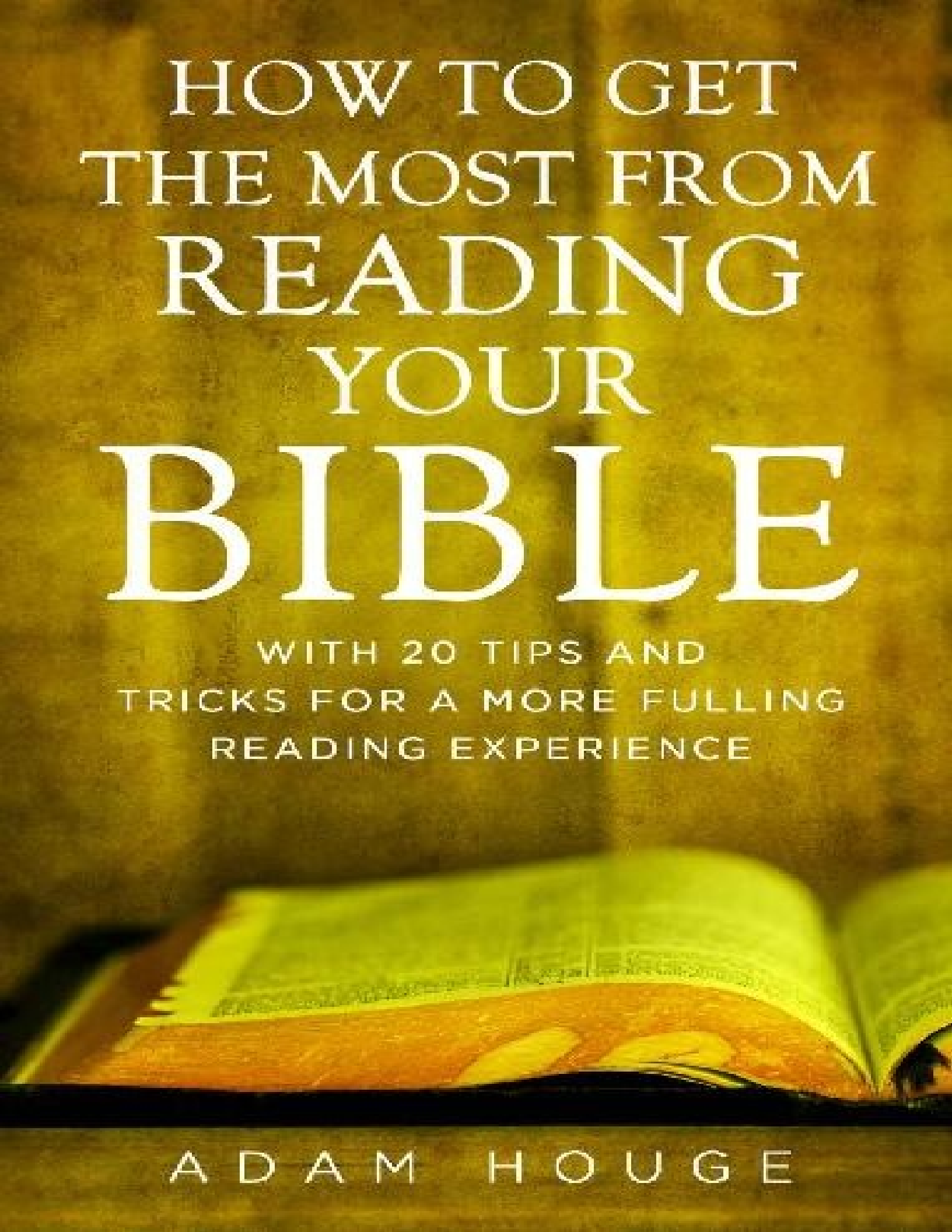
HOW TO GET THE MOST FROM READING YOUR BIBLE

WITH 20 TIPS AND TRICKS FOR A MORE FULLING READING EXPERIENCE



ADAM HOUGE

How To Get The Most From Reading Your Bible™

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Introduction

The Bible is the greatest and most influential book in all of human history. People have fought for, bled for it, have been tortured for it, have lived for it, and have died for it. It is the most powerful and influential book that has ever existed.

There is no greater book in the world that men must live by, because contained in it are the words of salvation found in Christ Jesus. There is no other Name under heaven by which men must be saved Jesus Christ. And there is no other word, than the word of God that can deliver a soul. This book is the gospel of salvation and apart from the knowledge of it, no man can be saved. This is the word of God and Jesus Christ is the Word made flesh. The closer we get to the Scriptures, and the more we grow in them practicing them daily, the closer we are to the Lord.

Knowing this, the need for understanding the Bible is of infinite importance. We need to seek God on a daily basis in His word. Personal Bible study time with God in the secret place, should be a daily practice. But when we read the word some things help us get more out of it than others. Therefore it is necessary to understand what will help us get the most from reading the Bible.

Pray And Let God Speak To You

When we read the word there are times that the words speak out to us and there are times that it doesn't. Many people suggest that you should read until the word speaks out to you. But there are a few things that need to be understood before doing this.

For example why does the word speak to us? Should we read when it doesn't speak to us, or when it speaks to us? Does it even matter?

When the word reads to you and you feel connected with the pages, this is the Holy Spirit making the scriptures come alive. He is speaking to you due to certain issues or lessons that need to be addressed in your life. He is your Counselor and Guide sent by the Father. He will speak to you in the word and interpret the meaning of the Scriptures. He will bring understanding to you because in Christ He is your source of wisdom. You have the mind of Christ because the Holy Spirit is the mind of Christ in you.

In order for us to become more connected with the word, we need to become more connected with the Holy Spirit. Faith comes from the word of God and salvation comes by faith. Yet the Scriptures tell us that faith comes through hearing. As it is written,

"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Rom 10:17

But how do we "hear" the word when we read it? We hear it when the Holy Spirit speaks it to us inwardly when we read. When we understand this, it becomes important that the word would speak out to us. It needs to speak out to you, because these are the areas in your walk that God is teaching you. And we must all be taught by God. As Jesus said,

"It is written in the prophets, 'and they shall all be taught by God.' Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me." John 6:45

In order to come to Jesus you need to be hearing from and taught by God. So then the question remains, "why do we have to read the word awhile before it starts to speak to us?" When you've been busy throughout the day and haven't allowed your thoughts to dwell on the Lord, it can be difficult to feel His presence. But when we focus on Him and His word suddenly we feel Him there again and are able to hear from Him.

The reason why you hear the Lord after reading awhile is because you haven't

been listening to Him throughout the day. Then when you sit down to incline your ear to Him, you start hearing Him again. Otherwise you should be able to sit down and hear God immediately when you read.

If your ear is continuously inclined to Him as soon as you open the pages they will speak out to you. But if you haven't been paying attention to Him, like you should, then it becomes difficult to hear. This is why we worship before Sunday sermon rather than afterward: It wakes us up both physically and spiritually. Then with our spiritual minds more circumspect, we are able to hear the Lord more clearly during the sermon. Similar to this, it is good to sit in the presence of the Lord first before reading. Set some time aside before you read to pray and worship. Then when you feel the Lord with you, focus on His presence and open up the word. Where ever God wants you to read you will feel the pages speaking out to you.

There is a second reason, however, that will keep you from hearing until you've read a while. Perhaps what you're reading God isn't speaking out to you. Then after you've read awhile you finally made it to the section of the text God wants to speak to you. Although it's good to always read the word, it is better to hear the word -spiritually speaking. It is better to read what God is speaking to you. If God is speaking to you in an entire book, then dive headfirst into it. He will often do that seeing that the Bible is your schoolbook.

God is your teacher and He is guiding you through the schoolbook. Your homework is real life practice, and your tests are real life experiences. Understanding this, it is most important to pray before you read. Ask the Lord to give you wisdom and help you understand the Scriptures. Pray for discernment and open ears to hear. Then when God speaks, pay attention to what He is saying to you.

Incline Your Ear

Write And Meditate On What God Says

God speaks with the still small voice. His voice is much like a whisper. Consider the nature of a whisper for moment. It's quiet and difficult to hear. But a whisper is spoken between two intimately attuned people. They whisper to each other to keep the conversation private. God is relational and He is keeping His conversation with you intimate and private.

His quiet voice is a reflection of His relationship with us. He often whispers because He's speaking intimately to from His heart. It's important to understand that everything He says to you is from His heart and for your eternal life. There could be nothing more important the words He gives you. His words are for your deliverance and your salvation. Without His word, we cannot be saved.

Understanding this we need to sit forward in our relationship with God and incline our ears to hear Him. He speaks quietly not only for intimate reasons but also that we should listen up. It gives opportunity for free will, because we now have a choice to brush off His voice or to listen to it. But if God were always loud then we would be more likely to listen to it, due to fear. But by gentleness He gives a chance for free will, and perfect love. Those who freely love, perfectly love.

When He speaks quietly it requires you to care about what He's saying. If you love the Lord your God with everything you are, then you will care about what He has to say to you.

The words He speaks inwardly are infinitely important, infinitely wise, and eternally impactful. Therefore beloved, incline the ears of your heart and listen carefully to the gentle whispers of God. Make yourself more sensitive to His voice and incline your ears to Him. In this you will hear God frequently and grow to better understand His voice. The more you incline your ear to Him the more you will grow in discernment of His will.

A little child learns to speak from their parents. They cannot learn unless they care about what their parents are saying. When they do care, they can catch on quickly to the human language. Likewise you need to sit forward on the edge of your seat in your relationship with your Father and care about what He has to say. In doing this you will quickly learn the language of God.

It will become easier for you to understand what He's saying and His will shall

be clearer for you throughout life. Not that it will always be clear all the time but it will be easier to discern His will a majority of the time. But that God calls us to incline our ears for salvation's sake is evident. As it is written,

"Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you— The sure mercies of David." Isa 55:3

When you pray that the Lord will speak to you in the Scriptures, the next thing to do is find where you hear Him speaking. Read there and absorb the meaning, do not breeze through it. Whenever you feel as if God is sharing something with you then write it down. Always write what God gives you. If He is interpreting the scriptures or comparing it to life, write everything.

Writing helps you remember it longer and it will be there for you for later reference. I use a New King James wide margin Bible, for that purpose. That way I can write my notes in the Bible and not over the words. But whatever you choose to do is up to you. Your Bible is a study book, and although the words are sacred they're most sacred not when they're written on paper but when they're inscribed in your heart. Therefore Beloved, write down what you're learning. If you choose to write it on a piece of paper then shuffle it in the pages where it corresponds with the Scriptures. Leave it in your Bible for later reference. That way every time you open the word it will be right there for you.

Also this gives you opportunity to take notes on Sunday. Then by writing what you heard God speaking through the sermon, you can add it to the corresponding scripture that God may have spoken to you at another point in time. It can help bring a more full picture of the word of God to you. And thus it will enhance your understanding of the Scriptures.

In school the teacher always wants you taking notes. These notes will be useful for later tests and homework. Likewise if you're taking notes it can help you in life practice and in the trials and testings of life. I can't number the times I was in the middle of a trial when I came across a sheet of paper filled with notes that I wrote pertaining to the situation. When I read the notes, which the Lord spoke to me months prior to my situation, I heard God and it encouraged me. Why would we hear God from our own writing? Because we are writing what God is saying to us and not what is in our own heart. When we do this it gives us an opportunity for encouragement later in life when we need it.

Also by taking notes it shows God that you're serious about what He's teaching you and your relationship with Him. The more you take notes the more you will hear God speaking to you in the Scriptures. This happens for several reasons.

The first is that God sees you're serious and He will talk to someone who's listening. Would you talk to someone who doesn't listen to you? Neither does God talk to us very often if we're not listening. But when we incline our ears to Him, He increases His speech.

Also by writing when God speaks to you, you're training yourself to listen for the voice of the Lord. You are learning to better discern the difference between words of your own heart and the words of God spoken to you by the Holy Spirit. When you can make this distinction it becomes easier to follow God and not be led astray by your own heart. When you write you're practicing communication with God. Practice makes perfect, and the more you write the words He speaks to you the more you will understand Him.

After God has spoken to you it's good to meditate on the Scripture He's giving you. Go back over your notes and meditate on them. Meditate on the Scripture itself and take some time to sit in the Lord's presence. As you focus on His presence and turn your ears to Him it will be easier to hear Him. Then as you meditate it gives you opportunity to grow even more in the Lord. Godly Christian meditation is a necessity in our walks. But what does this meditation look like?

The practice of medical meditation requires you to empty your mind of all thoughts and to relax perfectly. Breathing deeply and rhythmically. This meditation is for the purpose of deep relaxation which is good for many health benefits. Many other religions practice this kind of meditation and bring a spiritual twist to it.

But how do we as Christians meditate in Christ? Sometimes it is good to find a place of peace -a secret place with God. Then in the secret place you need to empty your mind of all things as you relax and rest in the presence of the Holy Spirit. Then as you sit in His presence you need to listen to the Lord as He speaks to you. In this you are mediating on the word of the Holy Spirit and thus can grow in understanding the voice of God. Meditate on His presence and focus your mind on it. Listen intently with your spiritual ears both inwardly and outwardly, then you will begin to hear the voice of God.

Take the time to hear from God on a more frequent basis. In this you will grow in sensitivity to His voice, and you'll hear Him speaking to you all day every day nonstop. You will know what His will is for you every moment of the day. In the end there will be very few times that you won't understand His will for you. Then when you don't understand, all you have to do is pray and seek Him and

wait for Him to speak. Because you perfectly understand His voice from having practiced it continuously, it will be easy for you to know His will the moment He answers your prayers.

When we write what He speaks it helps us to discern His voice. This is good for later meditation on His presence and His goodness. When we meditate on His goodness and His love, it causes our hearts to bubble over with an inexpressible joy that results in never-ending worship. Therefore beloved, meditate on the words He speaks to you and practice them daily. Meditate on them by example and practice them. Incline your ear to Him and listen carefully to His inward voice. Grow in discernment, and you will have a more fulfilling experience when you read the Bible.

Memorize The Words He Speaks In The Bible And Not Just Any Scripture

When God speaks to us, the words He gives us are for real life practice. It can be difficult, however, to practice what we learned unless we remember them from day to day. It goes without saying that we need to memorize the scripture God speaks to us.

Many of us go about memorizing the word by picking verses we like, or ones that sound good. But it is better to memorize what God is speaking out to you in the scriptures. As we said before God will lead you through the scriptures and teach you what you need to know to walk with Him uprightly.

He is our teacher and seeing that this is the case we should focus on the lessons at hand and master them. A good student puts to memory the key elements of a teacher's lessons from the text book. Then when it's time for a test, they already have everything they need to know memorized. They pass the tests and end up not only being an 'A' student, but an honor student. If then you being the student of God, want to be honorable, then you must put to memory the lessons He's giving you. As it is written,

"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." 2Ti 2:15

Any scripture that pops out to you and seems alive is something God wants you to memorize. If it's an entire book then sit down and be devoted to memorizing it. Many of the believers in the early church had the scriptures memorized. They weren't all able to carry scrolls with them and as a result they had to put to memory everything they could. Look at Stephen's testimony just before he was martyred. He skillfully and accurately paraphrased the scriptures before His persecutors killed him. It was obvious that he had much of the scripture memorized for daily practice.

If you find it difficult to memorize I speak in great detail on this subject in my books How To Memorize The Bible Quick And Easy In 5 Simple Steps and How To Memorize The Entire Bible In No Time Flat. Being a preacher, I need to know the scriptures like the back of my hand. I'm always running into opportunities to share the Lord and so need to have as much scripture as possible memorized. Through much prayer and meditation I have memorized several books of the bible word for word. I believe that any Christian can do this

following the methods I outline in my books, if they put forth the effort. Sometimes bible studies will come up at places you don't expect when you don't have a bible handy. In that case it's good to have the entire book in question memorized that you want to study with a colleague.

Memorizing large portions of scripture is surprisingly easy. It takes much work and dedication however. But in short if we first begin with the scripture God gives us, the process gets easier. Then from there we should choose our memorizing method of choice. I use the chunk method for my memorizing. In the chunk method, we simply take the scripture and break it down into easier to memorize pieces. Then after those pieces are memorized we put them together and memorize them as one whole unit.

After you have decided what method works best for you, then pray for wisdom before you start. Ask the Lord to be your help when memorizing and then having faith, lean on Him for strength. Even as the scriptures say,

"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him." Jas 1:5

Only you must ask in faith. It is God's will for you to have wisdom. He will not with hold it from you, nor do you have to say "Your will be done." It's already God's will and He'll give you what you pray for if you pray in faith. Even as the scripture goes on to say,

"But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.

For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways." Jas 1:6-8

God wants you to be wise. He wants you to walk in Him uprightly and He will give you every tool you need to do so. He will not leave you without help, but even as He said He will send you the Helper who is the Holy Spirit.

"And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you." John 14:16-18

The Spirit is your help in time of need. When we need to memorize and grow in wisdom He will be our strength in our weaknesses. He is the infinitely wise

mind of Jesus in us. He will aid us in every way possible to sustain us in the Lord. He, being the very beating heart of Christ, will never leave you helpless, only you must have faith in Him and be willing to lean on Him.

Can you have faith that the Holy Spirit will help you memorize? Are you willing to press hard into God by faith while you memorize? You must meditate on His presence and be strengthened by Him, then through time you will see that it is easy to memorize entire books of the bible in no time flat.

Carry The Words With You

When we read the word we try to carry the words with us and seek to practice them daily. But the best words to practice are, as we said before, the ones God gives to us as we read. Whatever speaks out to us we should be practicing daily.

It is always good to read before you start your day. Find a spot that speaks out to you and meditate on it. Mark it and memorize it later. But immediately after your morning devotion continue to practice what you learn. Go forward with your lessons and be careful to practice them. If you're having a devotion before work, take the words with you to work and practice them there. If you practice the scriptures everywhere you go in life you will conduct yourself in godliness 24/7.

Be diligent to practice the lessons you've learned on a day to day basis. Make it your aim to grow in the Lord continuously. Push hard into Him and try to grow daily. God is willing to teach you only be willing to commit yourself to walking in Him daily.

Make it your effort to practice what you learned and to be an example of Christ to all those around you. This goes without saying but sometimes when we get caught up with a busy life we forget to carry Christ with us, in our actions, to the work places, etc. It can be easy to blend in with the crowd at our jobs, but God calls us to be separate. We have been sanctified by the Lord. When a tool of the temple is sanctified, it is spiritually cleansed and set apart for the service of God. We, like these tools, have been cleansed in Christ and set apart for His purpose. Therefore beloved, remember to remain sanctified and to come out from those around you.

Others find Christ in us through His love at work in us. They do not find Him through us becoming like the world, but by being different from the world. The love of Jesus is what separates us from them. There is much brokenness associated with the world. If unbelievers see that your life is the same as theirs they have no reason to believe that you have anything better than them.

We should not "be like the world to let the world in." But rather by sanctification we should show the world how far the east is from the west. Not only by holy conduct but by loving conduct. The love of the world is cold and conditional. But when they see the unconditional love of God at work through us, toward them, they are drawn to the message we speak. Therefore beloved make it your aim in everything to carry the words with you and practice them daily.

Remember to be a light always, and to show kindness to all men. Both those who are kind to you, and those who are hurtful. In this kindness they will find Christ.

When you carry the words with you, you can be an example to all men, both to the believer and unbeliever. You can encourage your brothers and sisters, lifting them up in the Spirit of God. And you can lead the unsaved to Christ.

The point is not merely to preach the word, but to live it. Yet some have a custom of living the love of God yet not preaching it. We must be doing both always. God saves us by His word, and faith comes through hearing it. If we don't preach it, then no one will get saved. Remember to memorize the word and carry the scriptures with you. When you write what God speaks to you, you're making your heart more sensitive to His speech. Then when you're called to witness for example you will be more sensitive to exactly what God wants you to say. You will be accustomed to listening inwardly to the voice of the Holy Spirit and so give the message of God to the people. The unsaved find Christ because they are drawn by the Father. As it is written,

"No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.

It is written in the prophets, 'and they shall all be taught by God.' Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me." John 6:44-45

Seeing that this is the case, we need to give them what God gives to us. They need to hear and learn from the Father. Let Him speak to you what you should say. He knows exactly what they need to hear because He's been drawing them their entire lives.

Speak the word and live the word. We are called to let our speech be seasoned with salt. Christ is that salt so speak of His word always with others. With the brethren constantly discuss the goodness of the Lord. With the unsaved share the truth of His gospel and love. The world always speaks idly, so turn those conversations around into a witnessing opportunity. No matter what you're doing, turn all time spent with the brethren back into real, sincere and meaty fellowship.

Fellowship is more than time spent together in friendship. Fellowship is done over a topic or interest. True fellowship can be defined as a group of people meeting together for a shared interest or aim. Let not that interest or aim be idle

activities. But true biblical fellowship is that which is done in Christ. He should be our shared interest, and our aim should be to become well pleasing to Him, together as family in Christ.

Share the Lord with one another and so be edified by one another. Be the example of Christ to your friends. If they aren't bringing everything back to Jesus, then you be the first. Bring every conversation back to the Lord and let your words be seasoned with salt always. Even as it is written,

"Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one." Col 4:6

Edify one another and keep your tongue seasoned with the salt of Christ. If you're reading often and always memorizing there will be much to share. God will lay things on your heart often, because you have His word on the tip of your tongue always, and you have grown sensitive to His voice. You should strive in such a way that your brethren will say of you, that you have edified them every time they visited you. Before long brethren will begin noticing the grace of God in you, and will look up to you because of your wisdom. But true wisdom is not that which is contained in the head, but in the heart. True wisdom is found in conduct and not in word only.

Even as we read,

"My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth." 1Jn 3:18

Make it your daily striving to grow in the scriptures. Share what you've learned with others. And if someone needs help understanding something, and God is inclining your heart, step forward and let the Lord speak through you. Say what God gives to you, and be an encouragement always. As it is also written,

"…be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity." 1Ti 4:12

When you walk in the Spirit like this your conduct will always be with love, holiness, and purity. We should always walk in purity before all men. We ought to walk in love and share it always. Live the word and walk in the wisdom of it at all times. In so doing you will be an example of the love and goodness of God, as a good ambassador of Christ, toward the unbeliever. Even as it is written,

"Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time." Col 4:5

Share Christ with them that they may find Him. God will lead you in the way

you should evangelize. But it all begins with the time you spend reading the Word. Read the Scriptures often and grow in sensitivity to His voice. By doing those two things you will see a dramatic difference in your walk. Hence you will get the most out of reading your bible.

Read Often And Be Devoted

Before reading it's always good to pray and to ask the Lord to lead you. If you're in between books and don't know where to start, ask the Lord to guide your fingers and flip open the pages. Sometimes He will, and you will find that the first thing your eyes meet is speaking to you.

Even though this is a good way to read, it is better to stick to a book. If God is speaking to you in a particular book keep going back to it day after day until you read it in its entirety. Highlight the passages that God spoke to you, and memorize them if necessary. When you memorize a lot of passages it becomes easier to notice where scriptures are saying the same thing. Then you can cross reference them more easily and efficiently. But make an effort to stay in a book. It can be good to flip through the pages for encouragement, but also keep in a book and sit in it until it's done.

Remain committed to reading the word. Seek the Lord in the Scriptures daily and spend at least an hour a day reading. It is best to spend an hour all at once and not break it up throughout the day. There is nothing wrong with a 10 minute devotion in the morning or before going to bed but if you want to get more from the Bible you need to spend more time reading it.

A relationship with God is like any relationship. How much time you spend trying to make it better will determine how good it will be. God created human relationships for us to better understand how we relate to Him and how He relates to us. For example in marriage if you want to be closer to your spouse spend much time studying him or her. You need to study them, learn their likes and dislikes, and have a serious heart to please them. If you do these things every relationship will be blessed.

Likewise we need to be serious about our relationship with God. We need to have a heart to please Him, to learn His likes and dislikes that we can follow His will, and we need to study Him diligently. The better we understand God to closer to Him we are. The closer to Him we are, the easier it is to hear and discern His voice. And the easier it is to hear and discern His voice, the easier it is to follow Him and please Him by remaining committed to His will.

It is His will for us to grow in His word. It is by His word that we find salvation. Without His word there would be no gospel. Therefore beloved make it your aim to be well pleasing to God in all things. If you grow in understanding and

practicing His word you will grow in Him. This is how we grow in Christ: by growing in the word.

Babies grow very quickly. By the time a child is two they have grown so much that they're half their total height. A person has as much growth in the first two years of their childhood, as they do for the last 16 years.

But how do babies grow so much? It's through mama's milk and the substances found in the milk. Likewise the word is our milk and we as infants in Christ should devour as much of it is possible. The more you grow in the word the stronger you'll become in Christ. The Holy Spirit interprets the word to us and shows how to practice it daily. But even as it is written,

"As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby" 1Pe 2:2

Let your love for the Lord guide you, and desire to grow in His word. Hunger and thirst for it. Understanding the word of God is as necessary for your soul as food is for your body.

If you want to get more out of the Bible you need to desire it and read it on a daily basis. The faithful and committed servant strives to please the master. If then you would strive to please the Lord strive to grow in His word.

20 Tips And Tricks For A More Fulfilling Reading Experience

A few things in this chapter will summarize what we previously mentioned, however there are many other valuable tips worth mentioning. Some of the best ways to get the most out of your reading experience is as follows:

1) Revere The Word Of God

Always assume in every passage that the Scriptures are the word of God, not the word of the author. Imagine it as Jesus speaking directly to you, especially in the books that exhort you, such as the epistles and letters. Even with the Old Testament, picture it as Jesus talking and suddenly many scriptures will have a new light.

A few books that have an abrupt revelation would be all the letters of Paul, 1John, 2John, 3John, Psalms, Proverbs, etc. When the Proverbs say, “My son” do not imagine it as David talking to Solomon or Solomon talking to you, but as Jesus speaking. Or for example in 2John, if you imagine it as Jesus speaking, the scriptures have a new meaning. Imagine this as Jesus talking to you through the Holy Spirit:

“Having many things to write to you, I did not wish to do so with paper and ink; but I hope to come to you and speak face to face, that our joy may be full.” 2Jn 1:12

Now suddenly you see the eagerness of the Lord to send the Holy Spirit upon you, right here, right now. Also, ironically, 2 John is one of the last books of the bible. It is as if God was saying, “I Am about to finish penning the bible, then when it’s done I’m going to meet with you face to face through My Holy Spirit.”

The convictions and words of the Bible are communicated to us through the inward abiding of the Holy Spirit. The Jews of old didn’t have this luxury and so were dependent upon the written word until the Messiah would come. Now that He has come, He has poured His spirit on us. The Spirit gives us the word of God directly now, whereas the bible serves as the foundation. The Spirit speaks to us, but the written word is the confirmation and solidification of what the Holy Spirit is saying. By the Scriptures we can confirm anything to be the active leading of God for our lives. God does not contradict Himself, and so if anything doesn’t line up with the Scripture, then it’s not the Holy Spirit speaking to you.

2) Let God Read The Pages And Guide You Through Them

God is your teacher so let Him teach you in the word. Be a good and attentive student and faithful to listen. The Holy Spirit will interpret the word to you if you listen to Him while you read.

3) Worship And Pray Before You Read

This will cause you to be more focused on the Holy Spirit. Thus you will hear from Him more clearly and effectively.

4) Pray For The Lord To Open Your Understanding

Before you even read, pray and ask the Lord to guide you through the pages and to open your understanding.

5) Memorize What God Is Teaching You

Put to memory the things God is speaking to you in the scriptures. Don’t just memorize any scripture, but the ones God is speaking. This is the best way to memorize the scriptures that are most relevant to your life in the here and now.

6) Make It Your Life's Aim To Practice The Word Of God

Anything you recently learned is best retained by day to day practice. Therefore be diligent to live out the scriptures daily.

7) Seek Truth

Don’t be satisfied with any explanation to the scriptures. Seek the truth behind them -the real meaning. There are many doctrines today and many variations of “The true doctrine.” What an oxymoron! There is only one way to Heaven so why do so many people think they can practice the word however suits them best? The scriptures state that many will have itching ears in the last days and that is the case now. So be wary of those around you who appear to have itchy ears, and do not be influenced by them. Seek the exact meaning of the Scriptures.

We are saved by the word of God so it’s infinitely important to understand the exact message God is trying to tell you. You can’t walk according to your own interpretation but according to God’s one truth. Be diligent to find it and pray often for God to lead you to it. Wait on Him to answer as you read, and be led by His Spirit in all things.

8) Be Devoted

Seek God in the morning, at night and throughout the day. But be sure to seek Him in His word daily. Set aside a special place and make it your “secret place.” Then set aside some time every day to meet with Him there. Be devoted and read the word daily. There is no greater devotional then the word of God itself.

9) Remove All Distractions

When reading the Scriptures remove all distractions. If you have children ask your spouse to help you keep them quiet. Turn the TV off, the music off, and your phone off. One phone call can lead to a long distraction. Don't let Satan distract you from reading the word of God. While you're reading the devil may stir up your heart to desire something else. Do not listen to temptation but resist the devil and continue reading.

Also do not sit in a room that has many distractions. If there are paintings, posters, or pictures on the walls you tend to look at rather than reading, take them down or choose a new room. Remove all distractions and be alone with God. This is the best way to work on your relationship with Him, and to hear from Him, clearly and effectively.

10) Make Reading A Time Of Joy

You will often hear me say that we need to sit forward in our seats to hear from the Lord. This however is speaking in a spiritual sense and not a physical sense. When reading it's better to do so in a manner you enjoy most. Sit in a comfortable chair and wrap yourself in a warm blanket. Have a cup of hot chocolate, coffee, or other favorite beverage.

When we treat reading the word like studying school books it can cause your thoughts to drift. But if you sit down and make it an enjoyable experience, like you would with a relaxing book, then you will associate the word with an enjoyable read. When you enjoy the word, you'll want to read it more often.

11) Understand The Scriptures

Do not just breeze through the Scriptures as you read. Read them listening intently to the Spirit, and be deliberate about your reading. Try to understand every element of the Scripture.

12) Pick The Right Time To Read

If it’s at all possible it’s best to have a morning devotion to get your day started right. If this can’t be done then set aside some time that’s most appropriate for you every single day. Be dedicated to meet with God at that time. If you can’t read in the mornings be sure to pray and worship and meditate on His Spirit.

13) Pick An Appropriate Amount Of Time For Reading

To get the most from the word you should be reading at least an hour a day. So if it’s impossible to put forth this much time in the morning, then pick a more appropriate time to sit down and be devoted to God. It is good to read in the mornings, and there is nothing wrong with a 10 minute devotion. It can be uplifting and enlightening.

However it is good to set aside at least an hour every day sit down, be devoted, and work on your relationship with Jesus. If you take your relationship with Him seriously then seek to grow in His presence and His word daily.

14) Meditate On The Word Of God

Take the time to sit in God's presence and meditate on Him. Hear from Him and what He has to say. Let the meaning of the scripture sink down at this time. When we read too quickly it can be difficult to absorb the meaning. But if we slow this down a bit, it will help us to absorb the meaning.

15) Strive To Grow In The Word

Strive to understand the Scriptures, memorize it, read frequently, read for long periods of time, and come to a full knowledge of the Scriptures. Learn to rightly divide the Scriptures. This is done best by praying for wisdom and seeking it from the Holy Spirit while you read. When we grow in the word and in practicing it, we grow in the Lord. Make your aim to grow in the word daily.

16) Compare Yourself With The Word Having An Honest Heart

Consider how your walk lines up with the Scriptures. Compare yourself to the word often. When you compare yourself to it you're opening your heart up for growth. If you're willing to admit your weaknesses, then God will meet with you in the place of humility. Even as it is written,

"Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time" 1Pe 5:6

17) Choose The Right Version To Read From

Not every translation is created equal. Not every bible says the same thing. In fact there are many mistranslations and missing texts from a wide variety of versions.

There are many disputes over the various versions that should be read. Being an experienced preacher committed to the truth I have found that certain translations do not help a Christian whatsoever. Question your current translation. If you think it's accurate because others have told you so, that doesn't mean it's true.

Your walk with Jesus is a personal one. So make certain you are personally looking into the best version. Look up the flaws or faults that might be associated with it. Certain versions are missing between 20,000 to 80,000 words scattered throughout the scriptures. There are so many words in the bible that in some cases it only appears as a subtle difference when you read. However when compiled together this is equal to 8 whole books of the bible.

The NIV for example claims that they are translated from the original Alexandrian Greek. This isn't completely true, however. In 1881 two gentlemen by the names of Brooke Foss Westcott and Fenton John Anthony Hort, created their own version of the Greek based off the Alexandrian Greek. Their version is called the Westcott and Hort Greek.

The issue is that these men were not Christian at all. For example, they were major figures in the foundation of the "Ghostly Guild" of Cambridge University. This is a paranormal research group which hunts for ghosts and partakes in many other paranormal activities, not a Christian society. They removed various scriptures from the bible they felt didn't fit, when creating their Greek. Some people may brush this off as a nonsense conspiracy theory, but if you look it up for yourself you will find the answer relatively quickly.

As a result of these altered texts the Westcott and Hort Greek is the same Greek that the Jehovah's Witnesses use to translate their Bible. To make matters worse the NIV is missing the exact same Scriptures as the Jehovah's Witness' Bible. They claim that Jesus Christ is Michael the Archangel incarnate and can justify it with their bible, and can do likewise with an NIV in their hands. How much more can they make a convert out of someone carrying an NIV or similarly translated version?

Many of these Scriptures take away from the deity of Jesus, among other things. There are so many scriptures missing that it could equal nearly 8 of the smaller books of the bible. Some people try to defend this version claiming that scribal errors were made when translating the literal translations, and things were added by the scribes. This however isn't true. 20,000-80,000 words were not added by scribes, but were subtracted by Westcott and Hort, and the translators of the various versions missing text such as the NIV. If then you feel that the Jehovah Witness bible is a proper translation for you, then NIV is right up your alley. Otherwise I would not recommend it.

When I was a new believer I used the NIV. I didn't start growing until I changed to a more literal translation. There are many literal translations and each of them have some issues as well.

Although there is nothing wrong with the word of God, from time to time mistakes are made by those who translate it. Therefore it is best to use a literal translation and compare it to the original Greek and Hebrew. When you read the word make your reading time Bible study time with Jesus.

Keep a Greek and Hebrew lexicon on you and if ever anything is in question refer back to it to broaden your understanding of the word of God.

If you're often referring back to the Greek and Hebrew, you will see what Scriptures a translation is missing or has poorly translated. If you find that the version your reading is poorly translated, or missing a lot of Scripture, throw it out and buy a different Bible. The word of God is a serious thing and must be taken seriously. It cannot be applied accurately, unless it is accurately conveyed to you. It cannot be fully applied unless it's being given to you in its entirety. Therefore beloved make it your aim to find the most accurate translation possible which is true to the original Greek and Hebrew and refer to a lexicon or dictionary of definitions often.

I'm not going to suggest any particular version. There are many more than the NIV that have issues such as the ones I stated. It appears however to be the most popular argument, hence my mentioning it. I do not however single out that version, but would like to encourage you to do your own due diligence and find the most accurate translation.

If you do this and pray for truth, God will lead you to what He wants you to read. I do however suggest a literal translation. I prefer modern English because I understand it better. But you need to use what works best for you, and can be most accurately applied. Find the right version which accurately conveys the

truth in its entirety. Then when you have found it, stick with it and refer back to the original Greek and Hebrew. Once you have an accurate version, it is good to use it as your main version you memorize from. If you memorize from several different bibles it will be difficult to retain any of it. Next time you try to read the word, you'll say, "doesn't it say this?" And how can you repeat paragraphs of scripture back to yourself that you learned through time, unless they all say the same thing?

18) Choose The Right Tools

Every time you read, it should be a Bible study. We learn from studying and meditating on the word not just reading it. Knowing this it is necessary to have the right tools to study the word.

I recommend having a concordance, a dictionary of Bible definitions, and a Greek and Hebrew lexicon. When studying I also read from several translations when necessary. By using several literal translations and Greek and Hebrew definitions of the Bible, you can come to a more complete understanding of the Scriptures. I do this with anything that's in doubt. I refer back to the original Greek or Hebrew, and if I doubt how it was translated I read other translations to see how they translated it and why.

In such a case some literal translations may have issues with contextual meanings. For example in modern language we use slangs to communicate with one another. This was the case with the ancient languages as well. There are a few times that literal words are used metaphorically, because it was common speech at the time. For example the exact same word for childbearing in the New Testament is also used metaphorically for raising children, and child rearing. The equivalent of modern day translation would be child labor or bearing children. Although some people may want to compare raising children with child labor it is not a typical slang used for today.

Thus it is good to see how other translations translate the words in question. It helps broaden your understanding and give you a more complete picture of the word of God. I also recommend having a Bible Atlas on hand. When you are reading through the stories (i.e. the ministry of Jesus, David's life, etc.) it can help bring a better understanding of where events took place. There is a free tool for all of these. For those of you who may not have heard of it "E-Sword" is a free bible software for studying the word of God.

It is a free download for your computer with no strings attached. There are a few things that you can buy from them if you want but you don't have to. There are plenty of free downloads that can help you during your study time. You can download free Bible maps, free concordances, free Bible dictionaries, free Greek and Hebrew dictionaries and lexicons, among many other things. So for those of you who are tight on money, this is an indispensable resource.

It also has a search function for the Bibles and concordances making it infinitely easier than flipping through pages to find a particular passage. Just type in the

basic phrase and let the search function do the rest. If there's an issue with finding anything using this feature, I recommend using a search engine online. There are so many believers across the world who've made wonderful websites dedicated to the word of God. If you can't find a Scripture in a concordance you can type it into a search bar and find it relatively easily online.

19) Write In Your Bible

I use a wide margin Bible and write my notes directly in it. They're there for me for later reference whenever I open the word. Your Bible is your study book and should be treated as such. Write in it, study it, learn from it, and grow in it.

Document what God is speaking to you and it will be there for later referencing.

20) Write Topical Headings In The Front Of Your Bible

Some Bibles have blank pages in the front of them. Usually these are used for dedications or notes for those giving a Bible as a gift. If your pages are blank it's better to use them for topical notes.

Make a topical heading then right the verse references underneath it.

For example:

Walking In The Holy Spirit

Rom 8:1-9; Rom 8:14; Gal 5:16; Gal 5:25; Eze 36:27, etc…

Every time you find a new Scripture that's directly pertaining to the topic heading, write the reference number under the heading in the above example. Later when you're having a Bible study, a discussion, or dispute on doctrine you have all of your references put together under one simple heading right there in front your Bible.

Conclusion

If you follow these basic tips and tricks you will get considerably more from reading your Bible. You'll be able to gain a greater understanding of the Scriptures, and have more of a handle on the word. You'll grow in wisdom, and in your walk with Christ. In this you will become more pleasing to the Lord, and have a firm foundation in your salvation.

Also By Adam Houge

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(Learning to walk in the power of God by first walking in the passion of Jesus Christ)

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(Being careful to use words seasoned with God’s love)

About The Author

Adam is a preacher, teacher and bestselling author. Through His travels he’s seen the need for a new awakening and a new revival: A revival of the heart. Come join Adam on this journey of redemption and experience God like

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