

CHAPTER 4

Reading God's Word

In the last chapter we looked at 1 Peter 2:2: "Desire the sincere milk of the _____ that ye may _____ thereby." God's Word and growing are two things that go together! Just as a baby cannot grow without drinking milk, so a believer cannot grow without reading God's Word. The Bible is God's food for spiritual growth. If we are going to grow in the Lord, then we must feed on God's Word.

In this chapter we will share some helpful suggestions that will make it easier for you to read and to understand your Bible:

1. Read Regularly!

To stay healthy, most of us have three meals each day. We need food to be healthy and to grow, and we set apart time every day for meals.

Did you have supper every day last week? Did you have lunch every day last week? Do people often say, "I'm so busy today that I do not have time to eat lunch or supper? No, usually people take time and make time to eat!

How often do you feed on God's Word? Once a week? Twice a week? Every day? The Lord Jesus said that people need more than bread to live. What else does man need (Matthew 4:4)?
 _____ What kind of food did Job enjoy eating most of all (Job 23:12)?

When can you read God's Word? One of the places God's Word is read is in church. You can read the Bible in Sunday School class. During the worship service you can read the Bible (either silently or out loud) during the Scripture Reading. During the sermon you can follow along in your Bible and read along silently as your Pastor reads out loud. Then listen carefully as he explains what the verses mean.

At home there are times for Bible reading. Some families have a special time when they all get together and read from God's Word and pray. These are good opportunities to feed on God's Word.

It is important also to find time to read the Bible for yourself. Set aside some time during the day when you can sit down and open your Bible. Many Christians find the morning to be the best time because they can start the day by hearing from God through His Word. Others enjoy reading the Bible in the evening or right before they go to bed. You need to find the time that works best for you--a time when it is quiet so that you will not be disturbed. Trying to read in front of a television set will not work very well!

Get into the habit of reading. There are many things that we do all the time because we are in the

habit of doing them. We get dressed and undressed every day. We brush our teeth. We sit down at the table to eat. These are things we do every day. Why not make Bible reading part of your daily routine?

Reading regularly (day by day) is more important than reading for a long time on one day. For example, suppose one week you read the Bible on Monday for a whole hour, but on all the other days of the week you did not read the Bible at all! The next week, you read the Bible ten minutes every day (ten minutes each day for seven days!). During which week did you do the most reading? Which is healthier, to eat a huge feast on Monday and not eat the rest of the week or to eat regular meals each day of the week?

2. Read Slowly!

What really counts is not how much of God's Word you go through, but how much of God's Word goes through you! It is much better to read and understand one verse, than to read three chapters and not remember anything that you read in those chapters! It is better to read a little with your understanding than to read much in a hurry.

According to 1 Corinthians 14:19, Paul would rather speak five words that could be understood than _____ words in an unknown tongue (foreign language) which could not be understood. The same is true with reading the Bible. It is better to read five words slowly and carefully so that you understand them than to read 10,000 words in a hurry without understanding what you have read!

Here are two examples of precious truth from God's Word. Notice that there are only five words in each:

1 Corinthians 15:3

1. **Christ**
2. **died**
3. **for**
4. **our**
5. **sins.**

Hebrews 13:5

1. **I**
2. **will**
3. **never**
4. **leave**
5. **you.**

Therefore, when you read the Bible, take your time, read slowly, and if you do not understand

what you just read, go back over it and read it again! If you still do not understand it, then go on and continue reading because there are many things in the Bible which we will not understand at first. Always try to understand as much as you can! If you have trouble understanding something, ask your parents or your Pastor or your Sunday School teacher.

3. Read From Beginning To End!

Many people do not know where to start reading in the Bible, so they sometimes use the "lucky dip" method. That is, they say, "Lord, show me where You want me to read" and then they open their Bible and start reading wherever the Bible happens to open. Sometimes the Lord will bless this method, but in general it is not the best way to read.

To show you some of the dangers in the "lucky dip" method, consider the following humorous story:

A man once used the "lucky dip" method. The first verse he happened to turn to was Matthew 27:5 which says that Judas "went and _____." Since he was not sure how this verse applied to himself, he flipped to another passage and the Bible fell open to Luke 10:37: "Then said Jesus unto him, _____ and _____." As you can imagine, the man was quite upset and he did not know how he could ever obey that, so he decided to turn to one more place. Once again the Bible was opened and to his horror his finger fell upon John 13:27: "Then said Jesus unto him, That (what) thou doest, _____." As you can see, the "lucky dip" method could cause a person to get the wrong message from the Bible!

When you read a book or a short story, where do you usually begin? In the middle? At the end? At the beginning? Usually when we read something, we start at the beginning and we read through until we get to the end. We read a letter in the same way--we start at the beginning and read it in the same order as it was written. The same approach will help you when you read God's Word. First choose the book that you want to read. There are (how many?) _____ Books in the Bible to choose from. Then start at the beginning with chapter 1 and continue until you come to the end. For example, when Paul wrote to the Philippians, he did not write chapter 3 and then chapter 2 and then chapter 4 and then chapter 1. First he wrote chapter 1, then 2, then 3 and finally he concluded with chapter 4. If he wrote the book of Philippians this way, shouldn't we read it this way?

4. Read Carefully!

Pay close attention to every word. Be a good DETECTIVE and see what you can discover! Do not overlook any details. Sometimes we miss what God is saying because we fail to see what is right before our eyes! Also, be careful not to let your mind start to daydream as you are reading. Keep yourself alert by asking yourself: What did I just read?

When you read the Word of God, read it just as you would eat fish. If you come to a verse that you cannot understand, do not cast the Book away. Certainly you would not throw away your plate of fish just because you came to a bone! You must simply lay it aside and go on reading,

just as you would go on eating. Then when you read it again (perhaps years later), some of the statements that you thought were bones you will be able to eat and digest and understand!

5. Read Inquisitively (Asking Questions)!

The more questions that you ask, the more answers you will get and the more you will understand what you are reading.

**"I have six strong and faithful men:
WHO, WHAT, WHERE, HOW, WHY and WHEN!
I use them as I read God's Book.
They help me get a much better look!"**

Let us see how we can use these six men to help us in understanding the Bible. Read Luke 15:3-7. **WHO** spoke this parable? **WHAT** was lost? **WHERE** will there be joy? **HOW** did the shepherd celebrate the finding of the lost sheep? **WHY** will there be joy in heaven? **WHEN** did the shepherd call his friends and neighbours together?

Read Genesis 37:29-34. Can you think of **WHO, WHAT, WHERE, HOW, WHY** and **WHEN** questions to ask concerning this passage?

There are other questions that are good to ask as we read God's Word. Here are some:

- 1) Is there any command to obey?
- 2) Is there any promise to believe and claim?
- 3) Is there a good example to follow?
- 4) Is there any sin to avoid?
- 5) Is there anything that I can thank God for?
- 6) Do I learn anything about God in this passage? (who He is and what He is like?)
- 7) Do I learn anything about man (and thus myself) from this passage?
- 8) Do I learn anything about my enemies—the world, the flesh and the devil?

Read Philippians Chapter 4 and see if you can find answers to any of these questions.

6. Read Lovingly!

The Bible is God's LOVE LETTER to you! It is God's personal message to you!

Most people enjoy getting letters in the mail. When you receive a letter in the mail, how do you read it? Do you read it carefully? Do you enjoy reading it? Do you read every word of it? Do you read it more than once? Do you tell others about what the letter said? Do you think about it later in the day? Do you try to remember what was said in the letter? We need to read the Bible in this way.

7. Read Prayerfully!

The Holy Spirit is our Teacher as we read the Bible! The Author of the Bible is right there with us as we read to help us to understand it! Who is the best Person who can really help us to understand the Bible (2 Timothy 2:7)? _____

It is always good to pray before we read God's Word. Psalm 119:18 is a good example of a prayer that can be prayed. May God open our eyes to see wonderful things in His Book!

8. Pass It On!

Don't be selfish with the truth you learn from God's Word. Share it with others. Tell others what you have been learning from your Bible reading time. As you share it with others, it will help you to remember what you learned. Pass it on!

9. Meditate On It

Just as a cow chews its food over and over again, we need to chew on the things we have learned from our reading. As I go through the day, I can ask myself, "What did I learn in Sunday School on Sunday? What did I learn from the Pastor's message? What did I learn from the Scripture that my family read last night? What truth did I learn from my Bible reading time this morning?" This will help me to remember the things the truths I learn in God's Word.

How often does God want us to meditate on His Word (Psalm 1:2 and Psalm 119:97)?

10. Live It Out!

The Bible says that we are not just to be H_____ of the Word but we are to be D_____ of the Word (James 1:22). So also, we are not just to be READERS of the Word, but we are also to be DOERS of what we have read!

We must live out God's Word and do what it says. God's Word does us no good unless we practice it and put it to work! As you meditate on God's Word, you should always ask yourself, "HOW CAN I PRACTICE THOSE THINGS WHICH I HAVE READ IN GOD'S WORD?"

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Note for the teacher: You may want to choose a passage of Scripture which can be used during the classroom time so that you can help the students work through some of the principles mentioned in this chapter.

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God."
Jesus



As well expect the body to thrive without this.

As the soul to live without this. *acc*