

HOW TO GET MORE

FROM YOUR BIBLE



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How to Get More From Your Bible

Have you ever wondered if God still speaks to people today? Can ordinary people without seminary degrees understand the Bible?

Take heart from Jesus' words.

“But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you” (John 14:26).

“I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do” (Luke 10:21).

Yes, God still speaks today! He's used my daily Bible reading to address immediate needs many times. I remember one particular morning. I'd driven through the scene of a terrible car accident the previous evening at an intersection I frequented. The morning paper described the scene.

A young husband returned home to an empty house. After a while, he became concerned and decided to trace his wife's carpool route in search of them. He arrived at the scene to learn a drunk driver had crossed the lane and smashed into his family's car killing his wife and three young children. Grieved and shaken by this story, I opened my Bible to where I'd left off the previous morning. This is what I read:

“The righteous perish,
and no one takes it to heart;
the devout are taken away,
and no one understands
that the righteous are taken away
to be spared from evil.
Those who walk uprightly
enter into peace;
they find rest as they lie in death” (Isaiah 57:1-2).

Comfort washed over me. If God could orchestrate my reading to be at this verse when I needed it, He would be there for this man too.

Best Beauty Treatment

Did you know that spending time with Jesus in His word transforms us from the inside out ([Romans 12:2](#))? Wouldn't it be awesome if when people saw us they saw Jesus in us? This happened to Peter and John. “When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus” (Acts 4:13).

Renewing our minds with God's truth transforms us—our priorities, how we treat people, and how we respond to stress. We begin to look, act—and even smell—like Jesus ([2 Corinthians 2:25](#))!

A Simple Tool

After graduating from college, I joined the high school ministry of Cru (Campus Crusade for Christ.). My director, Dan Lane, taught our team a simple three-question method of studying the Bible.

With my Bible, a blank notebook, and eager heart, I began a wonderful adventure that led me into a deeper love for and relationship with my Lord. Meeting with the Lord in His Word became the favorite part of my day.

Don't pressure yourself to experience an epiphany every day. But expect to receive deposits of understanding that lead to wisdom. Think of your daily study as depositing commodities worth more than money into the bank of your soul.

Jesus longs to connect with you; to refresh, restore, correct, and sustain you. Are you ready to be blessed?

The Format:

Choose the book of the Bible you will study. You don't need to hop around every day looking for God. As you faithfully read each day in the book you are reading, He will speak to you.

- **Begin with Prayer**

Acknowledge your dependence on God and invite His Spirit to grant you understanding ([Luke 25:45](#), 1 Corinthians 2:11-16). Open your heart and let Him teach you. Set aside preconceived ideas or what you've heard others tell you a passage says.

“However, as it is written:

‘What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard,
and what no human mind has conceived’—
the things God has prepared for those who love him—these are
the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit.
The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God” (1
Corinthians 2:9-10).

Enjoy your time with the Lord. As A. W. Tozer said, “I did not go through the Book. The Book went through me.”

- **Read the Passage**

Read through the day's passage to understand the context before beginning the verse by verse study. Look for the main point. Notice the author's choice of words. Highlight repeated terms and key phrases. Sometimes it helps to read other Bible translations or paraphrases.

- **Observation: What does it say?**

Look for the facts. What was the author saying to his particular audience? List the prominent facts from each verse. Don't add your own thoughts (yet) or what you've heard others say it means. Notice the author's choice of words. Look for

the subject, what's taking place, who's speaking, and to whom. What words and ideas are repeated? What comparisons and contrasts are mentioned? What does the passage say about God, about humans? What word pictures are drawn?

If you are studying only a couple of verses, you may enjoy listing many details. However, don't get bogged down in so much detail you become weary and quit. Don't make this a tedious assignment. This is your time to "be still and know God."

- **Interpretation: What does it mean?**

Interpret the facts. Look for the spiritual lessons in the facts you listed. What does the passage mean that crosses cultural and time barriers? The lessons should fit the context of your passage and be relevant to today.

For example, in 2 Timothy 4:13, Paul writes to Timothy, "When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, and my scrolls, especially the parchments."

The literal meaning is the imprisoned apostle needs his cloak and parchments. A spiritual lesson may be that spiritual leaders have practical needs. Another lesson may be, it's appropriate to ask for help from those who can aid us with our practical needs. A third lesson might be, we should be available to assist a saint in need.

Context impacts interpretation. What do the biblical audience and modern readers share in common? How are we different? These differences affect how we apply the passage. For example, we may draw principles from Ephesians 6 that apply to the employer-employee relationship today, but to ignore the distinction between modern employees and slaves would lead to misapplication of this passage.

- **Application: How does it apply?**

Now for the fun part. Apply the lessons you've gleaned to your life, family, or culture. Sometimes the lesson you identified raises a question; other times you might ask God, "What are You saying to me?"

Get personal and practical by putting the lessons you've learned into the form of a question that you might ask yourself or someone else. From the example

above you might write, what Christian leader or fellow believer has a practical need I can meet? Or who can I ask to help me with my practical need?

Or you may just write the answer, I want to bring Aunt Judy a meal.

- **Illustrate**

This is optional but can be fun. Identify your main takeaway from your reading. Draw a picture or write a few words that capture the lesson. This step often helps me retain what I learned.

- **Response**

Has the Holy Spirit shown you an attitude, false belief, or behavior to change? Ask God for the power to respond in faith to what He's shown you. Bible study should be living water, not a dead sea.

I suggest you designate a notebook for your Bible study. Work your way through one book of the Bible at a time. The Gospels are an excellent place to start. You can be as general or as detailed as you like. Taking the time to interact with and apply the Scriptures will transform your life.

I turn my notebook upside down and write my prayers in the back of the book. When they meet in the middle, I get a new book.

In the following pages I give you a passage to go through. Afterwards, is the same passage with thoughts I got from it. ¹

¹ To learn more, Anne Graham Lotz teaches a similar method at:
<http://www.annegrahamlotz.org/2014/10/30/journey-jesus-learning-hear-voice/>


Matthew 7:24-29

READ THE PASSAGE	WHAT DOES IT SAY?
24 "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.	
25 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.	
26 But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand.	
27 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."	
28 When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching,	
29 because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.	

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?	HOW DOES IT APPLY TO ME?
<p>Illustrate or summarize the point you want to remember.</p>	<p>How will I respond? Ask God for His power to apply what you have learned.</p>

Matthew 7:24-29

READ THE PASSAGE	WHAT DOES IT SAY?
24 "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.	<i>24 Everyone who hears and practices Jesus' words, is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.</i>
25 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.	<i>25 House didn't fall when beat against, because it had its foundation on the rock.</i>
26 But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand.	<i>26 One who hears and does not practice Christ's words, like a foolish man who built his house on sand.</i>
27 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."	<i>27 It fell when the storm beat against it</i>
28 When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching,	<i>28 The crowds were amazed at His teaching.</i>
29 because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.	<i>29 Jesus taught as one having authority.</i>

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?	HOW DOES IT APPLY TO ME?
<p>24-25 <i>Hearing is not enough; putting God's Word into action protects us in life's storms.</i></p> <p>26 <i>Hearing God's Word but not applying it provides no protection when life's storms hit.</i></p> <p>27 <i>Storms come to everyone - whether we are prepared or not.</i></p> <p>28-29 <i>I need to listen and submit to Jesus' teaching.</i></p>	<p>24-25 <i>How well am I applying what I know?</i></p> <p>26 <i>What "sand" do you depend on to bring you security, significance, or satisfaction?</i></p> <p>27 <i>How prepared am I to face a storm?</i></p> <p>28-29 <i>Am I open to being taught by the authority of God?</i></p>
<p>Illustrate or summarize the point you want to remember.</p> 	<p>How will I respond?</p> <p>Ask God for His power to apply what you learned.</p> <p><i>Lord, help me to be faithful to meet with you daily and then apply what you teach me.</i></p>