

Walking in the Light of God's Word

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Sometimes the notion of having a daily time with the God's Word—where you read Scripture and then apply its truths to your life—can seem mystical, complicated, confusing, and even overwhelming. Due to this, many of us give up before we've even opened our Bibles to read a solitary verse! But God is longing to meet with us, if we will only come to him with a simple desire—to get to know Him.

It doesn't need to be complicated. It doesn't need to be long. It doesn't need to be anything more than a carved-out portion of your day where you obtain your daily dose of perspective and your spiritual food for the day. Then, you can go forth in confidence knowing God is near and that you have been strengthened that day by his very words to you.

Here are five simple ideas to enable you to walk in the light of God's word. I hope you find them helpful and that they motivate you to connect often with the God who created you, knows you, sees and understands your unique situation, and loves you with an ever-lasting, unconditional love!

Karen Ehman

Put it on paper.

We treat so many other appointments as important, such as going to the dentist or the doctor. If we are a no-show there, we get charged a fine. And so, we make sure we show up.

Treat your time with God just as serious. Just thinking, "I'll take some time tomorrow to read my Bible" often doesn't work. Instead, each night before going to bed, look over your schedule for the following day and then put down a block of time where you will focus on reading and applying scripture. Don't shoot for an hour if that is unrealistic. Start small. Even planning a 10-15-minute slot will do. Then, make sure you show up.

Gather some tools for the time.

No carpenter, cook, or cardiologist would dream of tackling their tasks for the day without the proper tools. Being a Christian is no different! Of course having a Bible to read in your preferred translation is the first step. (*See the resource list below for some of my favorite Bibles and tools) However, it is also helpful to have the following:

- A notebook or journal, to record what you discover, points you want to ponder further, or specific verses you desire to apply and/or memorize.
- A comfortable pen and some non-bleeding, colored pens or highlighters, if you plan to write or highlight in your Bible.
- Some sticky notes for jotting down verses or points to remember throughout your day. You might also want to record these in a smaller notebook or a spiral deck of blank 3 x 5-inch notecards.
- A basket or tote bag to keep the tools all together so they are easy to grab and take to a favorite chair, a calm outdoor spot, or even a nearby coffee house.
- OPTIONAL: A Hebrew- Greek dictionary, for looking up the original meaning of words.

♥ Try the simple method of “Jump, Jot, Jesus.”

This is a simple method that I first began doing way back when I became a Christian at the age of 16. I still do it today. It is a straightforward, three-step process that helps to uncomplicate reading and applying God’s word. (It is not an in-depth Bible study, which I also encourage you to do. This is a simple, daily reading time.) I will explain this three-step process and then give an example of it afterwards.

Step one is to choose a book of the Bible to read and then, starting at the beginning, read just until something jumps out at you—something that you want to remember, or you want to apply in your life. On some days, I read an entire page or two in my Bible. Other days, it’s just a few paragraphs. Sometimes the very first verse I read has something in it that seems to leap off the page at me! I then underline it with an erasable colored pen. (You may choose to highlight it, or if you prefer not to write in your Bible, you could write it down in a journal or notebook)

Step two is to jot down my thoughts about what it is that jumped out at me. I do this in the wide margins of the Bible I use for daily Bible reading, which is listed in the resources below. But you could also jot it down in a notebook or journal if you wish. I did that for many years.

The final step is to take what you have experienced in your reading time and turn it into a prayer to God, prayed in Jesus’ name.

Here is an example of this three-step method:

Let’s say in my reading one day, I happen upon James 1:19-21. It reads this way in the CSB version:

My dear brothers and sisters, understand this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger, for human anger does not accomplish God’s righteousness. Therefore, ridding yourselves of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent, humbly receive the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

I’d grab my colored pen and underline the words and phrases in that passage that jumped out at me, namely, “...quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger” and also, “...ridding yourselves of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent, humbly receive the implanted word.”

That was the “Jump” step. Then, I might write the following in the wide margin of my Bible, or in a notebook or journal:

When dealing with others, I need to:

~ Be quick to listen

~ Be slow to speak

~ Be slow to get angry, because being angry doesn’t accomplish the things of God.

I must also:

~ Get rid of that which is morally wrong and evil.

~ Spend time planting the word of God humbly in my heart. It will save me!

After this “Jot” step, we turn to the final step: “Jesus.” For this I might write out a simple prayer such as this:

Father God, please help me watch my words today, being quick to listen, slow to speak and even slower to get angry. I want to plant Your word in my heart knowing it will save me heartache and fractured relationships. Help me to apply the truth I read today interacting with others in my life. In Jesus' name, amen.

When we read the Bible, we learn. However, when we write out the commands in a way that is personal to us and then turn them into a prayer, we learn to walk in the light of God’s word. This will help us the next time we are faced with a situation where we need to react in a godly manner but find it challenging. When we have trained our brain to recall the non-negotiables of a Christian’s behavior, it allows us to act, and react, in a much healthier and biblical way.

Dig deeper than the English language will take you.

If you want to dig even further, I am a huge advocate of looking at certain words in the original Hebrew language of the Old Testament or the Greek language of the New Testament. There are some great online places you can do this, and there is also a resource listed below for a hardcopy volume that will help you in this endeavor. But first, let me give you an example of this.

In the book of Galatians, the Apostle Paul asks a question to his fellow believers that is still relevant for us today: “Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ” (Galatians 1:10).

The Greek word for “please” that is transliterated to English is *areskó*. It doesn’t just mean to make someone else happy with you. At its core, it means “to agree to satisfy another in order to win their approval, affection, or attention; to meet their expectations; to willingly serve.” Knowing this comprehensive definition causes the verse to pop much more than it does when only reading it in English.

My favorite online resources for this are Biblehub and Bible Study Tools. My favorite hard copy resources are listed down below.

Plan pop ups in your day.

To help drive home the meaning of something you read that day, jot a question to yourself on a sticky note, record a verse you might want to memorize on a note card, or scratch out a key word or two from the verse on a sticky note and then post it where you will see it often, such as on the bathroom mirror, near the kitchen sink, or on the dashboard of your vehicle. Or you can even get creative and make some phrases—or even an entire verse—the lock screen on your phone. These will help you to recall throughout the day what it is that you read earlier.

RESOURCES:

- My favorite Bible translations are NLT (New Living Translation) for simply reading through the Bible to get the overall picture, CSB (Christian Standard Bible) version for studying and memorizing scripture, and the AMP (Amplified) version of the Bible for more deeply understanding the Greek and Hebrew meanings of words. I also love the Hebrew-Greek Keyword Bible that is available in a few different translations. And I have an older version of this wide-margin CSB bible that I do my “Jump, Jot, Jesus” method in throughout the week.
- I own this notebook and this journal and I use this comfortable pen and non-bleeding, colored pens or highlighters.
- Here are some whimsical sticky notes, for jotting down verses or points to remember throughout your day. You might also want to record these in a smaller notebook or a colorful ring bound deck of 3 x 5 inch notecards.
- This is a perfect basket to keep the tools all together.



I hope you find these ideas helpful as you take time to walk in the light of God’s Word this week.