

The Taking Your Time Method of Bible Study

Many Bible readers assume that it takes a biblical scholar to profit from the biblical text. Let me challenge that assumption.

Often our failure to understand a text results more from insufficient attention to what can easily be seen rather than from inadequate scholarly skills. I'm not down on scholarship- I love scholarship – but I want to encourage you to do something already in your skill set: taking the time to read and re-read the section you want to understand.

Dave Roper, a pastor, and respected biblical scholar once shared that his preferred method of Bible study was simply to read the section he was studying over and over and over. He thought 7-10 times was a pretty good number.

I've been teaching the first chapters of Genesis for decades, yet each time I start another Genesis series, I discover things I missed in my earlier studies.

While I am what you might call a biblical scholar with a lot of fancy skills like reading Greek and Hebrew, when I'm guiding a group through a biblical text, at times we explore the meaning of a particular word with online Bible tools, but we primarily read and reread the English text and notice what pops up. Every time their eyes have opened my eyes to truths I'd never before noticed. It seems that there's no end to the depth of God's message.

Practicing the Taking Your Time Method

Start by reading and rereading [Genesis 1: 1-2;3](#) and simply notice what's there. Let me guide you with some questions, just like I do with my study groups. Ask your own questions as you ponder this text.

A Few Questions

- What's described in the first two sentences? (think of them as an "introduction" to this section.)
- How would you evaluate the state of the world that the introduction describes? Would you like to live in such a place?
- Is there a repeated phrase that divides the rest of the chapter into sections?
- What happens in each of those sections?
- Do God's acts in each section relate the introduction? How? Here's an example: in the beginning, there's formless chaos. What does God do about it? He brings order.
- What does God do about the darkness?
- When does God rest? Why?

Two Crucial Questions and an Important Follow-up

1. What do you learn about God's character from His actions during creation?
2. How has God expressed His character as He notices chaotic, empty or dark places in your life?

[ask God to open your eyes to see examples of His careful care for you and take time to notice what He reveals to you.] **The**