

# Bible Reading Has Been My Life

by John Piper

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*This sermon emphasizes the importance of reading the Bible daily and how individual gifts and limitations can uniquely impact one's approach to reading and sharing God's Word. It highlights the power of Scripture in various aspects of life, including personal growth, spiritual warfare, witnessing, handling crises, and nurturing family relationships.*

**Scripture:** Romans 12:5, Matthew 11:28, 1 Peter 1:23, James 1:18, Deuteronomy 6:6

**Topics:** "Daily Bible Reading", "Impact of Individual Gifts"

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## Description

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## Transcript

I want to begin with a surprising text, maybe, that you don't know. What's it got to do with reading? So I'm going to read a couple of verses from Romans 12, 5 to 8. We though many are one body in Christ and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them.

If prophecy in proportion to our faith, if service in our serving, the one who teaches in his teaching, the one who exhorts in his exhortation, the one who contributes in generosity, the one who leads with zeal, the one who does acts of mercy with cheerfulness, and I want to add, the one who reads with what? What would you put? And the reason I feel okay suggesting that Paul could continue that way is because those last several were not gifts that are unique to any Christian. Every Christian is supposed to be merciful, right? Be merciful as your Heavenly Father is merciful. He's spoken to all Christians.

And here it says those of you who show mercy as your gift, do it with cheerfulness. Or what about giving? Generosity. Every one of you men should be a giver.

Financially, other ways. That's not a unique gift, or is it? So if he can take generosity and say do that with what? The one who contributes with generosity, the one who shows mercy with cheerfulness, he can say the one who reads, because everybody's supposed to be a reader if you've given the opportunity to learn how to read in this world. There are cultures that haven't had that opportunity yet.

And what would you fill in the blank with then? And the reason this feels so relevant to me, and the reason I'm starting this way, is because okay if there are merciful people, which all Christians are supposed to be, and Paul feels legitimate in calling out mercy as something you might be especially gifted at, that means that ordinary Christian duties and acts can be expressed in peculiarly individually anointed ways, like reading. And so I paused when I thought that and think, okay, what about me? What about me? So I'm going to tell you my story, because you know, if you know me at all, you know me as a preacher and a writer, maybe a family guy, some of you personally enough to be on the staff with me and so on for 33 years here. But you don't know, you don't know how I got to all those places, and what limitations and giftings prescribe those paths.

You're all, you're all led by limits that you have, things you cannot, you're not good at, and a few things that you're more or less good at, and that's why you do what you do. So for me to fill in the blank, okay, in your mercy be cheerfulness, in your contributing be generous, in your reading be blank. Piper, what's your blank? You could fill in, in your reading be speedy, speed reader, in your reading be really good comprehender, memorer, memorizer, or rememberer.

Remember what you read. Or it could be, when you read, be especially adept at relating what you read to other scriptures. Think of reading the Bible.

When you read, be especially adept at explaining it to other people. When you read, be especially adept at applying it to your friends. And on and on the list could go.

You may be more or less good at some aspect of reading and not other aspects of reading. How would that affect your life? How would that affect your vocation or your fathering? So when I was, I grew up in a Christian home. My dad was an evangelist.

My mom and dad are both in heaven, I believe, right now. And I've always described it as the happiest home I could have ever imagined for. My mom and dad would sing, they'd sing in the front seat of the car while my sister and I sat in the back seat on the way to Florida to Daytona Beach to do some deep-sea fishing.

Great memories of my life. And they're singing, heavenly sunshine, heavenly sunshine, old spiritual 1950s worship songs. And I had a great home.

And long about the seventh grade, something happened and I discovered I could not speak in front of a group. And it wasn't funny. It wasn't like, oh, he has butterflies, or oh, his knees knock, or oh, his hands tremble.

He shut down. It was absolutely humiliating from age, what, whatever age you are in the seventh grade, till about 20. It was horrible.

I would not want to live my teenage years over again. I do not look back on my teenage years as happy years. They were acne, you know, and that was probably owing to how anxious I was.

And I didn't accept any office proposals in school, even though academically I did okay in high school. They nominated me for vice president or presidency. No way, you have to give speeches.

I can't give any speeches. I couldn't do a report in a biology class for 30 seconds to say what I was supposed to be doing with my science project. I couldn't do any of it.

I took a C in civics because you're supposed to give an oral book report. I said to Mr. Vermillion, I can't give an oral book report. And he said, well, if you don't give an oral book report, you're gonna get a C. I said, fine, I'll get a C. I just cannot do it.

Accompanying that, and maybe related to it, I don't know, was the fact that I couldn't read fast, and therefore every kind of test that involved reading, like these horrible tests, you know, you had to take for standardized stuff, and to get into college, you know, read a paragraph, and then they ask you ten questions about it, and I cannot remember what's there, and if I go back and reread it to find out what the answer is, it'll keep me from finishing on time, and inside I'm just churning with anxiety about this test, because I couldn't read, and to this day cannot read faster than I can talk. Now, I've talked to some specialists. I've took all kinds of courses.

I've had examinations done, and whatnot, and Andy Nacelli's wife told me the other day, I think, Pastor John, you have dyslexia. I said, well, I don't transpose things too often. Like, when I write down phone numbers, I do sometimes switch things around.

She said, oh, no, no, that's not the only mark of dyslexia. All kinds of things that are going on with your brain. Like my son.

So I passed some of this on to one of my sons, and I can remember my son was ready to drop out of high school a week before he graduated from Roosevelt High. I said, well, he said, I can't do what she wants me to do, and the teacher said, if you don't do this, you're gonna fail this class, and what she wanted him to do was listen to me in class, and write down the main points, and hand that in at the end. That's all you have to do to pass this class, and he said, I can't do that.

I can tell her verbatim when she's done what she said. I cannot write and listen at the same time. Those are the peculiar things that you can pass on to your kids, or... So anyway, the point of all that was, I come to college a very slow reader, and a poor rememberer.

The very two things that are necessary to be academically successful, at least in my mind, and not able to speak. I fell in love with reading on the 11th grade, but it didn't change the speed of my reading. I just wanted to read fiction, and so I became a lit major in college.

Crazy, and I avoided every single class on the novel, and took every class on poetry, and you know why? Novels are long, and you, they want me to read six novels in a class. I can't read one novel in a class, let alone six novels in a class, whereas poetry, you take a poet, a poem, I've got this long, and you analyze it and write a paper about it. I can do that.

That's why today I'm a preacher, and not an academician. I tried teaching at Bethel for six years. I was a competent teacher, but as I looked around at my colleagues and what's expected of an academician, namely, read everything, remember everything, write books about everything.

I said, I'll never be able to do that. You know what preachers do? In season and out of season, they remember Bible verse. On Sunday, they have a paragraph, and they understand it, love it, and tell people what they see in it, and I thought, I can do that.

I can do that, and I did it for 33 years, and people thought I was good at it. I became a pastor in large measure because I can't read fast, and I can't remember much of what I read, but oh, can I analyze a paragraph? And give me enough time, I can analyze a lot of them and write books like that. I mean, that

looks like, whoa, you know, to write a book like that, you must, you know, read everything.

I said, no, I write books like that because I don't read everything. So when I finish my paragraph here, let the one who reads, blank, I do not put, let the one who reads be a speed reader. Or let the one who reads be one who remembers everything he reads.

I don't, I can't. But I will put, let the one who reads, read slowly and deeply, and with tears and with longing to live it and speak it as he sees it. Then I say, okay, okay.

And I would just say to you brothers, as you finish that sentence, let the one who reads, blank. You fill it in for you. God may you, you.

If you got a great memory, memorize books. I worked like crazy to memorize scripture. I wake up every morning, and before I get out of bed, I recite a chapter in Philippians, till I've got the whole book, and a chapter in 1st Peter, till I've got the whole book.

I know there's two books by heart. I could recite both those books by heart right now. You know what that costs me over the last eight years? Constant work.

Constant work. Those things will go out of my mind within a week if I'm not doing a chapter a day on Philippians and 1st Peter. So the fact that I have a lousy memory is no excuse for not memorizing scripture.

So, find your completion. Now, here's what I'm going to do the rest of time. Given my limitations.

Can't read fast. Can't remember much of what I read without an enormous amount of labor to memorize. How do I read my Bible daily? What, what, how does the Bible function for John Piper in my life daily? That's what I want to talk about for the rest of our minutes together, and I've got it boiled down to something like reading and my life, reading and God, reading and the devil, reading and witness, reading and crisis, reading and family, and a little story to go with each of those of how reading relates to those things in my, my life.

So the gist of it is this. I read my Bible every morning and pray for about an hour. I've done this as long as I can remember.

And I say brothers, it is my life. So let me start with my life. When I say reading and life, here's 1st Peter.

Since you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable through the living and abiding Word of God, now get that, you have been born again. That is, you have been made alive from spiritual death by the living and abiding Word of God. If any of you men is alive in Christ, you owe it to the Word of God.

All flesh is like grass, all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, the flower falls. The Word of the Lord remains forever, and that Word is the good news that was preached to you.

Now, here's what James, that was 1st Peter 1.23. Here's what James does with a similar thought. Of his own will, he has brought us forth by the Word of Truth. So you were born again, brought to spiritual life, made a believer by the Word of Truth.

Therefore, put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive the implanted Word. What a strange phrase! Right? Receive the implanted Word. It's already implanted in you.

That's what happened when you were born again. God planted His seed in you. His Word has taken root in you.

That's why you're a Christian. Now, James says, receive it, receive it, receive it, receive it. That will be your life.

Your life is given, your life is sustained by the power of the Word at the beginning and the receiving of the Word. For me, every morning for 70... Well, when did I start this? I don't know. Not when I was four, so not 70 years.

Somewhere along the way, about 15, say. I have a Bible that my parents gave me when I was 15. I look at it and how it's marked up in red.

I have memories of lying in my single bed with the trolley cars on the wallpaper on the wall above me, reading my Bible late at night. Desperate, because I couldn't speak. Which was a great gift to me, by the way, that God shut me down socially, cut me off from all fast tracks, all party tracks, all cool guy tracks.

I was just shut down into my little world of going hard after God when I was 15. So I've been reading my Bible every day since I was 15, and it has been my life. So that's my first point.

The Bible and life, reading and life. Doesn't matter whether you feel like it, though you want to feel like it, and the ideal is to enjoy it with all your heart. But you're like farmers, right? Farmers cultivate the field because the crops won't come.

It doesn't matter whether they're weeping. You go forth weeping, sowing your seed, and you will come forth rejoicing. So weep on, reader.

That's not the criterion of whether you should read or not. Life, life comes through this word. And if you want to know how I do it, by the way, the Discipleship Journal Reading Plan, it's called.

You can go online and find it, is a plan where you read the whole Bible in a year, four chapters a day, roughly, and in four different places of the Bible at the same time, and you get five days off without reading at the end of every month. That's the genius of the program, because everybody gets behind, and the reason people give up on reading the Bible in a year, is because they're behind by February, and it's no point. And then if you start to drift, drifting, the devil is an expert at using drifters to do nothing.

And so what a wonderful thing. So I've been using this for 30 years, maybe, the Discipleship Journal Reading Plan. It's this goal.

I still, I can never find anything better. Number two, reading and God. Reading is not an end in itself, right? We want to know God.

We want to trust Christ. We want to be filled and led by the Holy Spirit, and the Word is the key to all of those. So let me just say a word about God the Father, God the Son, God the Spirit, and how reading relates.

So what, I just cannot overstate to you, man, what a precious thing it is to know, with a few clear sentences, why you are alive, and what you're doing every morning, and every night. Why do you exist, and why do you read your Bible? With regard to God the Father, it is for His glory, right? Whether you eat, or drink, or whatever you do. Now, wouldn't that include reading your Bible? Do all to the glory of God, 1st Corinthians 10 31.

So I know the goal of my reading the Bible. I know it, beyond a shadow of a doubt. God is to be made to look glorious in my life, because I read the Bible.

That clears all daylight to me, as I look at the whole range of Scripture. So every text I read, I know I'm reading it, to the glory of God. I want God to look great, because I'm reading this.

I want to know Him as great, see Him as great, savor Him as great, show Him as great, right? So that's number one. God the Father, to His glory, 1st Corinthians 10 31. What about the Son, God the Son? Romans 8 32, probably the most important verse in my theology.

He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all. Get the logic now. Will He not then freely with Him give us all things? The logic is, if God didn't spare Christ, but hand Him over to torture and shame for sinners, me.

Would He then withhold any omnipotent effort to give me everything I need for His purposes? No. The logic would break down if He did. Christ would have died in vain if He did.

Therefore, every good that you get from the Bible is blood-bought, and that's how Jesus relates to every text you read. 2nd Corinthians 1 20 says, all the promises of God are yes in Him. So if you have Him, if you're in Him, if His blood is covering your sins, every page of this book is yours.

The whole promise, the whole inheritance, everything good that you could possibly get out of this book that's really there is yours because of Jesus and God not sparing His own Son. If He didn't spare His own Son, will He not with Him freely give you all things that are in this book for your good and for your eternal welfare? Yes, He will. So the goal of all things, the glory of God.

The foundation of all things, the blood of Jesus, the Son of God, and then thirdly, the Holy Spirit. You got texts like, be led by the Spirit, bear the fruits of the Spirit, walk by the Spirit, put to death the deeds of the body by the Spirit. Everything we do is to be done in the power of the Holy Spirit by relying on Him.

That's true for the Bible. So that book you've got in your hand there, reading the Bible supernaturally, is my lifetime of effort to describe, what's that like? What is it like to read the Bible in reliance upon the Holy Spirit, 300 pages about that. And by the way, don't feel intimidated.

Oh my goodness, he gave me this book, now I've got to read it. You do not have to read it. Here's my suggestion.

Most of you probably do not read 300 page books, but you read short things and a book like this doesn't have to be read straight through. Just flip through the index or the table of contents and if you see a chapter that just sticks out, just go there. It might help.

So, reading in God, God the Father, read to His glory. God the Son, every benefit that is promised in the Bible is yours on the basis of the blood, the Holy Spirit. He's the one who illumines.

He's the one who opens the eyes of the heart. He's the one who gives a spirit of wisdom and a revelation. We read in reliance upon His help.

Number three, reading and the devil. The devil's real, brothers. You might think in terms of the pandemic, could well be.

I mean, I think the devil is on a leash and God holds the leash. And the devil may be the immediate cause of all kinds of horrors in the world and God holding the leash could have jerked at any time and therefore behind everything is God with His infinitely wise purposes. But when I think of the devil today, I think of the way we treat each other on the internet.

I think of the kind of tensions that are seething in the church right now between maskers and non maskers and and between Trumpers and non Trumpers. And I mean the kind of the kind of stuff that we're feeling in our hearts towards each other is demonic. It really is demonic and and therefore I hate the devil and I want the devil to be defeated.

I want you men to good warriors against the devil and we'll read a verse to you and then give tell you a story. This is 1st John 2 14. I write to you fathers because you know him who is from the beginning.

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. Now there's a connection between the Word of God abiding in you and you overcoming the evil one. Jesus was perfect and when he was tempted by the devil, what did he do? He quoted the Bible of all things.

He wrote the Bible. He didn't quote the Bible. All he needed to do was say what he said later.

Get out of here. Go to the pigs. Go to hell.

You're you're done. I'm God. You don't own anything.

You don't rule anything. I'm Jesus the Son of God. Instead he quoted scripture and dispensed the devil like that.

You can do that and that's what they were doing. So my my first year here 1980 I was living over 1604 Elliot Tom Steller so sit for 33 years Tom just switched from being a pastor here to be a missionary. That's a glorious way to do it.

I love it and so Tom and I were living together and he was the associate here and for you for students and I was I was a brand-new pastor in 1980 and we got a call from some college students at Bethel saying about 10 o'clock at night called me and said there's a there's a woman in this apartment. She's demon-possessed and we want you to come and cast the demon out. Like that's in the Bible, it's just not in my experience.

What would you guys do? Somebody called you up said there's a demon-possessed woman in the apartment here. We're not letting her out. You come we'll keep her here.

So I called Tom because you're supposed to go out two by two and we got in the car and headed for that apartment and praying. God, we've never ever been asked to do anything like this in our life. This is this is frontline missionary story.

It's just not pastors in Minneapolis. And we got there and we went in and there was this girl named Midge. I came to find out later and she looked like a maniac and she had a penknife.

One of these little things that have a blade about that long and like and she was going around juking at people and she didn't stick anybody, but I kept my winter coat on thinking okay, it won't go all the way in. Now what would you do? What would you do? Quote the Bible. You quote the Bible.

You start telling Bible stories. You recite Romans 8. You call up anything God gives you. You need Christ.

You need the Holy Spirit at that moment and you said God help me. I don't know what to do. I don't know what to say.

I just I know what I'm saying right now that the Word of God gave Jesus power over the devil. So maybe you would grant us your word now to speak in a prophetic way that would deliver her because they say she's demon-possessed. I don't know.

Maybe that's what she always is. She just looks horrible. She sounds horrible and so that's what we did and she collapsed on the floor and and the students, there were about six of them, men and women, began to sing over her Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia and then I would call this prophetic.

They put words besides Alleluia to that Jesus is powerful. I forget what words they used, but just words that came to mind about Jesus. They sang over her.

We sang over her. She went absolutely berserk, screamed at the top of her lungs for Satan not to leave her and then bang, just went as unconscious as she could be as far as I could tell and I thought oh my goodness, she's dead or whatever. I didn't know what's going on.

And we stopped and waited and she comes around and brothers, her face was totally different and when she opened her mouth, it was a different voice and I said, Midge, hand her to my Bible. She had knocked it out of my hand two or three times, hand her my Bible so I want you to read Romans 8 to us and she did. She's in church the next Sunday on the second row, scared me to death.

I thought she's gonna, you know, stand up and do something horrible in church. I remember visiting in the hospital. She broke her leg playing soccer, told me horrible stories while I was visiting her in the hospital about satanic worship she was involved in in Arizona and brothers, I don't know what your challenge might be.

The devil is subtle and the devil is blatant. Right now you're all dealing with the subtleties of Satan. That's what he specializes in the Western world.

He thinks all of us scientific people don't believe he exists and so he'll keep that cover and not show his hand too much with demonic exorcism or demonic possession like he does in so many other places. But it's here and witchcraft is here and all kinds of demonic involvement are here in the Twin Cities and you guys are going to hit it. And it'll be there either in subtle ways or in manifest ways and I just tell you, the Word of God is powerful.

It is powerful. You do not have to be an expert at this, but you do need to be in the Word. You do not want to walk out without your sword any morning.

Okay, so there's the devil. Here's my next one. The reading in the devil, reading and witness.

So on the 9th, on November 7, let's see, November 5, Noel had a car wreck and I love our yellow Toyota. Everybody loves our yellow Toyota. There comes the pastor in his yellow Toyota and she totals it.

Now, it's not her fault at all. The other guy ran the red light. She's fine and State Farm gave us \$6,000 for that Toyota.

Okay, we got to have another car. We only have one car. We've always only had one car and because we live so close, I walked over this morning.

So David Livingston says, go to Oleg Dovchenko down in where is he, Farmington and he rebuilds wrecked cars and Jason's driving one of his cars, Jason Meyer, and Chuck is driving one of his cars, and I'm driving one of his cars, so go get a car from Oleg. So I called Oleg and said, hey, Pastor John here, he thought I was joking. He said, yeah, right, you know, blah, blah, blah.

I said, you mean the Pastor John? Yes, yes, Oleg, come on. I need a car, a car. I'd really drive cars.

I don't fly. So we drive down there. So what does Oleg do? He's a half an hour late.

I said, we'll beat you at 1230. Half an hour late. He shows up.

He said, I had to go get Andy because Andy called me this morning right after you called and said you want to talk about Jesus. And he didn't know Jesus. I've tried to witness to him.

So I told him, there's a Jesus guy coming to buy a car. So you, I'm gonna come get you and you're gonna talk to him. So I'm there to buy a car.

He introduces me to Andy Standall. I'm saying the name so you can pray for him, and he takes us up to the lunchroom nook in his shop and sits us down and walks away and says, tell him about Jesus, Pastor John. Are you ready for that? Are you ready? You will be if you read your Bible every morning and come away from your Bible with one sentence that you love.

Now that's, that's getting at my point about the fact that I don't remember much. There is no way I remember four chapters that I read in the morning. I read them and sometimes a half an hour later, I can't remember where, where I was reading.

So I have to work to make sure something lodges, right? And so I take a sentence and I chew on it and I savor it and I love it and I trust it. Sometimes I write it on a piece of paper and stick it in my pocket. I think like I'm not gonna be able to remember this and I eat it all day long.

I eat that one sentence all day long because I can remember a sentence. I can't remember a chapter, let alone four. So what did I do with Andy? I just took the lozenge out of my mouth and the lozenge that morning was John 635 as I recall.

And it says, I'm the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will not hunger and he who believes in me will never thirst. And I talked to Andy for 20 minutes about what it means to be hungry for Jesus and to drink the water of Jesus.

And God brought words to my mind. He just brought words. Andy was spellbound.

I mean, he just sat there. He's just a mechanic. You know, he helps Oleg and so he's probably not talking about college education.

And just a real ordinary normal guy and here I am, got PhD and that does me no good there. Only one thing does me any good there. Will the Holy Spirit show up, reach in my brain and pull out a verse or two and help me to say, this is beautiful Andy.

This is my life Andy. This is free and you can have this living water. Now he didn't make any decision there.

In fact, I didn't push for any decision. I hardly ever do that because I want I want them to know it does come down to them and God in reality. Not me putting artificial words in their mouths.

And I said, now, do you have a Bible? I've got old King James. I said, okay, you need a newer Bible. I'll send you one.

And so I sent him, I paid 34 bucks at Amazon and had mailed to him an ESV study Bible. He's probably never seen one of those in his life. It's huge.

He probably felt totally intimidated by it. I sent him one of my Don't Waste Your Life and one of my Seeing and Savoring. Those are my two kind of go-to unbeliever books that I would give to people.

So pray for Andy Standoff. But my point is today, before this day is over right now, God's gonna give you something like that. It's gonna put right in your path something wonderful.

My first reaction to Olive was, I came to buy a car. What are you doing? You can talk to this guy about Jesus. Why are you treating me like some priest for? Now, and after that self-defensive, fearful attitude got crucified, I was thrilled to be able to, it was a gift.

Like I came to the end of the day saying, Jesus, what a gift. A gift you gave me to be able to talk to that guy. So there's the Bible and witnessing.

The Bible in crisis. Just one quick story. Anybody here remember the name Rollin Erickson? You're all too young.

Rollin was the main man at Bethlehem when I came in 1980. Just a statesman of a Christian. Loved Jesus with all of his heart and my first year here, I was as green.

I'd never, I'd never done a funeral. I had never visited the hospital. I was so unbelievably green at age 34.

I'd just done academia for all those years and I get a phone call that his wife had a heart attack. She's at North Memorial Hospital, and I'm thinking, oh boy. Okay, I'm gonna get there before the ambulance does.

I'm gonna be a good pastor. I jump in my car, head to North Memorial and when I got there, she's in surgery and the family, probably a dozen of them, were in the waiting room and I walk in and Rollin gives me a big hug. You know what he says? Give us a word, pastor.

Give us a word. And I couldn't think of anything. This is before I had formed some of my crisp habits of get a sentence every morning.

Get a sentence from your four chapters every morning. I used to think, just read it good enough and let it have its general impact. And I, I think I said something like, let me pray for you.

And I prayed something and he's very gracious and I went home, humiliated, defeated, young pastor, didn't do what I needed to do, got down on my knees and said to the Lord, that will never happen again. I'm sorry. And memorized.

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, as the mountains shake in the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult. There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High.

God is in the midst of her. He will help her right early. The nations rage and the kingdoms totter.

He utters his voice and the earth melts. He breaks the bow, shatters the spear, burns the chariots with fire. Come, behold the works of the Lord.

How he's wrought desolations to the ends of the earth. He is exalted among the nations. He's exalted in the earth.

The Lord of hosts is with us. The God of Jacob is our refuge. I just memorized it cold as 1982 and I've never stopped using it.

It's always there. I will never be caught flat-footed again like that in your cause, Lord Jesus. If somebody looks at me and says, give us a word in the midst of crisis.

Psalms 46 is coming out, if nothing's there from the front burner in the morning. But let me tell you what this morning was, because you want to, do you still do that? I said, absolutely I do. This morning was a little crowded just because I'm fitting in a three-mile run before this and I'm eating breakfast and I'm having devotions trying to get ready to come talk to you guys.

And so I read Daniel 1 and 2. It's all I had time for. Daniel 1 and 2. And you know what I'm taking away from my all my sucking them on my lozenge all day long? God gave Daniel favor and compassion in the eyes of the chief eunuch. So God, you got any meetings today? You can't meet one of your kids today.

You can't talk to your wife today. You can't talk to a friend today, a colleague, and you wonder, will I find favor? Will they look upon this conversation with some sympathy? God gives favor. God gives compassion to his people when they need it.

They might kill you and they might look upon you with favor. Who controls that? God, the King's heart is like a river in the hand of the Lord. He turns it wherever he wills.

So I'm taking away from Daniel 1 and 9 this morning. God gives favor. God gives compassion.

He controls the heart of the people I talk to. That's gold right there in Daniel 1 and 9. So that's what I've got in my head all day long today. And we'll see what the Lord brings me later this afternoon.

Okay, last one will be done. Reading and family. Deuteronomy 6, real familiar.

These words that I command you today shall be on your heart. That's why I take a sentence and try to press it in on my heart. What does this mean? Why is this sweet? Why would this be precious today? How could I commend this to anyone today? If I talk to my neighbor Steve about my life today while I'm raking leaves in the backyard, which is too late by the way, the last pickup for bags was on the 18th, but I'll put the bags behind the garage and they'll soak all winter long.

But I'll be out there raking leaves today because they were covered with snow and I need to rake them up and put them in the bags. Anyway, if Steve says, how are you doing? And I say, Steve, I read this morning an amazing thing in the prophet Daniel and wouldn't that be cool? And then talk to him about the goodness of God and giving people favor when they need it and see where it goes. Canned evangelism has never, I think you ought to always have a simple gospel message in your head, you know, God, sin, Christ, faith.

That's a great outline for all gospel messages. God, sin, Christ, faith. But way better is for you to just tell people what's precious to you today.

What's precious to you today about Jesus? Okay, so it says, let these words that I command you today be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk in the way, when you lie down, when you rise, you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, not that I'm real crazy about tattoos, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Now the point of that would be fathers just immerse your families in the word. Just immerse them in your word. Driving the car, connected to the word.

Playing, playtime in the evening, connected to the word. Dealing with the crisis in the kids lives, connected to the word. Suppertime, connected to the word.

Watching a movie, connected to the word. Etc. Just immerse your life in the word.

And that's only possible if you are reading the word.

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Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/OIYE2spzG74.mp4>

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