

Teach Yourself To Read the Bible: Scriptural Guide to Growth



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PREFACE: The purpose of this ministry is to spread the word of God. We pray that you are blessed by what is revealed within. This lesson was first published January 8, 1991 and was entitled "Spiritual Growth: To Read the Bible Or Not, (That is the Questions)?".

(Note: **All of our lessons will be available in their entirety on this site. See, our primary goal is to spread and minister the word of God freely.** We have also decided to make our lessons available in printed form for a small fee for the benefit of those: who may not access to the internet, who want a printed copy for their study reference, and for utilization by Sunday school and bible study groups. The proceeds from these sales go to support the continued availability of this online ministry. We praise God for those who are learning and growing through this online ministry.)

1. Introduction

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. This book is another in the series published by sword ministries aimed at guiding Christians to a deeper level of understanding in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. The Focus of this book is to give new born Christians a basic understanding of how to grow up spiritually in the Lord. It will give you insight on things to do now that you are a Christian. Its main focus will be on the third step of growing spiritually: **how to read and understand the word of God.** It will tell you instruct you on **choosing a bible, reading patterns, note taking, reading, study methods, meditation** and more.

My prayer is that all who read this book will gain an understanding and find a wonderful relationship with Jesus Christ. See, Christianity is not focused on religion. It is focused on a personal, life changing walk with God through his Son Jesus Christ.

2. Growing Up Spiritually

2 PETER 1:1. Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: 2. Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the KNOWLEDGE of God, and of Jesus our Lord, 3. According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the **KNOWLEDGE** of him that hath called us to glory and **virtue:** 4. Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through LUST. 5. And besides this giving, all **DILIGENCE**, add to your **FAITH VIRTUE**, and to virtue **KNOWLEDGE;** 6. And to knowledge **TEMPERANCE;** and to temperance **PATIENCE;** and to patience **GODLINESS;** 7. And to godliness **BROTHERLY KINDNESS;** and to brotherly kindness **CHARITY.** 8. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful [ST JOHN 15:1-6, GALATIANS 5:16-25] in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

9. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. 10. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give **diligence to make your calling and election sure:** for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: 11. For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. 12. Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth.

HEBREWS 6:1. Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, 2. Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgement. 3. And this will we do, if God permit. 4. **For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,** 5. And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, 6. **If they shall fall away, TO RENEW THEM AGAIN UNTO REPENTANCE; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.**

These scriptures make it quite clear that we are to be **DILIGENT** and to grow up unto perfection (EPHESIANS 4:11-16.) If we refuse to heed the call, there is a chance that we might find ourselves in a dangerous position. First, let me put your mind at ease. If you are still seeking God and hungering after his word, you have not fallen away from God (HEBREWS 6:6.) It is highly unlikely that most christians will reach this state. However, since the scriptures show that it is possible to fall away, we must address this area also.

Secondly, if you reach this state, I believe that you will know it because you will never have a desire to sincerely follow God or anything that is right. You would have to **KNOWINGLY, VEHEMENTLY, AND WITH GREAT DETERMINATION DENY** the Lord to reach this state. This is a more severe action than using God's name in vain or simply deciding to turn away from God. Now, if you stay turned away from God and continually deny him, there is a possibility of reaching this state. I hope you see that it will take great effort on your part to do this. **IN OTHER WORDS, AS LONG AS YOU ARE FOLLOWING GOD AND SERVING HIM, YOU WILL NEVER HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT REACHING THIS STATE.**

Now that we have dealt with the issue that normally troubles everyone (those six pivotal scriptures in Hebrews,) let us take a look at spiritual growth. If we grow spiritually, we will never have to really worry about reaching this state (2 PETER 1:10.)

Notice that the book of Peter is written to Christians (them that have obtained like precious faith through Jesus Christ.) Since we have escaped the world, we should give **DILIGENCE** to grow away from the world. It gives 8 specific steps that we should move through. Notice in the 9th verse, if we don't do those things, we will find ourselves in the same situation that we were trying to escape (blind, unfruitful, still living in our old sins.)

IF YOU ARE SEEKING A TRUE AND LASTING CHANGE IN YOUR LIFE, THESE ARE THE ONLY STEPS THAT WILL GET YOU THERE.

3. Step 1: FAITH

HEBREWS 11:1. Now **FAITH** is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. 3. Through **FAITH** we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. 6. **But without FAITH it is impossible to please him:** for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

ROMANS 10:9. That if thou shalt **CONFESS** with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt **BELIEVE** in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10. For with the heart man **BELIEVETH** unto righteousness; and with the mouth **CONFESSION** is made unto salvation.

ST MARK 16:16. He that **BELIEVETH** and is **BAPTIZED** shall be **SAVED**; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

EPHESIANS 2:8. For **BY GRACE** are ye **SAVED** through **FAITH**: and that **NOT OF YOURSELVES**: it is the **GIFT OF GOD**: 9. **NOT OF WORKS**, lest any man should boast.

Faith is the first step to growing spiritually. Your acceptance to God and subsequent salvation comes through faith in Jesus Christ. Faith (a deep rooted belief in God) is the key to salvation. Please note that when the scriptures speak of belief (Faith,) it involves believing and loving God with all you heart, soul, mind and strength (ST MATTHEW 22:27, JAMES 2:17-26.) If you possess this type of faith, you can rest assuredly in your salvation. If you have been baptized (I have written a booklet for those who need more information on baptism) you are ready to move on to the next step.

4. Step 2: VIRTUE

VIRTUE: conformity to a standard of right: Morality; Chastity esp in a woman. pg. 1317

MORALITY: a doctrine or system of moral conduct; conformity to ideals of right human conduct. pg. 771

Webster's 9th New Collegiate Dictionary c 1984 by Merriam-Webster Inc.

ROMANS 6:1. What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? 2. **GOD FORBID.** How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? 3. Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 4. Therefore we were buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, **even so we also should walk in newness of life.**

5. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. 11. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. 12. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. 23. For the wages of sin is death, but the **GIFT OF GOD** is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

1 JOHN 5:1. Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. 2. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. 3. **For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments:** and his commandments are not grievous. 4. **For WHATSOEVER IS BORN OF GOD OVERCOMETH THE WORLD:** and this is the victory that overcometh the world, **EVEN OUR FAITH.**

From the definition, I think that you should be able to see that virtue means to live upright before God. We have been made new creatures in Christ (2 CORINTHIANS 5:17) and now God wants us to live up to his moral standard. The United States seems pretty much void of morality today. Everyone wants to live life their own way and refuse to hold even our traditional moral standards in esteem. We can also see the effects of a low moral standard on our nation. This is the first place that most Christians begin experiencing difficulty. This is somewhat understandable considering the attitudes and conditions in which we are living. Yet, God's Word is clear. **HE FORBIDS US TO KNOWINGLY LIVE IN SIN !!!**

See, faith and baptism brings us to this point. Notice how ROMANS 6:4 points us from baptism to the new life that we are suppose to walk (live) in. The problem is that most Christians either don't know how to or refuse to live in accordance with God's word. In other words, they don't want to change. However, scriptures make it clear that we are now new creatures (2 CORINTHIANS 5:17.)

God wants us to live according to his word. Most people say that they love God. The only way for us to prove that we truly love the Lord is for us to start keeping his commandments (his word.)

ROMANS 6:16. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, HIS SERVANTS YE ARE TO WHOM YE OBEY; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

Remember, Paul is writing here to Christians. He is letting them know that if they continue to live in sin, then their reward will be death. If they obey the word, they will obtain eternal life through the righteousness of Jesus Christ. There is no choice. This is the next step in growing. The third step, growing in knowledge, will help you to change if you really want to. If not, you are leaving yourself in a dangerous position because, the wages of sin is death.

5. Step 3: KNOWLEDGE

I am assuming that most people who will study this book are already at this point. I briefly touched on the steps leading up to this point in the preceding sections. Unfortunately most people stop at this point. If you stop at Step 2, you will never be able to have a fulfilling relationship with God. Let's examine this area.

I have found that most people don't read their bibles, because they don't know how to. They don't know where to begin, how to go about reading it, or how to gain an understanding from it. Now the issue has been greatly confused by the numerous translations of the bible that have been placed on the market. Satan has done his job well: he has kept countless Christians from reading and studying the word of God. Let's examine the issues around the word of God.

a. The Bible, The Word of God

Let us take a look at the Word of God and see why so much value is placed on it.

i. Jesus is the Word

ST JOHN 1:1. In the beginning was the WORD, and the WORD was with God, and the WORD WAS GOD. 14. And the WORD was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld HIS glory, the glory as of the ONLY BEGOTTEN OF THE FATHER,) FULL OF GRACE AND TRUTH. 17. For the law was given by Moses, but GRACE AND TRUTH came by JESUS CHRIST. 18. No man hath seen God at any time; the ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, which is in the bosom of the Father, HE hath declared him.

SEE REVELATIONS 19: 11-16, HEBREWS 10:6-7

Most Christians will probably tell you that they love God and Jesus and want to know them better. I can understand that idea because I love my wife dearly and I personally want to know all that I can about her. Well, the way to get to know God and Jesus is through the Word.

As pointed out above, **Jesus is the WORD** (See also, 1 JOHN 5:7 KJV.) He is the only one that was begotten of the Father. When we read the **BIBLE, GOD'S WORD**, we are reading God's revelation of himself to man. If you really want to get to know God and Jesus, read the **WORD**.

ii. The Word is the Bread of Life

ST JOHN 6:47. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. 48. I am that bread of life. 49. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. 50. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. 51. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: AND THE BREAD THAT I WILL GIVE IS MY FLESH, which I will give for the life of the world. 52. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? 53. Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. 54. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. 55. For my FLESH IS MEAT INDEED, and my blood is drink indeed. 56. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. 57. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. 58. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.

ST MATTHEW 4:4. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by **BREAD** alone, **BUT BY EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDETH OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.**

The easiest way to digest this information is to remember these three critical ideas:

1. Jesus is the Word
2. The Word was made Flesh and dwelt among us.
3. Jesus (the Word) is the Spiritual food that, if eaten, will cause us to grow spiritually.

We already know that Jesus is the Word. Remember, the word was made flesh and dwelt among us (ST JOHN 1:1, 14.) When we eat the flesh (read) and accept and believe it (make Jesus Lord and Saviour of our life) we will live forever. Are you getting the picture of how important the WORD is yet. Let me continue.

The scriptures have also told us that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord (ST MATTHEW 4:4.) Looking at this and remembering that the Word (Jesus) was made flesh and dwelt among us, we can see how God has given us his word through Jesus so that we would know how to live our individual lives. It also shows us how to gain access to eternal life. As pointed out in verse 57, we must eat the word and then live by the word.

iii. The Word came from God, Not Man

2 PETER 1:20. Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. 21. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

2 TIMOTHY 3:16. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17. That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

ST MATTHEW 5:17. Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. 18. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

LUKE 21:33. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

PSALMS 119:89. For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven.

I have given you all these scriptures so that you will know that the bible is **GOD'S WORD TO MAN**. God's word is settled in the heaven forever. IT CANNOT BE CHANGED. If He can create the whole world, surely He can preserve His word, without flaw, down through the centuries. Notice also that man had no input into the scriptures. The scriptures are not given so that we can make our own private interpretation either. God spoke through men and they wrote down his scriptures without error. If you are persuaded that the bible is full of errors, then you are saying that God is not great enough to preserve his word without error.

iv. The Bible is a Spiritual Book

1 CORINTHIANS 2:9. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. 10. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. 11. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. 12. Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. 13. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 14. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. (ROMANS 8:3-9)

God's word is spiritual. The natural man cannot receive and understand his words. In other words, unless you are saved and born again (ST JOHN 3:3-8) you will not be able to understand the word of God. The casual reader will never find the deep spiritual truths that are hidden in God's Word. Hopefully, you have the Spirit of God. If you do, you will find that his Spirit knows all about him. As you allow, the Holy Spirit will begin teaching you about God's word, comparing spiritual things with spiritual things. This is the reason why you must read God's word prayerfully.

Let me convey this idea at this point. When you first begin reading the bible, especially the King James Version, **you will most likely find it difficult and confusing. This is a natural reaction.** The reason this will happen is that your spiritual man is weak (1 CORINTHIANS 11:23-30, mainly verse 30.) As you begin reading, your spiritual man will gain strength and come alive. Since the word is food, I will compare it with natural food to help communicate my meaning. When you eat a meal, you don't stop to ask who cooked it. Most of us will simply eat and enjoy. Well, our physical body doesn't care either. Our body will take in the food, our stomach will digest it, and then the nutrients will be supplied to all parts of our body to strengthen it. As you read the word of God you are feeding your spiritual man. **Even though you don't understand it**, the word will supply the ingredients necessary for your spiritual man to grow just as the natural food helps our physical bodies to grow. The word is taken into the stomach of our spiritual man (the mind) where it is digested (meditation, PSALMS 1) and broken down. When you need it, just like when you need a burst of energy to escape a harmful situation, the Holy Spirit will bring to mind whatever scriptures you will need in a format that you can understand (ST MATTHEW 10:19-20 & ST JOHN 14:26.)

b. The Word is Spiritual Food to Grow On

1 PETER 2:2. As **NEWBORN BABES**, desire the **sincere MILK OF THE WORD**, that ye may GROW thereby: 3. If so by ye have **TASTED** that the Lord is gracious.

1 CORINTHIANS 3:

1. And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto **BABES** in Christ,
2. **I have FED you with MILK, and not with MEAT:** for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.
3. **For ye are yet carnal:** for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

HEBREWS 5:12. **For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of MILK, and not of strong MEAT.** 13. For every one that useth **MILK** is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a **BABE**. 14. But strong **MEAT** belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

EZEKIEL 2:8. But thou, son of man, hear what I say unto thee; Be not thou rebellious like that rebellious house: **open thy MOUTH, and EAT that I give thee.** 9. And when I looked, behold, an hand was sent unto me; and, lo, **a roll of a book was therein;** 10. And he spread it before me; and it was **written within and without: and there was written lamentations, and mourning, and woe.**

EZEKIEL 3:1. Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, **EAT that thou findest; EAT THIS ROLL,** and go speak unto the house of Israel. 2. So I opened my MOUTH, and **HE CAUSED ME TO EAT THAT ROLL.** 3. And he said unto me, Son of man, **CAUSE THY BELLY TO EAT,** and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then did I eat it; and **IT WAS IN MY MOUTH AS HONEY FOR SWEETNESS.**

YOU WILL NEVER GROW SPIRITUALLY UNTIL YOU BEGIN READING AND STUDYING THE WORD OF GOD ON A PERSONAL BASIS. Paul lets us know that the only way that we can grow is through the milk of the word.

When anyone gets saved, they are a babe in Christ. Until they grow spiritually, they are still a babe in Christ. The only way to grow is through a personal understanding of the word of God. Listening to preaching and attending the church and bible study is a good **supplement** but it can never replace their requirement to personally read and study God's word. Paul made the comment that when they needed to be teachers of other, they were in need that someone would teach them again. They were in need of milk. I'm afraid that many Christians find themselves in this position year after year. There are many people that could be lead to Christ, but most Christians probably don't know the words to say. I pray that I've said something that has encouraged you to change if this is the situation in your life.

c. Reading God's Word

i. Which Bible to Choose

I believe that the King James Version (KJV) of the bible is an accurate translation of the original manuscripts. This is the bible I recommend for reading. Most people claim that it is too difficult to read. Let's examine this argument.

When we were in high school, most of us were required to read and understand the writings of Shakespeare and other great literary people. It was written in old English and was quite difficult to understand. Yet, we read it. After that, we studied it in great detail to find all of its hidden treasures. I don't know of any attempts to **TRANSLATE** (rewrite) all of their works into a modern, more understandable language, do you!!! Yet, we mastered it. **The bible is not written for easy reading.** However, it is written to be understood. It contains great treasures and spiritual truths that are hidden to the casual reader but open to the dedicated children of God. It is designed to be studied and meditated on. In other words, there is no short cut to truly understanding the word of God. **YOU WILL FIND THAT AS YOU BEGIN READING IT PRAYERFULLY, UNDERSTANDING IT WILL BECOME EASIER AND EASIER.**

See, for over 300 years, the KJV Bible was the bible of choice for all born again believers. It was basically unquestioned and believers walked in a strong faith with God. Today, you find that the newer versions have accomplished the task of casting great doubt on God's word. In the process, it has destroyed the faith many people had in the word of God.

You will find in many places, these newer versions have changed the word of God and attacked many of its great spiritual truths. Most people are unaware of this attack. For your own benefit, if you have a different version of the bible, compare these scriptures to the ones in the KJV and try to discern the subtle, sometimes even blunt, differences in meaning:

[NOTE: notice that they usually change only one or two words, and the difference in those words make a giant difference in meaning. You will probably notice that the KJV is clearer and easier to understand when compared to the newer versions, SURPRISED??]

1 TIMOTHY 3:16; ROMANS 14:10,12; ACTS 20:28; ST JOHN 9:35; MICAH 5:2; 1 PETER 2:2; ST JOHN 3:36; ST JOHN 6:47; ST JOHN 6:35; GENESIS 6:8; ZECHARIAH 9:9; COLOSSIANS 1:14; 1 PETER 4:1; ST LUKE 24:6; ST LUKE 4:4, ISAIAH 7:14; ST LUKE 1:34; ST LUKE 2:23; ST JOHN 9:34; 1 SAMUEL 20:30; 1 KINGS 18:27; 2 KINGS 21:6; PSALMS 34:20

THE FOLLOWING SCRIPTURES ARE **OMITTED** EITHER IN PART OR ENTIRETY FROM THE NEWER VERSIONS:

ACTS 8:36-38; ST MATTHEW 17:21; ST MATTHEW 18:11; ST MARK 7:16; ST MARK 11:26; ST MARK 15:28; ST LUKE 17:36; ST LUKE 24:11-13; ST LUKE 24:40; ST MATTHEW 23:14; ST MARK 16:9-20; ST MATTHEW 9:13; ST LUKE 22:19-20; ST JOHN 7:53-8:11

REVELATIONS 22:19. And **IF ANY MAN SHALL TAKE AWAY FROM THE WORDS OF THE BOOK OF THIS PROPHECY**, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

God says that his word will endure forever. If a man take away from the words of his book, God says that he will take away his part out of the book of life. **God does not want us tampering with his word!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!** This is only a sample of what they have done to the newer versions of the bible. If you have had trouble reading or accepting them, this is most likely the reason why. I have met people who personally told me that the Holy Spirit within them was uncomfortable (grieved) until they started reading from the KJV. I was also told by some that they could only memorized scriptures when they did it from the KJV. If I've gotten your attention and you want more knowledge, read the following book:

TITLE: Let's Weigh the Evidence
AUTHOR: Barry Burton
PUBLISHER: Chick Publication, P.O. Box 662, Chino, CA 91708-0662
COPYRIGHT: 1983
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOG CARD NO.: 83-71271
ISBN: 0-937958-17-4
OTHER INFORMATION: Ninth Printing 184/F
PRICE: \$ 3.95 (You can order it directly from Chick Publications)

I quoted the above scriptures from this reference. Most of these scriptures were compared against the New American Standard (NAS) Bible, Living Bible, Revised Standard Version Bible, Revised Version Bible, and the Good News Bible. This book will explain the original manuscripts, how the KJV came about, and give you insights into the other bibles. Let me forewarn you that it will be next to impossible to get a copy of this book because many Christian bookstores refuse to stock it and some have claimed that it doesn't even exist. However, if you want a copy you can either write to Chick Publications or contact me (address on back cover.)

ii. A Good Reading Pattern

I am going to suggest a number of reading patterns that you can use. The idea is for you to pick the one that most suits your needs. After you complete one (read the whole bible) you can change. **The goal is consistency and a diet of at least one chapter a day for the rest of your life.**

PATTERN 1: Start in ST JOHN and read through to REVELATIONS. Then start in GENESIS and read through to ST JOHN. 1 Chapter a day required.

PATTERN 2: Start in ST JOHN and GENESIS at the same time and read one chapter from each of these beginning points a day. 2 Chapters a day required.

PATTERN 3: Same as Pattern #2 except that when you reach REVELATIONS, go to ST MATTHEW and begin reading. After reading the old testament once, continue to read in a cycle from ST MATTHEW to REVELATIONS. The reason I suggest starting with the new testament is because it will lay the foundation that will give you a greater understanding and appreciation for the old testament. The reason I start at ST JOHN is because it begins with the statement "In the beginning" the same as GENESIS. ST JOHN also gives a lot of insight into salvation, Jesus, the Father, and the Holy Spirit that will be of great benefit as you begin your spiritual walk.

PROVERB PATTERN: Reading 1 proverb a day, you can read the book of PROVERBS in a month (31 chapters). Proverbs will give you a lot of wisdom and insight for daily living.

PSALMS PATTERN: Reading 5 psalms a day you can read the book of PSALMS in a month also. This book will provide a lot of encouragement and guidance during the many trials that you may face. As you read, you will be surprised to find out that the bible will explain itself. Notice how I bring scriptures together from all over the bible to explain these principles that I am laying forth.

For example to understand the GODHEAD, you have to know: GENESIS 1:26 (Let us make man), 1 TIMOTHY 3:16 (great is the mystery of godliness), ROMANS 1:20 (even his eternal power and Godhead), 1 JOHN 5:7 (For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one), ST JOHN 1:1 (In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God), ST JOHN 1:14 (And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us) and many others.

Simply reading will give you a good foundation in the word of God and prepare you to study and worship the Lord. You will now be able to listen to the preached word and gain more from it.

ST JOHN 14:26. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and **bring all things to your remembrance**, whatsoever I have said unto you.

In order for God to bring things to our remembrance, they must first be a member of our body. When you read, you are making the word a part of you: a member of your body. You may not understand it when you read it, but that is okay. Eventually the Lord will bring it to your remembrance and give you an understanding. Sometimes it will come when the word is being preached or taught. It will amaze you.

The Lord wants you to understand his word. However, he can't really give you an understanding if you never read the word and make it a member of your body.

iii. Note Taking

Think of your bible as a text book and mark it with study notes. Think about it. What is the difference between you making your own study marks and notes in a bible as compared to buying a bible that comes marked with study notes. There is no difference. One day, every worn bible will be burned, but, the words that are contained therein will live on. It is not the book that is holy but the words that are contained therein. I say this for the benefit of those who believe it is unholy or unthinkable to write or make study notes in a bible. As you read, highlight any areas that the Holy Spirit really focuses your attention on. Also you can highlight areas that you don't understand or those areas that really confuse you. If you discover a relationship between scriptures, go to each passage and annotate the other scripture reference in the margins. This will save you the trouble of tracking down scriptures in the future. Sometimes, I also write down the titles of sermons, minister's name and the date a sermon was preached. All of these techniques will make your bible a tremendous asset as time moves on.

iv. How to Read

Separate the concept of reading and studying. **UNTIL YOU ARE REALLY FAMILIAR WITH THE WORD, LET THEM BE TWO SEPARATE ACTIVITIES. DURING YOUR READING TIME, DO NOT STUDY! ! ! ! !** If you read something interesting, make note of it and come back and study it during your study time. Between these ideas, bible study lessons, and sermons, you will have plenty of information to study. **HOWEVER, NEVER STOP READING. MAKE THEM TWO SEPARATE ACTIVITIES.**

Think of reading as though you were eating a natural meal. When you eat dinner, do you stop and analyze every bite that you are taking. No, you eat and enjoy the things that are readily apparent: aroma, looks, and taste. You should read the word of God the same way. Take the understanding that you can from those things that are readily apparent. Your body does not stop to analyze the food, yet, it grows from the nutrients that it gains as it breaks down the food after it is in your body. When you read the bible, you make the word a member of your body. When the Holy Spirit starts breaking it down (brings it to your remembrance,) you gain understanding and will grow stronger spiritually. You will grow stronger day by day.

v. When to Read the Word of God

ST MATTHEW 6:11. Give us this day our **daily bread**.

ST MATTHEW 4:4. But he answered and said, It is written, **Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.**

DEUTERONOMY 8:3. **And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, BUT BY EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDETH OUT OF THE MOUTH OF THE LORD doth man live.**

EVERY CHRISTIAN SHOULD READ A MINIMUM OF A CHAPTER A DAY FROM THE WORD.

The first scripture was taken from the Lord's prayer. It shows us that we need bread from God daily. The next scriptures shows that this bread does not refer to natural food only, but it also includes spiritual food. We are to live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God (the Lord.) If we were to stop eating, our physical (natural) man would die in a short time period. By the same idea, if we don't feed our spiritual man, he will die eventually. If your life seems empty, I will take a guess that you have not been feeding your spiritual man. Once you start feeding him, he will come alive and you will immediately notice the change.

ROMANS 12:2. And be not conformed to this world: **but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind,** that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

This question was asked once upon a time: "Which man would be stronger in an individual's life? The natural man which is wrapped up in the lusts and cares of this world or the spiritual man which is concerned about following Jesus?" The answer was simply this, "The one that you feed the most." We feed our natural man (our mind) everyday with television, magazines, books, and all the other ideas of the world. It is no wonder we have such a hard time following Jesus. In order to change this, we must begin to feed the spiritual man. As you have learned from this book, the only way to feed the spiritual man is with the Word of God (Jesus, the word made flesh.) Feeding our mind the proper diet will transform us into what God wants us to be.

vi. Recommended Technique

Find a specific time were can you can dedicate that moment each day to reading the word of God. You can either buy another bible or use your favorite bible. The idea is to have one that you can leave in a special place all the time. **Use one of the suggested reading patterns, and date each chapter the day you read it until you have read the entire bible one time.** You can read as many chapters as you want and feel free to move about as the Spirit leads. Following the format that I've given you will give you a purpose so that when you finish reading a section of scriptures that appeals to you, you can get back on track and keep reading. **Your goal is to read the entire bible at least once.**

Personally, I use the first 15 minutes of work every day to read my bible. I call it my bible break. Everyone takes a smoking break or coffee break at work so I reasoned that I wanted my first break to be in the word of God. I keep a bible in my desk and never move it. Therefore, it is always ready for use. Through this technique, I have finally been able to read on a consistent basis.

The devil has been keeping you off track for many years by providing distractions from his bag of tricks. I think that it is time that we as Christians come up with a few tricks of our own to keep in step with God's Word.

vii. My Favorite Bible

My bible of choice is the **Thompson Chain-Reference Bible** in the King James Version. It contains a complete numerical system of chain references, analysis of books, outline studies of characters, unique charts, pictorial maps, and archaeological discovers along with many other features. It contains a condensed cyclopedia of topics and texts and other items with 4450 entries. I feel it is a excellent source for the beginning bible student. Also you will find that it is hard to outgrow. I've had mine for 8 years and I'm just beginning to examine the many scriptures and points of reference that it provides.

As you read, you will find that you will become very accustomed to the positioning of scriptures in your bible. If you buy a good reference bible now, you will not have to get accustomed to another bible later on. The reason that I like this particular bible most is that it does not contain a commentary. You are not faced with man's ideas. It strives, as I do, to present you as many scriptures as it can on a given subject so that you can let the Holy Spirit guide you into God's understanding. Remember, there is only one interpretation of the scriptures.

1 PETER 1:20. Knowing this first, **THAT NO PROPHECY OF THE SCRIPTURE IS OF ANY PRIVATE INTERPRETATION. 21. FOR THE PROPHECY CAME NOT IN OLD TIME BY THE WILL OF MAN: but HOLY MEN of God SPAKE as they were MOVED by the HOLY GHOST.**

There are other good reference bible out there, but this one just happens to be my favorite.

d. Understanding the Word of God

Let me also give you tips on how to go about understanding the word of God.

i. Study

2 TIMOTHY 2:15. **Study to shew thyself approved unto God,** a workman that needeth not to be a shamed, **RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH.**

Remember that the word of God is not given to private interpretation. God wrote it. He knows what it means. We must be able to rightly divide the word of Truth. The Holy Ghost moved men to write the word of God. We must now let the Holy Ghost move us to understand the word of God. Through the study of God's word is where we gain an understanding. During the process of reading, you were

laying a foundation even though you did not understand much of what you were reading. This is where you become the cook in the kitchen. You are going to analyze the meal and find out how to prepare that meal that you've been eating and enjoying.

(1) Tools of Study

In order to get the most out of your study time, there are some tools that you will need to acquire (My recommendations are in parenthesis:)

1. A good study bible (Thompson Chain-Reference Bible, KJV.)

2. A exhaustive concordance (Abingdons Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.) **NOTE:** This concordance book shows every word in the bible and its scriptural location. For example: You can look up the word love, and it will show you everywhere it occurs in the bible.

3. A bible dictionary.

4. A notebook (one dedicated for study notes.)

If you want to use another translation, I recommend a parallel bible that contains the KJV. A parallel bible shows other translations side by side. They normally show either 2, 4 or 8 translations at once. The 4 translation bible seems to be fairly popular.

Some people enjoy COMMENTARIES. For those of you who haven't heard of them, **THEY ARE BASICALLY ONE MAN'S INTERPRETATION OF THE SCRIPTURES.** If I were to purchase a set, I would buy the Matthew Henry Commentary Set.

(2) Tips for Studying

There are many ways to study the bible. I'm going to give you a few to help get you started.

(a) Chapter Study

In this method, you read and examine one chapter at a time. You try to locate the divisions in the chapter, discover the theme for each division, and analyze the overall perspective of the entire chapter. Then you try to apply the truths that you have learned to your life.

(b) Book Study

In this method, you work on examining a whole book at one time (Example: EPHESIANS.) Many bible studies are built around this method. It encompasses the chapter method above, but broadens its scope to the analysis of an entire book. The Thompson Chain-Reference Bible gives you additional insight by providing an analytical look at each book in its reference section. This analysis shows the major and minor themes of each book and gives you insight about the author and the times in which the book was written.

(c) Word Study

This is the study method that I use most often. This study of the knowledge of God is an example of a word (TOPICAL) study. This is where your concordance will be most useful. You can pick a word, like grace, and use the exhaustive concordance to find every scripture that it appears in throughout the bible. Now you can read each scripture relating to that one subject. This is the way that I gained a lot of insight into the scriptures. I have found that every biblical idea originates in GENESIS, ends in REVELATIONS, and is chained throughout the bible. In order to fully understand each idea, you must follow it from conception to completeness. This method will be great for answering questions that are formed during your reading time.

(d) Study Notes

Use your notebook to take notes on all your research. There is no use in building a bridge twice. It is a waste of time. By keeping good notes in your bible and notebook, you will be able to look back at your valuable research if you ever get confused.

ii. Pray to God

JAMES 1:5. **IF ANY OF YOU LACK WISDOM, LET HIM ASK OF GOD,** that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. 6. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. 7. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

ST LUKE 11:9. And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given unto you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

God wants us to know and understand his word. Each time, before you read the word, you should pray and ask God to give you wisdom so that you will understand his word. Then, be patient and wait for it to appear in your life. Do not doubt God. He will perform it. Just continue to be faithful in reading his word and continually pray to God for wisdom.

iii. Meditate on God's Word

PSALMS 1:1. Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of the sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. 2. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and **IN HIS LAW DOTH HE MEDITATE DAY AND NIGHT.** 3. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

JOSHUA 1: 8. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but **thou shalt meditate therein day and night,** that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

God makes it clear that he wants us to meditate on his word day and night. If we follow his guidance, Joshua points out that we will have good success. **IF YOUR LIFE SEEMS TO BE IN TURMOIL, A LARGE PART OF THE PROBLEM COULD BE THAT YOU ARE NOT LIVING AS GOD'S WORD DICTATES.** Notice in PSALMS that it says that everything that we do shall prosper. Remember also that, "All things work together for good to them that love the Lord (ROMANS 8:28)." In meditating on God's word, you will also gain understanding. The Holy Spirit will speak to you in those quiet times. My method for meditating is this:

1. I memorize the scripture that God has placed on my heart. The easiest way to memorize it is to say the scripture out loud many times until it sticks in the memory. Or else I will simply read over the passage of scriptures concerning the idea that God has given me.

2. Next, I reflect over the scripture word by word and then section by section.

The idea is to **keep God's word continually before you.** As you reflect, the Holy Spirit will give you the inspiration and insight that God has for you.

iv. Listen to the Holy Spirit

JOB 32:6. And Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite answered and said, I am young, and ye are very old; wherefore I was afraid, and durst not shew you mine opinion. 7. I said, Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom 8. **BUT THERE IS A SPIRIT**

IN MAN: AND THE INSPIRATION OF THE ALMIGHTY GIVETH THEM UNDERSTANDING. 9. Great men are not always wise: neither do the aged understand judgement.

1 THESSALONIANS 5:23. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole **SPIRIT and SOUL and BODY** be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

You are a triune being: spirit, soul and body. God communicates with you through your spirit.

ROMANS 8:16. The **SPIRIT** itself **BEARETH WITNESS** with **OUR SPIRIT** that we are the children of God:

This is also the way that we know that we are a Christian. God's Spirit communicates with our spirit.

ST JOHN 14:26. But the Comforter, which is **the HOLY GHOST**, whom the Father will send in my name, **HE SHALL TEACH YOU ALL THINGS**, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

1 JOHN 2:26. These things have I written unto you concerning **them that seduce you**. 27. But **THE ANOINTING** which ye have received of him **ABIDETH IN YOU**, and **ye need not that any man teach you**; but as the same **ANOINTING TEACHETH YOU OF ALL THINGS**, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, **ye shall abide in him**.

It is evident that the body to which this letter was addressed was having problems with false teachers. They were seducing the Christians and causing them to err concerning the word of God. We find this problem prevalent in many churches today. You must rely on the Holy Spirit to keep you on track with God's word. If you truly love the Lord, the Holy Ghost will not let you be misled for long. **This is why it is critical that you read the word of God for yourself.**

As you start being obedient to God's command to read and study his word, the Holy Spirit will guide your understanding.

e. Ignorance is no Excuse

1 PETER 2:9. But ye are a chosen generation, **A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD**, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:

HOSEA 4:6 **MY PEOPLE ARE DESTROYED FOR LACK OF KNOWLEDGE**: because thou hast **REJECTED KNOWLEDGE**. I will also **REJECT** thee, that thou shalt **BE NO PRIEST TO ME**: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.

The Lord says that his people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. He points out that because we have rejected his knowledge, he will reject us from being priests: this is an office to which he has called us. Every home has a bible. There is absolutely no excuse for not reading and study God's word.

6. The Other Steps

I am not going to go into these other areas. I have just labeled them hear so that you can think about them. As you read and study, I encourage you to consider these areas. I will probably write about them at a later date.

a. Step 4: TEMPERANCE

b. Step 5: PATIENCE

c. Step 6: GODLINESS

d. Step 7: BROTHERLY KINDNESS

e. Step 8: CHARITY

7. Final Word

It surprises me, the number of Christians that will read book after book by different Christian authors who have never stopped to read the entire Word of God. These other books are good and they serve a useful purpose: they assist by helping us to develop a clearer understanding of God's word in different areas. BUT, **THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR READING AND STUDYING THE WORD OF GOD**. Before you get carried off with reading other men's word, I recommend a good foundation in the word of God through a commitment to reading his word daily. I think it is okay to read and study other material along the way and in conjunction with reading the word of God. Just remember that the word of God takes priority. God's word was not created by man: it was penned by God. Remember how God personally wrote the ten commandments in the tables of stone on Mount Sinai (Exodus 24:12, 31:18.)

EXODUS 32:15. And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony were in his hand: the tables were written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other were they written. 16. **AND THE TABLES WERE THE WORK OF GOD, AND THE WRITING WAS THE WRITING OF GOD, GRAVEN UPON THE TABLES.**

God personally wrote his own testimony. In 2 CORINTHIANS 12:1-4, we find how Paul personally received his revelations directly from the Lord through vision and revelations. He shares about how he has heard things that the Lord would not permit him to ever repeat again.

GALATIANS 1:11. **But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man**. 12. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, **but by the revelation of Jesus Christ**.

Paul was amazed that the Galatians were so soon removed from the faith: GALATIANS 1:6. They were turning to man-made doctrines. He was comforting them and letting them know that he had received his words directly from the Lord. He pointed out that though an angel or anyone else preached any other Gospel, they should not receive it: GALATIANS 1:7-10.

God revealed the book of REVELATIONS to John while he was a prisoner on the island of Patmos. His command to John was to write what he saw and heard: REVELATIONS 1:11. Notice the first three chapters are written in red. Red represents the exact words of Christ in red letter editions of the bible. These three chapters contain a letter that was dictated by Jesus Christ to the church. The whole book was dictated to John as he wrote about things that were to come to pass. God's word will live forever. They cannot be changed. There is a great danger in adding to or taking away from his word. This is God's word to you. Please, join in with me, and get to know it personally.

REVELATIONS 20:14. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15. And **whosoever was not found written in the book of life** was cast into the lake of fire.

REVELATIONS 22:18. For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, **IF ANY MAN SHALL ADD UNTO THESE THINGS, GOD SHALL ADD UNTO HIM THE PLAGUES THAT ARE WRITTEN IN THIS BOOK**: 19. And **if any man shall TAKE AWAY FROM THE WORD OF THIS BOOK OF THIS PROPHECY, GOD SHALL TAKE HIS PART OUT OF THE BOOK OF LIFE, GOD SHALL TAKE HIS PART OUT OF THE BOOK OF LIFE**, and out of the holy city, and from the things that are written in this book. 20. He which testifieth these things said, **Surely I come quickly**. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. 21. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.