

How to Read the Bible

1. Pick a book of the Bible
 - a. Mark: Life of Jesus, highlights Jesus' life/ministry (what he did), fast-paced
 - b. John: Life of Jesus, highlights Jesus' character (who he is), slow-paced
 - c. Ephesians: Answers the question "what is the gospel?" and "how should I live in light of the gospel?"
 - d. Philippians: Learn how can we rejoice in Christ in the midst of pain and suffering
 - e. James: Teaches us how to practically live as Jesus followers
2. Watch the Bible Project Video over the book you pick (see Helpful Websites)
3. Read for breadth, study for depth: read the whole book or chapter in order to understand the context of what is going on (The Bible Project videos are helpful for getting the full context). Then study little portions at a time to gain a deeper understanding of what God is communicating through the text. Take your time when reading/studying Scripture. It's okay to spend several days in a small chunk if you're confused or feel like you want to continue thinking about it.
4. Study one chapter or passage at a time. Here is an example of what a study plan might look like:

Example: Mark

- Day 1:** Mark 1
- Day 2:** Mark 2-3
- Day 3:** Mark 4
- Day 4:** Mark 5
- Day 5:** Mark 6
- Day 6:** Mark 7
- Day 7:** Mark 8:1-9:1
- Day 8:** Mark 9:2-50
- Day 9:** Mark 10
- Day 10:** Mark 11
- Day 11:** Mark 12
- Day 12:** Mark 13
- Day 13:** Mark 14
- Day 14:** Mark 15
- Day 15:** Mark 16

Reading the Bible with other people is vital for being able to ask questions, come to a wider understanding of the text, and learn from one another as you pursue Christ together. Finding someone who has more experience than you with reading the Bible is helpful so they can guide you through it (knowing that everyone is still growing and no one will have all the answers).

5. Ask these questions as you read:
 - a. What does this teach me about God?
 - b. What does this teach me about me?
 - c. What should I do about it?

6. Write down observations and questions
 - a. Observations to make:
 - Repetition/patterns (repeating words/phrases/ideas)
 - Characteristics of God (*gracious, loving, faithful, kind, just, etc.*)
 - Characteristics of humanity (*forgiven, redeemed, made new, etc.*)
 - Commands of God (*love your neighbor as yourself, do not get drunk, pray continually, etc.*)
 - Promises of God (*I will never leave you nor forsake you, I will give you rest, etc.*)
 - Main idea or themes of a passage
 - b. Ask questions!
 - i. What is unclear or confusing?
 - ii. Are there words you don't know and need to define?
 - c. Color code the text if you are a visual learner. Here's an example:
 - i. **Blue** for words/phrases that repeat
 - ii. **Purple** for a characteristic of God (*gracious, loving, faithful, kind, just, etc.*)
 - iii. **Green** for characteristics of humans (*forgiven, redeemed, made new, etc.*)
 - iv. **Orange** for commands that we are to follow (*love your neighbor as yourself, do not get drunk, pray continually, etc.*)
 - v. **Yellow** for promises of God (*I will never leave you nor forsake you, I will give you rest, etc.*)
 - vi. **Pink** for verses that grab your attention

Helpful Websites:

1. Gotquestions.org (for any random questions you have about the Bible)
<https://www.gotquestions.org/>
2. The Bible Project (overview videos for each book of the Bible)
<https://bibleproject.com/>
3. Enduring Word (free online commentary on each book of the Bible)
<https://enduringword.com/>
4. Dr. Constable's Bible Study Notes (free online resource that provides historical background and commentary for every book of the Bible)
<https://soniclight.com/constable-notes/>
5. The Gospel Coalition (provides articles, books, podcasts, sermons, etc. on a variety of topics about faith and the Bible) <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/>
6. Desiring God (provides articles, books, podcasts, etc. and gives examples on how to study small chunks of Scripture through their feature called *Look at the Book*) <https://www.desiringgod.org/>