



Sunday School Lesson: How to Read the Bible
January 8, 2023

Why We Should Read the Bible

Today, many people keep the Bible a closed book. One reason is because we don't realize how much we need it. If someone suggested that you stop eating for a few months, you'd ignore them—and rightly so. We need food in order to survive, and without food we'll grow weak and eventually die.

"The Bible is not an option; it is a necessity. You cannot grow spiritually strong without it."

Job said, "Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food" (Job 23:12). **Is the Bible this important to you?**

Joshua 1:8

This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

This is wonderful command given to Joshua and it applies to us today. We need to be in God's Word every day. Meditate on it and saturate ourselves with the Word of God.

There are so many common questions God answers in the Bible.

What is the purpose to life? Where did I come from? Is there life after death? How do I get to heaven? Why is the world full of evil? Why do I struggle to do good? In addition to these "big" questions, the Bible gives much practical advice in areas such as: What do I look for in a mate? How can I have a successful marriage? How can I be a good friend? How can I be a good parent? What is success and how do I achieve it? How can I

change? What really matters in life? How can I live so that I do not look back with regret? How can I handle the unfair circumstances and bad events of life victoriously?

You see, God wants us to grow our faith and speak to us—and one of the ways that happens is through reading God’s Word and letting its truth sink deeply into our hearts and minds. Through the Bible we learn what He has done to save us and how God wants us to live.

Most of all we discover who He is and what He wants to do in our lives. The Apostle Paul put it this way: “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:” (2 Timothy 3:16).

Practical Tips for Reading the Bible

1. Purchase a Bible

King James Version is close to the original Greek and Hebrew manuscripts. However, it can be challenging to read. So, you can read other versions to help you understand the bible such as: The Amplified Bible (AMP), New Living Translation (NLT), New International Version (NIV) and more.

2. Identify a Plan or Strategy

A lot of Christians struggle with reading the Bible because they don’t have a plan. They just sort of open the Bible up one day, pick out scripture and then the next day or the next week they open the Bible up and pick a new passage of scripture, look at something new or nothing at all. Now, certainly God can work through that. But often you are going to find yourself frustrated if that’s the way you approach it.

Bottom line, if you don’t have a plan you’re not going to really get around to reading the Bible.

There are plans out there that that can guide you. Understand you do not necessarily have to read the Bible from beginning to the end. That's not the most important thing. Pick a plan and stick with it.

YouVersion (Bible App) is one of the most popular apps and is on half a billion phones around the world. This app has thousands of plans to help you know what to read. There's a reading plan for everyone. That's a great resource when you are asking yourself, "how to start reading the Bible?"

3. Plan a Specific Time for Reading the Bible each Day

Make a schedule and keep it strictly. Choose the time which fits you the best - mornings, daytime or evenings.

4. Before You Read, Pray

Pause before you open your Bible and ask God to speak to you. Remember, the Bible is God's Word; it is God's love letter written to His people, which includes you.

Ask God to help you understand His Word. Ask God to use His Word to teach you, to direct you and even to re-direct you, when necessary. Ask Him to use His Word to help you know Him and love Him.

Jeremiah 29:13 says, "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." God loves to reveal Himself to those who seek Him.

5. Write it Down. As you read the Bible ask two questions:

What does this teach me about God?

What does this teach me about how I should live?

No doubt, as you read, you'll find one or two verses that seem to leap off the page. Maybe they speak to an issue you've been grappling with; maybe they answer a question; maybe they give you comfort or encouragement; maybe they provide an example to follow or avoid.

When a verse resonates with you, stop and write it down, word for word. Pause to let the message sink in because these words are God's words to you.

The **Bible** was never meant to merely inform us; the Bible was meant to transform us.

By reading our Bible, we can grow in our faith and know God more. He speaks directly to us through His Word. Let us make a commitment to read His Word each day.