

# Different Approaches

There are **three different approaches** you can choose in your daily Bible study: **systematic, topical, and devotional.**

### *Reading Systematically*

One way to approach the Bible is to read all the way through it from beginning to end. This is the approach you should probably take if you are new to the Bible or if you've never read the whole way through the Bible before. It's necessary to have the big picture in mind when reading individual books or specific passages from the Bible.

The key is breaking up the Bible into manageable portions. There are many different plans you can use to read through the Bible in a year.

Skip Heitzig in his book, *How to Study the Bible and Enjoy It*, suggests a different kind of seven-day reading plan:

**SUNDAY:** Read the passage of Scripture your preacher preaches from. Do this either before or after church to reinforce the message.

**MONDAY:** Read from the legal books (Genesis to Deuteronomy).

**TUESDAY:** Read from the historical books (Joshua to Esther).

**WEDNESDAY:** Read from the poetic books (Job to the Song of Solomon).

**THURSDAY:** Read from the prophetic books (Isaiah to Malachi).

**FRIDAY:** Read from the Gospels (Matthew to John).

**SATURDAY:** Read from the rest of the New Testament (Acts to Revelation).

When you stop each day, either place a marker where you stop or write it down in your journal or notebook and resume your reading of that section on the same day the next week.

### *Reading Topically*

Another good approach to Bible study is to select one idea or topic and study everything the Bible has to say about it. If you are discussing the subject of baptism with someone, you can pull out your concordance and find all the verses in the Bible that speak about baptism. You are then able

## TRUTH THAT TRANSFORMS

---

to compare many different passages on the subject of baptism and come to a clearer understanding.

There are dangers with topical studies. One danger is there is always a temptation to proof-text with this kind of study. Proof-texting is when a passage is taken out of context to prove a point. This is not done always intentionally either. When we examine individual verses instead of entire passages as a whole, the context is often lost.

Another danger is to become imbalanced in our studies. If all of our study is focused on baptism or the other conditions of salvation, we may lose sight of God's grace.

### *Reading Devotionally*

*“Devotional Bible study is the process of reflecting on a few verses or a passage of Scripture and making a personal application.”* (Heitzig) Devotional reading seeks to understand an individual book or passage. Devotional reading does not bypass the information, but its main focus is application.

Devotional reading can almost be compared to taking a sightseeing trip in a car. Sometimes we just ride through the countryside observing the beautiful scenery that flies by. But after we've seen everything from inside a car window, we then want to go back and look at some things up close. We get out of the car and soak in all of the beauty of God's creation.