

## How to get the most value from reading. My personal experience.

1. Don't feel like you need to read the book cover to cover. Typically the introduction, the first few chapters and the last one are the most valuable parts of a book. Merely scan the other chapters and read just the parts that grab your attention. Often books have good summaries at the end of each chapter- read these.
2. Highlight only key sentences that are meaningful to you that you will want to return to later. You can identify these by imagining what you would tweet....and maybe you can even do that!
3. Reflect on what you are reading after short intervals of reading; say every 15-30 minutes. Think about how you will apply what you are reading. Remember reading without an impact on application is merely entertainment at best.
4. After you have finished reading the book, page through again and reread your highlights, journaling where you see personal application. Writing out sentences that are meaningful to you will help you to recall them when you need to apply them.
5. Get Amazon Kindle, preferably on an iPad! My personal reading capacity has at least tripled with these aids. The Kindle books cost less and are available to read in seconds. Also get youversion for instant access to multiple translations of the Bible, and an excellent selection of daily devotionals. Download for your smartphone too, as this will facilitate reading at any time of waiting...just not in the traffic!
6. Remember when reading books, that although they are often inspirational, only the Bible is inspired. It is unwise to ignore the experience and spiritual maturity of those who have walked further on the road than us, but always check that their views are in line with the Bible. Reading books is clearly not a substitute to reading the Bible, our first reading priority.
7. Books that refer to the Bible a lot and focus on the application of the Word are the most beneficial in the long term. However there are also very good books that do not refer to the Bible at all. You should test these against the Bible, especially compare to what Jesus said and did and the parables He told.
8. Expect to be prompted by the Holy Spirit to refer back to books you have read. This is part of hearing God speak to you.

9. Share your key learning from the books you read with another person or your life group and hold yourself accountable to them for your personal application of what you have read.
10. Develop your own personal library of books that you expect to refer to from time to time.

Include at least one book on each of the following topics:

**Overview of the mature Christian life**

**Prayer**

**Bible**

**Holy Spirit**

**Devotional Life**

(The above 4 topics are very well covered by Rick Warren's *The Purpose Driven Life* and in Blackaby's *Hearing God's Voice* and *Experiencing God*.)

**Servant Leadership** (Jesus on Leadership by Gene Wilkes; *Courageous Leadership* by Bill Hybels)

**How to share the good news with others** (Hybels' *Just Walk across the Room*)

**How to study the Bible for yourself** (*40 Days in the Word*)