

| Keep
it simple

Help for Christian Devotion

Keep It Simple – Help for Christian Devotion

Introduction

When I served in the US Navy, I very quickly learned to follow what is known as the K-I-S-S (Keep It Simple Stupid) principle, a principle initially developed by Navy engineers in 1960. The idea behind this principle is that the more complex a system design is, the harder it is to operate and repair. This principle is needed because we, as humans, tend to make things far more complicated than they need to be, and when we do, we run into all sorts of problems.

This principle is true in the design of military systems and has extended to the non-military design of computer systems and software. But what does this have to do with Christian devotion? What does this have to do with Bible reading and prayer? Much! I believe that, if followed, this principle will help remove the common road-blocks that keep us from the consistent practice of Christian devotion. We might call this the Keep It Simple *Sinner* principle, because, as weak sinners, we all need God's grace to help us continue—even in the simplest activities of the Christian life.

So, whether you have read through the Bible multiple times, have never read a single verse, or are somewhere in-between, it is my hope that this short pamphlet will motivate you to begin reading the Bible and encourage you to continue reading the Bible. But, most of all, I hope to remind you that you are not alone, we all need help because, unlike other books, the Bible is the only book that the world, your own flesh, and the Devil do not want you to read!

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Keep the Program Simple

So often, when approaching the Bible, we don't know where to begin, so we think, "I will follow a read-through-the-Bible in a year program." Then, after starting with the best intentions, sometime in January or February, we fall behind, and never get back on the proverbial "wagon." So, for the beginner (or the discouraged) I recommend a simple, non-dated, program. The key to this program is not *what* you read, or *how much* you read, but *THAT YOU READ PERIOD*. This is the key to building up a habit of becoming a daily reader of the Bible. There are 66 individual books in the Bible, 39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament. A good place to begin is either Genesis chapter 1 (first book of the Old Testament) or Matthew chapter 1 (first book of the New Testament). Then each day read at least a chapter, or two, depending upon length. Once finished, mark your place and begin there the next day.

Keep the Pattern Simple

Once you have determined what you are going to read, you may follow this simple pattern for your devotion time. First, begin with a simple prayer. This prayer does not need to be long, but it should include thanksgiving to God for giving you the Bible to read and a request that God will speak to you through the Bible, as you read it. Second, simply read for 10-15 minutes, covering one, or two, chapters. Third, after you finish reading, pick one thing from your reading that you found interesting. What did it teach you about God? About yourself? About the world? Make this what you think about as you go throughout your day and, if possible, share what you learned with someone else.

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Simply Be Patient

Have you ever had a day so busy that, by the time evening arrives, you realized that you forgot to eat lunch? When you finally realized that you didn't eat, what did you do? Did you force yourself to eat both lunch and supper at one sitting? Of course not! You simply ate supper and continued living. Why then do we treat Bible reading, the food which God has given us as our daily spiritual bread, so differently? A day, or a week, has gone by and you realize that you have not picked up your Bible once! Perhaps your first reaction is, "What a failure I am, I must catch up!" And so you attempt to read double, or triple. And when you don't find the time for that, you exclaim, "I cannot do this!" and give up. Part of a simple devotional life is to remember to have patience and extend grace to yourself. Recognize that you are not perfect. Pick up where you left off, and start reading again, following the simple program and simple pattern outlined above.

Remember, it is not *what* you read, nor *how much* you read, but that you *do read* that is most important. In other words, the best Bible reading program is the one you will actually *use*! May God grant you the power, the persistence, and the patience to continue reading the Bible with great profit to your spiritual growth.