

Constructive Bible Reading

by Paul Hershberger

Paul Hershberger emphasizes the importance of constructive Bible reading and prayer for spiritual growth and maturity in the Christian life.

Duration: 1:00:43

Scripture: Matthew 12, John 7:38, Colossians 3:16

Topics: "Bible Study", "Discipleship"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of consistently reading and studying the Bible. He uses the analogy of laying four bricks a day to illustrate the idea of constructively building one's life for Jesus Christ. The speaker encourages listeners to make Jesus the Lord of their lives, seek Him diligently, and read the Bible with purpose and intention. He also shares examples of individuals who accomplished great things for God by being persistent and dedicated in their faith.

Transcript

Hello, this is Brother Denny. Welcome to Charity Ministries. Our desire is that your life would be blessed and changed by this message.

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These messages are offered to all without charge by the freewill offerings of God's people. A special thank you to all who support this ministry. Well, greetings this morning again in the King's name, Jesus.

Now, if there was one of the presidents' daughters here, we would all probably have a bit of reverence on our hearts, especially in our minds. But if we're here as a child of the King, we have a seat way beyond that. I'd like to say this morning that yesterday I felt like I didn't fully get my heart conveyed.

It's almost just still burning in me this morning. The need to pray and seek God's face. When people pray, things happen.

Things change. We change. God moves.

I'm not going to start over. Another subject today, another dear subject to me, constructive Bible reading. It's a very dear subject to me, just like praying.

I put them right beside each other. And when you see both of these functioning the way they ought to in a Christian's life, you will see a Christian that just flourishes, that becomes very fruitful for God. You will see that.

And my heart this morning is to have us all fully persuaded by the time we're done that this is so. And open our eyes a bit to see the possibilities of what we could do. And hopefully motivate us to go ahead and do it.

Let's bow our heads and pray. Lord Jesus, this morning, we're just so thankful that you've adopted us. Thank you for the blood.

Thank you for salvation, that we can have our conscience cleansed. We can be forgiven from our sins, washed, made clean, and regenerated into a new creature. Thank you, Lord Jesus.

And Lord, as we look at that calling of being regenerated children, sons and daughters of yours, we pray, Lord, that this morning you would speak to our hearts as to how we can live lives that bring more glory to you, that walk worthy of that calling that you put on our lives. Would you open our eyes this morning? Enlighten the eyes of our understanding. Give us eyesight, Lord.

Give us eyes that have God. Cause us, Lord, to be able to get some of that rich gold and buy it from you. Cleanse us and purge us.

Guide our lives. Lord, I pray for the anointing of your Spirit upon my heart this morning and for the ability to communicate your truth to each one of these dear hearts. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen. Constructive Bible reading, the very heart of it is, inspiration for today that builds for the future. Something that inspires my heart today and builds my life for the future.

Over the years, I've raised the question in my heart and in my mind, why are there some people that mature and grow and prosper and others do not? Here you have a young man that gets born again. He gets set free from sin and then he just sits there. And you have another young man that gets born again, gets set free from sin, and he takes off running like he's running a race.

Why is there a difference? Why is there a difference when God is no respecter of person? When God will respond to each one of us exactly the same, somewhere there has to be a difference. Well, I'm going to say one of them I shared with you yesterday, another one I shared with you Monday, but I'd like to share another one of those with you today that make the difference as to whether we take off running in our Christian life, running the race that is set before us, or whether we just sort of sit there and bob along on the water. And float through life.

There is a difference. Some people seem to just be on a plane. Ah, they're doing alright.

They can survive on their own. Others, it's like a pump handle where you've got to take a hold of it and constantly keep that handle on a-going, because if you don't, well, it's going to die. And no more water is going to come.

The Bible says that if we have Jesus in our heart, there should be rivers of living water coming out from us. We shouldn't need to be pumped. And, young person, we can always have an overflow.

We can always have an overflow. And one thing that young people often think, they look at the preachers that get up here and they think, they must be above the clouds. It's all just clear sailing and no trials.

I'd like to inform you that we're real people. And even if you get above the clouds, I don't know if you've had airplane rides or not, but I remember one coming back from California flying to Detroit. And we were above the clouds.

I had a glass of water in my hand. And all of a sudden I was trying to do everything I can to keep this glass of water from being all over me because it was... And it was not some little plane. It was a 737 being ripped around.

Like, whew! So, even if you're above the clouds, it's not smooth sailing always. What do we do? I'm going to go on anyway. I'm going to go on anyway.

To be honest with you, yesterday I had one of those tests. I preached anyway. It didn't feel like it.

But I did it anyway. It doesn't always come easy. That's the kind of Christians we're looking for that'll go on.

And I'd like to urge us today to lay a standard in our lives while we are young about Bible reading that will never leave us all the days of our life. That we can know assuredly all the days of our life, this is what I need to do to be close to God, to hear from God. This is what I need to do.

I read an account here a number of months ago, and I can't remember all the details, but it had to do with a man, a missionary, that was close to God. And this evangelist went to share with this missionary, have this missionary share with him, and this missionary sat there, and he just started unfolding the book. I mean, one beautiful truth after another just rolled off of these pages.

And finally, the evangelist looked at him and said, Sir, how do you come up with all these beautiful truths? Here's what he said. I read my Bible on my knees before God, begging God to show me His will. And the beauties just come off of the pages.

And my friend, God is no respecter of person. God is no respecter of person. There is this problem that we have of forgetting.

I can just about guarantee, if I would go through this crowd and ask you to tell me what you read in your Bible this morning, there's quite a few of you that would have a little bit of a stumbling problem to tell me. Let me comfort you just a little bit. You're not weird.

So, how do we deal with that? We absorb some of it. Some of it passes on by and we tend to not get it. I'd like to give us an illustration of what I'm talking about.

Constructive Bible reading. I don't know if we have any masons in here today or not, but if we do, a mason knows that we don't lay hundreds of brick in one shot. We lay them one at a time.

In fact, they have a line and they line them up real nice even with the line. They get spaced just right. They get pressed into place and set real good.

Every brick gets some attention paid to it. And the next row comes and it goes on top. And a whole building gets laid up that way one brick at a time.

And it can look like a very tedious, slow job. But they're constructing, aren't they? They're building. By the time they're done, there's a structure there that has totally changed its appearance.

Now, I don't know if you can imagine being a mason and laying four brick a day. Four brick a day. I'm trying to keep it where it's very reachable.

I think most of us could handle that laying four brick a day. But if we would take and lay four brick a day for 15 years, we would have a whole house, a good-sized house, bricked. And there'd be a structure there.

People could see very clearly what you have done in the last 15 years. Now, the first day or week might look very depressing. I'm not getting very far.

But that is exactly what we need to do in our Bible reading. We need to constructively lay four brick a day. And my friend, if you will lay four brick a day for 15 years, there will be structure to your life, I promise you.

I promise you there will be structure to your life. People will look at your life and know that young person is going somewhere. That Christian is an effective Christian for Jesus Christ.

I guarantee you. You know, it's right in reach. It's right in reach if we can lay four brick a day.

Constructive. If I could, I'd hang it there. I'll just move it a little bit.

Each one getting snuggled into place, attention paid over it, and put in there to set up right, to build my life for Jesus Christ. I'd like to read a few verses in Hebrews 5. Some very interesting verses. Hebrews 5. I know Brother Rick probably talked about this a little bit.

No, he didn't yet. He might talk about it tomorrow. I hope I don't spoil his thing.

Hebrews 5.10 It says, Called of God and High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, of whom we have many things to say and hard to be uttered, seeing you are dull of hearing. 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 drink or strong meat. Sorry.

Here they should have been teachers. They should have been building their lives. And the writer here is saying, you should be mature, but you're still on milk.

You should be teaching and you're still being fed. Verse 13 For everyone that uses milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness, for he is of age. But strong meat belongs to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use, by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

The mature ones that can take the strong meat are those that take their Bibles and use them. And they keep using them. And it causes them to mature.

Their senses get exercised and they can think according to God's will and God's word because they are using and handling the word of God. Now again, I would like to say, to be effective, we can just go through the ritual of reading the Bible and it won't do a lot for us. But if we will surrender to Jesus Christ as Lord of our lives and pray and seek His face that He would make us like Him, and then we open this book and we read it and we study it and we devour it and we devour it and we love it with a passion and we devour it some more.

My friends, it will not be some dead book. It will not be strong meat belonging to them that are of full age. Now, I would like to stir our hearts a little bit.

Let's suppose that there is a young man that has an interest in a young lady and he is pursuing this. He is attracted to her and he is seeking God's will. He works through the proper channels and it finally comes down to everything is clear and he is going to get to go to her house and they are going to have a meal together there with the family and just very carefully stepping forward.

There are a few things he has noticed about her. She is rather skinny, a little bit frail and yet he is attracted to her and he is feeling this is God's will and he gets there and the table is all set. The plates are all in place.

Everything is where it needs to be and it is time for this meal and they sit down and the table is spread with everything on it and they are going to have a meal together here. Of course, hearts are pumping a little bit and after a bit, mom comes and sets a bottle on this young lady's plate and she is still on milk and she is still on the bottle. Can you imagine what happens in that young man's heart? In fact, she is fairly big so she needs some more and this is polished up a bit.

We have to keep her alive and there he sits and all afresh he is wondering is this God's will? The question is how many of us are that for God? And what kind of a sinking feeling does Jesus have in his heart as he looks at his bride? Not even just on milk. It's got to be chocolate milk. I was tempted to get some strawberry or maybe some vanilla milkshake or something like that they have these days.

It's all spiced up with all kinds of funny flavors. It's not even sincere milk anymore. But that's what the church is largely feasting on.

And we are these skinny, frail Christians that don't get anywhere. Just surviving. Can you imagine a mother being all excited about this wonderful little baby she has? She just loves this little darling.

How old is your baby? Oh, five years. Do you think she'd be excited? We know she wouldn't be excited. She'd be highly distressed.

And yet, in our Christian lives we pedal right past that and don't think anything of it. It's important that we build a constructive life for Jesus Christ. Still on milk only.

We're to be sons of God. We're to be kings and priests in the Kingdom of God. But still on milk.

Not hardly. Not hardly. Alright, 1 Peter 1, verse 23.

I'd like to focus on milk a little bit. There is a right place for milk. 1 Peter 1, verse 23.

Then we're going to go into chapter 2 as well. Born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass.

The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away. But the Word of the Lord endureth forever. And this is the Word which by the Gospel is preached unto you.

Chapter 2. Wherefore, lay aside all malice and all guile and hypocrisies and envies and all evil speakings. And as newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the Word. Why? That ye may grow thereby.

That ye may grow thereby. If so be that ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. One thing that you all know, a little baby, you give them milk, if it does what it's supposed to do, it will strengthen their bodies.

In months, they have doubled their weight. And they're growing. And mom is happy.

She might say, oh, my baby's growing up so quickly, but she really is happy about it. She wants to see that little child grow. She likes to see those pudgy cheeks, that double chin, those round ball the whole way down to their toes.

They love to see all that. They like to see them grow. And my young person, that is what the Word of God needs to do to us when we're first born again.

We go open the Word and it should be like sincere milk that just makes us grow and grow and grow. I'm sure you've heard the testimony. My Bible's not the same anymore.

Well, amen. What about a year later? Is the passion still there? Is the burning still in the soul? Are we now a one-year-old that's up and walking? And before you're two, they're running. In fact, sometimes at eight and nine months, they're trying to climb.

We had one that walked at nine and a half months. It was almost scary. But God wants us to grow and mature and get up and go.

That's what He wants for our lives. And if we can set that as a standard for our life in our youth and never quit, be up and going and growing and running the race that He has set before us, a question that often comes up, how can I have more faith? I lack faith. Well, I'd like to also tell you if you're saying that likely you have your focus in the wrong place because we shouldn't be looking at our faith, we should be looking at Jesus.

But if you need more faith, the Bible tells us, so then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. If we read how God moves and answers the cries of His people and meets the needs of His people in the Bible, how can we but believe that He'll do that for me? And thus, our faith grows. Well, secondly, I'd like to go on from Milk 2 Timothy 2.15 which was read last night.

But I'd like to look at that verse today. 2 Timothy 2.15 Here a number of years ago I had a message similar to this. And as I was studying, I decided I'm going to find something out.

And I got on the phone and I started calling people that I saw God using and blessing their life and they were fruitful for God. And I would call them and I asked them, can you share me, with me, what you do in your Bible reading? Eighty percent of them were searching and digging and studying the Word very actively. Ten percent said, I need more of that in my life.

I didn't take the time but it would have been good for me to go back now. That's probably eight or ten years ago. And see how those lives came out and who came out where.

Some of them I know right off are still doing the same thing. Still doing the same thing. But I can't remember all the names right off that I called.

Isn't that interesting though? People that God uses are searching and digging through the Word of God. Devouring it. Putting focus on it.

And a number of them even mentioned that it's important to be praying with it. I was focused on Bible reading, but that was just a part of it to them. And I agree with that very much.

Study. Study to show thyself approved unto God. Don't study to be approved unto men, but be studied to be approved unto God.

This word study means to use speed. That is to make effort. Be prompt.

Be earnest. And that's in the Strongs. If you look it up in the Vines, it's under diligence.

Diligence. To hasten to do a thing. Exert oneself.

Endeavor and give diligence. It's a pressing into it. Study like a student that is determined, I'm going to pass the test at the end of the semester because there's a livelihood that I need to perform.

There's a livelihood that I need to live out. There's something that I'm pressing for. And my friend, we have something to press for.

To serve our God and to walk in His will for each one of our lives. Oh, to be able to grow and mature so that we can be what He wants us to be. Study to show thyself approved unto God.

One thing that I found as I went through my life was that it becomes important to see Scripture in Bible context. There's a lot of that happening today where things are all out of context. Pluck out a verse or even a half of a verse and make it say what I want it to say.

Well, what is that context saying? Bible context as a whole and verse context within a chapter. An overview of the Bible. Being able to see the whole picture becomes important as we look at interpreting the Word of God.

Study to show thyself approved unto God. A workman that needeth not to be ashamed rightly dividing the Word of Truth. And if we have an overview of God's Word and God's will, we can rightly divide it.

Now, you might not be doing that at six months. I don't think we should be distressed if we're not. Remember, lay four brick a day for 15 years.

And you'd be amazed at what will happen. Now, I'd like to turn to the papers that I handed out. First of all, when I look at daily inspiration, one that's very familiar is reading through Proverbs in a month.

Some people even say, reading the proverb of the day. And I think that's a good thing. It only takes one chapter a day to do that.

Another one would be reading through Psalms in a month, which has 150 chapters and it takes five chapters in Psalms a day to read through Psalms in a month. I would encourage you to do it sometime. It's pretty inspiring.

Why? And yet, often that's about the level where we want to quit. You know, a chapter a day in Proverbs. And maybe I'd take a month or so where I'd read through Psalms and just inspire my heart, you know.

I've got to fill up this inspiration for today and go forward. But remember, we're looking at constructive Bible reading that feeds me today and builds for the future. I'd like to ask the question, how many of you here today have read through the New Testament the whole way? Can I see your hands? Good.

How many have read through the whole Bible from beginning to end? Can I see your hands? Good. There's something that happens when you read the whole way through. I remember the first time that I got all the way through the Bible and it's like the overview of the perspective of the Word of God and will of God changed.

It wasn't the same anymore. Now, in order to read through the whole Bible, you can do that with three and a quarter chapters a day and do it in one year. And that'll take you about 15 minutes.

Somewhere in that range on the average. It would take about 15 minutes. Now, does that sound hard? I wonder how many of us can read a newspaper for 15 minutes.

I mean, honestly. I know the Bible is not a storybook, but we read storybooks for hours. If we would take 30 minutes a day, we could read about six and a half chapters a day and get through the Bible twice in one year.

Twice in one year. 45 minutes? We'll do it three times. And an hour a day? We'll get you through the Bible in three months.

Three months. Whoa! That sounds like a feast! It is! It is! And you're a young person. I remember being young and reading 20 chapters a day because I loved it.

That jumps you up to several months. About two months, you're through the whole Bible. It's a feast.

Something I haven't talked about yet is when you're young, you have time. You do not have responsibility. And you have time.

You have energy. And yes, I agree, we have to have some rest. But when you're young, you probably need less than you will later on.

That's my testimony. I've had to step back just a little bit. I wasn't going to, but I got plopped down one day and I said, okay, I'll slow down just a little bit.

You have time. You don't have responsibility. And I'd like to just persuade you right now, if you think you don't have time for this kind of thing in your youth, you never will.

You never will. It will never get easier. That's why it's so important in our youth to set up a standard for Bible reading and prayer and lordship.

Alright, let's look at the New Testament. Reading three chapters a day will get us through the New Testament in three months. Again, barely 15 minutes a day.

And we can get through the New Testament in three months. Now, is that hard? Surely not. And actually, all you have to do is add a little over a chapter a day to it and you can do it in two months.

And I know you can do that because I still do that. In the midst of all the things going on. It's a matter of what we make a priority in our lives.

And if you double that to about eight and a half chapters a day, you can read through the New Testament one time every month. And my friend, if you do that for a year, the New Testament would take on brand new readings. I mean, light bulbs would be going off everywhere.

Look at all these treasures. And all of a sudden, you remember something in this book over here and I'm reading about it over here and you're connecting things back and forth and the further you go, the better it gets. The better it gets.

Another one that I would recommend to you is taking a book in the Bible and reading that book through every day for a whole month. The first week, you might feel like I'm having my nose to the grindstone. Well, can I tell you, would you believe me if I told you, that's good.

That's good. We do that at work. Why not do it for Jesus? But then after that, all of a sudden, the beginning of the book and the end of the book and the middle of the book all become a flowing connection of what was on the heart of the writer.

And it just starts opening up and the flowers start blooming. And as you dig deeper, all of a sudden one day this certain verse just comes alive right off of the page and you see way down into the gold mine. But it takes effort.

It takes continual effort. It takes constructive Bible reading that stays at it and keeps laying those four brick a day. Now, I have it scheduled out here to give you an idea.

A two year plan that you could go through the whole New Testament that way. There are some of them that are sort of small and there's others that are sort of big. And I don't know what time you have and when you have it.

One of the things I would recommend is if you see a slot where you know you have good time, do a bigger one. Do a bigger one. And you might want to shuffle some things around a little bit.

This is suggestion and ideas. But dig in there and make it go. Another thing you can do while you're doing that is take three by five cards, write the chapter on top that says Matthew chapter 13 and just make an outline of what's in the chapter.

Matthew chapter 13 has the sower, the tares, the mustard seed, leaven, the tares again, which is an answer to the first one, hidden treasure, the goodly pearl, sorting good and bad fish, and a prophet is without honor in his own country. And then memorize the card. I don't know if you have it or if it's happening to you or not.

The preacher gets up and gives the reference and you know what it says. I'm here to tell you, you can have that. You can have that.

Oh, I know what he's going to read. I can just about imagine what he's going to focus on in those verses. Oh, you can have that.

Another thing you can do that might make it easier if you color code it a little bit. This is Matthew 12, verses 1-50. You can put the verse count on.

Give you a reference. How many verses are on there? And then just simply alternate or whatever you choose. I'm just giving ideas.

Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath. Withered hand healed. Possessed delivered.

Blind and dumb healed. A kingdom divided. Cannot stand.

Blasphemy of the Holy Ghost. We are judged by our words. No sign but the sign of the prophet Jonah given.

Unclean spirit returns with seven other spirits. Who is Jesus' mother, brother, and sister? Riches. Riches.

Instead of just thinking Matthew 12, dumb. You can think Matthew 12. Oh! Down the line it goes.

And that can be for the whole Bible. Another thing is meditating and chewing one piece at a time. Taking a verse or two and just letting your mind focus on it.

And lay it before God. Lord, what are you saying here? There seems to be something here. What are you saying, Lord? And meditate on it.

Chew it. You can do word studies. I have a Strong's up here and I have a Vine's up here.

I'm going to not go through it today how to use them, but I'm going to have them here for when afterwards if you want to look at them and if you want to learn how to use them, I have them here today. But looking up words and seeing definitions. What did it mean? What does it mean? And digging a little deeper.

Another one I have here today that some of you, many of you might have seen is the Noah Webster 1828 Dictionary. I have one of them here if you want to look at them. We're going to leave that for afterwards.

If you want to look at them, you're welcome to do that. But taking in-depth studies of the word and looking deeper beyond the surface, beyond what you read, beyond just the simple things that are on top. Go for the goal.

Go for the deeper things that are hidden below the surface. I'm not sure if this is right yet. Anyway, let's go on.

Verse by verse, digging into the Word of God, going to the next page, cross-referencing and marking text and verses. As you read through your Bible and you find things that are special, mark the verses or the phrases that are special to you. Mark them.

I don't know if you've heard someone or not you might have done it where they're looking for something in the Bible and someone hands them a Bible that is not their own. I can't find it in yours. I need mine.

You've probably said that. Some of you have, I'm sure. Because you know where it is.

You know how you marked it. I have something that I brought here today. How many of you remember this? I cheered when I saw this.

But I'll be honest with you, this does not mean to me what it means to somebody else. Because it's not mine. But as I look at this page, there are some things that jump right off of it immediately.

And I see a system. Somebody had something in mind as they were doing this and they marked it a specific way and at a glance that page becomes alive. I have news for you.

Your Bible can look that way. Your Bible can look that way. But I can't sit there and just read through the Bible.

Oh, see, where was I going? Read-aways. I'm having a struggle this morning. And keep plotting on.

You can't do that. I'm reading the Bible. I'm reading the Word of God.

In 1 John, or St. John, it says, in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. If we turn to Revelation 19.13, it says His name was the Word of God.

And it's taking Jesus and connecting Him right with the Word. If Jesus was sitting there having devotion with this young person, would we not also... Oh, by the way, what were you saying? No, we wouldn't. We wouldn't.

We'd be paying attention. What did He say? How is He saying that? I wonder what He meant. We'd be taking special note.

And as we take special note of what He's saying, we need to go ahead and just start a system of marking things that mean something to me. I'd like to give you some suggestions on some of that. One of the first ones that people often think about is highlighting markers.

This is one of the first ones I use. I don't use them anymore. And I'll tell you why.

Bible pages are thin and they bleed through. And it'll make sort of a mess out of your Bible. So, first thing I'd like to tell you is I wouldn't recommend these.

But why did I need five of them? Color coding. Different things go in different places. I would recommend something like this.

And again, there are different ones. This is the Prismacolor, which is a softer than the Crayola. The Crayola is the same as your colors.

But they've got a pencil like this. But it's a harder pencil. This is a softer pencil.

And it marks very nice and friendly and smoothly. And with a thin page in the Bible, it's a very good thing to use. Just lightly coat it over.

And it will not bleed through and do something funny in your Bible. In fact, you can underline with it or you can color over with it. And I know one of the questions many of you are asking is where do you find such a thing? Well, locally here, I got this just yesterday from Ken's Joys.

And if you go on out the road, Conestoga Bookstore has them too. And that's 322 East from here. Just on the other side of Hingletown is where the first one is.

But there again, you can take different color codes. I'll give you one. I use orange for judgment.

Why do you think orange would be judgment? Fire. Fire. automatically just lights up judgment.

Sin, I underline in orange. Judgment gets highlighted in orange. Redemption is red.

That's right. Redemption is red because Jesus shed His blood. And I'm not here to tell you what to do, but it automatically means something to me when I see a verse that is highlighted in red.

Works of righteousness underline in red. But really, this system has things in it I don't have in mine. And my heart would be that each one of us would go get a system of marking our Bibles that means something

to me.

We can learn from each other, but make it personal. Make it personal. Another one that I would give you for markers, there's these fine point markers that Gospel bookstores usually have that you can use for underlining that do not have the bleeding through effect.

And you don't have to press as hard as a regular pen. I don't know if you've noticed on a thin page of a Bible, if you take a pen and make a hard line, you can see it very well on the other side. If you're not careful, you can cut right through the page.

So, I would recommend these to you as well. And all of a sudden, our Bible can just become more and more and more alive. Memorize verses that are special, have special meanings.

Chapters with basic doctrines or that mean something to you. Or whole books. Remember, you're young.

You have all kinds of time. And you can come get me for saying that if you want to afterwards, but I'm telling you, you have time. You have time.

Use it. Apply it the best you can. Another one is listening to tapes or CDs of the Bible.

Eye perception and ear perception sometimes vary in what you hear or see. It has a little different effect on you. And even as you're reading through the Bible, if you're listening to it at the same time, it itself can be a blessing.

Just for comprehension's sake. You're struggling with pronunciations? It'll help you with those pronunciations. Or, you can listen to the Bible while you're driving, while you're working, maybe while you're going to sleep.

And you add to it. Writing a devotional journal. Many people do that.

And I encourage that. Write down what God is doing in your heart. Sometimes just writing it down makes it stick better.

Makes it stick better. Could be just a few lines a day. Changing off.

Flexibility. It's important to not burn ourselves out just doing the same thing on and on and on. I need some flexibility and I'll change off at times what I'm doing.

And most people need that. Some people need it more than others. But allow yourself to change off.

And if you have a month that just stretches to your end on time, adjust a little bit the next month so you don't burn out physically trying to get your task done. We are real people. There have been times instead of having a rigorous schedule that I just allowed myself to flow a while and then go back in the pool.

Not relaxing to the point where here we go through life. No, no, no, no. That's dangerous.

That's dangerous. Now, I'd like to talk a little bit about aimless survival Bible reading. And reading without a purpose or a goal.

I'm just reading because after all I need to read the Bible. Lord, feed me for today. I need something.

And I know there's been times when it's been important when someone prayed, God, show me a verse and where my eyes fall, that's where I read. There might be some times we need to do that. But I would like to plead with you.

That is not a constructive Bible reading diet. It's just sort of aimlessly hitting around. And I'm not going to say God doesn't speak to people that way.

But if that's what we always do, it's not going to come out right. We'll never get anywhere. We'll just sort of flounder around.

Now, we were talking about reading through the Bible in one year. And if we read three and a quarter chapters a day, we can read through the whole Bible in one year. Well, if we read one chapter a day, we can read through the Bible in three years and three months.

That sound exciting? Sounds like the air is sort of coming out of the tire, doesn't it? And the worst part of it is to consistently keep reading one chapter a day for three years and three months, you're probably not going to get it done. We're just too human to be that relaxed about digging in and seeking after God. We're too human for that.

Remember, we're to study to show ourselves approved unto God. In John 7, verse 38, He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture has said, out of His belly shall flow rivers of living water. Rivers of it.

And I'm here to say you can have that. Colossians 3, verse 16 says, Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly. Now, when we look at a rich man, we think of what? Come on.

Money. Lots of money. When we let the Word of Christ dwell in us richly, we think of what? Lots of Bible.

Right? Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly. Ephesians 6, verse 17, And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. And if this book is alive and burning in us and we have it comprehended in our hearts, when a trial and temptation come, it becomes the sword that defends our life.

So, our livelihood in Jesus depends on constructive Bible reading. It's a purifier, Ephesians 5, verse 26 and 27, that He might sanctify and cleanse it, the church, with the washing of the water by the Word. That He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.

Oh, let the Word wash us. And as we keep burying ourselves in it from day to day, portions will keep opening up that mean something to me and change my life. And we need that.

We need that. 1 John 2. I'd like to read a few verses there. 1 John 2. I'm going to start reading in verse 12.

I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake. I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known Him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one.

And I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known Him that is from the beginning. And He keeps talking about knowing Him.

I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong and the Word of God abideth in you. And ye have overcome the wicked one. And what we see here is a focus on a relationship with the God of heaven and the Word of God abiding in them.

And that's what we need. We need that relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, a vibrant relationship. And then let the Word of Christ richly dwell in us, and it will abide in us and become that thing that caused us to overcome the world.

I'd like to give you an account yet of William Carey. How many of you have heard of William Carey? Good. He was a missionary.

He said, I can plod, undoubtedly the world owes a great deal to men of genius, but it is doubtful whether it owes as much to such as to men of dogged perseverance. Perseverance is needed in every phase of the Christian life. Nothing is obtained in the spiritual realm by a hop, skip and a jump, so to speak.

We don't get anywhere that way. When William Carey began thinking of going to India as a pioneer missionary, his father pointed out to him that he possessed no academic qualifications that would fit him for such a task. Son, you don't have what you need.

But William Carey answered, I can plod. I can plod. Those who accomplish things for the glory of God and the good of humanity are plodders.

Plodders that are willing to lay four brick a day and keep laying another four brick a day and keep laying another four brick a day. And he indeed was a pioneer missionary that went out and accomplished things for God that others had not ventured into. Well, I trust you'll take this home and in a year from now, you won't be the same anymore.

If you do, you won't be. I guarantee it to you. Make Jesus Lord of your life.

Seek Him like an enduring prayer warrior and read your Bible constructively every day. God bless you.

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