

Reading Repeatedly - Exercise 1

Adapted from "Living by the Book" Howard Hendricks

Passage: Romans 5

Time Commitment: 30 Minutes Daily

Certain passages of scripture almost demand repeated readings, and the book of Romans contains many such examples. Plan to spend the next week thinking about Romans 5.

You may be an expert in a given field. If you read a book in that field two or three times, you have got it. You can put the book down and move on to something else. But that is never true of the Bible. Read it over and over again, and you will still see things you have never seen before.

Day 1 - Read Romans 5. Spend a half hour or so differentiating between portions you think you understand clearly and those that may remain something of a mystery to you. Record any questions you have.

Day 2 - To put Romans 5 in a proper context, read Romans 1-5 straight through. As you read Romans 5 again, make a note of any verses that refer back to something Paul had already said in Romans 1-4. (Note: Any passage that begins with "Therefore" will refer to previous material).

Day 3 - If possible, find a audio version of this passage (Other options include having someone else read it to you, or reading aloud.) Listen for repeated words or phrases. What is Paul trying to emphasize in this passage?

Day 4 - Paul is dealing with some complex and deep thoughts. Use one or more different translations to try to get some alternative ways to express his statements. (You might want to try the Phillips or Amplified translations, which insert clarifying statements within the text).

Day 5 - Go to the other extreme from what you did yesterday. Today try to find a simplified paraphrase of Romans 5. Consider the New Living Translation, The Message, or even a children's translation. Determine how these concepts might be explained to people who don't have a vast understanding of scriptures.

Day 6 - Suppose you're a reporter and Romans 5 is an account that comes in over the news wires. It's your job to write it up. Read the chapter again. Then determine what you think should be the headline and lead sentence.

Day 7 - Read Romans 5 again. Have any of your questions from Day 1 been answered by now? If you have remaining questions, good! Perhaps you'll keep reading until they are clarified. If you don't give up, you will arrive at answers to most of your Biblical questions.
