



Suggested Steps in Reading God's Word

Here are a few helpful steps you may wish to follow as you dig deeper into God's Word.

1. Read the Bible text chosen for the day.
2. Pray for the Holy Spirit to guide your meditation: "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer" (Psalm 19:14).
3. Read an introduction to the book of the Bible you will be reading. The introductions in the Concordia Self-Study Bible and the Lutheran Study Bible are good resources in this regard.
4. Consider the various contexts surrounding the text or book being read. Ask: what can the geographical, historical, social political, textual, and grammatical contexts tell you about the text?
5. Consider the genre of the text: Is it a story, comparison, allegory, parable, prayer, poem, sermon, or vision? Who is the writer? Who is speaking in the text? Examine sentences, paragraphs, period, word meaning, and so forth.
6. Remember the analogy of Scripture (the idea that "Scripture interprets Scripture.") Examine parallel passages and cross-referenced texts in the Old and New Testaments, which speak on the same or related topics, to help shed light on the current text. As time allows, the diligent student wants to dig deeper and deeper into the whole counsel of God revealed in His Word.
7. Summarize the central doctrine of this text, and any false beliefs condemned.
8. Ask: What are some Law and Gospel themes in this text that can be applied to my life? What doctrines is the Holy Spirit teaching me here?
 - a. **Law (Malady):** In what way does the Holy Spirit warn me of my weaknesses and challenges here? What pitfalls is He warning me to avoid? How does the Holy Spirit call me to make a u-turn and repent?
 - b. **Gospel (Remedy):** In what ways in this text does the Holy Spirit point me to God's grace, revealed through Jesus' life, suffering death, and resurrection? How does it point me to Christ and to His comfort for me?
9. Application: What are some encouraging teachings I can take from this text today? How shall I respond to God's Word for me today?
10. Closing prayer.

Taken from Rev. Dr. Leonardo Neitzel's feature "A Lamp To My Feet: Reading the Word of God Daily" in The Canadian Lutheran November/December 2020 Issue.

