

Chapter 27: Reading, Writing, and 'Rithmetic

Life Application Verses:

2 Timothy 2: 15. Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.

I have been in education for 42+ years at this writing, teaching in the community college and university for 31+ and 11+ years, respectively (two jobs at the same time). In those years, I have learned something very fundamental: reading ***IS*** fundamental to writing and arithmetic and all the other disciplines in our total system of education in this nation. I've heard it said so much in recent years that our current generation is so 'techno-savvy' that we 'old foggies' are light-years behind them in technology. That is both true and false: it is true that they spend a lot of time with technology-based devices, like smart phones and computers; what is false about the idea that our present generation is so advanced is that texting at 90-keystrokes-per-minute is not application to problems nor does it promote reading, writing or creative-thinking. Oh it may add a bit to that educated notion, but from my perspective, just because you can use a smart phone does not mean you can write a coherent sentence or solve a logical problem and report on its outcome. So it goes with Bible Study.

Just because my Bible is on my desk does not mean I have studied it beyond just a 'texting' application. I might be able to quote verses and remember where important passages are in the Holy Word, but am I doing my reading to make me 'approved' as in the Life Application Verses? I want to address two major tenets in this discussion/chapter. The first is that of being Heavenly Minded in the 'three R's (hereafter 3Rs)'—Reading, Riting, Rithmetic (I know, as an educator this gives me a cringing of the past 42+ years...LOL); the second is to become an advocate for a return to sensible educational goals in our nation. SO, without further ado, let's get to this 'research paper.'

Heavenly Minded and Earthly Good in the context of this chapter is to implore you (and myself) to study God's Word as if our very lives depended on it. In actuality, our lives do depend on it. We should be so Heavenly Minded towards our God that we accomplish the 3Rs each time we open the Bible. Let's look at it this way: what is the difference in scanning a passage of Scripture and reading it, writing notes, and logically analyzing its application to make

us more Earthly Good? That was Quiz question 1. Quiz question 2 is: will your life be improved by the 3Rs in Biblical Study or will it be harmed? And, the Essay Question is: Do you think that keeping a journal of your readings, writings, and analysis will be harmful to your student learning outcomes? Now, let me provide a key to the quiz/exam.

1. What is the difference in scanning a passage of Scripture and reading it, writing notes, and logically analyzing its application to make us more Earthly Good? Scanning a passage is to gain a gist of its content and meaning. Scanning is like speed-reading and while I have not researched speed-reading to determine its benefit, comprehension, and retention p-value, I don't think God intended for us to 'speed read' the most IMPORTANT book in history. Thus, scanning is not an absolute to understand the Word of God; conversely, reading is an active verb which has correlation to understanding, retention, and application from what is read in the Word of God. As a natural succession to reading, if we practice writing our thoughts, concerns, and even our prayers in a journal, writing helps us to analyze our thoughts, intents, our Heart, feelings, beliefs, and so forth, into application for our lives. Scanning is on one end of the student learning outcome spectrum, opposite from the 3Rs; it is like trying to measure the distance the East is from the West as they form a straight line 180 degrees from each other—by using a ruler, instead of GPS technologies (you do understand that East to West as a straight line has no end!).

2. Will your life be improved by the 3Rs in Biblical Study or will it be harmed? As my students might opine, "DrK, this is such a simple question. Do we really need to answer it?" Ah...yes. Analyze the harm notion and you will see the power of this question. Let's return to the Life Application Verses: "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth." Harm is written all over this verse. Look closely at what it is saying. 'Be diligent to present yourself approved to God' is the first thing you might want to notice. If you and I are not diligent in the 3Rs of studying, analyzing, and applying Truth of Scripture to our lives, are we harmed? "DrK, this is such a simple question. Do we really need to answer it?" Do you see the logic? If you don't do the 3Rs in the Word of God, how can we be a "workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth?" **IF** you don't 3Rs the Holy Scripture, how can you be approved? Christianity is not a multiple choice quiz that you only need a C to pass? It's a P or F outcome. You either believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God or you don't! Selecting the C answer on this test for each question is not going to help you find Eternal Life. But, once you give your entire self over to God through Christ Jesus, the next task is to do the 3Rs in the Holy Bible. How? God said to be diligent in study so that you will be approved by God—not ashamed of your knowledge—so that your life might be handled according to the Word of Truth. IN essence, Heavenly Minded, Earthly Good; in essence, so simple, 'we trip over our own feet.'

3. Do you think a keeping a journal of your readings, writings, and analysis will be *harmful* to your student learning outcomes? There are few absolutes in life, but this is one of them. I have found that note-taking is essential to learning. Primero, let's address student learning outcomes or SLOs for a moment; segundo, let's talk about the application of the 3Rs. I believe that when God created all things, he also created education. It may take the form of OJT as when He guided Moses to Egypt all the way to when John was on Patmos—but learning is fundamental to our existence. How else could we know of God in such intimacy or at a level of knowledge that allows us to Know Him as our Father-God so that we can exist as the Children of God? Our life-events are SLOs. IN other words, acceptance of Jesus as Lord and Savior is the most important of all SLOs (Student Learning Outcomes); witnessing is a SLO; study of scripture is a continuous improvement type SLO; and, loving our family is a major SLO. Thus, Student Learning Outcomes are those things we accomplish. How can we maximize our SLOs? I would recommend that you keep a journal. IN this journal—which can be a simple spiral notebook—you read scripture with intent to learn its meaning. As you read, you jot down notes, thoughts, feelings, concerns, prayer for loved ones, your errors and need for forgiveness; in other words, your journal becomes an extension of your very thought processes. Write as much as you desire and be as open as you feel led; but read to write and write to analyze what God is saying to you, how it must be applied to your life, to the relationship between Him and your family. Use the 3Rs to maximize your SLOs so that as you grow in your Faith, you have achieved the Life Application Verses: “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.”

Let me summarize this section before moving to education in our nation: practice the 3Rs in your study of God's Word. Be diligent in your practice, study to be Heavenly Minded approved before God, so that your Earthly Good is to serve others, to love your family like you have never loved before, and to have a fellowship with your God like you have never experienced before. If you have passed the Eternal Life exam, in accepting Jesus as Lord and Savior, study-up on the next big test: The Life Exam. The Life Exam is full of Student Learning Outcome questions, and these questions measure your (and my) approval unto God as workmen who need not be ashamed before Him as our study has equipped us to handle and apply the Word of Truth in our daily lives.

Now, turning to contemporary educational issues in our nation. I receive journals by the pound; I read some of the content, and some of the content I ignore, or lightly scan. I talk to other educators, present at conferences, and write articles and conduct research on various

topics. (I am not an expert with all the answers; anyone who makes that claim, beware of them! God is the only expert!) Education has become a political football for votes, bashing, and rhetoric. All the while, our graduation rates are stagnated or falling, our high school graduates are at odds with retention and grade inflation, and there are volumes about those who have means and those who do not and how this impacts student learning outcomes. There is insufficient space here to constructively deal with even a simple, single issue. What I am addressing here is the Christian impact on education.

First, Prayer in schools is a battle for which we as Christians must not surrender. It is imperative that our God-given right to prayer is not totally destroyed by the forces in our society. I implore each of you to find avenues and like-minded groups and organizations that support prayer and Bible reading and speaking and writing about God in our schools. Be active in these groups and Pray that God will aggressively intervene in this gravely important issue in our schools. Second, volunteer at local schools to do whatever they need to help them with student achievement. For example, if the school needs tutors, be one; if they need painting, be a painter; if they need a hall monitor, be one; if they need a teaching assistant, be one. Become involved in your local schools. If you are a business leader, VOLUNTEER your time to go into the schools and discuss what it takes to be successful in business as a leader or as an employee. Our kids, from K-12, need as many positive role models as they can possibly have in their lives. Third, become an advocate for community, school, and family as the three cornerstones of education. It takes the community to support the local schools, it takes the schools to be models of quality and caring, and it takes parents/students to be involved and responsible for the SLOs of the kids/themselves in our schools.

I won't address the issue of public vs. private schools here because what has been discussed to this point is applicable for both. I believe that when God created education, He didn't intend for it to be segregated, separated, or political fodder for politicians. He didn't mean for our schools to be places of bullies, drugs, and gangs, either. Our kids need a solid education; that is, one where they are proficient in the 3Rs. Then, we add things about History, Sociology, Technology, etc. If my own students struggle to read a college-level book, how can I expect him or her to write to a level of business-acceptable quality? I can tell you that even at

the college level, students struggle with reading, writing, and critical-thinking. Oh, they might have a big 'S' on their chest as the fastest texting critter in the room, but can they write an executive summary? The odds are not positive that this will be achieved at an acceptable level.

If you doubt this truth, please let me know and I can send you several papers that indicate the level of writing skills. The reading skills are crucial because if you cannot read well, how can you write what you can't read? How can you logically and critically analyze a problem to work towards a solution? Is this what God had in mind? I hardly believe that when He created us, He desired for us to be ignorant of a baseline set of skills to utilize in life to help us understand His Will for our lives. We are shocked at someone who can't read in our 'modern times.' Why are we not shocked in our global existence when our students can't read or write at a level that employers expect in terms of acceptable skills? I believe that God is shocked because we in education and in our nation have perpetrated this student learning outcome. It is because community, school, and family have not worked together sufficiently to overcome these deficiencies. I include politicians in the community component. You can legislate to your heart's content that people will not speed; yet, they speed all the time. Legislators can pass laws that drinking-and-driving or texting-and-driving should not be done—but these things happen and people die as a result. National and well-intended laws are passed, but have our children become better at the 3Rs? You are going to need to do some homework to understand the truth in this last question. I believe the Life Application Verses speak to life-long learning, whether for Bible Study or earning an Electrical Engineering Degree.

Bible Study is based on the 3Rs, SLOs, and Prayer. Becoming a high school graduate, college graduate, or updating technical skills is based on the 3Rs and SLOs. Well, if these are based on the same baseline resources, then there is no difference in God's Eyes, right? As Christians, after we study Holy Scriptures and close The Book, that does not end the application of God's Truth. Christians work in the world-of-work, just as the non-believer. They both need education and they both need Salvation in Christ Jesus. Christians have accepted this Gift; non-believers have not. But, the 3Rs and Student Learning Outcomes remain!

Consequently, as Children of God, study diligently; study to show yourself approved before God, as a student of His Word, Truth, and Life. Be active in supporting your local

schools; find those who can't read or write and tutor them; find political will to ensure Prayer and God are not thrown from our schools as if these are mere lowly tenants of the school system; become a model to others of life-long learning; and hold up your Holy Bible at every opportunity as the model Holy Book of Learning Outcomes.

A Question of Curiosity:

Do you spend time with your children in their Student Learning Outcomes? You, as an adult Child of God, shape these minds for God. Should we do any less than help our children learn to master the 3Rs? If you have time, is it possible for you to help other children in need of 3R or SLO development?

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"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction." ~ Proverbs 1:7 ~

"I am afraid that the schools will prove the very gates of hell, unless they diligently labor in explaining the Holy Scriptures and engraving them in the heart of the youth." ~ Martin Luther ~

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Special Note:

If you visit the following website (URL subject to change), you will find a very interesting educational exam: Bullitt County History, *1912 Eighth Grade Examination for Bullitt County Schools*. There are sections on Reading, Arithmetic, Grammar, Geography, Physiology, Civil Government, and History. What is so profound in these materials is that one of the Grammar questions asked: "#7. Diagram: The Lord loveth a cheerful giver." Can you imagine what sort of firestorm this would create in today's modern, secular society that impacts our educational system, particularly the K-8 kids? If you decide to take this exam on the web site, take heart; they give you the answers to the questions in the web materials, so don't feel bad if you didn't know the answers. I won't dare give you the score I made. Auburn University might want my doctorate back... LOL. <http://bullittcountyhistory.com/bchistory/schoolexam1912.html>

My Prayer For You:

My God of All Creation, our world is in a mess. We have people all over the world who can't read or write, or who have such deficiencies that their success in the workplace remains suspect. I diligently pray that the Christian community will undertake this matter as a crucial need in the lives of our children, regardless of their color, creed, belief, or gender. If our children can't read or read well, it impacts their lives in ways that we cannot even begin to understand. Guide us, O Lord, as to a path to take to help these young minds—and even adults who struggle with these same issues. May we as Children of God understand Your Will in these issues and help those in need. Guide us to them, show us their need, and help us to be the Feet of Your Mercy and Grace in their lives. Make us examples of Your Word: “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.” I pray for workmen to go and help those who can't read, read; to those who can't write, write; and for those who need a skill to think critically, guidance in how to accomplish this task. Use us O Lord as Your Hands and Feet so that those who need these skills might be helped and in turn, begin to read, write, and analyze the Words of Your Hand to bring them to Eternal Life in Christ Jesus. For The Lamb of God, I Pray. Amen.

The Following story happens all over the world, and finds application in families in every nation on Earth – including families in the United States. The 3Rs are so very important...

Ever wonder about the real lives and people that are being affected through Open Doors' literacy programs? Here we meet Zohra, a woman from Bangladesh whose life was forever changed by the opportunity to learn to read, and ultimately, read about the One who created her.¹*

My name is Zohra, and I am 30 years old. I'm married to Mateen, a laborer, and we have a ten year old daughter, Anamika. I was born in a Muslim family in Bangladesh. Our society expects women to stay at home. Though the government strives to educate young girls, family tradition and economic limitations force them to drop out. Eventually, when they reach their teens, they are set up for marriage. Because my family forced me to stop schooling when I was very young, I thought my dream of becoming a valuable part of society would never be fulfilled. I always knew about the importance of education, and I really wanted to get a diploma.

But, true to tradition, my family married me off to Mateen when I was 15. Mateen didn't go to school either. That was before I met Sharinah, a literacy teacher. Sharinah and I became good friends, and we shared our lives with one another. Some tears and laughter and many stories later, Sharinah sat down with me and shared the most important story of all the story of Jesus Christ. I didn't know how to read, so Sharinah would read the Bible to me. She would read about miracles, healings, suffering and joy. She would read about Jesus's love and sacrifice, about how He came into the world to save us from sin and death. I would listen and imagine,

¹ Reprinted with Permission: Source: <https://www.opendoorsusa.org/christian-persecution/stories/tag-blog-post/literacy-draws-woman-christ/>

and cling to her every word. Sharinah's stories were wonderful. Because of them, I surrendered my life to Christ. With that decision came the desire to proclaim my faith, and I was baptized not long after. I wanted Mateen to know Christ too, but I couldn't read the Bible to him. I prayed, and God answered.

In January 2013, Sharinah started literacy classes near my home. In class, we would always start and end with a prayer. Sharinah, now my teacher, would show us pictures as she presented Bible stories. We would learn the alphabet, try to pronounce, spell and discover meanings behind unfamiliar words. I can read the Bible now. God truly answers prayers. I'm still a bit slow, but it is my great joy to finally be able to read all those stories about Jesus to my husband. We can manage our home better, because I've also learned how to add and subtract. Now, we can be more conscious of our family expenses. Spiritually, I have never been better. I praise God for how He has allowed me to savor His Word. With it, He continually teaches me to be patient and forgiving. Now, I don't easily get upset. Peace has come into my household, because we no longer fight over petty things.



My neighbors have also noticed the change in me and my family. Other women now come to me to seek advice about family matters. I try to be a good example to them and I advise them to be patient, too, just as how the Lord has taught me.

**Names have been changed to protect the believers in this testimony.*

Why Is Reading the Bible So Important?²

Many Christians begin each new year with a plan to read through the entire Bible over the course of that year. Some reach that goal, but most don't. Then there are others who don't even bother to read God's Word at all. Is this issue really a big deal? Why is it so important to read Scripture on a regular basis?

Knowing God

First and foremost, the Bible is essential for knowing God and His will for our lives. The book of Romans tells us there are certain things we can know about God from general revelation. Without Scripture people can know about God's power and divine nature by examining creation ([Romans 1:20](#)). They also know God's law because it is written on their hearts ([Romans 2:14–15](#)). However, there is a vast difference between *knowing about* God and personally *knowing* God. Everyone knows about God, which is why you are without excuse if you reject Him, but only a fraction personally knows Him. The Bible is the foundational truth that teaches the history of the universe, the origin of sin, the reason for death, morality, and so on. Apart from God's Word, mankind would never learn the all-important message of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

² <https://answersingenesis.org/bible-questions/why-is-reading-bible-important/>

Knowing God's Will

The message of eternal salvation is a vital and dominant theme in Scripture, but the Bible reveals much more—including how God would have us live. Through the recorded examples of biblical figures we can learn what pleases God and what does not. His Word also gives direct instruction to believers on how we should act in every circumstance. God's inspired and inerrant Word was given for many reasons: to teach us, rebuke us, correct us, and instruct us in righteousness; it was also given so that we may be complete and equipped for every good work ([2 Timothy 3:16–17](#)). By reading the Bible on a consistent basis, you can find direction for your life and learn how to best serve the Lord who gave His life for you.

Knowing God's Word

Reading through the entire Bible provides an opportunity to better understand Scripture's "big picture." At the same time, we must be careful not to read the Bible just for the sake of doing it.

3R's Applied to the following ~~can~~ WILL change the way you live!

Genesis	Isaiah	Romans
Exodus	Jeremiah	1 Corinthians
Leviticus	Lamentations	2 Corinthians
Numbers	Ezekiel	Galatians
Deuteronomy	Daniel	Ephesians
Joshua	Hosea	Philippians
Judges	Joel	Colossians
Ruth	Amos	1 Thessalonians
1 Samuel	Obadiah	2 Thessalonians
2 Samuel	Jonah	1 Timothy
1 Kings	Micah	2 Timothy
2 Kings	Nahum	Titus
1 Chronicles	Habakkuk	Philemon
2 Chronicles	Zephaniah	Hebrews
Ezra	Haggai	James
Nehemiah	Zechariah	1 Peter
Esther	Malachi	2 Peter
Job	Matthew	1 John
Psalms	Mark	2 John
Proverbs	Luke	3 John
Ecclesiastes	John	Jude
Song of Solomon	Acts	Revelation

God Said So and Jesus Confirmed It!