

“SALT & LIGHT”

Getting to know God intimately...
By reading through the entire Bible

For He is a God who is
passionate about His
relationship with you.
Exodus 34:14

Salt & Light Introduction Workshop

The Vision: It's All About Him

In April of 2001 we officially started our “Salt & Light” Bible discussion groups. In “Salt & Light” we are reading “relationally” through the entire Bible at our own pace, fellowshiping with the Father, and encouraging each other! We are doing this together, as a team, cheering each other on!

We have never had so many books out on marriage, raising children, decision making, etc...and yet we have never had more divorces, relationship problems, problems with our children, etc.! Why? We might be looking for answers in the wrong book! Often people run to self-help books instead of the Bible. Why rely on a man's opinion? The Bible says that He is the “Almighty Counselor.” (Isaiah 9:6) Only a moment of reflection would reveal that we have gotten very wrapped up in so many other materials and we have been using the Bible as a resource book, not The Book. By reading through the entire Bible, we are seeking the whole counsel of God. Psalm 119:160 tells us, “The sum of His Word is Truth.” We desire no other answers but His. We desire no other answers but His!

It is so interesting...people often ask if you have read this book or that book, but we rarely hear people saying, “Have you read the book of Romans, or Deuteronomy or Luke?” I am sure you get the point. Of course we can still access all those other wonderful resources, but the problem often is that instead of letting His Word dwell richly in our hearts, the resources have our hearts. Instead of seeking the whole counsel of God...we often parrot what others have said who are sitting at His feet...which means that we are missing out on the thrill of what happens when we ask God to “Open our minds to understand the scriptures.” (Luke 24:45) We are missing the intimate relationship with The Father.

Self-Feeding Christians

People are often living off the insights which the Holy Spirit has given others and are “not fulfilled” themselves because they have not gotten the “full meal” from the Lord, where the relationship is built. They have been snacking, and snacking just leaves them feeling unfulfilled and wanting a “real” meal! May you prayerfully consider putting all other reading material aside until you get through the Bible the first time! You will be glad you did!

Each time you read a Christian book, listen to a television, radio, or video speaker, hear your pastor give a message, or listen to a conference teacher may each one of these brothers

and sisters make you hungry to go and hear from God! May that be our mindset as we listen to others who have spent time with God and who then share their treasures with us. God is interested in us spending time with Him ourselves! He doesn't care how much we know, until He knows how much we care.

In "Salt & Light" we are teaching folks to be "self-feeding" Christians, feasting directly from His Word. The power of the Holy Spirit, speaking to us through the Bible alone, has been underestimated. We are seeing "just" His Word powerfully change lives...as people are daily washing their minds with the pure milk of the Word, the whole counsel of God.

Brain Washed

Once while many of us were gathered together reading His Word, a "seeker" said to me, "Excuse me, but I just have to tell you I feel like what we are reading in this Bible is just brainwashing us." I said, "You know, you are exactly right. We all need our brains washed with the Truth because of all the lies we've believed." You could have heard a pin drop. At the end of our time together in God's Word, one of those girls became a Christian! "Faith comes by hearing the Word of God!" Her brain was definitely washed with the Truth! We know who won that battle! His name is Jesus and He is the only Truth, the only Way and the only Life, and He came to set us free...DAILY! God's Word powerfully changed her life and it will powerfully change your life each day, if you read it!

As God continues to send us out with this message, we hear again and again, "This is so freeing!" "Is reading the entire Bible a lost art?" I think for many it may be. Wherever we go to take God's message we ask the question, "How many of you have ever read the entire Bible?" Seldom do more than two or three hands go up...Then we ask, "How many of you would like to read the entire Bible?" Every hand goes up! May we all "be voices crying in the wilderness" to get people back to Him!

God has enlarged our borders for the sake of His Kingdom by blessing us with fellowships for teens, college/career, men, women, couples, and co-ed groups. As people are reading through His entire Word God continues to equip His saints through His Word and the leading of His Spirit "to do the work of the ministry" that they have been called to (Ephesians 4:11-16). The believers that are facilitating these groups don't feel like they have to be "leaders" they just know THE Leader! They don't have to be experts they just know THE Expert. The only preparation for these facilitators is quality, connecting time with Him each day! We minister out of the abundance of our relationship with the Father. (John 15:5)

The believers, and yes, seekers, that come to these groups do so because they want to read "relationally" with Him through the entire Bible. After all, is there any other book where you can literally converse and interact with the author while you are reading? They are also "treasuring God's Word in their heart" by memorizing scripture weekly, in order to tell people what God says and not what they think. "Those who present their own ideas are looking for praise for themselves, but those who seek to honor the One who sent them are genuine and there is nothing false about them." (John 7:18) "Let the Words of Christ richly dwell within your hearts and make you wise. Use His words to teach and counsel each other. And whatever you do or say may it be as a representative of the Lord Jesus Christ."

(Colossians 3:16-17) “Salt & Light” leaders tell their groups, “It is my job to help you accomplish your goal of reading through the entire Bible and memorizing scripture.” It is very exciting to join God in his work and to watch all God is doing!

Working at the Relationship

It seems many people are working at the wrong thing...they are “working at the work” and not “working at the relationship with Him.” John 15:5 expresses God's heartfelt priority here.

“I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in Him, bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.” So the fruit comes from abiding! Let me say that again...**the fruit comes from abiding!** Abiding is unbroken fellowship, keeping short accounts with God, and being quick to confess. God did not create us to work for Him, but to have a relationship with Him...joining Him in His work as He invites us to be a part of what He is doing. Being together with Him is the focus. Oswald Chambers said it well, “God has not called us to anything but Himself, and everything else flows from that call.” Jesus ministered to other people out of the abundance of His relationship with the Father. “Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness...” Whenever we put other things first there is confusion and lack of peace.

The Battle is the Lord's

As we focus on our relationship with Him, the struggle will be making time to be with God everyday. Jesus died to restore our relationship with God and time with Him is worth fighting for! We are in a battle! Being with Him **is** the "root of the fruit"...when we abide, we bear much fruit. Since the fruit comes from our relationship with God, doesn't it make sense that personal, relational time with God is where Satan is going to attack? It's our relationship with the Lord that makes Satan "shake in his boots." And he will try to do everything to keep us away from our daily time with the Lord, to prevent us from reaping a harvest of fruit...lasting fruit! If Satan can get us to just work at the work and keep us away from the relationship he knows he has us. He knows we will get burned out working in our own strength...and burned is what he is after, in more ways than one! Let's face it: We are in a “war” and the enemy does not want us to have this kind of a relationship with a Holy God. But, Hallelujah! God is jealous for us and He wants us to feel the same about Him. The Holy Spirit will empower us to fight for a relationship with Him. He is worth every moment! You will see !

Empowered by the Holy Spirit to fight this battle, we meet with the Lord each day. During this time God does not want us to merely “drive through” but to “get out of our car and go in.” Each day, when we first come to the Lord , our minds are often already in 4th gear.....we have to downshift to 1st gear, put it in park, turn off the engine, and “get out of our car and go in.” You may be thinking, “Yeah, but to be honest there are just some mornings I don't feel like reading the Word.” The greatest thing about God is He understands us completely! Just have a talk with Him and say, “Lord, You know how I am feeling this morning. Would you please give me the desire and strength to spend time with You?” You see, it is a win-win situation with God. He doesn't let our weaknesses bother Him. He is bigger than our frailties! Remember, “He's just waiting for you to ask.” And He is more than ready to answer, you will see!

John 17:3 says, "This is eternal life, that you might know Him and Jesus Christ whom He has sent." Philippians 1:6 says, "He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus," and Philippians 2:13 says, "It is God who is at work within you both to will and to work for His good pleasure." He just wants us to cooperate with Him when He comes and invites us to join Him in His work. The reason He invites us to join Him is because He wants to be with us! He doesn't need us, but He does want us!

It has never been clearer that God is not interested in our ability, but our availability. Even though there is an abundance of "fruit," we have never done so little and seen so much.... It's more of Him and less of us. (John 3:30) Isn't that what we are all after? He has just asked us to work at our relationship with Him, to show up when He invites us, and join Him in His work. Obediently we come to Him and He takes over. It is glorious! We never want to go back the other way. We meet with Him daily in His Word and through prayer! It will cost you a lot to follow Jesus like this, but it will cost you a whole lot more not to!

Your Resource Basket

As we pursue a relationship with God, all the things that God is teaching us from our time with Him in His Word (the scriptures that you are memorizing, the insights that God gives others, sermons you hear, etc). will go into our "resource basket." As we live our lives encountering those that God brings across our paths we are asking God, "What is it that You want to say?" (Not what do You want me to say?) The entire focus is on Him. We let Him go into our "resource basket". When we ask Him, He will give us what we need...*He is "intimately acquainted with all our ways."* Remember Matthew 10:19-20, "Do not be anxious about what you are to say or speak for it shall be given to you in that hour what you are to speak. For it won't be you doing the talking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you." Also remember John 7:18, "Those who present their own ideas are looking for praise for themselves, but those who seek to honor the One who sent them are honorable and there is nothing false about them."

We frequently review what is in our resource baskets and then we ask Him what He wants to say or do. We watch and listen and make ourselves available to Him. Perhaps this is best illustrated in one of my quiet times. I was reading one day, feeling discouraged and defeated because I wasn't doing consistently those things I was reading about. Overwhelmed (sound familiar) I started to close my Bible and the Lord said, "You know the problem here is this. I know that you can't do what you just read, but you don't know that you can't do what you just read. You see there is not one thing in this book that you can do 'apart from Me.' (John 15:5) But you can do all of this through Me who strengthens you. (Philippians 4:13) All I want to know is the heart of the matter. Do you want to do what you just read and if you do, then why don't you ask Me? Now go back through those verses that you felt defeated by and talk to Me and let Me know that you want to do what you just read. Pray back through them. I am just waiting for you to ask! Remember that I told you, 'I began a good work in you and I will complete it until the day of Christ Jesus.' And I said, 'I am at work within you (I didn't say, 'you're at work within you') giving you the desire to obey Me and the power to do what pleases Me' " (Philippians 1:6, 2:13)

Praying Through Scripture

Why do we pray through scripture? In 1 John 5:14-15 God tells us, "This is the confidence you have in approaching Me, that if you ask anything according to My will, I hear you. And if you know that I hear you-whatever you ask- you know that you have what you asked of Me." [faith] We don't know how, when, or where He will respond. But when we pray through His Word (which is His will), we do know that we can be sure He will respond! And respond He does! Hallelujah, what a Savior! Jesus never mentioned unanswered prayer. He had the unlimited certainty of knowing that when He prayed for the Father's will, that prayer is always answered! Everything is a prayer request! He's just waiting for you to ask!

Let's apply Jesus' example! As we begin to meet with God each day, we should follow the scriptures' invitation to first "enter His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise." (Psalm 100:4) Then instead of trying to open our own minds to understand the scriptures we pray through Luke 24:45 and ask Him to "Open our minds to understand the scriptures." We also ask Him, "Lord, may our hearts burn within us while You are speaking to us and teaching us. Would You please explain your scriptures to us?" (Luke 24:32) Pray His Word back to Him. It is His will. He's just waiting for you to ask and when you do, hang on for the ride of your life because He will answer! Remember it is not the answer that you are after but the ONE WHO IS the answer!

And last, but certainly not least, remember to "take every thought captive" (2 Cor 10: 3-5) and make it a "prayer request." Discernment, judgmental thoughts, criticism, everything that comes into these minds of ours becomes a "prayer request." When "everything is a prayer request"...then you become a solution to the problem instead of a problem to the problem and your "vessel" stays clean, because your mind stays clean...it is "stayed on Thee." (Isaiah 26:3) In other words, praying immediately as you capture your thoughts keeps you out of trouble, and keeps others from getting in trouble or gets them out of trouble! Capture your thoughts before they capture you! "Much prayer, much power! No prayer, no power!" God does not need us to pray...but He loves for us to talk to Him. To help us do that consistently, He has us join Him in prayer. After all, Jesus does sit at the right hand of the Father and LIVES to intercede for us. So the next time you get that tap on the shoulder, you will know that He is inviting you to join Him in intercession! Wow! How intimate, He takes my breath away! No He doesn't need me, but He definitely wants me...I like being wanted, how about you?

Exodus 34:14 says, "You must worship no other gods but only the Lord, for He is a God who is passionate about His relationship with you!" May we all be "a voice crying in the wilderness" to get this message out!

If you give a person a fish it will feed them for a day.....
If you teach them how to fish...
It will feed them for a lifetime!

If you want to know more about Salt & Light, check out our website at www.saltandlightgroup.com

We continue to ask the Lord to multiply His ministry in Florida, in every state in the U.S., and in every country! Big request? Big God! Would you stop and take a minute right now to pray and ask God to do this?

Here are some suggested scriptures to pray through:

Matthew 10:37, “Then He said to His disciples, “The Harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest.”

Matthew 28: 18-20, “And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations...teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’”

2 Timothy 2:2, “And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.”

*IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS AFTER READING ALL THIS, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO ASK!
ALL FOR HIS GLORY

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At Home and in Our Small Groups

What basic things take place during a typical “Salt & Light” discussion group?

Each Week at Home

During the week everyone is reading relationally through the entire Bible
(Each person reads at their own pace).

- ❖ Underline passages that God impresses on your heart and mind.
- ❖ If you journal, you may want to make notes in your journal about what God is saying to you. (Special verses God points out to you; Thanks and praise to God; Confess any sin to Him; Bring Him your concerns or your questions, and your prayer requests!)
- ❖ Make a note of the verse God has impressed on your heart to memorize.
 - Review your verses regularly and often.
 - At the weekly meeting everyone will practice scripture memory verses
 - Memorizing is easier because *He has spoken to you!*

Every Other Week in Our Small Groups

- ❖ Pray together for the Lord’s presence and insight, and for our hearts and minds to be open.
- ❖ Everyone has an opportunity to share their scripture memory verse.

- ❖ During our time together we will share such things as:
 - How did God’s Word speak to you?
 - How did you see God at work?
 - How did God answer prayer?
 - How can we pray for you?

At Home Again

- ❖ There is not one thing written in the Bible that you can accomplish on your own.
 - But, “we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us”. (Phillipians 4:13)
 - During the week pray back through the scriptures the Lord has given you.
 - The Word of God is the Will of God, so you can expectantly wait for Him to answer when you are praying His Word. When, where, or how He will answer is in His timing, but you know He will, because He says He will! (I John 5:14-15)

- ❖ Add to your resource basket all the things God is teaching you. Review:
 - Insights the Lord is revealing during your time with Him
 - Memory verses
 - Treasures God has spoken to you through others.
 - Messages you hear from Christian leaders.

- ❖ Focus on Him. Ask Him, “Lord, what is it that *You* want to say?” He’s just waiting for you to ask!

- ❖ Take every thought captive. (2 Corinthian 10:3-5) and make it a prayer request. Much prayer...much power! No prayer...No power! Everything is a prayer request!

- ❖ The Lord doesn’t need you ...but He definitely wants you...I like being wanted, how about you?

On Alternate Weeks – Salt & Light 2

After your group has been sharing their quiet times for a month or so please begin to study a book of the Bible together. Do the following with a book of the Bible you all agree to study in your group: (It is recommended that you “start” with a “gospel” first & then go on to “Acts” later)

1. Study a chapter together every other week. On alternate weeks we are sharing from our own personal reading . (BEFORE SHARING YOUR INSIGHTS THE GROUP SHOULD READ ALOUD THE CHAPTER YOU ARE STUDYING)
2. During the week everyone should prepare for the study by:
 - Prayerfully: “read relationally” (converse with The Author Himself) while reading the chapter you are studying. Before you start reading, pray and ask Him to : “Open your mind to understand the scriptures" Luke 24:45 and tell Him that you long for “your heart to burn within you while He is speaking to you... and ask Him to explain the scriptures to you?” Luke 24:32
 - Take notes on any insights that He gives you & jot down any questions that you ask Him about what you read... record His answer to you. *He’s just waiting for you to ask! *Everything is a prayer request!

- Prayerfully discover the following and record: Who is writing the chapter you are reading? What do you know about him? Who is the audience...Christians, non-Christians or both?
- Then as God leads you to various passages within that chapter, cross-reference the ones He impressed upon you. Record what He shows you. Scripture always confirms scripture.
- Next, circle the words that God impressed on your heart and words that are repeated. Use a dictionary to look up the meaning. This will broaden your understanding of the context that the word is used in. Write down what you found. (If you have one, use a Bible Dictionary.)
- (Optional) Lastly use any Commentary's that you would like to get another perspective from the Spirit on the Words of God.
- Now, on a sheet of paper, make 3 columns at the top with these titles:

God/Jesus/Holy Spirit	Christians	Non-Christians
Vs. 6 powerful	Vs. 22 bold	Vs. 12 skeptical
Vs. 19 forgiving	Vs. 29 fervent	Vs. 15 afraid

- Now you will be making a list of characteristics for each title. Be sure to write down the verse where you found each characteristic. (example: vs.6 God is powerful)
- Finally, from the chapter that you just studied, please come to a conclusion as you ask the Lord for His insights to you, regarding the following:
 1. What have I learned about God/Jesus/Holy Spirit . What is He like in the chapter that I just studied? What words describe Him? (Please list in the appropriate column)
 2. What have I learned about the character(s): Christians & non-Christians in the chapter. What are they like? What words describe them? (Please list in appropriate column)
 3. Lastly, “write out” from the chapter you just studied God’s message to you.

Where Do I Begin?

This is a great starting place for new believers, or those reading through the Bible for the first time. Follow this with "The Big Four".

Here's some food for thought! Most people's view of God is not completely accurate because they have only listened to other people's opinions about God. What people hear about Him may come from family and friends, philosophy, books, T.V., radio, movies, etc., and often they have drawn conclusions about God based on inaccurate information and the traditions of men instead of the Word of God. The problem is they have not given God a chance to speak for Himself. People may have read bits and pieces from the Bible, but to accurately hear God speak they must have the "whole counsel of God." For example, in Matthew 4:6 when Satan misquotes scripture, Jesus responds with scripture and says, "The scriptures also say...." (i.e., the whole counsel of God.)

Remember, this is no ordinary book! This Book is "the Word of God" written to you, "up close and personal," penned through over 40 men over a 1,500 year period, by the inspiration of God's Spirit (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Many of the writers never knew each other, yet all the books of the Bible fit together perfectly... don't take my word for it, check it out! Did you know this book has sold more copies than any other book in the world? Did you know that more people have died for this book than any other book? It has also been burned more than any other book in the world! Just what is it about this Book that people would be willing to die for it, and that others would be threatened by it enough to want to burn it? You're on a journey to find out just that!

Common sense has it that none of us would want to spend time with someone if we have heard things that would make that person seem less than desirable. Unfortunately many people have an incorrect view of God based on what others have told them, and this prevents them from spending time with Him in His Word. When they finally go to the Word, the God they are about to meet may not at all be the same God they expected! Take a moment and allow yourself to be introduced to the True God and His awesome character...go to His Word and let Him speak for Himself!

The First Week

Day One

Read Psalm 103

Underline each word or phrase that speaks of God's character....What is He like?

Day Two

Read Isaiah 40: 25-31 and Romans 8: 31-39 and Psalm 145

Underline each word or phrase that speaks of God's character.

Day Three

Read Psalm 139 Underline each word or phrase that describes the following:

- What does God know about me?
- What does God do for me?
- What have I discovered about God?

Day Four

Read Daniel 3

Meet three men who believed what God said in Psalm 103 and Psalm 139. What words come to your mind to describe the three men in Daniel 3 and to describe the king?

Day Five

So, What's next?

Have you ever read a novel or known anyone who has? Would you say that the Bible is similar in size to some novels?

Well then, couldn't we agree that it is a possibility to read through the entire Bible? O.K., now that we have that settled, let's get started!

We recommend you read the following books first, which will give you an overview of the entire Bible, as well as equip you with a tool so that you can confidently ask someone, "Would you like to get together and read some of the Bible?" Most people will never ask this question to a non-believer because they don't know what to do. Now you have a tool! Read in this order: Genesis 1 – Exodus 20; then Matthew; then John; and follow with Romans. (Refer to the page entitled "An Overview of the Bible – The Big Four." You will find it attached to this section). **GET STARTED TODAY!** Begin in Genesis 1!

Day Six

Today, and from now on...

Pick up where you left off the day before. Perhaps some days reading a whole chapter; while on other days you may delight in meditating and studying simply a verse or two. ASK God, He WILL show you! It's best, if you can, to spend time with God first thing in the morning. Then in the evening read one Psalm and one chapter of Proverbs. We all need our minds "washed" at the beginning and end of the day with the Truth! "For you will know the Truth and the Truth will set you free." (John 8:32)...And who doesn't want to be free?

Moving Ahead

We all like to accomplish a goal. Note your progress. For example, when you finish reading chapter one of Genesis, put a check mark beside that chapter. Do the same for the rest of the chapters in Genesis. Then, when you complete the entire book of Genesis, turn to the Table of Contents in the front of your Bible. There are 66 books listed there. Put a check mark beside Genesis. Now, how many books do you have left to go?

That's right! 65! Remember that we suggest you first read Genesis through Exodus 20, followed by Matthew, John, and Romans, in that order. Then proceed on to the rest of the Bible (remembering to read a Psalm and a Proverb each night). When you are finished reading the entire Bible, share what you have done with someone you know and celebrate your victory by doing something special, like going out to dinner!

What in the world are you going to do now that you have finished reading the entire Bible? That's right! Start over! It is most assuredly the "Book without bottom!"

You will never tire hearing His voice! During your second time through...try reading the Bible in a different translation!

Words of Encouragement

Remember, do not just "read the Bible," but "read relationally." After all, is there any other book that while you are reading, you can literally converse and interact with the author?

Pray for a desire to "listen to God speak to you" as you read His Word. Ask Him to do just that! He's just waiting for you to ask and He loves that you want to!

How will you know God is speaking to you? Will a bush catch on fire? Will a thundering voice peal through the heavens? No, it's not that mysterious. It can simply be a verse that seems to "jump out" at you while you are reading, or a verse that seems to "speak" right to an issue or situation in your life. It's truly that easy!

This is the beginning of a personal relationship with God, not a course in Bible knowledge alone.

Before you begin reading each day do as the scriptures say in Psalm 100:4, "Enter His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise."

Then pray through Luke 24:45, "Lord please open my mind to understand the scriptures." (Instead of trying to open your own mind to understand.) Also ask Him to "teach and explain His word to you so that your heart may burn within you while He is speaking." (Luke 24:32)

Be sure to underline anything you sense the Lord is speaking to you about as you are reading. Remember, this is no ordinary book! This Book is "the Word of God" written to you, "up close and personal."

Let me also encourage you during your first time reading through the Bible, to make it a point to find out what God is like and to discover His character for yourself. If you daily read the Bible and search for God's character, you will come to know Him intimately, in a

deeper way! That is a promise! And an exciting one at that! You will see! This will give you a balanced view of what He is really like, and you will find Him irresistible, kind, patient, loyal, a “Man of His Word,” forgiving, long-suffering, and serious about what He says to you!

This is the most important step, and critical in developing your relationship with God. Why? Because most likely, you are not going to trust someone you do not know. Walking with God is all about trusting Him. Again you are encouraged, work through the Bible daily! Take notes and think about what He is really like from whichever passages or chapters you are reading each day.

Food for Thought That Bears Repeating

The Bible was penned by over forty men over a 1,500 year period, through the inspiration of God’s Spirit (2 Timothy 3: 16-17). Many of these men never knew each other, yet all the books of the Bible fit together perfectly! This Book has been burned more than any other book in the world and more people have died for this Book than any other book! Just what is it about this Book that people would die for it or feel threatened enough by it to burn it? You are about to set out on a personal journey that will lead you into an intimate relationship with the Author of The Book! Will you prayerfully consider putting all other reading material aside until you get through the Bible for the first time? You will be glad you did!

May you be richly blessed and changed as you meet with Him each day.
HANG ON FOR THE RIDE OF YOUR LIFE!

**HE IS ANYTHING BUT BORING!
AS A MATTER OF FACT, HE IS IRRESISTIBLE ... YOU CAN COUNT ON
THAT!**

The Big Four

After completing ‘Where do I Begin?’ follow this outline for reading before you start your journey through the Bible.

Overview of the Bible

1) **Genesis 1 – Exodus 20:**

The Old Testament is the foundation for the New Testament. (Luke 24: 27, 32)

A. Genesis 1 – 11: 4 Major Events (Creation, the Fall, the Flood, Tower of Babel)

Themes:

- Attributes of God
- Where sin came from
- Judgment of God

B. Genesis 12 – 50: 4 Major People (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph)

Themes:

- Promises of God
- Faithfulness of God

C. Exodus 1 – 20

Themes:

- God remembers His covenant to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Ch 2:23, 24)
- Passover (Ch 12)
- Ten Commandments (Ch 20)

2) **Matthew:** The link book to the Old Testament (see Ch 1)

Themes:

- Jesus as king (Ch 2:2)
- Jesus as the new lawgiver (Matthew 5 ties into Exodus 20)

3) **John:** Goes back to the beginning (Ch 1: 1-3)

Themes:

- Emphasis on belief (Ch 20:31)
- 7 Signs
- 7 “I ams” demonstrate who Jesus is

4) **Romans:** Paul’s clear and logical explanation about the gospel (Ch 1: 16-17)

Themes:

- God's righteousness
- Man's sinfulness
- God's solution

Why use the Big Four?

- Many people are no longer familiar with the Bible – this gets them into the Bible.
- Those who are familiar with the Bible have it in bits and pieces – this gives the big picture.
- This is Bible based – gets people into the Word on a personal basis and allows for self-discovery.
- God's Word, not Bible study material, becomes the source of authority.
- People read the Bible on their own when not with you – extensive and intensive sowing.
- The habit of spending time in the Word begins forming and carries over after conversion.
- You can use this in small groups or one-on-one.
- This is an evangelism method that helps to produce disciples.

Applications

Read these books and look for the above-mentioned themes in each book.
Begin praying for someone to share this with.

The Wake-Up Call

Look at the Tester, not the tempter. John 8:36 – ‘If the Son has set you free, you will be free, indeed’.

What if Satan called a world wide convention, and in his opening address to his evil angels, he said, “We can’t keep the people from going to church. We can’t keep them from reading their Bibles and knowing the truth. We can’t even keep them from conservative values. But, we can do something else. We can keep them from forming an intimate, abiding relationship experience with God. If they gain that connection with God, our power over them is broken.

So let them go to church, let them have their conservative lifestyles, but steal their time, so they can’t gain that experience with God. This is what I want you to do, angels. Distract them from gaining hold of their God and maintaining that vital connection throughout their day!”

“How shall we do this?” shouted his angels.

“Keep them busy in the non-essentials of life and invent un-numbered schemes to occupy their minds,” he answered. “Tempt them to spend, spend, spend, then borrow, borrow, borrow. Convince the wives to go to work for long hours and the husbands to work 6 or 7 days a week, 10-12 hours a day, so they can afford their lifestyles. Keep them from spending time with their children. As their family fragments, soon, their homes will offer no escape from the pressures of work.

Over stimulate their minds so that they cannot hear that still small voice. Entice them to play the radio or cassette player whenever they drive, to keep the TV, VCR, CDs and their PCs going constantly in their homes. And see to it that every store and restaurant in the world plays non biblical, contradicting music constantly. This will jam their minds and break that union with God.

Fill their coffee tables with magazines and newspapers. Pound their minds with the news 24 hours a day. Invade their driving moments with billboards. Flood their mailboxes with junk mail, sweepstakes, mail order catalogs, and every kind of newsletter and promotional offering free products, services, and false hopes.

Even in their recreation, let them be excessive. Have them return from their recreation exhausted, disquieted, and unprepared for the coming week. Don’t let them go out in nature to reflect on God’s wonders. Send them to amusement parks, sporting events, concerts, and movies instead.

And when they meet for spiritual fellowship, involve them in gossip and small talk so that they leave with troubled consciences and unsettled emotion.

Let them be involved in soul-winning. But crowd their lives with so many good causes they have no time to seek power from God. Soon they will be working in their own strength, sacrificing their health and family for the good of the cause.”

It was quite a convention in the end. And the evil angels went eagerly to their assignments causing Christians and Jews everywhere to get busy, busy, busy and rush here and there.

Has the devil been successful at his scheme? You be the judge.

How about this definition of BUSY?

B---Being

U---Under

S---Satan's

Y---Yoke

Has the Lord spoken to your heart: Please stop and have a talk with Him. If He has exposed anything that needs to change in your life, make it a prayer request. He is just waiting for you to ask! Remember, "He rides across the Heavens to help you, across the skies in majestic splendor" (Deuteronomy 33:26), and "He is passionate about His relationship with you (Exodus 34:14).

(Retrieved from the World Wide Web_Author Unknown)

You Can Memorize Scripture

If you have had trouble memorizing scripture, don't be discouraged. Read on for insights and ideas on how to memorize God's Word.

You Can Memorize Scripture! Your memory is good! Do you think you have a poor memory? Wait a minute. What's your address and phone number? How about all the information you know by heart about your job? How about all the people you call by name? Or the facts and figures you can recite about your favorite sport or hobby? You see, your memory is really pretty good after all. Anything is easy to memorize when you are really interested in it, or use it often. A good memory is not something you either have or don't have. It is a skill, and like other skills it can be improved. Attitude is what makes the difference. Adopt an attitude of confidence in Scripture memory and you will develop skill in memorizing. Here's some additional encouragement: You can count on God to help you memorize Scripture. He wants His Word to be in your heart.

"These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts." Deuteronomy 6:6

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." Colossians 3:16

Principles for Memorizing Scripture

AS YOU START TO MEMORIZE THE VERSE:

- Study the Scripture Memory ...each week. (Review each week)
- Read the context of the verse in your Bible to understand the setting.
- Get a clear understanding of what the verse means by reading the verse in other translations.
- Read the verse through several times thoughtfully, aloud, or in a whisper.
- Each time you read the verse, say the topic, reference, verse, and reference.
- Discuss the verse with God in prayer, and continue to see His help if you want to be able to memorize.

WHILE YOU ARE MEMORIZING THE VERSE:

- Work on the verse aloud as often as possible.
- Learn the topic, reference, and first phrase.

- Continue to memorize by adding an additional phrase when you are comfortable with the previous phrase
- Choose a time when your mind is free from outside distractions.
- As you memorize and review the verse, think about how it applies to your own life and circumstances
- Use spare moments while waiting, walking or driving to review and meditate on verses

AFTER YOU CAN SAY THE TOPIC, REFERENCE, VERSE, AND REFERENCE CORRECTLY

- It is helpful to write the verse out. This deepens the impression in your mind.
- Review the verse immediately and frequently in the first few days after learning the verse.
- REVIEW! REVIEW! REVIEW. Repetition is the best method to deepen your impressions of verses

Praying Through Scripture

Jesus prayed scripture and he is our example.

Why Pray Scripture?

Jesus is our model. With the Scriptures He opposed temptation and answered His critics. He even prayed the words of the Psalms from the cross.

Praying the Scriptures is talking to God in His own language. How does a baby learn to talk? By listening to his Father.

God's Word gives the Spirit His two-edged weapon. Ephesians 6:17 says, "Take the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God." Fill your prayers with the powerful weapon of God's Word. No soldier dares report to duty without a weapon. His life depends on it. So does yours! Bring the power of the Word into your praise and prayer. Amy Carmichael wrote, "The only thing that matters in our warfare is the faithful use of His precious blade, the Word."

God binds Himself to His promises, so learn to plead the promises of God. D.L. Moody said, "Tarry at a promise and God will meet you there." Numbers 23:19 tells us, "Has God said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?" Every promise is like a check, its value is nothing more than a piece of paper until it is cashed at the bank. Praying the Word of God "cashes" His promises. At the age of 90, George Mueller said that he never had an unanswered prayer. His secret? "I always pray with an open Bible, filling my praise and petition with God's Word. I pray God's promises, His declarations concerning Himself. I pray His names and titles by which He reveals His nature and character. I pray the rights He gave the believer to bold and confident access. When a need arose, I spread them all out before God who hears His children. My heavenly Father will not break His word to His own child."

Praying the Word of God builds faith. "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." (Romans 10:17)

Praying the Scriptures assures that you are praying the mind and will of God. Charles Spurgeon said that our prayers are according to the mind of God when they are according to the Word of God.

Praying God's Word seals the answer. Promises predict the answers. They point to what to expect. Isaiah 55:11 says that God's Word never returns to Him void without accomplishing what He desires. Don't worry on your knees and call it prayer.

Praying God's Word brings God's power into our praying. In the Amplified Bible, Luke 1:37 says, "For with God nothing is ever impossible, and no word from God shall be without power or impossible of fulfillment." Mary clearly understood it this way. She replied, "May it be to me as you have said." (Luke 1: 38)

Praying Scriptures orchestrates prayer agreement for multiplied power. Leviticus 26:8 says, "Five of you will chase a hundred, and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand, and your enemies will fall by the sword before you." Deuteronomy 32:30 refers to one man chasing a thousand, or two putting ten thousand to flight.

How to Pray Scriptures

Read a verse or Scripture passage. Ask God what He sees. He will give you a praise, a confession, or a petition based on the passage. Pray it back to God. Praying the Word of God is God-oriented praying (a good antidote to self-centered shopping list praying). In praying a promise, focus on the God of the promise, whose name and character guarantee the fulfillment of the promise. Seek His face, not His hand. Gaze at God, glance at the requests. Match His attributes and names to your needs.

As You Come to Him

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Prepare | <u>Psalm 27:8</u> – "My heart has heard you say, 'Come and talk with Me.' And my heart responds, 'Lord, I am coming.'" |
| Remember | <u>Hebrews 4:14-16</u> - "... Let us cling to Him and never stop trusting Him. This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses..... Therefore, let us come boldly, with confidence to the Throne of Grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in our time of need." |
| Enter with Thanksgiving | <u>Psalm 100:4</u> - "Enter His gates with Thanksgiving and into His courts with Praise." |
| Confess | <u>1 John 1:9</u> – "If we confess our sins He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." |
| Ask | <u>Luke 24:45</u> - "Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures." |
| Desire | <u>Luke 24:32</u> - "They said to one another, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to |

us?’ ”

- Believe/Faith 1 John 5:14-15 – “This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.”
- Confidence Acts 4:13 – “Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus.”
- Result of being with Him Luke 19:40 – “But some of the Pharisees among the crowd said, ‘Teacher, rebuke your followers for saying things like that!’ He replied, ‘If they keep quiet, the stones (rocks) will cry out.’ ”
- With Him = Much Fruit John 15:5 – “I am the Vine you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.”
- Fact Exodus 34:14 – “You must worship no other gods, but only the Lord, for He is a God who is passionate about His relationship with you.”

Your Quiet Time

God's Word is our Daily Bread.

Quiet Time in the Morning

Meeting with God in the morning is a preparation for the day, a time for spiritual cleansing and a teaching time....spiritual counsel from the Almighty Counselor **Luke 21:38** And all the people would get up early in the morning to come to Him in the temple and listen.

Isaiah 50:4 The Lord God has given me the tongue of disciples, that I may know how to sustain the weary one with a word. He awakens me morning by morning, He awakens my ear to listen as a disciple.

Psalms 88:13 But I, O Lord, have cried out to You for help, and in the morning my prayer comes before You.

Psalms 90:14 O Satisfy us in the morning with Your loving kindness, that we may sing for joy and be glad.

Psalms 5:3 In the morning, O Lord, you will hear my voice; in the morning I will eagerly order my prayer to You and eagerly watch.

Psalms 143:8 Let me hear Your loving kindness in the morning, for I trust in You; teach me the way in which I should walk; For to You I lift up my soul.

Mark 1:35 And in the early morning, while it was still dark, He arose and went out and departed to a lonely place and was praying there.

Psalms 59:16 But as for me, I shall sing of Your strength; yes, I shall joyfully sing of your loving kindness in the morning for You have been my stronghold and a refuge in the day of distress.

God's Word, our Daily Bread

Psalm 119:9, 11 How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to Your Word. Your Word I have treasured in my heart, that I might not sin against You.

Matthew 4:4 But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'"

1 Peter 2:2 Like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation.

Hebrews 4:12-13 For the Word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart, and there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

Joshua 1:8 This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it, for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

Psalm 1:1-3 How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers! But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. And he will be like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither, and in whatever he does, he prospers.

Jeremiah 30:2 Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, "Write all the Words which I have spoken to you in a book.
(i.e. Journaling)

Jesus Christ ministered to other people out of the Abundance of His Relationship with the Father!

John 15:5 "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in him bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing." (unbroken fellowship with Him)

To know Christ and make Him known!

John 17:3 says, "Now this is eternal life: that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent."

Let's Be Honest

How can we use Scripture to deal with feelings..

This is a reminder to all of us that we need to recognize feelings as just that – feelings. We need to offer our feelings to God, and not condemn or judge those among us who honestly share their emotions (feelings) with us. A feeling or emotion is not a sin. How we respond to a feeling determines whether we will sin or not.

The Lord desires truth and honesty at the deepest level and wants us to experience His love, forgiveness, and power in all areas of our lives. Experiencing His love does not mean that all of our thoughts, emotions, and behaviors will be pleasant and pure. It means that we can be real, feeling pain and joy, love and anger, confidence and confusion. The Psalms give us tremendous insight about what it means to be honest with the Lord. David and other psalmists wrote and spoke honestly about the full range of their responses to situations.

For example, David expressed his anger with the Lord because he felt abandoned by Him:

I say to God my Rock, “Why have you forgotten me? Why must I go about mourning, oppressed by the enemy?” (Psalm 42:9, NIV)

At times, David was very angry with others, and he expressed his anger to the Lord in terms that reveal the depth of his feelings:

Break the teeth in their mouths, O God: tear out, O Lord, the fangs of the lions! Let them vanish like water that flows away; when they draw the bow, let their arrows be blunted. Like a slug melting away as it moves along, like a stillborn child, may they not see the sun. Before your pots can feel the heat of the thorns – whether they be green or dry – the wicked will be swept away. (Psalm 58:6-9, NIV)

David wrote of his despair about difficult situations:

My heart is in anguish within me: the terrors of death assail me. Fear and trembling have beset me; the horror has overwhelmed me. (Psalm 55: 4-5, NIV)

And he communicated his despair to the Lord:

Why do you hide your face and forget our misery and oppression? We are brought down to the dust; our bodies cling to ground. (Psalm 44: 24-25, NIV)

Sometimes he was confused:

How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and every day have sorrow in my heart? (Psalm 13: 1-2, NIV)

Sometimes David communicated his love for the Lord:

As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God? (Psalm 42: 1-2, NIV)

At times David trusted in the Lord:

The Lord is my light and my salvation – whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life – of whom shall I be afraid? When evil men advance against me to devour my flesh, when my enemies and my foes attack me, they will stumble and fall. Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then I will be confident. (Psalm 27: 1-3, NIV)

At other times he was filled with praise for God:

I will exalt you, my God the King: I will praise your name for ever and ever. Every day I will praise you and extol your name for ever and ever. Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom. (Psalm 145: 1-3, NIV)

In conclusion – think about this: These passages demonstrate that God, who spoke of David as a man after His own heart, wants us to be open and honest with Him about all of our emotions, not just the pleasant ones.

It is clear after reading David's conversations with God; we have permission to be completely honest with our Heavenly Father. If we aren't dumping every last pain, hurt, discouragement, disappointment, and all of our other true feelings on God, it will leak out and get dumped on others. You can count on it! Whether this happens verbally or non-verbally...it **will** come out!

It is a lot of work to walk with God like this. But He wants to do the work in us. That is why pursuing a relationship with God is the critical priority over everything else in our life! God invites us to "come to Him," (Hebrews 4:16; Psalm 27:8 NLT) to pour all this out. What is the result? We will become closer to Him because we haven't left Him out of the process. He wants to be included! And, after He listens, He wants to tell us the Truth. He is into His children being set free. After all what Father wouldn't?

When we dump our anger or hurts on a close friend what is the result? As they listen to us and pray with us, we connect with them and feel that someone understands us. We have an Ultimate Someone who is the Lover of our soul...Jesus Himself! He is just waiting for you to come and "let it all out!" David's talks with God clearly let us know we have permission to be open and honest about our feelings, why else would God have allowed all of those talks to be in His Word! Once again...the **Truth has set us free!**