

Elisabeth Julin's Bible-Reading Upbringing

By Eric Julin

Lizzie grew up in a ministry. Her family, the Pents, traveled about the U.S., Mexico, and Canada. They would arrive at a church where they were scheduled to perform and take over most of one or two services. Their services would go like this: Dr. Pent, Lizzie's Father, would introduce the family, then, accompanying themselves they would sing a song, after which one member of the family would quote an entire chapter of the Bible, there would be another song, another quote, and so on until all the members had quoted a chapter. Dr. Pent would then close the service encouraging the congregation to read the Scriptures and pray. All the family participated, all eight children along with Dr. and Mrs. Pent. When Lizzie and I were first married, I also participated; except they didn't allow me to sing, which was a wise choice.

Family Bible Reading

Personal and public Bible reading was done in the family on a daily basis. I can say from personal experience being directly involved with the family that they truly read for at least one-half hour after each meal. Each read aloud. Sometimes longer chapters were divided among different readers. Each was expected to read privately for him/herself in the morning before breakfast. No matter where they were, they followed this discipline—at home, in motels, while guests in others' homes, in parking lots, while driving in the caravan of cars. They rarely failed. I know, I saw it; I did it with them.

This discipline may seem harsh, and to most I suppose it is. But it was before I became a Christian that I visited the family. At that time, I lived with my brother who was married to

Lizzie's sister, Connie. The rest of the Pents lived on the same street. I ate with them, went to work with them, and even went to meetings with them. As a non-Christian living with this family, I saw that they were not strange. They were cheerful, energetic, cooperative, helpful, and easy to be with. They were not embarrassing to me as some other Christians had been. My observation of the family did more than anything else to bring me to the Lord. After Lizzie and I were married I saw no variance in the family from the Bible reading habit.

Our Bible Reading

These days, Lizzie and I now read only in the morning after breakfast. We read two chapters. It takes as little as fifteen minutes if the chapters are short, or a lot longer if the chapters are long. It usually takes us in excess of 30 minutes since we talk to each other of the inspiration we are getting. It's very inspiring and exciting for us.

We've always read aloud. It's a way of sharing. I always try to dramatize my reading as it helps me make sense out of the words. And frankly, sometimes we don't even hear what we ourselves are reading. Think how Ezra 2 will improve your elocution and reading aloud skills; or any other large list of names. (Yes, we do read the names, and have been blessed by that, too.)

Your Bible Reading

You can read the Bible, too. You could read 30 minutes x number of times a day. You could read two chapters x times a day, or five chapters. You could read two, five, or 10 pages x times a day. Take your Bible, look at the last page number, and then simply divide it by 365 to determine how many pages you want to read at a session to read the Bible once in a year. It's not much.

The possibilities are endless. Most of the time we've started at Genesis and read straight through to Revelation, then started again. These days we'll read a book in the Old Testament,

then one in the New, then back to the Old, etc. When the boys had a Bible competition at their school concerning a certain book, we would read only that book, through and through, until the day of the event.

We've never favored the plans that suggest reading this group of verses here and that set of verses there. We always felt they left out the context of what is being said. We wanted God to speak to us. We did not want someone else controlling how we read.

A regular reading habit will pay handsome dividends over time. I recommend you invent, then follow, your own system.

Can you tell I believe in it?

Read the Bible Over 100 Times?

To tell the truth, when Lizzie said she had read or heard the Bible read more than 100 times by age 21, I always thought it was a number that was pulled out of the air. I knew it was a lot, but a hundred? So I calculated it.

What I found is that while it's an aggressive schedule, it's possible to read the Bible ten times in a year using a family of ten. If each reads daily during a half-hour period after each meal, and there are no interruptions or delays, it's totally possible.

There are several factors to consider. Not all chapters are the same length, some are short and some are very long (Psalm 119), some have lots of names (Ezra 2). If each family member read a chapter and there were a string of long chapters, or even just a few, it would certainly take more than 30 minutes to complete one after-meal reading. So some chapters would have to be split between two readers. Here is my formula:

Element	Number	Rationale
Days/year	365	
Meals/day	3	

1/2 hour	0.5	
Words in Bible	807,361	
Time each can read/meal	3	30 min / 10
Nr of words each can read/meal	750	3 min @ 250 wpm
Total words family reads/meal	7500	30 min @ 250 wpm
Total words family reads/year	8212500.0	Days x meals x Total family words read
No. times read per year	10.2	Total words read / Words in Bible

The conclusion: What if you read it only eight times a year, is that good? What if only five times, or three, is that good? What if you only do it once a year? Do you realize that many Christians (and I'll bet most) have never read the whole Bible? You can devise any plan you want to and start reading today. No one's watching, no one's keeping score. You will do this effort—read the whole Bible—just because you want to. The benefit to you and your family will be immeasurable.

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