

First, a note from Steve:

I came up with this approach over 20 years ago and have been using it ever since. The problem that needed solving was the way I felt “straight-jacketed” by all of the highly regimented plans I had tried. These obviously work for some people, but all too often they left me feeling bored (by following someone else’s trail) or guilty (for falling behind and failing to catch up). Mostly, I felt that I was being “force fed” more scripture than I could digest on a daily basis and that what was dished out on my plate didn’t match my spiritual appetite. This was turning Bible reading from a delight into drudge work!

As I prayed I sensed the Lord showing me that I didn’t go about planning my meals the way I was trying to go about feeding on His Word. Generally speaking, we let legitimate appetite and desire lead, while keeping in mind the four main food groups that need to be balanced out. Specifically, I never say, “It’s Tuesday, so tonight the master plan calls for macaroni.” No, I go to the pantry and fridge, see what’s there, then check in with my appetite and, *Voila!*, a delectable idea for a meal swims into focus. Why not feed on scripture the same way? The “Refrigerator Method” was born! (I also call it the “B4 Plan” and the “Sticky Tab Method” for reasons that are explained on the next page—the part for you to print.)



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The “Refrigerator Method” for Healthy Bible Reading

<http://blog.forerunners4him.org/connectors>

The great thing in natural life is to keep up a steady and balanced approach to meals, eating from all the major food groups, while avoiding excessive snacking. Simply opening the Bible to any page or to only your favorite pages is **“snacking” on scripture**—not a good strategy for a balanced diet! The Refrigerator Method is a way of reading the Bible that will lead you through whole books and eventually take you through the whole of scripture, while following your “spiritual appetite.”

Pick a set time for your meal. Most choose first thing in the morning. Then have a plan in mind. You could plan to read from cover to cover, for instance, but why not try the **“B4 Plan”** first (short for 4 sections of Bible reading)? The way this works is that you take four sticky tabs and put one in each of **the four basic “food groups” of scripture**: Psalms, Gospels, Epistles, and the Old Testament. (These are the four groups that Sunday readings of scripture are usually taken from.) Read part of a long section or all of a short section, unless of course you positively feel led to devour several chapters at once. The goal is to read from all four sections—if you have the time. But don’t cram them in! It’s better to digest the first one or two sections well, than gobble all four at light speed.

1) Begin with a bite size portion of Psalms or Proverbs. Go through these on a loop. Psalms will teach you how to pray and praise, inspire you to love God and help you “jump start” your heart with devotion each morning. Proverbs will give you practical wisdom for the daily life. Begin at Psalm 1. When you reach the end of Proverbs 31, circle back around. Sometimes I widen the circle by adding in The Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes.

2) Then, read a healthy portion of one of the Gospels. These give us our vital images of Jesus. He is God’s love in action. He is God’s Word to us. He is our Example. Drink Him in, as well as His words. Begin with Matthew. When you get to the end of John, circle back around. To widen the circle occasionally add in the Book of Acts (the disciples in action).

3) Read a portion from the rest of the New Testament. These are letters directed to the churches—that includes us! We want to learn from those who knew Jesus the best. Start with any letter you have a hunger to read. Read a paragraph or a whole chapter. When you finish that book, move on to another one. Don’t hop from one unfinished book to another—that leaves a fairly unsatisfying taste in the mouth.

4) Read a portion from the rest of the Old Testament. Clearly it will take more time to eventually finish all of the books that remain, but let your interest—your spiritual hunger—guide you. Typically, I read longer sections of the OT at a sitting because I’m going for overview; with the gospels and the letters I’m going slower and digging deeper.

Remember to “say grace” before your spiritual meals: Ask God to open your heart and mind to His Word and to open His Word to your heart and mind. Seek to read from all four groups, but don’t beat yourself up if you don’t. The important thing is, on the one hand, to keep your spiritual hunger alive by not “force feeding” yourself according to someone else’s schedule and, on the other, to keep chewing your way through a healthy, balanced diet of truth, skipping as few meals as possible.

Taste and see that the Lord is good! Psalm 34:8



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