



WE MAKE TIME FOR WHAT WE VALUE: BE INTENTIONAL ABOUT BIBLE INTAKE.

Blockbuster books

- Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy* – 18 million copies
- Gone with the Wind* – 30 million copies
- Twilight: The Saga* – 100 million copies
- Lord of the Rings* – 150 million copies
- Harry Potter* – 400 million copies
- The Works of Mao Tse-tung* “The Little Red Book” – 820 million copies
- The Bible* – 6+ billion copies.¹

Psalm 1:1-6

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers;² but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.³ He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.⁴ The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away.⁵ Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;⁶ for the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

Q: What are your top 2 questions about reading/studying the Bible?

- o Where do I begin?
- o What are some good websites for Bible study resources?
- o What version of the Bible do you recommend?
- o Is the Bible reliable?
- o Where should I start? Genesis? John? Psalms?
- o What does it mean to be still? How do we sit and listen while studying?
- o Why does my brain wander?
- o How do I understand the context of Scripture?

Personal evaluation

How intentional am I about Bible intake?

1-----	5-----	10-----
Meh	So-so	Spartan-Commitment-Level

If my spiritual growth was totally dependent upon my Bible intake, I would be...

1-----	5-----	10-----
Starving	So-so	Full & Energized

My level of capability in defending the Bible is...

1-----	5-----	10-----
Novice	So-so	Ninja Black Belt

Bible 101

Q: What is Scripture?

A: The Bible is comprised of 66 books from Genesis to Revelation. “The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God’s revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy.” – *The Baptist Faith & Message* (2000).²

Q: Aren’t there “Lost Books” of the Bible? Didn’t Church Councils decide which books to keep and which ones to exclude?

A: The Church clarified canonical books because:

- Persecution: Let’s clarify what we already recognize what is worth dying for and what is not.
- Heresies: When heresies arise, we need a clear line in the sand to separate truth from error. In order to do that, we need to go on record with what Christians have always believed.

Reasons why we can trust the Bible:

1. Significant Manuscript evidence: Over 24,000 New Testament manuscripts.
2. Archaeological **verification**.
 - Hittite Empire – Hittite library found in Turkey in 1906.
 - The Ebla Tablets: Discovered in 1964 by University of Rome professor, Paolo Matthiae.³

Proverbs 30:5-6

“Every word of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. ⁶ Do not add to his words, lest he rebuke you and you be found a liar.”

3. Eye-opening **honesty**: Records embarrassing details on “heroes.” Abraham: coward, Jacob: cheater, David: murderer, Paul: persecutor of Christians, Peter: Christ-denier, disciples: cowards, Thomas: skeptic.

Q: How can the Bible impact my life?

A: 2 Timothy 3:16-17 *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*

- Teaches us what we need to know.
- Rebukes us when we’re doing wrong.
- Corrects us so that we can improve.
- Trains us to become all that He has created us to be.

Q: Where do I start with the Bible?

A: Key word: “Intentionality.”

Next Steps of Bible intake

- ⇒ **Carve** out time for it: We make time for what we value.
- ⇒ Download the Bible App or purchase your own Bible.
- ⇒ Monthly reading goals.
 - Read through the Gospel of John (21 chapters #21JohnStreet).
 - Read one chapter of Proverbs per day (31 chapters).
 - Read through the Gospel of Matthew (1 chapter a day and you'll read it in less than a month).
- ⇒ Audio goals.
 - Philippians (13 minutes).
 - James (15 minutes).
 - Gospel of Mark (1 hour and 19 minutes).
- ⇒ Bible community goals: Start attending a small group Bible class
- ⇒ Memorization Goals: Galatians 2:20; Matthew 6:33; John 3:30, John 11:35.

Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Matthew 6:33

But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

John 3:30

He must increase, but I must decrease.

John 11:35

Jesus wept.

Tools for maximizing your Bible intake:

- Find at least one word, phrase, or verse to *meditate* on each time you read.
- Highlight all the verbs.
- Ask questions about God: What is God teaching me about **Himself** in this passage?
- Ask questions about yourself: What is God teaching me about myself?
- Ask questions about the world: What is God teaching me about the world?
- Read, Reflect, & Record (journal).
- Pray through the verses. Let the words shape your prayers.

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Extended notes

Q: Apocrypha?

A: The word *apocrypha* means hidden. It is used in a general sense to describe a list of books written by Jews between 300 and 100 B.C... The Jews never recognized these books as being canonical (inspired). There is no record that Jesus or the apostles ever quoted from the apocryphal books.⁴

Recommended resources:

- www.crosswalk.com (free online Bible commentaries).
- www.bible.org
- *Now that You're a Christian: A Guide to Your Faith in Plain Language* by Bruce Bickel & Stan Jantz (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2005).
- *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* by Gordon D. Fee & Douglas Stuart (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003).
- *Harmony of the Gospels* by A. T. Robertson (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1950).

¹ Kevin Lynch, "World Book Day: Our top ten reading-related world records," *Guinness World Records*, March 5, 2015, <http://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/news/2015/3/world-book-day-our-top-ten-reading-related-world-records-374040>.

² "It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation." Baptist Faith & Message (2000), <http://www.sbc.net/bfm2000/bfm2000.asp>. *Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 17:19; Joshua 8:34; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11,89,105,140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16; 36:1-32; Matthew 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16ff.; 17:11; Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21.*

³ Boyce Rensberger, "Ebla Ruins Shed Light on Early Modern Man," *New York Times*, January 16, 1979, <http://www.nytimes.com/1979/01/16/archives/ebla-ruins-shed-light-on-early-urban-man-resemblance-to-cities-of.html>.

⁴ <https://carm.org/dictionary-apocrypha>.