

Tips for Reading & Reflecting

1. Give time for reflection.

Simply lingering a little longer than it takes to read, taking time to reflect can lead to clearer understanding and deeper application.

Don't forget that we are looking for what the passage meant. When we ask the question, "What does this verse mean?" we are asking what did it mean when it was written. What did God want us all to know about Him when this was written? What God meant then is still what the verse means now because God is the same God now as he was when the Bible was written. Often with a little reflection, we will understand and hear what God is saying right now, loud and clear.

2. Read your passage in a couple different translations. Look for words and phrases that are different, the variety of saying the same thing can help your understanding.
3. Keep the big message of Jesus and the gospel foremost in your mind. Scripture should be understood in light of the central message of the Bible. And the harder sections should be understood in light of the easier sections. The parts should be seen in light of the whole basic message of the Bible.
4. Pay attention to the type writing, the genre.
 - a. Story - everyday encounters with God told to reveal who God is.
 - b. Poem - praise, emotions, principles that are a part of following the Lord
 - c. Letters - personal and churchwide instruction for life as a church
5. Ask and answer some key questions. Answering these questions is a great step towards application.
 - What does this verse teach me about God and His character?
 - What does this passage say about the church and the life of God's people?
 - What does this passage show about human nature, character or behavior?
 - Are there examples for me to follow or avoid, commands for me to obey, promises to claim, warnings to heed?
 - Is there something I should start doing? Something I should stop doing?
 - Why might God be showing me this today, at this point in my life? What is going on in my life to which this would be relevant?
6. Don't lose sight of the purpose of reading and reflecting: Understand and apply what God is saying.