

How to Properly Read the Bible

by Jason Lovelace

Key Scripture:

2nd Timothy 3.15-17 – *“And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”*

2nd Peter 1.20-21 – *“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”*

Hebrews 4.12 – *“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”*

Ephesians 6.17 – *“And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God...”*

Jeremiah 23.29 – *“Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?”*

John 6.63, 68 – *“⁶³It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. ⁶⁸Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.”*

Is it hard for you to read the Bible? When you sit down to read the Bible, does it seem difficult to understand? Is it hard to make sense of the Bible? How a person reads the Bible makes the difference when it comes to understanding what the Bible Says. How, then, can someone read the Bible and understand? What is the correct way to read the Bible.

To Understand the Bible, We Must Understand What the Bible Is.

The first way to better understand the Bible is to understand what the Bible actually is. So what, exactly, is the Bible? The Bible is not like any other book on the face of the Earth, first, because it is really a collection of books and letters. Secondly, the Bible is divided between the Old Testament and the New Testament. Thirdly, the Bible was written over the course of about 3,000 years. Fourthly, it was penned by more than 40 different writers. Finally, though many different people wrote the Bible, it was actually given under the guidance and inspiration of God Himself. Because of all of this, the Bible is set apart from other books that can be found on earth, and that have ever been written. It is, in essence, more than just a collection of stories bound together between two covers.

A Love Letter from God Himself

First and foremost, the Bible is a love letter. Who likes love letters, anyone? When you get a love letter from someone, how do you feel? The Bible is God's letter of love to the people of the world. Time and time again throughout the Bible, God not only tells about his love, but he does things to show his love, as well. We often hear the phrase, "God is Love". Where does that phrase come from? It comes from the truth of the Bible, God's love letter. The stories of how God took care of the Children of Israel and of the different people in the Old Testament are really stories telling about his love. The stories of Jesus walking the earth, doing miracles, and teaching people is God, again, showing and living his love out in the form of Jesus Christ. The Bible is God's letter of love to people. John 3.16 tells about God's love, and why Jesus came to the Earth. The Bible is God's Love Letter to people.

It's Alive!!!!

Many times in the classic monster movies, a crazy scientist will shout with insane glee, "It's Alive!!!" Though the Bible was not written by a crazy scientist, it is, in fact, alive. In John chapter 6, Jesus himself states that his words are life, and Peter later repeats this later on in John 6. The Bible is living, and anyone who reads it can and will receive the life that it has. Unlike other books, which may tell of life, or describe life, the Bible gives life to all who will come and read. In fact, Jesus later states that the Bible is as important as physical food; the Bible is food for the spirit, and it is living water for the soul. The Bible is living! It is alive!

The Bible is a Tool

Does anyone have a favorite tool? Maybe a teacher has a book that is vital to teaching. Perhaps a gardener has a shovel or a rake that is essential to his or her garden. A farmer may have a favorite horse or tractor. Do you have a favorite tool for your work or job? The Bible, too, is a tool. Jeremiah Chapter 23 says that the Bible is like a hammer. What do workers do with a hammer? Builders use hammers to pound in nails. Other workers use hammers to break rocks or other things that are in need of breaking up. Jeremiah 23 also says that the Bible is like a fire. How do workers use fire? Fire is a cleaner, as it burns off things that are dirty. In the same way, the Bible can burn away bad things in our life like a fire does. Also, like a fire, the Bible shines light into our spirits. It shows us the dark areas of our lives that need change. It lights up the dark places and gives the light of Jesus Christ. The Bible is definitely a tool, and a useful one.

The Bible is a Weapon What kinds of weapons are there in the world today? What kinds of weapons are famous in Japan? Many people, when thinking of Japan, imagine a *katana* or a *wakizashi*. The Bible is also a weapon. Just as fire and hammers are tools, they are also weapons, but even more-so, the Bible is like a sword. Hebrews four says that the Bible is quick, powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword. Hebrews also says that the Bible is so sharp that it can divide the soul and spirit. Further, Ephesians 6 calls the Bible the "sword of the Spirit". Looking at Matthew and Luke, when Jesus was tempted for forty days in the desert, what did he do to fight? How did Jesus make the devil go away? Jesus used the Word of God, the Bible! We need to remember that the Bible is a weapon, and we must use it carefully.

How Do We Read the Bible?

Now that we know what the Bible is, it is important to know how to read the Bible. Many people choose many different ways to read the Bible. Because of this, many people have many different interpretations of what the Bible says. When reading the Bible, it is important to remember these things:

1. Ask for Help! Pray!

The first thing to do when trying to read the Bible, is to ask for help. Maybe you are thinking to ask the pastor for help, or from a Bible Teacher. Though this kind of help is good, the best help to ask for is from God. Before reading the Bible, ask for help from God: pray! James chapter 1 states that if we ask God for wisdom, he will give it to us. When we read the Bible, we need to ask for God's help to understand it! Second Peter states that this is what the prophets of old did. They received the messages of God from the Holy Ghost. In the same way, when we read the Bible we, too, need the help of the Holy Ghost. Before reading the Bible, the best thing to do is pray before starting. Ask God to help you understand the Bible, and he will help you.

2. Don't Read Cover-to-Cover

When you read a book, what page do you start with? Where do you end? Usually, people read from page one to the last page. This can be done with the Bible, as well, but it isn't always the best way. For beginners, the best place to start reading the Bible is with the Gospel of John? Why John? Reading the Gospel of John will give the reader a good idea of Who Jesus is and Who God is. After John, go to Matthew and read the rest of the Gospels, then go to Acts. Again, reading these Books of the Bible first will give the reader a good sense of what God is all about and who Jesus is.

3. Rome Wasn't Built in One Day

Do you know this phrase, this idiom? Do you know what it means? It means that when doing a big project, go slowly, and take one's time. In Exodus, God told the Children of Israel that they would not take the Promised Land right away. He said that they would take over Canaan "little by little". In the same way, reading the Bible needs to be done slowly. For the beginner, the best way is to read one chapter every day. Some chapters will be long, and some short, but it is best to start with one chapter per day. Later, after reading the Bible is easier and better to understand, reading two chapters, then three, and so forth is okay. However, in the beginning, try to read one chapter every day. Spend about 15 minutes and read one chapter a day.

Conclusion – Reading the Bible Doesn't Have to be Rocket Science

Friends, it really is easy to read the Bible. It does not have to be difficult. People make the Bible difficult when they try without help. If we will take our time, ask God to help us understand, and get to know God through the Gospels, we can understand the Bible the way God wants us to. Let us pray.

Prayer – Father in heaven, please help us to read your word. Please help us to understand what you are saying. Please help us, Lord, to know your word. Give us the wisdom, we

pray, to hear what you are saying in the Bible. We ask this in Jesus' Name, Amen.

Verse to Remember:

“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”

– Psalm 119.105