

Excerpts from *The Underrated Potential of One-to-One Bible Reading* (February 9, 2020) by Collen McFadden

In my experience of local-church ministry, I have found a simple activity that, by God's grace, encourages us to read our Bibles, pursue evangelism, and engage in discipleship. It's called one-to-one Bible reading.

2 People + 1 Bible + Regular Meetings = Gospel Fruit

One-to-one Bible reading is not complicated. It consists of two people meeting together on a regular basis to read through a book of the Bible.

They might meet weekly or bi-weekly. At their meetings they do a few things: pray; read through a passage together; ask simple questions related to **observation, interpretation, and application**; pray again; and schedule a meeting to read through the next passage. They continue meeting together until they finish reading the whole book together.

This simple activity gets people reading their Bibles regularly. It's also helpful as we encounter difficult-to-understand passages. Think of your friends who avoid reading the Bible because they stumble over Levitical laws, minor prophets, or Paul's teaching about spiritual gifts. And think of the texts that often confound you.

Reading the Bible with another person is greatly encouraging. Perhaps both of you will have the same questions. Or one of you will have an answer. Or you can each do some research and report your findings at the next session.

With the help of a friend, reading the Bible isn't daunting. In fact, it's satisfying to understand the life-giving words of Scripture and to grow in that understanding.

Bible Reading as Evangelism

One-to-one Bible reading is also an effective way to share the gospel with someone who doesn't believe in Christ. For example, I have friends who are interested in faith but object to Christianity. These objections are almost always because my friends listen to what other non-Christian critics are saying, and they don't read the primary source (the Bible) for themselves.

I tell them they can't reject something they haven't read firsthand. Then I invite them to read the Bible one-to-one with me.

Bible Reading as Discipleship

Once someone repents and believes Jesus is the Christ, Bible reading can't stop. Discipleship must continue—for both new and longtime Christians.

In the case of my friend (who came to Christ during our bible reading), I encouraged her to continue the path of discipleship by reading one-to-one with someone else, choosing a new biblical book to discover. As she reads the Bible more and more with other Christians, she grows as a disciple, learning about God and his redemptive work through Christ.

One-to-one Bible reading isn't the only way to evangelize and disciple. But if we're stuck on what to do in these areas, it's a good place to begin. Through this regular practice, we will see more church members—including ourselves—reading, evangelizing, and discipling. The method may be simple, but the fruit will be eternal.

➤ *End of article excerpts*

How do I invite someone to read the Bible with me?

Inviting can be direct or more natural. Maybe you are friends with someone, and though spiritual things haven't come up, you sense God prompting you to take a step of faith and ask them to read the bible with you.

Or maybe you're naturally on the topic of spiritual things. Whether you asked a question that led to this point, or the conversation has created space for meaningful or spiritual discussion, you can ask a question anchored to the conversation you're already engaged in.

Here are some sample direct invitations:

- "Hey, you may or may not be up for this, but I want to read through part of the bible at the start of the school year. Would you have any interest in doing that with me?"
- "You know, most people like to give up something during Lent, but I like to try and add something! Would you want to add something to your life and read the Gospel of John with me during Lent?"
- "Hey, I'd be interested in hearing some of your thoughts on spiritual things! Would you ever want to get together to read and discuss some of the life of Jesus?"

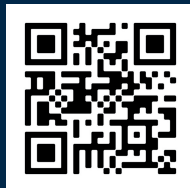
Here are some examples of natural situations:

- The person expresses interest in spiritual things and wanting to explore more. Simply ask, "Oh that's cool. I'm curious, would you like to read the Bible with me?"
- The person is not deflecting spiritual things but is skeptical. A question like this invites exploration: "Hey I have felt skeptical about things in the past. What has helped me to develop a thought-out conclusion is to go right to the source. If you have any interest in exploring spiritual things, we could discuss part of the bible together. What do ya say?"
- A close friend shares a personal struggle they've been dealing with. "I can relate to this. And honestly, reading the Bible as really helped me with the right perspective when facing struggles. Would you want to read the bible together for mutual encouragement?"

To invite another Christian for personal discipleship, you can simply something like:

"Hey, I have been wanting to read Philippians lately, and I was wondering if you would like to do that with me and discuss what God is teaching us. What do you say?"

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:



A simple way to
study the Bible



Discussion guides for every genre of Scripture, plus an 8-week journey through the Gospel of Mark—an excellent starting point for anyone exploring Jesus.