



A Spiritual Encouragement Message December 4, 2020

How Can I Stay on Top of My Reading Plan?

By Derrick Victor

Well, folks, it's day four in our 90-day reading plan. Over the years I've learned, especially in vigorous plans like a 90-day reading plan, that days 4-6 are usually where people call it quits. Why? Well, because we get busy and miss some of our reading on one or more days. And, after all, when you're reading the Bible in 90 days, one day is 17-18 chapters. Who can make up that kind of time? Usually, when we get behind, we get overwhelmed and see the whole project as a burden. So, I've decided to give you some advice that I have learned from many attempted Bible reading plans. Some of them I succeeded in, and some I failed to accomplish. Here are my lessons:

1. **If you get behind, don't feel compelled to "catch up"**. Remember, you're not doing this to cram as much information into your brain as possible in the least amount of time. You're doing this to **"take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability" (2 Pet. 3:17)**, as well as **"grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 3:18)**. Therefore, don't allow yourself to become overwhelmed with "catching up" because the next step is often giving up. If you read half of your 90-day challenge, at least you didn't quit and read only the first couple of days. You're still coming out ahead. So, if you get behind, simply start back up on the day that you're supposed to be on. **Don't quit.**
2. **Get an audio version of the Bible.** I know, I know, some people might think this is cheating. However, the goal is not specific to literacy, but gaining in **"knowledge and being able to instruct others" (Rom. 15:14)**. So, it does not matter if you read seventeen chapters or listen to seventeen chapters. What matters is that you retained the information. The average reader can read the average Bible chapter in four to six minutes. So, seventeen chapters by six minutes is 102 minutes (or, 1 hour and 42 minutes). Sometimes, we cannot sit down for that long to read. Some days just do not warrant that. Yet, with an audio Bible, I can listen to my reading plan while doing the dishes, showering, driving, exercising, etc. We all have tasks to fulfill in our daily lives that are

monotonous, which means an audio Bible fits the bill for our schedule. You can get these on Amazon, Audible, Logos, and many other platforms for under \$15. If you are unable to squeeze that financially at the moment, message one of the leaders of the church (elders, deacons, and preachers) and we will help you out.

3. **Finally, don't bog yourself down with details or questions concerning the text.** If you're like me, you may be reading a text and have a question about something in your plan. Then, you jump to research mode and spend your time researching your curiosity as opposed to finishing the plan. Avoid these rabbit holes. The great thing about the Bible is that you won't understand it immediately after one pass through or even twenty, you will understand it *more* after each single pass through. Sometimes the questions you have will answer themselves later. Or, later questions will be answered by earlier information. For example, if you've ever wondered about **Exodus 4** and why Moses was about to be killed by God for not being circumcised, you might recall your previous reading in **Genesis 17** which speaks of the Covenant of circumcision that God had made with Abraham and "all" his offspring. Moses, being his offspring and knowing the details of his heritage (the evidence that he knew is found in **Ex. 4:25** which tells us Zipporah, the wife of Moses, knew this information enough to save his life), should have been circumcised but did not do so for lack of desire. He was rebelling against God. God sought to punish him for ignoring a command that he knew, not for ignorance. So, just keep reading. Don't allow your curiosity to stop you from meeting your goal. I am always amazed at how many of my questions are answered even without searching intentionally. The Bible is filled with repeat messages, laws, and examples. Be patient and wait for the answers. You won't regret it!

Ultimately, I am praying for your success in our 90-day reading plan. Know that many of us are reading alongside you. Know that we all have the same goals to grow in the faith and better understand the scriptures. I hope these tips help you reach those goals and finish your plan. **"let your 'yes', be yes, and your 'no' be no"**. God bless!