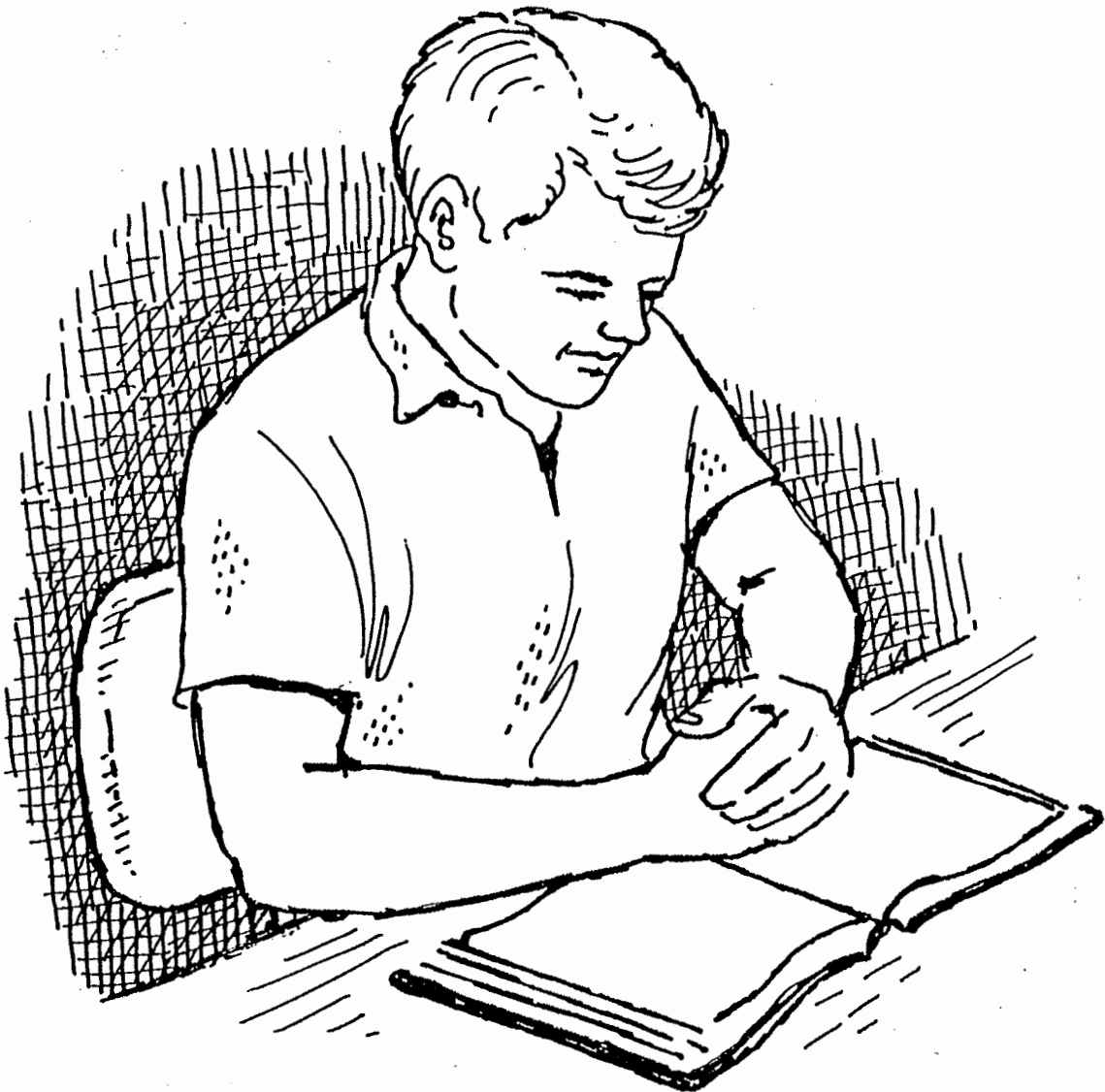


READING GOD'S WORD

**"Blessed is he that readeth"
(Revelation 1:3)**

**Some practical suggestions that might help
you to get more out of your Bible reading.**



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A Complete Literature List is Available Upon Request

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READ REGULARLY!

To insure good physical health we generally have three meals each day. How often do we feed on God's Word (see I Peter 2:2; Matthew 4:4; Job 23:12)? How often do you hear people say, "I'm so busy today that I do not have time to eat lunch and supper"?

Perhaps you think you do not have time to read the Bible every day. A man once made this excuse to the great evangelist, D.L. Moody. He answered, "My friend, if you are too busy to read the Bible every day you are busier than Almighty God ever intended any human being should be, and you had better let some things go, and take time to read the Bible."

It is good to set aside a special time during the day for your reading. Many Christians find the morning to be the best time because they can start the day by hearing from God. Others read in the evenings or during some quiet time during the day (some mothers might wait until after the children have gone to school in the morning). You need to choose a time that will work best for you.

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! A little read with the understanding is better than much that is read in haste. According to I Corinthians 14:19, Paul would probably want us to read five words with our understanding, rather than read ten thousand words so hastily that we do not get anything out of it! Likewise, you can get more from the Lord in five minutes spent unhurried than in thirty-five minutes with your eye on the clock!

READ SYSTEMATICALLY!

Many people do not know where to start reading in the Bible, so they sometimes use the "lucky dip" method. They say, "Lord, show me where you want me to read" and randomly 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 His Word.

To show you some of the dangers in the "lucky dip" method, consider the following illustration: The story is told of a man who used this method. The first verse he happened to turn to was Matthew 27:5 which says Judas "went and hanged himself." 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, Go, and do thou likewise." 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. Again he opened the Bible at random and to his horror his finger fell upon John 13:27: "Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly." As you can see, this method could easily cause a person to take verses out of context!

When we read a short story, we generally start at the beginning and read through until we get to the end. This is how the writer wrote it, and this is the best way to read it. We usually read letters in the same way. The same should be true

with the books of the Bible. The best way to read is to start at the beginning of a book and continue until you get to the end. When Paul wrote the books of Romans, he did not write chapter 13 first and then chapter 8. He began with chapter 1 and then wrote chapter 2, etc. If he wrote it this way, shouldn't we read it this way?

Have you ever thought of reading the Bible all the way through? Many believers have found this to be of great blessing. To assist you in this, Bible Reading Schedules have been published. Most people can read the Bible through in one year if they read for about 1/2 hour each day. The Bible reading schedule will tell you how much to read each day.

READ CAREFULLY!

Pay close attention to every word. Do not overlook any details. Be a good detective and see what you can discover! Sometimes we miss what God has for us because we fail to see what is right before our eyes! Also, be careful not to let your mind start to daydream (to check this you can always ask yourself: What did I just read?).

READ INQUISITIVELY!

As you read the Bible, always be asking questions such as these: Who is the author or speaker? To whom is the passage written or who is the speaker

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addressing? What are the main ideas? Who do the pronouns (“he” “she” “they” “it” “you” etc.) refer to? Some other key questions that will help to bring out the meaning of the passage as are follows:

- Is there any command to obey?
- Is there any promise to believe?
- Is there a good example to follow?
- Is there any sin to avoid?



- Do I learn anything about God?
- Do I learn anything about man?
- Is there anything I can thank God for?

Questions such as these will help make the passage real to you. J.G. Mathieson tells of a little boy who was in the habit of attending the preaching of the Gospel every Lord's day. Being unable to attend one evening, he decided to go to his room and read his Bible. His mother was upstairs caring for the little ones and did not know what her boy was doing. However she noticed he was very quiet. Thinking perhaps he was up to some mischief, she called to him, “What are you doing?” He replied, “I am watching Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead!”

He was reading from John chapter 11. He was so involved and careful with his Bible reading, it was as if he were actually there watching this great miracle! It was all very real to him.

READ LOVINGLY!

Think of a young woman in love with her fiance who is separated from her by many miles. How do you suppose she would read his love letters? As soon as the letter arrives in the mail she would rip it open and quickly read it all the way through with great interest. Then she would read it again, this time very slowly. She would think about every word. She would lovingly meditate upon every phrase and think to her-

self, “I wonder why he said this?” Even after she finishes reading the letter she would remember much of what was contained in the letter and she would continue thinking about it throughout the day.

We need to read the Bible in that way! And if you think about it, is not the Bible God's love letter to us? (Read I John 4.)

READ PRAYERFULLY!

Depend upon the Holy Spirit to teach you. Make it a habit to pray before you read (Psalm 119:18 is a good example of such a prayer!). Why is this important? It is the Lord that gives understanding (II Timothy 2:7).

When your time of reading is through, the real spiritual exercise has just begun. Now you need to go out and put into practice the truth that you read. J. Wilbur Chapman has given us the following suggestions for how we can get the most from the

Word of God:

Study it through. Never begin a day without mastering a verse from its pages.

Pray it in. Never lay aside your Bible until the verse, or passage you have studied, has become a part of your being.

Put it down. The truth that God teaches you, put in the margin of your bible or in your notebook.

Work it out. Live the truth you get in the morning through each hour of the day.

Pass it on. Seek to tell someone else what you have learned.

May the reading of God's Holy Word be a constant source of joy and delight to your heart! ■

“The studious perusal of the Sacred Volume will make better citizens, better fathers, and better husbands.”

- Thomas Jefferson