

AN INTRODUCTION TO DAILY BIBLE READING

NEWNESS OF LIFE

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JOHN EDDISON

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INTRODUCTION

NEWNESS OF LIFE was first produced over fifty years ago, and it has been widely used and greatly valued ever since. Michael Green in his Foreword to the 1994 edition wrote, 'I must have used it for thirty years in one or other of its editions. I know of no introductory series of Bible reading notes which is as valuable as this.'

The purpose of this booklet is primarily to introduce people to the habit of daily Bible reading, and it is hoped that after using it for a month, the reader will adopt one of the many daily Bible reading systems available.¹

Passages from the Bible have been carefully chosen with people in mind who may quite recently have made a start in the Christian life, and are anxious to understand more about some of the basic truths of the Christian faith.

There are perhaps three things that make the Bible unique amongst books, and its study by the Christian so important. The first is its Author, for it claims that while it was written by a wide variety of people, they were each guided and inspired by the Holy Spirit of God. Just as we can speak of St Paul's Cathedral as being 'Christopher Wren's Cathedral', because although he may never have handled a single stone in the construction, it was he who inspired those who did; so we speak of the Bible as 'God's Word' – the principal way in which He has revealed Himself, and spoken to the hearts, minds and consciences of men and women down the ages.

There is next the Appeal of the Bible, for it is still the most popular Book in the world, and has been translated into more languages than any other. It owes this appeal to the fact that it contains the answers to all the deepest human needs; and it is to this Book, as to nowhere else, that people have

¹ For more information regarding the schemes available please contact www.10ofthose.com.

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turned to find forgiveness, encouragement, hope and peace of mind. Its appeal is universal, and people of every class and colour, age and ability, have found comfort in its pages.

Finally, the Bible has a very special Aim. Most books have some sort of aim – to amuse, inform, excite; but the aim of the Bible is unique, for as we read it, it will throw a remarkable light on human nature; and upon man – ‘The glory and the scandal of the universe’; and it will unfold the wisdom and the power, the holiness and the love of God as revealed to us in Jesus Christ.

**1. ABIDE WITH ME****LUKE 24:13-32**

¹³Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus...

¹⁴They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. ¹⁵As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; ¹⁶but they were kept from recognising him.

¹⁷He asked them, 'What are you discussing together as you walk along?' They stood still, their faces downcast. ¹⁸One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, 'Are you only a visitor to Jerusalem and do not know the things that have happened there in these days?'

¹⁹'What things?' he asked.

'About Jesus of Nazareth,' they replied... ²⁰The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; ²¹but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. ²²And what is more,... some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning ²³but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. ²⁴Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see.'

²⁵He said to them, 'How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?' ²⁷And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

²⁸As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus acted as if he were going further. ²⁹But they urged him strongly, 'Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over.' So he went in to stay with them.

³⁰When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. ³¹Then their eyes were opened and they recognised him, and he disappeared from their sight. ³²They asked each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?'

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This familiar story makes a very suitable reading with which to start. First it takes us to the source of Christianity, for our faith does not rest upon 'cleverly invented stories', but upon the historical facts of the birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ; and this chapter is one of many accounts of his victory over sin and death by those who were 'eye-witnesses of his majesty' (2 Peter 1:16).

Second, it defines the Christian life for us in the simplest terms. A Christian is not just someone who keeps a lot of rules or performs certain rites. He is someone who has found, as Cleopas and his companion found, that Jesus Christ is not only a figure of history, but a present reality whose friendship can be a living experience.

Think of the excuses they might have made not to invite Jesus home. Perhaps the house was in a mess, the spare room unswept and the bed unaired: Too bad for Jesus! Or perhaps they had a lot to do and next week's work to prepare for: Too busy for Jesus! With a quiet 'Good night', Jesus would have continued His journey, and they would have missed the most wonderful experience. But they made no such shallow excuses. Instead they gave that immortal invitation which has been woven into one of our most famous hymns, 'Abide with me, fast falls the eventide'.

THOUGHT

We can never be 'too bad' to invite Jesus into our lives,
but we may easily think we are 'too busy' to do so.



PRAYER

O Lord, I need Your presence every passing hour. I need
Your forgiveness for my sins, Your power to conquer
temptation, and Your wisdom to guide me. Abide with me,
now and forever. Amen

