

DON'T WASTE YOUR BIBLE READING

READING OF THE WORD

Psalm 119:33-40

Teach me, O Lord, the way of your statutes; and I will keep it to the end. Give me understanding, that I may keep your law and observe it with my whole heart. Lead me in the path of your commandments, for I delight in it. ***Incline my heart to your testimonies, and not to selfish gain!*** Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things; and give me life in your ways. Confirm to your servant your promise, that you may be feared. Turn away the reproach that I dread, for your rules are good. Behold, I long for your precepts; in your righteousness give me life!

PRAYER

FATHER many years ago you fed over 5,000 people with 5 loaves and 2 fishes. Many of those people had different hunger needs and wants and desires, yet you miraculously feed them, they were satisfied and had left overs. Today, there are many here that have different spiritual hunger, needs and desires that need the feeding of your word today. Please come and feed us this morning. I ask in Jesus name. Amen

Warm up:

The title of my message this morning is Don't Waste Your Bible Reading. There are notes in your bulletin to follow along the train of thought. If you need a bible please raise your hand and the ushers will get you one.

In the dry seasons of my walk with Christ I pray this Psalm. Especially where it says incline my heart to your testimonies... to your word. Nine out of ten (93%) Americans say that they own a Bible. In fact, the average American household has four Bibles. If you Google Bible reading plan, you will find a variety of great reading programs for every style and desire.

Yet, in Christian surveys the # 1 reason people express why they don't read their Bible is the excuse that they are too busy. Today I want to go deeper than these statistics and get the heart of wasting our Bible reading.

We waste something when we basically do not use the way it was intended to be used for.

Let's dive into our outline

First let's look at why do we waste our bible reading.

I. REASON WHY WE WASTE OUR BIBLE READING

Jesus reveals the heart of the matter on – of all days- the day he rises from the dead.

- So in essence here are two guys talking about the events of the last few days. Then Jesus appears yet doesn't reveal to them, who he is. And they reveal that they know their bible- which is the Old Testament writings when they said they had hoped he was the Messiah... perhaps putting a few things together in

essence trying to gather what they know in light of what they learned. They are having a biblical conversation.

- Then Jesus says this:

25 And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" 27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

- Jesus says we are slow to believe... Believe what? Believe what we profess.
- We profess to believe what the Bible says.
- But in our day today living, we will live what we truly believe.

If you've been attending LEFC any length of time, you've heard us summarize this by stating: people don't live what they profess they live what they believe..

Now the question beneath the answer is even more telling. Why do we waste our bible reading? because we are foolish and slow to believe. Then the question beneath that answer is:

Why are we slow to believe?

We struggle--- {Grab the Value sign} with this

The answer: We struggle with the ABC'S of God Word

- (a) We struggle with the Bible's authority
 - i. We struggle to submit when it tells the Christian that God is speaking here.
- (b) We struggle with the Bible's inerrancy
 - i. We struggle to be humble enough to accept that the Bible is right .
- (c) We struggle with the Bible's clarity
 - i. We struggle to believe the Bible means what it says
- (d) We struggle with the Bible's sufficiency
 - i. I'll talk about that in a little bit.

And what that answer reveals – is that we struggle not just with the characteristics of God's word- but with God himself.

So guard against being a fool and being slow to believe. We all do this! Not one of us in this room lives the Christian life so perfectly that we live exactly what we profess we believe.

We are not quick to submit and be humbled by these words. We are not empowered and passionate in our love for Jesus that we so fully overflow with the correct Biblical worldview all the time.

We sin in our slow beliefs, and it shows--- in how we trust, obey, submit and repent to God.

So Why do we waste our Bible reading? because we are slow to believe

Second point let's talk about...

II. REVEALING WAYS WE WASTE OUR BIBLE READING

Now this is the portion of my message that gets messy and meddles

Why would I meddle? I mean there are many of us that ask why do preachers meddle and get so specific in what they area saying.

I'll tell you why.. Because the blind spots of our lives need to be exposed.
And the Word says Faithful are the wounds of a friend.

And this morning, I am your friend, because I share this with concern love and care that you will not miss the purpose of Bible Reading. I don't want for you to stand before God and say, look at all this religious and theological reading I did for you Lord and the Lord to say, I never knew you.

I was stepping all over my toes on this so I'm in this boat first. But I felt I needed to go through this in the top ten style of presenting this Some on this list we will camp on for a few minutes, some will be quick bites that I'll note and then move on.

TOP TEN WAYS WE WASTE OUR BIBLE READING

10. We don't open the Word of God.

Now you might be saying well that doesn't make sense. How can I waste my Bible reading if I don't open the Bible?

- Now this is different than going through the dry spells and tough season where our Bible reading is a struggle and your fighting through it.-- perhaps its hard and difficult to go through because everything is fine but you not feeling watered

The "we" I am referring to are the one who comes here this morning- hears the Bible reading this morning. Yet sees no reason to crack open the Bible during the week." Why should you open it" You don't understand the benefit—"sure I love Jesus and I ask for forgiveness but I don't open his word, that's for preachers... not me."

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome.

1 John 5:1-3

- A person who is saved by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus alone is one who was once dead in their sins and then forgiven and then brought alive to a new birth in Christ and with that new birth is new strength- not from yourself... with that new birth is new desires- not from your old dead worldly self- but new desires for God,* his relationship, * his love *his ways HIS WORD... Continually...
- If you find the commands of Scripture and the habit of Bible reading burdensome... This may indicate either an undetected cancer in your spiritual life that you need to repent of and have it removed out of you heart and soul as you pray Lord "incline my heart to your testimonies and not selfish gain" Or it may be a check of your spiritual pulse and life over all.

- Are you saying I may not be Christian if I don't read the Bible?" No I'm not saying that.
- Yet such a lack of a loving habit as reading God's living word is and lack of desire as someone who claims to love Jesus and put their trust for both this life and eternity- should cause you to pause and reflect on the reality of your relationship with God.
- One of the hard meddling truth is this -You can have goals in life so out of sync with the Bible that you find the Bible boring and his commands burdensome.
- If the desire for God's word is waning or has never existed- you are wasting the Bible reading that you' re hearing this morning and the Lord is lovingly calling you to turn away from selfish gain and begin to walk toward the living word- that is Jesus Christ- and to put your trust in him to forgive you and make you alive spiritually.

So top ten ways we waste our Bible reading 10 We don't open it- we rely on Sunday and that's it. Moving on.

9. We don't engage in studying it on any level.

We waste our Bible reading when all we do is simply read it. Check off our list and move on with our day.

We read it and don't seek it. We look at it one time but don't treasure what it says
It is a waste if Christians do not

- *seek the truth of God.
- * esteem the wisdom of God.
- * treasure the beauty of God. Those are found in Scripture
- * savored the goodness of God.
- * trust the faithfulness of God.
- * believe the promises of God.
- * obey the commandments of God. That is found in Scripture.

We waste our bible reading if we don't engage in with it on any level.

8. We just audit a bible study

This is a quick one... You may have been going to bible studies all of your life. But do you just audit the class and enjoy the conversation. **Do you let the study not just make you wrestle with the text and truth... but do you let it mold your heart?** We waste our Bible reading when the approach is so academic or even so social that it loses the spiritual impact.

How about this? Does the book you are reviewing, get you back into the Scriptures? Many Bible studies are just good spiritually minded books that quote the Bible, but does it get you back into the Scriptures?

We waste our Bible reading by just auditing a class or Bible study

7. We limit our studying to one book or topic.

Another quick one. This again is about engagement. Are you reading and wearing out pages in your bible because you are rereading your favorite book?

- When was the last time you went to Obadiah for encouragement?

I know just as many people fascinated with the topic of the end times and the book of revelation as there are people fascinated with systematic theology and the Pauline letters... yet both can limit their exposure to certain books or topics and waste their Bible reading.

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.
2 Timothy 3:16

- Don't substitute your Facebook inspirational postings for the Bible.
- Social media has proven we have time to read.

So we waste our bible reading when we limit our reading to one book or topic.

6. We don't return to what we learn.

Listen to what the Bible says about wisdom Proverb 8:22-36

"The LORD possessed me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of old. Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth. When there were no depths I was brought forth, when there were no springs abounding with water. Before the mountains had been shaped, before the hills, I was brought forth, before he had made the earth with its fields, or the first of the dust of the world...

- God has set up wisdom... it starts with the Fear the Lord. As the creator of this world he know how this works and transcends our knowledge of it. He reveals true wisdom. He has designed this life to work for his glory and our good yet we don't return back to it.

Here is the call...

32 "And now, O sons, listen to me: blessed are those who keep my ways. [what ways? wisdom's way] Hear instruction and be wise, and do not neglect it. Blessed is the one who listens to me, watching daily at my gates, waiting beside my doors. For whoever finds me finds life and obtains favor from the LORD, but he who fails to find me injures himself; all who hate me love death."

- How many times do we re read Bible studies we go through?
- How many times do we skip over verses, accounts and truths we feel we have already mastered.
- Were you challenged when you heard the quote from DA Carson last week when John preached that said mastering God's word is one thing by being mastered by it is something else?
- In fact this passage says Fools don't listen to true wisdom. False wisdom hurt yourself and those who hate wisdom show that they love death instead of life.

- We waste our Bible reading—even our Bible studies when we don't return back to what we learned.

5. We fail to remember what it says

We waste our Bible reading when we fail to remember what it says.

- The Bible exhorts Israel to remember the works of God's deliverance and benefits of being his people.
- So the Church is also to remember God's deliverance of our lives from the bondage and condemnation of sin. We are to remember promises we have as Christians.

We call it today "preaching the Gospel to yourself."

Many Christians know what the gospel professes but fail to remember the hope and strength and promises of God when we are in need.

The number one person you listen to is yourself. Make sure you are including conversations that—as it is says about King David... encourages yourself in the Lord.

- ❖ Remember God's redeeming power to obey God's word
- ❖ Remember your former condition while in sin to be compassionate to others- not self righteous.
- ❖ Remember your sin in order to delight in God's forgiveness.
- ❖ Remember your position in Christ--- ***because of Christ*** so that you can't boast!

We waste our Bible reading when we fail to remember what it says.

4. We fail to quote it in our witnessing, exhorting and ministry to the One another body

We waste our Bible reading when we don't talk about it with others.

I remembering hearing this years ago by Pastor David Holt when he shared he was having a spiritual conversation with one of his kids and they asked him when they asked him a question he was quoting the Bible more. He said it was because my opinion isn't as important as God's word.

- I have to admit the longer I'm a parent the more try I try to point my kids to scripture instead of my opinions.
- A lot of ministry the family of God is to have with one another is to point Back to the Lord, back to the Cross, back to His word of truth. To let the word of Christ dwell in us richly (Col 3 says)
- We are to quote it to encourage the discouraged this morning. We are to quote it to bring wisdom to those who need direction. We are to pray it for one another.
- We waste our Bible reading, if we fail to quote it in our witnessing. God's word is the power of God onto salvation.
- The power of salvation is not found in our clever arguments and abilities to defend apologetically God and his word alone. Quote Scripture. Use Scripture to present the defense, the truth and the gospel.

We waste our Bible reading when we don't talk about it with others.

3. We don't believe it is sufficient

- I hit on this earlier but I'll say it like this. We waste our bible reading if we believe it's the appetizer to the Spiritual meal at the devotional sit down. The warm up to the devotional book our reading.
- James Montgomery Boise says it like this...(btw JMB was the Pastor of Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia. His preaching is featured in the radio broadcast The Bible Study Hour and he was the **Chairman of the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy**. The international council of biblical inerrancy successfully addressed the liberal theological attacks and debates in the 1970's and 80's on the authority and truthfulness of Scripture.)

He said it like this:

"I want to say here, however, that important as I believe the matter of inerrancy is— and I do believe it. I believe churches will flounder and die if this is forgotten. Important as this is, **I do not think it [biblical inerrancy] is the most critical issue about the Bible facing the American church today. The issue I would pinpoint today is the sufficiency of God's Word.**

I would ask the questions: Do we really believe that God has given us what we need in this book? Or do we think we have to supplement the Bible with other man-made things? Do we need sociological techniques to do evangelism? Do we need psychology and psychiatry for Christian growth? Do we need extra-biblical signs or miracles for guidance? Is the Bible's teaching adequate for achieving social progress and reform?"

We will waste our bible reading if we don't believe in its sufficiency alone! We will waste our Bible reading if we don't believe in its power alone to change, heal, encourage and sanctify us.

Psalm 19:7-9 says

The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul;
the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple;
the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart;
the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever;
the rules of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether.

We will waste our bible reading if we don't believe in its sufficiency alone!

2. We waste our bible reading by being hearers only and not doers

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing. James 1:22-25

- We waste our Bible reading if we don't apply it to our life.. This is a point many of us have been waiting for because we know it. We understand it. We know where we all sin here--- right?
- We understand that we can walk out of here and away from our devoted Bible times and forget what God commands us to do in living for His glory, in walking in grace. In loving one another.
- We deceive ourselves into thinking that reading and talking about the Bible is the same as doing the Bible.

Yet

Not being a doer of God's word is not the biggest waste of your bible reading.

You see...You can be applying the moral commands and spiritual disciplines revealed in this book and still be wasting your bible reading.

We need to see the do's and do not's in light of who He has revealed... which is Himself.

Not just Bible verses... bible revelation of God Almighty through the son Jesus Christ.

1. We waste our Bible reading if we just grow in knowledge and not in love

- God is not so much the object of our study as the cause of our wonder.
"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'
Matthew 22:37
- John Piper says it like this:

The Bible is relevant for the life and work of any man. But really it comes down to this. Does he want to see the greatest treasure in the universe? Does he desire to know Jesus and enjoy Jesus more than anything? Does he love people so much that he grieves over the fact that they don't know Jesus and will be lost forever without him? That is the question. If Jesus is supreme in this person's life, if the passion is to know him above all, if the passion is to desire him and enjoy him and treasure him more than anything, if the passion is to bring as many people with you as you can into that experience, then you can't live without the Bible. It is the most relevant book in the world.

- On the elder retreat-this past year we sensed that the challenge for our family of God here is was not necessarily more knowledge of Jesus- but more love for Jesus.
- We are to not just grow smarter, we are to grow more graciously softer to Him and to others
- To love the Lord our God with All of our being—but also to love our neighbors love ourselves more.

So in our outline

- I. We have the Reason why we waste our bible reading
- II. We have revealed some of the ways how we waste our Bible reading

You and I are at this point where we are saying... I've failed in this. What happens now. How do I respond to the truth that I have wasted, my bible reading and that I don't love Jesus more than I did 15 years ago

Last point This is how you respond...you

III. REMEMBER AND REPENT WHEN WE WASTE OUR BIBLE READING

You need to remember the purposes for why God has given us the Bible. **We will not waste something when we know the purpose of it.** God gives us the Bible to reveal Himself, so that our redeemed lives will witness to his glory in saving us, loving us and adopting us.

And in turn hear his Spirit speak to us and we will do what the Father commands and we will love Jesus with all our heart soul mind and strength

- **We need to remember God has given us the bible is given to us to reveal Himself to us thru the person of Jesus** not just truths and advise to live by.
- And when we are revealed Jesus, our hearts are called to respond to that revealing love grace hope and salvation that is found only through a relationship with Him. And we are to respond to this --revealing day after day after day...
- The Bible calls out Behold you God, behold your creator behold your Savior
- So take heart if you've failed and repent.
- "Repent" what do you mean repent" I mean for you Christian turn away from habits of meaningless reading and begin the habits of graciously encountering Jesus Christ again.

There are 3 Motivations for repenting

1. You should repent because the mercy of God's forgiveness is amazing:
Remember : The mercy of God's forgiveness.
2. You should repent because his redeeming power renews and empowers.
He redeems the years wasted He empowers the remaining years for purposes. Remember: His redeeming power renews.
3. You should repent because you can trust his sovereign will. The journey your Christian walk is on has brought you to this decision today and it is no accident. Remember: His sovereign will

Closing Prayer

Father incline our heart to your word and make yourself not so much the object of our study as the cause of our wonder, worship and love. In Jesus name