



READING THE BIBLE FOR PLEASURE AND PROFIT

Dick Woike was a real friend to so many men and women as he was to my wife Suzanne and me. We met Dick and his wife Pat in 1976. Pat visited Suzanne in our home after she had attended a women's "Feminar" sponsored by Pat and other local women in and around St. Davids, Pennsylvania. The Feminar addressed the topic of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ in the context of marriage and family life. That is where Suzanne gave her heart to the Lord and Pat's visit was to confirm Suzanne's decision. They became friends.

Then we met Dick. He and Pat picked us up on a Monday night for a Bible study at another couple's home. That was the first time that I came face to face with God's Word. I remember Dick sitting in a soft chair reading and commenting from the Gospel of John. I was impressed by his good nature and the ease with which he explained the scriptures. Within a month I, too, would how my heart and receive the Savior.

Every year for five years in his Sunday School class at the Church of the Savior, Dick with his wonderfully tight sense of humor, took Suzanne and me through the entire Bible. During the week, each class member read the assignment, (about three pages a day) and answered several assigned questions. Then, on Sunday morning Dick shared his insights. His Bible lessons were loaded with rich illustrations from his half century experience as a businessman. It was a wonderful fellowship.

Those first five years in the Lord were filled with important life and career decisions. Dick was always there when I needed him. He had a unique ability to remain objective without being judgmental. A true friend, he helped me untangle financial, career, and business situations. He encouraged me to make sure I was guided by the Scripture in all my decisions.

This encouraging "consultive" approach was tremendously instrumental in the lives of so many men through the years, in both in business and in lay ministry. Dr. Armand Nicholi, II, a psychiatrist at Harvard University, is one of these men whom Dick helped along the way. Dick believed in meeting men where they were—in the marketplace. He always had a group meeting during the week at a local restaurant.

For many years Dick was very active in leadership with the Christian Businessmen's Committee. He worked for several years as an associate with Arthur DeMoss, the founder of National Liberty Corporation. Dick went home to heaven in 1989. Much of what we try to do through Leadership Ministries is modeled after Dick Woike.

We are pleased to make this article, "How to Read Your Bible with Pleasure and Profit," written by Dick in 1974, available through Leadership Ministries, Inc. It is an effective tool to encourage rigorous Christian leadership. Thank you to Mrs. Pat Woike for permission to reprint the article.

—Chris White

Too many people approach the Bible out of a sense of duty or with the mistaken notion that only learned theologians can understand it. As a layman who has been enjoying his Bible by following a consistent pattern of daily reading which began more than thirty-three years ago, I would offer the following hints:

1. Make time to read your Bible **every day**. If possible, set aside regular time to do this, so that you will cultivate the habit. We have so many bad habits that we fall into easily that it is good to deliberately institute a good habit which becomes part of your life.
2. **Read enough** of your Bible at one sitting so that you develop some **continuity** of thought. Under my system, I read the Bible through once a year, which means that I divide the number of pages in my Bible by 365 and arrive at somewhere between three and four pages a day.
3. **Read consecutively**. Don't get into any elaborate systems which call for consulting schedules or programs. It's far more comfortable to pick up your Bible at the place where you left off the day before. If you should be forced to miss a day or two, you can always catch up by reading a little extra. If you have a complicated system and you fall behind, you become discouraged and step reading altogether.
4. **Keep your mind on the subject**. When I first began reading my Bible I found my mind wandering. I corrected this by keeping a ballpoint pen in my hand and underlining words or sentences or whole paragraphs whenever I felt they deserved emphasis. I find this marking business is very important in achieving continuous alertness as I read my daily three or four pages. Without it, my mind wanders.
5. **Read your Bible selfishly**. By this I mean that you should expect to find in your daily reading something which improves your own spiritual life. Too often Sunday School teachers and others refer to the Bible in order to give them material with which to address other people. The Bible is a very personal Book and abounds in warnings and promises and instruction which, like good medicine, are valuable only if taken personally.
6. **Read while your mind is alert**. I have found that because the Bible is such a profound Book, I appreciate it more when I read it in the morning before I leave for the office. It takes me twenty minutes to half an hour to finish my daily reading assignment, and if I try to do it at night after dinner, I would be too drowsy to assimilate the wisdom which far surpasses that found in ordinary books. I

know that some people cannot devote the time in the morning, and there are many who like to read in the evening. I suggest that if you find yourself too tired in the evening, you get up a little early in order to get the best use of your mind in your Bible reading.

7. **Read your Bible confidently.** Jesus said that the Holy Spirit is available to us to teach us. I usually bow my head for just a moment as I begin reading and ask God, the Author of the Book, to teach me something today that I can appreciate. I may not understand everything I read in the three or four pages, but I am confident that I will find at least one tremendous thought to add to my cumulative store of knowledge.
8. **Read with simplicity.** Go on the assumption that the Bible is true. There is so much skepticism and so much in the way of unbelieving “scholarship” extant that some lay people are almost afraid to admit that they believe some of the miraculous events recorded in the Bible. Childlike faith is not to be confused with childishness. As you read the whole Bible through, you will find nothing unbelievable in it. The so-called contradictions are not as numerous as critics would have you believe. Furthermore, when honestly studied, they disappear into thin air.
9. Buy yourself a Bible with type that is large enough to be **read comfortably** and with a binding that makes handling it a pleasurable experience.
10. If you have a little extra time, **keep a diary** in which you enlarge your own thoughts on some passage that you have found in your daily reading. In other words, write your own daily devotional.

POSTSCRIPT

Dick Woike’s life and message reminds us of the Apostle Paul’s prayer for the church in Colossae . . .

For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light. Colossians 1:9-12

Notice how the process starts . . .

- **fill you with the knowledge of His will**—His will is found in the Old and New Testaments. “All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable.” (2 Timothy 3:16)
- **through all spiritual wisdom**—that is, practical know-how which comes from God.
- **and understanding**—clear analysis and decision making in applying this knowledge to various problems.
- **in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord**—transformed character... patience, kindness, joy, etc.
- **to please Him in every way**—to anticipate and do His wishes in every aspect of life.

Four things result from such a God-pleasing life...

- **bearing fruit** and **growing in the knowledge of God** (verse 10)
- **being strengthened** and **giving thanks** (verses 11-12)

But, again, the whole process starts with the knowledge of His will by reading and studying the Bible. We sincerely hope this article results in more enjoyable and effective Bible reading for you and those with whom you come in contact.

Additional resources are available at leadadmin.org/resources.