

How to Read the Bible

Our aim in reading the Bible should be the same as God's purpose for us in reading the Bible

We read the bible for information

Read Isaiah 55:6-13

For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. (Rom 15:4)

Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. (1Co 10:11)

We read the Bible for transformation

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account. (Heb 4:12-13)

Read Psalm 19:7-14

Steps in reading the Bible

1. Ask the Lord to illuminate the text

For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. (2Pe 1:21)

Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away.⁷ But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory.⁸ None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.⁹ But, as it is written,

"What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him"--

¹⁰ these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. ¹¹ For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

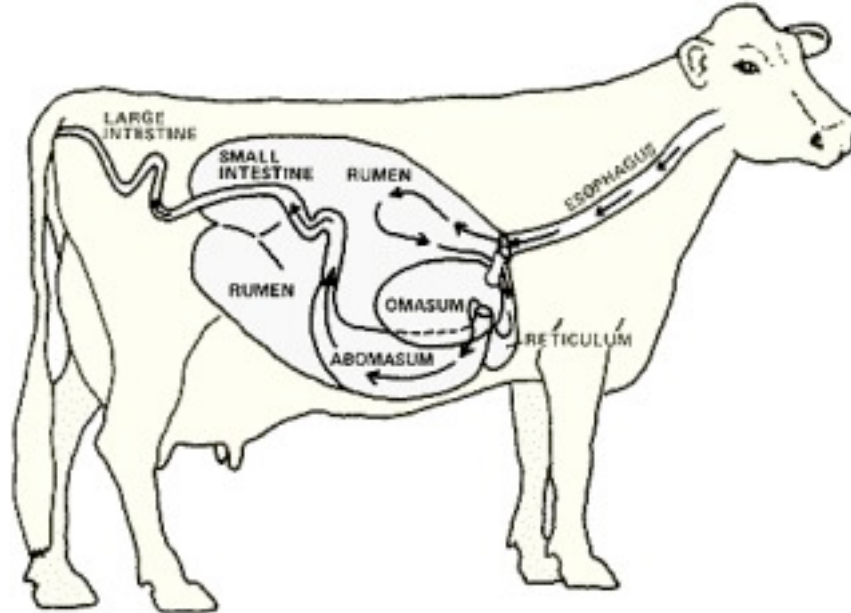
¹² Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. ¹³ And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.

¹⁴ The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

¹⁵ The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. ¹⁶ "For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ. (1Cor 2:6-16)

Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law. (Psa 119:18)

2. Repeat the passage in different ways.
3. Pray through the text.
4. Think of the text (or write it out) in your own words.
5. Meditate.



6. Do what the passage says.

Questions to ask when reading a passage:

- What was the author's intent when he wrote it? (Exegesis)
- What is the context of the passage? (Hermeneutics)
- What does it tell me about God?
- What does it tell me about myself?
- What are the implications for my own life?

We read the Word to know the true and ultimate Word. God has spoken ultimately and conclusively through Jesus the Word.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (Jn 1:1)

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son... (Heb 1:1-2)

Helpful Resources

- How to Read the Bible for All It's Worth* by Gordon Fee & Douglas Stuart
- How to Read the Bible Book by Book* by Gordon Fee & Douglas Stuart
- Playing with Fire* by Walt Russell
- Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* by Donald Whitney