

Process continued

Perhaps use a plan, or use a daily guide.... like 'Word for Today'
There is a good start here: www.tinyurl.com/VCS30days

Make a note - (the weakest ink is stronger than the strongest memory)
Is there one outstanding verse that you want to hold on to - why not write it on a card.... Take it in and make it part of you.

The objective is not to get through the Bible, it's to get the Bible through you.

Pray

Talk to God as your heavenly Father about what you feel He has been saying to you – and if there is some action, discovery or a decision, or perhaps a renewed resolve, make a note of it, in code if you like!

Priority

In 21st Century western urban culture we have 'no time' - at least that's how it seems. In reality we generally only have time for things *we regard* as being of high importance, and somehow we do have time for those.

Taking God's Word into my life in a way that makes a significant difference is not going to happen unless I give it priority. It is never an accident, it is invariably the outcome of purposeful and committed intent.

Preparation

There is little benefit, or pleasure, in looking at breakfast but not engaging with it. In a similar way, we can go through the motions of reading the Bible, but without engagement, it leaves us unsatisfied and unchanged.

The key, is in the heart. At the end of the great history of Israel set out in Ps 78, the writer concludes 'And David shepherded them **with integrity of heart**, with skilful hands he led them'. I could have all the skills of a PhD in theology but if my heart is not open, available and listening to God, I am just going through the motions.

So, on the way in, always prepare your heart, be willing and open to what the Holy Spirit may wish to say to you – you're in safe hands.

How do I get to grips with God's Word?

A short practical guide to reading the Bible



Blessed is the one who reads the words...
and takes them to heart

Revelation 1:3



Vineyard Church Sutton
Bible resource no 1

Place

'Do you have a room? Does it have a door? Ok, go into the room and shut the door' - Jesus. Having a regular place, a room, a seat, where you meet with God is helpful. What's the best place for you to do that?

Purpose

Be clear about why you are reading the Bible, because motivation is key. If you have no compelling reason, try the online talk from April 11th.

Passage

Where do I read? You could work through a book at a time e.g. Start with the Gospel of John, go on to Acts, then try Romans (more difficult) or one of the smaller 'pastoral' letters like Philipians; when you have read a book, mark its name in the Contents page of your Bible. Or follow a guide, or a reading plan (just Google 'Bible Reading Plan'). Some parts of the Bible are not easy, if you find a book you have started is not helpful then prayerfully choose another.

Props

Bible, notebook, pen, any guide you are using and perhaps a cup of tea. Have a Bible you find physically comfortable. Clear type, right size for you, right translation or paraphrase. Make it yours.

Parchment

Well... paper or notebook. Have one notebook specifically to keep track of what you are reading and what God is saying to you (and also what you are praying about). It will be worth keeping. The present is often enriched by reflecting on the lessons and experiences of the past.

Plan

Take time, perhaps at the start of each month, to reflect and think - what has God been saying? What have I taken in?

And also look forward - what's the plan this month? What next for me?

Parents

Parents of young children have particular challenges in creating personal time and it's a good idea to talk about how you can support one another so both have an opportunity for some regular one-on-one with God.

Process

Set aside a small minimum amount of time, don't be too ambitious, little and often is a good starting point. That's how we like our 'earthly food'.

Set aside distractions and allow yourself to focus on God. See yourself coming into His presence and if there are any 'issues' between you, try to deal with them.

Bear in mind, it is His unchanging desire to welcome you.

If something pops up to distract you (e.g. something you have just remembered you need to do today) - write it down, and leave it on the page, for now.

Pray—ask God's Spirit to come alongside and speak to you, be your teacher and give you understanding. Read, and perhaps read again.

How much should I read? Whatever feels right for you and seems most helpful. It could be a chapter a day or more; sometimes I have stayed with just two verses I have re-read and thought about for several days — like advice or medicine that I have needed repeated doses of.

Ask:

- what is this telling me? - about God, Jesus, man, me
- what's the main point of the passage?
- is there a particular point that stands out for me, what is that saying to me?
- Is there something here I don't understand - do I want to find out more? Make a note; write a question. Use a dictionary.
- Is there a correction or rebuke, a gentle word of guidance, an encouragement, a promise?
- Is there something which in a literal or metaphorical way is speaking personally to me?
- Is there something here I want to take away and keep and make my own — like Mary who 'treasured all these things in her heart'.

