

How to Begin Your Own Bible Study

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It is a known fact that a person needs exercise to stay in shape. Without consistent exercise, your body grows “out of shape,” creating fatigue problems and physical inability. The same is true of your spiritual life. Without the discipline of a quiet time, your spiritual life and relationship with Jesus Christ will grow weak. To ensure a healthy spiritual life, there has to be consistent exercise of quiet time. Are you ready? Let’s exercise.

Warm Up

You need to know that God loves you and wants to spend time with you. He enjoys your fellowship and dependence upon him. He wants your companionship as much as you want his (John 4:23; 1 Corinthians 1:9).

You need to know that your quiet time will help you discover direction for your life and help you set priorities (John 16:13).

You need to know that as you experience answered prayer (John 15:7), you will learn how to discern right from wrong (John 17:15-17), and you will grow in your knowledge of his gracious love (John 17:23, 26).

You need to admit that you will do what you want to do.

Routine 1: Set Your Time

When you read the life of Jesus in the New Testament, you notice that Jesus turned aside to a solitary place to pray (Mark 1:35). He took time to pray and fellowship with his Heavenly Father. So, make your schedule accommodate time with the Father.

The morning is the best time. Get up a few minutes earlier and prepare yourself for the day as you normally do, and just before your rush into the world, take time to prepare yourself through your time alone with the Father. Before you think you cannot do it, read Mark 1:35.

Routine 2: Set Your Place

Find a place that will allow you to read the Bible and pray openly without interruption. I have a friend who has his quiet time in his car in the morning before leaving for work. It must be a place where you can be silent before the Lord. You may even want to consider leaving your Bible and a pad of paper with pen at that same place, so the next morning you will not have to search around the house for them.

Routine 3: Set Your Mind

Remember you are about to hear from God as you read from the Bible. You need to prepare yourself. Here is where most believers make their first mistake in studying the Word. They

jump right in without preparation. Perhaps you need to confess some sin, or you need to offer thanksgiving. But make sure that you go to the Scriptures with one question on your mind: “God, what do you need to say to me today?” As you read, remember you are not reading necessarily for knowledge but for the “voice of God.” We have to hear him first before we gain anything.

Routine 4: Set Your Pace

Start with setting aside about ten minutes for your quiet time. After you have prepared yourself, then begin reading the Scriptures. You are not in a hurry. You might miss something. Read deliberately. Read slowly, concentrating on the message of the passage or verses. Is there a truth there for you? The Bible states that the Holy Spirit will reveal truth to you (John 16:13).

HELP: To begin a quiet time, you might want to start with the Gospel of John. The Gospel of Matthew will tell you what Jesus said and taught. The Gospel of Mark and Luke will tell you what Jesus did. The Gospel of John will tell you who Jesus is.

HELP: You might want to consider purchasing a “Study Bible.” It has notes and other helps for the reader. A good translation that is easily understood is a must. The King James Version is difficult for most to read. You may want to consider the New International Version.

Routine 5: Set Your Priority

After you sense a message for you, right it down. It might be something simple or something overwhelming. Some mornings you may not catch anything. That’s fine. You are still reading God’s Word, and he says through Isaiah the Prophet that his word is beneficial and will “not return unto him empty” (Isaiah 55:9-10). After you have written your truth down, think how it applies to your life: your relationship with God through Christ, your family, your job, your church, or your relationships with others. If you have time, try utilizing the meditation skills you have already learned. Remember that God gave you his Word so that you will apply it to your life.

Routine 6: Cool Down

At the beginning of your quiet time you prayed asking God, “What do you need to say to me?” Now that you have heard God speak to you through his Word, you need to ask yourself, “What do I need to say to God?” It might be a prayer that celebrates the truth revealed or a lesson taught. It might be “a light” coming on as you seek to make decisions, or it may be the manner in which you are to relate to someone. It might a prayer of confession and repentance, or a prayer of thanksgiving. Whatever the character of the prayer, you are responding to God’s voice to you. That’s called spiritual breathing. We “inhale” God’s Word and we “exhale” by prayer.