

The Scripture Union Bible Reading Method



“A time-tested, effective way to help you get the most out of reading the Bible.”

Now that we’ve reviewed the basic steps needed to establish a successful daily appointment with God—you’ve decided on a time, a place and a plan—you’re ready to “dig in” to the Bible itself. The Scripture Union Bible Reading Method is a simple, 5-step method that has been used by millions of people around the world for over 100 years. It’s a time-tested, effective way to help you get the most out of reading the Bible. Here’s how it works.

PRAY

Prayer is the starting point; remember, you’re beginning a dialog. Before you read the Bible, ask God to help you understand the passage for the day. God, through the Holy Spirit, is the “author” of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21). He’s given us his written Word to communicate his eternal truth. So ask God to speak to you as you read. As the boy Samuel was taught to pray “Speak Lord, for your servant is listening” (1 Samuel 3:9), so let that be your prayerful attitude as you start your time with God.

READ

Next, read slowly and carefully through the Bible passage. Sometimes, you’ll want to read the passage more than once. You may also find it helpful to read the preceding or following passages to get the context. Take the time to read it as thoroughly as you can, expecting God to answer your prayer for understanding of his Word.

REFLECT

This is a key part of the process, reflecting or meditating on what you have just read. First, ask these questions: What does this passage say? What is its main point? What does it reveal about God, or about me? What does it require of me now, in thought, word or action? These questions will help you “dig deeper” into the meaning of the passage as you study and reflect. Many people find it helpful to write their answers in a journal or notebook. Next, it helps to read the thoughts of someone else who’s studied the same passage. That’s why so many people like Scripture Union’s Bible Guides Discovery or Encounter with God, they provide helpful commentary from Christians around the world.

APPLY

God gave us his Word for “teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16). Its purpose is not only to give us information about God, but, also to help us live in the proper relationship to him and others. If we are willing, the Holy Spirit can use God’s Word to shape our lives in the direction of greater godliness. That’s why this step is so important. After you’ve reflected on the meaning of the passage, ask yourself this: How can God’s Word apply to my life today; my situations at home, at work, school or church? Your goal is to use what you’ve learned to become more like Jesus. The application questions and exercises suggested in Discovery or Encounter with God are very helpful for this.

PRAY

End your time in God’s Word as you began, in prayer. Make your discoveries from the Bible the basis of your prayer time. Ask God to help you live out and apply what you learned that day. Thank God for meeting with you and sharing his Word with you. There are other suggestions for prayer each day in the “Prayer Journal” on the inside back cover of Discovery and Encounter with God. As you can see, the Scripture Union Bible Reading Method is simple, but it’s also effective. In the worldwide Scripture Union network, we have a phrase that sums up our approach to Bible reading: Pray it in; live it out. That’s the way to make God’s Word come alive every day.