

Becoming a Bible-Reading Leader

*Detailed Outline
Part 3 of 3*

IV. Practical Helps for Reading Holy Scripture (cont.)

2. Create a place and a time.

C. Establish a regular time for your Bible reading.

We live in a very busy world today, so we need to fight back and push back and take control of our time. The time is there, we just have to use it properly.

How often should we read the Scriptures?

John Blanchard writes:

“Surely, we only have to be realistic and honest with ourselves to know how regularly we need to turn to the Bible. How often do we face problems, temptations, pressures? Everyday. Then how often do we need instruction, guidance and greater encouragement? Everyday. To catch all these felt needs up into an even greater issue, how often do we need to see God’s face, hear His voice, feel His touch, know His power? The answer to all these questions is the same; every day. So, we should strive to every day read the Word of God, even if it’s for a short time.”

Now, I’m realistic about life and I know you will not read every day, but let’s be as consistent and persistent as we can.

Now some of you are very, very busy—I know that—so you need to set aside a night or a Saturday morning or a Sunday evening that you have special time with the Lord and you get caught up on these things.

I really advise young men to have one night minimum that you are home, and after you’re done with the family you have several hours with the Lord, catching up on your Bible reading. Doing your Bible study, doing reading that you need to do.

3. Use a good, readable Bible and become familiar with it.

It’s very important that you have a good Bible. Now, most of you are serious Bible students because you are leaders in the church. You need an essentially literal Bible.

I’ve seen people with Bibles that the print is so small, you would not want to read it. It hinders you from reading. It should be a good size print, as much white space as you can get so that your Bible’s comfortable to you. It becomes familiar to you, and you’ll love to open it. I’ve seen Bibles that I would never read in a million years. You practically have to a magnifying glass to read the thing, and that’s why people don’t read it. And then now this is a personal thing, I like to mark my Bible, and I like to cross-reference all the time. You may not want to write on your Bible, but I like

to write in my Bible, and to make it very, very comfortable, and know where things are and find things, so that's often what I'm trying to do with my Bible.

You don't want it to be a foreign book.

4. Read-meditate on the Bible.

Oh, this is a very important point. It's something that I enjoyed most thoroughly. It's really one of my favorite things to do in the day, to read slow meditation on the Word.

Thomas Watson:

"The reason we come away so cold from reading the Word is because we do not warm ourselves on the fire of meditation."

"The tree of your spiritual life thrives best with meditation because it helps you absorb the water of God's Word."

You need to read through the whole Bible, but you also need to learn careful, quiet meditation on the Bible.

Spurgeon:

"You are retired to your private devotions. You've opened the Bible and you begin to read. It is always better to read a little and digest it as meditation than it is to read much then think you have done a good thing by merely reading the letter of the word. For you might as well read the alphabet backwards and forwards as read a chapter of the scripture unless you meditate on it and seek to comprehend its meaning. The business of the believer with his Bible open is to pray, 'Lord, give me the meaning and the spirit of your word or it lies open before me. Apply your word with power to my soul threatening and promise, doctrine or precept, whatever it may be lead me into the soul and marrow of your word.'"

Spurgeon:

"In your private devotions strive after vital godliness, real soul work, the life giving operation of the Spirit of God in your hearts."

5. Use Bible reading projects.

Example: Pick a subject, or maybe a couple subjects, and build your own topical Bible concordance. When I wrote the book *Leading with Love*, this is what I did. I took several years of reading through the Scriptures, and I typed up every verse on love, all from the New Testament; and then I start to put them in categories, and I began to get a mental picture of the whole of Scripture on this topic.

6. Listen to the Bible.

A lot of people do not like to read. They're not good readers. Reading is difficult for them and so listening to the Bible read to you is a good way to read the Bible.

7. Have someone hold you accountable for your Bible reading.

I read about an article about dieting. In it, a scientist was quoted saying, "Send the message to yourself by your computer every day to remind yourself of what you want to do." This is because you forget. The same goes for reading the Bible. Send a message to yourself through your computer or through a friend or spouse.

8. Pray the Bible.

Use your Bible to improve your prayer life. You can pray to God as you read the words of Scripture. You can pray the statements of Scripture back to God. You can also add new words and expressions to your prayers by adopting the words of Scripture.

Sometimes in our prayers we run out of words and it sounds like we just repeat the same old words, but by reading the scripture and bringing the scripture into your prayers it creates new terms and prayers.

You can memorize the Scriptures that impact you. Some people memorize whole books of the Bible so that they have the Scripture in their minds at all times.

The psalmist said, **I've stored up your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.** (Ps. 119:11)

9. Be doers of the Word and not just readers of the Word.

Be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourself. If anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he's like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror, for he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he is like. (James 1:22-24)

It's not just a matter of reading and knowledge and learning, it is doing, it is living it, it's putting into shoe leather. It is thinking, talking, speaking as the scripture teach us. It's obedience to the word of God, that's what he's saying.

So let us be, as the Christian leaders, persistent, consistent Bible readers; but even more importantly, let us be doers of the Word, practitioners, not just theoreticians.