

Basics of Bible Reading

The purpose of Bible study is [transformation](#), not information.

James 1:22 (NIV) Do not merely listen to the word... Do what it says.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NIV) All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Teaching - what is **right**

Rebuking - what is **not** right

Correcting - how to **get** right

Training in Righteousness – how to **stay** right with God

The passage above says that "all scripture is god-breathed". Unfortunately, some English translations translate this as "inspired" which today means more of uplifting or encouraging, as in "My experience inspired me with new ideas". We speak of a poet or artist being moved or inspired to draw or write something.

But the original Greek word (the New Testament part of the Bible was written in Greek and some in Aramaic) means "God-breathed" which carries the idea that these are God's words, not simply words someone wrote because they had an interesting spiritual experience.

When you read God's Word, keep this thought in mind, "It is God talking to me and about me." Expect God to speak to you through His word, and ask Him to do so as you begin reading.

As you read a passage in the Bible, ask the following questions, and turn the answers into prayers:

1. How does this passage increase my appreciation for God?

What is there about God for which I can praise Him? What blessings does it describe? Give God thanks for these.

2. What encourages me from the passage and why?

What promises to you does God give in this passage? What truths does it state about god's attitude towards you?

For example: John 3:16 says, "God so loved the world (you included) that He sent His one and only Son..."

Say to yourself several times, "God so loves ME, that He sent His son."

Enjoy that fact. Be encouraged by God's love for you. Take joy in this truth.

Now express your thanks to Him, in prayer, for loving you so much.

3. What areas of sin does the passage warn against, if any?

Confess these sins if you are guilty of them. Ask God for help in avoiding situations, places, and people where you are prone to this temptation.

4. What does it say I need to do to obey God?

In which responsibilities, life circumstances, decisions, or relationships do I need to apply/obey this command from God? If you don't obey, what negative consequences could you experience? What hindrances am I likely to face as I seek to obey?

Ask for God's help in overcoming these.

Praying the Bible is a wonderful way to use God's word to spend time with God. Put whatever you read into the context of your life and then base your prayer on this. Below are several examples of praying God's word. The first uses Psalm 34 and the second is from Ephesians 1. Turn each part of the passage into a prayer. In each example below a line from the Bible is followed by an example of praying it to God.

Psalm 34:1-22

I will extol the Lord at all times; his praise will always be on my lips.

Pray something like, "I extol Your name, LORD. I praise You for who You are."

2 My soul will boast in the Lord;

Pray something like, "In my spirit I boast to the angels and devils that You are my God."

... let the afflicted hear and rejoice.

You might pray something like, "Though, I am feeling afflicted, I rejoice in You."

3 Glorify the Lord with me; let us exalt his name together.

Pray something like, "I do glorify Your name today, Lord, and look forward to exalting Your name with others this Sunday."

4 I sought the Lord, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears.

Pray something like, "There have been times that I have been afraid and come to You for help and You have given me strength to face the problems. Thank You, Lord for Your faithfulness."

5 Those who look to him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame.

Pray something like, "Today, I claim the JOY and PEACE that You have promised those who put their faith in You."

6 This poor man called, and the Lord heard him; he saved him out of all his troubles.

Pray something like, "Thank You for the times You have gotten me through problems. There was the time I..., and the time of ...
Thank You for Your help in those."

7 The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them.

Pray something like, "Lord, deliver me from the problem of... that I am currently facing."

8 Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him.

Pray something like, "I can testify that it is blessed to trust in You. Give me someone this day to tell this to."

9 Fear the Lord, you his saints, for those who fear him lack nothing.

Pray something like, "Thank You for meeting all of my physical needs today. Help me to use them to bring glory and honor to You."

10 The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.

Pray something like, "Show me the futility of wishing for things of this world. Teach me all of the good things that are mine in Jesus. Show my heart the benefit of having each of them."

11 Come, my children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord.

Pray something like, "Help me to respect Your will today, to fear Your power to punish, and to save."

12 Whoever of you loves life and desires to see many good days, 13 keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking lies.

Pray something like, "Help me to think before I speak every word today, Lord. Help me to say only what will help and encourage others."

14 Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.

Pray something like, "Help me to recognize when I am being tempted today, Lord. And fill my mind with Your will in that moment so I know the right way to choose."

15 The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their cry;

Pray something like, "I believe that You are hearing my prayer this day, as I pray by faith in Jesus."

16 the face of the Lord is against those who do evil, to cut off the memory of them from the earth.

Pray something like, "Thank You Lord for Your promise of eternal life in Christ, never to be cut off from Your people."

17 The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles.

Pray something like, "Lord, I desire to be righteous like Christ today. I know You hear my prayer of faith."

18 The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

Lord, my spirit is down today because of _____. Please bring healing into this person's life.

19 A righteous man may have many troubles, but the Lord delivers him from them all;

Pray something like, "I pray for _____ at church. Help her to trust in Your love and power, through Jesus, today."

20 he protects all his bones, not one of them will be broken.

Pray something like, "Show this person that she can trust You to meet her every need. Bring glory to Yourself through this situation."

21 Evil will slay the wicked; the foes of the righteous will be condemned.

Lord, show Yourself to be mighty in my life today. Let others see You in me.

22 The Lord redeems his servants; no one will be condemned who takes refuge in him.

Pray something like, "Thank, You again, Lord, for Your mighty salvation. Help me to remember it all day long and live in Joy and Peace because of it."

Ephesians 1:3-8

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

Pray something like, "Thank You, God, for all of the spiritual blessings that I have in Christ. Help me to learn what they are and to appreciate them."

4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.

Pray something like, "Lord, I am not very holy or blameless. I am sorry for the times that I bring dishonor to Your name by my sinful words and behavior. Help me to see what parts of my life I have yet to turn fully over to You."

In love 5 he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—

Pray something like, "Thank You for adopting me into Your kingdom family."

6 to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

Pray something like, "I wish to live a life that will bring glory to You. Create that life for me, and me for that life."

7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace 8 that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding.

Pray something like, "Lord, how can I say thank you in a way that You deserve for all You have done for me. I praise and thank you for forgiving my sins. Your grace is rich indeed. Express Your grace to others today in the way I treat them."

Passages that describe an event are not as easy to do the above with. But it can be done as you meditate on the people and how they are reacting, what they are saying, what you think you might do in that situation, the results that occur, etc. See the following to help you.

People – Who are the people in the text? Who is this written to? How are they like you, and not like you?

Place – What is the setting and what are the similarities to our world?

Plot – What is happening? Is there any conflict or tension? How would you react in this situation, or to what is being said?

Point – What was the intended message for the first people to hear this passage? What did God want them to learn, or feel, or do?

Principles – What truths, for all of God's people, can we draw from this passage?

Parallels – Where does this truth apply to your life, at home, at work, at school, in church, in the neighborhood, or in your heart, desires, will, temptations, etc.?

Personal – What attitude, action, value, or belief needs to change in you or your life?

Plan – What will be your first step of action to live out what you've learned?