

READ THE BIBLE FOR

LIFE

Listen. Understand. Respond.

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Viewer Guides with Answers. *Read the Bible for Life Bible Study.*

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The number one predictor of a person's spiritual health is whether or not they read the Bible on a daily basis.

16 percent of churchgoers read the Bible every day.

37 percent say that Bible reading and study have made a significant difference in the way they live their lives.

Listen

We can't understand what we don't hear.

Understand

We cannot live what we don't understand.

1. Have a readable translation.

2. Have good tools.

Respond

The goal is not just knowledge but to apply Scripture to our lives so we will make a difference.

“Apply yourself wholly to the Scriptures.”

“Apply the Scriptures wholly to yourself.”

Two Kinds of Space

1. Life space

2. Heart space

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Context

The circumstances that form the setting for a passage of Scripture by which that passage of Scripture can be rightly understood

Four Kinds of Context

1. Historical

Historical events in the biblical era, either events recorded in the pages of Scripture or events that form the backdrop for the biblical story

2. Cultural

Attitudes, patterns of behavior, or expressions of a particular society that affect our understanding of a passage

Bible-study tools:

- Study Bible
- Bible dictionary
- Backgrounds commentary

3. Literary

How a passage fits and/or functions in a book, a group of books, or the Bible as a whole

4. Theological

How a topic fits in the tapestry of theological themes in the Bible

Our context affects the way we read the Bible.

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The Old Testament was the Bible for Jesus and the early church.

Reasons to Read the Old Testament

1. The Old Testament is God's Word to us.
2. The Old Testament is unfamiliar.
3. We can't make sense of the New Testament without understanding the Old Testament.
4. The Old Testament has rich perspective on who God is and who we are as people.

Approximately 40 percent of the Old Testament is in story form.

How to Read the Old Testament Stories

1. Ask questions about the purpose of the story.
 - What kind of God is God?
 - What does God value?
 - What was God's intention?
 - Who are we?

Covenant: a meaningful agreement between God and human beings

2. Notice the details of the story.
3. Learn from the characters.
4. See God as the main hero of the Old Testament story.
5. The smaller stories make up a grand story.

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How to Read the Law

Where does the law fit in the story? How does it relate to God's covenant?

Acts 1: God's plan for all people

Act 2: God's covenant people

The law teaches a covenant people how to live well for God.

The law provides a means of forgiveness when they fail.

How do we as Christians read the law?

1. Are there direct commands that are emphasized in the New Testament?
2. Has the New Testament shown the law to be no longer directly applicable?
3. What are the principles behind this law that reflect God's values?

How to Read the Prophets

Where do the Prophets fit into the story? How do they relate to the covenant?

1. A call to covenant faithfulness
2. Judgment is coming if you don't respond.
3. Hope of a future

How do we as Christians read the Prophets?

1. What does it mean to love God with covenant faithfulness?
2. What are my idols?
3. Address injustice and lack of concern for the poor.
4. God still calls us to repentance.
5. What is God's kingdom vision for the future?

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Guidelines for Reading the Psalms

1. Understand the various functions of the psalms.

Three ways psalms help us:

- They give expression to my thoughts and prayers.
- They help me reflect on God and on life.
- They form my thinking about God and life.

2. Embrace the figurative language of the psalms.

What truth or experience is being described through this word picture?

3. Understand the structure.

Parallelism: a line that is repeated in some way

4. Use the psalms in prayer to express a range of emotions and life experiences.

Three Ways to Use Psalms in Your Prayer Life

1. Worship
2. Petition
3. Lament

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Sixty percent of the New Testament is in story form.

Keys to Reading the New Testament Stories

1. Understand the cultural context of the story.

Bible-study tools:

- Study Bible
- Bible dictionary
- Backgrounds commentary
- Bible commentaries

2. Understand how the story books of the New Testament work.

3. The Gospel writers arranged their stories to emphasize certain points.

4. What does this story tell me about Jesus?

5. Read the crucifixion and resurrection as the climax of the story.

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How to Read Jesus' Teaching

1. Jesus' teaching is often organized according to main themes.
2. Jesus' teaching revolves around a central message.

All the teaching of Jesus comes together around the idea of the kingdom of God.

3. Jesus' message was communicated through a variety of methods.
 - Jesus used object lessons in His teaching.
 - Jesus used drama in His teaching.
 - Jesus used figures of speech in His teaching.
 - Jesus used parables in His teaching.

A parable is a story that is set alongside a spiritual truth in order to focus on that spiritual truth.

4. Jesus' teaching has a primary goal: discipleship.

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How to Read the New Testament Letters

1. Understand the historical situation or occasion of the letter.
2. Understand the structure of the letter.
3. Move from culture to culture thoughtfully.

Three Forms of Literature in Revelation

1. Letter
2. Prophecy
3. Apocalyptic

Guidelines for Reading Revelation

1. Read in light of the original audience.
2. Study the use of symbols.
 - Pay attention when John interprets a symbol.
 - Read in light of the Old Testament.
 - Utilize a good commentary.
3. Understand how relevant Revelation is for today.

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1. Work personal reading of the Bible into your daily schedule.

- Read broadly and meditate prayerfully.
- Have realistic goals and a good plan.
- Have a consistent time and place.
- Have good tools and a pen in hand.
- Live what you read.

2. Read the Bible with your family.

- You are the primary disciplers of your children.
- Have a pattern of Bible reading and listening.
- How are you teaching your children the big story of Scripture?

3. Encounter the Bible as a part of the church.

- Receive the Word preached as an act of worship.
- Participate in small-group study as an act of community.
- Encourage others in the Word as an act of ministry.

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