

The Benefits of Reading the Whole Bible (Judy Reamer)

The inspired Word, the revealed Word, has been given to the whole world, but the *illumination* of the Word is a gift for His children. Illumination brings *understanding* to the inspired Word of God.

Moses speaks of seven benefits to the king who is about to enter the Promised Land with the Israelites.

“It [i.e. the laws and decrees] is to be with him, and *he is to read it all the days of his life* so that he may learn to revere the LORD his God [1. **To have respect for the Lord**] and follow carefully all the words of this law and these decrees [2. **To learn obedience**] and not consider himself better than his brothers [3. **To learn humility rather than pride**] and [not] turn from the law to the right or to the left [4. **To become established**]. Then he and his descendants will reign a long time over his kingdom in Israel [5. **He will have a long life**, 6. **He will continue in his kingdom**, 7. **His children will be blessed**]” (Deuteronomy 17:18-20).

Listed below are some of the benefits I have personally experienced:

1. THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD BECOMES AVAILABLE.

Instead of a thousand puzzle pieces in a box, I see the Bible as a mural of how God deals with people. The Bible is not intended to be shrouded in mystery. For example, it is all right to just look at the Song of Solomon as a book about the beauty of sexual intimacy. We tend to think the Bible is, in large part, a cryptic maze.

2. OBEDIENCE ISSUES: GOD’S MORAL WILL IS REVEALED.

The “who, where, when and how” of our lives will be different for each individual, but the revealed will of God—that is, His moral will (which is for all of us)—is clear in the Bible. R. C. Sproul wrote, “*Knowledge of God’s Word does not guarantee that we will do what it says, but at least we will find out what we are supposed to be doing in our quest for human fulfillment.*” (New Wine, May 1979)

3. HIS SOARING MERCY IS SEEN AS NEVER BEFORE.

I never realized how long suffering a love He had until I read large portions of the Bible at one time. I noticed how I had broken the laws of God and saw His mercy towards me. “*And when they heard that the Lord was concerned about them and had seen their misery, they bowed down and worshiped*” (Exodus 4:31). As God’s child, you see this and it births a worshipful heart.

4. HIS JUDGMENTS ARE SEEN AS NEVER BEFORE.

I see the horrific consequences of sin and want to avoid the suffering they bring. Obedience becomes paramount to me.

5. READING THE BIBLE PREVENTS “TRUTH DECAY” AND PROTECTS AGAINST FALSE TEACHING.

“*Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true*” (Acts 17:11).

While I can offer no guarantee, our best defense is a strong foundation of the Bible. I’m now more able to recognize someone who is:

- a) Giving speculative teachings.
- b) Allegorizing unnecessarily or teaching extreme typology.
- c) Reading personal doctrines and opinions into Scripture.
- d) Borrowing concepts from outside sources and wrapping Scripture around them. (It could be totally out of context though it sure may sound good.)

I don’t want to have a critical spirit, but I might be able to biblically discuss a “balanced approach” with a teacher who addresses only “one side of the coin.”

Love for God without knowledge can lead to teachers guiding people into heresy and even into occultish beliefs. I spent years in the cults and the occult because I didn’t know the Bible. “**Jesus replied, ‘You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God’**” (Matt. 22:29).

I have an increasing desire not to read things into the Bible. I allow the Bible to speak to me. I’ve become more conservative with the God’s Word, allowing Scripture to explain Scripture. I try not to read things

into the Bible, but instead let my thoughts come *from* the Bible. Many people are basing their theology on Christian fiction books. We would do well to read the Good Book so we'd be able to detect heresy.

6. WHEN HELPING OTHERS, THE TRACK RECORD INCREASES FOR WISE COUNSELING.

When presented with the challenge of guiding people toward life in the Spirit, the Bible has much to draw from in order to help others in their journey.

7. THE HOLY SPIRIT COUNSELS THE READER THROUGH THE BIBLE.

There would be less need for counselors. The Mighty Counselor provides a love letter well over a thousand-pages. When we regularly read the Scriptures, we may receive understanding in whatever situation we find ourselves. I feel encouraged when I am helped through my own reading of the Bible.

8. QUESTIONS ARE ANSWERED.

People send me questions concerning doctrine, marriage, health, and other important issues. I have many questions myself. My time is so limited that I can't take time to do the research in order to meet all the needs. It really excites me when in the normal course of reading, *in context*, I will come across the help needed for others, for myself, and for my teachings. It's wonderful to have an answer come off the page naturally. I jot it down and dig deeper at a later time if I choose to.

9. CONNECTING BOOKS OF THE BIBLE IS MADE EASIER.

One time I took months to finish a novel. I never could remember names or locations and kept forgetting what it was about when I picked it up infrequently. That will happen if you pick up the Bible infrequently. In the New Testament, references to the Old Testament are made by inference. If I have not been in the Old Testament recently, I will have a difficult time pulling up the example referred to in the New Testament.

10. READING THE BIBLE GIVES HOPE.

"For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope" (Rom. 15:4).

11. PASSAGES THAT WERE CONFUSING BEGIN TO OPEN UP THRU OTHER PARTS OF THE BIBLE.

Scripture interprets scripture.

12. READING PROVIDES CONTINUOUS CLEANSING FROM SIN.

Constant exposure helps with this. "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, *cleansing* her by the washing with water through the word" (Eph. 5:25, 26). If you are tender toward God while reading the Bible, conviction is experienced as God exposes our sins. "By them [the precepts] is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward" (Psalm 19:11).

13. FAMILIARITY: THE READER GROWS MORE COMFORTABLE LISTENING TO BIBLE TEACHERS.

As I sit in the congregation, the Bible stories and principles have become so familiar that I am not sitting in with a puzzled mind.

14. EMMANUEL ("GOD WITH US") BECOMES THE CENTER OF YOUR EXISTENCE.

"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul..." (Psalm 19:7), "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path" (Psalm 119:105).