

How to read a book (and not miss the point)

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So, I've finally read [Rob Bell's *Love Wins*](#) and am working on a review. When I think about all the controversy surrounding the book, I wish more people had a chance to take a study seminar I took while studying at [Regent College](#).

Professor [John G. Stackhouse Jr.](#)

offered these helpful tips for reading nonfiction. Note how actually reading a book's main content is step five! And considering these tips, it makes you wonder how much time and energy could have been saved responding to *Love Wins*!?!

1. Examine the front cover. Ask yourself: what can I learn about the book from this first impression?

2. Read the back cover. It typically provides good summary of the book's argument.

3. Take time with the front matter

(e.g. publication info, table of contents, preface, introduction). This step is key! These sections will most often reveal the background to the book's content and the author's intent for writing the book (definitely the case in the preface for *Love Wins*).

4. Read the conclusion

before the body of the book. This allows you to find out where the book is headed without getting caught up in unnecessary confusion over specific parts. And really, it's not like it's a novel where the ending will be spoiled :-).

5. Read the body of the book.

This comes last! And in doing so, to avoid getting bogged down, but your primary focus on the introduction and conclusion of each chapter. Again, this will help grasp the main points.

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