

Equipped to enjoy reading the Bible (part one)

When I was a child, I was taught a little song that went like this: *“Read your Bible, pray every day, and you’ll grow, grow, grow.”* I wasn’t very tall, so I remember thinking this was the magic formula for gaining height! For most of my kiddy friends, it was a fun song to sing, but I doubt if any of us took these words seriously. We weren’t particularly interested in reading our Bibles and praying and, even if we had been, we didn’t know how to do it. I imagine the same is true of many people today. Some have come into a living relationship with Jesus Christ but, through no fault of their own, they haven’t a clue how to get the most out of the book that God has written. So, how can we read the Bible so that it’s likely to make a difference in our lives? Here are three questions that people have asked, along with some suggestions.

When is the best time to read the Bible? There are no hard and fast rules for this, but it can be helpful to have a set time each day for reading the Bible. Some people like to start the day with God. They’d rather hear what He has to say to them through His word before they’re exposed to all the various voices and perspectives that they’ll come across during the day. Whatever time you set aside for your main Bible reading of the day, you might want to make this a deliberate choice and treat it as an important commitment. Someone once referred to this as *“making an unbreakable appointment with God”*. If you’re employed outside the home, you know that you’re expected to turn up for work on a regular basis because you owe it to your employer to do so. Why should God receive anything less? If you’re not in the habit of having a regular, daily time of Bible reading, you might find it useful to ring-fence some time by marking this on your calendar or in your diary, and then stick to it (even when you don’t feel like it). Your choice might vary from day to day or from week to week. I believe the important thing is to plan your time and not leave it to when you feel like it.

Where is the best place to read the Bible? There’s no biblical command that says we have to read God’s word in a certain location, but choosing a specific place for your main reading of the day helps to give a sense of order and consistency to it. Where you read will largely depend on personal preference and family circumstances. For example, a person living alone might have greater flexibility in this than someone who belongs to a large, busy family. If you haven’t already established a regular place to read your Bible, why not think of somewhere now?

What is the best way to read the Bible? We read in 2 Timothy 3:16 that everything written in the Bible is inspired by God. If He has inspired, or authored, the words of the Bible, then it must all be important. The question is, how do we give attention to it all? One way we can do this is by putting a Bible reading plan in place. Here are some ways you might consider doing this:

⇒ [Plan One - The Big Picture](#)

If you’re new to reading the Bible, it’s probably not a good idea to start at Genesis and read on through to Revelation - you’re likely to get bogged down before you get very far. A good place to start is with a gospel. This is where you learn about the life of Jesus Christ and read His words first-hand. Why not begin by reading Matthew’s gospel? It has 28 chapters and, if you read one chapter a day, you’ll get through it in a month. This is quite a lot, but gives you the big picture of the life and teachings of Jesus.

⇒ [Plan Two - The Small Picture](#)

Psalms 119 is made up of 22 sections. Each section has only eight verses, so you could read one section a day and cover the whole psalm in about three weeks. This would allow you to go through this psalm in some detail.

⇒ [Plan Three - The Complete Picture](#)

Have you ever read the whole Bible? One way you can do this is to use a reading plan that takes you through the entire Bible in, say, one, two or three years. **Equipped for Living** has produced a three-year Bible reading plan, offering a unique “core” and “options” format that you can fit into your daily schedule. You can download it free of charge from our website. Why not make a start right now?