

## **TLCBiblical.com Video Series**

### **106 Determining A Reading / Study Schedule**

#### **1. Introduction**

Alright, now we have a Bible, some additional study resources and we're ready to go to work! But how do we start. In this video I'm going to cover a simple plan and make some suggestions that will put you on a path to Bible study success.

#### **2. The basic considerations we're going to cover are**

- a. Setting goals
- b. Determining a schedule
- c. And find a place to read or study

#### **3. Goals**

If you're new to the Bible or have been studying for a while and find yourself frustrated with your progress, the first thing I'm going to suggest is that you just take a deep breath, sit back, and make a fresh start.

One of the most important things to realize when setting goals is to be realistic. The Bible is a big thick book with a lot of words and a lot to learn and that is not going to happen overnight. You want studying the Bible to be an enjoyable experience and that will make it easier to proceed. You want to move at a pace that's right for you so you can absorb what you're reading. We don't want to make the mistake of rushing too fast and missing the point of what we're covering and we don't want to move so slowly that we lose interest. Goals need to be set but they need to be your goals, not someone else's so you can learn at your speed and enjoy the process. I'm not going to identify specific items for you, that will be up to you, but I am going to outline a goal setting process that has worked for me and might help you as well.

First write down what you want to accomplish. Take an inventory of what you know now and then imagine where you'd like to be in six months or a year. What would you like to know or be able to do then that you don't know or can't do now.

Second - work backward from your imagined endpoint and list the things you think would have to be done to get you there. This is a good way to identify what you need to consider, any obstacles you might encounter and what you'll have to do to achieve your goals. Write these intermediate steps down and then write yourself a note that these are subject to change. Any time we embark on something new it doesn't matter how much forethought we give to it there are always things that come up that we didn't think about so we need to be flexible and willing to shift around things if needed. We might also find that some steps won't be needed and we can erase them.

Third - determine a time frame for getting this done. Be reasonable and realistic with

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yourself. Some things to consider aren't limited to just the amount of time that you'll need but you also have to think about what you've been able to learn in the past and what you've had to do to achieve that. Use your past successes to help come up with a good estimate and then write yourself a note that this also is subject to change.

As part of your goal setting - create a checklist containing the end result and the intermediate steps you've identified. This will give you a visual reminder of where you were, what you've done and where you are now. Every time you complete a step you'll realize that you're that much closer to achieving your goal.

#### **4. Set a schedule**

One thing that all of us has said at one time or another is "I don't have time for that" and we might be right. We really don't have enough time to do everything we need or want to do so that means we have to make time! This is a matter of deciding what's important to us and then doing it without making excuses. If we're serious about the Bible we'll find a way to clear our schedules and get it done. Here are some things to think about when determining a Bible reading or study schedule.

First - you know your attention span so you want to set an amount of time to spend reading and studying that will work for you. Some folks enjoy marathon sessions while others have to take things in smaller bites and that's perfectly fine. As with goal setting you don't want to be unrealistic and push yourself too long or cut the time so short that you get nothing from it. Be reasonable. Start with smaller time increments and then add to that when and if you can.

Once you have an idea of how much time you can spend reading or studying you want to get that on a calendar or just write it down. One thing to remember is that this doesn't have to be the same time every day if your schedule doesn't allow that so don't set up a rigid framework that will lead you to crossing out days or times and eventually fall by the wayside. If you can start with 15 minutes then take a look at the week, figure out when you have that much time available each day and come up with a working idea of when you can it. A key idea in this lesson has been to be flexible and that applies to study time as well. We want to make sure that we spend time every day with God's word and be consistent but we don't want to lock ourselves into a time frame that we can't make allowances for.

The last thing to consider in regard to setting a schedule is that Bible study should be an enjoyable activity so don't turn it into a chore. The best time to study the Bible is when we want to, not when we have to. We want to love what we're trying to accomplish not frustrate ourselves.

#### **5. Find a place to study**

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Everyone has a different level of concentration that fits their learning style. I know folks who prefer loud music and crowds while folks such as myself need silence and no distractions. We know what environments we do our best in so as we plan or study times we need to also think about where we can read or study that best suits our needs and abilities. As I've mentioned earlier we need to be flexible with this. Personal study doesn't need to be rigidly formal or so loose and relaxed that we can't focus. Think about where you can do this and if needed access things like a surface to write on and enough space to open a couple of books if you need to.

One thing I haven't mentioned but needs to be covered is that there is a difference between reading and studying. When we're reading our aim is to go through the material at a comfortable pace and simply explore the narrative. We're not concerned with in-depth analysis, we just want to know the story or get the facts as presented. Study on the other hand is when we decide to focus on a particular area with the aim of performing a detailed analysis so we can come to a better understanding of it. There are times when our sessions are a combination of both but if you just want to read the scriptures then do that and note passages that you want to come back to for a deeper investigation. We can usually squeeze a little more time into our busy schedules to read than to study so there may be a lot more flexibility in when we can read and reserve our study time for those periods when we have the ability to concentrate and focus on an intended subject. For reading purposes many Bibles and bookstores have a daily reading calendar that you can use to structure this and keep you on track if that works for you.

In the next video I'll discuss some tips for **Memorizing The Books of the Bible & Why You Need To Do That.**