

Dear friend,

Psalm 25:4-5 contains a prayer that everyone who knows Christ as their Savior prays on a regular basis (though not always in these exact words.). “Show me your ways, O Lord, teach me your paths; guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior and my hope is in you all day long.” If God is your Savior and your hope for good is in him each day, then it is your passion to live in his ways and know his truth.

What this prayer, and every prayer of the Bible, expresses is that the main need of our lives is not that God change the circumstances but that God change us to live in and through the circumstances in which he has placed us. We need God’s view of reality (his truth) and God’s way of living in this reality. One of the greatest benefits of being a Christian is to know that there is no circumstance I will ever encounter for which God does not have truth to comfort and a way to live.

All who honestly yearn to have God teach them his ways and his truth also diligently pursue those ways and that truth by reading, studying and meditating upon God’s word, the Bible. It is impossible to sincerely pray, “Show me your ways, O Lord...,” and then ignore the revelation of God’s ways given in his word. (It is more than possible to insincerely (hypocritically) pray this prayer and not read the Bible.) Psalm 119 vividly captures this passionate prayer to have God teach us his truth and the corresponding commitment to read and study and meditate upon his word. “I seek you with all my heart, do not let me stray from your commands (v. 10)... I have chosen the way of truth; I have set my heart on your laws (v. 30)... Teach me, O Lord, to follow your decrees; then I will keep them to the end (v. 33)... I lift up my hands to your commands, which I love, and I meditate on your decrees (v. 48).”

Developing the habit of reading through the entire Bible every year or every two years is one of the most basic things we can do to express our passion to have God show us his ways and teach us his truth. I want to encourage you, as we begin this new year to make it your goal, this year to read the entire Bible (or at least to read half this year and half in 2006). We have a couple of resources to help you. We have purchased 15 copies of “The One Year Bible” which arranges the Bible in daily readings from the NT, OT, Psalms and Proverbs. You can purchase a copy in either the “New Living Translation” or the “English Standard Version” at the Information table for \$12. We also have copies of the “Discipleship Journal Bible Reading Plan” that you can pick up for free at the information table. This plan has you read each day from the gospels, the epistles, OT poetic books (Job through Ecclesiastes) and the OT historical and prophetic books. This plan can be done in two years by reading the OT history and prophets one year and then the other three the next.

I can tell you without any question that reading through the Bible each year has been one of the most important things I have done in my 30 years as a Christian. I have not completed the entire Bible every year but have done so most years and have come close in the others. I do not have spine tingling revelations from God every day but it has kept my mind and by God’s grace, my heart, fixed upon God’s ways and God’s truth. I can think of no better thing to tell you to do each day than to pray Psalm 25:4-5 and then read God’s word as an expression of your faith that God is going to answer your prayer. May he give all of us a growing passion to know his ways and his truth because he is our Savior and our hope is in him all day long.

By his grace,