

Bible Intake: Hearing & Reading

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[0 : 0 0] will trickle in, which is fine. Thanks.

Yeah, so if you didn't get one, there's a handout over there. And you can pick it up as you go out. That would be fine, too. You don't need to be looking at it while I'm talking. Today's class is going to be on Bible intake.

This is the first part of Bible intake, and we're going to talk about hearing and reading. So let me just open us in prayer. Heavenly Father, we are so grateful to be here and to be in your house and to be with your people.

Lord, on this foggy morning, would you defog our brains and our hearts? Lord, incline our hearts to your testimonies. Open our eyes to see beautiful things in your word.

Unite our hearts to fear your name above all things. And satisfy us with your steadfast love.

[1 : 1 9] Lord, this is what we long for. Lord, as we talk about some nuts and bolts, we pray that it wouldn't just be a kind of laundry list of stuff to do, Lord, but you would be giving us tools to draw nearer to you.

That's our goal. And we pray that you would work that goal out in our lives. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. So, the Bible is God's word.

I once had the pleasure of co-teaching or assisting a woman who taught the two-year-olds in a previous church, and I was a fairly young mom.

I had a two-year-old in the class, but she was my oldest and only at the time. So I had a lot to learn, and I had a lot to learn about children, and I hadn't grown up in a Christian home, so I was learning about how you teach these things to children, the truths of scripture.

And my teacher, her name was Linda, she had one basic goal for these two-year-olds, that they would come out of her class in a year or so knowing that the Bible is the word of God.

[2 : 3 9] And that was her main goal. She taught lots of stories. She engaged them in many different ways. But every day, we sang the B-I-B-L-E song. And she just reinforced in every possible way that the Bible is the word of God.

And what they understood at that age, I don't know, you know. But they got a message, right? And it's a message I think most of us have gotten, perhaps from the age of two, perhaps much more recently.

But we know that this is where God has revealed himself, where he reveals our own hearts to us, where he unveils his plan for the restoration of humanity to himself.

And in it are all we need for life and godliness. Second Peter says, His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

There's a lot in these two verses. I'm not going to, you know, I'm not going to, yeah. But through the knowledge of him who called us and through his precious and great promises, and there are other things that he gives us.

[4 : 11] These aren't the only things, but this foundational knowledge and knowing and trusting in his promises, we get that to a great extent from his word.

So hearing is the first thing I want to talk about. So this is the lowest bar, right, on Bible intake for most of us. We can hear the words of scripture. Romans 10, how then will they call on him in whom they have not believed?

And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And then the next thing I have up there in 1 Timothy, until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of scripture, to exhortation and to teachings, as Paul speaking to his mentee, Timothy.

We have a practice in our church, as many churches do, not enough churches in my opinion, but that's of the public reading of scripture, even apart from the sermon itself.

We always have this first scripture reading, which whoever's preaching chooses that to complement in some way the passage that they'll be preaching on.

[5 : 40] And we have this early in the service, as you've, you know, in most cases. We sing a couple of songs, and then we have someone who reads the scripture. And, yeah, I just want to, I want to ask, and you can respond, at some times we're going to walk around with the mic.

I think right now we probably don't need to. I just want to, maybe a, just a shout out, or just a raising of hands. How many of you find it difficult to concentrate during that first scripture reading?

Anybody? Yeah, it can be, it can be challenging, right? Like, it's almost like, well, we've sung these songs, and we have that ringing in our head, and then we sit down, and we're like, you know, if it's like me, you know, I'm trying to rearrange, oh, my Bible's over here, okay, I'm all set.

And meanwhile, someone has gotten up and started reading the scriptures, and I'm not always really keyed in. So, so this is something, like, how do we, how do we do that well?

And I don't think it's, this isn't really complicated. Some of the things, I think, are how we prepare for church beforehand, how early we get and sit down and do all that arranging of the coat and the Bible or purse or whatever, children, which are almost inevitable distraction.

[7 : 11] You know, how do, how do we do that? Do we, do we prepare and come in in such a way as we're ready to really hear the scriptures and listen? It's just one thing to hear it, right?

It's another thing to listen, right? The scriptures are, are usually on the screen behind the reader and it's also announced before the reader reads.

I find it really helpful to follow along. Other people don't and that's fine but that's something that's really helpful for me. It gives me something to, and I usually do it in my Bible because I'm old-fashioned and that's, that's, that's helpful for me to see the page.

But, whatever helps you to focus, you want to kind of think about that and I think, I think when we don't listen, sometimes it's, there may be legit distractions around us like children or whatever, how we came into church, how we, there are all kinds of things but we use that time of singing and worshiping God to begin to settle our hearts and be ready then to hear the scripture read.

For us, it is, it should be no surprise each, each Sunday service that that's what's coming next. Right? Another thing I'll just throw out there is that the, so in the days when we had paper bulletins, I would take my bulletin, I would go sit down and I would look that scripture up and stick my bulletin in there so I was ready to follow along.

[8 : 48] We don't have the paper bulletins, we don't necessarily have the warning but the order of service is on the website by Friday afternoon. So if you go to the website, you can, you can look at the order of service and you can see what that scripture is.

So if you're, if you're extra motivated, I would encourage that. I usually know it because I put the order of service on the website as part of my job but I find it helpful and I assume others might as well.

So it's always there by Friday afternoon unless, unless I forget which case it's not there. But, so those are just some, just some things to, to think about and I think, I don't know, for me it's mostly I just need to think about it.

I need to go, oh, this is the public reading of scripture. This is important. This is God's word for us. This matters. So there's other, other ways to listen.

Many Bible apps on your phone or your laptop or whatever will read the scripture to you. I know the ESV Bible app does. I think, a number of them do.

[10 : 06] There's, there's more out there than I'm aware of or have heard or have used. Some of them, you know, you're able to read along while the voice reads to you.

There's an app for the iPhone and Android called Dwell. And Dwell, I put the link in your handout. Dwell is a really nicely done website that allows you to listen to scripture but it's more than just like an audio Bible as you might be able to still get on CDs or something.

It's more than that because they have different voices you can choose from. They have a number of different translations. They have different ways to assemble a playlist.

They have, I'm going to mention it later, 62 reading plans or listening plans that you can go through. You can click a button to read along and it will move this, moves its little screen so that you can be reading on your screen as you're listening.

and it's just, it's a great little app. It's attractive. It's really handy and they continue to upgrade it. Our church has purchased a number of subscriptions for that.

[11 : 22] I think last I checked there were 10 left so if you don't have it, it is a paid, you can download it for free and sort of check it out but it is a paid subscription but if you go through the link that I've provided in the handout and it's been, it's been in like weekly emails and things, not every week I don't think but, and if you have any trouble, you know, getting to a link, just let me know or email the church office.

We can send that right out to you and then you, then you're covered. You're, you have a, you have a subscription and you can take advantage of all that it has to offer.

What are some times, some of you probably listen to scripture already, what are some times that you find that handy? Yep.

Driving. Driving. Yep. Yep. Exercising. Exercising. Very good. Anything else?

Can you imagine? Down in the studio, working all day long. Yep. Yep. Sure. A lot of us have mindless tasks we need to be doing.

[12 : 35] We can have the scripture going. My husband downloaded Dwell in the summer and began listening to the entire Bible, straight through in order, I think, and he would, he works sort of late into the, he works until eight because his, his job, it's remote, but it's in California, so their hours are different.

He works until eight and then he would come home, he would come home, come down the stairs and fix himself some supper and, and then he would just lie on the couch and plug in the Bible and he would listen to for about an hour and he has completed the entire Bible that way.

I have had times when I just, just really wanted to soak in scripture but I wasn't, I didn't want to sit there and read.

I remember one time when I, I went to the beach because I just, I was emotionally going through a lot of stuff and I just wanted to sort of, sort of process but not process and it was spring but it was a warm sunny day and I just, so the beach was nearly empty but I lay on the beach, I plugged in the Gospel of John and I just lay there and listen to the whole thing.

that brings up a question though. What if I, my attention wanders while I'm listening. My attention does that all the time.

[14 : 06] Okay, I, unless I'm looking, it's really hard for me to concentrate. Driving I can but even then, you know, I'm sort of in and out. So is it not worth it if we can't really focus all the time or if we don't really focus?

I'm going to say it's still worth it. I'm going to say don't stress about it because as long as this isn't your only place of Bible intake, you're getting more than you would not listening, right?

And things are going to catch your ear and who knows what goes on in your subconscious. I don't even know. Like, you know, if it gets in when you're not paying attention in some way, you know, we don't want to rely on that.

My husband, would frequently doze off while he was reading, while he was listening to the scriptures during that season. But he was reading the Bible other times. He, you know, has read the Bible at number, so he missed things.

And when I lay on the beach in the sun listening to the Gospel of John, I dozed off. And it was a blessing in that time to be that relaxed and to just rest.

[15 : 19] And then, you know, when I came back to, I was listening to the Word of God. And, you know, this isn't the, we don't want to take lightly that it's the Word of God, but at the same time, I don't think we need to beat ourselves up if we're listening and we lose concentration.

I think the same goes for reading, and I'm going to talk a little bit about that in a little bit. But for me, listening is far more difficult to hold my attention. And I know for other people it's not, it's, yeah, for some people, listening is really easier than reading.

But that's what I would say about listening. So we want to listen with attention during the public reading of Scripture and our worship services.

We want to listen in other ways when we have time, when we have space, a little bit of brain space to hear God's Word. And then another way is we can, when we're reading Scripture, we can read it out loud.

You know, for centuries that's how reading was done. You just read out loud. And what happens there is you're looking at it, so it's coming in through your eyes, into your brain, right?

[16 : 42] As you read it, you're hearing it as well. And all, the more gateways we have for information coming in, the better.

And if it's the Word of God, how much better, how much, you know, like, and, you know, this is one of the reasons, like, you know, YouTube or TikTok or Instagram, all that stuff has exploded, and we know, movies and television, because of the, it draws us, because it's not just our ears or just our eyes.

and so reading aloud can be really great, too. It can be, like, you know, you may feel self-conscious at first, but you're just reading aloud.

It's, you know. So, so, so, the more gateways, the more retention, I would suggest. So, any questions about listening, about hearing the Word of God?

I know for some people, reading is just plain hard. A lot of people struggle to read, and we make, in our Western world, such a big deal about reading, as, you know, I think I make a big deal of reading, but we need to remember, there were centuries when people did not read, and they were no less godly as long as they had some access to the Word of God, right?

[18 : 21] And most of it was oral. It was mostly coming in their ears. And we're a more visual society, I think, but, but reading can be challenging. And, that doesn't mean, you know, that you're doomed to be a second-class Christian if you struggle with reading.

It's just not the case. It's interesting to be, now, Ambrose of Milan was one of the first that reads silent.

Because it was all acoustic. And he became a tourist attraction. Yes! When they would come to the church, they would just stand and watch him, because they could see his eyes moving across, and they couldn't hear anything.

It's like, Matthew was really strange that it was a tourist attraction. So, in that sense, it's wonderful because illiteracy, we often look at that, oh, look at how many, look at the high percentage of illiterates in that society.

But, it wasn't as much of a barrier for precisely what you said, because the reading was acoustic. Something would be pinned up, somebody would come and read it out loud for a little crowd.

[19 : 30] So, you still had access because it was acoustic, this is on you. Yeah. Yeah. Tom? I just wanted to, I discovered the Bible Lab Bible Gateway that I listen to, and what I love about it is I use different Bible translations that I don't normally read.

Mm-hmm. And I also, I actually really like the original KJV to listen to. And the reason why is because I think in my line of work I'm always studying and it's hard for me to get out of that mindset of like reading.

So, I'm trying to think like what's the context to writing this, when, where, why, how, instead of just listening to the eternal words of the timeless nature of the scripture. And when I listen, I get out of that mindset.

Yeah. I just listen to it as God's spoken word to us and it's been, it's been immensely helpful for me. And it's ironic because I'm a reader, that's what I do, but listening is, I feel, for me, it's been better.

Mm-hmm. In terms of taking God's word. Yeah, and there's total sense. Because, and it is, it's a different experience, right? It's different. Josh.

[20 : 43] I, I remember when I was teaching poetry to, uh, high school students, we would go through this poem, I forget the name of the poet, but he, it was a poem about teaching poetry and at the end of it is, uh, he, it's, he's explaining how he feels when, when students ask him questions about poetry, they, they want to tie it to a chair and interrogate it.

They want to strangle a meaning out of it. And I feel like, I feel that way sometimes. When I come to my Bible reading times, um, I'm, I feel pressured to be a real student, a real, very studious, you know, um, interpreter of the Bible.

And it's like, well, or you could listen to what God, like, like you were saying, the, the word of God is just beautiful. Yeah. You know, in and of itself.

Yeah. And we should study. We need to, we need to do that. but when it becomes a burden, sometimes it's helpful to get rid of that burden.

Yeah. No, absolutely. I think we need to take advantage of all the different ways that we have. And, you know, we, we live in a society where we have so many different ways, um, you know, to take in the scriptures.

[21 : 58] Um, I think we should take advantage of that and, um, and not just, not just do one thing. Um, so, uh, what does the next slide say?

Oh, did that. Okay. So we're going to turn to reading now. Um, and reading is, is how we're mostly accustomed, uh, to approaching the scriptures, um, aside from in public worship.

Um, I want to think a little bit about how we approach our Bible reading. Um, I learned this some years ago in a book by John Piper, and I've heard him speak of it, you know, on recorded sermons.

And, um, and it's a, it's a little mnemonic, um, I O U S that I have found really helpful, um, to use when approaching scripture.

And what it is, is it just a, they're just prayers from the Bible to ask the Lord, to, um, ask, ask the Lord to be with us, to help us, to open our eyes, these kinds of things.

[23 : 11] Um, I went through them as I prayed to open the class this morning. So the first one, the I is for incline my heart to your testimonies and not to selfish gain.

From Psalm 119, 36, the next verse is turn my eyes from looking at worthless things and give me life in your ways.

And I find them together to be really, really helpful. How many worthless things are before my eyes, uh, all day long. Um, but as I come to the scriptures, I want the Lord to incline, you know, lean, lean my heart into it, um, to help me.

Because I need help. I get up in the morning and like, I don't necessarily, I'm not leaning into scripture from the time my eyeballs, you know, see the light. That's not happening.

Um, and without the Lord, we really, we need his help. It's his book. We have his Holy Spirit dwelling within us who has promised to help us as we read. And, um, I just think it just makes total sense to pray before we approach the scriptures, um, rather than just flip right to the, right to the passage or whatever it is.

[24 : 25] So incline my heart to your testimonies. The O is for open my eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.

Also from Psalm 119. Um, I've heard John Piper talk about this and say, he sometimes prays, open my eyes that I may see Jesus in your word, right?

That's the most wondrous thing we could see in the scriptures. Um, and we need, we need our eyes open. The eyes of our heart need to be open as we come to the scriptures.

Um, not just our physical eyes. Um, so the eyes as a, as a gateway, uh, to our heart. The U is for unite my heart to fear your name from Psalm 86.

So we come to our time of Bible reading. Um, even if we do it first thing in the morning, we're coming out of dreams and, you know, maybe an accident with the coffee maker or, you know, a little interchange with a, someone who lives in our house with us.

[25 : 37] Um, and if we read later in the day, um, there's a whole day's worth of distractions building up and different things. And our hearts, our minds are like scattered all over.

Um, and we ask the Lord to unite, unite our, you know, to, I think of it as, as focus, focus my heart, uh, that I might do what's really, really important, which is to fear the name of God.

Um, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. So we want to come to the scriptures with that fear of the Lord in our hearts. And we need help. We need help. So we pray, unite my heart, uh, to fear your name.

And as we come in fear, this respect and awe and honoring God, uh, in our hearts, we're more able than to hear his word when it rebukes us or corrects us.

We need to come with an attitude of submission. This is God's word. And I sit under it. This is, this is, this is the God of the universe who created me, who made me.

[26 : 44] And this isn't just, you know, a self-help book off the, off the shelf at Barnes and Noble. This is the word of God. So to, to be aware of that, to make ourselves aware, to ask the Lord to make us aware.

And finally, the S I've just, the brackets are just because in the, in the Bible, you'll find it in the plural, which is, um, which is great. But when I pray it, I, uh, you know, on my own like this, satisfy me in the morning with your steadfast love, that I may rejoice and be glad.

Uh, my heart is frequently, uh, running after things to satisfy it. And they are not always God. They are not always where true satisfaction lies.

And I want to come to scriptures and be satisfied, to be filled that I, so that then I don't run all over the place, trying to fill it with other things, with, you know, good reputation, with success, with, uh, yeah, yeah, being known or being well liked or, or buying stuff or watching YouTube videos or whatever.

Right. Um, we're always trying to satisfy our hearts, but it's God in him is our satisfaction. And, and why not ask, Lord, satisfy me, uh, satisfy me with your steadfast love.

[28 : 21] So that's a, that's just a little mnemonic. You can, um, you can memorize it. You can, uh, I have a, I have a little ring of verses.

Now this is way more than, than those four. Uh, but it started with those four. Um, and, um, I just, I did this in Photoshop, so it's a little fancy, but you can just use three by five cards, you know?

Um, and I have this right near the table where I usually read the word and I pick it up and, uh, you know, I, you know, I might go through these.

I might, I have some other ones. I have a verse here, um, from Psalm 10, which is a promise of satisfaction for he satisfies the longing soul and the hungry soul.

He fills with good things. So I'm, I'm grabbing hold of that promise. Um, and asking the Lord to fulfill it in me, to keep his promise to me, to satisfy me, to fill me with good things.

[29 : 22] Um, and these, these verses aren't all like necessarily prayers, but, um, another that I use is send out your light and your truth. Let them lead me.

Let them bring me to your holy hill and to your dwelling. That's from Psalm 43. Send out your light and your truth. I'm about to open the book. Here is light and truth.

Send it out. And let it lead me to you, right? To your dwelling place, your holy hill. Let the word lead me. Not, not just, don't let me stop here on the words on the page, but let it lead me into the presence of God.

That's what, that's what's going to satisfy. Right? It's a very special one here is that's where Yale got its motto from Psalm 43. All right. It's a very fast line and truth. That was their prayer.

Thank you. Excellent. Yeah. So anyway, I've done this with different verses that have, that have grabbed hold of me. Um, and that I thought I need to pray that regularly.

[30 : 24] And so I, I have done this. Um, you can do something like that again, three by five cards or whatever that helps you to remember. Um, um, yeah.

So that's just the beginning, right? That's, that's how we come. We come with prayer, asking for help because we need that help, right? We need it to focus. We need it to, to understand. We need it to be led into the presence of God by his word.

Okay. Reading now, the reading, um, so we're going to talk a little bit about, so I'm going to go through, uh, we're going to talk about some advantages and disadvantages to using a plan.

Then we're going to talk about a bunch of plans. Um, and then I'm going to talk about reading fast and reading slow. So that's where we're going for the rest of this. Um, so reading plans, reading plans have been very helpful for me.

I haven't always used one. Uh, and I don't, I don't always use one right now in my Bible reading. I'm not using a plan. So it's not like I do it all the time. Um, but it has been really helpful to kind of, then I just know what the next thing is.

[31 : 35] And I might, other times I might just choose a book of the Bible and say, okay, this is what I'm going to be reading, you know, until I'm done. Um, and just go through it at whatever pace the Lord leads me.

We're going to talk about pace in a little bit. Um, if you've never read the whole Bible all the way through, not necessarily Genesis to Revelation straight, but the whole Bible, uh, I think that's a great goal.

I would challenge you to do that. Um, it is accessible for most of us. Um, I think Whitney in his book, uh, spiritual disciplines of the Christian life says, and I haven't, I haven't verified this, but most, um, like, uh, recordings of the Bible.

It's about, it's something like 70 hours. So when you think about that, 70 hours in a year, how many hours do you actually have in a year?

Um, it's not really a lot of time. So, uh, so yeah, unless you have a real challenge with reading, which I totally get, um, I think it's a worthy goal.

[32 : 46] Uh, but I don't do it every year. And as I said, some years I've done it very fast. Some years I've done it more slowly. In some years I haven't actually done it at all. Um, so there, you know, there's no, um, there's no right way to do it.

Um, disadvantages to a plan. You know, there are going to be times when you don't have time on a given day. That's certainly going to be the case at some point.

You don't take the time or you're sick or you're traveling and it just doesn't work in or whatever. And then you feel yourself falling behind.

Um, as a homeschooler, uh, I often, uh, coached, uh, younger moms who are homeschooling. And they would say, but what I'm falling behind.

And I would say, behind who? It's not a race. It's not a race. And it's the same thing for your Bible reading. You're not racing anyone. You're not behind. Um, one of the disadvantages for a Bible plan, some Bible plans are dated and some are not.

[33 : 50] So some are designed to start January 1st and they, they tell you each day. So then you really feel it, right? If you start on January 1st and by the 10th, you're on the day eight reading, you know, you're, you're very aware of it and it, and it can stress you out.

Um, I'd encourage you to try to ignore that. But if that's a problem, find an undated one, um, with an undated one, you know, start whenever. And you can do that with a dated one too.

If you just ignore the dates, um, which I often do. Um, so, so plans can have that effect or they can get you reading, but not really paying attention because you have to do your reading today.

Um, again, I'll say that's not the worst thing in the world, right? You're going to read the whole Bible. You're going to do it again someday. You know, you're going to do it again. It's going to come by again.

And if you miss something, you miss something, but we're all going to miss something. Anytime we're, we're reading anything. So I have a daughter who reads the Bible straight through Genesis to Revelation.

[34 : 58] It works for her. That's what she does. I don't know if she keeps it strict to a year or anything. I think she just goes and goes back to Revelation, which hits the end of, goes back to Genesis when she hits the end of Revelation.

Works for her. Uh, for others, uh, it's really challenging when you get in. First, one challenging thing is you don't really get to the New Testament until, you know, pretty late in the year.

Um, and some of us want a little more New Testament in our, in our, uh, regular, regular reading. Um, uh, yeah, another disadvantage is, um, you can, it's not hard to get bogged down in, in areas which are just less accessible or less, you know, immediately interesting.

Um, and those areas will vary for different ones of us, right? My husband, um, really struggles with all the poetry. Um, whereas I am a word person and I love that part, right?

But I struggle with the laws, you know, so we have different, you know, we all have different places where we struggle. Or apocalyptic literature, you know, and you get into the prophets and there's these wild scenes and, and it just, you just kind of go, I have no idea what's going on here.

[36 : 16] Um, so, so, so those are pluses and minuses to that kind of plan, but there are a lot of different plans. Um, so some of them, uh, read from a number of different books at one time so that on any given day, you might be reading from four different places in scripture or three different places, or there's one plan out there that has you reading from 10 different places in scripture.

Um, and it takes you through, it, it's a fascinating plan because as you go, some, their books are repeated at different, um, at different paces.

Like, so, so some plans you're always going to read Genesis one and Matthew one on the same day. If you're following the plan, right? And then you'll read Genesis two and Matthew two, right?

And, and other plans will mix that up. So you might be reading Genesis one and Psalm one and Daniel four and acts 14 or so.

And that's the fun of that is the different kind of intersections you notice. And it's amazing. The Bible is amazing in the ways that all the different parts speak to one another.

[37 : 35] And you're not going to find that like every single day. You're not going to go, go, wow, this is just like that. But you are going to, you're going to see it. And, and it's a wonderful thing. Um, you can just read, you know, book by book as the Lord leads.

Um, I'm, I'm, that's kind of what I've been doing, uh, in recent months. Um, I started the Pentateuch, not as part of, I'm going to read the whole, whole Bible in a year, but just, this is what I'm going to do.

And I have a book, uh, that I came across that has been really helpful. It's a, it's a, basically a commentary or introduction to the Pentateuch. And it's been really, really helpful. So I read basically a chapter and I see what's in the, it's in the commentary and, um, it's not, it doesn't have like, it's not super lengthy, but, um, I found that really helpful.

And when I reached the end of the Pentateuch, which is coming up, I may do something different. I may just keep going, uh, in Joshua, but, um, but you can just choose some, sometimes I've just read, you know, I've read Ephesians and I thought, no, I need Matthew now.

And no, I need, you know, so, but you can also get a chart where you can just check off what you've read and it's not in order. You're just checking off and it'll lay out all the chapters, um, just as a way to keep track.

[38 : 55] And then to, and to, you know, you can look at it, you finish a book, you look at it and you go, well, I, gee, I haven't read any Old Testament in a while. I better do some of that or not.

I'd better, but that sounds like a good, a good idea. Um, so, I mean, I'm a person, who likes check boxes and, um, and I benefit from that.

And not everyone does. Like it's just, for some, it just becomes a chore, um, and a task to be completed. and the heart kind of, kind of goes out of it.

Um, I will say that the first time I read through the Bible in a year, um, I used a plan and it was a task. Um, it was, I don't know, sometimes it was definitely a chore.

I always said, no, certainly not all the time, uh, but sometimes it was a chore. Um, but what I found as I continued to do that, and, in fact, as I mentioned before, I picked up the pace.

[39 : 59] Um, I found it got easier and easier and easier and less of a chore, uh, less of a task to be done and more of a delight. And I would, I would just, you know, that, I didn't discover that until I was in my forties or fifties.

You know, I, I, I just thought, ah, this isn't for me. I can't do this. Um, which is, which is the temptation, right? You start doing something like that and you realize you, you fall behind, right?

And you just weighed down and you feel like you're just reading to check the box. And we don't want to do that, right? We don't want to do that. But sometimes just gutting through, that kind of discipline, disciplining ourselves and continuing to pray, ask the Lord to illuminate his word, ask the Lord to help you, ask the Lord to make it less of a chore, ask the Lord to reveal yourself.

These are prayers he loves to answer. Um, and as we continue to do that, we find, I found, uh, it got easier and easier and easier.

And I found that with particular books. Um, I think I mentioned last week, I, Ezekiel was the last book to actually conquer, which is what it felt like.

[41 : 12] It felt like this is a mountain. I'm going to conquer it. Um, and there was a lot I didn't understand, uh, that first time through, but the more I read it, the more I understood.

and the more I liked it and enjoyed it. And now it's like not on the bottom of the list at all. Like it's, it's right up there. And many of those books that I slogged through, you know, have gotten easier.

They've made much more sense and they've become much more friendly to me. Um, so your experience may vary, you know, mostly I'm really just sharing my experiences, but I, these were things I hadn't been told.

No one told me, you know, if you start and it's hard, it might just get better. And it might not be for another year that it gets better, like really better, but it really might.

And that's exciting. And it was just like such a thrill to me as I realized that the more I read, the more I was getting, the more I understood, the more I came to places and thought, Oh yeah, I remember this part.

[42 : 17] And, and understood a little more than I did the time before. So I have in your handout, I have some sample plans linked.

Um, I have some of those printed out just so you can look at them. I wouldn't, these are just printed on regular copy paper. Um, and I would personally, I print them out on a cardstock.

Uh, these are front and back. Many of them are designed to be printed like that. So you can then, then you have a booklet, um, and you go one, two, three, anyway. So I have some samples.

If you just want to look at a couple that I've really enjoyed, um, the navigators, uh, have put out, uh, three different kinds of, uh, Bible reading plans for a number of years.

And this is where I started. And, um, they have, uh, yeah, they have different, different approaches to each one. Um, so, you know, you're felt, you're free to look at these, um, after people have had a chance to look at them, you're free to take one with you.

[43 : 22] Um, but there's just one copy each. Um, some of them, um, some of them call for five days of reading in a week. So that's kind of nice because it gives you a little leeway.

Right? So, you know, and maybe your practice is not to, not to spend a lot of time in private Bible reading before church on a Sunday. Maybe, maybe that's your, you know, and I did that for a long time.

And, and this gives you that breathing space. Right? Um, so anyway, there's tons and tons and tons of different plans. And I mean, just Google Bible reading plans and you'll be overwhelmed.

So some of those, uh, some of those sites are there and you'll find people talking about which ones they like better. It's a whole, it's a whole world. Um, so let me just talk a little bit about pace.

Reading fast, reading slow, really reading slowly. Uh, many of us have a bent, uh, toward, toward a certain pace.

[44 : 24] Um, many of us, yeah, I think, I think often we might have a bent or we might feel like we should read at a certain pace. Or we just struggle to get, it passed, you know, you're in a verse and Kim Newgast was talking to me.

She's just like, there's all these rabbit trails and you could follow all these rabbit trails and you find cool things and it's exciting and it's fun. And, and that's great.

Right? Um, on the other hand, you're going to struggle with a plan for instance, or struggle with reading a certain amount in a year, things like that, which is not, it's not God's law that we follow that or we read a certain time.

Pace is not, you know, part of the picture, as far as I can see in scripture. Oh, plans. Um, so I did mention last week, there was a time in my life when I read through the Bible and I read through the entire Bible three times.

And that made, that meant six times through the New Testament and six times through Psalms, I think, because the plan did that. Some of the plans will repeat the New Testament, um, or the Psalms or other, or the Psalms or other, other books.

[45 : 40] Um, so that was a lot of reading every day. I read morning, I read evening, so I didn't do it all at once. Um, and what I found, and it's not for everyone.

I'm not, you know, I, but it was great. It was so good for me because first I had to decide no rabbit trails.

None of that, right? I had to decide. I get something I don't understand. You know what? I'm just going on by.

Doesn't mean I can't stop and think about it at all and see if I can make sense of it. But basically, I just read. It's kind of like what Tom was saying about his experience listening to scripture.

He's not analyzing. He's not dissecting it. He's not. And reading that way, um, I found really, really profitable. For one thing, it gets you through the hard books, whatever they are for you.

[46 : 39] Um, the books you tend to get bogged down in. It gets you through those much more quickly. If you're, you're reading them faster and you're reading, you know, you're, you get them through before you know it.

You know, it's the end of Leviticus and it's only been four days, you know. Um, and that kind of pace, it seems like, well, you're not getting anything out of it. But what I found is I got a much broader sense of, of the scope of scripture.

And as plans I was following, the plan I followed, uh, I think it was the book at a time one that Navigators does, um, you know, had me reading from different places. And you see those intersections more.

Um, and just the quantity I was reading, the hard books got easier. They just got easier because I was more familiar with them.

I knew where Ezekiel was going. I knew, you know, I had a sense of familiarity and, you know, when you approach something that's familiar, you're better able to get a, get a handle on it, right?

[47 : 47] To get a hold of it, to have it make sense. And every time, even if you're not, you're not reading a commentary, you're not, you may not, you know, be reading the notes in your study Bible, you may not be using a study Bible, or you may, you know, whatever, you're going to learn.

You're going to learn. And again, it's, you know, I'm not going to say like everyone must do this. Um, but it was just so profitable for me. And again, I don't do it all the time now.

Um, but I did it, you know, for several years, I read the whole Bible plus some repeated stuff several times a year. I think only did it three times once, but, um, and the, and the, and I used a plan, but I just, you know, I just did two days at a time or something.

I forget how I, how exactly I did it, but I just, um, yeah, to do it twice, you just do two days every day. Um, so, so I just want to throw that out as an option that people often say, no, you should slow down when you're reading the Bible.

And, and I'm not going to say you shouldn't like, that's the next thing reading slowly, but, but people don't usually say, oh, just speed up, just read it, get a handle on it.

[49 : 02] Right. Uh, I know that in the academic world, I know people often will skim through a whole book before they go back and start at the beginning.

Right. They'll get through, get a sense of where it's going, read the table of contents, get a feel for the whole flow. If you're really reading a book that you want to retain, that's a great thing to do.

Well, it's great for the Bible to, um, to, to just whip through it, honestly. And again, you have to be okay with, I don't get that. Okay.

Moving on. You have to, you have to train yourself, especially if you're, you're prone to following all those rabbit trails. Um, and you have to be okay with, wow.

I just like ran my eyes over the pages and I didn't get anything. Like I just, I just learned to be okay with that. It's just like listening to be okay with mind wandering or dozing off.

[49 : 58] It's for a season and it's not the only thing you're doing. Right. And it's not for always. You don't always want to read the scripture, just running our eyes over the words. And I'm not, that's not what I'm encouraging here.

I'm encouraging actually reading it, but, but there are going to be days when that's what you do. That's certainly days when that's what I do, um, or have done. And I just said to myself, okay, tomorrow I'll try to pay better attention.

And, you know, the next time through, I may have been really paying attention. And when I was doing it more than once a year, that was, it was six months later, I was reading the same thing and, uh, it was a better day, you know, and I was reading it.

Um, so it's a little radical, I think, but, uh, but I found it really helpful. So I just want to put that out there. Uh, many of us know how to, uh, read more slowly, uh, for quality I have there.

I think there's quality also in the, quantity approach of reading fast, as I, I think I've made clear. Um, but there's a certainly a time for that. There's a time for really slowing down and seeking what the Lord would have for me today.

[51 : 08] And this verse, you know, it might be just verse by verse. Um, there's a time for reading, like I'm reading right now with this commentary, uh, through pen, the Pentateuch.

It's really helpful, you know, so I'll read a chapter. I'll look and see what it has to say. I'll think about that. Um, I'll do other things as we'll get to in other classes. I write stuff down as another, uh, really helpful thing, especially if I'm reading slowly.

Um, I write a lot down that the Lord shows me. Um, I'll copy out verses that really strike me. Um, so I have a, I always, uh, have a journal there, uh, right there.

Um, you can do as, uh, as Kim was talking about, follow those rabbit trails and see where the Lord leads and see where the scriptures lead. Um, yeah.

And then the, the last thing I put there as different, um, but similar is studying. And I think studying is, you know, for me, that's, it's more methodical, um, than just following a rabbit trail or just reading the footnotes or even what I'm doing in the Pentateuch where I'm just, you know, every few days I open the commentary and read through and see what, you know, um, but I'm not really, uh, kind of studying, but not really studying.

[52 : 27] Um, so there's study and I'm not going to talk about study. That's a whole, that's a whole thing. Right. Um, and there are, there are a lot of, um, there are a lot of resources out there.

I, I don't think I put them on the handout. I think I meant to, I meant to come up with someone for the handout and I did not, but we have a book in the book stall called, um, women of the word.

It's addressed to women, obviously written by a woman, Jen Wilkin, but she is a, she knows her stuff and men. You can do it too.

It's not, I think it's addressed to women because marketing, I really think that's it. Um, there's nothing in that book that I noticed that doesn't address men and isn't just a really good, way to approach the scripture in study.

Um, so that's called women of the word. And there are, there are many other resources. And if you, you know, really trying to try and hard to find something, I'd be glad to talk to you about it, but I'm not really an expert in that, in that kind of thing.

[53 : 34] Um, because I'm really more of a reader. I'm going to study when I need to, but I, I'm more of a just reader. Um, does anyone have questions or anything we have?

Yeah, we have time, plenty of time. I will be coming around with a microphone. This is what this is. So you can be heard for those who are listening online. Ralph.

Do you have tips for particular books of the Bible? In other words, you mentioned, uh, Ezekiel. How about Zach, uh, Jeremiah?

How do you get through Jeremiah? Oh, gosh. Uh, so, um, okay. So here's a book that I would recommend. Okay.

I'm actually reading it right now for a class, but it's called 40 questions. On. Interpreting the Bible. Pretty sure that's what's called.

[54 : 38] The author is Rob Plummer. He's a wonderful professor at, uh, Southern seminary. And I had him for, I had him for Greek.

So I, you know, I got, I was able to get acquainted with him. He's a great guy. Anyway, it's, it's this, it's, it's set up in questions. There's a whole series of 40 questions books, but this is Rob Plummer on interpreting the Bible.

And it, it addresses, it addresses some of the big questions that are, then it addresses genre by genre. So how do we approach prophecy? Um, and it gives some guidelines and it helps you see how, what, what were the prophets about?

What were they trying to do? How do we read them? Well, and I think we, I think we all recognize, like, we don't read revelation exactly the same way we read Matthew, right?

They're not the same thing. Matthew is a narrative. It's telling a story sort of front to back. It's sort of, you know, and as a particular focus, obviously on the life, uh, of Jesus and his death and resurrection, revelation is a whole different genre, right?

[55 : 47] And it's filled with apocalyptic literature, which is that sort of crazy imagery that we get in many of the prophets, old Testament and also revelation.

And so how do we read that? So that book, um, touches on each of those, um, each of those genres. So that would be an overview book.

The other book I just read for my class, again, it's a class in interpreting the Bible, um, is by, his last name is Gentry, but I'm missing his first.

Um, Paul, uh, Gentry. Um, and it's called how to read and understand, um, the prophets. So that would, that gives you even more.

And what he does in that book is he, he actually takes chunks of, you know, some prophecy and walks through it. And what he helps you do is then relate it, read it as a Christian, which is to say, most of these prophecies have been fulfilled or have been fulfilled and are being fulfilled in Christ.

[57 : 00] So we read it with that in mind. So that's just sort of a general kind of, how do we read, uh, something like Jeremiah? Um, yeah.

Uh, I haven't, I personally absolutely love the prophets. So, so, um, I delight to get through Jeremiah and I'm sorry when it's over, but, um, but I'm just nerdy that way.

Uh, um, yeah. So, so it's a good question in that we don't read all the different parts the same, right? Reading a Psalm, you know, you're reading different literature from Leviticus, right?

Matt. Um, uh, uh, I often think of some of the prophets like the editorial page of the newspaper, as opposed to, you know, the historical books, like being the news section.

Yeah. And if you were to approach, um, an editorial page with no idea what the current news is, uh, it might be pretty, uh, meaningless.

[58 : 07] Yeah. So, um, uh, I always found it helpful to, to know what the history was that, uh, yeah, absolutely. However, um, now that I think of it, I don't think of a good resource for that other than, you know, just a commentary, but, uh, well, the other resource is the Bible.

I mean, that's the, and this is part of what I found as I read a lot of scripture is I found, I knew the history or I knew enough that I knew, Oh wait, what was going on then?

And I could go back and find it because I knew sort of where it was because I'd read and read and read. So, um, so yeah. And there are resources for that kind of thing. Um, there are, there are books that will give you sort of a basic timeline and then you can figure out, you know, who's this prophet talking to?

And these are, you do need to do this. If you're going to really understand what's going on, you need to look at who this prophet was talking to and what time and what was going on. And my professor just said, you know, recently in lecture, uh, um, what did he say?

I'm sorry. I just blanked on it. Um, yeah. Anyway, so you read it where that profit is and, Oh, this is it that the profits are, he called them like the enforcers.

[59 : 36] They're enforcing. The law. That is mostly it from the book of Deuteronomy, there are promises, there are curses. And then the prophets take those promises and curses and say, this is the, this is what you were told to do.

Do it. You know, and this is why these bad things are happening to you. And judgment is coming because you're not doing what Moses taught in, in the law, in the books of the law in, and in particular in Deuteronomy, which sort of summarizes, um, much of what is in the other books, um, without not so much the history, but, um, so if you think of them that way, you know, they're, they're trying to recall to Israel's mind, what they're supposed to be doing and show them that they're not doing it for the most part.

And then they're giving promises. They're giving promises like this is what happens. If you obey the Lord, these glorious things are going to happen. And some of those promises are, you guys are just messing up, but God is going to save you anyway.

And that's the gospel, right? That's the gospel. Um, yeah. So those are just kind of like some overall things. Um, but yeah, it's, I mean, it's a great question and you don't have time to, uh, go into all the different genres and stuff like that.

That's a, that's another, another topic, but, um, but yeah. And there are ways to approach like all that stuff that's hard for you. Um, you know, even the laws, even Leviticus or numbers.

[61 : 16] Yeah. Any other questions or comments? Thanks.

Thanks. Thanks, Iver. Yeah. Callie. I had a Bible reading plan that was chronological one time, and I've gone through it a couple of times, but it breaks up the history with the prophecy.

And that's super helpful because you get the Bible's history and then you get to go see the prophets about it. And I found that, and even the Psalms, it would sprinkle the Psalms into David's life when the, and Moses, like the Psalm of Moses, that was really helpful for getting to the old Testament.

That's, that was a really good plan. And the ESV study Bible has great notes. And so if you want to get through something in a reasonable amount of time, you can on the same page, get a lot of that history just to help you. Okay. Reorient time.

So those two things helped me a lot when I was trying to get through the old Testament and understand what I was going through. Yeah. And not get bogged down for five years in it too, but to actually make some progress. Right. So. Yeah.

[62 : 16] And you can, I mean, you can get a Bible that's set up. There's a one year chronological Bible and it's set up, as Callie was saying, in chronological order.

And then you, all you, you don't even have to like keep bookmarks in different parts of your Bible. You can just read through, you know, just open in the next page and read what's in front of you. So that's a, that's a, yeah.

Yeah. For Paul's letters, it's great too. It's an accent with Paul's letters. That's a really fun way to read those things. Yeah. Yeah. Yep. Yeah. I'm telling you, there are all kinds of plans.

They will do all kinds of things for you. And some of them, I mean, you can, you know, I mentioned there's listening plans on, on the dwell app. You know, some of them are just like, you know, read through the Psalms in three months or something like that.

So they're not necessarily one year plans or, or things like that. They're just different, different things, different ways to read through or listen through.

[63 : 19] Um, and you can find them. I'm telling you, I did it. I Googled reading plans and it was just like, wow, there's a lot out here. For briefly, I, I, I had a web, I had a website for homeschooling and I had, but I also had a Bible reading thing and I kept track of some plans, but I think they've really just exploded.

The internet is just like, yeah. And many, many churches have them. One of the most famous ones is the, uh, one by, um, McShane. And his is often used and adapted.

Um, and it's a good one too. There's a booklet in the back of the sanctuary. I meant to grab it before this class, but there's a booklet back there, um, that has the McShane plan through it, you know, so you can go through.

And that's reading from, I think two different places in scripture. I forget. No, four. It's four. Um, and the way this guy was a 19th century guy.

Um, the way he imagined it was two for private reading and two for family reading. Um, so that you did it that way. There's also, there's also, I think I wrote down on the handout for the love of God.

[64 : 34] There are two volumes of this book and it's by D.A. Carson and it gives you the plan and it's the McShane plan. Um, um, and then he does a little devotional on one of the parts you read.

Um, and there are two volumes because one volume he does the private reading columns and one he does the family reading columns.

So anyway, he's, he's super smart and, and, and they're really, they're really nice devotionals. Just a page. Debbie. We're going through that, those books right now. And, um, it, I would call it more commentary than devotional.

Okay. Yeah. Yeah. It's good. Yeah. But yes, it's good. Yeah. Yeah. And that's available online too. Yeah. You can just go online. Um, and they'll give you, it gives you the, the readings and here's the, here's the Carson for the day.

So you don't even have to spend any money. Josh. A plan I really like that I just want to shameless plug here is, um, um, it's called daily light on the daily path.

[65 : 39] And it was also written by someone from the 19th century. I don't remember. There's a Mueller in there, but I don't think it was George. Um, anyway, it's, uh, like seven or eight verses that are all on one topic, but it doesn't tell you what it is.

And so, but you, but usually the, the first verse and the last verse are like the key. And so what I found was if I wasn't like, first of all, you have to flip around to find them.

They're all over. Yeah. Um, but usually they're about Jesus or the gospel or some central thing. And I ended up writing them out physically because I just wasn't seeing the connection until I did.

And then it was amazing. It's, it's time consuming. Yeah. But it, but it, I was like, um, and I, I certainly couldn't do it every day, but, um, oh man, that was so good.

Daily light on the daily path. That's on the ESV app. Cool. And some other thing there, there's a really handy printout that you can fold and it fits in your Bible and they're tiny little font, the check boxes, but yes, yes, tiny little font.

[66 : 44] You get a magnifying glass. It's, it's, it's all good. Same. Yeah. And large. I used to be able to read these, but I, I mean, I'm sure I printed them out, but boy, they're small now.

I don't know what happened. Good. All right. So as you can tell, I like talking about this stuff. So you're, you know, you're always free to come up and talk to me.

Um, so let's close in prayer. Um, thanks for your attention. I really appreciate it. Father, we, we just thank you for the gift of your word, Lord, that you have chosen to communicate to us that you have given us this book, Lord, that you have given us your spirit to help us, as we read this book, that you have placed us in a time of history where there is so much help out there.

There are so many resources. Lord, we pray that you would unite our hearts to fear your name. Lord, even in the, as we think about all the different ways to approach your word, Lord, that you would lead us to the way for this season in our lives that makes the most sense.

Lord, that you would use in our lives, because there are so many different ways we can go about it. And we don't always choose wisely. Lord, we pray for your guidance in that, or we pray most of all for hearts that long to know you better and to love you more, and that you would send out your light and your truth and use them to draw us to yourself.

[68 : 20] In Jesus' name we pray. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Next week, meditating on scripture and a little memorizing.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.