

## Digesting Your Spiritual Food: A Few Principles



### The Most Important Thing: Read Your Bible Regularly

Here at Chester ARP we encourage the use of daily devotional guides and regular Scripture reading. You eat regularly. Take in spiritual food regularly. We associate meals with specific times and places. Likewise, we should be careful to designate specific times and places for Bible study. If we fail to do this, we will never find time for God's Word. Make time with the same sense of discipline and urgency that you use to feed your body, earn a living, finish school assignments or accomplish anything else that may be essential to your lives.

Growing In Christ,  
Witnessing to the World

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### Second: Read Systematically

Refuse the urge to simply use a here-a-little-there-a-little, fall-open, finger-pointing, or other random reading strategy. Instead read by book, topic, or character. Examples include:

- By book (John, Judges, Genesis, etc.)
- By topic (faith, hope, love, etc.)
- By character (Jesus, Moses, Paul, etc.)

A systematic approach will enable you to remain focused and give you a structure through which you can much more easily comprehend the full-meaning of Scripture.

### Third: Read Consecutively

Read the parts of the Bible in order: Books from front to back and chapters from beginning to end. Progressively read to complete, in due time, the whole Bible, exposing yourself to all of God's message. Whatever, your method of regular study may be, include consecutive reading in your devotional time. This will enable you to gain a much greater understanding of God's redemptive history and plan for his creation.

### Fourth: Read All the Bible

No matter how long it takes, read it! Then read it again and again. Begin your Bible Study with the parts that tell the narrative history of God's redemptive work.

- In the Old Testament read: Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah.
- In the New Testament read: Matthew (or Mark or Luke) and then Acts.

With 14-16 books you have the whole story. Then, systematically study the rest of the books, placing them in their proper place within biblical history to give you an understanding of their context. The Old Testament is important! You can't understand the New Testament without the Old. They combine to tell the whole story. Read the hard and "boring" parts. You will be surprised at how the most obscure parts can become vital to your comprehension and bless you later. Expect these "hidden" treasures.

### Fifth: Read in Context with Tools

Attempt to figure out what the Bible meant to the original readers. It means the same now! Let the Bible explain itself. Parallel passages, related texts or other information found elsewhere in Scripture will likely shed light on what you are studying at the moment. The more you know your Bible, the easier this becomes. Use a variety of translations and/or paraphrases to assist you in your study. Use a concordance to trace the use of words or concepts throughout Scripture. Use the work of reputable scholars in solid, reformed commentaries.

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