

October 29, 2005 by Steve Brandon



Practical Ideas for Reading Your Bible

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

1. Make it important
2. Have a plan
3. Know the blessing
4. Some practical ideas

(The following message was given to the men who attended the 8th annual Men's Exposition Conference on October 28-29, 2005 at Wellspring Chapel, in DeKalb, Illinois. The purpose of this conference is to help the men in their own study of the Scriptures, which will better equip them for the task of leading their family in spiritual matters. This year we thought about the profitability of simply reading the Bible. This message was delivered as a closing message to the conference.)

This conference has been all about one thing: encouraging you men opening your Bibles to read them. When several of us pastors initially gathered to plan this conference, I remember one of the pastors saying, "I believe that one of the greatest difficulties with our men reading the Bible is the very simple task of first opening the book!" I agree. And thus, we have had this conference. As we close this conference, the task assigned to me is to help you with some very practical ways to get you to read your Bibles on a regular basis. My message is entitled, "Practical Ideas for Reading Your Bible."

I love books. I have always loved books. Now that I am a pastor, I have the privilege of reading many books. Without question, I can tell you of one particular book that rests in my library that has made the most impact upon my life. In fact, this book has made such an impact on me, that I can tell you when and where I bought it. I bought it on July 10th, 1994 at the Book Shack in Los Angeles. I can even tell you where it was initially sitting on the shelf before I picked it up. The title of the book is "Thoughts on Family Worship" by J. W. Alexander. It's not so much that this book has made any sort of *theological* impact upon my life. But, it has made a practical impact upon my life *every day*! It's not even so much the details of this book as it is the overall premise: A godly family ought to gather each day for a time of worship together.

Before I picked up this book, I had never heard much about "family worship." Nor had I ever heard of J. W. Alexander. And yet, soon after reading this book, by God's grace, my family has gathered together consistently for family worship. As a family, it has been our goal to gather every day for the purpose of worship. Our consistency in this practice varies. There are times in which we get to it about every day. There are times in which things are particularly busy in the home and we only have the opportunity gather a few times in the week. But never is there a week that goes by where we don't gather at least once each week.

The elements of family worship are simple: Singing, Reading, and Praying. Each time we gather, things are a bit different. There is a variety in what we do. But, the basic elements of singing, reading, and praying form the foundation of what we do. Over time, our whole format has changed its focus. There are seasons in which we have sung more than we have read. There are seasons in which we have prayed more than we have read. There are seasons in which we have forsaken singing all together.

This morning, it isn't my purpose to speak with you regarding singing or praying together as a family. (That's for another day). Today is all about reading your Bible. And I would simply encourage you to engage your family in this process. It's good to read your Bible on your own. But I believe that it is far better for you to read it aloud with your family. My first challenge for you this morning is for you to ...

1. Make it important

I want for you to consider the importance that God has placed upon reading the Bible with your family. To do so, I want to direct your attention to Deuteronomy 6:4-9. This portion of Scripture is so famous that every Jew knows it by heart. I has a name. It is called "The Shema," after the first Hebrew word in the passage.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

"Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. And you shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

In this passage, the LORD has commanded the people of Israel to keep the Scriptures in front and center place within their families. The Scripture is to be on the heart and in the home. Verse 6 describes how the Scriptures should be on your heart. Verse 7 describes how the Scriptures should be in your home.

Look at verse 6, "And these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart." In other words, you should memorize Scripture. You should think about Scripture. You should meditate upon Scripture. You should love the Scripture. Your cry should be that of the Psalmist, "Oh, how I love Your Law! It is my meditation all the day!" (Ps. 119:97). You delight should be the same as the Psalmist, "I shall delight in Your commandments, which I love. I shall lift up my hands to Your commandments, which I love; and I will meditate on Your statutes" (Ps. 119:47-48). If you love have a love-affair with the Scriptures as the Psalmist did, then you will read them. I often tell the people of our church, "When the heart is willing, the feet are swift." If you have a willing heart that loves the word of God, then you will run to read the Scriptures. You will meditate upon them.

But, I want for you to notice that the command of Deuteronomy 6 doesn't stop with the heart. It proceeds into the home. Look with me in verse 7, "and you shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when your rise up." The picture here is of a father, talking with his children about the Scriptures whenever and wherever they happen to be.

Bible teaching isn't simply the pastor's job. Bible teaching isn't simply the Sunday School teacher's job. Bible teaching isn't simply for the Christian School teacher. Bible teaching is to take place in the home. It's not that I'm against pastors teaching the Bible. It's not that I'm against other Christians serving our children by teaching them. However, I would contend that the impact of teachers outside the home will be far less than the impact made by the fathers teaching inside the home. In other words, I believe that a child who is educated in the things of God in the greatest of Christian schools, and in the greatest of Christian churches, with no Bible influence in the home is worse off than the child who is educated in the public school system, but reads the Bible with his father every day. I firmly believe this. I believe that all of our activity at church (Sunday morning services, Sunday school classes, midweek gatherings, ...) can be entirely undone, if fathers, who attend church with their children, fail in teaching the Scriptures to their families.

Do you see the importance of reading the Bible with your family? Historically the church has. I trust that you have heard of the Westminster Confession of Faith. It was adopted in 1674 by the Scottish General Assembly and has become one of the most quoted confessions in all of Christendom. This assembly considered that the neglect of family worship was grounds for church discipline! Listen to what they wrote to the elders of the churches:

The elders are ... "to make diligent search and enquiry, in the congregations committed to their charge respectively, whether there be among them any family or families which use to neglect this necessary duty [i.e. of family worship]; and if any such family be found, the head of the family is to be first admonished privately to amend his fault; and, in case of his continuing therein, he is to be gravely and sadly reprov'd by the session; after which reproof, if he be found still to neglect Family worship, let him be, for his obstinacy in such an offence, suspended and debarred from the Lord's supper, as being justly esteemed unworthy to communicate therein, till he amend.

And family worship begins with the simple reading of the Bible to your family. Which is what this entire conference has been about. Some of you men are here without families. That's fine. Take the things that you hear and use them on your own. Some of you men are here and you are a son. That's fine as well. Take the things that you hear here and encourage your father to implement them. If you have no father, speak to your mother about these things. Some of you men are here without any children. That's fine. Read the Bible with your wife. Make it important.

2. Have a plan

When you go home today (or perhaps some time next week), have a talk with your wife and speak with her of some of the things that you learned this weekend. Talk with her and tell her that you would like to begin scheduling into your days a daily time when you can all get together to read the Bible as a family. For the vast majority of you, this will thrill your wife. She will make tremendous sacrifices to help you make it happen. Once you and your wife agree on when a good time would be, have a family meeting with your children.

First of all, confess your lack in these areas. Say, "Kids, I'm very sorry for the way that our family has run in the past. I faithfully bring you to church. We are involved in the activities of the church. But, I haven't done a good job at bringing the church home. I'm sorry and this is wrong. Would you please forgive me? By God's grace, I want to make a change in our lives. We are going to start reading the Bible together as a family." Then, tell them of your plan, "We are going to make 7pm the time in which we read the Bible together. I don't care where you are in the house, when the chime strikes 7pm, we are going to drop everything to gather our family together." Or, you might say something like this, "We are going to be gathering together for a family every morning. You all know that I leave for work at 7:15 in the morning. Mom and I will awaken you all by 6:45 so that we can have a few minutes together reading before I leave for school." Or, you might plan on reading your Bible just after dinner every night when you gather for regular Bible reading. Every single home represented here is different. Every single home here lives under a different schedule and a different mindset. Talk with your wife and figure out what works for you.

For our household, our goal is every morning and every evening. As a pastor, the evenings are difficult. Our schedule is normally booked for 4 or 5 evenings each week. There are times when we can fit in our Bible reading into a time slot after the evening's activities. But, many times, this is simply impossible. And so, we seek to try for the mornings as well. But, this is far from regular. And so, for our family, we don't gather like clockwork. But, we do gather consistently. I am so blessed with how the Lord has blessed my family. We have been reading the Bible together for so long that it is more difficult for me not to read than to read with them. The momentum has begun and I'm merely riding the wave! I think about my youngest daughter, who is two years old. She has begun to learn the art of stalling before going to bed. You say, "Stephanie, it's time to go to bed." And she will say, "Milk! Milk! Milk!" Or, she will say, "Brush teeth! Brush teeth! Brush teeth!" Or, she will say, "Kisses! Kisses! Kisses!" Or, she will say, "Read da Bible! Read da Bible!" She's not spiritual. She's stalling. The only reason why she says this is because the Lord has stirred us to read the Bible regularly in our home.

Not only do you need a plan to start reading. You also need a plan for reading. I remember early on in our family worship experience, we

would often Bible roulette during our family worship time. "What's Don preaching on this week? Let's read that." At times, we thought about a passage that I was teaching in a Bible study. We would read that passage. At other times, we thought about a song that the children have been singing recently, so we read that passage. For us, this sort of reading plan didn't get us very far. There was no anticipation for what we were going to read. There was no momentum built.

After a while, we said, "Let's start reading through the Bible." And so, we wrote up a schedule that would take us through the Bible. It helped immensely, in that there would be no question as to what we would read next. And yet, it seemed like things dragged on. It seemed like things were going so slow.

A big turning point for us was when we were challenged to read through the entire Bible in a year as a family. This was three years ago. For the past three years, we have been reading through the entire Bible out loud as a family together. We have a schedule of reading, which divides the Bible up into sections of equal length. (If you are interested in a schedule, you can go to rvbc.cc, and find one). We know how much we need to read to keep on schedule. Did you know that it only takes 15 minutes of reading out loud each day to read through the entire Bible in a year? It's not that much. It only gets into a problem if you skip a day or two, because then, it suddenly takes 45 minutes just to catch up. But, here is what is interesting: Our kids have so much enjoyed reading, that they have no problem at all reading the Bible together as a family for 45 minutes. To catch up in our reading, we have read for an hour together with very little complaint. The kids see the schedule. They know when we are behind. They want to catch up. And so, they are willing to read the Scriptures for long periods of time.

The reason why I've made this effort to read through the Bible each year with my family is because I have caught a vision. I want to allow my family to see the entire picture of the Bible and how it flows every year. I want for them to reflect each year upon the faithfulness of God to fulfill His promises to Noah and to Abraham and to David. I want for them to hear each year of how God is a God who sovereignly chooses those to whom He will extend His grace. He choose Noah and Abram and the people of Israel. I want for them to marvel each year of the sovereignty of God in the story of Joseph. I want for them to hear each year of how God demonstrated His power in the plagues and understand how many times the Scriptural writers refer back to this event. I want for them to hear God's requirements of the law every year, that they might come to know their sin. I want for them to spend a week listening again and again and again to how the Lord demanded a sacrifice for sin as we read through Leviticus, and thus better understand the need for the sacrifice of Christ. I want for them to hear each year how God will bless those who live righteously and curse those who live wickedly. I want for them to read each year about the rebellion and unbelief of God's people and God's punishment for them in the wilderness. I want for them to read each year of how faithful God is to His promises, in giving the people of Israel their land. I want for them to read about how abundant God was in His grace to continue to provide judges to a wayward people. I want for them to hear each year about the history of Israel: wow they were persuaded by the other nations to have a king; how they chose a king based upon the outward appearances, rather than upon the heart; how Saul's life ended in disaster. I want for them to hear each year that the Lords looks upon the heart and not upon appearances, and how much better it was for David to rule and to reign. I want for them to hear each year of how even the best of men, like David, can sin greatly -- committing adultery and murder. I want for them to hear each year of how there is forgiveness for people like David and Moses and Paul, who were all murderers. I want for them to read Psalm 119 each year and see the profitability of the Scriptures. I want for them to think through the transcendent worship of God as presented in the Psalms. I want for them to hear of the spiritual struggles of the God's greatest saints, which are also recorded in the Psalms. I want for them to hear the wisdom of Solomon every year. I want for them to see that all of the head-knowledge in the world is ultimately worth nothing, if their life would end up like Solomon's life. I want for them to understand the big picture of the divided kingdom of Israel and Judah and why they fell. I want for them to listen through the endless genealogies every year to remind them that our faith is historical. These are real people. I want for them to hear over and over and over again the prophets call the people back! (We are currently reading through Jeremiah. It's his constant message: turn back to the Lord!) I want for them to realize how many of the prophets prophesied of the time when Messiah would come and rescue God's people. I want for them to read each year of the coming of Jesus, who was the fulfillment of all the Scripture. I want for them to think through His life four times each year, reading through each of the gospel accounts. I want for them to think about what the Lord did in the early church. I want for them to hear Romans each year and the glorious gospel of Christ. I want for them to hear Galatians each year to know that they will never be perfected in the flesh. I want for them to hear the epistles each year, that they might know how to conduct themselves in the household of God. I want for them to see how often Paul tells us to look to the cross to know and understand how it is that we should live. I want for them to hear over and over and over again of the dangers of false teaching, which arises in every single epistle. I want for them to hear in Hebrews every year of the excellencies of Christ above all other things or people or angels. I want for them to read Revelation and anticipate the glorious judgment of God and eternal happiness of those who love God! And then, I want for them to start all over again and do it again.

I have caught this vision. My kids have caught it too. They know the plan that we have. They want to keep upon on the plan. As such, I have created a certain amount of momentum in our family that it is much easier to read through the Bible with my family than it is to read through it by myself.

On a number of occasions this past year, I have been gone for an extended period of time. On several occasions this past year, I was separated from my family. I took a trip to Nepal for a week and a half. I went down south to help with recovery from Katrina. My wife and daughter went out west on a special vacation together. During these times of separation, I fell behind in my reading. And my family fell behind in our reading. With a plan of reading and with group accountability of my family, we all have found it to be much easier to read the Bible on schedule.

3. Know the blessing

Reading through the Bible each year with my family has been a great blessing to us. In fact, it has been such a great blessing to me that I am going to be preaching through the entire Bible in 2006. We are distributing a Bible reading schedule to the entire church body (as we have done for the past several years). We are going to encourage every family to read through the Bible next year. I am going to be preaching on the passages in the Bible that were read on the previous week. I have told our church body that we aren't going to be deviating for mother's day or for father's day or for Easter or for Thanksgiving or for Christmas or for anything. I have told our church body (and have warned the pastors of Kishwaukee Bible Church, who may come up to fill in for me from time to time) that visiting preachers will be preaching the text that is according to our schedule. Our flocks are going to center around a response and application to our Bible reading and preaching. We

are thinking about putting together a memory verse for each week. Early in the year, we are planning on hosting a "Walk Thru the Old Testament" seminar (done by Walk Thru The Bible Ministries). We are also thinking about a hymn of the week to encourage the families to sing in their family worship time.

What has stirred me to do this? The great blessing that I have received from reading through the Bible together as a family each year. I want other families to join in the blessing. It's not just me. There have been some great saints of old who have commended reading through the Bible. I want for you to listen to the testimony of several well-respected men of God from the history of the church. I also want to give you the testimony of two men who attend our church.

First, I want to give you the testimony of George Müller. When George Müller was seventy-one years old, he gave some advice to younger believers. He said, ...

Now in brotherly love and affection I would give a few hints to my younger fellow-believers as to the way in which to keep up spiritual enjoyment. It is absolutely needful in order that happiness in the Lord may continue, that the Scriptures be regularly read. These are God's appointed means for the nourishment of the inner man. . . . Consider it, and ponder over it. . . . Especially we should read regularly through the Scriptures, consecutively, and not pick out here and there a chapter. If we do, we remain spiritual dwarfs. I tell you so affectionately. For the first four years after my conversion I made no progress, because I neglected the Bible. But when I regularly read on through the whole with reference to my own heart and soul, I directly made progress. Then my peace and joy continued more and more. Now I have been doing this for 47 years. I have read through the whole Bible about 100 times and I always find it fresh when I begin again. Thus my peace and joy have increased more and more. ^[1]

Next, listen to the admonition of J. C. Ryle. He said, ...

Read all the Bible, and read it in an orderly way. I fear there are many parts of the Word which some people never read at all. This is to say the least, a very presumptuous habit. 'All Scripture is profitable.' (2 Tim. iii. 16.) To this habit may be traced that want of broad, well-proportioned views of truth, which is so common in this day. Some people's Bible-reading is a system of perpetual dipping and picking. They do not seem to have an idea of regularly going through the whole book. This also is a great mistake. No doubt in times of sickness and affliction it is allowable to search out seasonable portions. But with this exception, I believe it is by far the best plan to begin the Old and New Testaments at the same time,--to read each straight through to the end, and then begin again. This is a matter in which every one must be persuaded in his own mind. I can only say that it has been my own plan for nearly forty years, and I have never seen cause to alter it. ... Do not think you are getting no good from the Bible, merely because you do not see that good day by day. The greatest effects are by no means those which make the most noise, and are most easily observed. The greatest effects are often silent, quiet, and hard to detect at the time they are being produced. Think of the influence of the moon upon the earth, and of the air upon the human lungs. Remember how silently the dew falls, and how imperceptibly the grass grows. There may be far more doing than you think in your soul by your Bible-reading. ^[2]

In 1842, Robert Murray M'Cheyne, wrote up a reading schedule for his congregation to follow. His purpose was clear.

Those believers will stand firmest who have no dependence upon self or upon creatures, but upon Jehovah our Righteousness. We must be driven more to our Bibles, and to the mercy-seat, if we are to stand in the evil day. ... It has long been in my mind to prepare a scheme of Scripture reading, in which as many as were made willing by God might agree, so that the whole Bible might be read once by you in the year, and all might be feeding in the same portion of the green pasture at the same time." He gave four dangers to such reading: (1) formality; (2) self-righteousness; (3) careless reading; and (4) a yoke too heavy to bear. He gave five advantages to such a church-wide schedule: (1) The whole Bible will be read through in an orderly manner in the course of a year; (2) Time will not be wasted in choosing what portions to read; (3) Parents will have a regular subject upon which to examine their children and servants; (4) The pastor will know in what part of the pasture the flock are feeding; and (5) The sweet bond of Christian love and unity will be strengthened. ^[3]

Early in his ministry, D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones discovered M'Cheyne's schedule for daily Bible readings. For more than fifty years, he made it his practice to read through the Bible each year according to M'Cheyne's schedule. ^[4]

Now, I want to give you the testimony of several men in our church. The first comes from Brad Koloch, who writes.

Our family has benefited tremendously from the reading through of the Bible cover to cover in one year. Before embarking on the journey, I had some doubts. There were some books of the Bible I had never even read. Besides, there were parts that I thought would be boring and/or irrelevant to my faith, mostly the Old Testament. Besides, time was at a premium and I didn't think we could fit it in to our schedule. Thankfully, the Holy Spirit convicted me of the weakness of these "excuses". First and foremost, "ALL scripture is God-breathed" meaning that every book, every page, every word came from God and therefore must be vital to read. Second, Jesus didn't find the Old Testament to be boring or irrelevant to His life. Neither did Peter, or Paul. The author of Matthew quoted Old Testament Scriptures with regularity. Finally, if I can "religiously" set aside an hour to watch the evening news every night, why could I not set aside time for the Good News? Our family devotions were focused around the reading of devotional books, which were topical and Scriptural. Yet they were not strung together nor organized in such a way as to really help my family to grow. Using the Bible itself, reading it from start to finish, has spurred us on to grow. We read, discuss, question, research and pray through the verses. We are on our

second time through and there are plenty of things we have learned and will continue to learn as we read through every year. If you are wondering whether or not to participate in the reading, whether on our schedule or in your own schedule, let me urge you to prayerfully consider it. The Scripture has the words of Life. The revelation of God through the Scripture is just as important as the revelation of God through His Son, Jesus. If you have time to play that video game, talk to that friend on the phone, watch that movie, shoot those baskets, read that secular novel, surf the Web and yet not find the time to read God's Word, you need to re-prioritize your life (I am talking from my own experience here). I pray that God would lead you to delve into His Word eagerly, humbly, and consistently. You will not be disappointed.

Another man in our church, Gordy Bell, writes, ...

In 1984 my nephew was going to California to graduate school and asked me a question. I was rather shocked by his question because it had to do with reading through the Bible. The question was, "Uncle Gordy, have you ever read through the entire Bible?" It caught me off guard because I knew I hadn't. I had studied through various books and taught Sunday School but I could not actually say I had. I said, "no, I actually haven't." His response to me was the most positive thing that happened in our conversation. He said, "I haven't either, would you be willing in the next year to read through with me?" We used the "Through The Bible In A Year" Bible which was put out at that time by Tyndale House. That was the beginning of our reading through the Bible each year since 1984. Ruthie and I feel that reading through the Bible on the same schedule has been key to our daily living and conversations about what we have been reading. We sometimes comment on how we ever got along without doing this because it has had such a positive impact. It's amazing how the Lord reveals new things each year that seem so pointed for us at the time we read them. We have appreciated RVBC having a reading program for all to be involved who have committed before the Lord to know more about His Word. We highly recommend, no matter when you pick up a schedule, to begin reading with those in the body who have committed to do this. We feel that as a church this brings unity, holy living and daily application of the Word that transforms our lives for the glory of God.

4. Some practical ideas

I want to conclude my message by giving you some very practical suggestions for reading through the Bible together as a family.

1. Include your children.

For those children in your family who can read, let them read. If not, then let them do something with their hands (i.e. play with small toys or color in coloring books). Let your children play as you read to them. You will be surprised at the level of comprehension that your children have. (At least, I am surprised). My son will be sitting on the floor playing with his Legos and will suddenly ask a question that shows that he is fully understanding what is taking place. I remember reading through 1 Corinthians. We got to chapter 11, which deals with head coverings. I didn't even think that my daughter was listening. All of a sudden, she asks, "Dad, is he talking about something that covers your head or is he talking about hair which covers your head?" What's so profound about this is that this is a major interpretive question scholars have sought to answer over the years. I said, "That's a good question, Carissa. I don't know. Many people don't know." We had a bit more discussion, but not much. And then, we continued on!

2. Read creatively.

When going through some of the sections of Scripture that have repeated words, such as the genealogies or the recording of the tribes, we will often have our children run across the room on certain words. This is especially true in the genealogies. Whenever they hear the word, "son," they are allowed to run across the room and back. When there is a section that talks about how many years that people lived, we have allowed our kids to imagine the room to be a giant scale of years. Whenever they hear a number, they are to approximate where it would be on the scale of the room. There have been times when we have developed hand-signals for specific words. If you hear the word, "Father," raise your hand. If you hear the word, "Mother," clap your hands. If you hear the word, "son," stomp your feet. Activities like these help to get through some of the more repetitive sections.

3. Skip ahead if you must.

We have not done this often, but we feel the freedom to skip ahead if we are especially far behind. Rather than attempting to catch up, it is better to cut your losses and start afresh on schedule. If you don't feel the freedom to do this, the reading schedule will become a heavy task-master over your head, which would be unprofitable for you or for your family.

4. Give general summaries of what you are reading.

Often, the chapter titles in your Bible is sufficient. Titles such as "David's sin" or "Jeremiah is thrown into the cistern" or "Solomon dedicates the temple" are of great help. They help to give the listener something to listen for. Not only do chapter titles help, but also, placing the reading in its chronological time-frame is helpful as well.

5. Keep reading.

Don't get too bogged down in the details. Believe that there is a long-term benefit in everything that you read in the Scriptures. Believe that though a particular section of Scripture may not be incredibly helpful for you today at this moment, it will be in the future. Particularly some may think this about reading through the genealogies. However, several days of reading the genealogies will continue to cement in your minds that the things contained in the Scripture are historical, with real names and real places. The Bible is not a fairy tale. Such a conviction will help immensely when coming to read about Jonah or Christ's resurrection.

6. Slow down if the Spirit guides.

Should there be something particularly crucial for you to talk about, then stop your reading and talk about it. But, don't get too bogged down in the details. Many of the details will be answered by pressing on.

7. Stop making excuses.

I began my message by mentioning a book that I read early in my marriage that has had a daily effect upon my life as it has stirred our family to read the Bible together. One of the best portions of the book is when J. W. Toward the end of the book, he deals with many of the common excuses that people make to neglect the duty of family worship. Let me give them to you and respond with my own thoughts.

Excuses for the Neglect of Family Worship.

1. *"The service, as I have seen it, is a dull formality; and my house is as well without it."* I say that the misuse of something doesn't mean that we shouldn't use it correctly. The worship of God ought never to be dull.

2. *"Family Worship may be well enough in itself, but it does not fall in with the customs of my house and my guests."* Favorite television shows, late nights out, and protesting children are all obstacles. Such customs, however, ought to magnify the great need of your house to focus hearts God-ward.

3. *"I have not time for Family Worship."* Schedules and meetings and activities will always battle for your time. You need to prayerfully evaluate your household priorities in light of eternity.

4. *"Our family is so small. It ought to be easier for you to gather for worship."* Certainly a husband and wife can find a few minutes each day for this practice.

5. *"My family is so large. With a large family comes greater responsibility."* Think of the multiplied effects of your neglect of family worship.

6. *"There are persons present in my house whose superior age or intelligence deters me from duty."* Your attempts at leadership will be respected.

7. *"I am unlearned, and destitute of gifts."* Can you read? If not, allow another in your family to read for you.

8. *"My family is unwilling to unite in the service."* Stand strong, like Joshua, "As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD" (Josh 24:15).

9. *"The truth is, I am ashamed to begin."* Ahhhh, now we are getting somewhere!

This message was delivered to the Bible in Life Conference at Wellspring Chapel on October 29, 2005 by Steve Brandon. For more information see www.rvbc.cc.

[1] This was quoted by John Piper on February 3, 2004 at The Bethlehem Conference for Pastors.

[2] J. C. Ryle, *Practical Religion*, pp. 133, 136.

[3] *Memoir & Remains of Robert Murray M'Cheyne*, compiled by Andrew Bonar, pp. 618-622.

[4] Iain Murry, *The Fight of Faith*, p. 748.