

# QUIET TIME FOR CHRISTIANS

A Practical Guide to Daily Bible  
Reading and Prayer



Adrian V W Freer

*'And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed'*  
(Mark 1:35)

# **QUIET TIME FOR CHRISTIANS**

## **A Practical Guide to Daily Bible Reading and Prayer**

**Adrian V W Freer**

**WCP**

**Welford Court Press**

Quiet Time for Christians: A Practical Guide to Daily Bible Reading and Prayer

Welford Court Press

4 Whitebeam Road

Oadby

Leicester LE2 4EA

United Kingdom

[www.webdatauk.wixsite.com/welford-court-press](http://www.webdatauk.wixsite.com/welford-court-press)

© Adrian V W Freer 2017. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, recorded or transmitted by any means without permission from the publishers.

First published 2017

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN: 978 0 9520304 4 7

Unless otherwise stated Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations from The Authorized (King James) Version. Rights in the Authorized Version in the United Kingdom are vested in the Crown. Reproduced by permission of the Crown's patentee, Cambridge University Press.

Quotations from Holy Scripture are shown in *italics*.

Extracts from *The Book of Common Prayer*, the rights in which are vested in the Crown, are reproduced by permission of the Crown's patentee, Cambridge University Press.

Copyright Notices for other Bible versions quoted in the text are recorded on pages 153/154.

Printed and bound in the UK by BookPrintingUK

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The author would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the kind help of those who have contributed towards the preparation of this book.

I would like to record my deep and sincere thanks to my wife, Louise, for her support, patience and encouragement whilst writing this present volume, and for reading and commenting on the numerous drafts and re-drafts.

I also wish to thank Steve and Caroline Vickers for their many helpful suggestions of memory verses to include in appendix IV.

Sincere gratitude is very much owed to Margaret Siddans for her wise and constructive comments and suggestions, and for painstakingly checking and correcting the final proof.

I would also like to express my appreciation to Michael Coley ([www.bible-reading.com](http://www.bible-reading.com)) for kindly granting permission to reproduce the 'Bible-in-one-year' reading plan reproduced in appendix III.

Finally, it is appropriate to record my indebtedness to Wikipedia for making available so many public domain images. The on-going work of this not-for-profit organization in providing free access to more than 40 million articles, in over 250 languages, and 35 million freely licensed images is invaluable in promoting knowledge.

## **Dedication**

To Louise, Neil and Kathy, and (the memory of) Bernard and Brenda; in fond remembrance of the hours we spent together searching the Scriptures. This book is also dedicated to my brothers and sisters in Christ at Gaulby Reformed Evangelical Anglican Fellowship.

## CONTENTS

<b>ILLUSTRATIONS</b>	11
<b>PREFACE</b>	15
<b>1 INTRODUCTION TO DAILY BIBLE READING</b>	17
The discipline of daily Bible reading	
True discipleship	
<b>2 WHY READ THE BIBLE ON A DAILY BASIS?</b>	21
The Bible's declarations about itself	
Obligations to follow the commands of Scripture	
A handbook for life	
<b>3 SET ASIDE A REGULAR TIME AND PLACE FOR BIBLE READING</b>	29
When and where	
Stand, sit or kneel?	
Jesus' custom of prayer	
Begin with a prayer for enlightenment	
<b>4 BIBLE TRANSLATION</b>	37
History of the Bible	
Transcribing the Bible	
Translating the Bible	
<i>Old Testament</i>	
<i>New Testament</i>	
Original texts	
Translation philosophies	
Recommended translations	
Commercial considerations	

The canon of Scripture

## **5 EXAMPLES OF TRANSLATION APPROACHES**

53

Alternative words and thoughts

*Genesis 5:1*

*Romans 12:2*

Culture- and time-specific expressions

*1 Samuel 24:3*

*Colossians 3:12*

The reverential aspect

*1 Chronicles 29:11*

*Isaiah 1:26*

'Gender-neutral' translations

*John 2:8*

'Politically correct' translations

*John 19:12*

Imprecise translations

*Psalms 34:20*

*Colossians 2:9*

## **6 HOW TO READ GOD'S WORD**

63

How much time is required

How much to read

How to read the Bible

Memorable verses

Understanding the passage

Questions to ask

Pitfalls to avoid

Study resources

Dealing with puzzling passages

Meditating on Bible passages

Systematic Bible study is also essential

Refuting error

## **7 CONCLUDE WITH A TIME OF PRAYER**

79

The 'Acts' acrostic

*Adoration*

*Confession*



*Thanksgiving*  
*Supplication*  
God's will  
Fasting  
A concluding prayer for grace

**8 APPLICATION OF GOD'S WORD** 91

Obedience brings blessing  
Which laws still apply?  
The threefold division of the law  
    *The Ceremonial Law*  
    *The Civil Law*  
    *The Moral Law*  
The Holy Spirit is our teacher

**9 FURTHER BENEFITS OF A REGULAR QUIET TIME** 101

Understanding the counsel of God  
Responding to events biblically  
Living a Christian lifestyle  
The sincerity of our faith  
A crucial question!

**10 THE GOSPEL OF JESUS** 111

The gospel demands a response  
The Bible and its revelation of God  
Genesis, creation and the fall  
Man cannot redeem himself  
The call of Abraham  
The Old Testament law and the sacrificial system  
The perfect sacrifice  
Marks of genuine conversion  
Becoming a true Christian

**11 SUMMARY** 125

Peace  
Begin a daily quiet time now

<b>NOTES</b>	129
--------------	-----

<b>APPENDICES</b>	135
-------------------	-----

- I** Prayer bookmark
- II** Bibliography
- III** A Bible-in-one-year reading plan
- IV** Memory verses
- V** The author
- VI** Author's doctrinal statement
- VII** Glossary

<b>COPYRIGHT NOTICES</b>	153
--------------------------	-----

<b>INDEX</b>	155
--------------	-----

## ILLUSTRATIONS

### Chapter 1:

St Peter's Parish Church, Gaulby, Leicestershire, 1741	17
Hugh Latimer preaching at Westminster to a crowd including King Edward VI of England	19

### Chapter 2:

William Tyndale: translator of the Bible into English from the Hebrew and Greek texts, and first to take advantage of the printing press	21
Samaria, Mountains of Ephraim and the Mediterranean Sea	23
The Children of Israel crossed the River Jordan to take possession of the Promised Land	24
Thessalonica: capital city in Macedonia	26
John Wycliffe (c.1330-1384): pre-Reformation theologian and first translator of the Bible into English	27

### Chapter 3:

The wilderness in southern Israel with Mount Seir in the distance	29
Kneeler commemorating the Golden Jubilee of HM Queen Elizabeth II	32
Galilee: Jesus spent much of his early ministry in the region	34
The Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus prayed on the night before his crucifixion	35

### Chapter 4:

John's Gospel from William Tyndale's 1526 translation of the New Testament	37
--	----

Early wooden printing press depicted in 1568	39
Cave 4 at Qumran where several hundred Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered between 1947 and 1956	41
Papyrus P <sup>52</sup> : the oldest surviving fragment of the New Testament containing part of John's Gospel dating from around 125-150 AD	42
Map: Notable places mentioned in the text regarding the location of manuscripts	43
Fresco at Santorini depicting Athanasius of Alexandria (c.297-373 AD)	45
Table: Comparison table of English language Bible translations	47
Table: Reading level of English language Bible translations	49
Justin Martyr (100-165 AD): early Christian theologian	51

## Chapter 5:

Table: English language Bible translations and date of first publication	54
The Wilderness of Engedi and the Dead Sea	55
The golden lampstand from the temple (Exodus 25:31-40): detail from Titus' Arch in Rome	57
Nazareth: where Jesus grew up, lived and worked prior to embarking on his public ministry	58
Bronze prutah bearing the inscription 'Tiberius Emperor' minted by Pontius Pilate around 29/30 AD	60
Table: Alternative translations of some Bible words	62

## Chapter 6:

Papyrus P <sup>46</sup> : the earliest almost complete manuscript of Paul's epistles dating from around 125-175 AD	64
There are countless blessings to be gained from memorizing Scripture	66
Detail from <i>The Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins</i> by Friedrich Wilhelm Schadow (1789-1862)	68
Scenes of the incarnation of the Lord Jesus: modern stained glass window at Illston-on-the-Hill, Leicestershire	70

Map: The Land of Canaan engraved by Alexander Findlay, published in 1835	72
Philippi: Roman colony in the province of Macedonia	74
Shield of the Trinity: diagram devised to explain the mystery of the Holy Trinity	75
John Calvin (1509-1564): Protestant Reformer and theologian	76
Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758): possibly America's most important and enlightened theologian	77

### **Chapter 7:**

The 'Acts' acrostic	79
The Philistine city of Gaza	82
<i>The Healing of the Ten Lepers</i> by James Tissot (1836-1902)	84
Nain: at the gate of the town Jesus raised the widow's son to life	86
The tomb of Ezra on the bank of the Euphrates	88

### **Chapter 8:**

The disciples witness Jesus' ascension: detail from stained glass window at St Peter's Church, Gaulby, Leicestershire	92
Rome: many thousands of early Christians were martyred in the city for their faith	93
Thomas Cranmer (1489-1556): Archbishop of Canterbury	95
The tabernacle as described in Exodus 26:1-37	97
The Lord's Prayer, Ten Commandments and Apostles' Creed: tablet at St Michael and All Angels, Illston-on-the-Hill, Leicestershire	98
Colossae: the church there was probably started by Epaphras	99

### **Chapter 9:**

Painting of Saint Paul by El Greco (1541-1614)	102
Papyrus reed used in the manufacture of paper in early times	104
Saul of Tarsus encountered the risen Jesus on the road to Damascus	106

Model of the Second Temple located in the Israel Museum, Jerusalem	107
The Mount of Olives seen from Jerusalem: the site of Jesus’ ascension	109

## **Chapter 10:**

Athens: the apostle Paul preached the gospel in the Areopagus	113
St John the Baptist Church, Kings Norton, Leicestershire, 1760, one of the most majestic churches of the Gothic Revival	115
Fountain at Nazareth	116
The Theatre at Ephesus	118
Painting of <i>Abraham and the Three Angels</i> by James Tissot (1836-1902)	119
‘ <i>The just shall live by faith</i> ’: Martin Luther, Protestant Reformer (1483-1546)	121
Table: Works of the Flesh versus Fruit of the Spirit	123

## **Chapter 11:**

The Church of the Beatitudes in Galilee: the reputed site where Jesus taught his disciples to pray	126
The Sea of Galilee where Jesus slept peacefully during the storm	128

## **Appendices**

Prayer bookmark	136
Table: Bible-in-one-year reading plan	139-140
The author	145
St Peter’s Church, Gaulby, Leicestershire, UK	146

## PREFACE

One of the most important disciplines for any Christian is to have a regular daily devotional time with God where they read their Bible and pray. It is an indisputable fact that those who develop this routine become stronger Christians, have a deeper faith, are less liable to succumb to temptation, are more likely to make the right decisions in life, and will persevere to the end in their Christian walk. In so doing they will also lead happier, contented and more fulfilled lives.

Sadly, all too many professing believers appear to have a haphazard or undisciplined devotional pattern, if they even have one at all; and this leads to them never progressing as they should. This book has been written to counteract this regrettable state of affairs and encourage the routine of a *daily* quiet time. It is intended to be a *practical* guide to help the believer enjoy a more fulfilling time with their Lord and in the process become better acquainted with their Saviour.

A survey carried out by the Evangelical Alliance reported that just 31% of professing believers had a regular daily quiet time and, although surveys can be misleading, the overall pattern portrayed is nevertheless disturbing.<sup>1</sup> Surely, if Christians cannot find time amidst the bustle of daily life to spend a portion of the day with their Saviour who has done so much to redeem them it must highlight a serious problem. During his earthly ministry our Lord was probably the busiest person in history and yet Scripture records that, despite all the calls upon his time, he did not overlook spending time to be alone with his heavenly Father. That being the case all Christians should surely want to follow his example.

The Bible gives numerous commands and examples about spending time alone with God, in both the Old and the New

## Quiet time for Christians

Testament, and the relevant Scripture references have been quoted throughout this book. It is strongly recommended that these are referred to in order to gain the fullest understanding and achieve the maximum benefit from those precious times alone with God.

It is probably true to say that one of the best ways in which we can prove our true spirituality to ourselves – God already knows our hearts, see 1 Chronicles 29:17, Psalm 139:23 and Acts 1:24 – is by measuring how much time we spend, unseen and unknown by others, absorbed in God's Word and in prayer. Having a deep desire for individual communion with God is probably the most compelling evidence of a healthy relationship with him. All the true men and women of faith down through the ages knew the value of such a time spent with their Saviour – and so can we. It is suggested that if our quiet time is one of the first things to be neglected when there are too many demands calling for our attention, then we should take stock of our priorities.

It is the author's sincere prayer that what follows will assist those who already have a daily quiet time to make the occasion more profitable and productive; and also encourage those who do not as yet read their Bible regularly to embark on the rewarding and lifelong journey of discovering the glorious truths recorded in God's Word.

It is perhaps pertinent to stress that the suggestions offered here are not to be considered as strict rules to be uniformly applied by everyone. Rather they are (hopefully) helpful guidelines which can be tried and adapted to suit the needs of individuals until they find what is best for them. The wonder of God's grace is that all Christians are different and that they come from every nation, tribe, tongue, social class and ability.

May our Lord Jesus Christ be glorified as his people read and obey his most precious and holy Word.

Adrian V W Freer



## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION TO DAILY BIBLE READING

The purpose of this book, as the title indicates, is to encourage more believers to read their Bible for themselves. Setting aside a regular time to read God's Word and have a time of prayer is one of the most valuable disciplines for any Christian if they are to have a closer walk with their Lord. It is something that *all* Christians need to do; it is not exclusively the domain of hermits, ascetics and monastics – it is for everyone.

It is perhaps appropriate to state that the object of this book is to inspire *devotional reading* as opposed to *academic study*. It is intended to be a hands-on, practical help in this most important of Christian disciplines. Whilst getting to grips with



*St Peter's Parish Church, Gaulby, Leicestershire, 1741*

theological truths by studying the Bible is an essential part of being a Christian, and is to be heartily encouraged, that is not the primary purpose of this present book.

True Christianity is all about having a *personal* relationship with Jesus and, just as we take time to get to know our proposed marriage partner before the wedding, as the bride of Christ we need to get to know Jesus before the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. We shall spend a long time in eternity with our blessed Saviour and what better time and place to become acquainted with him than during our quiet time in this earthly life?

## **THE DISCIPLINE OF DAILY BIBLE READING**

It would perhaps be pertinent to explain the reasons why this book came to be written. The churches in the Gaulby Parish in Leicestershire have for many years distributed free copies of Bible reading notes amongst the congregation. It became clear from feedback, however, that although most folk received the notes gladly, a small number did not appear to read them; or indeed read their Bibles at all for that matter. It could be that they felt that they ought to take the notes because by not doing so would make them appear unspiritual, but they never actually got around to set aside a time to read them; or it could even be that they could not see the point in doing so. Whatever the underlying reasons, the church sought to address the situation and set out to encourage more people to read the Bible for themselves.

No doubt the situation encountered at Gaulby is no different from that in many other churches throughout the land and it therefore seemed prudent to bring the subject before a wider audience by producing this book with some guidelines for a more effective time of daily Bible reading and prayer. It is hoped that by so doing it will help deepen the faith of believers and also encourage those who do not as yet know Jesus Christ as

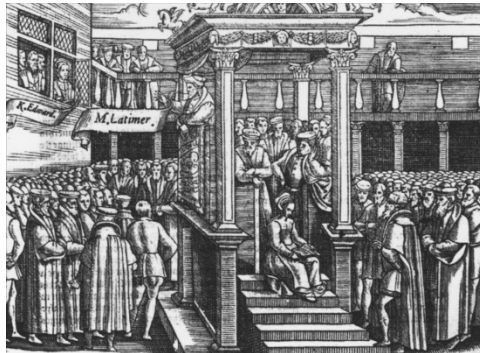
their Lord and Saviour to seek him in his Word and come to a saving faith.

## TRUE DISCIPLESHIP

Regrettably nowadays, all too many who would profess to be Christians appear to think that by coming to church once on a Sunday, listening to the prayers, hearing God's Word preached, putting something in the collection plate and perhaps helping out in some way with the practical aspects of the church is all that is necessary to be a Christian.

All too frequently, churches that once counted themselves as being 'Bible-believing' have watered down the authentic message of the gospel in order to make it more attractive and as a result the difficult and costly issues of discipleship are omitted in case they might put people off. In contrast, our Lord spelled out very clearly that becoming a true disciple has a real price that we should consider carefully before following him. Jesus frequently warned his hearers that there will be difficulties, challenges and even persecution from a hostile world (see, for example, Luke 14:27-28). Nevertheless, as

demanding as discipleship can frequently be, it is nothing approaching the cost that it took for our Saviour to redeem a people for himself. Despite the obstacles, following Christ through the narrow gate is the only way to true contentment in this life and the glorious riches of eternity that



*Hugh Latimer preaching at Westminster to a crowd including King Edward VI of England. Latimer was martyred in 1555.*

Public domain image/Wikimedia Commons

## Quiet time for Christians

Jesus has prepared for all those who will follow him (2 Timothy 4:8).

The world around us is full of conflicting religions, values, ideologies, philosophies, moral codes and a whole raft of other misconceptions; but the Bible makes the unique claim for itself that it, and it alone, is God's truth and that it is inerrant and infallible in its entirety. That being the case, all Christians should surely want to read it on a regular basis.

We should never lose sight of the fact that, by owning a copy of the Bible, we possess the most valuable handbook there is for living in the world today; and indeed in any age. It is therefore hoped that this book will provide the encouragement for believers to take time to read God's Word and reap the benefits to be gained.

## Chapter 2

### WHY READ THE BIBLE ON A DAILY BASIS?

At the start of this initiative to encourage regular Bible reading and prayer it would perhaps be prudent to step back for a moment to consider exactly why we should read Scripture and what makes it so unique that, over the centuries, Christians have read it, studied it and treasured it. Indeed, many of our forebears in the faith such as John Wycliffe and William Tyndale have suffered the most severe persecution, and many have laid down their lives in order that the Bible may be made freely available to us in our own language.<sup>2</sup> To answer that question perhaps the best course of action is to consider precisely what the Bible claims for itself and see whether those claims can be justified.

#### THE BIBLE'S DECLARATIONS ABOUT ITSELF

In 2 Timothy 3:16-17 the apostle Paul confidently asserts that



*William Tyndale: translator of the Bible into English from the Hebrew and Greek texts, and first to take advantage of the printing press. He was martyred at Oxford on 6<sup>th</sup> October 1536.*

Public domain image/Wikimedia Commons

## Quiet time for Christians

the words of the Bible are inspired by God, not by men, when he declares, *'All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.'* All the authors who contributed to the Bible may have recorded it in their own individual styles, but it is ultimately 'God-breathed' in its inspiration. It is the only book written by God in this fashion.

In Psalm 19:7-11 King David had this to say about the comprehensive truth of God's Word and what he asserts is so important that the passage needs to be quoted in its entirety: *'The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.'* David knew with absolute certainty the truth and value of God's revealed Word and, if we read it regularly, so will we.

The truths of the Bible are unchangeable; so much so that our Lord had this to say about their immutability, *"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished"* (Matthew 5:17-18). Indeed, there are severe warnings and penalties recorded at the very end of the Bible not to tamper with it in any way: *'I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book'* (Revelation 22:18-19).

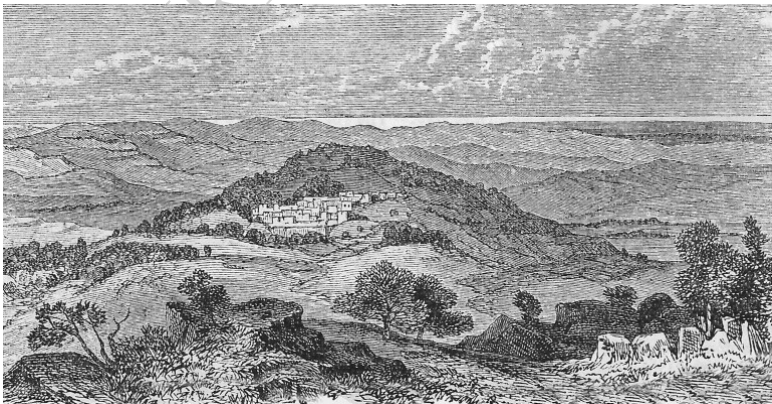
## OBLIGATIONS TO FOLLOW THE COMMANDS OF SCRIPTURE

Once they have learned what God rightfully demands, believers need to be obedient to that Word and in so doing reap the blessings that obedience brings.

• ***Our Lord commanded his disciples that they were to follow the teachings of Scripture.***

In the parable of the Good Samaritan, after giving the example of the foreigner who took pity on the wounded man, he asked a question and followed it with a command to follow the good example of the foreigner. *“Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbour to the man who fell among the robbers?”* He said, *“The one who showed him mercy.”* And Jesus said to him, ***“You go, and do likewise”*** (Luke 10:36-37, emphasis added).

On the night of his betrayal, after Jesus had washed the feet of his disciples to illustrate the kind of humility that they should display, he gave them this instruction to copy his example, *“For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you”* (John 13:15). Later on that same evening Jesus told his disciples that if they truly loved him they would obey his instructions, *“If you love me, you will keep my*



*Samaria, Mountains of Ephraim and the Mediterranean Sea*

## Quiet time for Christians

*commandments”* (John 14:15).

The Old Testament records that the people of Israel were told, *“If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God that I command you today, by loving the LORD your God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and his rules, then you shall live and multiply, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to take possession of it”* (Deuteronomy 30:16). On the other hand they were also firmly warned that if they chose to disobey they would suffer his righteous anger and punishment: *“But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, I declare to you today, that you shall surely perish. You shall not live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to enter and possess”* (Deuteronomy 30:17-18).

The examples in the Bible are set down for a purpose, the good ones to be followed and the bad ones to be spurned – they are not recorded by chance or merely for academic interest.

• ***Scripture should be the Christian’s guide for every decision in life.***

In Psalm 119:105 the psalmist says, *‘Your word is a lamp*



*The Children of Israel crossed the River Jordan to take possession of the Promised Land*



*to my feet and a light to my path.*' We live in a world overflowing with conflicting ideologies and philosophies but the Bible is the only absolutely reliable guide that we have to follow. All other advice emanating from other sources changes with the prevailing time and culture but the guidance of the Bible is the one unchanging and absolute truth that the believer can cling on to with every confidence (see 2 Peter 1:19).

When problems arise, or we come to a point where we have to make important decisions that will affect our lives, there is no better handbook to consult than God's Word.

**• *Although Christians enjoy a freedom in Christ which those enslaved in their sin do not (and cannot) possess, that freedom does not give free licence to do as we please.***

We must never forget that we have been purchased at a great cost and we do not belong to ourselves any more, but rather we belong to Christ and we should therefore willingly seek to serve him. In Luke 11:28 Jesus told us that we will be blessed if we keep his Word, *'But he said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!"'*

Once again, in 1 Peter 2:16, we are commanded, *'Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God.'* Paradoxically, true freedom from sin and its dire consequences comes only when we become servants of Christ.

**• *Once Christians have obeyed God's command to repent and believe the gospel, they should endeavour to please him in every aspect of their lives.***

All Christians must surely want to have the smile of God upon their lives and by living to please him is the only way that they can achieve it. The commands in the Bible are not there to shackle us or stop us living a fulfilled life; on the contrary they are there so that we can avoid the snares of the evil one and live happily, contentedly and at peace with God and our fellow man.

In 1 Thessalonians 4:1 the apostle Paul gives this admonition about the way Christians ought to live, *'Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you*

## Quiet time for Christians

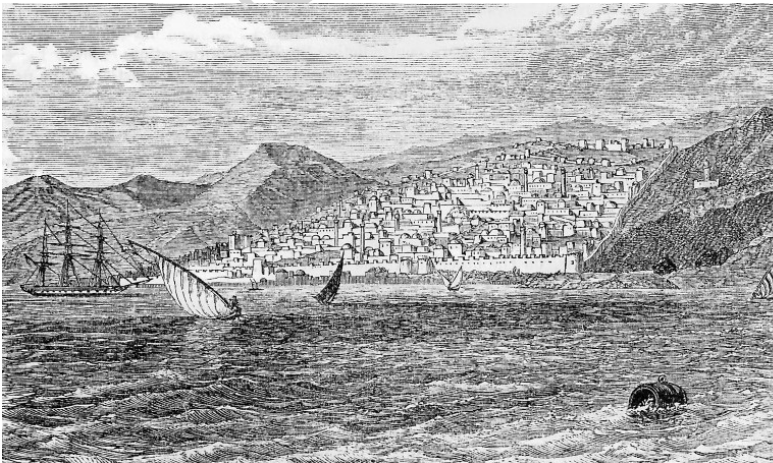
*received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more.'*

Becoming a true Christian is far more than an outward show on a Sunday that is subsequently forgotten for the rest of the week. Quite the opposite, it is something that permeates every moment of Christians' lives as they progress in their walk with their Lord. The Bible calls this ongoing process of becoming more Christ-like 'sanctification'.

- ***Loving other believers is a proof of our love for Jesus.***

The Bible tells us that because Jesus has loved us in the first instance, to the point where he gave his life for those whom he would save, we will understandably love him in return. *'In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins'* (1 John 4:10). If we truly understand what Christ has saved us from, and the great cost it entailed, our hearts will overflow with gratitude and love towards our Saviour. That love will subsequently overflow into a deeper love for other Christians.

At the last supper Jesus gave this new command to his disciples, *"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another"*



*Thessalonica: capital city in Macedonia*

Why read the Bible on a daily basis?

(John 13:34). This display of love for fellow believers is one of the hallmarks by which Christians are to be recognized. *“By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another”* (John 13:35). Writing several years later the apostle John reiterated that command from Jesus in his first epistle, *‘And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother’* (1 John 4:21).

## A HANDBOOK FOR LIFE

The Bible is unquestionably the most well-preserved historical document of all time – indeed it has been divinely protected down through the centuries from countless satanically-inspired attacks to eradicate it. It has been banned, burned, scorned, criticized and confiscated, and those who have sought to promote and distribute it have been martyred in the process; nevertheless in spite of all these ravages God has always prevailed in keeping his Word unscathed. Indeed, in his divine providence he has even used these attacks to increase its distribution ever more widely for the furtherance of the gospel.

The Bible is the only infallible textbook for leading a happy and contented life and so we need to consult it, the manufacturer’s instruction book for mankind, on a regular basis. My mother used to repeat the following amusing adage, ‘When you buy a new appliance, when all else fails read the



*John Wycliffe<sup>3</sup> (c.1330-1384): pre-Reformation theologian and first translator of the Bible into English*

Public domain image/Wikimedia Commons

## Quiet time for Christians

instructions!' The Bible is God's instruction manual for us and we need to consult it *before* we make any choices that may be unwise. Otherwise we will end up embroiled in sin with all its problems.

Whilst it is true that sin can be forgiven when we come to God in repentance, there is always the outworking of the consequences of that sin that we will have to confront and which can sometimes afflict us for years. It is surely better to avoid the difficulties in the first place by being obedient to God's wise commands.

God's instructions are recorded for our own good just as in the same way he gave this promise to the exiles in Babylon that what he was doing was for their ultimate benefit, *"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope"* (Jeremiah 29:11).

King David said this about how highly God reveres his Word in Psalm 138:2, *'I bow down toward your holy temple and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness, for you have exalted above all things your name **and your word**'* (emphasis added). If God esteems his Word so highly, then surely so should we!

In Isaiah 66:2 the prophet records these words about the kind of people whom the Lord seeks, *"...But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and **trembles at my word**"* (emphasis added). As we approach the words of Scripture we should do so in a spirit of reverence and awe.

We probably do not always value the immense and eternal worth of Scripture as highly as we ought. It is not the paper, ink and binding of the physical book that has supreme value; but rather it is the spiritual revelation, set down upon its pages, that is beyond price.

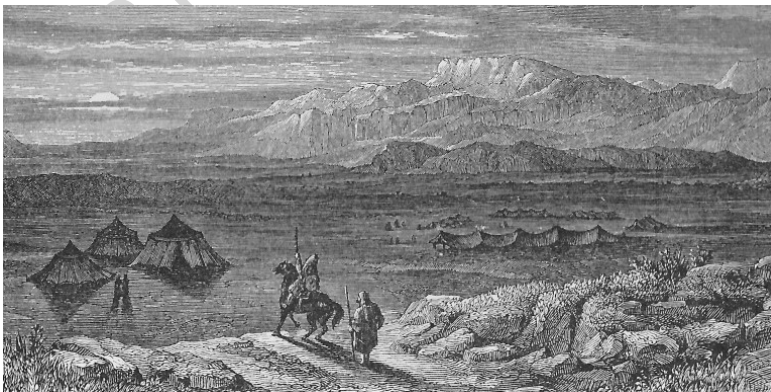
## Chapter 3

### SET ASIDE A REGULAR TIME AND PLACE FOR BIBLE READING

The Bible does not give any absolute command that one specific time or place is compulsory to read God's Word or to pray. Nevertheless there are numerous examples recorded in the Bible about reading Scripture and communing with God and consequently the following guidelines should prove helpful.

In Psalm 63 David<sup>4</sup> tells us that he sought God continually and persistently. *'O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water'* (Psalm 63:1). We need to ask ourselves, do we truly have that same intense longing to be with God as David did?

Since the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom, at the precise moment of Jesus' death on the cross, believers now have direct access to God without the need for any



*The wilderness in southern Israel with Mount Seir in the distance*

intermediary and they can approach him at any time and in any place. That is the converse of the situation where Queen Esther knew that if she approached the king without being summoned she was liable to be put to death. *“All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that if any man or woman goes to the king inside the inner court without being called, there is but one law—to be put to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden sceptre so that he may live”* (Esther 4:11). We are so fortunate that our King is not at all like that; he loves his children and he longs for us to draw near to him at any time. That being the case let us make good use of that opportunity to commune with him and bring our concerns before the throne of grace (see Hebrews 4:16).

### WHEN AND WHERE

It is a good plan to set aside a regular time each day and endeavour to keep within that routine. Having a regular location is also a wise strategy because your mind will become accustomed to the routine of that particular place and it is far less likely that new distractions will disturb you.

You may find that early in the morning when your mind is fresh and the new day is before you is most suitable to your individual pattern of life; or you may find that in the evening when the day is done is when you want to bring the events of the past hours before the Lord; or you might feel that some other time of day suits you best. Whatever you decide, try to stick to it. Unforeseen events may (and undoubtedly will) interrupt this on occasion, but whenever this happens try to get back into your chosen pattern once again as soon as possible.

Until the pattern becomes firmly embedded into your daily routine you may be discouraged to discover that you have missed a couple or more days. If that should happen, do what you would do with any other lapse in your Christian walk; admit the error, confess it, ask for forgiveness and re-start *immediately*. Although in our human frailty we are often haphazard in our

**PAGES 31 TO 154 ARE OMITTED FROM THIS EXTRACT**

COPYRIGHT MATERIAL

## INDEX

- Abraham, 118-119, 121  
'Acts' acrostic, 79-85  
adoration, 80-81  
Alexandria, 41, 43, 44, 45  
'analogy of faith', 72  
angel of the Lord, 103  
angels, 92, 116, 119  
Anna, 88  
Apocrypha, 38, 129-130, 149  
Aramaic, 37, 149  
Arius, 44  
Article VI, 38, 129-130  
Article VII, 95-97, 99  
ascension, 38, 92, 109, 120  
Assyrians, 103  
Athanasius, 44, 45  
Athens, 113  
atonement, 76, 149, 150  
Beatitudes, 126  
benedictions, 89, 149  
Bereans, 31  
bestsellers, 49, 50, 132  
Bible atlas, 71  
Bible dictionary, 71  
Bible notes, 65  
Bible versions, 37, 47, 48, 53  
'Bible-in-one-year' reading  
  plan, 64, 139-140  
*Book of Common Prayer*, 36, 82,  
  95, 138  
Byzantine texts, 43-45  
Byzantium, 43  
Caesarea, 43, 44  
Calvin, John, 76, 151  
Calvinism – see five points of  
  Calvinism  
canon of Scripture, 38, 50-52,  
  149  
ceremonial law, 94-97  
Christianity, 18, 44, 115, 122  
Christian(s), 15-16, 17-20,  
  24-27, 30-35, 75, 91-99,  
  104-105, 125  
civil law, 96-98  
Colossae, 99  
commands of Scripture, 15,  
  23-27, 93, 95, 113, 122  
commentaries, 48, 72, 75  
commercial considerations,  
  49-50  
confession, 81-83, 109, 125  
Constantinople, 43  
conversion, 66, 91, 112, 122  
copyright, 50  
Corinth, 70, 132  
counsel of God, 85, 101-103  
Cranmer, Thomas, 95-96  
creation, 53, 75, 81, 116  
Damascus, 66, 105, 106  
Daniel, 32-33, 37, 88  
David, King, 22, 28, 29, 55-56,  
  61, 80, 82, 88, 107



Dead Sea Scrolls, 41  
 devotional time, 15, 17, 75,  
     125, 127  
  
 disciples, 23, 26-27, 32, 35, 67,  
     69, 79, 88, 92, 122, 126, 127  
 discipleship, 19, 115, 150  
 dying thief, 108  
 dynamic equivalent  
     translations, 46, 47  
 eclectic texts, 40  
 Edward VI, King, 19  
 Edwards, Jonathan, 77, 132  
 Egypt, 43, 44  
 election, 76, 113, 150  
 Elijah, 32, 92  
 Ellerton, John, 127  
 Engedi, 55  
 English Standard Version, 44,  
     48, 51, 56, 61  
 Ephesus, 118  
 Erasmus, Desiderius, 43-44  
 Esther, Queen, 30, 38, 76, 88  
 Euphrates, River, 88  
 euthanasia, 104  
 evangelism, 112  
 Ezra, 37, 88, 133  
 faith, 18-19, 21, 76, 77, 80, 91,  
     105, 106, 108-109, 111,  
     119-123, 151  
 fall, the, 116-117  
 false doctrine, 77, 126  
 fasting, 87-89  
 Father, God the, 15, 31, 33, 35,  
     75, 79, 83, 87, 88, 94, 103,  
     108, 114, 125  
 feminist agenda, 47, 58  
 Findlay, Alexander, 72  
 finished work of Christ, 76, 96  
 five points of Calvinism, 76  
 formal translations, 46  
  
 Foxe, John, 133  
 free translations, 46, 47, 61  
 functional equivalent  
     translations, 46  
 Galilee, 34, 58, 126, 127, 128  
 Gaulby, Leicestershire, 17, 18,  
     92  
 Gaza, 82  
 'gender-neutral' translations,  
     58-59  
 Gethsemane, 35  
 God's will, 85-87, 102  
 Good News Bible, 51, 56  
 Good Samaritan, 23  
 gospel, 19, 27, 45, 48, 75-76,  
     91, 104, 105, 109-110,  
     111-124  
 grace, 16, 75, 76, 83, 109, 121,  
     150  
 Great Awakening, 77, 150  
 Great Commission, 92  
 Greek, 21, 37, 41-44, 150, 152  
 handbook for life, 20, 25, 27-28  
 Hannah, 32  
 health, wealth and prosperity,  
     115  
 heaven, 76-77, 92, 97, 109, 114,  
     120  
 Hebrew, 37, 40-41, 150, 152  
 hell, 114  
 Henry VIII, King, 129  
 'Heroes of the Faith', 108  
 Hezekiah, King, 103  
 Hippolytus, 51  
 Holy Spirit, 34, 35, 42, 61, 62,  
     71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 91, 99-100,  
     104, 112-114, 122  
 how much to read, 64-65  
 Illston-on-the-Hill,  
     Leicestershire, 70, 98  
 Irenaeus, 51

James (1: disciple of Jesus), 87, 92  
 James (2: half-brother of Jesus), 42, 91  
 Jehoshaphat, King, 33, 88  
 Jephthah, 87  
 Jesus, 18-20, 23, 25-27, 33, 35, 59-60, 76, 87, 92, 108-110, 111-124, 127  
 Jewish leaders, 59-60  
 Jews, 41, 59-60, 66  
 John, 27, 87, 92  
 Jordan, River, 24  
 Joseph, 76  
 justification, 76, 106, 151  
 Justin Martyr, 51  
 King James Version, 43-44, 48, 50, 51, 56, 132  
 Kings Norton, Leicestershire, 115  
 Latimer, Hugh, 19  
 law(s), 94-100, 104, 105, 119-120  
 liberal translations, 46-47, 61, 132  
 literal translations, 46, 47, 48  
 Living Bible, The, 59  
 Longstaff, William, 128  
 Lord's Day, 100  
 Luke, 31, 66  
 Luther, Martin, 44, 121, 151  
 Majority Text, 130  
 martyrs, 19, 21, 27, 93, 150  
 meditation, 73-75, 80  
 memory verses, 66, 67, 141-144  
 Message, The, 57, 61  
 moral law, 98-99  
 morality, decline in, 104  
 Moses, 38, 69, 92, 94, 96, 98, 119  
 mysticism, 70, 74  
 Nain, widow of, 85-86  
 Nathan, 82  
 Nazareth, 58, 116  
 New Age religion, 74  
 New International Reader's Version, 58, 59  
 New International Version, 44, 51, 58, 59  
 New King James Version, 44, 48, 51, 52, 56, 57  
 New Living Translation, 59, 61  
 New Testament church, 68, 70, 88, 99-100  
 obedience, 23-24, 28, 91, 93-94, 100, 105, 122  
 papyrus, 42, 64, 104  
 paraphrase, 46, 56, 132  
 Patmos, 38, 87  
 Paul, 21, 25, 54, 56, 66, 68, 70, 73, 79, 91, 101-103, 106, 113  
 peace, 25, 27, 109, 111, 114, 115, 127, 128  
 perseverance, 15, 31, 76  
 Peter, 42, 60, 65, 67, 92, 95, 105  
 Pharisee(s), 86, 107  
 Philippi, 73-74  
 Philistines, 82  
 Pilate, Pontius, 59-60  
 pitfalls to avoid, 69-71, 105  
 'politically correct' translations, 47, 59-60  
 posture, 31-33  
 prayer, 16, 31-34, 35-36, 63, 79-90, 107-108, 125-128  
 prayer bookmark, 85, 136  
 preaching, 19, 75, 104, 112-113  
 printing, 21, 39  
 Promised Land, 24

Protestant, 37, 41, 43, 72, 76,  
     121, 151  
 providence, 27, 34, 50, 67, 76,  
     83, 103, 127, 151  
 puzzling passages, 72-73  
 questions to ask, 69  
 Qumran, 41  
 reading level, 48, 49  
 Received Text – see Textus  
     Receptus  
 recommended translations, 48  
 Reformation, 44, 129, 151  
 remnant, 105, 152  
 repentance, 28, 77, 81, 83, 94,  
     109, 111, 112, 114  
 reverential aspect, 56-58  
 Revised Standard Version, 56  
 rich young ruler, 98  
 ritual law – see ceremonial law  
 Rome, 43, 44, 54, 57, 93, 101  
 Sabbath, 100, 152  
 sacrifice, 76, 95, 96, 97, 117,  
     119-120, 152  
 Saint Catherine's Monastery,  
     Sinai, 43, 44  
 salvation, 76, 78, 81, 91, 96,  
     106, 112, 117, 121, 124, 152  
 Samaria, 23  
 Samaritan, 84, 152  
 sanctification, 26, 152  
 Satan, 77, 104  
 Saul, King, 55-56, 82, 107  
 Saul of Tarsus, 66, 105, 106  
 Sennacherib, King, 103  
 Sinaiticus, 44, 51, 130  
 sincerity, 86, 106-108  
 sovereignty of God, 45, 76, 78,  
     84, 111, 113, 126, 128, 151  
 Steele, Anne, 36  
 storm, 127-128  
 study resources, 71-72  
 supplication, 84-85  
 tax collector, 108  
 temple, 29, 57, 96, 107-108  
 Ten Commandments, 98, 112  
 Textus Receptus, 43-45, 50,  
     130, 152  
 thanksgiving, 80, 83-84, 125  
 Thessalonica, 26, 31  
 Thirty-Nine Articles, 38, 95, 96,  
     152  
 threefold division of the law,  
     95-96  
 transcription, 39-41  
 transfiguration, 92  
 translation, 37-52, 53-62  
 Trinity, 75  
 Turkey, 43  
 Tyndale, William, 21, 37, 44,  
     129  
 Vaticanus, 44, 51, 130  
 wedding in Cana, 58-59  
 Westcott and Hort, 44-45,  
     130-132  
 when to pray, 30-31  
 where to pray, 30  
 wise and foolish virgins, 68  
 worship, 33, 56, 68, 125, 128  
 Wycliffe, John, 21, 27, 129

# Quiet Time for Christians

## A Practical Guide to Daily Bible Reading and Prayer

**Adrian V W Freer**

Setting aside a regular time each day to read God's Word and have a time of prayer is one of the most valuable disciplines for any Christian if they are to have a closer walk with their Saviour.

It is an indisputable fact that those who develop this routine become stronger Christians, have a deeper faith, are less liable to succumb to temptation, are more likely to make the right decisions in life, and they will persevere to the end in their Christian walk. In so doing they will lead happier, contented and more fulfilled lives. That being the case all Christians should surely want to read their Bible on a daily basis.

The aim of this book is twofold: firstly to assist those who already have a quiet time to make it more profitable and productive, and secondly to persuade those who do not as yet have a regular time alone with God to embark on the rewarding and lifelong journey of discovering the glorious truths recorded in God's Word.

54 illustrations, 6 tables and 1 map

**ISBN: 978 0 9520304 4 7**

**WCP**

**Welford Court Press**

ISBN 9780952030447



9 780952 030447