

October 27-31, 2025 Edition

Following
The Year^(s) Of Jesus Part 199
How To Read The Bible

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When you read the Bible ask yourself if there's anything you're reading where God is speaking to you personally... anything that you need to start applying in your own life. Then try to reflect on what you read... what you heard from God throughout the day and we know you'll be blessed.

*** These are EXTREMELY rough drafts so if you see typos... well yuo knew the rest ;0) These are essentially the ramblings of thoughts running through Ed or Judy's mind the week before Ed teaches a lesson on these concepts. They are pretty much how Ed gets ready for the weekends. They are not necessarily coherent so if they don't make much sense... sorry about that.

**** Also these devotionals are the product of both Judy & Ed's experiences and education. Figuring out which are from Judy and which are from Ed (sometimes both are contained in a single day) is half the fun.

You can also get these devotionals on Riverside's Facebook page (www.facebook.com/EagleRiverside). You don't have to have a FB account to read them but if you do have an account if you "like" the Riverside page and click the box to get updates the devos will show up on your wall every weekday (along with other news and event updates).

Monday Reflection: Mondays. I don't know about you, but oftentimes Mondays can feel like a bad case of "oh my goodness, there's so much to do and I'm already behind." With that in mind, I'm going to ask you a question, and I don't want you to panic/feel guilty/catch a case of the "shoulds"/or stop reading. Okay - enough preface. Here's the question: when was the last time you read the Bible?

Whether you answered with today, a decade ago, or never - it's okay. Today, let's pretend like it's all new to us. To everyone. Today and all this week, we're going to talk about how to read the Bible.

Growing up, I don't recall ever choosing to read the Bible by myself. I grew up Catholic (this is Aniela, by the way.) Usually, the priests read to us what we needed to know and that was that. Then, I went off to a Christian college and took a class on the Gospels. Imagine my surprise when I read the Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John and realized they told a lot of the same stories. I was going to college for Journalism and this just smacked of plagiarism!

By reading the Gospels and then Bible for myself, I realized there was a lot more in there than the stories we heard in Sunday school. As I like to tell the youth group kids - the Bible contains stories about love and war, it has action adventures, there's pearls of wisdom, and there's even a talking donkey. I'm serious. But, by far, my favorite thing about The Bible is it tells me about Jesus.

Jesus is what this life is all about. So, that's what we'll focus on. For today - just ponder on these words from Romans 10:17 -

"So faith comes from hearing, that is, hearing the Good News about Christ."

Tuesday Reflection: No matter how old you are - how long you've been in church - everyone can benefit from learning more about The Bible. So, let's begin our crash course.

The first thing you need to do is get ready to read. Do you have access to a Bible? If you like to hold a book in your hands, maybe a physical bible is what you need. If you love to read ebooks, perhaps you'd prefer to download the YouVersion app.

When you go to get a bible - whether on the app or a hard copy, take a look at the words inside it. Is it in understandable English? (I'm not talking about the concepts - those sometimes feel like Greek.) Is it full of words like "thou" and "thine?" Do you like that? If not, maybe find a different translation. Some people find comfort in the King James version. Others want something more easy to read. There are many translations to choose from. But, the best one is the one you'll actually read.

We use the Bible to guide us. Psalm 119:105 says "Your word is a lamp to my feet - a light to my path." The Bible - helps me find my way in what can feel like a dark world.

You've got your Bible ready - now, let's get ready to read. First, let's pray. Then, tomorrow, we'll get into more practical steps to reading the word.

Father, thank You that we have the Bible readily available to us. Please

show us what You want us to see in the Bible. And help us to understand what we read. Amen.

Wednesday Reflection: One of the best pearls of wisdom I ever received from a boss was when I was very overwhelmed by a project and she asked me, "How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time." That's the way to look at reading the Bible: start slow.

Start with a manageable dose of reading. Read a short passage. If you're feeling ambitious - read a whole chapter. But, don't set yourself up to fail by saying you're going to read the whole thing in one sitting. I'm not sure that's even possible.

When you start reading, be prepared to have a lot of questions. There are a lot of things in the Bible that make you scratch your head. There are all sorts of levels of cultural nuance we just don't get because it's the year 2025. That doesn't mean the Bible is null and void. It just means, we need to approach it with a lens of humility and wisdom. We're not going to get it right away.

When we get to reading our Bible - I'd recommend starting in the New Testament. The Gospel of Jesus - according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John - will tell you the story of Jesus. Or, you might want to start with James. James is basically the how-to guide of Christian living.

James is only five chapters long. If you read a chapter every day, you'd be done with an entire book of the Bible in just five days. James has a ton of wisdom in it. And it makes a lot of sense.

James 1:5 says, "If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking." So, even if you find yourself reading James and things sound confusing - ask God for help. It's always a good place to start.

Tomorrow, we'll dig even further into reading the Bible. For now, focus on asking God for help understanding what you're reading.

Thursday Reflection: Have you ever walked into a conversation and only caught part of it but the part you caught had you scratching your head?

That's the focus of today's devotional: consider the context of what you're reading. When you read a verse - look around. What are the verses surrounding that verse? What book of the Bible are you reading? Who wrote that book? Who is it written to? What was happening at that time? Knowing the answers to those questions helps you understand more about what you've just read.

One of the verses I see a lot on T-shirts, bumper stickers, and quoted often online is Phillipians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." That's a beautiful verse. And it has so much promise. But, it wasn't written to us about starting a new business or a new diet for that matter. But, it's not written for that purpose. It's Paul writing about surviving great hardship. I DO believe Christ strengthens me. And I know I am taking it out of context when I pray that verse over my life. I feel like Jesus will let that slide.

That's a fairly harmless one to take out of context. But, there are others that are not. Including Matthew 4:9. Don't know that one? Go look it up. I'll wait. Okay- you're back? So, that verse sounds fine... until you see who's talking. That would be the enemy talking to Jesus. So, consider the context. Consider who is talking.

So far this week, we've learned... to consider the context, take things slowly, and prepare yourself to read. Tomorrow, we learn our last step. How to put it all into practice.

Jesus, thank You for who You are. Thank You for Your life and how You lived it. Please help me this week as I continue to read Your words. Help me put what I read into action. I want to be more like You. Amen.

Friday Reflection: What do you do once you've prepared, read slowly, and taken things in context? Now, you figure out what to do with it all. Going to church has helped me so much with that. Pastor Ed has a gift of being able to break things down into a way that I understand it. Ever do his follow through steps each week? I do. I mean, I try. Okay, I mean I remember that I was going to do it just about the same time I'm reading through the next week's follow through step. It's the thought that matters, right?

One of the things that's helpful with the follow through step is that it gets you thinking about God's word. What can I do differently that gets me closer to Jesus? Because that's what this is all about, right?

So, read the words. And then, really take them in. Let them wash over you. Meditate on them. Jot down a few things when you come across scripture that speaks to you. Keep a list of scriptures you can come back to later. Maybe even try memorizing a few of your favorite verses.

Here's one of my all time favorites.

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Philippians 4:6 NLT

Meditate on God's word. Let it guide you to live a life that aligns with Jesus. A life that leads with love.

Holy Spirit, fill us up. When we're lost and we don't know our way - bring us peace. When we read the Bible and we just don't get it - help us to understand. Guide our way. Amen.