

July 5, 2020 Read the Good Book 2 Timothy 3:14-17 NLT

It is such a joy to be here this morning. To see each others' faces again—at a safe distance of course! We are going through such a challenging time & yet here we are. God has seen us through. Praise God. He is good! We look forward to seeing our friends watching online in the near future as well! The KBF leadership has done such a wonderful job over the past months as well as preparing for re-opening this morning. They have thought things out carefully and have created a very safe environment for us all. Thank you!

Intro: How many of you enjoy reading & read books regularly? How many don't read often?

A Global study on reading habits revealed that 80% of Japanese read at least one book a year. During the Meiji restoration, (Edo) Tokyo was known to have 800 book lenders. A foreign professional living in Tokyo at the time, was amazed by the reading habits of Japanese; keeping a book tucked away in the sleeve of their kimono or clothing to read at ever opportunity. Fast forward 150 years.

The National Federation of University Co-operative Association conducted a survey. They found that the majority of Japanese University students 53%-- don't read books at all. As a result many university students demonstrate unsatisfactory reading competence in their academic learning. Main cause? Manga. I know our university friends at KBF, are the exception.

I had some downtime these past few months with the pandemic. So, I decided to read... the Bible. I read it from start to finish. Once I got started I couldn't put it down. Nearly every day I read 3-4 hours. It really helped me see the God's amazing storyline from beginning to end!

I've entitled my message today: Read the Good Book. Our Scripture lesson is taken from 2 Timothy 3:14-17. This is a letter from Paul to a young leader in the making, Timothy.

Bible 1: 2 Timothy 3:14-17 But you must remain faithful to the things you have been taught. You know they are true, for you know you can trust those who taught you. 15 You have been taught the holy Scriptures from childhood, and they have given you the wisdom to receive the salvation that comes by trusting in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our

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lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.  
17 God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work. NLT

I want to quickly share 3 priceless teachings from God's Holy Word.

1. What is true & false. As we listen to the voices around us; media, philosophy, psychology, opinions of the experts, it becomes challenging to know what's true and what's false. V. 14 reads, remain faithful to the things you have been taught. You know they are true, for you know you can trust those who taught you.
2. What is right and wrong. We are all prone to wrong ideas, thoughts, ways of doing things, ways of living, ways of being in relationship with others. Thankfully, the Bible doesn't leave us in the dark, but instructs us in the right way, right path, right attitude, right actions. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. Ps. 119:105.
3. The most Priceless Teaching of all is found in v. 15b...The Scriptures give us wisdom to receive the salvation that comes from trusting in Christ Jesus as Lord of Life, Lord of our lives. You can have confidence in these priceless teachings because they come from God.

During my seminary days I visited Japan to conduct research and interviews with Christian leaders. I had the privilege of spending some time with a man from Kyoto named Kazuhiro Tanimoto. Growing up, Tanimoto's father was the only one in the family who knew how to read. One day he took his son to a bookstore and said, "Kazuhiro look for the biggest, cheapest book you could find." Tanimoto searched and searched, and finally found the perfect book, (can you guess what book he found?) the Bible. Tanimoto's father hoped to get the most reading enjoyment for the least amount of money. This was Tanimoto's first introduction to the Bible. His father read the Bible to the family beginning with Genesis all the way through the entire Old Testament. Upon beginning the New Testament in Matthew he became confused with the genealogy of Jesus. There so happened to be a Methodist church near their village, so Tanimoto's father sent him to church to find out about the genealogy and to study the Bible further. Though his parents were devout Buddhists, on Sunday, they would send all seven of their children to the Methodist church, while they went on to the Buddhist temple. It was through this that Tanimoto for the first time heard about Jesus Christ, and the way of salvation. Today Kazuhiro Tanimoto is Rev. Kazuhiro Tanimoto, pastor of a church in Kyoto, Japan. And all because he chose the

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biggest, cheapest book he could find and began to read. So, are you ready to read The Good Book?

Application: They say it takes 21 days to start a new habit, so. I would like to extend an invitation. Read the book of John. It is called the “book of love.” It is a good place to start, because it has only 21 chapters. That means if you read one chapter each day you will be finished in 3 weeks. And after 3 weeks you will have a new habit of reading the bible & will want to continue. Then you can go back to Matthew & read through the NT in 8 ½ months. If you already read the bible regularly. Keep up the good work.

By reading slowly, daily, through the bible/NT, it will speak to our personal questions, struggles, doubts, hopes. It will speak to the needs in our family, our relationships, our work situation, school, the world around us.

Great bible apps: You Version logo/with countless language translations; Japanese Drama Bible (may celebrities participated). These are free. You can read or listen.

Close: When reading the Bible, we meet God in the pages. More than ever, given the condition of the world, we need God’s Word to guide us. The Bible enables us to reflect on our past, be strong and encouraged in the present & empowers & gives us hope for the future. It speaks to our failures, our shame, to our plans, to our doubts, to our fears, to our weaknesses, to our identity, to our purpose, it teaches us true from false, right from wrong & most importantly it reveals Jesus Christ: our Savior, Friend, and Lord, the who knows us completely and yet still loves us completely. Amazing huh? Within these pages God breathes life into us. Let us Read the Good Book! Amen!

The Lord bless you and keep you, make His face shine upon you, be gracious to you and give you peace. Numbers 6:24-26