

Can We Believe the Bible?

By Charles Higgs

Lesson Four : How can I get the most out studying the Bible?

Answer:

It is essential that as believers that we study the Bible. *"Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good."* (1 Peter 2:2 NIV) That verses tells us that as a baby goes for the bottle, believers should go for Bible. It is not original but my Dad used to tell me, *" Charles, reading and studying God's word will keep you from sin but sin will keep you from reading and studying God's word."* David talks about that, *"I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you."* (Psalm 119:11 NIV)

I

This is how Martin Luther studied the Bible:

"First I shake the whole apple tree that the ripest might fall. Then I climb the tree and shake each limb, and then each branch and then each twig, and then I look under each leaf."

Reading and studying the Bible is God talking to you!

It has been said, "When you pray that is you talking to God and when you read the Bible that is God talking to you." The great preacher, D.L. Moody, who shook two continents for Christ in the late 1800's gave the following testimony: "I prayed for faith, and I thought that someday faith would come down and strike me like lightening. But faith did not come. One day I was reading the tenth chapter of Romans: *'Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.'* I had closed my Bible and prayed for faith. I now open my Bible, and began to study, and faith has been growing ever since."

"Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ." (Romans 10:17 NIV)

God's word is living and active!

"The word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." (Hebrews 4:12 NIV)

Help! I want to know how to get the most of reading and studying the Bible.

"It's not the things I don't understand about the Bible that bother me; it's the things I do understand that bother me." Mark Twain

Here is how an honest seeker can read and study the Bible for a better understanding:

PRAY!

"Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law." (Psalm 119:18 NIV)

Ask God to help you as you study his word. When we read a book we do not have the privilege of having the author present to help us understand what we are reading. It is different with the Bible because you and ask the author to help you understand what has been written.

Get an understandable translation!

Get a Bible that's clear to you. With so many good translations today, both traditional and contemporary, you can find one that's easy for you to understand.

Read!

Read the Bible through in one year by scheduling 15 minutes a day for Bible Reading. Nothing can bring you closer to God than living daily in the Word.

"If you aim at nothing, you'll probably hit it," is a phrase we sometimes hear. This applies to our Bible reading as well. If we are not aiming to meet God in his Word, we won't. So, consciously come to your time of Bible reading expecting to hear God speak to your life situation. Come expecting to learn, expecting to change, and you won't be disappointed. Set aside a definite time for reading the Bible...you won't be disappointed.

1. "Mark." (It is written in chronological order.)
2. Read "Matthew." (It goes into better detail of some events and adds more about Jesus.)
3. Read "John." (It contains a lot of the life of Jesus not before read, especially his last two weeks before the crucifixion.)
4. Read "Luke" then "Acts." (Both written by Apostle Paul's traveling companion Luke. Acts is a continuation of Luke. It describes the early church and contains the examples of New Testament conversions.)
5. Read "Galatians." (It deals with the reasons why we do not follow the Old Testament Laws in a more simplified way than does Romans or Hebrews.)
6. Then read the rest of the New Testament starting at Romans and going to Revelation.

Think!

You can have a quiet time in a noisy world. How?

It is not a duty but a delight.

People refer to the habit of daily Bible reading and prayer. Of course, a quiet time does involve discipline. But don't miss the point. Your quiet time is really a meeting with the living Christ. Don't focus so much on the mechanics of the process that you miss the Person behind it. If you want to have a more meaningful quiet time, view Bible reading and prayer as daily dialog with God, a daily meeting.

Don't go on a Guilt Trip.

Have you ever heard someone confess, "I'm having trouble keeping a regular quiet time. I know I ought to do better, but ..."? Remember, God really loves you. And he wants to meet with you. Don't focus on guilt for not "paying your dues" to God. Rather, in whatever time you have, focus

on expressing your love and devotion to him. Soon you'll find yourself feeling less guilty and more excited about meeting with God.

Find a Plan That Fits You

Many people say, "I love to cook but I hate to decide what's for dinner." The same principle is true when it comes to a daily quiet time. That's why it's helpful to use a daily Bible reading plan or devotional guide.

Learn to Listen

Prayer is not just talking to God, it's also listening. Take time to still yourself in God's presence. Give your worries and concerns to him. Wait in silence listening to the still small voice of his Spirit. Think back on the experiences of the last day. How did you see God's hand at work? Reflect on what you've read in God's Word. What is God saying to you? Invite the Holy Spirit to be present. When you really love someone, you take time to listen.

Ask questions????

Who is speaking? Who is being spoken to? What is being commanded or said? Why is it being said? How is it to be done? What do I need to do in response to what I am reading.

Living by the Book! By Howard Hendricks

I think we would do well to draw some great principles from taken from "Living by the Book" by Howard Hendricks

Ten Strategies for first rate reading:

Read Thoughtfully; Read Repeatedly; Read Patiently; Read Selectively; Read Prayerfully; Read imaginatively; Read Meditatively; Read purposefully; Read Acquisitively; Read Telescopically

Six Things to Look for:

Things that are emphasized

Things that are repeated

Things that are related

Things that are alike, and unlike

Things that are true to life

What is the big picture?

Five Keys to Interpretation:

- Content
- Context
- Comparison
- Culture
- Consultation

4 Steps to Application

- Know the Text and Know Your Life
- Relate the two
- Meditate
- Practice

Questions to Ask:

- Is there an example for me to follow?
- Is there a sin to avoid?
- Is there a promise to claim?
- Is there a prayer to repeat?
- Is there a command to obey?
- Is there a condition to meet?
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- Is there a verse to memorize? Is there an error to mark?
- Is there a challenge to face?

As you go down your trail of life get the Bible out your saddle back and have a great journey.