

American Decency Association

PO Box 202, Fremont, MI 49412 231-924-4050 www.americandecency.org

Encouraging Christians to guard their hearts

July 2016

Why Are So Many Christians Bored with the Bible?

By: Marshall Segal



Unfortunately, many Christians love the idea of the Bible, but not really the Bible itself. We love having a Bible close by, even within reach, but don't make time to open it on an average day. We talk about Bible reading like we talk about cutting calories or cleaning our house. We're grateful for the results, but we don't wake up dying to do it again. It sounds like a fine thing to do, until we have to choose what we won't do in order to make time for it.

If that's you, you probably also know a Christian who loves reading their Bible. They can't get enough of it. As far as you know, they would just as likely go a whole

day without food as without the Bible. Their happy discipline convicts and, if you're honest, sometimes even annoys you. Who is it in your life who is most likely to pray like this?

"I enjoy reading the Bible more than the wealthy enjoy all their houses, cars, technology, and vacations. God, your word will be my first priority and focus each day. I will read and read the Bible, until I cannot forget it. Give me more grace, O God, and enable me to obey what I've read. Help me see more today than I've already seen before, even in these same pages. I only wish I had more time to read more of my Bible."

Does that sound like you? Or more likely someone you know? Do you feel at home in a love like that? Or have you delegated that kind of personality and affection to other "more spiritual" people?

God, Open Our Eyes and Hearts

The prayer above is a paraphrase of a prayer in Psalm 119:14–20:

In the way of your testimonies I delight as much as in all riches. I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways. I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word. Deal bountifully with your servant, that I may live and keep your word. Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law. I am a sojourner on the earth; hide not your commandments from me! My soul is consumed with longing for your rules at all times.

Reading a prayer like that usually levels me. The psalm's passionate love for God's word can make me uncomfortable. The love seems so real, so right, so beautiful — and so foreign, at least some days. Why do I wake up worried about what's on Twitter, instead of wanting to open the Bible? Why am I more excited to read the best new book

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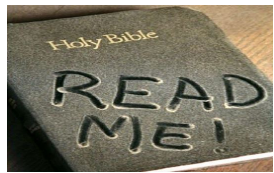
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Why Are We Bored?

A lot of us want to relegate love like this to others. Some people love the Bible, and some people love people. Or, some people like to read, and some people like to serve. But the Bible, like the gospel, can't be relegated only to a few. Bible reading isn't a spiritual gift like Bible teaching, or biblical counseling, or speaking in tongues. Bible reading and loving is a gift (and calling) for all believers.

on whatever, rather than the only book with the very words of God? Why am I still likely to find my identity and worth in what I have or what I've done, instead of what God says about me? Why am I bored reading the Bible while the psalmist is having the time of his life?

Psalm 119 does not model extraordinary Christianity. It's showing us how people truly in love with God receive actual words from God. They realize the awesome gift they've received in this book. When they open their Bibles, or hear the Bible read or preached, they can feel as though God himself were walking down from heaven to speak to them.

I admit I have a hard time remembering and feeling that some mornings. Why are so many Christians bored with the Bible? Because we've forgotten what the Bible is.

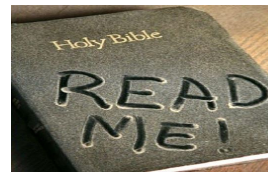
He says, "It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn your statutes" (Psalm 119:71). The author praises God for pain, because he believes the pain helped him understand God and his word better. Have you ever been able to draw a line like that, between your suffering and your Bible reading? He goes on, "The law of your mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver pieces" (Psalm 119:72). What if you had to pay five dollars every time you read your Bible? What would your Bible budget be this month?

John Piper reminds us, again, narrating his personal Bible reading with wonder:

Think of it. Marvel at this. Stand in awe of this. The God who keeps watch over the nations, like some people keep watch over cattle or construction sites—this God still speaks in the twenty-first century. . . . By this voice, he speaks with absolute truth and personal force. By this voice, he reveals his all-surpassing beauty. By this voice, he reveals the deepest secrets of our hearts. No voice anywhere anytime can reach as deep or lift as high or carry as far as the voice of God that we hear in the Bible.

Absolute truth. Personal power and relevance. All-surpassing beauty. All-knowing love and wisdom. All from the mind and mouth of God. All in the pages of a book we can hold in one hand.

[Used with permission from *Desiring God*, Marshall Segal, June, 2016]



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