

Something to Pray About

January 2014 – Cindy Sears

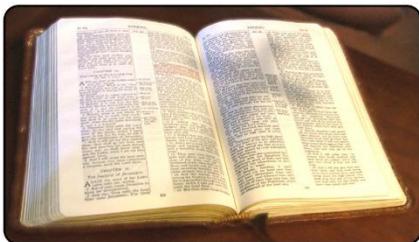
For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. —Hebrews 4:12 NKJV

The Living Sword

Although the Holy Bible remains the best seller of all time, it is probably the least read best seller of all time, too. What keeps people from reading the Bible? Is it busyness, laziness, or fear?

I realize that our world today is full of distractions, which makes it difficult to set aside time for reading anything, let alone the Bible. After all, the Bible is not just one book; it is 66 books in all. It is also very old—and we prefer new things today. So biblical ignorance is rampant in our society; but, sadly, it is also rampant within the Church. Busyness is not a good reason though—not for Christians. We always find time to do what we really want to do. Make the commitment to read and the time will be available.

I have often heard people say that they just don't understand the Bible or that they find it difficult to read. This complaint is a hard sale today. There are at least 50 different translations available in the English language. As of 2012, parts of the Bible have been translated into 2,778 languages. The whole Bible is available in 518 world languages. There is even a Manga version (graphical/picture type) and a version using Cockney rhyming slang. No one has to wade through the old King James Version, which used old English language and grammar. (Actually, we don't even have the original old King James Version or only old English scholars would be able to read it.) Language is fluid, not static; and these translations help keep the Bible readable for every generation. There is a translation out there, especially for English readers, which you can understand. Drop that excuse.



As for the fear, I can understand that one. For as the verse in Hebrews 4:12 tells us, God's Word is "sharper than a two-edged sword." When you read the Bible regularly, you will be changed. This will be a blessing, but, at first, it may feel more like a curse. As with surgery to remove a cancerous tumor, when God removes evil from us, it can hurt and take time for a full recovery.

Yet, the Bible is a "feast of blessings, promises, hopes, assurances, encouragements, warnings, guidelines—essentially everything we need to navigate this perilous obstacle course we call life." I highly recommend you find a way around your obstacles or objections and read the Word daily. Please accept the challenge from Emily Johnson and read through the Bible in 2014, even if you do not want to officially join the Bible reading group. She can point you to a Bible reading plan that will be more pleasurable than a "read straight through" option.

As you read, do not expect to understand everything you read. God's ways and His thoughts are higher than ours (see Isaiah 55:8-11). There are some passages that are obscure even to scholars and theologians. Some passages may leave you scratching your head today, but when you read the same passages again later in life, the Holy Spirit will turn on the light bulb of understanding for you right when you need it. Be willing to listen to what the Word is saying, and do not attempt to add to it or twist it

around to suit your own desires. Do not be quick to put your own spin on His Words (see Proverbs 30:5-6). If you get behind in your reading, don't just give up. Play catch-up or just start from the day you ought to be on. Be consistent and committed but not obsessive.

Remember that "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness..." But don't forget to read the next verse in that passage, which says, "...that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work," (2 Timothy 3:16-17). God's Word is not meant to just be read; it is meant to be acted upon—to lead to action. Use it to defend yourself in times of temptation, to encourage you in times of affliction, to guide you when making decisions, to change you to be more like Christ each day, and to lead you into service to God and man.

I believe that the higher the number of our members who accept the challenge to read through the Bible in 2014, the more blessings God will bestow upon our church AND the more we will be able to minister to our community in the name of and with the love of Christ. Accept the challenge; be blessed; and become a blessing.

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path," Psalm 119:105. (NKJV)

"Your word is a lamp that gives light wherever I walk." (CEV)

"Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path." (NLT)

"Your words are a flashlight to light the path ahead of me and keep me from stumbling." (Living Bible)

"Your word is like a lamp that guides my steps, a light that shows the path I should take." (Easy-to-Read Version)

"Your word is a lamp for my steps; it lights the path before me." (The Voice)

"Your word is a lamp before my feet and a light for my journey." (CEB)

