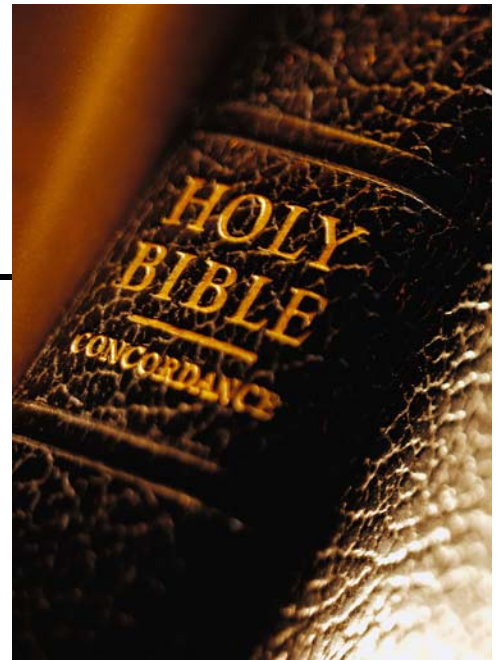


2

Learning to Use Your Bible!



“I believe the Bible is the best gift God has ever given to man. All the good from the Savior of the world is communicated to us through this book.” (Abraham Lincoln)

“A man can no more take in a supply of grace for the future than he can eat enough for the next six months, or take sufficient air into his lungs at once to sustain life for a week. We must draw upon God’s boundless store of grace from day to day as we need it.” (D. L. Moody)

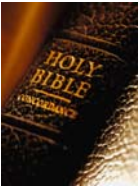
We are here because we agree with the two statements above. We are here because we yearn to be fed by the Springs of Living Water present in God’s Word. But how do we get started? Together, let’s find out!

1. **Translation.** Religious wars have been fought over the issue of which translation a church must use! We would offer only this humble advice.
 - Use a translation that is faithful to the original Bible languages yet fluent in English.
 - King James Version
 - New International Version
 - God’s Word to the Nations
2. **Be careful with Paraphrases.** (Good News, Living Bible)
3. **Size:** Small enough to carry. Large enough to read and take notes.
4. **Helps:** commentary; cross-references, concordance, maps, indexes, tabs
 - Concordia Self-Study Bible
 - People’s Bible Commentaries
 - Thompson’s Chain-Reference Bible
 - Bible Software
5. **Make it your “personal” Bible.** (highlighters, notes, post-its, etc.)
6. **The purpose of reading the entire Bible**
 - Review Bible History
 - Get a view of the “big picture” (the red thread of God’s grace)
7. **Develop a Routine** (first thing in the morning, after a meal, before bed-time, *instead of TV or surfing the Internet*)

Vocabulary

Meditation—“A spiritual exercise consisting in deep continual reflection on a religious theme.”

Studying—“meditating on a portion of Scripture with a view toward all of Scripture”



Methods for Reading the Bible

- Read by units (sections, chapters, books)
- Read by topics (using a Concordance or a Chain-reference Bible help with this.)
- Don't get bogged down! (Luther: "*Pick the ripest fruit first.*")
- Set realistic goals. A chapter a day? 5 minutes a day? 15 minutes? 5 days a week? Through the Bible in a year? In 3 years? (*If you miss a day or a few days, don't give up and quit!*)
- **A Suggested Sequence:**
 1. Read Mark and Acts (The life of Jesus and the history of the early Christian church)
 2. Select 2–4 shorter books from the Apostle Paul. (e.g., Philippians, Ephesians, 1 Timothy)
 3. Read Genesis and Exodus (the beginning of history, and the history of Israel)
 4. Read Hebrews (*hard, but this will give you the Old Testament/New Testament connection*)
 5. Read selectively in different portions of the Psalms. (wonderful devotional material!)
 6. Read the first 10 chapters of Proverbs (practical, every-day wisdom for life)
 7. Read John's Gospel and his 3 epistles (see Jesus' love in words and actions.)
 8. Read the letters of Peter and James
 9. Read Romans and the rest of Paul's epistles (letters to the Christian churches)
 10. Read Joshua through 2 Samuel (the continued history of Israel)
 11. Read Isaiah (The Old Testament "Evangelist")
 12. Read an Old Testament minor Prophet (Hosea, Joel, etc.)
 13. Read Revelation (Last? And for a reason. The better you know the rest of your Bible, the better equipped you will be to handle the book of Revelation!

Digging In

Psalm 19:14

Psalm 4:4

Joshua 1:8

Digesting the Message

Jeremiah 15:16

The Attitude—begin expectantly, humbly, reverently, prayerfully

Psalm 119:18

1 Samuel 3:9

Thoughts to Ponder

As you read your Bible, ask questions like these:

1) Do these verses offer a warning?

A promise? Guidance?

Encouragement?

2) Do these verses convict me? (law)

Comfort me? (Gospel)

Guide me? (Law as a guideline)

Let "CATS" have a place in your Bible reading.

Confession. Adoration. Thanksgiving.

Supplication.