



11

Discipline Yourself to Read

Paul said to Timothy in I Timothy 4:13, “Give attendance to reading. . . . A friend of mine, Charles Tremendous Jones, said, “You’re the same person right now you’ll be this same time next year except for the people you meet and the books you read.” Readers are leaders. The first among all books is the Bible; therefore, it should be at the top of the list of everybody’s priority reading material.

D. L. Moody said, “When we pray, we talk to God; when we read the Bible, God talks to us; and we need to do most of the listening.” The Bible should be read through every year.

G. Campbell Morgan, the twentieth century’s greatest expositor, once said from the pulpit, “The Bible can be read through in sixty hours.” After the service, one of his members, a banker, disagreed with him, saying that he did not believe the statement. Morgan simply replied, “Then the burden of proof lies with you.”

A few weeks later he came back and said, “Mr. Morgan, you were wrong about that statement that the Bible could be read through in sixty hours.”

“Yes?” Morgan asked as he waited for further comment. The man said, “It can be read through in forty hours,” to which G. Campbell Morgan replied, “I was not talking about bankers’ rates: I was talking about pulpit rate.” But at pulpit rate, the Bible could be read through in sixty hours; yet few people ever read it through. If you set out to read three chapters a day and four chapters every third day, you can read through the Bible in one year. And few things can be more rewarding.

In addition to the Bible, one should read good books. But don’t waste time reading things that are not constructive and helpful. Biographies of great men are good reading. I encourage young people everywhere to read biographies. They’ll do several things for you: first, you’ll discover that God uses ordinary men to accomplish extraordinary things. Second, you’ll learn little but important things about the men that made them great. Third, seeing what other men have accomplished will build your faith and cause you to believe that God could use you in like manner.

**Lives of great men all remind us
We, too, can make our lives sublime;
And, in passing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time.**

The Bible says in Proverbs 13:20, “He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.” In a sense, when you read biographies of great men, you’re walking with the wise.

Read sermons. Some of the best literature in the world is sermons, especially the older sermons by men like T. DeWitt Talmage, Charles Haddon Spurgeon and others. Be sure you read after fundamental Christians and not after modernists who deny the Bible is the Word of God.

As editor of the SWORD OF THE LORD and president of the Foundation, I highly recommend all Sword books— especially Dr. John R. Rice’s sermons and commentaries, Tom Malone’s sermons, as well as sermon books by others.

When a person is an adult, he should start reading a reliable newspaper every day, keeping up with current events and what’s going on in the world. When you read, try to remember statistics and facts so that, when you need them, you can quote them accurately. If you can’t read as much as you would like to, then at least keep abreast of

the most important things happening in the world. When you read, make notes in the margins of your books of thoughts that come to mind. Reading comes easy for some: they enjoy it. But to others it is labor. But whatever the case may be in your situation, make yourself read anyway. In a sense, you are what you feed on mentally; so feed on good books.

And the best Book of all is the Bible!