

How to Enjoy Your Bible

By John Blanchard



EP BOOKS

1st Floor Venture House, 6 Silver Court, Watchmead, Welwyn Garden City, UK, AL7 1TS

EP BOOKS are distributed in the USA by:

JPL Fulfillment

3741 Linden Avenue Southeast,

Grand Rapids, MI 49548.

E-mail: sales@jplfulfillment.com

Tel: 877.683.6935

© Evangelical Press 2015. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted, in any form, or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publishers.

First published 1979

Sixth impression 1991

Reprinted 1995, 1997, 2004, 2007

This edition 2015

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data available

ISBN: 978-0-85234-182-7

Scripture quotations are taken from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®)
Copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. All rights reserved.

Contents

Foreword	5
Introduction.	7
The truth behind the title	11
Countering the critics.	21
The excellence of the evidence—1.	40
The excellence of the evidence—2.	57
The trouble with translations.	74
A look around the library.	110
How should I come to my Bible	136
Methods and means	149
The outcome of obedience.	192
Appendix: Electronic aids to Bible study.	210
Notes	212
Scripture Index	215



Foreword

I have been an admirer of John Blanchard's work for many years and consistently think of him as one of the best communicators of the Christian faith today. I try to read everything he has written and on each occasion I have been informed, stimulated and challenged in my faith. John has that rare ability to communicate in a clear, contemporary, accessible manner.

How to enjoy your Bible follows in the footsteps of his previous best-sellers. It strongly endorses the integrity of the Bible's authorship, contents, value and accuracy and effectively counters the arguments of those who regard it as no more than an antiquated collections of myths and fables, some kind of moral rulebook or a jumbled collection of men's religious thoughts.

It is a refreshing experience to read a book so well

researched and so cogently argued. Chapters 3 and 4, in which John deals with ‘The excellence of the evidence’, are pages you will want to read again and again. Chapters 7–9 are important reminders that there is no substitute for reading, digesting and applying the Scriptures to our lives today. In a world dominated by MP3 players, multiplex cinemas, satellite television, mobile phones, e-mail, the internet and YouTube, John’s timely reminder that Christians ought to enjoy the reading of the Scriptures is essential if we are ever to grow in our relationship with the living God.

As you begin this book let me add a ‘health warning’. Don’t read it if you want to maintain the status quo of your Christian faith. However, if you want to be drawn into the subject matter, grow in faith, spend time getting to know your Bible and understand why it is vital to do so, then this book is for you. I cannot recommend it strongly enough. Enjoy it, read it, read it slowly, revel in it, do so prayerfully—then get another copy to give to someone else, so that they too can learn how to benefit from the excellence of *How to enjoy your Bible*.

Rev. Richard Gibbons
Senior Pastor
First Presbyterian Church
Greenville, South Carolina



Introduction

This book is written out of two firmly held convictions. The first is that the Bible is the Word of God. There was a time when the meaning of that statement would have been absolutely clear and incapable of being misunderstood, but in these days words are being twisted and interpreted to mean almost anything, so let me explain myself. I am totally persuaded that in the form in which they were originally written, every word of the Bible's sixty-six books was 'breathed out by God' (2 Timothy 3:16). This immediately speaks of the Bible's purity and unity. Its purity, that is to say its inerrancy and infallibility, is guaranteed by the fact that, God being God, his Word must necessarily be perfect in every way.

*God being God, his
Word must necessarily
be perfect in every way.*

The Bible's divine authorship also guarantees its unity, each separate part contributing perfectly to all the others,

because every one of its human writers ‘spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit’ (2 Peter 1:21). In the British theologian Dr J. I. Packer’s vivid illustration, ‘The Bible appears like a symphony orchestra, with the Holy Ghost as its Toscanini; each instrument has been brought willingly, spontaneously, creatively, to play his notes just as the great conductor desired, though none of them could ever hear the music as a whole.’¹

While we do not have any of the Bible’s original documents available to us today, I believe with the seventeenth-century Puritans not only that both Old and New Testaments were breathed out by God but that ‘by God’s singular care and providence’ they have been ‘kept pure in all ages’. This brings us to the tingling truth that to pick up a Bible is to hold in one’s hand nothing less than the ‘living and abiding word of God’ (1 Peter 1:23). I find this both awe-inspiring and exhilarating.

*‘the sceptre by which
the heavenly King rules
his people’
(Calvin)*

The second conviction I have is that Christians are meant to enjoy the Bible. The great French Reformer John Calvin rightly described the Bible as ‘the sceptre by which the heavenly King rules his people’, but this does not mean that we are to look upon it as a rod of iron. Nor, on the other hand, is it to be treated trivially as some kind of religious toy, something to be used for our spiritual entertainment. Instead, it is meant to be a constant means of enlightenment,

enrichment and encouragement, its dynamic influence bringing a deepening joy into our daily lives.

Sadly, many Christians seem to fall short of that experience. They read the Bible, perhaps regularly, but if they were to be absolutely honest about their reading they would have to confess that the whole business has become a duty rather than a delight. Others have got into a rut over the method they use for studying the Bible, with the result that they are becoming bored rather than being blessed. I sincerely hope that this book will be a help to people who find themselves in situations like these. However, it is not basically meant to be a rescue operation. It is written by an ordinary Christian to other ordinary Christians, explaining very simply from my own study and experience why and how we can enjoy the Bible and find it to be a daily source of spiritual power.

Enjoy your Bible

In the late nineteen-forties the late Rev. G. R. Harding Wood wrote a delightful little book entitled *Enjoy your Bible*. After his death, Mrs Maureen Vellacott, Mr Wood's beneficiary, kindly gave me permission to use the same title for an entirely new work which was published in 1978. This new work was considerably revised in 1984, but as there have been at least two significant English translations of the Bible since then, to say nothing of numerous new aids to Bible study, I have felt it best to expand, revise and update the 1984 publication.

As this new presentation goes to press I want to repeat my thanks to Joy Harling (my secretary at the time) who bravely and efficiently coped with my mangled manuscript

of the first edition. I am also grateful to the members of the Board of EP Books, who are a constant encouragement to me in my ministry, and who have enthusiastically endorsed the release of this new presentation.

John Blanchard
Banstead , Surrey
May 2014