

How to Read the Bible



2 Timothy 2:15

15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

(NKJV)

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So, are we all like this?

- 59%, that's 6 out of every 10 Americans say they read the bible... (that dropped from 73% in 1980)
 - 41% rarely or never read the bible
 - 10% less than monthly
 - 12% monthly
 - 21% weekly
 - 16% daily

First...

- “ ***All Scripture is given by inspiration of God,*** and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness..”(2Tim.3:16)
- We believe the bible was written by God’s divine inspiration, and humanly expressed.
 - Divine – Godly
 - Inspiration- moved, stirred, aroused, influenced

Two ways of reading the bible.

- Intellectual
 - Man puts himself and his mind in control of the text trying to subject its meaning to his own understanding.
- Spiritual
 - Man puts the text on a level above himself and tries and tries to bring his mind into submission to its meaning. This is the way we should the bible, with humilty, awe, and submission.

Why?

- "You search the Scriptures, for in them you have **eternal life**; and these are they which **testify of Me.**" (John 5:39)
- "Your word is a lamp to my feet and **light to my path.**" (Psalm 119:105).

- Your **relationship** with the Holy Bible is concentrated in acquiring the Bible, adhering to it, reading, understanding, contemplating, studying and learning it by heart. And, above all, you should behave according to it and train yourself to follow its commandments.

- “For the word of God *is* **living** and **powerful**, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” (Hebrews 4:12)
- “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. **The words that I speak to you are spirit, and *they* are life.**” (John 6:63)

What does that mean...

- “the scriptures were not given for information, but transformation.”(unknown)
- “And do not be conformed to this world, but be **transformed** by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God”(Romans 12:12)
- People who live long lives together eventually begin to sound alike, to talk alike, and even to think alike. As we walk with God, we take on his thoughts, his principles, and his attitudes. We take on his heart, mind, and personality

How do we know its alive?

- **Treating others with love.** Philippians 2:3-4 says, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others."

- **Sharing your faith.** Matthew 5:14-16 says, "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."

- ¹⁷ Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.
- ¹⁸ But someone will say, “You have faith, and I have works.” Show me your faith without your^[a] works, and I will show you my faith by my^[b] works. ¹⁹ You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!

Set up a plan

- ²⁸ For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has *enough* to finish *it*— ²⁹ lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see *it* begin to mock him (Luke 14:28-29)

Plans are different per personality and per circumstance.

- Write it down..
- Commit to it..
- Post it somewhere you will see it.
- Make a time schedule, you will never truly acknowledge how much time we have unless you write it down.
- Action planning is largely a matter of identifying all the steps that have to be taken before the final result can be achieved

- Read the Bible on regular basis, daily.
- Read every morning so that they might be the subject of your thoughts and meditations during the day.
- Read with understanding, depth and contemplation.
- It would be better if accompanied by prayer.

Put yourself there

- “Your words were found, and I **ate** them, And Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; For I am called by Your name, O LORD God of hosts.” (Jerimiah 15:16)

- Joseph was thrown in the well by his brothers.
 - How did he feel?
 - What was he thinking?
 - Did he hear them talk about him as they were walking away?
 - Do you think he was praying?

- Prodigal son “sat with himself”
 - What was going through his mind.
 - What gave him courage to get up, and go back to his father?
 - What was he thinking on his way home?
- What is important is not the amount you read but the depth in reading. That comes when the Lord's words penetrate deep into your heart touching your feelings...(HH Pope Shenouda)

The bible talks to you personally.

- Try to learn some verses that give certain principles or impressions or some of God's promises and answers to matters that bother you.
- Repeat these verses in your heart many times with enjoyment that makes them stick to your spirit and depths.
- Deal with these verses practically. Make them the subject of your spiritual exercises. Thus you turn the Bible into life and it becomes part of you.
- In your reading do not focus on the letter but the spirit. And if you need help, do not hesitate to ask...

- Build a relationship with the bible
 - The words are alive
- Be diligent
- Set a plan
- Put yourself there
- Personal interaction