

# HOW TO READ THE BIBLE



The Bible is written for you. By reading it, you can let god's word become a part of your life.



The following ten rules for reading can help that to happen.

## 1 READ THE BIBLE... ...AND PRAY.

The Bible is Sacred Scripture.

Therefore it is good to pray, before reading, to ask God for his Holy Spirit and, after reading to thank him. How can you pray? Simply start with this short prayer: **"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path"**(Ps 119:105)

## 2 ...AND ALLOW YOURSELF TO BE SURPRISED.

The Bible is a book full of surprises. Even though you have heard many of the stories already, give them a second chance. And yourself, too!

The Bible shows you the all-surpassing breadth and greatness of God.

## 3 ...AND BE GLAD

The Bible is a great love story with a happy ending: death does not have a chance. Life wins. You find this Good News again and again in all passages of the Bible. Look for it-and be glad when you have found it.

## 4 ...AND DO IT REGULARLY.

The Bible is the book for your life. If you read from it everyday, even if it is only a verse or a short paragraph, you may realize that the book does you a lot of good. Just as with sports and music: you make progress only by constant practice -and once you have acquired a few skills, it is really fun.

## 5 ...AND DO NOT READ TOO MUCH.

The Bible is a gigantic treasure. You receive it as a free gift. You do not have to unpack it all right away. Read only as much as you can take in well.

If something speaks to you in a special way, write it out for yourself and learn it by heart.

## 6 ...AND ALLOW YOURSELF TIME.

The Bible is an ancient book that is eternally young and new. It is not supposed to be read from start to finish without a break. It is good to pause as you read. That way you can reflect and become aware of what God wants to say to you. And once you have read through the Bible, just start over again from the beginning. You will again discover completely different aspects of it.

## 7 ...AND BE PATIENT

The Bible is a book full of profound wisdom, but occasionally it seems puzzling and strange. You will not understand everything right away. Then, too, much can be understood only in terms of the time or the historical situation. Have patience with yourself and with the Bible. When something is not clear to you, then look at the context or at other passages that deal with the same subject. Your Bible gives you a lot of support.

## 8 ...AND READ IT WITH OTHERS

You can share with others what the Bible says to you. And what others have discovered in the Bible can help you to understand it better. If you speak with others about the Bible, make sure that God's Word remains central and does not get talked to death. The Bible is never a weapon to use against others, it is a bridge for peacemakers.

## 9 ...AND OPEN YOUR HEART.

The Bible is a matter of the heart. Someone who reads the Bible cannot leave it at that. God Opens his heart. His Word continues to be written in your life, and you can celebrate it in the liturgy. You are being invited to read the Bible with an open heart.

## 10 ...AND GO ON YOUR WAY.

The Bible is the compass for your life. It shows you how things ought to be. You yourself walk the path of your life. But you do not travel it alone. Think of the disciples on the road to Emmaus. At first they did not recognize Jesus, who accompanied them in their grief. But then they asked themselves: **"Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?"**

**"Reading the Bible should be a form of prayer. The Bible should be read in God's presence and as the unfolding of His mind. It is not just a book, but God's love letter to you.**

-Peter Kreeft

