Today I’m going to help you think about your plan. You may or may not be a natural planner, but we all make plans and we all need plans. Now I’m not thinking about summer plans or business plans or family plans. I’m thinking about a Bible Reading plan. There are two challenges I’d like to bring before you today about our Bible Reading. Number one: *Do you have a plan?*

Well, today is the day you’re going to get your plan in place! No more point and shoot method. You know what I’m talking about: open your Bible, flip through the pages and randomly put your finger down for a word from God. Random readings will not give you the necessary context that allows one to rightly interpret and apply. Now a lot of people won’t get a plan because they anticipate they’ll fail to keep it. The truth is you’re not going to follow it perfectly, but that’s a silly reason not to have one. The contractor of a house probably will change plans or even miss steps as he builds the house, but that doesn’t mean he doesn’t come into the project without a plan in the first place! You will find that *some* consistency leads to *greater* consistency. The reason much of our Bible reading fails is that we didn’t first have a structure to fall back so we can readily get back on track after derailing. If we don’t know where to turn, we turn aimlessly looking for what we think we need for the day, and rarely does method work on a long term basis.

So, find a plan! There are hundreds of options, just choose one. For the time being I have enjoyed following **Robert Murray M’cheyne’s reading plan**. M’cheyne was a pastor who wanted his congregation to have a plan of getting into the word. One thing I like about this plan is that it has readings for private as well as for the family. This reminds me that I should read God’s Word with my family in addition to by myself. What’s even better is that you can access this plan online. Just type “M’cheyne reading plan”. No need to buy a book. If, however, you are looking for a companion book to this plan check out D.A. Carson’s two volume set based on M’cheyne’s reading plan. The book is called “***For the Love of God: A Daily Companion for Discovering the Riches of God’s Word***.”

Now there is a second plan I’d like to highlight, and the reason is that it frames up a second challenge for today. This plan is called the **Foundations 260** plan, or **F-260**. This plan encourages us to plan to read 5 days a week with the weekend off. Not that we shouldn’t read on the weekends -but the writer recognized that with everyday plans, there is little room for making up lost time. It is hard to catch up when one day is lost. So when you do miss a day this plan has a built in catch-up period which is over the weekend.

I like that, but what I like even more about the F-260 plan is *how* it encourages us to read our Bible. The temptation is to minimize our reading into a checklist. We get to thinking that reading in and of itself is sufficient. What we really need is *Bible Engagement*. Bible engagement begins with bible reading, but it doesn’t end there. In this method of study, after reading the selected verses you then highlight one or two verses from the passage and in a journal you write these verses down. It will surprise you how writing slows down your mind to ponder each and every word of that verse. Is it any wonder that God gave Israel’s kings this command in Deut. 17:18-20:

*18“And when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself in a book a copy of this law, approved bythe Levitical priests. 19And it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes, and doing them, 20that his heart may not be lifted up above his brothers, and that he may not turn aside from the commandment, either to the right hand or to the left, so that he may continue long in his kingdom, he and his children, in Israel.*

Writing God’s Word is powerful for retaining it in the mind. After doing this the plan then encourages the reader to **explain** it in their own words, think how it **applies**, and again write what their **response** to it is going to be.

That is Bible engagement. Allowing the Bible to change us, which is what God’s Word is supposed to do. But first you need a plan. And don’t just plan to read. Plan to engage.