



be just the encouragement your friend needs to read God's word as well.

share with you some that I have found useful.

Second, find a friend. Whether it's a family member or the person who sits across the building from you, a reading partner will prove invaluable in reading through the Bible. Find someone who will read with you, discuss those readings with you, and keep you on track. This will not only help you in your effort to read God's word, but it may

Finally, just read. Some of the best advice I've ever received about Bible reading is to just read the text. It's easy to get bogged down by asking questions and then going to find answers in a dictionary or commentary.

Rather than letting questions distract you from the text, quickly jot down notes or questions you have while reading to go back and study later. In the meantime, just read the text like you would any other book. You may be surprised how many of your questions are answered when you just read.

Brethren, we have the privilege of reading the mind of God. Let's not excuse our tendency to neglect this powerful book, but let us read it with the urgency and attention it deserves. **"For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there without watering the earth... so will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; it will not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it"** (Isaiah 55:10-11).



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ISSUE

16.31

BULLETIN OF  
THE OLSEN  
PARK CHURCH  
OF CHRIST

# Faithful Sayings

August 3,  
2014

## Services

Sunday: 9:30 AM  
10:20 AM  
6:00 PM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM



## Elders:

Pat Ledbetter  
Jeff Nunn  
Kyle Pope

## Deacons:

Eddie Cook  
Steve Dixon  
Jack Langley  
Neil Ledbetter  
Brady McAlister  
Walker McAnear  
Lance Purcell  
Rusty Scott

## Evangelists:

Kyle Pope  
Andrew Dow

## Let's Read Our Bibles

By Andrew Dow

In 2014 the American Bible Society teamed up with Barna Group to conduct a study entitled "The State of the Bible." In their study they concluded that 88% of U.S. adults own at least one Bible, while 54% of U.S. adults admitted to reading the Bible less than five times a year outside of their regular weekend worship service. These statistics demonstrate a problem that most people could probably have guessed. The Bible is easily the most distributed book of all time, and yet very few people are reading it. Despite God's expectation that His followers give careful attention to His words (cf. Joshua 1:8; 1 Timothy 4:13; 2 Timothy 2:15), man has consistently failed to feast upon those words. Let's think a little bit about why this is the case and what we can do to fix the problem on an individual level.

### Why Don't We Read The Bible?

"I don't have enough time to read the Bible." Time is one of the most valuable things we are given. In fact, time is so valuable that Paul wrote, **"Be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the**

**days are evil**" (Ephesians 5:15-16). Time cannot be saved for later, so we must make the most of the time we're given. Consider these questions: How much time do you spend on Facebook or other social media sites? How much time do you spend watching TV or movies? How much time do you spend reading for leisure? How much time do you spend on your hobby? With all the time we spend on frivolous things, surely we can make time for a book that impacts our eternity!

*"I wouldn't be able to understand the Bible."* It is amazing to me that some who have never read the Bible from cover to cover are so quick to dismiss it as incomprehensible. No one can fully understand any book from which they have only read a handful of sentences. The Scriptures clearly teach that, **"God is not a God of confusion but of peace"** (1 Corinthians 14:33). Furthermore, Paul writes, **"All Scripture is... profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work"** (2 Timothy 3:16-17). God's words are not meant to confuse us, but they are for our understanding and application.

*"I don't really want to read the Bible."* While there are probably very few Christians who would actually say this, I wonder if this attitude is what really keeps us from reading our Bibles. I don't mean this in the sense that we don't want to know God's word, but simply that we don't care enough to make the effort. Perhaps we think that reading the Bible won't really do us that much good, or we can spend our time doing something that will be more enjoyable. Whatever our excuse, we need to set it aside and recognize our need for Bible reading.

### Why Should We Read The Bible?

The Bible provides guidance. God's word teaches that, **"a man's way is not in himself, nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps"** (Jeremiah 10:23). Since we are incapable of knowing which way we ought to walk, who will direct us? The word of God provides that direction. **"Your word is a lamp to my feet,"** the Psalmist declares, **"and a light to my path..."**



Olsen Park church of Christ

**The wicked have laid a snare for me, yet I have not gone astray from Your precepts.**" (Psalm 119:105, 110). It is only the words of God that can guide the man of God.

The Bible provides life. Paul reminded Timothy, **"From childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation..."** (2 Timothy 3:15). The epistle to the Romans says, **"So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ"** (Romans 10:17). True faith is the result of hearing what the Bible reveals to us. Apart from such faith, there can be no life.

The Bible is God's mind revealed. Notice these words, **"Just as it is written, 'Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him.' For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.... Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God"** (1 Corinthians 2:9-12). Think about what the Bible is. It is not simply a historical record, or a good book to read in our down time. The Bible is the mind of God given to us so that we can know Him! Why should we make an effort to read the Bible? It is our source of guidance, it is our source of life, and it is the only means by which we can come to know the mind of almighty Jehovah!

### Some Tips for Bible Reading

Up to this point we have seen that, although we often excuse ourselves from reading it, the Bible is worth making the time and effort to read. For those who understand the Bible's value and would like to make Bible reading a habit, I'd like to close by offering a few suggestions.

First, make a plan. I have often started reading my Bible without any plan or direction. Without a game plan, I became more and more lax in my reading until I stopped altogether. This type of failure will only make it harder to start again. I would encourage anyone who wants to read through the Bible to find a good Bible reading schedule. These are easily accessible on the internet and can be extremely helpful. If anyone has any interest in such a plan, I'd be happy to