

Reading the Bible Daily

by Keith Malcomson

This sermon emphasizes the importance of daily reading the Bible, highlighting the blessings and benefits that come from immersing oneself in God's Word. It addresses the struggle of distractions, lack of concentration, and dangers like self-righteousness and misinterpretation, while encouraging a disciplined approach to reading the Bible for spiritual growth and understanding.

Scripture: Isaiah 50:4, John 6:66

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Description

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Transcript

Praise God. I want you to turn to Joshua chapter 1. If you find Deuteronomy, Joshua comes straight after that. We're going to read from chapter 1 starting at verse 5 here tonight.

And I just want to do a few brief messages on these next three Wednesday nights, tonight and the next two Wednesday nights. And I'm just calling this daily devotions. We're beginning a new year.

We're embarking on 2023. And I just want to lay out very simply some very basic things, things we know, things we understand. But yet the things we know best, I'm not informing you of something new here, but I'm going to lay out what you know best that is most easy to neglect.

And yet it carries the greatest blessing. And so tonight, next week and the following Wednesday night, I want to deal with things that have probably been the cause of more spiritual blessing in my life than anything else that if you build into your life. And so I've called these three messages daily devotions, very simple, very basic.

And I hope I'm very clear. I'm very simple here tonight, but here in this first message, I'm calling this reading the Bible daily. Soon as I say that immediately, you understand the battle that's involved.

It is so simple, so basic, so elementary, and yet a war rages around you daily reading the Bible. I would actually say nothing will bless you more than daily reading the Bible. Let's read together Joshua 1 and

verse five.

There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life. As I was with Moses, I will be with thee. I will not fail thee nor forsake thee.

Be strong and of a good courage for unto this people shall thou divide foreign inheritance of land, which I swear unto their fathers to give them. Only be thou strong and very courageous that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses, my servant commanded thee, turn not from it to the right hand nor to the left, that thou mayest prosper withersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shall meditate therein day and night that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein.

For then thou shalt make thy way prosperous and then thou shalt have good success. Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage. Be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed for the Lord thy God is with thee withersoever thou goest.

Amen. Let's pray together. Father, we do pray, O God, that you'd, nor God, encourage us, strengthen us, exhort us, build us up, lead us, guide us, nor God, draw out our hearts, O God, to read the word of God daily, nor God, we do pray that you open our eyes, O God, that faith would enter our hearts, nor God, to believe, O God, that the daily reading of the word of God, meditating upon it, thinking upon it, let that become a very part of our innermost being, nor God, is one of the most fruitful things that we can do in a day, nor God, I do pray that your grace comes down, nor God, that we might not be found guilty or condemned or weary or burdened down with this, but Lord God, our hearts would be lifted with desire and with faith, O God, let your grace be ministered tonight, nor God, that this won't be legalistic or burdensome, but Lord God, it would be a thing that we would seek after, O God, as a great blessing in our life, in Jesus' mighty name, amen, amen.

Look again at verse 8 where we have just read, because I believe the title of the message, the entire theme of the message, it must be absolutely biblical, it mustn't just be inferred, it must be biblical. If I'm going to exhort you tonight, that you must be faithful, that you ought to be faithful, that you have to be crazy if you're not faithful in this, then I've got to prove it by scripture. Does the Bible actually teach that you ought to read the Bible daily? Does the Bible actually exhort you and encourage you that it is normal for a believer, a follower of God, to at least find time for the Word of God daily? Maybe you could say, well, maybe weekly, but does it really teach daily? Does it teach that we, yes, a preacher maybe, but all of us ought to have time in the Word? I believe it does.

Listen again to verse 8. This book of the law, you have it in your hands tonight, the Old Testament, this book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth. It's very personal. The Word that is written is to actually be a part of your daily life.

It is to be on your tongue, on your mouth. So what is written here is to be so taken into your life that then you give it out. There's an entire flow.

It's a bit like a river that is healthy or a lock or something else. You get an inlet and an outlet. That's why the Dead Sea is the Dead Sea.

You get water flowing in from the Jordan, but there's no flowing out. If there's no flowing out, you can become a stagnant pool, a place of disease, sickness, illness. And so it's not enough to merely take in the

Word of God.

It's got to flow through you. But you've got to spend time in the Word of God if it is going to flow through you. But he goes further here.

But thou shalt. There's not a discussion or an opinion. This is Moses speaking to Joshua.

You would think this is basic. Joshua is a trained soldier, about 40 years old. He's got experience, reputation, a walk with God, maturity.

And yet Moses, one of the last things he says to him is, listen to me, son. I'm going. The Lord's going to take me.

You're embarking on one of the greatest parts of your entire life. What does he say? Thou shalt meditate therein in the Word of God, day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to it. And so you spend time in the Word of God so that you may become a doer of the Word of God, to read for head knowledge, to win arguments, to be a brain box, to have information.

You're a stagnant pool. The only reason you'd spend time in the Word of God is that what is written there can become an actual part of your life. That is the purpose of meditating in the Word of God.

Notice what Moses says to Joshua. Do this day and night, not just night, not just day, not just every other day, not just every week, not just in your youth, not just until you get a great knowledge of this. He says, you're mature.

He's not telling them to do this because he doesn't know the Word of God or hasn't spent time in the Word of God. He's speaking to a man who's been raised in the Word of God, who's saturated with the Word of God, who's been taught the Word of God rightly. And yet here is Moses saying, do not neglect to spend time in God's Word every day.

If actually because of your past knowledge or present knowledge of the Word of God, you think that you don't need to spend time in the Word. That's very dangerous. That's really dangerous in the spiritual life.

You know why? Because the Word of God is more than gathering information. It is God speaking, communicating. It is God.

You're enabling out of one of the most remarkable books to say, God speak to me today, deal with issues today, instruct me, encourage me, challenge me, rebuke me, redirect me, stop me from doing something. I cannot tell you the amount of times that the Word of God has restrained me daily. I actually believe certain people are not restrained from speaking in a certain way, acting in a certain way, thinking in a certain way because they don't spend time in the Word of God.

They're not even convicted. They're not even aware. If you spend time daily in the Word of God, little portions, you would actually be convicted of things that you say, that's fine, that's okay, because the Word of God is alive.

It is living. It's not a book of information. This is a vital means for God to communicate.

It is a thing of fellowship. In fact, I'd go as far as to say it's impossible to have fellowship with God outside the Word of God. Oh yes, you could commune with God and not have a Bible or not quote a scripture.

You could. But what I'm saying is, anyone who has a low view of scripture has a very low view of God. They may not think it, but if you neglect this book, that's exactly what you think of God.

That's your attitude towards God. There was a great preacher from last century called Smith Wigglesworth. He actually got raised in the gospel but could never read.

He couldn't read the Bible, but he always carried a little pocket Bible with him in his pocket. He couldn't read it. He couldn't write.

He wasn't educated. He'd gone on as a young boy, worked in the turnip fields, picking turnips, I think from about eight years old, had no schooling. He just worked and worked and worked and he grew up and he got married and it was his wife who taught him, began to teach him how to read.

He had one desire to read, that he could read the Word of God for himself. And for the rest of his days, he died at age 87. He said, I never ever read any other book than the Bible, God's written scripture.

You know what he learned to read late in life. So he dare not read any other book. And he challenged people.

He said, if you ever find me without the scripture in my pocket, you'll have a hard job. He always carried the Word of God with them wherever he went. Listen to this quote from Smith Wigglesworth.

And this shows you his attitude about the Word of God. This is an illiterate, uneducated plumber from Bradford in England. This is what he thought about the Word of God.

And it's eloquently written. The Bible is the Word of God, supernatural in origin, eternal in duration, inexpressible in value, infinite in scope, regenerative in power, infallible in authority, universal in interest, personal in application, inspired in totality. Read it through, write it down, pray it in, work it out, then pass it on.

It becomes the epistle. Sorry. Truly it is the Word of God.

It brings into man the personality of God. It changes the man until he becomes the epistle of God. It transforms his mind, changes his character, takes him on from grace to grace, and gives him an inheritance in the Spirit, the Holy Spirit.

God comes in, dwells in, walks in, talks through, and supps with him, a man of the Bible. I believe he's absolutely right. That's why he was so jealous over carrying this little book in his pocket, never neglecting it.

And he constantly emphasised the importance of the Bible. No wonder that in the 20th century, he became renowned as one of the greatest healing evangelists in our world. You know why? Because he had a biblical foundation in Scripture, saturated in the Word of God, and he warned about deception that would come.

I'm going to give you a few little simple points here as we go into this. We have a little church manual, and we don't have any left, I'm afraid. They're out of print, but we'll get more done up.

It's a handbook for Limerick City Church. At the back of it, you may or may not have come across it, but it's an exhortation to daily devotion, with reading the Scripture being number one in the list. And it's there to

exhort you and encourage you that as a part of this church, it's a precious thing to read the Word of God daily, however you do that.

But I want to give you a few points here. You can read it in there. It's a bit small for me to read tonight.

The writing's getting smaller. It's not my eyes. But I want to give you these simple four points just to help you, encourage you, challenge you.

Maybe you'll get convicted tonight. Maybe you'll get encouraged tonight. But why not allow the Holy Spirit to speak to you from Scripture, about Scripture, and about how you should give attendance to it daily? Do not neglect the Word daily.

Tonight, if you have been, don't go down condemned. Don't become guilty. Don't start taking on a burden of going, it's too much for me.

Don't do that. I'm going to deal with all of these things. But I want to help you.

I don't want to discourage you. Neither do I want the devil to condemn you. I want the Holy Spirit to convict you.

What's the difference between God convicting you and the devil condemning you? The devil comes and says, see what you're doing wrong. There's no hope. And he writes you off.

The Holy Spirit is different. He comes right in. He doesn't drop hints.

He's not vague. That's why if someone tells me, I feel condemned, I feel guilty, I say, what about? Because if you don't know what you're guilty about, that's probably your flesh or the devil. Because the Holy Spirit deals with something unless you're very dumb and very deaf.

The Holy Spirit actually says, this is sin. This is what you're doing. I'm convicting you.

That's how you know it's the Holy Spirit. He speaks clearly most often through the Word of God. And so here's my four points.

Number one, the duty of reading the Bible daily. I believe it's not only a blessing, it's a duty, a responsibility, a command, an expectation. It says in 1 Timothy 4.13, Paul speaking to Timothy.

Don't think that Moses says this to Joshua and Paul says things like this to Timothy because they're in ministry or they're preachers. Don't think that. You need it more than them.

Do you realize that? If they had to do it when they knew this book inside out and were mature and walking close with God, don't you think you need it more? If Christ had to get up early to pray, do you think it was because he was so great he'd done that and you don't need to do that? If Christ had to rise early to pray, do you not think you need to rise early to pray? If Christ quoted the Word of God against the devil to deal with the devil's attacks, do you think you don't need to quote the devil or resist him or respond to his lies? Of course you do. Jesus did in the flesh. He had to take the Word of God and quote and confront the devil directly.

So do you. But listen, the duty of reading 1 Timothy 4.13, Paul speaking to Timothy. Till I come or till I come to you, give attendance to reading, exhortation, and doctrine.

Paul states three things here that Timothy is to give attendance, real primacy to, or focus to, reading, exhortation, and doctrine. He's talking about the public gathering of the church. When you gather, read the scriptures, exhort according to the Word of God, and teach doctrine.

Notice that the public reading of scripture is put before exhortation and before doctrine. So before you break down and begin to teach systematically and clearly, read the Word of God. Before you stand up in the church and begin to exhort and stir people and challenge people, read the Word of God.

Some preachers think it's a tradition that I open up the Bible, read a scripture or a chapter, and then preach from it. Oh no. Remember when Christ, 30 years old, went to the synagogue for the first time, and it was his first reading of the scripture publicly in the synagogue.

Remember it says he took the scroll of Isaiah, and he turned to the spot, and when he found it, he read it before he preached, before he gave his first sermon. So even Christ was a textual preacher. He found the scripture.

Do you know what? All my opinions mean nothing unless it's only an opening up of the text of scripture. That's where the authority is. Now listen carefully.

If Paul is telling Timothy to read the Word of God in the public gathering of God's people, do you not think it's important in our own personal time to read the Word? Look again at Joshua chapter 1 and verse 8. Moses tells Joshua, but meditate therein, in the law, in the written Word of God, in the written scriptures. Some of these guys that blew in and out of churches say, I hear from God directly. That's what I meditate on.

No. Moses is exhorting Joshua in the Bible, in the written scriptures. Meditate every day.

Take time in the Word of God. Some smart alecks say it's only the Word of God when the Holy Spirit moves on it. That's a lie.

This is the Word of God. Some people say it's ineffectual until the Holy Spirit moves on it. That's partially true and partially error.

The Word itself is inspired by the Holy Ghost. This is not like any other book. It is utterly, utterly unique.

And so the Word of God itself, the Holy Spirit honors it. You can't handle the Word of God without the Holy Spirit being there. So to say there's no power in this book is an actual lie.

It's dynamite. It's explosive. It is dangerous.

And Moses is telling Joshua every day, meditate. Take time in the Word of God. Listen to what it says in Psalm 1 verse 1. Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

Who is this man that's so unique that keeps himself in his daily life from sinners and mockers and wicked men and those who are wrong in their lifestyle? Who is this man who can walk through his life and he's perfectly blessed, blessed of God, while all around there can be sinners? The next verse says, but his delight is in the law of the Lord. You can always tell someone who has a delight in God's Word or loves God's Word or enjoys God's Word. Candace was such a person, I want to tell you.

And I could easily tell she loved the Word of God by her actions towards the Bible. But his delight is in the law of the Lord. And in his law does he meditate day and night.

So we have it again, not only in Joshua chapter 1, but here in Psalm 1. To become a certain kind of believer, a certain kind of Christian, you're going to do certain things. Don't think that you will naturally grow as a Christian while neglecting the Bible. You will not grow.

George Mueller, the great man of faith, do you know what he said? He said he was saved a Christian for four years. He read lots of Christian books, mission magazines, listened to best preaching. And he said, for four years, I never grew as a Christian.

Do you know why? He didn't read the Bible daily. He was a real convert. He loved Jesus with all his heart.

His life was changed, real repentance. And yet he said he was dysfunctional for four years. And he said, when I learned the secret of reading the Bible daily, and in fact, reading the entire Bible through in a year, every year for the rest of his life, he'd done it about 200 times, 100 times he read the Bible on his knees.

What a man. You want to wonder why George Mueller became the man he did? You can look to this. His first four years, he was saturated, surrounded by great ministry, reading all these classics of the Christian world.

He said he never grew. When did that change? When he went back to the Bible and just start daily on his knees, reading it systematically, wanting to read the entire Bible in an entire year. And so what it says here, his delight is in the law of the Lord and in his law, does he meditate day and night, day and night, day and night.

I hope those words ring in your ears, day and night, day and night, day and night. Well, I'll just go to bed day and night. Night's a good time to read.

I'm tired. Oh, why not just read a verse? Why not read a verse? How long will that take? How much time will you spend on Facebook, WhatsApp, or a load of other things just before? Oh, I'm too tired. You're not too tired for certain things.

You're tired for certain things. When you think of the Bible, I'm so tired. I can't concentrate.

I don't know what I'm reading. And then you apply all of your energy to other things. And he shall be like a tree.

What is this man who meditates in the word of God, in the law of God, day and night, the written scriptures, just spends time thinking on it. No great experience of the Holy Spirit, no flash of lightning, no rain of revelation like John the Apostle. He's just spending time in the written book of God, a book like this.

Do you know what he's like? It says, he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water that bringeth forth his fruit in his season. His leaf also shall not wither and whatsoever he do shall prosper. Moses told Joshua, you'll prosper.

If you meditate on God's word day and night, day and night, you'll prosper. Here in Psalm 1, if you meditate in the word of God day and night, you'll prosper, you'll have good success. Whatever you do will be blessed of God.

That means when you neglect the word of God and try to live the Christian life, but you do not meditate in God's word, I assure you, you could be stunted in your growth, hindered in the blessing of God, hindered in walking in the will of God. We are constantly throughout the Bible told to do certain things with the written scriptures. You're to receive them, you're to hide them in your heart, you're to store them up in your heart, you're to keep them or guard them or watch over them to make sure they're not endangered.

Deuteronomy 6, verse 6, it says, and these words which I command thee this day shall be in thy heart. How do they get in your heart? You have to read the word of God, you have to read or they don't get into your heart. You're not born again filled with the word of God, you're not.

The entire Bible, that's why we're exhorted from Genesis to Revelation, store it up, hide it, read it, learn it, teach it to your children. You're not born again filled with the word of God or with a mind filled with the word of God, you are not. But God's made a commitment to fill you with his word in a very real way.

Or Deuteronomy 11, verse 18, therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul. There's a difference between heart and soul and you're actually to store up the words written in the Bible, sentences, commands, promises, you're to store them up. You're to hide them in your heart in a very diligent and careful way.

In case someone would say that's Old Testament, let's go to the New Testament. Colossians 3.16, Paul writing to the church of Colossae, let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom. Let it, allow it.

Let the words of this book dwell in you richly. In other words, in fullness, perform in what they desire. You cannot allow the word of God to dwell in you richly if you don't read it, if you don't spend time meditating.

You will not be filled with the riches of God's word. Impossible. In Proverbs 3 we're told, write them upon the table of thine heart.

How do you write God's words upon your heart? You're commanded to. So notice the duty of reading is not left to your whims. I'll do it next week.

Yeah, and you'll suffer. You know, a musician once said, said, if I do not practice for one day, I notice it. If I do not practice for two days, other musical friends around me, they notice it.

If I do not practice for three days, those who come to listen may begin to notice. That's all within days. That's someone with a musical instrument who's a professional.

You could say I'm a professional on a violin, a piano, or some other tambourine, whatever it is. I don't need to practice. I can turn up Sunday morning.

I know how to play a guitar. I know the songs. Yeah, and it'll be obvious when you don't spend time.

Do you know those who are proficient and expert, they spend more time preparing and practicing than anyone else. You know why? They know the importance of neglect. Neglect one day, you're going to feel it.

Rush a thing, ad lib the spiritual things of God's kingdom, preaching, worship, evangelism. I'll just ad lib, I know it all. It's going to show.

You ever met those little kids and they've got food chocolate all over their face. Jimmy, where's the chocolate bar? I don't know. He's not aware that it's showing up what he's doing, but it's very obvious.

Do you realize in the Christian life it's very obvious when people neglect spiritual things, it shows, it manifests increasingly to such a point that there is a smell of these things. There's no doubt about it. It says in 2 Corinthians 3 and 3 about the word of God or the law of God is not written with ink, but with the spirit of the living God, not in tablets of stone, but in the fleshly tablets of the heart.

Do you know the Holy Spirit has a mission? Write God's word on your heart. It's not him doing it miraculously and you sit back. How is he going to do that? You need to be reading the word of God.

You need to be there praying and saying, Lord, please write this in my heart. When's the last time you asked God to write the word of God in your heart, to engrave it on your heart? You say, oh, but I know it. Really? It says in Proverbs 7 verse 1 to 3, my son, keep my words, lay up my commandments within me, keep my commandments and live.

And my law as the apple of thine eye, bind them upon thy fingers, your works. Don't do anything without binding God's word to your fingers. Write them upon the table of thy heart, engrave them, write them.

Do you realise as you do that, the Holy Spirit works to write the word of God upon your heart? It says in Jeremiah 31, 33, but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel. After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts and write it upon their heart. In case you think that's Old Testament.

Do you see how I have to qualify everything and explain everything? Because the church world, pulpits, the internet is so filled with air. I've always got to prove simple elementary things. Hebrews chapter 10, 16, this saying the very same thing as Jeremiah.

Now it's Paul speaking to the New Testament church under grace in the new covenant. This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord. I will put my laws into their hearts and in their minds while I write them.

Do you realise under the new covenant, God's made a covenant with you. If you're born again, God's made a covenant to say, I'll write my laws on your heart and mind, but you've got to be involved with us. You're commanded, read the word of God, hide the word of God, write the word of God.

It says in John 14, 26, but the comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, or Holy Ghost, whom the father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things and bring things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you. Do you realise one of the tasks of the Holy Spirit is to bring back the words of Jesus Christ to your mind? If you haven't read them, meditated on them, spent time in them, memorised them, how does the Holy Spirit bring that back? I've seen this in my life. I've been in real situations, instantly scriptures I didn't even have in my mind, instantly they rose up.

It was the Holy Spirit bringing back to my mind, my natural thinking. That's number one, the duty of reading. The entire Bible exhorts you to read it.

There's no other book in the world that screams out, read me, read me, eat me, have me for breakfast and for lunch and for dinner, have me when you get up in the morning, have me when you go to bed at night. No book cries out, eat me, eat me, eat me, carry me with you, think of me, meditate. All the way through

this book it exhorts you to spend time with it.

Number two, different ways to read the Bible. You see how Joshua's told meditate in the law day and night, day and night. The word meditate used here in Psalm 1 and in Joshua chapter 1 and elsewhere in the Psalms and other places in the Bible, the word meditate, we've dealt with this several times before, but it's important.

I'm exhorting you, I'm encouraging you for 2023 to spend time daily in the Bible. Maybe you've neglected it or grown tired or got busy. I'm calling you back.

I'm giving you a call by the Holy Spirit, by the Lord from the Bible. What's the word meditate mean? The Hebrew word means to ponder. In other words, you go over and over and over, not just that you read, but that you ponder it.

It means to utter, to speak to yourself, hold a conversation with yourself. It's the practice of remembering, pondering, considering, and reflecting on the word of God. You could have a verse in front of you, a simple verse.

How do you meditate on that? You can read it. We understand that. What is meditating on the word of God? You begin to go, what does this mean? What is God saying to me? How do I apply this? Just in a few minutes, you can eat that verse.

I would love to set you all down around the tables with a knife and fork and a Bible, and I'd love to teach you how to eat a verse. See, at school, no one taught me how to study. I went and tried to tell my teacher, I don't know how to study.

She sent me to the headmaster. I got disciplined. I'm trying to ask, teach me how to study.

She thought I was being silly or playing games. I'm actually asking, help me, show me. Some people go, but how do I study the Bible? How do I meditate? How do I do this? You literally sit down like you would with a meal, and you begin probing, dissecting.

Let me check that out. What's that? What's been slipped into my meal here? Poke it a bit, identify it, then eat it. When you take one verse, do it with Psalm 1 tonight or tomorrow morning, and start going through it, and just begin to think on every verse, all the main words.

Do you know that's how I preach? Do you realize how I preach is a meditation of the Word of God? You see, on Sunday, when we dealt with Ecclesiastes 3, what was I doing? I'm just going down and making you think about a scripture. You could read that and not think those thoughts. I wasn't telling you anything profound.

For half my message, all I'd done was take a few verses, and I'm making you think about it. I'm making you look at it more closely, make it personal, begin to apply it. That's all I'm doing.

Why not do that for yourself when you come to a verse? Go to Psalm 1, verse 1 to 3, and begin spending time thinking, asking yourself questions. What's that word mean? What does that word mean? What does this mean? How does this look in my life? How do I do that? Do you see how reading becomes meditation on a daily basis? You're actually commanded to do this on a daily basis. My point is different ways to read the Bible, different ways.

You know what Smith Wigglesworth said? He said, some people like to read the Bible in Hebrew. Others like to read the Bible in Greek. He says, I like to read the Bible in the Holy Ghost.

In other words, depending. I can't read the original languages, but I want to be in such an atmosphere where when I come to the Bible, I'm dependent on the teacher. The Holy Spirit, one of his tasks is to teach you the Word of God.

Do you do that? Do you get frustrated, tired, weary, discouraged? You don't understand the Bible, and yet you've never prayed, saying, Lord, teach me by your Holy Spirit. Do you come dependent on him saying, I cannot understand this. I cannot teach myself.

I need you, God, to teach me. What a remarkable thing. Now, some people, when they come to the daily reading or meditation, they depend on daily reading books.

This is one of the best of them. Morning and Evening by Charles Spurgeon. It's outstanding.

It's an excellent daily reading book. Some people will depend on that for their Christian life. That is their source.

Others just read a chapter of Proverbs. I've known men. All they've done was repeatedly in their life, their family men, hardworking men.

So they just read Proverbs perpetually throughout decades. Literally one proverb each day of the week. That's what they're doing.

That's what some do. Others just spend time in the Psalms saying, I understand the Psalms or the Gospel of John. I spend time there.

Other men and women will just spend time in books. Books, teaching, instruction, insight into whatever. And of course, you know that Candace gave you Streams in the Desert to the ladies last year.

It is an outstanding, excellent daily reading book. Can I tell you something? All those things are good. I love them all.

To be honest, I've struggled. I've utterly neglected daily reading books my entire life. I only dip into them once in a blue moon.

I find it very hard to read consistently any daily reading book. You're not commanded to do any of those things. And I believe it's milk.

It could be good milk, but you will neglect. There's nothing to replace daily reading the Word of God. It says in Psalm 119.97, Oh, how I love thy law.

It is, it is my meditation. Not someone just exhorting you about it. Thank God for Sunday morning.

And you come to hear me preach and you listen to the Word of God and you love the Word of God. But that isn't sufficient. If you think it's sufficient to be in a church that preaches the Word of God and Keith knows what he's talking about and he's preaching the Word of God and we love the Word of God and we've chosen a church where the Word of God is preached.

That is not sufficient. I've met people growing up. I met a lot of them.

They're in Bible preaching churches. You know what? They didn't learn anything from reading Scripture every morning. They didn't do that.

You know where they learned it? They learned it on a Sunday morning on a Wednesday night or they learned it from the hymns they sung. But they didn't learn it from personal reading of the Bible. And you know, those folk always showed up as being carnal in their life.

They could debate doctrine. They could argue over theology. They were profound experts in doctrine, but they didn't read the Bible.

They didn't meditate on it. They hadn't digested it. They weren't spiritual.

They hadn't benefited. They had become a head knowledge religion. Now, how do you read the Bible? When I was young, I started in my teens to read the Bible.

I was dyslexic. I couldn't read or write. Then when I gained the ability to read and write, I started to read one chapter of the Bible before I went to bed at night as a teenager at high school.

And it was a great struggle. It was very hard for me. I was uneducated.

I had disability. I struggled. But my love for Jesus Christ, my love and respect of this book forced me to go, I will not go to bed tonight or switch off the light.

No one told me to do this as best as I know. But it was a desire of my heart. And I said, I will not lay my head in that pillow until I read one chapter tonight.

Do you know when I got to 17, after I'd been backslidden, got back to the Lord, started walking them, 17, 18 years old, I started to mark in my Bible. I had three green markers and I'd put them in three different places. It wasn't a schedule of how much to read at a certain pace, but I put them in three different places and I had it marked from this book to that book.

And I read through just at my own pace. And that meant I could read through the entire Bible, no pressure, no daily amounts. Though I was daily reading the word of God, it was under no constraint to do it at a certain pace.

And I was going to get through the entire Bible. There's been times where I would read the Bible from Genesis all the way through, but very rarely I've broken it up, read in different places on the same day, not just in one place in that day. So that's where I began.

When I was 21, I found McShane's Reading Schedule and that become my preferred one. And I've done that for about 30 years now is McShane's Reading Schedule. In fact, over 30 years, maybe 33.

Listen, with McShane, and we have copies here at the back of the church, you read four portions of scripture or four chapters in four different places in the Bible. You read the entire Bible once in a year, the New Testament twice in a year and Proverbs and Psalms twice in the period of a year, just reading four chapters or four portions every day. McShane breaks it down so you could do two chapters in the morning, two chapters at night.

I love this. It's helped me. There's certain times I'm doing other things.

So I don't do that. I just pull out of it. Then I go back in.

If I'm doing a three week school of Christ, Bible school, the schedule is so intense. Often I at least cover some of that, but not all four chapters. I'm just doing so much.

Sometimes if I'm preaching, go to Germany, preach several times in a day. I am not reading four chapters first thing in the morning. So I'll pull out and come back in after that.

And I find this brilliant. You don't need to do McShane's notes. You don't need to do that.

You can find your own way. But Robert Murray McShane, who was born in Edinburgh in Scotland, he lived from 1813 to 1843. He died at the age of 28 or sorry, 29.

He saw revival come to his church and was one of the most remarkable preachers in his entire nation, only saved for six years. And yet he wrote this for his entire church, that the entire church could be reading the word of God. And he actually writes at the start of it.

He says, I know that most of you do not read your Bible every day. So I'm writing out the schedule to help you and encourage you to be in the word of God every single day. Listen to what he wrote, writing to a very young man.

You read your Bible regularly, of course, but do try and understand it and still more to feel it. Read more parts than one at a time. For example, if you are reading Genesis, read a Psalm also.

Or if you're reading Matthew, read a small bit of an epistle. Turn your Bible into prayer. Thus, if you were reading the first Psalm, spread the Bible out before you, kneel down before it and begin to pray.

Oh Lord, give me the blessedness of this man in Psalm 1, who is meditating on the word of God day and night. You begin to pray what you're reading, you're making it personal. Or, oh Lord, give me, let me not stand in the counsel of the ungodly.

So you're not only reading this and meditating on it, you're now praying. The word of God, reading the word of God daily, becomes a part of your prayer life. You cannot separate it.

And it becomes real. Lord, don't let me, when I go to work today, or when I'm around my family today, don't let me stand in the counsel of the ungodly. Don't let them influence me.

How many times have you been with a family member at Christmas or New Year or some other time, and a godly member, sorry, an ungodly member of the family is affecting that atmosphere. And now you don't speak out, you laugh at their jokes, you fit in with their schedule. It's an ungodly person.

Do you realize if you're meditating on the word of God that morning, your spirit would have rose up and said, no thanks. Or you'd shock the entire gathering by saying, guess what I read this morning? Surrounded by ungodly family members. If you can be with your mommy, your daddy, your cousin, your child, your brother, your sister, and it's all worldly talk, and yet your lips are zipped, you've got a big task ahead.

They are influencing you. You're not influencing them. You need to spend time in the word of God.

Third of all, difficulties in reading the Bible daily. 2 Timothy 3.16 it says, all scripture. See how we've done an entire series on the book of Ruth? Some people wouldn't even imagine reading the book of Ruth.

In a period of a year or over a few years as a Christian, apart from us teaching it, if I said, when did you last read Ruth? They'd go, but it's not an important book. What could be in there? It's a story, a very romantic, crazy, illogical, intense, personal. What's that got to do with my life? You could say that.

And yet Paul writes to Timothy, all scripture is inspired. Do you know some people teach in the church, you can't use the book of Acts to teach doctrine? Because they know, and it's often people against the gifts and against tongues and against miracles and against the work of the Holy Spirit. They very quickly say, you cannot teach the book of Acts or you can't use it for doctrine.

Well then that excludes the scripture. I have a verse that says, all scripture is given by inspiration of God. Every book in the Bible, including Ruth and Acts, it is breathed out by God and listen, it is profitable for doctrine.

Do you know the book of Acts is profitable for doctrine? Prove it. I just have. So any intellectual theologian from the reform camp who says you cannot use the book of Acts to teach something.

Well, we know why they're saying that. They're the biblical ones and they're telling us the book of Acts isn't profitable for doctrine. If you ever encounter someone like that, you need to say, man, you need to get back into the scripture.

You don't believe the Bible. You don't believe the book of Acts is inspired and authoritative. Oh yes, I do.

Well, Paul says it is profitable. It's useful for doctrine. Do you disagree with this? Would you like to go on record saying you don't believe in this scripture? We must not become victims of people.

I want to tell you difficulties in reading. Listen to what it says in Psalm. What I'm doing here, I'm going to give you a few of the difficulties, but listen, I want you to see there are difficulties in reading the Bible.

You haven't faced one difficulty that I haven't faced. I guarantee you in this room, you could say, oh, sickness, distractions, lack of concentration. I get sleepy.

I don't understand it. Join the club. Do you think you're special? Oh, but I don't understand it.

Really? And I understand everything in the Bible. You think I understand everything? Do you think that all year? Well, you're wrong. Man, we're going to boom that one out.

But listen, listen to what it says in Psalm 19 verse 7. The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul. The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord, which is another name for God's word, the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever.

The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than fine gold. Sweeter also are they than honey and the honeycomb.

Moreover, by them is thy servant warned, and in keeping of them there is great reward. I could preach an entire sermon of that, an entire series of those few verses, because what you're reading there is the tremendous benefits and blessing of God's word. But this point three, difficulties in reading.

Sickness can be a very real thing. I'm not nullifying sickness. Physical, your eyes, some other pain or agony, or in mind, or in emotions.

Do you know sickness isn't only in your physical body. When I was 21, I didn't understand you can damage that brain. You can.

You can wear out your brain. You can exhaust your brain. You know, you can have an injury in the brain like you can with your arm or your eye.

Exactly the same. It's a very, very real thing. And if you haven't experienced something like that, you don't understand that.

I didn't at 21. It took me to 30 to find out. You know, this mind is also a wonderful thing.

It can be hurt. You may say sickness could be a hindrance. I'd like to say your sickness could actually be a great advantage.

Do you know, in reading bios, do you know how many times I've read about someone in sickness, on their sickness bed, meeting with God in profound ways, having deep revelations. They were closed down, shut down. Brother Clendenin was traveling, very busy.

Me looking in on school of Christ, I knew there's things going on in school of Christ. He would need to be attended to. But he was going from nation to nation to nation, from Ireland to Vietnam to India, constantly preaching, pouring out.

Do you know what the Lord done? For three months, shut him down where he couldn't go anywhere in order to speak to him. Do you realize the testimonies I have read where someone on a bed of sickness with some frailty or something going on, God has actually opened up the word of God. They read more of the word of God then than they did before.

They're shut down, they're confined, they're at home. And all of a sudden sickness can be an advantage. You think it's a disadvantage.

Not always, but it could be. I never want to lose my eyesight. I never want to lose my ability to preach my throat.

What a test. What about distractions? You say, but every time I sit down, the distractions is different than lack of concentration. I'm going to point this out.

A distraction is WhatsApp beeps on your phone because you've got it on alarm. Beep. So I'll just look at it and then go back to reading.

Do you realize what you've just done? That's why if you're sitting in this church and I'm preaching and you answer your phone, I'll say something. I will say something because it's good for you. Distractions are all around you.

This is the most distracted generation. You sit down to read your Bible. You know, this morning I'm sitting down with my Bible.

Someone phones who almost never phones me. And I just waited, sent a message saying, I'll phone you back or we'll talk tomorrow. This is a busy day for me.

Why is it a busy day? I'm not going to see anyone throughout this day. I'm not going to talk to anyone throughout this day. I'm in the word of God.

I'm trying to find the mind of God for tonight. It's a very busy day. More important than that phone call.

I just looked at it. I wasn't being rude. I knew it could come back.

I messaged the person saying, not today, not today. I could have fitted it in, but not today. Not at this moment.

I am reading the word of God. It's important for me to hear. When you sit down, choose a time, choose a place.

Switch your phone off. Take the phone off the hook. Put your mobile just out of reach, unless you're using it to know what chapter you should be reading in McSheen's notes, which I do.

Be very careful of distractions. Distractions you say, I can't help them. Yes, you can.

It's your response. So when you come to read scripture, there's nothing more important for that day. Why not make a time, a place and guard it, protect it.

Say, this is the most important thing in my day. It's not more. Do you know, for most of my married life, 16 years, I never had a conversation with Candice before reading the word of God.

For most of it. Less so in recent times, because we did, just because of how things were. But you know what, for most of the time, it was the pattern.

I do not want a conversation with Candice until I have been talking to the Lord. Do you realize I loved her. There's no one I love to spend more time on.

And yet we built in at the beginning of our marriage. I don't want to spend time with you in the morning. I want to spend time in the word of God.

I want to read. We can talk over breakfast. We always had a set time.

We always spend time. We always talk, but not now. The Bible, reading God.

But sure you knew the Bible. Sure you knew it back to front. You've read it many times.

Yes. And do you realize how much time I missed out with my precious wife, because I'm either reading the Bible, studying the Bible, or preparing sermons. That was a choice.

It was a great price. The greatest price I ever paid in the past 16 years was losing out in time with Candice, because I had to spend time in the word. I'm scared not to spend time in this book.

And so there's dangers, distractions, lack of concentration. Now I know you think I've never experienced this. I'm standing here saying, you have never experienced it.

I'm the only person in the world. And so I've read one chapter of the Bible. I've got to end and go, what did I just read? So I went back and read it again.

I didn't give up. I didn't shut it and say, let's go get a cup of tea. I read it again.

I got to end and went, it's happened again. So I read it a third time. I've read it a fourth time.

I've read it a fifth time. Do you realize lack of concentration is common to all of us? Distractions are common. I wonder who that is.

And you could get back to that place five hours later, or maybe not tonight. Man, I got distracted reading the Bible. Now here we are at almost 11 o'clock at night.

I'm too tired to read the Bible. You've just been distracted. Do you realize it's common to all of us in this room? You think I'm some special case.

Oh, Keith, you don't understand. I'm not educated. When I come to the Bible, yes, I understand the Psalms, but there's lots of other places.

I don't understand what you understand. There's lack of education, lack of academic ability. I don't understand it.

Do you know how many times I read chapters when I have not got a clue what I'm reading here? Do you know how many times I read that? Year after year after year going, I don't have a foggy. I hope nobody asked me a question about this verse or this chapter. And sometimes you guys and Rory especially is definitely going to find that one verse.

I can just see him now. He's going, I wonder which one it is. As I go through scripture, there is so much of this Bible I do not understand.

There's so much of this Bible I go, I know there's a wealth, there's gold here, there's silver, but I just cannot perceive it. But I do know it's here. John Bunyan speaks about one of those men.

He had a gold crown hanging over his head. I forget his name now. And he's brushing around with the brush, just looking for something in the dust that's precious.

But he couldn't see the crown above his head. Do you know, I believe a lot of Christians are like that. They're scrummaging around all day, every day, all week.

Lord, I need more wisdom. And Lord, I need knowledge. Lord, I need guidance.

Lord, I need encouragement. Lord, I need strength. And do you know where you get it all? Here in this book.

It's all sitting there for you. But you're going, no, I'm tired. Don't you realize every time I pick my Bible up, and I know none of you's experience this, I get tired.

My eyes just close. I begin to doze. Then stand up.

Start walking back and forth. Why not listen to the word of God when you're driving in the car or shaving? If you neglect the Bible, you've chosen to. Because no other generation has ever had the facilities.

You could shave, or you could be washing the car or driving down the road, and you can listen to someone free, read you the word of God beautifully all day long, all the time, and you don't take advantage of that. Do you realize they would have had to pay someone in past days to do that? And you've got all of these on your mobile. You're mobile.

You're checking everything. You're mobile. Just highlight that device that says how much time you spend on your device.

Mine's switched off. But if you switch it on and you go, no, I definitely don't spend that much time. And then it shows you what you spend time on.

You think you're not being spied on. Think again. But you know, more than that, God is watching.

The devil is watching. And you're there. You can imagine how much time you have in 24 hours.

You can imagine. Oh, but I get sleepy. I get tired.

I can't concentrate. How long are you going to listen to the devil? What do you believe that it stops you getting into this book? And then bring that thought to the Bible. I had all the things wrong with me that should have hindered me.

And it didn't. Lord, I'm going to read a chapter before I pop my head on the pillow. Fifth and lastly, let me finish.

Fourth, dangers of reading. I'm going to close this. I'm just going to be brief here.

Hearing without doing, reading without doing. Do you know that you read in order to apply? We are warned repeatedly of being a hearer, but not a doer. And it says, if you hear the Word of God, know the Word of God, listen to preaching, read the Word of God and don't do it.

You're deceived. It doesn't call it anything else. It doesn't say just lazy.

It says deceived. Do you know we're warned in the New Testament that tradition can nullify the Word of God. You could be there.

Pardon me. You could be there reading it, but some tradition that says, that's not for you. You don't need to do that.

That's Old Testament. God doesn't want you condemned. You're under grace.

You don't need to worry about, you're not preaching Sunday. Do you realize traditions can nullify the power of God's Word. Certain things in God's Word ought to convict you.

It ought to be explosive. It ought to be like a hammer and a sword. It ought to be a dunamis.

And yet you have traditions. Oh, I'm not talking about the Pharisees. I'm not talking about them.

I'm talking about us having traditions, ideologies, ideas that say, hey, it's okay. You know, your tradition and your brain said, it's okay. If I don't read the Word, meditate on it or understand it.

Who gave you that liberty? I wonder who sold you that lie. What about self-righteousness? I read my four chapters this morning. I'm proud of myself.

I've done my duty. In fact, reading my four chapters makes me feel so great before God. If I, for some genuine reason, I don't get to it.

My life's a disaster. You're probably suffering from self-righteousness. I didn't read four chapters today.

What your righteousness and acceptance of God hinges on that. Sometimes I've read one verse and got as much as reading four chapters. Sometimes it's taken me three hours on a verse.

Whereas I could spend 30 minutes on four chapters. It can be dynamite. So you need to be careful of self-righteousness that you go, I've done that, I've done that, I've done that.

But is it benefiting you spiritually? More to the point, does your reading of the Bible stick a pin in your pride, in your arrogance, in your self-righteousness? Well, I've done my duty for the day. Really? What about judgmentalism? I've read the Bible, now I can judge you. You need to do this, you need to do that, you need to correct that.

Is that how you read your Bible? You become an expert on every preacher on YouTube or the internet. He's wrong, he's right, he's wrong, he's right. Is that where your knowledge has taken you? I'm talking about dangers of reading the Bible every day.

You'd think there's no dangers of reading the Bible every day. There's people who read the Bible every day who are very dangerous in the church. You could become very judgmental or you could misinterpret it.

There's false teachers that spend every day, all the day, all their time in the Bible. They're heretics, they're false teachers. They're spreading false teachings.

And so there's dangers, there are dangers of reading the Bible. If you take a scripture out of context, misunderstand it, begin to share it with others, it could be very dangerous. When I was a young guy, one older Christian thought he was being smart and he just points something out.

He says, look, have you ever noticed this? It sowed a problem with me that it took me 15 years to get through. One mature Christian pointing something out saying, look at this. And it took me the next 15 years to get clear of that error and wrong interpretation.

Hey, I bleed, I'm flesh and blood. It says in John 6, and this is Jesus saying, multitudes follow him because of the miracles, because he feeds them miraculously. Remember the 5,000, multitudes, 10,000, 15,000 following him.

Then he begins to teach, get into specific scriptures, begin to emphasize certain lines. Listen to what happened. And when they heard this, they said, this is a hard saying, who can hear it? Then what happens, it says the multitudes left him and said, we're not going to follow him.

He's teaching individual scriptures like this one, for example, you couldn't even come on to me unless the father drew you. That's hard. We don't believe that, therefore we're going to walk away from you to prove that it's not true.

And multitudes leave him in one sermon. Christ said, see, do you know what they thought? The words of Christ were hard, unpalatable, distasteful. We don't like them.

We reject them. Multitudes of people, and they're called disciples in this verse, disciples who say these things are too hard. Listen, the other disciples, Jesus turns to the 11 and says, the 12, will you also go away? Listen to what Peter says.

Sometimes he got it right. Simon Peter answered him and said, Lord, to whom will we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. The same teaching, the same sentence, the same words, the multitudes of disciples say these are hard sayings.

Peter doesn't think they're easy, but he says these, where else can we go? Lord, you're killing me. Lord, these are hard things to perceive. But do you know what? These are the words of eternal life.

So you get two different people. One says, these are hard sayings. The other one says, these are words of eternal life, the exact same words.

Do you know there's great dangers in hearing the word of God and reading the word of God? There's some people who can't make a difference between the old covenant and new covenant when they read the Bible. They merge it all. All that was a part of the old covenant, they bring into the new covenant, get themselves very confused.

Others who are in the new covenant under grace say, we don't believe in commandments. We don't believe in anyone preaching. You ought to do this.

You ought to read your Bible. There'll be someone on there, I assure you, who will actually say, Malcolmson, that's law to say you need to read the Bible every day. What a burden you're putting on us.

Do you know what? This is the word of God. And so you say there's dangers of reading from your own traditions to not being a doer of it, to excusing it, misunderstanding it, misapplying it. Fifth and lastly, there was five points.

I'm going to finish with this. The blessing of reading. Now I'm going to leave you with this.

Isaiah 50 verse four. And there's a prophecy about the coming Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord God has given me the tongue of the learned.

Here is a prophecy about God's servant who's going to come, the Messiah. And it actually happened. It was about Jesus Christ.

Here he is saying, the Lord has given me the tongue of the learned. In other words, when I open my mouth, it has learning in it. It has clarity in it.

It has power in it. Remember what people say of Christ? They said, no man ever speak like this man. Where did he get his authority when he speaks? Christ was a learner.

He had a learned tongue. That I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary. So you can have the tongue of the learned, that you know how to speak to individuals to strengthen them.

They're tired. They're about to give up. And you know how to speak to them.

You have the ability to strengthen them with words. Your tongue is the tongue of the learner. It has a first say of the Lord from the word of God.

How do you get that? Listen very carefully. How did he get it? He waketh morning by morning. He wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned.

Do you know Christ woke morning by morning to spend time in the word of God? There's a prophecy about the Messiah. Don't think that Christ just knew the word of God. It says he learned.

And you know what? I believe Christ got rose early in the morning, every single morning to spend time in the word of God. He inclined his ear. Why could he preach? Oh, because he's the Messiah.

Do you know what? He had to spend time in the word of God. And you know what? For you and I, you want the tongue of the learned. You want an eloquent tongue, a clear tongue, a tongue filled with us.

Thus saith the Lord for those who are tired and weary and discouraged and going to give up or commit suicide or think God could never have mercy on them. Do you know how you get that tongue? Wake up early in the morning. Oh, brother Keith, I'm a nine o'clock riser.

I can't get out of my bed before nine. I roll out of bed and roll into my desk at work. You don't realize I'm not a morning person.

What time do you go to bed? Ten o'clock. Do you know they said out in the world when I was young, my granddad used to say, early to bed, early to rise keeps a man healthy, wealthy and wise. That's not scripture, but it's true.

Do you honestly think you're going to rise early to read in the morning when you fill hours in the evening with things that aren't important? You go to bed late and you think you're going to walk in and hear the word of God. We're going to hear more of this over the next weeks about early rising is a dominant theme in the Bible. Dominant, overwhelming.

It's everywhere about rising early. I actually believe if the spirit of God's moving in your life, you're going to have an urge to rise early in the morning and make that a part. I understand how it can be neglected.

You could lose it. Maybe you used to do it and you don't do it now. It's time to put it back in place again.

Build the altar again. This fifth and last point, the blessings of reading the word of God. A few years ago, I preached a sermon.

It was part 22 of the series on the word of God, part 22. It was the final part of that series on the word of God. I actually had 16 points in the sermon.

I want to give you the 16 points as I close. Now some of you are getting worried. It was a 20 second message, 16 points, and I'm going to give them to you before I close.

Listen, this is the benefits of reading the word of God. The word is wheat for bread, spiritual bread. The word is a fire to refine you.

The word is a hammer to break things in your life. The word is a mirror to reveal things to you that need dealt with, that you can't naturally see. The word is water to wash yourself in.

The word is streams of water to dwell by and be refreshed in. The word of God is a seed that is sown in the ground and will bear good fruit. The word is a lamp and a light to walk by in darkness.

The word is a straight ruler that you don't go off course. The word is rain and it is snow to refresh your spirit within you. The word is a sword that cuts out cancerous growth in your spiritual life.

The word is an anchor to hold you steadfast in the storm so you don't move away from the things of God. The word is milk for the newborn babe and the mature Christian in Christ to stay healthy. The word is meat for the mature believer.

The word is like gold and silver that will make you rich. The word is like sweetness likened onto honey. Sixteen things about the word of God and you know what? We're barely touching on it.

The benefits of daily reading the word of God. Have a time, have a place, have a way. You may not, you all of us sit here don't we? I hope the fact that you're sitting here means every single one of you eats as a normal part of your life.

But our eating habits may look different but eating is eating. Some of you eat less healthy than others. Some of you eat more than others.

Some of you need to eat more. Some of you need to eat less. That is all a part of it.

Do you know what? We are all diverse in our eating habits and I can tell you eating for you and I may look different but you could be right and I can be right for that stage in your growth. Eating is eating. Have a place, have a time and the best time is first thing in the morning.

I re-believe that with all of my heart. But if you say that you're not a morning person then have quality time when you're most awake, most alive, most open with least distractions. Let's pray, ask God's help.

Father we do thank you for the word of God and even as we go into this new year we just pray right now for your grace and your mercy. Lord God that you encourage, you challenge, you rebuke, you stir us, you draw out our thirst and our desire. My God we'd have to be crazy to miss out on all the benefits of daily reading the word of God.

One day is not enough, two days is not enough. Father I pray will you teach us, will you create a deep spiritual desire and even when we get tired, when we don't understand, when we get distracted, when we get confused, when our hearts are heavy. Father help us to stay disciplined in faithfully reading the word of God, to read it on our knees, to begin to pray and to ask you to teach us and instruct us.

Thank you that you've made a covenant with us that you will write these words on our minds and write them and grave them upon our very hearts. Lord God we want the word of God hidden in our heart that we might not sin against you, that we might have an anchor, that we might have a lamp, that we might have a sword in our hand and Lord God we do love you tonight that you placed within our hands a beautiful treasure of your wisdom, your knowledge, your thoughts, your commands, your promises, your blessings, your wisdom, your help, your knowledge, your understanding, your clarity in all things and father we do not want to neglect this book in Jesus mighty name. Amen.

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