**International Day of Bible**

**The Bible in American Life**

**Introduction:**

According to recent surveys, 80% of Americans believe the Bible is inspired by God. At the same time, there appear to be large gaps in people’s knowledge of the Bible. Recently the **Center for the Study of Religion and American Culture**, released the results of their large-scale investigation of the Bible in American life. The purpose of this study was to better understand how Americans use the Bible in their daily lives and how other influences shape their use of Scripture. **Here are a few of the findings.**

* “There is a 50/50 split among Americans who read any form of scripture in the past year and those who did not. Among those who did, women outnumber men, older people outnumber younger people, and Southerners exceed those from other regions of the country.
* Among those who read any form of scripture in the past year, 95% named the Bible as the scripture they read. All told, this means that 48% of Americans read the Bible at some point in the past year. Most of those people read at least monthly, and a substantial number – 9% of all Americans – read the Bible daily.
* Despite the proliferation of Bible translations, the King James Version is the top choice – and by a wide margin – of Bible readers.
* The strongest correlation with Bible reading is race, with African Americans reading the Bible at considerably higher rates than others.
* Half of those who read the Bible in the past year also committed scripture to memory. About two-thirds of congregations in America hold events for children to memorize verses from the Bible.”

The need for using God’s Word to guide our daily decisions is seen in Psalm 119:105-112.

**Body:**

1. **The Word Illuminates** Psalm 119:105-108 “Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path. I have sworn and confirmed That I will keep Your righteous judgments. I am afflicted very much; Revive me, O Lord, according to Your word. Accept, I pray, the freewill offerings of my mouth, O Lord, And teach me Your judgments.” NKJV

* As God’s people, we live in a sin-darkened world. God’s Word lights our path to keep us from stumbling and falling. The image in this verse is of a small bowl filled with oil and like a lantern on a pole. It would provide enough light for each step taken, but not enough to see all the way to the end. This is similar to headlights on a car.
* God’s Word reveals where we came from, where we’re going, and how we’re to get there. The Bible never uses the word “unsaved” to describe the unbeliever, but rather the word “lost.” To be lost is to be without direction or help. (Proverbs 6:23) “For the commandment is a lamp, And the law a light; Reproofs of instruction are the way of life.” NKJV God’s Word helps us make right decisions about the paths in front of us. (II Peter 1:19-21) “And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.” NKJV
* We must make a strong commitment to God’s Word. (Psalm 119:105) “Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.” NKJV It will not supernaturally or miraculously keep us from making wrong decisions. We must commit to keeping it at all costs. (Psalm 119:106) “I have sworn and confirmed That I will keep Your righteous judgments.” NKJV If we do, then God will direct our paths. (Proverbs 3:5-6) “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.” NKJV
* God’s Word shines the light on the source of our problems. It gets right to the heart of the problem.

“A SMALL FACTORY had to shut down when a vital piece of machinery broke down. Their own mechanic unsuccessfully worked on the unit. So an outside expert was called in. He came in and looked over the unit for a few minutes. He went to his tool box and pulled out a hammer and tapped the machine in a certain spot and it started running beautifully. He submitted a bill of $500 and the plant owner hit the ceiling and demanded an itemized bill. The itemized bill said, “Charge: $1.00 for hitting machine; $499.00 for knowing where to hit.’ ”

David, the author of this psalm, needed revival. He needed repair. (Psalm 119:25) “My soul clings to the dust; Revive me according to Your word.” NKJV God’s people have problems. We have issues and trials. God’s Word provides the remedy which might at times be a bitter pill to swallow.

* God’s Word reveals how we are to worship our heavenly Father with “freewill offerings.” Our worship should always come freely from the heart. (Psalm 119:7) “I will praise You with uprightness of heart, When I learn Your righteous judgment.” NKJV

We should ask God to teach us how to live right.

1. **The Word Guards** Psalm 119:109-110 “My life is continually in my hand, Yet I do not forget Your law. The wicked have laid a snare for me, Yet I have not strayed from Your precepts.” NKJV

* God’s Word is there to help us when difficult conditions arise. It can calm our fears. Note the use of this phrase in Judges 12:2-3. “And Jephthah said to them, ‘My people and I were in a great struggle with the people of Ammon; and when I called you, you did not deliver me out of their hands. So when I saw that you would not deliver me, I took my life in my hands and crossed over against the people of Ammon; and the Lord delivered them into my hand. Why then have you come up to me this day to fight against me?’ ” NKJV
* The Bible counsels us when trouble arises. (Psalm 119:23-24, 69) “Princes also sit and speak against me, But Your servant meditates on Your statutes. Your testimonies also are my delight And my counselors. 69 The proud have forged a lie against me, But I will keep Your precepts with my whole heart.” NKJV
* God’s Word reveals the traps and snares Satan sets to try and devour us. (II Corinthians 2:11) “lest Satan should take advantage of us, for we are not ignorant of his devices.” NKJV (Ephesians 6:10-13) “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might,. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.” NKJV
* God has promised to never leave us or forsake us.

(Hebrews 13:5) “Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’ ” NKJV

1. **The Word Delights** Psalm 119:111-112 “Your testimonies I have taken as a heritage forever, For they are the rejoicing of my heart. I have inclined my heart to perform Your statutes Forever, to the very end.” NKJV

* God’s Word will abide forever. (I Peter 1:22-23) “Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever.” NKJV (Matthew 24:35) “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will in no means pass away.” NKJV
* The Word brings joy. (Psalm 119:14-16, 18, 47-48) “I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies, As much as in all riches. I will meditate on Your precepts, And contemplate Your ways. I will delight myself in Your statutes; I will not forget Your word. 18 Open my eyes, that I may see Wondrous things from Your law. 47 And I will delight myself in Your commandments, Which I love. My hands also I will lift up to Your commandments, Which I love, And I will meditate on Your statutes.” NKJV
* Faithfulness to the Word keeps us focused on the great reward that lies ahead. (Psalm 119:33) “Teach me, O Lord, the way of Your statutes, And I shall keep it to the end.” NKJV Note Peter’s words in I Peter 1:3-5. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” NKJV

**Conclusion:**

God’s Word is always available for us to turn to when we need guidance and direction. It guards us from the pitfalls of life and brings joy to our lives. Let us always be diligent students of it.

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