

LEARN HOW TO READ BETTER

The first thing we need to do is learn to read as for the first time. The moment you come to a passage of scripture and say, "Oh I know this one already, you're in deep trouble. Instead, you need to come to every text as if you'd never seen it before in your life. That's quite a discipline. It involves cultivating a mind-set, an attitude toward the Word.

One thing that helps is reading the Bible in different versions. Reading an unfamiliar version jars your attention so that you see the Bible with a new set of eyes. So do whatever it takes to approach the Word with a fresh perspective. For instance, reading the Word as a love letter. When you received a letter from your loved one, you didn't mumble, "Oh no, another letter from Jay Jay or Kiki!" No, we used to read every single letter 4 or 5 times and that's the same way to read the Word of God!

So below are listed 5 of 10 strategies to first rate reading:

1. Read Thoughtfully - reading thoughtfully involves study and putting your thinking cap on.

2. Read Repeatedly - read a scripture over and over again. Not just once or twice, but 100 times if necessary to gain insight! The genius of the Word of God is that it has staying power and can stand up to repeated exposure which is one of the many reasons that the Bible is unique. You will see things that you've never seen before! Also, under that umbrella of reading repeatedly is listening to the scriptures. Audio Bibles can be done while gardening or cleaning and reading the Bible out loud helps as well.

3. Read Patiently - the fruit of the Word takes time to ripen. This may be a hard assignment for most of us because we live in an instant society and want everything 'microwaved' - meaning that we want it now! But if we are impatient with the Word of God then we'll miss out on a rich harvest. So, in other words, we have to build up some stamina. For instance: taking a book a month and read it several times. This gives you a chance to observe its structure, identify the key terms, investigate the characters, and decide some practical ways to apply the truths to your life. So be patient with the text and be patient with yourself.

4. Read Selectively - ask these 6 questions

- *Who?* Who are the people in the text? What is said about that person or those people you have identified? Then ask, what does this person say?
- *What?* What is happening in this text? What are the events? In what order? What happens to the characters? What is the point of the communication, if there is communication? What's wrong with the picture?
- *Where?* Where's the location? Where is the narrative taking place? Where are the people in the story and where are they coming from? Where are they going? Where is the writer?
- *When?* This questions time...When did the events in the text take place? When was the writer writing? So always determine what time it is...morning, afternoon, evening, etc.
- *Why?* Why is this included? Why is it placed here? Why does this follow that? Why does this person say that? So what "why" does it dig for meaning!

REAL TALK FROM THE WORD

- *Wherefore?* Which is, so what? What difference would it make if I were to apply this truth? Wherefore is the question that gets us started doing something about what we've read. So, remember, the Word of God was not written to satisfy our curiosity; it was written to change our lives. So, with any passage of scripture, we need to ask, so what?

5. Read Prayerfully - Pray before, during, and after your reading of the scriptures because it's a key to effective Bible study. Especially when you get stuck or confused. Ask God right then to help you discover His truth.