

QTC553. How and why to 'read' the Bible in a year - Part 1. 09 January 2025

How and why to 'read' the Bible in a year - Part 1 | Malcolm Cox | Quiet Time Coaching Episode 553

Introduction

Although the title of this podcast is "How and why to read the Bible in a year", the real point is familiarity with Scripture. Not just the bits you read or hear preached frequently, but the parts you know exist but tend to forget about.

Last year, I decided to find a way to have a better feel for Scripture as a whole. I'd like to tell you how I proceeded. Next week, I will share precisely what I did. But first, let me remind you why it's important to have a handle on the whole of Scripture, not just our favourite bits.

Today, 8 reasons to make a plan to become familiar with *all* Scripture.

1. Fullness of God's Revelation

- The Bible is God's complete revelation to humanity (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Every part of Scripture, even the less famous sections, is "God-breathed" and has a purpose, whether for teaching, rebuking, correcting, or training in righteousness.
- Limiting ourselves to well-known passages narrows our understanding of who God is and how He works.

2. Context and Depth

- Familiarity with the whole Bible helps us understand the context of popular passages. For instance, John 3:16 has deeper significance when understood alongside the surrounding verses and the broader narrative of redemption throughout Scripture.
- It also prevents misinterpretation or misuse of isolated verses.

3. Spiritual Growth and Maturity

- All Scripture contributes to spiritual growth (Hebrews 5:12-14). The less famous parts, like genealogies, laws, and historical narratives, often reveal aspects of God's character and His long-term faithfulness that we might otherwise overlook.

- Reading the “difficult” parts stretches our faith and forces us to wrestle with challenging truths, fostering maturity.

4. A Balanced Understanding of God

- Focusing only on famous passages may lead to an incomplete or skewed view of God. For example, the Psalms reveal His compassion, but books like Leviticus and Habakkuk show His holiness and justice.
- A full understanding of Scripture allows us to see both God’s mercy and His righteousness, His love and His sovereignty.

5. Equipping for Life’s Challenges

- Life’s complexities demand wisdom that goes beyond a handful of familiar passages. The wisdom in Proverbs, the raw emotions in Lamentations, or the perseverance in Job prepare us for diverse experiences and trials.
- Jesus Himself modelled this by quoting from less familiar parts of Scripture during His ministry (e.g., Psalm 91 when tempted in the wilderness).

6. Ability to Teach and Share

- Christians are called to make disciples and teach others (Matthew 28:19-20). A broad knowledge of Scripture equips us to answer questions, address doubts, and share the gospel in a deeper way.
- Familiarity with all parts of the Bible shows that the entire book points to Christ (Luke 24:27).

7. Protection Against Error

- Knowing all of Scripture guards against false teaching (Acts 20:29-30). Cults and distortions often rely on taking a few verses out of context.
- A broader understanding helps us discern truth from error and remain grounded in sound doctrine.

8. Discovering Hidden Gems

- The “less famous” parts of Scripture often hold treasures that speak to us in unexpected ways. For instance, stories like Abigail’s wisdom (1 Samuel 25) or Hagar’s encounter with God (Genesis 16) offer profound lessons about God’s care and our response to Him.
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Question

Which of the eight reasons resonates most? How could it motivate you to develop a plan to get to know the entirety of scripture better?

Suggestions

If you have done this kind of exercise before, take some time to note what worked well and what didn't. If you've never done this before, why not search online for suggestions on how to do it healthily? Also, talk to friends who have taken this approach to gaining greater familiarity with Scripture.

Conclusion

Remember, the point is not to do an in-depth study of the Bible in one year. We're not trying to replace deep Bible study. That should be done in digestible chunks. We're talking about finding a way to become more familiar with Scripture and especially to be reminded of the more obscure parts. You never know what diamonds you might unearth.

Next time, I will share the specific things I did in 2024 that helped me develop greater familiarity with Scripture as a whole.

Your brother, Malcolm

Please add your comments on this week's topic. We learn best when we learn in community.

Do you have a question about teaching the Bible? Is it theological, technical, or practical? Please send me your questions or suggestions. Here's the email: malcolm@malcolmcox.org.

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