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# ***The Reading Remnant Guide***

## **Welcome!**

*"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path". Psalm 119:105*

Congratulations! You've made the decision to join the Reading Remnant. You've taken the first step. The Holy Spirit has impressed you of the need to grow in your walk with God, and you are responding to His call. No matter what your past devotional experience, *we believe that this can be a powerful, encouraging, and life-changing journey for you.* This handout will provide you with simple, practical tips on how to get the most out of your Reading Remnant experience.

## **Why Read?**

*"For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes." Romans 1:16*

Power. We need it. Both for every-day living, as well as for eternal life! The Gospel is where that power comes from. We need to be plugged in to the power-source by constantly connecting with Jesus through His Word.

*"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." 2 Timothy 3:16-17*

The Bible claims that it comes from the very breath of God, and that it is able to teach and guide us in the way of righteousness, making us complete, and able to fulfill our mission.

*"Seek the Lord while He may be found; call on Him while He is near." Isaiah 55:6*

We are living in a very crucial time in earth's history. Bible prophecy is being fulfilled right before our eyes, and we know that Jesus' return will be soon! Jesus is doing everything He possibly can to save us. He has made us His priority. We must make Him our priority too. Now is the time. It's a dangerous thing to procrastinate, to delay the development of a relationship with Him, we aren't sure of the future, or even of tomorrow. But, by making Him a priority now, we will be preparing each day for whatever the future holds.

## **Your Mission Statement**

*"I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus".  
Phillipians 3:14*

We suggest that you develop a very short Mission Statement that summarizes why you have decided to join this reading program. This should be just one sentence, or even just a short prayer. An example would be "Lord, I want to know you", or "Father, help me put you first". Write this on post-its and put on your computer, refrigerator, mirror, etc. Write it on your heart. You will find that in rough times, when you are tempted to put other priorities before God, that you can lean on this.

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## **Pray, Pray, Pray**

*“Never should the Bible be studied without prayer. Before opening its pages we should ask for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, and it will be given... Jesus will see us also in the secret places of prayer if we will seek Him for light that we may know what is truth. Angels from the world of light will be with those who in humility of heart seek for divine guidance”. EGW {SC 91.1}*

### **Start with Prayer**

We should always approach reading the Bible with a word of prayer. Remember, we are not alone in this, but have a Helper! Ask the Holy Spirit to bless you with understanding. Tell the Father that you are “here” and that you want to get to know Him better.

### **Finish with Prayer**

When we sit down with the Living Word, there will always be something that affects our hearts. We may be convicted to change our action, encouraged to continue growing in Christ, or blessed with a better understanding of God’s character. Make it a practice to reflect on these variable experiences after your reading and direct your prayer appropriately. Also, try to remember to praise God, for the opportunity to know Him better, and for giving you the desire and discipline to study His Word.

### **Pray for Others**

We are all in this together! As a church, any revival movement depends on all of us working together through the Holy Spirit. And also pray that there will be revival in church member’s hearts and also others in our sphere of influence will be able to see Jesus through us. Try to commit to pray daily for OTHERS in the Reading Remnant. Prayer works!

## **Develop a support system**

*“Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up!” Eccl 4:9-10*

### **Accountability**

There really is strength in numbers. One of the best ways to stay accountable and on target is to have a reading buddy, or a small accountability group. You can work out what works best for you, ranging from texting each other daily to checking in weekly. For instance, one way to stay accountable in a small group is to set up an email list on Google with “open carbon copies” to each member in the group. Sometimes just knowing that you have accountability partners is enough to overcome.

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## **The “Ten Friend Challenge”**

One of the most powerful tools people use to quit smoking is to tell their friends and family that they are quitting and ask for their support. We ask that you consider adopting this technique to stay on track with your reading assignment. People often don't want to do this because they are anticipating that they will fail, and they would prefer fail in private. But we want to everything we can to succeed!!! We urge you to adopt this technique and take the “Ten Friend Challenge”.

### Step 1: Contact “The Ten”

Pick 10 friends or family members, explain *what* the reading program is, and tell them *why* you are doing it.

### Step 2: Make Your Appeal

After you explain your mission, appeal to them for help. Ask them to support you by keeping you in their prayers, and to occasionally check in on you to see how you are doing.

This is not only a great way to stay on track, but it can also be a powerful evangelism tool. You never know, by asking for help for yourself, you may encourage someone else to grow closer to Jesus!

## **“Email Encouragement” Program**

Yes, we all are already subject to email pollution. But we want to do everything we can to stay on track. When you sign up for the “Email Encouragement” list, you will receive a weekly email that has words of encouragement, testimonies from other members in the program, and further tips to stay on track. These will be “one way” communications, so no other members will see your email address.

## **Taming The Wandering Mind**

*“It is not natural for the heart to love the Bible; but when it is renewed by grace, then the mind will feast upon the rich truths and promises contained in the word of God.”*  
EGW, ATY 79.

## **Yes, the Mind Will Wander!**

We have to anticipate that the mind will wander when we are doing our daily reading. The mind just wanders, it just does. In the world of internet and television, we are used to constant stimulation, so we must *expect* that we will have difficulty concentrating, especially when sitting down to a book that sometimes has unfamiliar language. Don't be discouraged, this is expected! Through grace and by faith, your mind will be renewed!

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## **“Reading Hygiene”**

Basic rules of “reading hygiene” tell us that we need to take control of our reading environment and optimize it for concentration.

- Ideally, the area in which one studies should be free of distractions such as noise or the movement of people. If your television is in your reading space, turn it off. If a computer is in your reading space, put it in “sleep” mode.
- Reading in bed might be relaxing, but you risk falling asleep!
- Lighting is important. Adjust the lighting so it does not glare or shine directly into the eyes. It should be neither too dark nor too light. Avoid sitting in shadows.
- Temperature control is important. It should not be too hot or too cold. If you cannot control the temperature in your reading environment, then think ahead and have clothing that you can layer.
- Turn your phone off or on vibrate while you are reading!!!! Let the people in your house know that this is your “reading time” and not to distract you unless it’s an emergency.

## **Read out loud**

Have you ever found yourself reading the same paragraph over and over, and not getting any comprehension at all? One way to break this pattern and get back on track is to read out loud. When you read out loud, you are using multiple different parts of your brain, and this engagement will change and sharpen your focus. When you find yourself back on track, you can resume silent reading.

## **Interactive Reading**

Underline. Highlight. Put little stars next to the verses that speak to your heart. When you do this, you are recruiting multiple areas of your brain, not just the ones that are involved with reading. This will help you to stay engaged in the text.

## **Interval Reading**

Try to break your study time with God into manageable units. By doing so, you will avoid boredom and loss of concentration, and, in turn, to improve understanding. Some studies have suggested that sessions lasting twenty to thirty minutes are best.

## **Keep a “Reminder Pad”**

If while you're studying you happen to think about something that needs to be done, jot it down on your “reminder pad”. Having written it down you can go back to studying. You'll know that if you look at the pad later, you will be reminded of the things you have to do. *It's worrying about forgetting the things you have to do that might be interfering with your studying.*

## **Keep a “Reading Journal”**

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When you are reading, many questions about spirituality, bible history, and doctrine will arise. Don't get hung up! Instead, write the verse and your questions down, and commit to finding answers to these when you are done with your reading.

### **The “Stand Up” Maneuver**

If your mind wanders, stand up and face away from your books. If you must daydream, and we all do it occasionally, get up and turn around. Don't leave the room, just stand by your desk, daydreaming while you face away from your assignment. The physical act of standing up helps bring your thinking back to the job. Try it!

### **The “Count to Ten” Maneuver**

If you find your mind wandering, stop at the end of each page, and count 10 slowly when you are reading. While this may increase your study time, it will be quite useful if you find you can't concentrate and your mind is wandering.

### **Time Management**

*“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.” Matthew 6:33*

Yes, I want to make God first in my life, but just how much time are we talking about here? For an idea of how much time you will need to dedicate, here are some rough calculations:

There are 788,280 words in the Bible. If you are on My Daily Bread plan, you have 365 days to read this, so  $788,280/365 = 2160$  words per day. The average speed of an audiobook is 150 words per minute (wpm). Reading is a bit quicker, but lets use the slower number. If you take 2160 words/150 wpm, this gives you around 15 minutes of straight reading.

For the Conflict Series, we took a sample of 10 chapters, counted the words, and then averaged them together. This gave us around 5070 words per chapter. If we use the same reading speed,  $5070 \text{ words}/150 \text{ wpm} = 34$  minutes of straight reading.

Making God a priority is going to require some changes, so it is important to know how to budget your time accordingly. There are a million ways to improve time management, but the best way is to first set aside your dedicated time with God (non-negotiable!), and then figure out the rest. God comes first!!

### **No Days Off!**

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*“For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.” Hebrews 12:11 (ESV)*

We will inevitably have things that come up that will throw us off of our commitment to daily reading. Some of these will be good things, like vacations, birthdays, and weddings. Some of these will be bad things, like sickness, family troubles, or the passing of a loved one. In times like these, in both good and bad, we have to trust that all things will be better if we stick close to God and His Word.

One way to avoid lapsing in discipline is to *anticipate in advance* that life will get complicated, that the going will get rough... but that despite this, we will stick to our reading plan. We suggest the following motto: ***No Days Off!!*** Practice your mind to accept this.

### **What To Do If You Get Off Track**

*“For a righteous man falls seven times, and gets back up.” Prov 24:16*

#### **Get right back on track!**

Don't let a missed day or two get you down. As soon as you get off track, get right back on! The sooner you jump back into the schedule, the easier it will be. And do not be discouraged, but rather tell yourself over and over, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me”. Phillipians 4:13

#### **Tell a friend**

Do not be afraid to ask for help. As soon as you notice that you are falling off schedule, or that you are struggling to get back on, call a friend or a family member. Commit to it!

#### **Identify the Problem**

We can always make lemonade from lemons. Even though it is discouraging to stumble, we should always look at this as a growth opportunity. If you find yourself off track, use the opportunity to go back and identify what it is that lead to the problem. Examine the things that you put higher on your priority list before reading. Were you on the internet, were you watching TV, were you spending too much time on the phone? Write these things down and put them beside your Mission Statement. Remind yourself of what is important. You will begin to see how life's distractions are really more insidious than you think, that they take you away from the things that your heart really desires.

#### **Take Responsibility**

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Don't make excuses to yourself for procrastinating, and don't blame others when distracted. Saying "I'm so busy I never get to..." is just an excuse and form of procrastination. Staying on track is a personal responsibility. It's in your hands. Thoughtfully examine the consequences of your behavior.

### **Pray**

If we do fall off track or putting the world before God, know that the Lord is compassionate and understands our condition. Remember, we are not alone on this! "He who has begun a good work in you will complete *it*." Phillipians 1:6. *All we need to do is ask for help*, and we can be confident that He will be faithful to help us. "Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us". 1 John 5:14.

### **Repeat and Spoken Word Principle**

Often we are told that words follow our thoughts or that what we are thinking about will be come out on our tongue. This is very true, but the opposite is just as true: that thoughts follow words. So if you are repeatedly saying "I am going to read today" or "I trust Jesus" or "I love God's Word" then you will naturally think about those things and will want to do them. Often we just forget and the best way to not forget is to have something on the forefront of our minds.

### **Internet Resources**

#### **The Bible (Multiple translations)**

[www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com)

#### **Ellen G. White (The Conflict Series and More!)**

[www.whiteestate.org/books/books.asp](http://www.whiteestate.org/books/books.asp)

#### **Seventh Day Adventist Bible Concordance**

[www.bibleexplained.com/index.html](http://www.bibleexplained.com/index.html)

#### **The Reading Plans**

[www.fallbrookadventist.org/the-reading-plans](http://www.fallbrookadventist.org/the-reading-plans)

#### **Questions/Support**

Email: [readingremnant@gmail.com](mailto:readingremnant@gmail.com)

### **Encouraging Words**

*Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." Heb 12:1-2*

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