



Reading—a Key to Personal Growth

by Joey Ellis

The Bible tells us that “And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men” (Luke 2:52). If we want our leaders to be all they can be, then we need to model personal growth for them. In this article, I want to stress the importance of personal growth and development through reading.

Leaders Are Readers

One characteristic of great leaders throughout history is an appetite for reading. It widens our sphere of knowledge, stimulates our minds, and assists in the creative process.

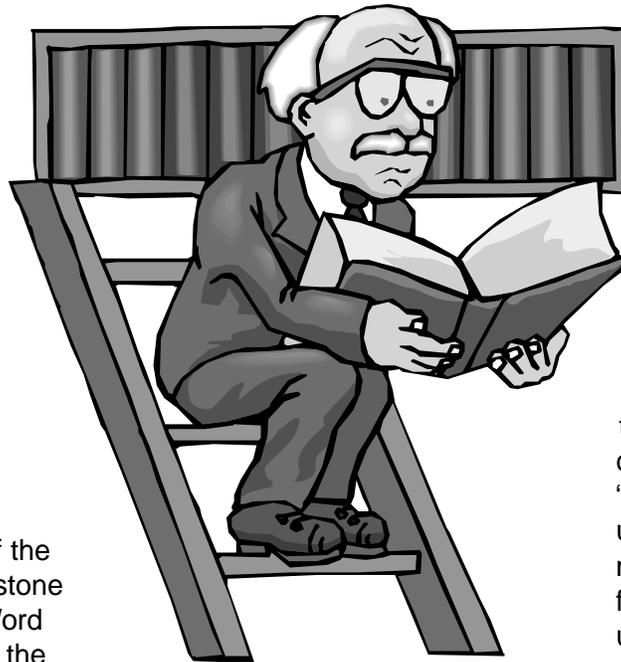
Above all else, read the Scriptures. Daily reading of the Bible should be the cornerstone of our reading. Read the Word for your personal growth in the Lord, not just to prepare for next week's lesson. “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path” (Psalm 119:105). We cannot lead others if we do not know where we are going.

Read Widely

Books about our favorite subjects are the easiest to read. Expand your horizons and read

from other subjects. Choose areas to target your reading, such as spiritual growth, marriage, parenting, leadership, missions, kids' ministry.

Set a goal for your book reading. If you are already an avid reader, one book a month may



be a good target. If you are just jumping back into it, read a book every two months. If you have internet access, subscribe to e-newsletters. As they are delivered to your computer, print them and place them in your “To Be Read” folder. You can read articles contained in newsletters in minutes. Set a goal to read one article a week.

Finding Time

A big question for most of us is, “When do I find time to read?” It is a matter of priority. If you value it highly enough, you will make time for it. I am an early riser. I enjoy getting up early and reading before the rest of my

family awakens. My wife is an evening person. She enjoys her reading time just before turning in at night. Lunch is a great time to read. Read while you travel. Believe it or not, you can get a lot of reading done even while waiting at traffic signals.

Another great way to enjoy a good book is to listen to it on tape while traveling in your vehicle. Zig Ziglar calls this “Automobile University.” Some of us may spend up to an hour or more each day getting to and from work. Take this time that is usually spent frustrated in traffic and turn it into an opportunity to learn.

An active reading plan will help to develop you as a leader. As you grow, take your ministry team along with you. As your team grows, your children grow. Make reading a part of your daily routine.

Questions for Further Study—

1. Why is reading a key to personal growth?
2. What kinds of books do you find yourself reading most often?
3. What kinds of books would help you expand your horizons?
4. How might you be able to fit a reading routine into your busy schedule?

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