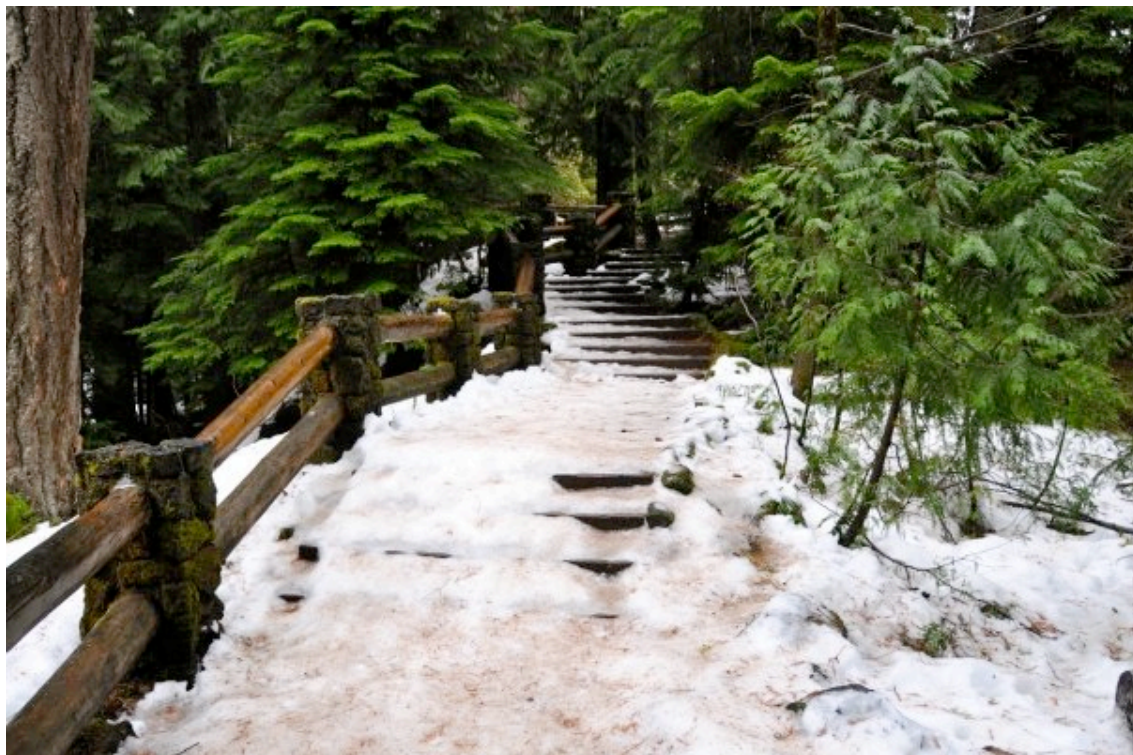


SIMPLIFY...FOCUS...SLOW DOWN

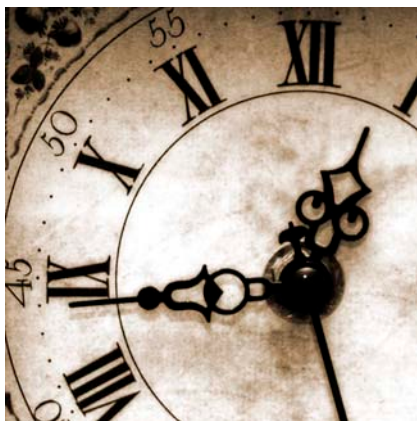
READING YOUR BIBLE IN 2010



“God has not bowed to our nervous haste nor embraced the methods of our machine age. The man who will know God must give time to Him.”

(A.W. Tozer)

Quotes to Ponder...



“You must ruthlessly eliminate hurry from your life. Hurry is the enemy of spirituality.”

“Dost thou love life? Then don’t squander time. For that’s the stuff life’s made of.” (Sir Walter Scott)

“Let temporal things serve your use, but the eternal be the object of your desire.” (Thomas à Kempis)

“Our life is frittered away by detail...simplify, simplify, simplify!” (Thoreau)

“It is never too late to start doing what is right.” (J. Allan Petersen)

“The person who can read and doesn’t has no advantage over the person who can’t read at all.”

“The Bible was written to be read. An unread Bible is like food that is refused, an unopened love letter, a buried sword, a road map not studied, a gold mine not worked.” (Irving L. Jensen)

“God has not bowed to our nervous haste nor embraced the methods of our machine age. The man who will know God must give time to Him.” (A.W. Tozer)

With the beginning of a new year (and decade) just a few days away, I thought it would be a good time to suggest that you consider reading through the Bible in 2010. Yes, *the entire Bible – Genesis to Revelation*.

Did you know that if you simply read an average of four chapters a day (about 20 to 30 minutes if read at normal reading speed out loud... only 10 to 20 minutes on average if read silently), you can read through the entire Bible in one year?

Imagine how your life could change in one year by simply committing yourself to spend 15 to 30 minutes each day getting to know God by reading His Word.

If you want to dig a little deeper, spend an extra 10 to 20 minutes each day and implement a Bible Study method that I have been using since my teenage years. It's called the S.P.E.C.S. method. SPECS is an acronym which stands for...

Sins to forsake

Promises to claim

Examples to follow

Commands to obey

Significant truth to learn

As you read the section of Scripture for that day, ask yourself, is there a 1) Sin to forsake?, 2) Promise to claim?, 3) Example to follow?, 4) Command to obey?, or a 5) Significant truth to learn?

I would encourage you to keep a journal (handwritten or on the computer) to record the insights that the Holy Spirit shows you from His Word.

We all have the same amount of time – 24 hours a day, 168 hours a week. Presuming the average person sleeps seven hours a night,



that takes up 49 hours a week. Presuming that the average person works 55 hours a week (including driving), that totals 104 hours a week between working and sleeping (our two biggest time consumers). That leaves 64 hours a week left for everything else.

In 2010, how are you going to spend those 64 hours a week? How about investing a few of those hours each week in getting to know God?

We all make choices with our time.

Our lives are, to a large degree, simply a product of the choices we make. Make good, right, wise choices...moment by moment, day by day, week by week, month by month.

I believe it was **Aristotle** who said, *“We are what we repeatedly do.”* Someone else said, *“Show me a person’s daily habits and I will show you their future.”* Our habits shape us, mold us and make us. They determine who we become. They shape our character.

It’s been said by behavioral scientists that if a person will do something for 21 days straight, it will be the beginning of forming a habit – good or bad.

In 2010, choose a time and a place that works for you each day and make a commitment to yourself, to the Lord and to some close friends (who can help you by holding you accountable to do *what you already want to do*) to spend time reading and meditating upon God’s Word each day.

Don’t fall into the trap that the devil loves to throw at you, when he says, *“You don’t really feel like reading your Bible today. Don’t do it unless you feel like it. Don’t be legalistic about it. Only do it when you really feel like it, then it will be genuine.”*

I promise that if you follow that path it will lead to an anemic spiritual life (at best) in which you gradually drift further and further away from Jesus. I have found over the years that when I choose to do the right thing even when I don’t feel like it,

eventually the feelings and desires come.

How about stepping away from the computer, TV, hobby or whatever other distraction may be in your life and open your Bible and get to know God in 2010!



I've included in the next column the web address that will give you a **choice of 10 different types of plans for Bible reading in 2010**. Everything from simply reading straight through from Genesis to Revelation throughout the year, to reading a few chapters in the Old Testament, one chapter in the New Testament, a few verses from the Psalms and the book of Proverbs each day.

My personal favorite over the years has been the plan where you read a section from the **Psalms and Wisdom Literature**, a section from the **Pentateuch and History of Israel**, a section from the **Chronicles and the Prophets**, and finally a section from the **Gospels and the Epistles**. It equals out to be approximately four chapters a day.

This provides enough variety and helps prevent you from getting bogged down in Leviticus for two weeks straight "starving for some relevant insights" for your life today (not that there aren't many great insights from Leviticus...there are! It's just not as easy to know what they are without more in-depth study).

Here is the web address: <http://www.esv.org/biblereadingplans>

You can even set it up to have the particular Bible reading plan emailed directly to you each morning with the full text of all four sections if you want. You can also download (as a PDF file) the particular Bible reading plan that you select so you can print it out and slip it in your Bible. Because of modern technology, never has it been easier to put together a tailor made Bible Reading plan that fits your particular needs.

Here is what I have found over the last few decades: here in America we have more Bibles than we know what to do with. We have a "study bible" for every kind of person and situation. BUT, we actually read and study the Bible LESS than at any time in our history! Studies show

"Every Christian is either a 'conformer' or a 'transformer'. We are either fashioning our lives by pressure from without, or we are transforming our lives by power from within. Reading God's Word daily helps us to do the latter." (Warren Wiersbe)

that the average Christian is almost illiterate when it comes to knowing what the Bible says.

Please remember: the point of Bible reading is not to simply grow in knowledge alone, but to get to know God Himself!

"Thus says the LORD, 'Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things,' declares the LORD." **(Jeremiah 9:23-24 NASB)**

More than planning, preparing or thinking about reading the Bible in 2010, the most important thing is to "just do it!" (as the famous athletic shoe company says).

"A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step."
(Lao Tzu - Ancient Chinese philosopher)

May you have a truly wonderful and blessed 2010!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul R. Madson".

Paul R. Madson

