

How to Read the Bible

1. Start with prayer. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you understand what you're reading. *"Open my eyes, O Lord, that I may see wonderful things in your Word"* (based on Psalm 119:18).
2. Each chapter of the Bible will answer at least one of these questions. What did God promise? What did God do? Which sin of mine is revealed? *How is God's love for me revealed? (this is the most important question)* What am I to believe about God? What am I to believe about myself (and all mankind). What does God want me to do? *"Wisdom is supreme; therefore get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding"* (Proverbs 4:7).
3. Be patient. Some parts of the Bible are easy to understand right away; other parts are more difficult. As you become familiar with the Bible, you'll understand it better. *"And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you"* (Philippians 3:15).
4. Write down your questions. Watch for answers as you read elsewhere in the Bible: Scripture interprets itself. You may also call your pastor or another Christian for answers to your questions.
5. The best Bible reading plan is one you do every day. Try to stick to the plan on these pages. *"How precious are Your thoughts to me, O God!"* (Psalm 139:17).
6. If you can't read both of today's chapters, read at least one chapter. But read every day. *"His delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night"* (Psalm 1:2) ("Law" sometimes means "Word.")
7. Reading the Bible gives rest, unless it becomes a burden. So if you fall behind, read only today's chapters. Give yourself permission to read the chapters you missed next year. *"Come to me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest"* (Matthew 11:29).
8. Bible reading is a process. It doesn't matter how many times you've read the Bible already—what did you read today? *"Direct me in the path of your commands, for there I find delight"* (Psalm 119:35).
9. When you've read through the whole Bible a few times and you're ready to delve more deeply into the Bible, ask your pastor for a good commentary (e.g. the People's Bible). *"Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ"* (2 Peter 3:18).
10. Reading the Bible won't gain God's favor for you. But it will help convince you that you already have God's favor through faith in Jesus.