his people. Your treatment of others is kind and loving.

You’re the best version of you because the Bible shapes your life.

## **Scripture Pierces Your Heart**

The third reason to read the Bible often: *Bible reading pierces your heart.*

As the Letter to the Hebrews said, “Indeed, the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12).

Many people ignore the Bible because when they read it, God’s Word cuts them to the quick. It excises false gods. They fear its way of living will rob their happiness.

Scripture uncovers the weakness I don’t want to see. But it leads me toward a truer strength—the kind that pleases God and equips me to love others generously.

The wandering Israelites were reminded to rest a day each week because God relaxed after he created the world. But they hardened their hearts and never entered that rest. When we refuse to listen, God’s word grows silent to us.

As a follower of Jesus Christ, you experience the Bible as a healing instrument, a scalpel that returns you to spiritual health. It comforts, challenges, and constructs you as the person you should be, the good and gracious person you want to be.

**So how do you begin to read the Bible?** Work at the names; you'll learn the important ones. Skip over the "begats." Read what you understand. Then challenge yourself to read a little of the hard stuff. Think about what God teaches. You'll be equipped to behave well in a grimy world.

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Remember to read the Bible. God talks to you in its pages.

**Amen**