

A Mid-Year Check-Up

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by Ben Purves

Six months ago, our church began our first church-wide Bible reading plan.

It is an extended version of Robert Murray M'Cheyne's classic Bible reading plan, which takes us through the Old Testament once, and the New Testament and Psalms twice. This year we'll read Genesis-2 Chronicles, Psalms, and the New Testament. Next year we'll read Ezra-Malachi, Psalms, and the New Testament.

We also launched [Via Emmaus](#), a conversation podcast to encourage and equip you as you read the Bible. If you have a question from your reading, email it to viaemmaus@obc.org, and you might hear a response in one of the next episodes!

A Bible Reading Self-Assessment

As we are now halfway through the year, I invite you to pause and consider your time in the Word. You might be exactly where you need to be, or you might need to reset.

Is using this reading schedule a blessing?

If so, may you persevere with this reading plan. It is incredibly enriching to read through the entirety of God's Word, and be renewed day by day. I have enjoyed many conversations with my brothers and sisters at OBC over the past months as we have read together.

Have you fallen behind?

If you can catch up in a day or two, do so. But if you find yourself drifting further and further behind, don't let your desire to catch up prevent you from continuing. Pick up your Bible and begin anew with today's reading, and read alongside your brothers and sisters in our church family. Feel free to note passages you'd like to go back and read, but do not let them stop you from progressing.

Does it seem burdensome?

M'Cheyne warned his church about how his reading schedule might not be best for everyone, and there may be a danger of it becoming a formality or a yoke that is too heavy to bear:

We are such weak creatures that any regularly returning duty is apt to degenerate into a lifeless form. The tendency of reading the Word by a fixed rule may, in some minds, be to create this skeleton religion. This is to be the peculiar sin of the last days – "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." Guard against this. Let the calendar perish rather than this rust eat up your souls....

Some may engage in reading with alacrity for a time, and afterwards feel it a burden, grievous to be borne. They may find conscience dragging them through the appointed task without any relish of the heavenly food. If this be the case with any, throw aside the fetter, and feed at liberty in the sweet garden of God. My desire is not to cast a snare upon you, but to be a helper of your joy.

If this plan is a burden, leave it behind, and continue in the Word. Identify a book of the Bible, and set a pace that gives your soul the time you need to pray and meditate. Continue to read and feast your soul in the Scriptures.

Would you like to let us know how you're doing with your Bible reading? We invite you to fill out [this survey here](#).

A Closing Word of Encouragement from M'Cheyne

The following encouragement was written by M'Cheyne to his congregation in December of 1842 as they were about to begin reading the Bible together:

The sweet bond of Christian love and unity will be strengthened. We shall be often led to think of those dear brothers and sisters in the Lord, here and elsewhere, who agree to join with us in reading those portions. We shall oftener be led to agree on earth, touching something we shall ask of God. We shall pray over the same promises, mourn over the same confessions, praise God in the same songs, and be nourished by the same words of eternal life...

Above all, use the Word as a lamp to your feet and a light to your path - your guide in perplexity, your armor in temptation, your food in times of faintness. Hear the constant cry of the great Intercessor, "Sanctify them through thy truth, thy Word is truth."

May these things be true for us as we share in the Word together!

Pastor Ben