

Hints, Tips and Helpful Thoughts for Reading the Bible

Where do I start?

1. Begin with prayer and get into a Conversation with God
2. Don't start with page one and try to read cover to cover. Try reading the Gospel of Luke, Acts, Romans, Genesis, and Psalms to get started.

Recognize that there are Roadblocks to reading the Bible

1. The Bible can be confusing. If you get confused, trust God, pray about it and keep reading until something makes sense.
2. Realize that we may have disagreements with the Bible. If you disagree with something you read, talk to God in prayer and talk to someone of faith you trust for help in understanding.
3. You might get bored. If you get bored, trust God, and keep reading. It may take time for you to get used to the written style and the ancient situation.

When you read the Bible, consider asking these questions.

1. **What is the context for this passage?**
Try to put a passage in the context of the overall witness of scripture so that a particular passage doesn't stand alone.
2. **How does this fit with my understanding of Jesus?**
If what you think scripture is saying runs counter to the witness of Jesus, then perhaps you need to reconsider your interpretation
3. **What is God saying to me?**
God's Word can stand beside you and support you and it can also stand over and against you, calling you to change. Try to hear how a particular passage is speaking to your life today.

When you read the Bible, remember:

1. Chapter and Verse divisions are not all that important, they are for reference, but don't necessarily mean that the end of a verse or chapter is the end of a thought.
2. Key points are often repeated. Watch for those repeated points as you read.

These suggestions for *Getting into the Bible* are adapted from a presentation made by Pastor Mike Foss to the Lutheran Men in Mission National Gathering on July 23, 2004.