

# Six Reasons to Read the Bible Daily

by John Piper

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*This sermon emphasizes the importance of focusing on the Bible as the key to understanding God's call for every human being to glorify Him. It presents a six-step argument highlighting the need to know, enjoy, and reflect God's glory, with references to key Bible verses supporting this call to glorify God through knowing and enjoying Him. The sermon also stresses the significance of seeing God's glory, the internal work of the new birth, and the external focus on the Word of God to truly meet and experience God's presence and power.*

**Scripture:** Isaiah 43:7, 1 Corinthians 10:31, Romans 1:21, Psalms 149:5, Ephesians 1:18, John 16:14, 1 Peter 1:23, Acts 26:18, Ephesians 3:4, 2 Timothy 2:7

**Topics:** "Glorifying God", "The Power of Scripture"

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## Description

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## Transcript

So let's go back now, let's take a step back. Why the Bible? And let me develop a six step argument for why we should look so closely at this book. Step number one, God's call on every human being is that we glorify him.

By knowing him accurately in our thoughts and by enjoying him intensely in our emotions and by reflecting him consistently in our actions. That is the call of God on your life. I'll give you some Bible for that in just a minute, but that's my starting place in this seminar.

I know why I exist and I know why you exist. God's put you here to glorify him, knowing, enjoying, showing. Another way to put it, this is simply, this is simply a second way to say the same thing.

God is calling each of us to show his supreme greatness. I'm trying to find a word other than glory, just so if you stumble over the word glorify, you will now see it means something like show his supreme greatness by using our mind to grasp his truth, using our heart to feel his beauty, using our body to put that truth and beauty on display. Those all say the same thing.

So that's why you exist. You have a mind in the image of God, you have an emotion slash will in the image of God and you have a body to act it out in this world and we're called to make God look great by knowing him, enjoying him, reflecting him in this way. That's step number one.

Here's the Bible verses some underneath it. This is Isaiah 43. Bring my sons from afar, my daughters from the ends of the earth, everyone who is called by my name whom I created for my glory.

That's why you were made. Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. I don't think there is a verse that my mother or my father put in letters to me more often than that verse right there.

First Corinthians 10, 31, whatever you do, Johnny, whatever you do and we're open to you doing whatever God calls you to do. You don't have to be an evangelist like your dad, just do what God calls you to do. Do it to the glory of God and if you can't, don't do it.

That was pretty good guidance. Say to a 15-year-old, if you can't do it to the glory of God, don't do it. That was very helpful to me.

Some more verses. I said we do it by knowing and by enjoying. They did not glorify him as God but exchanged the truth about God for a lie.

And since they did not approve to have God in their knowledge, God gave them up to a debased mind. I think that text clearly teaches that you get two alternatives in life. You can glorify God or you can throw the truth away.

And if you throw the truth away, you won't glorify God. They did not glorify him as God but they exchanged the truth for a lie. We glorify God by using these minds not to believe lies but to believe truth.

God is honored when we believe the truth about God, not error about God. So you know what is true about God in order to glorify him with the way we know him. And then with regard to enjoying, Psalm 149, five, let the godly exult in glory and let them sing for joy in their beds.

So we exult in glory. The implication, I think, being if you're bored by glory, you make glory look bad. If you're thrilled with glory, you make glory look good.

There's a correlation between your affectional response to glory and how glory is reflected off of your life. This really does not hurt when I'm coughing. So don't think, oh my, he's in pain.

He's not in any pain, he's just annoyed. So if you wanna pray about that, the Lord knew that I had a cold when he set all this up. So this is a test for everybody.

And I feel very able to keep on going if you're not too frustrated. Point number two in my sequence. Verse one is that God made you to be glorified by knowing him, enjoying him.

Number two, seeing God's glory is essential to knowing it and enjoying it. So now we've got seeing as the main issue. Jesus said, seeing they do not see and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.

What in the world does seeing they do not see mean? It means we have two kinds of eyes. These and these. Now get that from the next verse, Ephesians one.

Paul prayed that the eyes of your heart would be enlightened, that you may know what are the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints. So Jesus said there is a seeing and there is another seeing. And Paul said, well, one of those seeings is the seeing of the heart.

And that's what he's praying for. And that's what I was praying for and am praying for that you would be granted. Because the devil and the unbelievers can see with these, they did, they saw Jesus.

Judas saw him for three years and never prized what he saw. He prized money. The love of money is deadly.

It destroyed him eternally. He saw him more closely than any of us will, but he didn't see him, not as a prize, not as a treasure. He stumbled over the treasure hidden in the field and he looked down and said, it's a rock and went on to something else.

The God of this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ. The reason people hear and don't believe the gospel is because at that moment in the hearing, they don't see glory. Blinded the minds to keep them from seeing what? Light of gospel of glory of Christ.

They see facts. Here's a crucified man. Here's a good teacher.

A lot of admirable traits. Nothing compellingly glorious. Not more glorious than their sports.

Not more glorious than their favorite videos. Not more glorious than their food or their sex or their job or their family. He's just nice.

He's just okay, not glorious. And therefore they don't believe. They may go to church, but they don't believe.

So number two is you gotta see the glory if you're gonna know it and enjoy it. Number three, the first key to seeing God's glory is internal, namely the new birth. God who said, let light shine out of darkness in the first creation has shown in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

That's the new birth. The new birth language isn't used there, but new creation is, and that's the same reality. First creation, let there be light.

Out of nothing, there was light. Second creation, dark dead heart. Let there be light, there is light.

And the light is the light of Christ that's seen. Jesus said to Nicodemus, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh.

That which is born of the spirit is spirit. I think that means is spiritually alive. Right now, your spirit is dead if you're not born again.

Your spiritual capacities to discern glory in the gospel as more compelling than anything else. Your spiritual capacities to see Christ as supremely glorious is nonexistent until the new birth. And at the new birth, you are spirit, meaning your spirit lives, it's alive.

You're not just flesh anymore, you're spirit. The Holy Spirit has moved in, he's conformed you to himself. You now have a living spirit, and that's the new birth.

So step number three is that if we're gonna glorify him by knowing him and enjoying him as we are, then we have to see him. If we're gonna see him, something internally has to happen. Namely, we've got to be born again, and then something external has to happen.

We must hear and understand the word of God, the gospel. You have been born again, this is 1 Peter now, you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable through the living and abiding word of God. So the new birth by the spirit doesn't happen abstracted from, disconnected from the word of God.

The Holy Spirit doesn't move throughout the world where the gospel is not preached and cause people to be born again. And there's a reason why he doesn't do it that way. It's because he means for the new birth to be an ability to see Christ in the gospel.

That's the point of the new birth, to have eyes to see Christ and glorify Christ. The Holy Spirit was sent to glorify the son of God, John 16, 14. Well, you can't glorify the son of God if you have open eyes and see nothing but trees in the middle of Africa with no gospel.

You just open your eyes, there's a sky and there's trees, there's water and there's people. Christ gets no glory at that moment. He doesn't do it that way.

He always, I always picture these jets flying. So this is the jet of the gospel. You know, what are they called? The blue angels or, they fly these incredible synchronizations and vroom, vroom.

And this is the gospel and this is the Holy Spirit. Vroom, vroom, just wherever the gospel's going, he's just doing his work. Well, if this plane lands, this one's landing.

He's landing. And he's not gonna go, oh, no problem, I can just raise people from the dead anywhere I want. Well, he could, but he hasn't set it up that way because 1 Peter says, you are born again through the living and abiding word of God.

That's how people are born again. So you can't make anybody be born again, but you sure can tell them the word of God so that it now is an occasion where the Holy Spirit can use what you just said so that he can open their eyes to see the beauty and glory of it. I am sending you, this is Acts 26.

This is amazing to me, this is so remarkable. This is Jesus talking to Paul as he commissions him to go. I am sending you to open their eyes.

You, finite, fallible, non-supernatural human being. I'm sending you to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God. Go do that, Paul.

To which, of course, Paul would say, I can't do that. And Jesus knows that, and therefore the point of this is God's supernatural regenerating work is always done through human agency, always. You have to hear or read, in a human production, the word of God in order to be born of God because God won't open the eyes of the blind to see nothing.

He opens the eyes to see Christ. He said, let there be light in your heart and you saw the light of the gospel of the glory of God in the face of Christ. And so the second thing that has to happen if we're going

to glorify God is that we have to look at the book, not just go out and pray for illumination.

Oh, Holy Spirit, tell me what I need to know about God right now. That's an insult to the Holy Spirit because his response is gonna be, I wrote a book. Don't ignore my book.

Don't try to do it another way. Don't take shortcuts on me. I did not preserve this book through the blood of the martyrs for you, for you to go out in the woods and play games with me.

Get on your face before my book and pray. So yes, you have to be born of God, you have to internal work of the spirit, and then you have to have somebody or some book show you the word. Step five, when we are internally awake to the word of God and externally focused on the word of God.

So those are the last two points, three and four. We meet God and see him in his glory. And here's a precious verse that I've loved for years in this regard.

The Lord appeared again at Shiloh, for the Lord revealed himself, revealed himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of the Lord. There's nothing I want more in this world than to meet God, deal with God, see God, feel God, experience the presence and power of God. I want to be near God and not consumed.

I want to know God, love God, enjoy God, be present with God now and forever. And that verse says that the Lord revealed himself to Samuel by the word of the Lord. You wanna meet God? This is where you meet God.

Or, lest we sound too studyish at that moment, this in you lived and applied everywhere you go. Probably you will meet God in the speaking of the word of God as often as in the reading of the word of God. Let's say that after years of delivering the word, hospitals and counseling sessions and on the street and knocking on doors that if you feel like I didn't get much this morning, and then you deliver what you got, in the delivery of that, God shows up.

And you see him in that, not separate from that, but in that. So God reveals himself by the word. One last step.

Therefore, we give ourselves to careful, thoughtful reading of God's inspired spokesmen like the apostle Paul. And here's a key passage concerning Paul's own sense of divine inspiration as he writes. We have received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit who is from God, and that we might understand the things freely given to us by God.

And we impart this in words not taught, not taught by human wisdom, but taught by the spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. So Paul claims as he's a teacher of the risen Christ to teach in words taught by the Holy Spirit. I believe that the words we're gonna look at in Romans nine are those.

They are taught by the Holy Spirit. So let me sum up these six steps for you. Number one, every one of us is called, and this is to answer the question, why are we focusing so much attention on the Bible? I mean, just another little anecdote here.

I'm 68 years old, and I moved away from my senior role as preaching pastor for Bethlehem a year ago or so. And I have in front of me now an unknown amount of time. An unknown amount of health, I'm pretty good right now.

And I could do anything I wanted to do. I mean, that I'm capable of doing. I can't run eight miles anymore, but I could do anything.

So what am I doing? I am giving myself to the Bible more than I ever have. I teach this to seminary students every Wednesday afternoon. I work a couple of days a week trying to make these, look at the book things.

I prepared my Romans nine to come to Houston. I don't get any honorarium for this. It's not, I don't need any more money.

I've got a retirement and I've got social security and I'm just fine, I don't need any money. So you can't make me do anything but enticing me with money. So why in the world are you getting on a plane when you're sick in your head and coming down here to talk for four hours? And the answer is, I love this book.

I'm old and when I think about getting ready to meet Jesus, which seems so close, what better way than to read what he said and you go so deep with what he said that when he shows up or I show up, there won't be any surprises. I don't want to be surprised. Like, oh, I didn't know you were like that.

I thought, ugh. I don't want to be ashamed. I mean, seriously, I thought a lot about this.

I really did. Before I resigned at Bethlehem, I thought a lot about this. What are you going to do? And my answer was, I'm going to spend more time in my Bible.

And I think, well, you were a pastor. Well, you think pastors spend a lot of time in their Bible? They run churches. It's not a good thing.

I'll bet your pastor spends time in his Bible. I mean, there are pastors who do spend time in their Bible but lots of pastors just run churches. So all that to say, why look at this book when you're 68 years old as much as you're looking at it? And the answer is, I love it and I want to be ready to meet him.

So summarizing the six steps now, but this is the big picture that accounts for everybody, not just me. We're all called to glorify God by knowing him, enjoying him, and showing him. Number two, we must see him in order to do that.

And number three, we are able to see him internally because of the new birth and externally because we're looking. We're looking and hearing the word of God. Number five, we meet God himself, glorious in his word.

No other place reliable can we meet God like that. And finally, therefore, we are devoting detailed attention to read this book. Two more verses on that last one.

When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ. Isn't that amazing? When you read this, this is Ephesians 3, 4. Paul said to the Ephesians, when you read this, you can see my insight in the mystery of Christ. Not when you pray for that insight without reading, but when you read it, amazing.

And then this is one of my favorite verses with regard to why I'm part of a college and seminary, which gives a lot of effort to teach students how to think. Paul said to Timothy, think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything. Think, for the Lord will give.

Now a lot of you probably have felt at some time in your life like you're in one camp or the other. I'm the kind that depend on the Lord to give me insight. And I'm the kind that think, thinkers think, waiters wait for gifts.

And they feel really spiritual, and they don't think these people are, because thinking is what everybody can do. Well, Paul says to Timothy, think over what I say, and wonder for the Lord will give. Not think because you won't be given, you have to get it yourself, or wait to get the gift so you don't need to think, but rather think for you will be given.

It's through the thinking. And all I know to say by way of experience of this is that for 33 years, I preached most weekends. And I know that Friday, which was my sermon preparation day, were unbelievably hard days.

Nothing came easy. And I thought after decades, it would get easy. It never got easy.

You'd read a passage and you'd say, God, number one, what does it mean? What is Paul trying to say? Or John or Matthew or Mark, Peter, what are they trying to say? How does this all fit together? And that was hard. And then the second question of, and what parts of that need to be said to these people? And how does it need to be said? And how does it need to be applied? Both those questions were enormously difficult. Nothing ever came easy.

And that's why this verse here was so precious to me. Think over what I say and the Lord will give. And he did, he did.

I think I can say honestly, I never entered the pulpit once where I was not thrilled to say what I had seen. I can never remember saying, this is gonna be boring because God is on this count, boring. I never said it.

I wouldn't have said it if I thought. God answers this prayer. For those who think and pray, he acts, he works.

Okay. That's my answer to the question, why focus on the Bible? Because in the Bible, God's spokesmen are speaking. And in speaking, God himself reveals.

And he reveals his glory, a glory to be truly known, a glory to be enjoyed. And that's why we're on the planet, to know him truly and enjoy him duly. That's why we're looking at the book.

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