

Through the Bible

in 6 Years



The 6-Year Bible

We best get to know God, know how to worship Him, and discover what he wants, by listening to Him. Mainly, by hearing from Him through His Word, the Bible. To become a mature follower of Jesus, read the Bible again and again and again and again.

You may read 5 or 10 verses at a time, a whole chapter or more. When you read, you may want to write down thoughts you want to remember in a notebook—or better yet, your Bible's margins. There is also a guide for how to study the Bible yourself in the back of this booklet.

But *how* you go about this matters less than *how often* you go about this. Regular, accumulated Bible reading will change your life more than one particular method of Bible study. Your mind will be transformed more from *regular* doses of Scripture over a *long* period of time than from *large* doses of Scripture over a *limited* period. Because the world bombards you with 16,000 questionable messages every single day, hearing from God through the Bible is an regularly needed corrective to lies, half-truths, and distractions.

If you're not accustomed to reading the Bible, you may wonder where to start and how much to start with. Some people try to read through all 66 books in a year. Unfortunately many go down in flames around Leviticus so maybe taking 6 years to read the Bible through is a more realistic pace for you. This plan provides structure for each year, yet gives you the flexibility to choose what to read when.

By following the 6-year Bible Plan you'll not only read through the entire Bible in 6 years, but *reread* 5 key books (Genesis, Romans, Acts, Ephesians, and Revelation) plus one gospel account (Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John) each year. Let's begin.

The schedule is meant to be flexible. You can start in January, or any time. Track your annual progress so you don't fall behind. The amount of reading is roughly comparable each year although years 2 and 3 require the largest number of chapters. Old and New Testament books are mixed, longer and shorter books are mixed, and more difficult books are mixed with less demanding ones. But since the order is not inspired, read in whatever order you like, checking each book off as you complete it.

Year 1

(305 chapters)

Date started _____

- Mark**
- Acts**
- Genesis**
- Romans**
- Ephesians**
- Exodus
- Numbers
- 1 Corinthians
- 1 Timothy
- 2 Timothy
- Joshua
- Revelation**
- Malachi
- Daniel
- 1 Thessalonians
- 2 Thessalonians
- Hosea
- James

Year 2

(365 chapters)

Date started _____

- Galatians
- John**
- Psalms
- Romans**
- Genesis**
- Ephesians**
- Acts**
- Isaiah
- Revelation**

Year 3

(322 chapters)

Date started _____

- Hebrews
- Leviticus
- Ephesians**
- Genesis**
- Colossians
- Proverbs
- Romans**
- 1 Samuel
- 2 Samuel
- Luke**
- Acts**
- Revelation**
- Obadiah
- 1 Peter
- 2 Peter
- Titus
- Deuteronomy

Year 4

(307 chapters)

Date started _____

- Philippians
- 1 Kings
- 2 Kings
- Micah
- Matthew**
- Ruth
- Romans**
- Jonah
- Nahum
- Ezra
- 1 John
- 2 John
- 3 John
- Jude
- Revelation**
- Jeremiah
- Lamentations
- Genesis**
- 2 Corinthians
- Ephesians**
- Acts**

Year 5

(288 chapters)

Date started _____

- Mark**
- Song of Songs
- Job
- Acts**
- 1 Corinthians
- Romans**
- Zechariah
- Haggai
- Genesis**
- Revelation**
- Joel
- Ephesians**
- 1 Chronicles
- 2 Chronicles

Year 6

(271 chapters)

Date started _____

- James
- Esther
- Amos
- Ecclesiastes
- Acts**
- Nehemiah
- Ephesians**
- Romans**
- Ezekiel
- Genesis
- Philippians
- Habakkuk
- Zephaniah
- Philemon
- Judges
- Revelation**
- John**

Old Testament (OT)

Genesis

Book of beginnings

Every Christian needs a basic understanding of *Genesis'* first 3 chapters in order to mature. Here you'll find God's master plan, Satan's conspiracy to ruin the plan, mankind's assistance in the ruin, and God's promise to rescue the human race and *still* fulfill His plan. Chapters 1-11 cover the beginnings of the planet and the human race, while 12-50 give an overview of the beginnings of God's covenant people: the Jews.

Exodus

Israel rescued and taught to worship

This book recounts Israel's transition from a captive people group to a theocracy: a nation under both law and God.

Leviticus

God is holy

Having been set apart to be holy for God, Israel's sacrifices were to reflect it. Contains a thorough description of holy worship which revolved around animal sacrifices, and the ministry of Israel's priests (from tribe of Levi[ticus]).

Numbers

40 Years of Judgment

A saga of disobedience, Numbers tells the sorry story of Israel's meanderings around the desert for refusing to trust God.

Deuteronomy

Reviewing the Law

With this final book, Moses closes the Pentateuch. It's a review of the law to alert the new generation to what God's like and what He expects.

Joshua

Conquest of Canaan

General Joshua assumes command from Moses and leads Israel in conquest of the land God had promised their ancestor Abraham. Miraculous victories remind Israel that it is not swift horses or sharp swords and spears that win battles, but God.

Judges

Traitorous nation

After Joshua the General died and before Israel got her first king, judges led the nation. Some were good, some were bad, but the people frequently abandoned their own God for their neighbors'. "Everyone did as he saw fit..." Judges records a sad and repetitious pattern of man's rebellion, God's wrath, man's repentance, and God's restoration.

Ruth

Redemption

Set in the days of the judges, this love story highlights the selflessness of a Gentile woman and a Jewish man who were ancestors of King David and Jesus.

1 Samuel

Israel's First King

The nation is transformed from a theocracy in which God was king, into a monarchy in which unreliable Saul was king. The writer examines the stormy relationship between Saul and his successor David, and how God sovereignly removes and raises up rulers.

2 Samuel

The Kingdom under David

This history book of King David's life from the time he became the recognized king to his death, contains stories of great heroism and faithfulness, as well as ones of cowardice and shame. Nevertheless, amazingly God still describes him in Acts as "A Man after God's Own Heart."

1 Kings

Israel's Kings & Prophets 101

From King Solomon to King Ahaziah; from wisdom to foolishness.

2 Kings

Israel's Kings & Prophets 201

From King Ahaziah to King Jehoiachin; from sorrow to slavery.

1 Chronicles

Hope & a Future for Israel

The author (perhaps Ezra) writes words of hope to encourage Babylonian Jews who have returned to Judea: God still has a plan for Israel, but He expects what he has always expected from his people: faithfulness. Extensive genealogies are woven with stories from King David's reign.

2 Chronicles

Decline of a Nation

Although it begins with the optimism surrounding the completion of the temple, this history of Israel's decline, division and breakup starting with Solomon, is a pitiful reminder of the price of unfaithfulness. Possibly written by Ezra after the captives returned to Jerusalem, it concludes with hope as seen in the mercy of a pagan king.

Ezra

Rebuilding God's temple

Thanks to a pagan king's generosity, Jewish families from Babylon return to Jerusalem to help Ezra rebuild the destroyed temple and restore true worship of the Most High God.

Nehemiah

Rebuilding Jerusalem's walls.

When this Jewish servant in Babylon's royal court heard about the pathetic condition of Jerusalem's walls and gates, he got the king's blessing and provisions to return and rebuild them in a record-breaking 52 days.

Esther

God's Sovereign Plan

Written by an unknown Jewish author, this book tells the story behind the Jewish feast *Purim*. An epic account of courage, trust, and Gods' faithfulness.

Job

Trust God despite suffering

The book for sufferers, it tracks Job from the moment his suffering was conceived, through his understandable "why?" questions, through endless discussions with well-intentioned friends who thought *they* knew why, to an encounter with God that made "why?" irrelevant.

Psalms

God is good

A book of prayers by King David and others, you'll discover *yourself* in their musings about themselves and their God: sorrow, joy, anguish, fear, despair, hope, remorse, relief, praise and thanksgiving—the stuff of strong *and* weak faith—is all here.

Proverbs

Book of Wisdom

Good advice by a collection of authors including the wisest man who ever lived, on how to live and how not to.

Ecclesiastes

The Rest is Meaningless

Likely written by Solomon, the disillusioned old monarch takes brutal stock of his life and what remains after a life of indulgence. He concludes that only a life centered on God and His purposes matters.

Song of Songs

Love Song

With a frankness that may startle novice readers, this inspired poetry portrays romantic love between married lovers in all its splendor and sensuality.

Isaiah

The Hope of Messiah!

Often using majestic poetry, this Jerusalem-based "prince of prophets" writes that God will both judge, and eventually bless Israel. Instead of being despised among nations, she will one day be honored as Messiah inaugurates her rebirth.

Jeremiah

Judgment everywhere

Jeremiah was an unhappy prophet preaching to an unhappy nation during unhappy years. He predicted—and then endured the tragic demise of Jerusalem and the southern kingdom of Judah. While gloom hovers over most of his sermons, he still predicts hope for a reunited people and their God. Except for David, no prophet is more honest about his misgivings that God is doing the right thing.

Lamentations

Book of Tears

Jeremiah had the misfortune to preside as prophet-in-weeping over the siege and collapse of Jerusalem. He mixes confession of his people's sins with his frustration that God's judgment needs to be so harsh.

Ezekiel

"I am the Lord"

A Jewish exile in Babylon, this prophet preached God's judgment against Jerusalem, Israel, as well as Gentile nations. His powerful preaching brought an end to idolatry among Jewish exiles once and for all, and using apocalyptic images, described the return of God's glory to His people.

Daniel

The Most High God Rules

No prophet is more widely read or studied than Daniel. His exploits in the Babylon court rival the most imaginative movie plot. His dreams and interpretations display God's future plans more vividly than any Bible book besides Revelation.

Hosea

God's rebel wife

The heart-wrenching story of a prophet called to literally live out God's most anguishing reality: Israel was his unfaithful bride.

Joel

The Day of the Lord

After a national plague of locusts destroys food prospects for the year, the prophet urges people to repent so God will again turn his

favor on them. Joel warns not only ancient Israel, but today's world that God's wrath is coming.

Amos

Deluded by Prosperity

During one of Israel's "golden ages," this prophet scratched beneath its national prosperity to expose the rotting hearts that worshiped foreign gods and mistreated the poor.

Obadiah

Edom's coming doom

This prophet predicts the eventual end of Esau's descendants due to their hostility toward the Jews.

Jonah

God Always Gets His Man

A gripping story pitting a reluctant and prejudiced missionary against a determined God who loves the world; God wins.

Micah

Prophet of God

Despite blaming sin and rebellion for God's impending punishments of both Israeli kingdoms, this blunt prophet from the south also offers the hope that inevitably comes when God intervenes.

Nahum

God will break the evil city

The prophet promises Jews living under Assyrian oppression that along with its capital city, the cruel nation will be trampled by God's fierce judgment. (Nineveh fell in 612 B.C.)

Habakkuk

God is Just

Alarmed by the people's freewheeling sin, the prophet asks God to intervene, only to become even more alarmed that God's judgment plans include using a *worse* nation. In the end, Habakkuk's protests crumble in the face of God and the prophet falls down in humble worship.

Zephaniah

The Day of the Lord

Dread will fall on those who rebel against God whether they are among His people or other nations. Conversely, the godly remnant will rise in honor to receive God's blessings and rewards.

Haggai

First Things First

The failure of the people to finish rebuilding God's house while enjoying their own, exposes their reluctance to give God what is rightfully His.

Zechariah

God's Work of God

A book of many visions, this work begins with the rebuilding of the Jerusalem temple, but races on to portray God's future work through the Messiah, His coming judgment on His enemies, and the deliverance of His people.

Malachi

Careless Religion

People who forgot God's blessings and became casual about His holiness, are confronted by God through this frank prophet. Malachi's plain talk on spiritual neglect delves into strikingly contemporary problems like giving God leftovers, disreputable religious leaders, divorce, and sacrificial giving.

New Testament (NT)

Matthew

Jesus the King

1 of 4 historical accounts or "gospels" of Jesus' life, it was written by one of Jesus' least likely followers: a converted tax collector named Matthew (aka Levi). He meticulously documents how Jesus accurately fulfilled prophecies recorded in the Old Testament about a coming Messiah.

Mark

Jesus, Man of Sorrows

This gospel was written by Peter's disciple John Mark. It was probably the first written gospel, the shortest, and for fast-moving action, this is the one to read. It reminds hard-pressed Christians that following Jesus means suffering like him.

Luke

Jesus, hope for the Gentiles

This gospel was written by a doctor who traveled with the apostle Paul. This and Luke's sequel "Acts" were both written to encourage the faith of Christians—perhaps especially those who weren't Jews—and give them an accurate account of Jesus' life and ministry to counter unbelievers' skepticism.

John

Jesus, Son of God

Jesus' disciple John, "the one whom Jesus loved..." (John 13:23 *et al*), wrote this gospel account. He makes the case for Jesus being God in human form more clearly than any other book. It is boldly evangelistic, pointing unbelievers to Jesus for hope.

Acts

The Infant Church

From Christ's return to heaven and then Pentecost, to the end of Paul's mission work, Acts tells the story of the Church's explosive growth and power after humble beginnings. In Luke's sequel to his gospel account, church leaders Peter and Paul get central billing.

Romans

You're righteous by faith alone!

Except for the gospels, this essay on salvation is the most important book in the New Testament: why salvation's needed, how it's acquired, what are its effects.

1 Corinthians

Church Problems

Many of today's church problems (spiritual superiority, sexual immorality, factions, lawsuits, misuse of spiritual gifts, doctrinal errors) were yesterday's church problems too and had to be addressed. Paul

gives wise counsel to churches and individuals alike. Here is the most extensive New Testament study on spiritual gifts.

2 Corinthians

You're being led astray!

Although Paul was the spiritual father to the Corinthian believers, he couldn't tell it by their loyalty. Something of a personal slap to him, other leaders had drawn church members into their own orbit at the price of Paul's reputation and position as an apostle of Jesus Christ. This book illustrates the high personal price God's servants must sometimes pay to be faithful to God.

Galatians

Beware of imitation gospels

Paul warns Christians not to listen to cult teachers who were teaching that you could only be saved *if* you kept Jewish laws in addition to placing faith in Christ. Any gospel that requires Jesus' work *plus* something is *no* gospel at all no matter who endorses or teaches it.

Ephesians

God's Big Plan

The apostle Paul expands your grasp of God's intentions and purposes in Christ—especially as it plays out in the Church. Also contains the "Marriage Blueprint" as well as how to respond to those in authority over you.

Philippians

Be Joyful!

In this letter of appreciation to the first European Christians, Paul reminds them of various doctrinal and practical matters, but it is his urging to REJOICE! that dominates.

Colossians

Christ is Enough

Penned in a jail cell, Paul's letter tackles a smorgasbord of false teachings gaining footholds in the Colosse church. But rather than dwelling on everything that's false, his main tactic is to highlight the truth. He exalts Jesus Christ in all of his power, identity and glory.

1 Thessalonians

Please God

Gentile converts are urged to please God, and Paul describes what will take place at the Rapture.

2 Thessalonians

Hang in there

This letter was written mainly to reassure believers that Jesus had not returned yet, that they had not missed Him; certain things had to happen first. Paul also gets more insistent that believers who aren't working, must.

1 Timothy

Shepherd the Church well

In this first of 3 books of advice for pastors, Paul urges Pastor Timothy to fight well for the faith: confront false teaching, make sure church leaders are qualified to lead, and minister effectively to all kinds of people in the church.

2 Timothy

Follow Jesus at all costs

The letter Pastor Timothy receives from his beloved mentor is strewn with Paul's tears, warnings, encouragements, and candor. "Following Jesus will cost you greatly—as it has me. But it leaves no regrets."

Titus

Lead the Church!

Paul instructs this missionary how to organize and maintain healthy churches in Crete.

Philemon

A Personal Plea

Paul urges a friend to take back a runaway slave who has converted, with the kindness one believer owes another.

Hebrews

How the New Covenant fulfills the Old

More than any other book, this one connects the new covenant with the old. The unknown author (perhaps Apollos or Barnabas) describes how God implemented the OT Law to prepare all Israel to bow at foot

of the cross (Galatians 3:24). The sacrificial system was designed to help the people recognize their "Once for all" Sacrificial Lamb when He died.

James

Genuine faith works!

Jesus' half-brother James, the pastor of the Jerusalem church, insists that genuine faith is revealed in actions.

1 Peter

From the ashes of suffering rises hope

Written to Christians being persecuted, Peter's letter is not one of stoic despair, but a jubilant reminder of the precious jewels God's given believers, and the behavior that such valuables should produce.

2 Peter

Be on your Guard!

Peter's second letter is a sober reminder that forces are arrayed against the Church from within, and from without. He promises that God will one day exert judgment on the earth, but deliver them to a new home.

1 John

The Marks of Genuine Salvation

The "Apostle of Love's" first letter is a remarkable yardstick with which to determine if your faith—or another's—is genuine or phony (see 5:13).

2 John

Careful whom you support

John warned Christians to be careful not to take in heretical teachers to their homes,

3 John

Thank you for your support!

John commends Gaius for aiding the apostle's preaching partners even though he didn't know them personally.

Jude

Watch out for false teachers!

Jesus' half-brother Jude (aka Judas; no, not *that* Judas!) urges Christians to deal firmly with false teachers who twist grace into an excuse for sin.

Revelation

The Apocalypse

Through the apostle John, Jesus gives a breathtaking view of God's violent judgment on the rebellious world, and the ultimate vindication of His saints. Jesus also warns the Church that she cannot compromise with the world and its values without penalty.

How to Study the Bible Yourself

Yes, you can study the Bible yourself. True, you can greatly benefit from group Bible studies and teaching by trained preachers and teachers, but they are no substitute for *personal* Bible study. You have the Bible, and if you've been born again, the Holy Spirit. That's enough to "get it." The following are some simple instructions to help you get the most out of your Bible. You can understand much simply by reading it, but digging a little more will open up a breadth of understanding that can thrill your heart and transform your life.

First, get your Bible, something to write with, and paper. (To have your study serve you in the future, use a 3 ring binder, your computer, or otherwise file your study results.)

Second, ask God for His help. Through the Holy Spirit, He will be your teacher. *"But the Counselor, the holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."* (Jesus, in John 14:26)

Third, read through your study passage at least 3 times; You might want to read it in several different translations or versions if you have access to them (buy versions for pennies at book sales).

Now you're ready to begin your study. You have 3 goals: look, understand, and do. Each corresponds to a question you'll ask yourself as you study a Bible section:

- What do I see in this section? (look)
- What does the section mean? (understand)
- What should I do as a result, or how should I be changed? (do)

Here are some tools that will help you with each question.

Look

1. Key Words: Look for words that are repeated in the section (or a family of related words like praise/worship/adore), or words that reflect the main idea of the passage even if they aren't repeated.
2. Commands: Are there any commands in the section?
3. Linking words: What words/phrases are in the section that con-

nect two or more phrases or sentences?

- *But...* Often shows contrast.
- *So that, in order that...* Indicates a purpose.
- *For, because...* Indicates a reason.
- *If...* Often indicates a condition.

These are the most common but you will notice others too like *unless, just as, in the same way, however*.

4. Cause-and-Effect Statements: Notice words like *if, since, because, therefore*. Such words often introduce statements telling what action will follow what thinking or conduct.
5. Questions: Are there any questions asked in the section?

Understand

(Some of these steps may require the aid of a more knowledgeable Christian)

1. Ask basic literature questions of the section (see pgs. 22-23 for sample questions): "who, what, when, where, why, how?"
2. Always regard what you're reading as literal unless the section makes it clear you shouldn't.
3. Ask yourself, "What did the writer mean?" Study what's written before and after ("the context") for clues.
4. Always interpret Scripture with other Scripture. Use cross-references in the middle column of your Bible if you have them. Let clearer sections help you interpret less clear sections.
5. Guard yourself against reading into Scripture what's not there.
6. Always keep in mind that the Bible is progressive. That is, God revealed more and more of his plan over time. So, Ephesians would reveal much more of God, His nature, and His will for us, than say, Genesis which recounts events from several thousand years earlier.
7. Once you think you understand what the section is saying, question your understanding.
 - Does the evidence support your understanding?
 - Does it agree with what you know is taught elsewhere in the Bible?
 - Does it agree with what the Christian Church has historically taught this section means?

Do

Now you're ready to apply what you've learned

1. Should I change what I believe about God?
 2. Should I change what I believe about people?
 3. Should I change what I believe about me?
 4. Should my values change?
 5. Should my priorities change?
 6. Should I reevaluate my motives?
 7. Should something change in a relationship?
 8. Should my attitude change?
 9. Should my behavior change?
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Sample Literature Questions to ask as you study

Who?

Who is the writer?

Who is the writer talking to?

Who is the writer talking about?

What?

What kind of literature is this section: poetry (like the Psalms and some of the OT prophecy books), narrative (recounts events), didactic (teaches something) or apocalyptic (describes stunning future events)?

What is talked about before this section, or after?

What is the emotional tone of the section?

What happens in the passage?

What is God doing in the passage?

What are people doing in the passage?

What information seems to be missing?

What does the section teach me about God the Father?

About Jesus Christ? About the Holy Spirit?

What will happen if I follow the example given in the section?

What will happen if I don't follow the example given in the section?

What difficult words are in the section and what do they mean?

Where?

Where did this take place?

Where will this take place?
What location is described?

When?

When did this take place?
When will this take place?

Why?

Why did the writer write this?
Why did God allow this?
Why did Jesus say that?
Why did the people respond that way?

How?

How should this affect my life or thinking?
How did God work in this person's life?
How does this passage relate to other Scripture?

You won't be able to come up with answers to all these questions in every passage you study. These are simply to help you dig deeper than you would by simple reading.

Some answers you'll find in the section you're studying, some you won't. You may find some in the section written before or after the one you're studying. You may find some answers in a cross-reference, or in some study tool like a Bible Dictionary, study Bible, or Bible Encyclopedia. But try hard not to rely primarily on these tools. Only the Bible is inspired by God.

*Bible study can change your life. It changed mine. God bless you as He speaks to you through His Word.
Pastor Keith Rohrer*