

# ***WHY READ THE BIBLE? Hot Answers to Melt Cold Habits***

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You really want to read the Bible. You want to and you know it's the right thing to do. You even know it would be good for you. You will be blessed if you do, but you struggle to stay consistent.

Why are we lukewarm Bible readers? Because three lies from the enemy keep most Christians from God's Word: 1) *I don't have time*; 2) *I don't understand it*; and 3) *it doesn't apply to my life*. To melt those cold habits and move from a lukewarm Bible reader to a consistently hot Bible reader, let's expose each habit and melt them once and for all.

## **I Don't Have Time**

The reality is we all have 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Time is not the issue; everyone is blessed with the same amount of time. Busyness is the issue. We all seem to be "so busy" in this thing called life. Busy at what?

Let's say we sleep about 8 hours a night (yeah, right!) and we work 8 hours a day (again, yeah, right!) That's 16 hours a day. It takes another couple of hours just to get ready for bed or to go to work, so take away another two hours. That's 18 hours of our 24-hour day just on those two things. That leaves six hours of free or discretionary time each day for personal choices: eating, exercise, TV, movies, social media, family, time with God.

Can you tithe, or give 10% of that time, to your relationship to God? After all, you say He is the highest priority in your life, right? Ten percent of that six hours, 360 minutes, is only 36 minutes a day. Round it off to 30 minutes. Can you give God 30 minutes a day? If you do, that is only two percent of your day! Is your relationship with God worth two percent of the day He gifts to you?

We all have time to do the things we want to do in life. If God is truly a priority, you will make time for Him. Let's drop the excuse of no time for Bible reading and prayer. It's not about time, it's about managing our time. Start today with 10 minutes, five in Bible reading, and five in prayer. Grow to 20 minutes, then to 30, 15 minutes in the Word and 15 minutes in prayer. Get there as soon as you can, and watch what intimacy with God does in your life.

## **I Don't Understand the Bible**

It's been said, "It's not what I don't understand in the Bible that bothers me, it's what I do understand!"

Most of the Bible is completely understandable to us; we just don't give it a chance. I started reading the Bible at 15 years old. I surely did not understand everything I read in my teenage years. However, I got that sin was not my friend, and temptations of the world were not in my best interests as a growing young Christian. The more I read, the more I understood and applied God's principles in my life. Acting on what I did understand kept me out of a lot of trouble. Bible reading can do that for each of us.

One of the jobs of the Holy Spirit is to lead us into all truth (John 16:13). He will teach us, if we spend time in the Bible and give Him a chance. One example of revealed truth in my life was when I was deciding whether to get married. I was in my second year of studies at a university. I planned to go home over the weekend and ask my girlfriend to marry me, but it was a big decision. I had prayed about it over and over, but I still wanted some assurance from the Lord it was the right choice. That very day I was headed home, in my daily quiet time of Bible reading and prayer, I read Ecclesiastes 4:9-12:

*Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, for he has no one to help him up. Again, if two lie down together, they will keep warm; but how can one be warm alone? Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken.*

God could not have texted it more clearly than what He already put in His Word many years ago. I went home in confidence in the Lord and asked her to marry me. We used Ecclesiastes 4:12 as our wedding theme, and we have been married over 40 years!

We can understand the Bible, as we trust the Holy Spirit, and engage daily in His Word.

## **It Doesn't Apply to My Life**

God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. His Word is eternal, it does not change. It is applicable to our 21<sup>st</sup> century lives as much as it was when it was written to those centuries ago. It is not an old dusty Book; it is alive with God's truths and instructions for life. An acronym for BIBLE is:

**Basic  
Instructions  
Before  
Life  
Everyday**

I shared how applicable it was to me at 19 years old. The Word of God is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path (Psalm 119:105). Another example is when I was diagnosed with prostate cancer, the most devastating news of my life, "*You have cancer.*" I did not choose what to read that week as I waited for test results to indicate how bad my situation was; I was already reading in Psalms. Passages like these comforted me:

- Psalm 6:2,4, "*Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am languishing, heal me, O Lord, for my bones are troubled...Turn, O Lord, deliver my life, save me for the sake of your steadfast love.*"
- Psalm 17:3, "*You have tried my heart, you have visited me by night, you have tested me, and you will find nothing.*"
- Psalm 42:2-4, "*the Lord protects him and keeps him alive; he is called blessed in the land; you do not give him up to the will of his enemies. The Lord sustains him on his sickbed; in his illness you restore him to full health. As for me, I said, O Lord, be gracious to me, heal me...*"

Again, He could not have texted me more clearly! Yes, the Bible still applies to life, our lives, and in our day. I know because I read it each day. I do so because He knows what is coming in my life, I don't. He knows the passage I need for the trials and temptations I will face each day. He knows the decisions I will be faced with, and He provides Biblical wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. My daily Bible reading experiment is nearly 50 years old. He has proven His Word to me time and time again. He will for you, if you give it a chance. As you read, think about what you are facing, and think about how what you just read may speak into your situation.

### **Hot Answers to Melt Cold Habits**

1. **Set a time.** Decide today to tithe 10% of your free time for Bible reading and prayer. Decide when the best time of day is for you. Are you a night owl? A morning person? Decide when you will spend 30 minutes a day with God.
2. **Use a Bible reading plan.** Don't wing it anymore. Choose a plan and stick with it. Visit [ezraproject.net](http://ezraproject.net) and get a Bible Reading Journal with a daily Bible reading plan. Journals also contain several suggested methods to read your Bible.

3. **Gain understanding.** Do what I do, journal. Committing to journal will change the way you read the Bible. You will pay more attention to what you are reading. You will think more about what you are hearing from God. You will jot down your thoughts or questions, and writing clarifies thinking. Rely on the Holy Spirit over time and He will teach you the truths of the Bible.
4. **Apply it to your life.** Read and pray and watch God begin to apply His Word in your life. It is the most exciting way to live life!
5. **Go audio.** The Ezra Project offers ADDBIBLE®, an audio daily devotion of a chapter or more of the Bible a day with teaching, life application, and a prayer for each day. Download the free app on your smart phone or tablet.

These five steps will melt cold Bible reading habits so you:

- can make time for God and His Word each day
- understand the Bible, thanks to the Holy Spirit
- and apply the Bible to your life

Enjoy the hot habit of daily Bible reading and you will be blessed! It's guaranteed, *"So shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it."* Isaiah 55:11.