

Planning Your Daily 20

Time: Are you a morning person, evening person, or mealtime person?

Place: What place is most conducive to quiet for you?

Environment: What physical item helps queue your spiritual readiness?

Text: It's a big Bible with lots of books, so what will you read?

The Gospels and Psalms are the best places to start as they dive directly into the person and heart of God.

77 Days

- *Gospel Survey: Luke-Matthew-John @1Chapter per Day*
- *Gospel Slow Read: Mark @1Story per Day*
- *Worship Walk Through: 1 Teaching from Jesus in John + 1 Psalm per Day (You won't get through either book but you will learn to walk in worship)*

The rest of the New Testament is all great for a second stop, and you'll find your most direct life applications there.

77 Days

- *Church & Letters Survey: Acts, Galatians-Philemon, James, 1 John @1 Chapter per Day*
- *Everyday Life Slow Read: 1&2 Corinthians, James @½Chapter per Day*
- *Theology Deep Read: Romans @1 Chapter per Day and Repeat 4 x*

Go back to Genesis after that, or anything else in the first half of the Old Testament to back fill the story. There are four other Poetic Books (Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs) that are fun to sprinkle in along the way.

77 Days

- *Forefathers Survey: Genesis-Exodus 20, Job 1-3,38-42*
- *Kings & Kingdom Survey: 1 Samuel-1 Kings @1 Chapter per Day*

The Prophetic Books (Isaiah through Malachi) and Revelation are the most challenging to read, and it will help to bring a study Bible with you.

77 Days

- *Prophets Survey: Hosea-Malachi @1Chapter per Day or Isaiah-Joel @3Chapters per Day*
- *End Times Slow Read: Daniel + Revelation @½Chapter per Day*

Practicing Scripture in Your Daily 20

Start by settling into your spot and taking 3-5 deep breaths. Start with a posture of gratitude for this time and space. Ask God to meet you in His Word by revealing something to you. Take an extended moment to acknowledge God's presence and present your longing to meet with him.

Read Scripture

Study with your Head

1. What did it mean to them *then*?
2. What does it mean to us now?

Reflect with Your Heart

1. How am I meeting the *presence* of God in this scripture?
2. What line gives me *pause* to take out into my everyday life?

Bring it back to your conversation with God over any invitation he made to you through His Word or any application you've pulled out. Conclude your prayer with any other conversation. Continue with prayer over any invitation God gave you in the scripture, or any application you are taking out of the scripture. Add to your prayers any other conversation you've been wanting to have or anything you've been needing to ask for.

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Sample Text: Ephesians 3.7-13

7 I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. 8 Although I am less than the least of all the Lord's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the boundless riches of Christ, 9 and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. 10 His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, 11 according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. 12 In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence. 13 I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory.

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Understanding What Genre You're Reading in Scripture

It makes a difference what kind of literature you are reading. You wouldn't read *Romeo & Juliet* the same way you read *National Geographic*, or a Presidential address the same way you hear a love song, or listen to Anne Frank the same way you do with Harry Potter, so don't read all the books in the Bible the same way. There are at least five major literary genres in Scripture to be aware of.

Story. *Read it like History or News.*

Just because it did happen doesn't mean that it truly should have happened. In that sense, you read story genre in scripture like you would news or history. We don't know if God thought the events to be good/bad/indifferent unless God's voice inserts itself into the scene to say it's good/bad/indifferent.

Poetry. *Read it like Lyrics, Romance, or an Emotional Interview.*

Images, longings, and frustrations meet inflated words like "always" and "never" in the poetic literature of the Bible. It's figurative language, and it communicates a figurative truth from the heart. Try to hold figurative truth to the same standards of literal truth, and you'll make a mess of poetic literature.

Letters. *Read it as a Mentor's Wisdom.*

Usually, these are letters from a pastor back to a church they planted. They get delivered with very pointed practical wisdom, but also very particular to the predicament the audience was in. Familiarizing yourself with the audience and predicament will help you extract the principle from these mentors to be applied as truth for today.

Prophetic. *Read it like Warnings on an Instruction Manual.*

No one reads the warning labels until something has gone wrong, however, in long seasons of prophetic literature things were going very wrong. These books are painfully repetitive with almost every chapter delivering a warning to the effect, "Stop sinning, or else." In that sense prophetic books are not fortune tellers, they are future commentators - what happens later if you keep doing this now.

What makes the prophets even harder to read is that you aren't always given the setting in which these words were delivered. It's like hearing a randomly recorded phone conversation, all audio with no screenplay. Just keep cruising during these readings to gather the big picture more than getting caught in any one prophecy.

Apocalypse. *Read it as Social Commentary, with Future Reality, in Cinematic Flare.*

Symbolic language and futurist content are chiefly responsible for difficulties in reading Revelation and the second half of Daniel. Some images are constant; others morph (lion is the lamb). Some images clearly refer to a specific thing, others to a general concept (7 lamp stands = 7 churches, yet the four horses do not express a specific form of conquest, war, famine, or death). Some timelines double back (or triple back!) and repeat themselves).

The real problem we have in reading apocalyptic literature is that we have nothing like it to compare it to today. It was not a strange unfamiliar genre to the original recipients, so they got the point much more readily. You can simplify your appreciation for any line by remembering your book ends: It starts with perseverance required for today and it ends with Jesus reigning on his throne forever.