

Daily Devotions

A question that I am often asked especially by young Christians is this: why do I need to read the Bible?

We need to read the Bible in order to know not only God's mind for the future but how to develop a daily walk with Him. God uses his word to change people's lives and bring those lives into a deeper relationship with Himself and a greater conformity to His will. (See Romans 12:1-2) For sixteen years now I have spent hours every week reading and studying the Scriptures. God has used this book to transform my life and to give me a great sense of security in a shifting and insecure world and to help me focus on walking with Him for a lifetime.

How then do we read the Bible? Do we just start at Genesis and make our way through to the book of Revelation? There are many ways to go about making a daily habit of reading the Scriptures or having daily devotions; let me mention the three most popular approaches.

One is to follow a reading plan to read the Bible through in a year. The great advantage of following a reading plan is that your reading is arranged for you; in a sense you are being supervised. You are not left to the vagaries of uncertainty: what will I read today, where will I begin, at what point will I end? If you've never read through God's entire book, I highly recommend the undertaking. It will be a tremendous blessing to you.

A second approach is to thread your way through the Scriptures by following a specific theme or topic. It is quite staggering how many themes can be found in Scripture and what great spiritual rewards can be had by acquainting yourself with them. You will find that the truth is that you will find more biblical themes and topics than it is possible to deal with in one lifetime.

A third approach, and one that I find somewhat preferable, is by reading through a book of the Bible. This enables you to get into the guts of the book and understand its message. Every book of the Bible has something unique and special to convey and, as with any book, this can only be understood when you read it from start to finish. This method has the advantage of helping you understand the unity and diversity of the Bible. Reading and pondering on this gives you such an appreciation for the wisdom and knowledge of God in putting together this amazing volume that it fires your soul and quickly brings praise and adoration to your lips.

I have found the best way to read a book of the Bible is to read it through once for a sense of the whole, and then to read it again and again for a month, perhaps reading a chapter a day for a week and then returning to reading the whole. I usually outline the book and take note of anything that strikes me – such as a command to be lived out, an insight to be stored in my heart, a new thought about God or a thought to be shared with someone who is struggling.

This summer, as we begin our study on the themes found in the talk “Many Aspire, Few Attain”, our daily devotions will focus primarily on the second thematic approach mentioned above. The daily readings are set up to help you meditate upon and follow the themes of the weekly study. However, due to their brief length, I would encourage you to incorporate these readings as a supplement into a more comprehensive approach involving methods one or three, but if time only permits you to keep up with the daily assignments, they will still be of great benefit to you.

It is important to remember this summer that all Bible reading ought to be preceded by humility and prayer. This puts you in a spiritually receptive frame of mind to receive what God has to say to you through His Word. The Bible can be read by anyone but it can only be understood by those whose hearts are in tune with God – those who have been born again into a personal relationship with Him through Jesus Christ. This is how the Bible puts it: “The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.” (1 Corinthians 2:14 ESV)

One thing is certain; time spent with the Bible is not wasted. The 98 daily readings that we have given you will certainly prove that over the course of the summer. The more one loves God the more one will love the Bible. And the more one loves the Bible the more one will love God. Always remember when approaching the Scriptures, God's one and only published work, it will yield its treasures only to those who read it, study it, and obey it.

*Based on the audio message “Many Aspire Few Attain” by Walter Henrichsen

**14 Week Devotional adapted and used with permission from Campus Outreach Indianapolis