

GUIDELINES ON READING OR STUDYING THE BIBLE

1. Before we even start, we must check our own heart attitude, James 4:6B says, “God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble”. Isaiah 5:21 says, “Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and clever in their own sight!” We must first be empty of self before we can receive anything from God. The Bible is not just another book it is the word of God.

2. Pray. We must seek His wisdom, His direction for it is the Holy Spirit who is our teacher. In the gospel of John 14:26 Jesus said, “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you”. (a side note, this verse contains a revelation of the Trinity)

Note: Now we are ready to read or study God’s word.

3. Pray. Talk to Him as you read or study His word. Let it be a two way conversation because He also speaks to us on a personal level through His word. (If we didn’t do #s 1 & 2 above we may not hear what the Lord is saying to us.)

4. Read with a notebook on hand to write down any thoughts, questions, or mental notes that come to mind.

5. Where and when was the passage written? Who wrote it and why? Who was it intended for?

6. You may want to outline the passage.

7. Personalize the passage as if it was written directly to you.

8. Pray for understanding.

9. Prayerfully meditate on each part, be patient.

10. For a word study note all the key words to research.

11. Maybe write a little exposition from the passage. What does it mean, to me, to the church, to the world (the unsaved)?

12. Using commentaries is good, but you are reading another man's thoughts on the passage. Use them last, first let the Holy Spirit speak to your heart.

13. If the Lord is showing us through His word that we need to repent (adjust our lifestyle to line up with His word), then we have to do it! Some things we may not be able to change quickly but we need to seek the Lord and depend on Him to deliver us. He will bless a willing heart. A plan of action may be needed for those sins that seem to overcome us frequently (the battles between the flesh and the spirit).

14. We need to set our heart to study God's word and know it. Practice the word of God. Do it. Live it. Share it.

Wrap Up: Ezra 7:10 says, "For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the Lord, and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel".

Note the order, before anything else "Ezra had set his heart". Set his heart to know God's word. Set his heart to practice God's word. Set his heart to share God's word.

In James 1:6 we read, “But let him ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea driven and tossed by the wind”. Then in James 1:22 it says, “but prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves”. Both of these verses support the need for the man or woman of God to decide to stand firm in faith. It starts with the choice to do so. It starts with doing the same as Ezra. Ezra set his heart. James 1:6 reinforces the call for us to set our heart to believe, trust, and not doubt the Lord and His word. Like in Ezra 7:10, James 1:22 call for us to “do” His word.

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