

Basic Steps to Reading the Bible

If you are new to reading the Bible, you may wonder where to start and what to do. Other books you've read from cover to cover, but this one can be a bit more intimidating. You have a desire to read it, but have a difficult time getting started.

Whether you are new to reading the Word, or have been reading for years, here is a simple guide to help you dig deeper. God has so much for us to learn from His Word. It is never too late to start reading for the first time or reading again for the first time. God promises that His Word always accomplishes the purpose He has for it when we read. I am excited that you have decided to start reading the Bible and pray that this simple guide helps you take away more from what you read.

Where to start? If you don't know where to start I have two suggestions.

Genesis - It is the first book in the Bible, and Moses wrote it to help us understand who God is. This book is full of stories you have probably heard before whether you've ever set foot inside a church or not.

Mark - This is second book in the New Testament. It includes stories of Jesus and His time on earth.

These are merely suggestions; you can apply the following reading techniques to any passage in the Bible. If you don't own a Bible, I would recommend going to your local Christian bookstore and asking them to help you find an NIV Bible. (NIV stands for New International Version, it is written in easy to read English) Some Bibles have notes at the bottom (these are called study Bibles and are more expensive). Other Bibles just have the actual Bible text in them. These are usually much smaller and less expensive.

If you want to start reading right now and don't own a Bible, jump online. One of my favorite places to access the Bible online is biblegateway.com. This site has different translations and you can search by book, verse or key word. If you have a smart phone or tablet, you can also download Bible apps directly to your device.

In addition to a Bible, I suggest having a pen and a journal handy. We want to absorb what we read. We will be reflecting on the Word. This can often be more effective if you can take notes and journal your response.

In my journal, I usually write the date at the top and the passage I am going to read.

For example:

Tuesday, November 1, 2011

Mark 1:1-20

Now it is time to begin.

Open with prayer.

Thank Him for loving you and writing this love letter to you.

Be honest with Him asking Him to speak to you. Commit to listening to what He has to say.

Ask Him for wisdom to understand His Word.

Take a few moments to breathe and get your mind and your heart settled. Leave the distractions at the door and turn your phone on silent. Don't rush this process.

Read.

Once you have mentally prepared and asked God to teach you, next you are going to want to read what He has written. I usually read a chapter or part of a chapter. Sometimes you will see the chapters broken down into smaller sections much like you would in other books. Some days you may want to read more and others less. Neither is right or wrong. There is also no set length of time to spend reading and reflecting.

As you read, write down any questions you have. These can be about the people or places (Who is Mark?) or they can be spiritual (What does it mean to be reborn?). Just like you learned in school, there are no wrong questions.

Reflect.

After you read, ask yourself the following questions and journal your responses.

What did I learn about God or Jesus in this passage?

What did I learn about the people in this passage?

What life lessons can I take away from this passage?

How can use what I learned in my life today? In the future?

Is there anything I need to change in my life as a result of what I learned?

Pray.

After you have reflected on the questions above, spend a few minutes discussing your answers with God. Ask Him for His opinion. Share with Him what you learned about Him. And tell Him how this will impact your life. Ask Him to help you carry out the changes that you need to make. Share anything else with Him that is on your heart.