In this series of emails we have seen the high regard in which Jesus held the Hebrew Scriptures, and how the Old Testament points to Jesus. We have also seen how the writers of the New Testament stressed their efforts to report faithfully what they had seen or heard, and we looked at some key New Testament 3: 16 verses about why Jesus came, how the Holy Spirit still comes to us, and why the Bible can be trusted. Then we looked at some favourite Bible passages, some of the most important Biblical teaching, and how to respond to two of the main difficulties that people feel when they read the Bible. Finally, we looked at the promise of Jesus that the Holy Spirit will help us find the truth when we read the Word of God. In this last email on the Holy Habit of Biblical teaching, we will look at practical things that can help us read the Bible more regularly and understand it more easily.

Firstly, there are several organisations that produce notes that take you through the most important Bible passages systematically, and explain them as you go along. These days the notes can be found via the internet as well as in booklets. The organisations include the Bible Society (various schemes including “Lyfe”), Scripture Union (who produce “Daily Bread”), the Bible Reading Fellowship (various schemes including “Day by Day with God”), and the International Bible Reading Association (IBRA). Some well-known Christian teachers such as Selwyn Hughes (“Every day with Jesus”) and Geoff Lucas (“Every Day”) also produce these notes. Some notes are aimed at individuals, some are for groups, some are for women, others for young people.

There is a lot of choice. How do you choose? You could look on line, where there are usually samples and explanations (if you google IBRA, don’t go to the International Bee or Bone Research Association sites by mistake!) You could call in at the CLC bookshop on High Street, just up from the Cathedral, where you can browse several of the schemes listed above, or get advice from the very helpful people who work there. Or you could ask our own Ruth Larder at church. Ruth very kindly orders various sets of notes from CLC for different people at church, and she is happy to speak to you about them. I am sure that the people who receive them from Ruth would let you take a look as well if you wanted.

If you don’t already attend one of the house groups at church, you could go to one of these. They will happily tell you how they use the Bible at their meetings. Speak to Lois or Anne Brookes, Alan Jones, Janet Nowell, Lesley Wallace, Daphne Wilkins or Glynn Williams. I also have details of a community Bible Study at Whirlow.

If you belong to the internet generation, there are some excellent websites and apps for your mobile phone. I use Bible Gateway, which instantly gives me every translation of the whole Bible, and has a good Search button for finding any passage via the key words. Another popular website is the Bible App - youversion.

All these aids are fine, but the most important thing of all is that we actually read the Bible. If you attended services at Bents Green 4 or 5 weeks, you were invited to take a free copy of Luke’s Gospel and challenged to read it over the summer. There are still copies available in church, and it is still summer! It is very good to get help from notes or from house groups or from the internet, but there is no substitute for reading the Word of God. God will bless you if you do this.

Produced by Glenn Evans on behalf of the Bents Green Holy Habits Planning Group (Debs Barnett, Glenn Evans, Martyn Read, Graham Wassell, Daphne and John Wilkins). All quotations from the Good News Translation unless otherwise stated. You can find more information on the Circuit Holy Habits Programme on the Sheffield Methodist Circuit website and also the Sheffield Methodist Circuit Facebook page.