

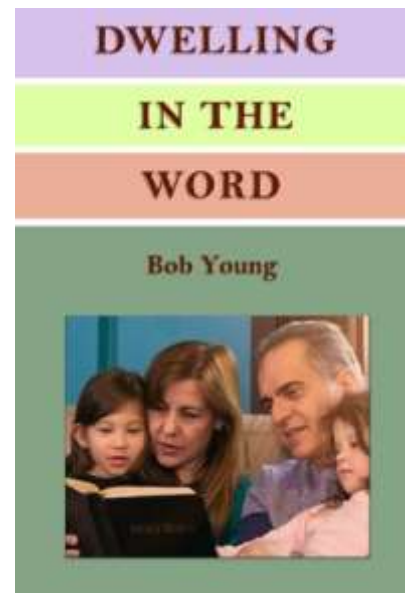
## Do you make Bible reading too hard?

By Bob Young

A basic guideline for Bible reading -- keep it simple! Here is a principle that works in all of life – do not make simple things complicated. I like to illustrate this point by thinking about vacation travels.

What do you need for a great vacation? What can go wrong, what will help things go right? I mention five things.

- It is easy to overpack – too much non-essential stuff and forget the basics.
- It is easy to over-plan and overcommit, for example, to make each day's drive too long. Keep it simple for the best vacation.
- The most enjoyable vacations often go back to the same place year after year.
- Use a map to plan the journey – roads change, new roads are built. Today online maps tell about construction, scenic options, and delays, with alternate routes to the destination.
- A map keeps you oriented – you know where you are. A favorite vacation story in our family tells about the time I missed a turn and did not realize it for over an hour. That was a long travel day!



This article is not about vacations and road trips. Apply the same five principles to Bible reading.

- Keep it simple, take care of the basics so you can enjoy the trip.
- Do not overcommit, keep it simple. Use a simple process to read, reflect, and react. The goal is to grasp the message and the meaning.
- Read repetitively—again and again. The second trip to a certain place is often more enjoyable than the first. In the early years of my ministry, I read the New Testament every month, dozens of times.
- Map out your trip in advance.
  - What is this book of the Bible about? How does the reading fit into the “trip”?
  - My grandchildren and I recently read a book about the experiences of my mother’s family when they moved from Missouri to New Mexico by covered wagon. We were glad the book had a map that showed the route they used.
- Stay oriented. Know where you are, what you are reading, the message, why it matters.

My recent book *Dwelling in the Word* (released August 2020) will help you enjoy your Bible reading. Keep it simple. The same five principles have guided the development and format of the book.

- For each chapter, you can read the selected reading or you can read in your own Bible. The best translation uses simple, understandable words (but having an English dictionary available is always a good idea—I keep one at hand when I read). In the book, I share a fresh translation so you can compare it with your own preferred translation or with other translations. Be ready to enjoy the journey.
- For most readers, the time invested will be 10-15 minutes daily. A simple process – read, reflect, react, pray. And if you get behind, the reading plan makes it easy to make up lost time, to catch up.
- Read the Bible at your own pace – once each year, but more often if you wish. The reading sequence is not tied to the calendar.
- Bible reading is a journey. Keep the map in view – the suggested reading sequence is explained. The chapter headings are included in a table of contents. The readings are somewhat chronological.
- Each reading has a brief explanation to keep you oriented, to help you know what you are reading, how the passage fits into the message of the author, and its importance in the message of the Bible.

In Bible reading, do not make it too complicated.

I invite you to join me on the journey! I am confident that before long you will find that the word of Christ is dwelling in you in abundance (Col. 3:16) as you “dwell in the Word.”