

find that they aren't all that obvious). Or take a look at God's laws and behavior in the Old Testament — is the God who orders the killing of babies, loves the smell of burning sacrifices, commands the death penalty for disobeying your parents, and sets up rules for the proper keeping of slaves really the one you worship?

When you read the Bible, you also need to see if you can tell which parts your church believes are literal truth, which are allegory, and which are just poetry. Christians have a wide range of opinions on the subject.

If you find yourself having to ask what a lot of passages mean, why certain aspects of your belief aren't clear, or why your church believes some things that appear un-Biblical, maybe you need to ask why, if God was going to give his words to humanity, he couldn't do it more clearly and timelessly.

Then again, perhaps avoiding tough questions like that is why you are avoiding reading the Bible in the first place.

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SHOULD CHRISTIANS READ THE BIBLE?

A Question of Moral Atheism

from blog.iamanatheist.com



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Or are you the kind of person who signs a contract at the bank without reading it because you figure you've probably already got a pretty good idea of what's in there? Maybe when you were young you had a Bible for children so you feel like you already know all the important parts and don't need to waste your time reading through a bunch of "begats." If so, did you know that most of these Biblical abridgements leave out quite a bit of text that is either difficult or "inappropriate" for children? For example, did you know that after escaping Sodom Lot was raped by his daughters? That Samson set fire to small animals? That God tried to murder Moses and only stopped when Moses' wife circumcised their son? If all you've read are abridgements, there's a lot you've missed. As a Christian, perhaps you think that all you need to read is the New Testament. But the New Testament loses much of its meaning if it's not read in light of the old testament. Try reading the Old Testament and looking for all the prophecies about Jesus that the New Testament says are there (you might be surprised to

SHOULD A CHRISTIAN read the Bible? It seems like a dumb question, but there are many Christians who have never tried to read a Bible, tried but failed, or just read selected parts. But if you already know what your faith is — an particularly if you attend a church in which lessons from the Bible are taught — is it really that important to read the whole thing? In a word, yes. Let's start off with the most important question: if you honest believe that God exists and has the power to punish you for all eternity, and if you honestly believe that this God helped write a book on the subject, then how could anything in the world be more important than reading that book? Sure, there's a lot of great stuff on the best-seller list that you'd like to get to, but we're talking about a book that your religion says can help you avoid eternal punishment. If, after considering this, you still don't feel inclined to read the Bible, perhaps you need to ask yourself just how committed you are to this whole "religion" think in the first place. Now for the second most important question: If, as a Christian, you believe that the Bible is the word of God, then shouldn't you know what that word is?

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QUESTIONS OF MORAL ATHEISM: INSTRUCTIONS

We appreciate your interest in helping us spread information about moral atheism! To make copies of this pamphlet for your own use or to share with friends, follow these simple steps:

1. Print pages one and two of this document, one on each side of the same piece of paper (if you don't have access to a duplex printer, print page one, put the page back in the paper tray upside down, and print page two — depending on the type of printer, you may have to experiment a bit).
2. Cut the printout in two, using the thin rules across the middle of the page as a guide.
3. Fold the two pieces of paper in half, making a pair of small pamphlets.
4. Keep one of the pamphlets to read, and give the other away to an interested friend or stranger.

That's it! If you have any questions, suggestions, or comments, we invite you to share them by leaving a comment on blog.iamanatheist.org. Thanks!
