

Reading Your Bible Different Ways

There are many different ways to skin a cat. Different ways serve different purposes, and we need to learn to adopt and utilize different bible reading methods in order to gain more from the bible

1. Read the bible in large sections or whole books at a time in one sitting

This has the advantage of giving you an overall perspective on the book. It aids in helping to pick up key themes, the flow of the thought and arguments and structure of the book. This is reading for understanding.

2. Devotional Reading

Read the bible prayerfully, verse by verse, paragraph by paragraph to understand the meaning and to consider the application and increase our knowledge of God. Think about the key verses. This is reading for transformation.

It is important not to set this method in opposition to the other methods of reading. In fact devotional reading works best when done in the context of other methods of bible reading.

3. Study a topic (Character, Theme)

This reading aims to collect all the Bible's teaching on a particular subject. The advantage of this method is that you know what the bible says on that particular subject. This method is a lot more difficult for it requires some knowledge of the whole of the bible. Alternatively you can focus on particular books eg. Sin in the book of Romans.

4. Study and read

Use a commentary - to increase depth of understanding of a book. A lot more detailed study, but pays great dividends.

5. Character study

Like a topical study, but with a special emphasis on biblical characters. In this study we look up all the references to that particular person. eg. Contrast Paul's reference to Timothy's timidity (2 Tim 1:6) with what we do know about Timothy.

6. Word study

Gives an understanding of what they mean and their application (Using a concordance at this point is essential). This is different to a thematic study. Thematic studies are not restricted to words, but focus on concepts. Word studies focus primarily on words.

7. Reading the bible Historically

In this method, we aim to read the bible chronologically in order to get a historical perspective on the book. Reading the prophetic books against the background of the book of Kings.

8. Bible study Material

In this method we are employing prepackage bible study material. Generally, they are a question and answer method of studying the bible. Questions are asked which draw our attention to particular points of interests. The weakness lies in its strength. Often times it can ask the wrong questions, which then gets us to focus on the wrong ideas.

9. Synoptic Reading

This is about reading parallel accounts of the same passage and noting down differences and similarities and what ideas are being communicated

eg. Reading Kings and Chronicles

Reading Gospels

Reading some of the Psalms eg. Ps 14 cf Ps 53