

# “THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

## Does Reading the Bible Consistently Matter?

By Kyle Campbell (revised)

I received an email this morning from YouVersion, the creator of Bible App. I use it to listen to the Bible during different times of the day.

It started by saying that reading Scripture isn't just something to check off of your new year's list – God's Word will actually transform your life. I've definitely said the same publicly (and thought the same privately) all my adult life.

But then the email said something remarkable. YouVersion declared that research revealed that destructive habits decrease and positive habits increase when people are in God's Word at least four days a week.

Someone who reads the Bible four or more times a week is:

- 59% less likely to view pornography.
- 74% less likely to gamble.
- 407% more likely to memorize Scripture.
- 228% more likely to talk about their faith with others.
- 231% more likely to help others become better disciples.

Additionally, these same people are 30% less likely to struggle with loneliness.

That's pretty amazing, isn't it? And it's verification that the Word is *“a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path”* (Psalm 119:105).

Get into the Word today. Start a year-long reading program for the entire Bible or the New Testament. If you didn't get started on New Year's Day, don't worry about it. Make your plan from January to January. It's not a big deal.

The real deal is immersing yourself in God's communication to you. It'll make you a different person. ■

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## Does God Have a Plan of Salvation?

By Joe R. Price

A plan is a program of action, “a scheme for making, doing, or arranging something” (Webster). We are familiar with plans: Football teams have game plans, architects have building plans, and teachers have lesson plans. Before smartphones, many people used day planners to arrange their daily activities.

Having a plan indicates order and definition. Although the word is not used in Ephesians 1:3-14, it is obvious from a reading of that passage that God had a plan to save lost souls that He executed through Jesus Christ. When we speak of the “scheme of redemption” we are referring to God's arrangement or plan by which He saves sinners.

We also speak of the plan of salvation when talking about how God's salvation is appropriated by the sinner. A reading of the New Testament makes it clear God has a plan (an arrangement) whereby His mercy and grace remove sin from our lives (Acts 4:12; Acts 10:34-35). What follows is a brief summary of God's plan, the arrangement God has revealed, which, when believed and obeyed, results in salvation.

First, one must believe in God and His Son, Jesus Christ (Heb. 11:6; John 8:24). Without faith, no one will be saved. One comes to faith in Christ by hearing the word of God (John 20:30-31; Rom. 10:17). It is this word of God that commands every sinner to confess faith that Jesus is the Christ (Rom. 10:9-10; Acts 8:37). When a sinner confesses faith in Christ, that person's faith compels him to repent of his sins (another commandment of God we obey to be saved, Luke 13:3, 5; Acts 2:38; Acts 17:30). Having repented (changed one's mind toward God and sin against Him), what remains is to be baptized into Christ for the remission of sins. In this action, Christ's blood washes sin away and the sinner is saved (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rom. 6:3-4; 1 Pet. 3:21). The Lord adds the saved person (now a Christian) to His body, the church (Acts 2:47). Now a disciple of Christ, the Christian lives by faith, obediently serving Jesus as Lord (Rom. 6:17-18; 12:1-2; Gal. 2:20).

God has a plan of salvation and wants to save you. The question is whether or not you have obeyed it. If not, why not believe, obey, and be saved now (2 Cor. 6:2)? ■

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## How to Become God's Enemy

Author Unknown

God's enemies have nothing to expect but his fierce wrath. The Hebrew writer states, ***"31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God"*** (Heb. 10:26-27, 31). Here are three ways to become an enemy of God and experience his judgment of condemnation

**First, to become an enemy of God one must not read the Bible.** Reading the Bible establishes faith, conviction, and understanding (Rom. 10:17 and Eph. 3:3). Knowledge and wisdom are depicted as the principal thing to obtain in this life (Prov. 4:7). When one reads the Bible, they gain strength to overcome the tempting vices of the devil (see Prov. 2:1-12). To not read the Bible is to not have faith, conviction, wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. In short, not reading the Bible is a sure way to live in sin and be God's enemy.

**Second, to become an enemy of God one must forsake the assembly of the saints** (Heb. 10:23-25). The assembly is where the saints are exhorted to gain knowledge, make corrections in life, and encouraged to keep pressing forward to the goal of heaven. To not attend worship services, or any of the assembly of saints where edification occurs, is to not be exhorted to continue in the faith. It is God's enemies that give up on him and return to the world.

**A third way one may become an enemy of God is to accept the sinful ways of the world.** James writes, ***"4 Whosoever would be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God"*** (Jas. 4:4). The apostle John writes, ***"16 All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vainglory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 17 And the world passes away and the lust thereof: but he that does the will of God abides forever"*** (1 Jn. 2:16-17). If you want to be an enemy of God, then accept and practice the ways of the world. You will fit in and not be hated (Jn. 7:7 and 15:18).

Hopefully, if you are reading this your objective is not to be God's enemy. Read your Bible for faith and strength. Attend the assemblies for exhortation. Do not be swayed by the ways of the world. Live for Jesus and He will grant you eternal life in heaven! ■

Service Times — Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM — Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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