

On a personal note . . .

I pray that your desire would be to live yielded to the Bible with greater faith and more consistency. "For the word of God is full of living power. It is sharper than the sharpest knife, cutting deep into our innermost thoughts and desires. It exposes us for what we really are" (Hebrews 4:12, NLT). Saturating yourself with scripture is essential to becoming the person God created you to be. I want to give you a few words of encouragement and helpful hints.

There are numerous reading plans available to aid you in reading through the Bible. If you don't have access to a reading plan, simply reading through the gospel of Matthew is not a bad place to start either. Reading plans, whether created by you or someone else, are helpful because they help give your reading focus, discipline and accountability.

However you choose to get into the Bible, what's important is that you do get into it, and what's even more important is that the Bible gets into you. If you miss a day, don't be discouraged—just jump back in where you left off. "Perfect attendance" at reading the Bible is not the goal. The goal is to live like Jesus.

Happy reading and I pray that you'll not only read the Bible, but that you'll allow the Bible to read you!

Yours in the Kingdom,

Ron Kastens



Resources

Helpful Books

Shaped by the Word, M. Robert Mulholland, Jr.
Celebration of Discipline, Richard Foster (esp. chapters 2 and 5)
Contemplative Bible Reading: Experiencing God Through Scripture, Richard Peace
Too Deep for Words: Rediscovering Lectio Divina, Thelma Hall
Read, Think, Pray, Live, Tony Jones
Listening to God, Jan Johnson

Helpful Websites

Bible Reading Plans—<http://www.navpress.com/Magazines/DJ/BibleReadingPlans.asp?mscsid=UW8JS1BQSNBQ9LR633VHVHVVJJXS7QEA>
Don't Open Your Bible Until You've Asked These Three Questions—<http://www.navpress.com/Magazines/DJ/ArticleDisplay.asp?mscsid=UW8JS1BQSNBQ9LR633VHVHVVJJXS7QEA&ID=055.10>
How to Break Out of a Spiritual Rut—<http://www.navpress.com/Magazines/DJ/ArticleDisplay.asp?mscsid=UW8JS1BQSNBQ9LR633VHVHVVJJXS7QEA&ID=111.09>
You Can Memorize Scripture—<http://www.navpress.com/Magazines/DJ/ArticleDisplay.asp?mscsid=UW8JS1BQSNBQ9LR633VHVHVVJJXS7QEA&ID=009.03>
Think About It—<http://www.navpress.com/Magazines/DJ/ArticleDisplay.asp?mscsid=UW8JS1BQSNBQ9LR633VHVHVVJJXS7QEA&ID=100.13>

CrossWay Christian Church

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Maurice Eastwick, Associate Pastor
Dave Fordyce, Worship/Creative Arts
Jenna Hardy, Family Ministry: Preschool
Ron Kastens, Leading/Teaching
Tim Lafferty, Community Life
Jim Wagner, Family Ministry: Student

The Bible and Life-change



We believe the Bible to be inspired by God and written down by people of his choosing. It speaks with God's authority through the individual styles and personalities of those who wrote it down. It teaches us how to live God honoring lives, points out when we disobey God, shows us how to correct our ways, and how to continue on God's path. The Bible is the trustworthy authority on what is believed, taught, and practiced by this church. There are no other writings thus inspired by God.

Statement of Faith
CrossWay Christian Church

Bible Intake Tips

Realize the Goal

The goal of involving yourself with the Bible is not to know everything there is to know about the Bible. The goal is not even to know more about the Bible than you do now. In fact, the goal is not even to know the Bible. The goal is to know Jesus (John 5:39) and then begin to live like him. The Bible happens to be one of the best ways we can get to know Jesus.

Use a Current Translation

We recommend starting with the New Living Translation or the New International Version. If you do not have one of these, take one with you the next time you are at CrossWay's facilities. If you are able to pick up a second Bible translation to aid in your study, we recommend either the New Revised Standard Version or the New American Standard Bible (updated).

Start Where You Are

If you are brand new to reading the Bible on your own, don't kid yourself by thinking you'll consistently make time to read for an hour (or even a half an hour a day). Start reading for 5 minutes a day and then spend ten minutes thinking and reflecting about what you've read.

Read/Reflect

We take in a great deal of information through reading. We are known as information junkies. If we read the Bible in the same way we read Sports Illustrated or the newspaper, it will not have much of an impact on our lives. Instead, try reading and then reflecting on what you read. I recommend reflecting for two times the amount of time that you read. For instance, if you read the Bible for 15 minutes, reflect on what you have read for 30.

Less is Often More

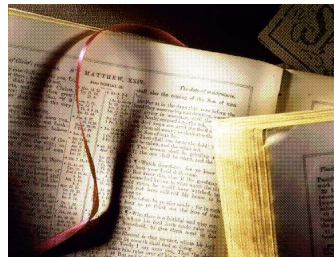
I have found that I seem to benefit more from reading small sections, with good periods of reflection, than I do with trying to read multiple chapters. Unless you are doing a book overview from 30,000 feet, reading a bunch of chapters at one sitting may seem very spiritual, but it often does more for your ego than it does for life change.

Reflect?

Reflect is another term for the biblical concept of meditation. All through the Bible we see the importance of meditating on God's word. During this time of reflection ask the Holy Spirit questions like this: "Where do the things I have just read intersect my life?" "What do you want to bring to my attention today?" "How have I not lived up to this teaching?" "What needs to change in me?" "What spiritual disciplines do I need to put into my life in order to be able to live in the way this passage is calling me to live?" In asking those questions make sure to give the Spirit time to answer. Reflection is often a missing ingredient in the Bible interaction of most Christians, yet during a time of reflection is often when the Holy Spirit does his best work. Then, take a thought with you for the day.

Less is Certainly More than None

If, on a particular day, you find you don't have as much time to read the Bible as you would like, don't ignore it altogether. In this way reading the Bible is like exercise, it may be less than what you would like, but less is still more than none. Even a verse or two from Proverbs or the Psalms can go a long way in the hands of the Spirit.



From the Source

"You search the Scriptures because you believe they give you eternal life. But the Scriptures point to me!"

Jesus of Nazareth
in John 5:39

"All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It straightens us out and teaches us to do what is right. It is God's way of preparing us in every way, fully equipped for every good thing God wants us to do."

St. Paul
in 2 Tim. 3:16-17

"Blessed are you, O LORD; teach me your principles."

King David
in Psalm 119:12

