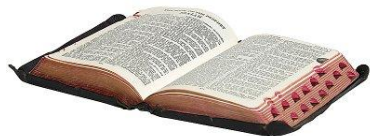


## The Good a Bible Might Do

Steve Burchett

A daring nun once grabbed a small Bible out of a casket just before it was closed. This Bible had been gently placed by the side of her dead friend who had also been her priest.



Why did this nun snatch the Bible at such a solemn occasion?

The deceased priest, just prior to becoming deathly ill, had been given this small Bible. He read it and came to know and love Jesus Christ. The nun had served as this man's nurse once he was sick, and she *had* to see what was in this book that had produced such a remarkable change in the priest. The nun read this little Bible, and before long, she was a true follower of Christ also!

But where did the priest get this Bible, and why did he decide to read it?

There was a lady who at one time was one of the priest's parishioners. However, she had stopped attending mass, so the priest sought her out to find out why. She gladly showed the priest the Bible that had revealed her sins against God and the way of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. She said to the priest, "I never knew what religion was before, but now, I am happy as the day is long."

So the formerly faithful church member gave her pocket Bible to the priest, and soon they were brother and sister in Christ for the first time.

But where had this woman picked up a Bible, and why did she decide to read it?

She got it from a pastor in a theater. Seeing others entering a building in London, she mistakenly thought there was a play going on and, depressed and in poor health, she thought it would be a good distraction. When she heard somebody up front say, "Let us pray," she recognized her mistake—this wasn't a play, this was a church service. She tried to get away, but upon rising she made such a loud noise that she sat down and stayed.

The pastor faithfully preached the gospel, and the Roman Catholic lady was convicted deeply of her sin. At the end of the meeting, she even told the pastor what she was experiencing, and he said, "Oh! I have a cure for you. Take this book, and read it. I am sure it will show you what to do with your sins, and make you feel happy." He had given her that little Bible, the one that God would use to reveal Christ to her, and then to the priest, and then to the nun.

I read this account in a book full of sermons for children, and the title of this section is, "The Good One Bible Did."<sup>1</sup> What lessons might we learn from this story?

First, never underestimate the power of God to save somebody who reads His Word. Paul reminded Timothy that Scripture is "able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 3:15). I once met a man who was a Muslim until someone gave him the gospel of John. He told me he was convicted of his sin by John 3, and by the time he finished reading John 6, he was a follower of Jesus!

Second, offering Scripture with a caveat like, "I would enjoy hearing what you think after reading this," might produce a future conversation about the gospel. I have a friend who carries several copies of John which he will occasionally give to unbelievers. Just inside the front cover he has pasted his own brief testimony and a warm but direct plea to read the booklet.

Third, there is no promise that an unbeliever who reads the Bible will be saved. Jesus said, "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted" (Matthew 13:11). God alone determines who will embrace the gospel (see 1 Corinthians 3:5-7). But we *must* give unbelievers the gospel, because whenever God's Spirit comes to grant understanding, it is always in partnership with the message of Christ.

Fourth, if you are an unbeliever, I'm pleading with you to pick up a Bible and start reading. Start with one of the first four books of the New Testament (Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John). You may be far more interested in reading the latest bestselling novel or watching a rerun on television, but sometimes we should do what we don't want to do. My basketball coach used to take us out to the track and make us run before the season. We didn't like burning lungs, but we trusted he knew what was for our good. Physical fitness was vital once the games began. Similarly, reading the Bible may seem painful, but within its pages you will find a story about a gracious God and a risen Savior who welcomes all who come to Him for salvation. If you refuse to consider what the Bible teaches, you surrender hope and guarantee yourself an eternity in hell paying the penalty that your sins deserve.

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<sup>1</sup> This account was taken from Richard Newton, *Bible Promises: Sermons for Children on God's Word as our Solid Rock* (Birmingham, AL: Solid Ground Christian Books, 2006), 43-45.