

## Approaching the Bible

I was baptized and entered the community of faith nearly 40 years ago. Sunday School classes, group studies, chain reference guides, concordances and commentaries have been part of my journey ever since. Theologians like NT Wright, Timothy Keller and Dallas Willard have expanded my understanding. Philosophers like CS Lewis and Manning have added color and texture with their stories of life. But as time passed something happened. I read the Bible less. It was a struggle to even pick it up. Why? I love so much in the Bible. The stories are raw and real. It overflows with poetry, imagery and adventure. It pulls back the curtain of time to reveal a Creator and creation - the greatest love story ever. So what changed?

I had. I had reduced the Bible to a text book. I was more interested in word studies than the Word. It had become an intellectual exercise instead of an encounter. I was more interested in debating than delight. And I became numb to it's life.

Thankfully, God had an answer (He usually does). READ. Quit over studying and over dissecting. READ. Pick ME up. Turn back the cover and simply READ. The I AM is not a history lesson (although His history is mind bending). The I AM is alive and He pierces the numbness of my scholarly attempts with all the color, beauty and outrageous love that is His. He breaks my heart with stories of evil we inflict on each other. And He restores my hope because He is far more than lessons in a book. He is I AM.

Do you go through periods where you struggle to spend time in the Bible?

What helped you with the struggle?

Does the work of theologians and philosophers help or sidetrack your time in the Bible?

Are study and reading different things to you?

What have been some of the most memorable moments in your journey with the Bible?

What have been your biggest frustrations or stumbling blocks with the Bible?