



February 2019

Missions Prep Series: Reading

Everyone has regrets. I'm afraid my personality tends toward regretful ponderings, often wishing for a "do over." I hear other missionaries, too, expressing regret over wasted time in years leading up to their departure for the mission field. Don't get me wrong. God is sovereign, and not one minute of our lives is wasted in His incomprehensible purposes of receiving glory and working for our good. However, I would encourage you to do all you can to use these months and years to better prepare for God's missional purposes and avoid regrets.

So let's talk about preparation. How can you be preparing now for missions? What habits, lifestyle changes, and practical tasks should you begin adopting that will help you prepare for a life given to the Great Commission?

In this edition of *Serve*, we're considering the topic of reading. Before you shut me down, let me assure you that I know you read a lot. You have to, right? After all, you're in school, and reading countless pages each semester may seem like a court sentence, and you can't wait to have served your time. I understand. However, stick with me. Even if you can't implement this practice this month, perhaps you will be convinced it is worth starting when you have a chance to begin.

Why read?

Taking in information and stories related to missions through reading helps you develop your thinking and perspective. It unlocks a stockpile of resources coming from the experiences and research of others. You'll be surprised how

often something you read will intersect with other experiences and conversations you're having in your day-to-day life.



What to read?

Missionary biographies are a great place to start. Real-life missionary stories have a way of demystifying missions and exposing the down-to-earth side of committed missionaries who have gone before. Most importantly, they will build your faith in a big God who desires to be glorified through the humble obedience of His people. I would recommend [*To the Golden Shore: The Life of Adoniram Judson*](#) and [*Through Gates of Splendor*](#). It will be hard to put these down!

Read books by missions thinkers and practitioners. Books on cross-cultural dynamics are helpful. A short but helpful book on this is [*Foreign to Familiar*](#), a book BMM requires all missionary appointees to read.

Also, read both fiction and nonfiction works that take place in various parts of the world to get a better understanding of different cultures and local histories.

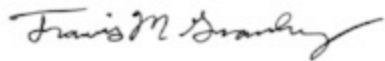
When to read?

I have found it helpful to make reading a part of my routine. You might read during your regular devotion time or just before you go to sleep. One way to cover a lot of territory without sacrificing a lot of time is to listen to audio books

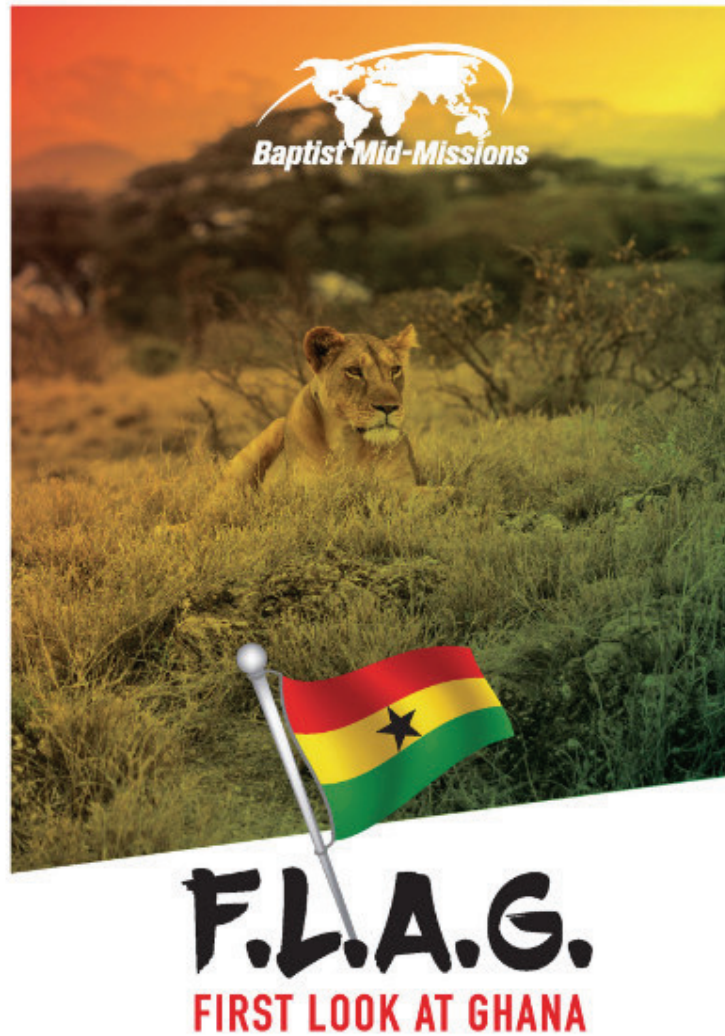
in the car or while doing mindless tasks. There are apps (Hoopla and Overdrive, to name two) that allow you to borrow audio books from your local library, which often include a good Christian selection. There are other ways to get audio books, too.

As you seek to use your time to prepare well for Great Commission usefulness, I hope you'll make reading a priority. I know you will be better off for it.

For His Name,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Travis M. Gravley".

[Travis Gravley](#)



Are you making summer plans? Check out our FirstLook trips. [FirstLook at Ghana](#) will give you a taste of Africa's culture and traditions. Interact with BMM missionaries as they disciple and minister in churches in Ghana. Contact Travis Gravley (tgravley@bmm.org) for more information.





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