

BIBLE MARKING

by D.L. Moody

Moody's practical guide to the method of marking and annotating one's Bible for more effective study and devotion. He provides systems for highlighting, cross-referencing, and organizing Scripture notes to deepen understanding and aid in teaching and preaching.

1 Chapters

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Bible-Marking Dwight L. Moody*An old writer said that some books are to be tasted, some to be swallowed, some to be chewed and digested. The Bible is one that you can never finish with. It is like a bottomless well; you can always find fresh truth gushing forth from its pages. quote;No Scripture,quote; said Spurgeon, quote;is exhausted by a single explanation. The flowers of Godapos;s garden bloom not only double, but sevenfold; they are continually pouring forth fresh fragrance.quote; Hence the great fascination of constant and earnest Bible study. I thank God there is a height in the Book that I have never been able to reach, a depth that I have never been able to fathom.Hence also the necessity of marking your Bible. Unless you have an uncommon memory, you cannot retain the good things you hear. If you trust to your ear alone, they will escape you in a day or two; but, if you mark your Bible, and enlist the aid of your eye, you will never lose them. The same applies to things you read.Every one ought to study the Bible with two ends in view,-- his own growth in knowledge and grace, and passing it on to others. We ought to have four ears,-- two for ourselves, and two for other people. My Bible is worth a good deal to me because I have so many passages marked that, if I am called upon to speak at any time, I am ready. We ought to be prepared to pass around heavenly thoughts and truths, just as we do the coin of the realm.Bible-marking should be made the servant of memory; a few words will recall a whole sermon. It sharpens the memory, instead of blunting it, if properly done, because it gives prominence to certain things that catch the eye, which by constant reading you get to learn by heart. It helps you to locate texts. It saves preachers and class-leaders the trouble of writing out notes of their addresses. Once in the margin, always ready.There is a danger, however, of overdoing a system of marking, and of making your marks more prominent than the Scripture itself. If the system is complicated it becomes a burden, and you are liable to get confused. It is easier to remember the texts than the meaning of your marks.The simplest way to mark is to underline the words, or to make a stroke alongside the verse. Another good way is to go over the printed letters with your pen, and make them thicker. The word will stand out like heavier type. [For example], mark quote;onlyquote; in Psalms 62 in this way.When any word or phrase is often repeated in a book or chapter, put consecutive numbers in the margin over against each text. Thus, quote;the fear of the LORDquote; in Pro 1:7-29, and so on. Number the ten plagues in this way. In the second chapter of Habakkuk are five quote;woesquote; against five common sins.When there is a succession of promises or charges in a verse, it is better to write the numbers small at the beginning of each promise. Thus, there is a sevenfold promise to Abraham in Gen 12:2-3, quote;1I will make of thee a great nation, 2and I will bless thee, 3and make thy name great, 4and thou shalt be a blessing, 5and I will bless them that bless thee, 6and curse him that curseth thee, 7and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.quote; In Pro 1:22, we have 1simple ones, 2scorners, 3fools.Put a cross in the margin against things not generally observed. For example, the law regarding womenapos;s wearing menapos;s clothes, and regarding birdapos;s-nesting, in Deu 22:5-6; the sleep of the poor man and of the rich man compared, Ecc 5:12.On blank pages at

the beginning and end of your Bible, jot down texts to answer the various kinds of difficulties that you meet in talking to people in the inquiry-room: "can't hold out," "too great a sinner," "fear persecution," etc. Also on these blank pages write short Bible readings and outlines of sermons. In addition to the examples already given, I find it helpful to mark--

1. Scripture references. Opposite Gen 1:1 write, "Through faith. Heb 11:3," because there we read, "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God." Opposite Gen 28:2 write, "An answer to prayer, Gen 35:3." Opposite Mat 6:33 write, "1Ki 17:3" and "Luk 10:42," which give illustrations of seeking the kingdom of God first. Opposite Gen 37:7 write, "Gen 50:18," which gives the fulfillment of the dream. You can connect the prophets with the historical books, the epistles with the Acts, in this way.
2. Notes to recall a sermon, story, or hymn. Against Psa 119:59-60, I have written, "The prodigal son's epitaph." The recalls John McNeill's sermon on those texts.
3. Railway connections; that is, connections made by fine lines running across the page. In Daniel 6, connect "will deliver" (v.16), "able to deliver" (v.20), and "hath delivered" (v.27). In Psalms 66, connect "Come and see" (v.5) with "come and hear" (v.16).
4. At the beginning of every book, a short summary of its contents, something like the summary given in some Bibles at the head of chapters.
5. Key-words for books and chapters. Genesis is the book of beginnings; Exodus, of redemption. The key-word of the first chapter of John is "receiving"; second chapter, "obedience"; and so on.
6. Any text that marks a religious crisis in life. I heard Mr. Meyer preach on 1Co 1:9, and he asked his hearers to write in their Bibles that they were that day "called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord." Do not buy a Bible that you are unwilling to mark and use. An interleaved Bible gives the most room for notes and suggestions. Be precise and concise in your marking; for instance, Neh 13:18, "A warning from history." Never mark anything because you saw it in the Bible of some one else. If it does not come home to you, if you do not understand it, do not put it down. Never pass a nugget without trying to grasp it. Then mark it down.* from Golden Counsels by Dwight L. Moody, 1899.

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