



The Prayer Room

Brought to you by the Good News Bearers
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LISTEN TO GOD IN THE BIBLE

How to Read the Bible – There is no “right” way to read the Bible, no set of rigid rules. But it is important to **read it in an orderly way**, and not haphazardly. The Bible is not a bunch of Godly “sound bites” to be snacked on at random.

Martin Luther had this to say about it:

“I study the Bible like I gather apples. First, I shake the whole tree, that the ripest may fall. Then I shake each limb, and when I have shaken each limb, I shake each branch and every twig. Then I look under every leaf. I shake the Bible as a whole, like shaking the whole tree. Then I shake every limb – study book after book. Then I shake every branch, giving attention to the chapters. Then I shake every twig, for a careful study of the paragraphs and sentences and words, and their meanings.”

(Martin Luther (LW:54.165))

If you are truly serious about reading the Bible, the Pastor would love to talk with you about this. We don't want you to go away “empty-handed”, though, so please read on.

To “shake the whole tree” we have to lay hold of **one limb** or another. And we have to start reading the Bible in **one book** or another.

The books that tell us most about Jesus Christ are the four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Each of them presents Jesus from a different perspective. Matthew shows us **Christ as king** and as **truly human**. Mark presents him as **servant** and Luke tells us of Christ the **savior**. John reveals Jesus Christ as **God, the Son**, truly divine.

A really good place to start is with the Gospel of Mark, which is believed to be the earliest written. It is also the shortest, with only 16 chapters. Mark is a real “action” read, with an exciting air of immediacy. You might then move on to Matthew, which presents Jesus in more detail. John would be next, with facets and stories of Jesus not seen in the other Gospels. Leave Luke until last, because it goes hand in hand with **Acts**. This book, also called The Acts of the Apostles, is really a continuation of Luke and is apparently written by the same author. It describes the birth and growth of the early Christian Church.

Read Galatians. Then read the rest of the New Testament, starting at Romans and going through to Revelation. This trip should take you at least five weeks and may well introduce you to the richest, most rewarding travel experience you will ever have. Some of it will be over pretty rough roads, like Paul's long, involved sentences, and the imagery of Christ's triumph in Revelation. Other parts will be smooth, delightful sailing, over roads too soon traveled and leaving you yearning for more.

Tune in with us next week as we continue with a road map of Old Testament travel.

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Please take this copy of The Prayer Room with you and join us in praying this prayer during the coming week.

Dear Lord, send your Holy Spirit to counsel and guide me as I read your holy Word. Call others to join with me in renewed acquaintance with the Bible, so we might grow in knowledge of you, into a mature community of faith. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.