

Four Questions to ask When reading the Bible

What does it
say?

What did it mean to
the original
audience?

How does it apply
to my life today?

What is God calling
me to do about it?

Cut out the bookmark on the left and keep it in your Bible for quick reference.

Here's a little more explanation to help you put them to work:

1. **What does it say?** What are the facts in the section you're reading?
 - a. Who is involved?
 - b. What is happening? What is being said?
 - c. When did this take place in relation to other Bible events?
 - d. Where does the action take place?
 - e. Why is God speaking the way He is? Or why is the individual in this passage acting or responding the way they are?
2. **What did it mean to the original audience?**
 - a. What is the context of this event or conversation? (What happens before and after?)
 - b. What was their culture like at the time?
 - c. How would they have interpreted these words or situation, and why?

You can learn some of this by reading the introductory notes at the beginning of each book; by reading study notes in your Bible; by looking up references to other verses in the Bible, or by using a Bible app or commentary like Read Scripture or biblegateway.com.

3. **How does it apply to my life today?** Since we are living under the New Covenant (because of Jesus' death and resurrection), we do not have to keep all the Old Testament laws (like animal sacrifices). But what lesson, warning, encouragement, or example can help you better follow Jesus Christ, and be applied to relationships with the people around you?
4. **What is God calling me to do about it?** Reading the Bible is meaningless unless we put it to work in our lives. So, how are you going to respond? Praise, seek God's forgiveness or forgive someone else, pause in wonder, make amends, give generously, run from temptation or stand and fight, follow the good example given or NOT make the same mistake they did? The list is endless. And it may not be the same the next time you read this passage.

Reading the Bible is such an exciting adventure! Don't feel bad if it's hard to understand at first. Ask God before you begin each day, to speak to you from His living Word. He will fill you with truth, comfort, and courage to sustain you in the darkest of times, and reveal His purpose for you. Just remember—Jesus' life, death, and resurrection are the only reason we have the Bible. It is the testimony of eyewitnesses of God's great love for the world, and His offer of salvation.