

# Enjoying Your Bible

by Alan Redpath

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*The Bible is essential for spiritual growth, conflict with the devil, and service in the Christian life, and it can be enjoyed by reading it regularly, slowly, and in good company.*

**Duration:** 21:58

**Scripture:** Psalm 1:2, Psalm 119:11, Matthew 4:4, John 17:17, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, James 1:22, 1 John 5:13

**Topics:** "Bible"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of admitting the word of God into our minds and lives. He encourages listeners to let the word of God soak in, take root, and become a part of their character. The preacher also emphasizes the need to submit to the authority of the word of God in daily living, making it the final word in all decisions. He highlights the danger of merely studying the Bible objectively and encourages a slow, thoughtful approach to reading and digesting its teachings. The sermon concludes with a practical suggestion of reading Scripture Union notes daily and engaging in constant, systematic, and prayerful study of the word of God to strengthen one's faith.

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## Transcript

Our subject this evening is enjoying your Bible. The psalmist said in Psalm 119 and verse 105, thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. In other words, the Word of God meant something real and vital to him.

And I just want to ask you very simply this evening, what place has the Bible in your life? It is to the spiritual life what food is to the physical life. That analogy is often used in Scripture. For instance, you recall the Apostle Peter saying on one occasion that we are to desire the sincere milk of the Word.

And the man who takes no food won't live very long. Food is necessary and the Bible is necessary. Now the question is, how can I enjoy my Bible? And I want to answer that question and just do so by using the simple analogy of the book being to your spiritual life in the purpose of God, what food is to your body.

What place has the Bible in your life? In the first place, food for your body must be a balanced diet. We hear an awful lot these days about vitamins, about a balanced diet being necessary to sustain blood, and flesh, and brain, and heart, and nerves, and muscle, and all the rest. If you have all one kind of food, it's not good for your body.

And if you have all one kind of spiritual food, it's not good for your body either, for your soul. And one kind of feeding on the Bible is not good. Some people read only the Old Testament bits of the Psalms, some people read only the Gospels, others constantly go back to favorite portions, and whole chunks of the Bible remain unread.

If I would enjoy the Word of God, I must learn to feed on the whole book, on its history, and its poetry, on its theology, its prophecy, and learn to rejoice in the whole teaching, and the whole balance, and revelation of the Word of God. You see, a balanced spiritual diet makes a balanced Christian. Too many of us are lopsided.

If you use your Bible properly, if you read the whole book, and make the whole book yours, it makes you strong for several things. For example, it makes you strong for growth in the Christian life. You remember how disappointed Paul was with the Corinthian church? 1 Corinthians chapter 3, verses 1 and 2, where he says, I have yet to speak unto you as unto babes.

There was no spiritual growth. Now, insufficient or bad food will arrest growth, and many Christians are in danger of contracting spiritual polio, simply because of neglecting good food, getting this spiritually deformed. Beware, my friend, what you read.

Bad books act like poison, and as many a man lost his appetite for the Word of God, because of some of the trash he's been reading, and he's ruined his own personal quiet time, and his morning watch with God, because he spent the last hour of the previous day reading some cheap novel. Ask yourself tonight, if you're alone, if there's nobody around, and if you want to read a book, do you prefer the Word of God, which is the light to your path, or do you prefer the novel, which perhaps, may I dare to suggest, has even something of the unpleasant in it? That's a very difficult question for you maybe to answer honestly, some of you. What place has the Bible got in your life? It's good for growth, and we neglect it at our peril.

And listen, it's good for conflict with the devil. When people sometimes talk with me about spiritual things, and say they are finding themselves defeated in life by temptation, I ask them usually a question. I say, did you have any breakfast this morning? Well, sure.

Well, tell me, did you have any spiritual breakfast this morning? And they know what I mean, and they say, well, quite frankly, I haven't time this morning. Really? Did you have any spiritual breakfast yesterday? No, I was really a bit busy yesterday too, I just didn't have time. Well, have you had any spiritual breakfast this week? No, not this week.

It's really been awful pressure this week, I haven't had a chance. Well, has it been this month, or even this year? No, no wonder, no wonder, when we don't have a good square meal from the book, no wonder we go down when we're tempted. You can't stand up to the devil if you don't feed on the Word of God.

The Bible is good for conflict with the enemy, and you could only stand against the enemy when you're feeding on the Word. The Word of God is good for service in the Christian life. You know, one of the outstanding sporting events in Britain is the boat race, which takes place every year between Oxford and Cambridge University.

A little while ago, I read in a paper of the breakfast the men on the crew have when they're in training. It almost made me wish that I was on the crew. What a breakfast! Steak, and all sorts of things that I would never think of eating in the morning.

What a meal! Ah, but you see, it was the food that made them strong when they were in training, and it was this that made them fit, and oh, the coveted honour of winning the race! But you know, there's a much greater honour than that for the Christian, it's that of extending the Kingdom of God in the hearts of other people. And if I'm to be used in Christian work then, then I find that the Bible will make me strong, and your service needs strength, and strength needs food, and the Word of God is the place where you get food. It makes you strong for your service for the Lord.

And then again, the Word of God makes you strong for the emergencies which occur in life. Sometimes the day goes smoothly enough, but the strength that you have for that is so useless for the battle you're going to face tomorrow. I remember, don't you, how the Lord Jesus vanquished the enemy? How he met every emergency in the wilderness, in that tremendous conflict, by the word, it is written, it is written, it is written.

And right through all the crises of his earthly life, all the way to the cross, he used the authority of God's Word. And therefore I must ask you, dear friend, is your Bible well-read? Is it well-used? I like to see a well-marked Bible, that's what makes you strong. I never forget just a few years ago, when a very dear friend of mine, some of you remember him, Reverend George Duncan was over here at Mid-America Keswick, and each morning at Moody Bible Institute he was given almost an hour to speak to the whole student body and faculty concerning the deeper things of the Christian life.

And he spoke with such simplicity and yet with such authority. And I remember on one occasion that he spoke about this very subject, getting to grips with the Word of God. And he gave some very practical lessons about it, and it all seemed so real to him and so vital.

Soon after that meeting, that morning, I had to go with him to his hotel room. And as we went into the room together, I noticed there was his Bible open on a desk. And here alongside it there was some black ink, and some green ink, and some red ink.

And here was a black ink pen, and a green ink pen, and a red ink pen. And I looked at that Bible, and I felt I was on holy ground, because I turned it over and found all its pages so marked. Ah, that's what gives strength.

No substitute for that in the Christian life. A boy once asked his Sunday school teacher the meaning of the words, urim and thummim. The teacher was honest enough to say that she didn't know.

But she said, I'll give you a good motto for your Bible, urim and thummim. Are you doing that? Is your Bible well-read? Oh, the Word of God gives you strength for all of these things. In the second place, food for the body must be eaten slowly.

You know, food should give your body power. Lots of folks today get ulcers because they eat the food too quickly. And they're always moving at such a pace of no time to stop, to sit down quietly for a meal.

And if you bolt food, it gives you a pain. And food has got to be digested and masticated, and you've got to take time over it. And the Word of God has got to be read, and marked, and learned, and inwardly digested.

I've often used the simple illustration, I won't do it again, but I just remind you of that wonderful creature, the cow, with so many stomachs that it can digest its food. And the Christian is supposed to digest his food, and masticate it, and take time over it. The Bible, if I'm to get anything about it, out of it, and to enjoy

it, I've got to read it slowly.

To dash into a very quick Bible reading with my Scripture Union portion, read it fast, comment upon it, and then leave it, is to get nothing at all out of the Word of God. It needs time. You take, for instance, a verse, that familiar verse, for an example, Galatians 2 20.

You all know it. I have been crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. And the life that I now live, I live through faith in the Son of God who loved me, and gave himself for me.

What does that verse tell me? It tells me five things, if I think about it, reading it backwards, five lovely things. It tells me that Jesus loves me. It tells me that Jesus died for me.

It tells me that he asks me to trust him, that I might live my life through faith in him. It tells me that if I trust him, he lives in me. I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.

It tells me that I have been identified, made one with him in his death and resurrection. It's the whole gospel in that one verse. It tells me all this.

Ah, but I've got to take time to dig it out. And if I would read my Bible profitably, the word is, carry, not hurry, carry over the Word of God. So the Bible, the food for my body, must be taken slowly, and the food from the Word of God must be digested, and I must take time to meditate on it.

Another thing, food for my body must be taken regularly. How many meals do you have a day? Three? Or if you add the snacks, four, five, or even six. How many spiritual meals do you have a day? One? Or perhaps not really, one a week.

Cafeteria snacks occasionally, but a real meal from the Word, once a day, or once a week. A pastor once asked a very dirty, dirty tramp, how often do you have a bath? And then replied to his amazement, every Christmas, whether I need it or not. Hmm.

How many meals do I have from my, the Word of God? Oh, I need a timetable if I'm going to get anything out of my Bible. Just any time is no time. Perhaps three times a day would be impossible for you.

Then insist on at least two, in the morning and in the evening. And take these verses from the book, dear friend, tonight, for your motto from the Word of God. Acts 17, 11.

Study the Word of God regularly. The Bereans who searched every day in the Scripture to see if these things were so. Study the Word of God prayerfully.

John 16, 13. For the Holy Spirit himself shall guide you into all truth. Study the Word of God thoroughly.

2 Timothy 2, 15. Study to show thyself a workman that needeth not to be ashamed. Food for the body must be taken regularly.

Food for the soul must be taken regularly. Don't fit in your Bible study round the circle of activity. Fit in the activity round the necessity of food from the Word of God.

And then again, food for the body must be eaten in good company. You never enjoy a meal so much if you're eating it by yourself. It's not so good for your digestion.

I think fellowship and eating a meal with other people makes it all the more enjoyable. And the best company for the study of the Word of God is the author of the book, the Holy Spirit himself. It makes such a difference in life when you come to know the author.

As a matter of fact, without him and without his presence, you just cannot understand the book. But once you come to know the author, the Spirit of God, then in every difficulty, in every problem, he's there for you to consult him. He dwells, you see, in the book.

And he dwells in the heart of the man who's studying the book, if that man is a Christian. He's the author of the book. That's why the Word of God has authority, because the Holy Spirit is the author.

And its authority comes from its inspiration. 2 Peter chapter 1 and verse 21 tells us that the Word of God is in-breathed by the Spirit. Holy men of God moved by the Holy Spirit wrote these things.

This is why the book has authority. This is what makes it different from any other book. And when you turn to the Word of God, you turn to it immediately as a book which is in-breathed from God himself.

That's why as you study the Word, you meet God in it. Food for the body needs to be eaten in good company. And food for the soul is enjoyable when you take it in the presence and in the company of the Holy Spirit.

But one more thing. When your appetite fails you, it's time to consult the doctor. When you've stopped enjoying eating, and when you don't like your food, that's the time to consult a physician.

Hunger is the natural God-given desire for food, and appetite is the enjoyment of it. And when either of these fail in life, there's something wrong. Isn't it a wonderful thing, folk, that food, ordinary food for your body, is enjoyable? That's really quite a miracle that you enjoy it.

And it should be so with the spiritual food from the Word of God. But you only enjoy food when it's doing the thing that God means it to do. And you only enjoy the Word of God when it's fulfilling in your life the purpose for which God gave it.

Have you ever stopped to ask yourself why God gave us the Bible? Let me tell you. John 20, 31. He gave it to us that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, and believing we might have life in his name.

That's why he gave the Word of God. He gave it in order that we might not sin. First John, chapter 2, verse 1. Little children, these things I write unto you, that ye sin not.

Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee. Psalm 119, verse 11. He gave us the book that it might stop us sinning.

Sin will keep you from the Bible. The Bible will keep you from sin. He gave us the book to do that.

He gave us the book that we might have assurance of life. First John, chapter 5, and verse 13. These things are written unto you that you might know that you have eternal life.

He gave us the book that it might make us like the Lord Jesus. John, chapter 17, and verse 17. Sanctify them through thy truth, for thy word is truth.

And dear friend, you begin to enjoy the book in your daily life when it's fulfilling the purpose for which God gave it. I ask you again, is it doing that in your heart? Has the Word of God brought you to believe that Jesus is the Christ, and believing that you might have life? Is the Word of God the sanctifying factor that because you read it and study it, it keeps you from sin? Has the Word of God brought you that sense of absolute assurance, because you know that it keeps you from sin? Jesus Christ as your Lord and therefore you're sure you have life. And is your Bible making you day by day more like the Lord Jesus? And that's how you enjoy the Bible.

You enjoy it when it's doing the thing that God gave it to you for. And I close by giving you four great words, well-known words, that you should always have before you as you turn to the Word of God. Four great principles of Bible study.

The first word is admit it to your mind and life. Admit the Word of God to your mind. Let it in, let it soak, let it take root in your mind and in your life.

Then submit to the authority of the Word of God in your daily living. Let this book be the final word of authority in everything. Whatever decision you have to make, refer it first of all to the Word.

What's that? The Scripture. Commit the Word of God to your life and to your character until what you read here becomes part of you. Not just a theory.

I believe that one of the great dangers is our objective study of the Bible. Is the study of it simply for systematic theology instead of food for our soul? Commit it to your life till it becomes part of you. And then transmit it through your life in testimony to others.

Admit it, submit to it, commit it to your life and then transmit it in testimony to other people. You enjoying the Word of God? I do pray that the book may live in your heart today and all through the days. That you must, might rejoice in it constantly.

And if I may close with a very practical word. One very simple method of the study of the Word of God which will be an immense help to you is to read your Scripture Union notes every day. And we'd be so glad here at church to help you to understand them and how, and to know how you may, may receive them.

The constant systematic prayerful study of the Word is that which makes the Christian strong. May the Lord help us to enjoy the book. Shall we bow together in prayer? We thank Thee Lord for Thy Word, for the written Word in which we find the living Word.

We thank Thee tonight for the reminder in the ministry of song and music of the assurance that we have as we turn to the book. We thank Thee that Thou hast given us the book that we might grow like the Lord Jesus. And we pray that the purpose of the book might be fulfilled in our lives each day as we submit to it and commit it to our lives and transmit its message to the world outside.

Lord give to us the joy, the sheer delight of communion with Thee in the Word. We ask it for Jesus' sake. Amen.

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