



LIFE APPLICATIONS “I CORINTHIANS”

Chapter 2

READ THE BIBLE

One of the ways in which the Holy Spirit teaches us is through our reading of Holy Scripture. Do you read the Bible? If you do, how often do you read it? Every day? Once per week? Only to prepare for Bible Bowl or a church school quiz?

A lot of people avoid the Bible because they think it is a dusty old book that has nothing to say about modern life. They may also think that, because the Bible is so old, it is impossible to understand. Some people even think that the Bible is simply a book of “bad news,” full of unpleasant rules designed to make life less fun.

In reality, however, the Bible is exciting and challenging, understandable, and very relevant for modern life.

First of all, the Bible is exciting because it challenges everything we think and do. The Bible isn’t simply a boring collection of rules and “inspirational quotes:” it shakes us up and forces us to look at how we see the world and live our lives. It gives us teachings and examples about standing up for what we believe, overcoming problems, caring for others, and - most importantly - developing a deep relationship with God while living in a shallow society. Furthermore, it does these things not by simply giving us a long list of rules (although at times the Bible does give us such lists), but also by telling us exciting stories about people who lived out what the Bible teaches, showing us beautiful poetry and powerful songs, and engaging us in fascinating philosophical and theological discussions.

Furthermore, the Bible is understandable. This doesn’t mean that anyone can simply pick up the Bible, read it for an hour or two, and understand everything they need to know. Instead, the Bible is understandable because there are many resources which help us understand the background of the biblical texts, as well as determining precisely what each biblical author was saying. The traditional teachings of the Church regarding biblical passages help us apply these passages to our spiritual lives, and avoid some of the strange interpretations and practices that some individuals develop on their own.

Finally, the Bible is very relevant for your life as a 21st century Christian. Most importantly, the Bible in general - and the Epistle to the Romans specifically - will help you grow in your relationship with God. The Bible is more than just a book of theology, however: it also helps us to cope with issues we face every day. For example, the Bible teaches us how to handle money (Proverbs 13:11; Ecclesiastes 5:10), how to treat others (Colossians 3:12), and teaches us about the attitude we should have toward work (Proverbs 14:23; Colossians 3:23). As an example of how reading the Bible can help you with your daily life, a study by the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America found that teens who

read the Bible at least once per week are better able than those who seldom or never read the Bible to deal with pressure to drink alcohol, use drugs, or engage in premarital sex.

Other teens have found Bible reading to be relevant to their daily lives. Crystal Kirgiss quotes one teen saying about reading the Bible, "The Bible is something I live by now. It answers every single question, and addresses every problem I've ever had. Maybe not always directly, but with God working in me, I can find the answer."

As we read the Bible, you'll find that you agree with what Blessed Augustine of Hippo wrote in the fourth century: people who read the Bible "will find there in much greater abundance things that are to be found nowhere else, but can be learnt only in the wonderful sublimity and wonderful simplicity of the Scriptures."