

How to use your Bible in prayer

It is foolish to pray without The Bible, because through The Bible the Lord reveals Himself to us. God speaks to us through His Word and it is our responsibility to respond. Every now and again The Bible requires us to change our behaviour, our way of thinking and our prayers. Anyone who neglects his study of The Bible runs the risk of going astray. The aim is to give guidelines to the intercessor on how to use his Bible.

1. Start your quiet time by reading a portion of Scripture. Pray through that portion. Take note of the admonitions, sins, promises, orders, examples and warnings and pray about them.
2. Make notes on prayers in Scripture. Start with Psalms and learn from David's prayers what you can, may and ought to pray.
3. Specially underline God's promises in Scripture, find ways to apply them in everyday life and use those promises when you pray.
4. Enrich your prayer with Scripture. Some groups talk about 'Word enriched prayer'.
5. Study the lives of prayers in the Bible. Learn from the examples of Jesus, David, Elijah, Moses, Paul, Abraham, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and others.
6. Every believer should have a Bible study programme and a Bible reading programme. It is not so far fetched to read through the Bible at least once a year. Get a One Year Bible and use it daily. However, this should not replace a more intensive study of the Bible.
7. Ask at least the following questions about each portion of Scripture:
 - Where is it written?
 - What does it say to me?
 - What behaviour does it encourage in me?
 - How should or can I pray about it?
8. It is important to memorize portions of Scripture. Try to memorize three verses a week. Very few people can manage more than three per week.
9. Scripture is important to prayer, because it is what God says Himself. To use The Word in prayer is to take God at His Word. God is Faithful to Himself and His Word.
10. Books are available with Bible promises that have been divided into sub-sections and which can be used effectively in your prayer time.
11. It can be meaningful to use coloured pencils to underline or colour certain things in your Bible in order to emphasize them. You can use the following classification, for instance, or work out your own:

Promises - underline with a blue pen

Commands - colour the verse with a red pencil

Warnings - colour them orange

Sin - underline with a red pen

Announcing of judgments - colour them brown

Portions on Praise and Worship - colour them yellow

Portions on prayer or prayers - mark with a P in the margin

Portions on the evil one/occult - mark with an * in the margin

These are only a few guidelines which could be expanded to suit your own needs. The following is an extract from the autobiography by George Muller. The method used by George Muller for his personal quiet time and enrichment can be effectively used by all believers. The most important thing, he said, was first to concentrate on reading the Bible, then meditating on a chosen portion:

"... that thus my heart might be comforted, encouraged, warned, reprov'd, instructed; and that thus, by means of the Word of God whilst meditating upon it, my heart might be brought into communion with the Lord... The first thing I did (early in the morning), after having asked in a few words the Lord's blessing upon his precious Word, was, to begin to meditate on the Word of God, searching, as it were into every verse to get blessing out of it; not for the sake of preaching on what I had meditated upon; but for the sake of obtaining food for my soul. The result I have found to be almost invariably this; that after a very few minutes my soul has been led to confession or to thanksgiving or to intercession or to supplication; so that though I did not as it were previously, give myself to prayer but to meditation yet it turned almost immediately more or less into prayer.

The difference then between my former practice and my present one is this: Formerly when I arose I began to pray as soon as possible and generally spent all my time till breakfast in prayer or almost all the time... But what was the result? I often spent a quarter of an hour or half an hour or even an hour on my knees before being conscious to myself of having derived comfort, encouragement, humbling of soul, etc; and often, after having suffered much from wandering of mind for the first ten minutes or a quarter of an hour or even half an hour, I only then began really to pray. I scarcely ever suffer now in this way. For my heart being nourished by the Truth, being brought into true fellowship with God, I speak to my Father and to my Friend (vile though I am, and unworthy of it!) about the things that He has brought before me in his precious Word. It often now astonishes me that I did not sooner see this point... In addition to this (Muller wrote some years later) I generally read after family prayer large portions of the Word of God when I still pursue my practice of reading onward in

The Holy Scriptures, sometimes in the New Testament and sometimes in the Old and for more than thirty-nine years I have proved the Blessedness of it. I take also either then or at other parts of the day, time more especially for prayer."