

Sundays, you can read through the entire Bible in one year. Alternatively, there are one-year Bibles available that have daily readings in the Old and New Testament, Psalms, and Proverbs.

Vary your study methods. In addition to simply reading through the Bible, consider a topical study, thematic approach, biographical study, chapter or book analysis or a word study. Always keep in mind that Bible study is much more than just an exercise in critical thinking or analysis. Strive to know God personally, not just to learn facts about Him.

Our goal is to become conformed to the image of Christ, and putting the Word of God down in our hearts is just the beginning. Then, we must follow through, obeying and applying what we have learned. That is when we will truly experience the power held in the Book of books!

APOSTOLIC FAITH CHURCH

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THE *Book* OF BOOKS

**IN THE BIBLE, WE FIND
AN UNPARALLELED
RESOURCE WHEN WE
SEEK TO KNOW AND DO
THE WILL OF GOD.**

It's not just a book, it's *the* Book! Who but God could have written a book over a period of almost two thousand years, in three different languages, on three continents, by at least thirty-seven authors, in sixty-six parts—and come up with the most significant literary masterpiece ever written? This Book marches through the pages of history as the one Book that has inspired more music, poetry, and works of art than any other. More than that, it has worked miracles, given hope, and engendered faith in the hearts of men. And most importantly, it has brought us the message of how we can be reconciled to God, our Creator.

Unfortunately, as awe-inspiring and important as the Bible is, it probably graces more shelves and gathers more dust than any other book. Why? Some people choose to ignore its life-changing potential, and relegate it to the bookcase as just another dusty volume recording a man's philosophy. Even Christians who have a sincere desire to know and please God may not have any idea how to study this Book effectively. They readily identify with the Ethiopian eunuch who, when asked if he understood the words he was reading in the Scriptures, responded, "How can I, except some man should guide me?" (Acts 8:31).

The Ethiopian had someone who could explain those words in the Scriptures to him, but most of us are on our own when it comes to Bible study. However difficult that may seem at first, we must remember that the Lord tells us to abide in, observe, feed on, delight in, meditate on, and love His Word. Why? There are many answers.

God's Word is our spiritual life.

"Man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live," we read in Deuteronomy 8:3. We cannot live without physical nourishment, so can we expect to survive spiritually without sustenance? Job

said, “I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food” (Job 23:12). One Christian of years past adopted the motto, “No Bible, no breakfast!” It might be good for all of us to consider whether breakfast or the Bible is more important as we start our day.

God’s Word is our protection against sin.

In Psalm 119:11 we read, “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.” When the Word is deep in our hearts, the Holy Spirit can bring it to mind as a warning when temptation comes our way. Most of us will not be tempted to go out and commit some monstrous crime. But how many times have we felt the urge to make a biting comment, to harbor a grudge, or to treat someone unkindly? In those moments, God’s Holy Spirit can bring a warning through a verse of Scripture.

God’s Word brings us victory over Satan.

We are in a real spiritual battle, and we are fighting a real spiritual enemy. One glance at daily headlines is enough to convince us that evil and wickedness are rampant in our society. We read in Ephesians 6:17 that in this battle, we are to use our weapon, “. . . the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.” Jesus used this weapon three times to gain victory over Satan in the wilderness, and we cannot go

wrong when we follow His example. When you feel oppressed by the enemy, try repeating a Bible verse out loud or singing a song based on Scripture.

God’s Word offers guidance.

Life is like walking through an intricate maze. Perplexing situations and difficult decisions are a part of our day-to-day existence. However, in the Bible, we find an unparalleled resource when we seek to know and do the will of God. In Psalm 119:130 we are told, “The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.” The Bible gives explicit directions on many issues, and principles to guide us in making all the choices that confront us.

God’s Word helps us minister to others.

Do you know someone who is hurting, someone who has a problem in life, someone who is discouraged? We can look to the truths of God and find words to offer that will bring enlightenment, comfort, and courage. Proverbs 22:20-21 explains, “Have not I written to thee excellent things in counsels and knowledge, that I might make thee know the certainty of the words of truth; that thou mightest answer the words of truth to them that send unto thee?”

God’s Word gives us confidence and power in prayer.

“If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you,” we read in John 15:7. God’s words are powerful, and we need to read them, study them, understand them, and apply them to our lives. This is what it means to abide in Christ and to have His words abide in us. When we do that, we can pray with assurance that God hears and will answer.

In spite of these compelling reasons to have daily devotional time with God, it is easy to take the Bible for granted, to be too busy to study, or to lapse into careless habits regarding this vital discipline. Through the ages, some people have believed the Bible, and some have burned it. Some guarded its precious words with their very lives, and others shredded its pages. Some scoffed at it, some ignored it—and some died for it. What will we do with it?

Practical guidelines for daily Bible study.

Pray before you read the Bible. Ask God to give you understanding and enlightenment, and to show you how the Scriptures you study apply in your life. Say like David, “Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law” (Psalm 119:18).

Set aside a specific time each day for Bible study, and keep that appointment. It will be much easier to follow through if you establish a definite time slot as part of your regular daily routine. Many people find that the quiet of early morning, before their hearts and minds become involved with other details, is a good time.

Decide on a specific place to study. Choose a spot where distractions and interruptions will be as minimal as possible. You might want to turn off your phone and let your family know that you’ll be busy during this time.

Choose a good study Bible. Select one that has cross-references in the margins that direct you to other, similar passages. Be sure to choose a Bible translation that is faithful to the original text, such as the King James Version.

Acquire appropriate reference tools. A Bible dictionary or a Biblical word study dictionary can be useful in researching the original meaning of words. Bible atlases and handbooks offer information regarding Bible lands and customs. A commentary presents research in concise form and Biblical order, but be sure you select one that is doctrinally sound. At the same time, remember that reference materials are not a substitute for your own firsthand research.

Make a plan. You may want to use a daily Bible-reading plan and keep a daily reading log. If you read three chapters each day and five on