**“Have You Not Read?”**

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Within the pages of the New Testament, we find Jesus asking folks the question: *“Have you not read?”* This question was asked by the Lord on three separate occasions in the New Testament. On all three occasions, He asked this question in response to the Pharisees and Sadducees when they tried to trap Him in His words (Matt. 12:3, 5, 19:4, 22:31; Mk. 12:10, 26; Lk. 6:3).

I think it would be good for us to ask ourselves that same question. In light of the fact that we live in a free nation that grants all of its citizens an education; and in light of the fact that we have open and public access to the greatest book in the world, have we not read it, yet? The apostle Paul told Timothy, *“Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching”* (I Tim. 4:13). Could we say we are doing this? If we aren’t reading the Bible, what has been our excuse for not reading it? From Old to New Testaments, there is great emphasis placed upon the reading and studying of Scripture (Ex. 24:7; Deut. 17:19, 31:11; Josh. 8:34-35; Neh. 8:3, 8, 18; Eph. 3:4; Col. 4:16; Rev 1:3; etc.). Because such reading and studying is emphasized by God, it begs the question of whether or not we are obedient to the Lord’s will? How are we doing? Are we in the habit of a regular, systematic reading of God’s word? If not, why not? How can we claim any relationship with God at all if we are not even reading His word?

Why ought we spend time reading the Bible when we could be reading the newspaper, or a magazine, or other materials instead? Put simply, it is because when we read the Bible, we are allowing our minds to access the very words that were “breathed-out” (inspired) by God (II Tim. 3:16-17). These words are written with the express purpose of thoroughly furnishing us to every good work, giving us wisdom, and cleansing our way, to name just a few things the word can do (II Tim. 3:16-17; Ps. 119:98-100, 9, 11). No other work can make this claim and be telling the truth. In connection with this, when reading the Bible, we are allowed access to the very mind of God, because it is His revelation which has been “breathed-out” when we read the word (I Cor. 2:7-16; II Pet. 1:20-21)!

It is this same written word that is described as a sword (Eph. 6:18), and a fire, and a hammer (Jer. 23:29). In fact, when we study about the spiritual armor that Christians must wear (Eph. 6:13-18), we will find that every piece has a connection with the written word!

So, why read the Bible? How could we not? How can we deprive ourselves of the spiritual knowledge and strength that God has provided? Yet, it is done day by day by the masses of people on earth! (Hosea 4:6)

Friends, how are you answering this most important question? How regular and systematic are we in reading the Scriptures? If we are not doing this, then why not? What excuse do we think God will accept from us for not reading His word?

*-- You are invited to visit with the Caneyville church of Christ. Times of services: Sun.: 10:00 am, 10:45 am, 5:00 pm; Wed.: 7:00 pm. Website: http://caneyvillechurchofchrist.com Tune in to our radio program on 99.9 FM at 1:00 pm and 1570 AM at 8:30 am, Mon-Fri. Questions? Call: (270) 589-4167*