

Reading the Bible with the Holy Spirit

Let's imagine you are on a trip. You aren't sure which way to go to get to where you want to. You've never been here before, but you think you need to turn right on this street. And then maybe a left would be good... Pretty soon, you find yourself lost. You have no idea where you are at or how to get to where you want to from here. Then you remember: you have a map.

So, you take it out and open it up. But you're not at all sure which end of the map is the direction you are facing, or where you are at, or where to go from where you are at on the map to get to where you want to go.



Last time, we talked about how the Bible is like a map for us in our life. But just like a map can only help us if we know how to use it, the Bible doesn't help us so much if we aren't sure how to read it. There is some good news though. Even though the Bible might feel like it is just a map because it is words on a page, the reality is that the Bible can be like a GPS system. We aren't alone. We have the Holy Spirit with us when we read the Bible. The Holy Spirit promises that He will guide us into all Truth.

John 16:13 - "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come."

This is the same Holy Spirit who led and inspired the writers of the Bible to write down the Word of God. That means the author of the Bible is with you, eagerly waiting to show you the truth in the Bible. The Holy Spirit works with the Word of God just like the voice on your GPS works with the map to lead you into truth. Whenever we open the Bible to read, we have the option to tap into this Heavenly GPS voice to guide us into truth. We just have to ask Him to lead and guide us and to help us understand what we are reading.

- **Before you open your Bible and read, it is a really good idea to first pray and ask God to guide you. Remember, He is the author of the Bible, and we are asking the author of the Bible to guide us. When we pray, we can ask Him to speak to us through His Word and help us to understand.**

1 John 2:27 - "But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him."

Reflection Question:

How does the Spirit of God teach us?

- Through His voice speaking to us
- Through others in the church
- Through the Bible
- All of the above

Remember, the Bible is like a road map for us and the Holy Spirit is like the Heavenly GPS system, giving us wisdom to know where to go as we read the map. As we read the Bible, we want to prayerfully ask God to help us understand. That is the first key to really understanding the Bible.

When we look at a map, we must look at it carefully, and not quickly, if we want it to help us. The same with the Bible. It helps us to read the Bible out loud, slowly, and prayerfully.

Reading the Bible out is kind of like how like the GPS system will say directions out loud for us to hear. When we slowly read the word of God out loud we can hear as well as see the words on the page. This helps us to think about what it means more deeply. Hearing the Bible can also help us be stirred in our faith.

Romans 10:17 “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”

We are not alone when we are speaking these words out. The Holy Spirit is right there with us as we read the Word, ready and available to speak to us and help us understand.

Reading the Bible is meant by our loving Heavenly Father to guide us into deeper connection, communion and communication with Him. It isn't intended to be something we do alone. As we read the Bible, we can ask the Holy Spirit what certain parts mean and expect that He will answer. Holy Spirit may do this by opening up our understanding or by speaking clearly to us through His still small voice, impressions, pictures, or calling to our memory other things we have heard or read from the Bible. This slow conversation with the Lord about the Bible is a part of meditating on the Word of God. In the Bible meditation is not an emptying of our minds, but a filling of our minds. When we meditate on the Bible, we fill our minds with the truths of the Bible. pausing often to allow time for the Holy Spirit to speak to us.

Blessed is the man
Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,
Nor stands in the path of sinners,
Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;
But his delight is in the law [the Word] of the LORD,
And in His law he meditates day and night.

- Psalm 1:1-2

“This Book of the Law [The Bible] shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.” – Joshua 1:8

“Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer.” (Psalm 19:14 NKJV)

Notice that in this verse, we are told we should not let the Bible leave our mouths, but we should meditate on it day and night. This means the ideas of speaking the Bible and meditating on it are closely connected. This shows that the Biblical understanding of meditation is not just thinking of something, but it leads to conversation with God and others about the word of God. The first person we should be talking to about the Bible is the person of the Holy Spirit. As we read the Bible, we can be talking with Him about it.

It is also a great practice to pray the Word of God back to Him. There are two main ways in which we can pray the Word of God and both of them have to do with our response to the truths in the Bible. Generally, there are two kinds of truths that we should be looking for in the Bible as we read: truths we should believe and truths we should obey.

Truths that we should believe. As we find these truths in the Bible, we should first thank the Lord for that truth, ask for him to show us more and ask for His help to believe it. For example,

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! – John 3:1a

If we are praying this truth we could say something like, “Thank you God that you love me and you call me your child. Show me more of this truth. Help me to believe it.”

Truths that we should obey. As we find these truths in the Bible, we should first commit to obey it, then ask Him to give us wisdom, grace and empowerment to walk it out.

“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind.” – Luke 10:27

If we are praying this scripture we could say something like, “Father, I set my heart to love you with all that I am. Help me to love you with all of my time, my strength, my soul and my mind.”

As we take the time to pray the Word of God back to the Father, it can make the word of God come alive for us.

Remember, the Holy Spirit is there with us as our teacher, eagerly awaiting to show us more of Himself and of the Father. The Holy Spirit is our ever-present help and guide, ready to lead us into all truth. Reading the Bible with the Holy Spirit slowly and prayerfully is one of the first secrets to unlocking your understanding of the Bible. From here, there are some more practical tips to help us get the most out of our time in the Bible. We will look at some of those next time.

Reflect

How can you better understand the Word of God?

- a) Know that God is with us when we read the Bible.
- b) Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to help us understand the Bible.
- c) Believe that the Bible is a road map for our lives that God wants to use to talk to us.
- d) Think deeply about what the Bible means.
- e) Meditate on the Bible.
- f) Read the Bible aloud.
- g) Talk about the Bible.
- h) Pray the Bible back to God.