

Steps to Help You Read Your Bible

Go Forth and Read...

When you begin to read or study a passage (or story) in the Bible, keep these steps in mind.

- 1. Translation:** Compare translations. Note the different English words, phrases, and punctuation.
Compare a few translations and note the differences in the passage you're reading in the Bible.
Get out a paper and write down the differences or circle them in your Bible.
- 2. Historical Background:** What is the historical background, social setting (culture), geography, and date of the biblical book you are reading.
This takes a little bit of work; but nothing a Study Bible or the internet can't solve.
Context: Look to understand who wrote, when and where the book was written, and what was going on when the author was writing (culture and customs).
- 3. Literary Context:** How does the passage fit in the larger scope of the book. How does it fit in the book it is found in?
What comes before what you are reading? What comes after it? Why is it placed where it is?
Context: Understanding the circumstances that are surrounding
- 4. Genre:** Identify the genre and type of literature of the passage.
What are you reading? Is it a Letter? Poetry? History? Prophecy? Wisdom Literature?
This is huge! So, important! You have to know what you are reading if you are going to understand it properly.
- 5. Vocabulary:** Define and explain the meaning of any words you may not understand in the passage.
Get your dictionary out!
- 6. Biblical Context:** How does the passage relate to the rest of the Bible? Does this passage remind you of another story in the Bible? How does that help you with your understanding of the passage?
Context: Understanding this book/passage relates to the rest of the Bible
- 7. Secondary Literature:** Investigate what others have said. Compare and adjust your view if necessary.
- 8. Application:** What does the passage mean for us today? What life issues are raised?