

“I’ve Been Reading the Bible”

The Bible is a reliable guide for all things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3). How curious, then, that it is so frequently neglected. It has always been the case that men and women of faith both read and relied upon the inspired word of God throughout their lives. Consider some major characters of Scripture who spent time reading the Bible:

Josiah – Josiah lived in a day where the Bible had been all but forgotten. In a dusty, forgotten part of the temple a copy of the Book of the Law written by Moses was found (2 Kings 22:11). Josiah read those words and tore his clothes because he realized the great sin his people had committed.

Daniel – Daniel is known for his prayer life (Dan. 6:1-10), but he is also a man who read the Bible. Daniel 9:2 states that in the first year of King Darius, “I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the LORD through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.” Not only did Daniel read Jeremiah’s words, but he accepted them as Scripture.

Jesus – At the young age of 12, Jesus knew Scripture well enough to converse with and astonish the teachers in the temple (Luke 2:46-47). Jesus demonstrates familiarity with all of Scripture. He quoted from or referred to Genesis (Matt. 19:4-5), Exodus (Matt. 5:21, 27), Leviticus (Matt. 5:43), Numbers (Matt. 5:33), Deuteronomy (Matt. 4:4; 5:31), Psalms (Matt. 21:16), Isaiah (Matt. 15:8-9), Jeremiah (Matt. 21:13), Daniel (Matt. 24:15-16), Hosea (Matt. 9:13), Jonah (Matt. 12:39-40), Micah (Matt. 10:35-36), Zechariah (Matt. 26:31), and Malachi (Luke 7:27), along with many other such references. It is abundantly obvious that Jesus spent time reading the Bible!

Peter – Peter may have been an “uneducated” Galilean (Acts 4:13), but he had obviously spent a great deal of time reading Scripture as well. Peter quotes from Genesis (Acts 3:25), Leviticus (1 Pet. 1:16), Deuteronomy (Acts 3:22-23), Psalms (Acts 1:20-21), Proverbs (1 Peter 4:8, 18), Isaiah (1 Pet. 2:6) and Joel (Acts 2:17-21). In addition, Peter explains to his readers that Paul’s writings were equal with, “the rest of the Scriptures,” thereby demonstrating that he also had read some of the inspired works of Paul (2 Pet. 3:15-16).

Paul – Paul found Scripture to be an essential and indispensable part of his life (cf. Phil. 3:5-6). He quoted from or referred to the Old Testament in 105 verses of Romans, 72 verses of 1 Corinthians, 21 verses of 2 Corinthians, 24 verses in Galatians, and frequently throughout his other epistles as well. In addition, 1 Timothy 5:18 contains a quotation from the Gospel According to Luke, which Paul refers to as Scripture. Obviously, Paul spent a tremendous amount of time reading from and poring over the word of God.

Question: if these men of faith invested so much of their time and energy in reading, thinking about and quoting from the Scriptures, how much more should we? **--JB**