

Proverbs

This book is a collection of moral and religious instructions for youth, but it is highly relevant to all of us who are “children of God.” This book contains the collected wisdom of the people of God—what has actually worked for many generations. In a day and age where the local Barnes and Noble store is full of self-help books, Christians should read *Proverbs* before spending their hard-earned cash on anything else. Since there are 31 short chapters in this book, some people read one a day!

Joshua – Kings 2

Gives you the history of Israel after Moses’ death.

This should be read in short segments along with parts of the New Testament so that we remember that the God who often seems harsh in the Old Testament is the same One that “so loved the world that He gave His only Son” Jesus Christ in order to save us from the eternal death—the effect of Sin. As you read, notice how God’s chosen people are always turning away from God, but God continues to be faithful to them.

Corinthians 1 & 2

The city of Corinth was the most similar to a modern American city of any in the ancient world. Hence, Paul’s letters to this city are full of advice for Christians struggling with sins and temptations very much like those we struggle with today.



Galatians

Sometimes called the *Magna Carta* of Christian liberty, this letter explains how the freedom we enjoy as Christians is related to our obligations to one another. It also explains the relationship between grace in the New Covenant and the Law in the old.

Revelation to St. John

This book is an *apocalypse*, which means its language is full of symbolism whose meaning may not be easily apparent. Though complicated, Christians should remember that it is a vision of the completion of God’s saving activity in history, a proclamation that—despite how things may appear right now—God will be the winner in the cosmic struggle of good against evil. The most useful parts of the letter to the modern reader are chapters 1-2, which are advice to churches on how to stay true to God at times when it is tempting to turn away.

The rest of the Bible can be read in any order you choose, but a good study Bible will help you. Even more important is to study the Bible *with other people*. God calls us through the Bible to become His *people*, not simply His person, and it was

His intention from the beginning that Scripture be read with other members of His faithful people, which are His body.

God bless you as you begin to experience the richness of the Bible. If you have any questions, please ask any congregation member. We will be happy to help you... or find someone who can. Let us grow in our knowledge of God’s Holy Word together!



*Rooted in the Word
Growing in Grace
Flourishing in the Faith*

Bible Reading for Beginners



Getting Started

1. **PRAY!** Always pray before, during, and after reading Scripture. The Bible is God's word to us, so it should always lead into a conversation with God.
2. Think about Christ as you read. Martin Luther said that the Bible was like a manger, holding Christ for us. Don't confuse the manger with Jesus Himself! If something seems difficult to understand, remember that it all points to Christ.
3. Try reading the books in the order below. This order is designed for people with little or no experience with the Bible, and is designed to help you "get into it" easily.

Gospel According to Luke

Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. This is the easiest of the four Gospels to read, and it includes the Christmas stories as well as those of Jesus' passion (crucifixion) and Easter resurrection.

Genesis

These are stories that are referred to throughout the rest of the Bible. Since the other Biblical writers just assume that you know these stories, it will make reading the rest of the Bible easier.

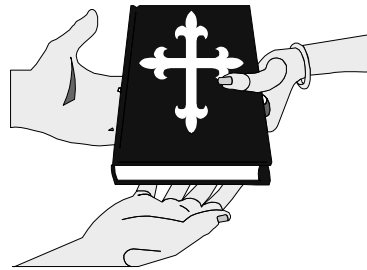
Acts of the Apostles

This is the follow-up to the Gospel of Luke and was written by the same person. This is what happened to the first Christians

after Jesus ascended into heaven to be with His Father. Some people call this "the Gospel of the Holy Spirit," since it begins with the giving of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost and tells about the birth of the Church.

Philemon

This is the shortest of Paul's letters, and so the easiest to understand. In it Paul pleads to Philemon on behalf of the runaway slave Onesimus. He requests that Philemon not treat Onesimus as a slave but as a brother since Onesimus has become a Christian.



We who were slaves in our sins but are now free because of Christ should hear these words as applying to us.

Romans

This is the longest of Paul's letters, but the most important because it outlines God's plan of salvation for humanity from the fall of Adam and Eve to the future inclusion of all God's children. This is a good one to tackle with a study Bible. (That's a Bible with comments at the bottom of the page to help you understand what you are reading.) You may also find it helpful to read a paraphrase translation of this book like Eugene Peterson's *The Message*.

Gospel According to John

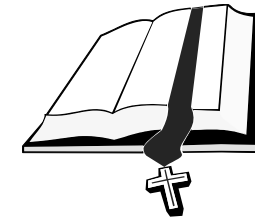
These are more stories about the life of Jesus, but John does not put the events of Jesus' life in *historical* order. Instead, he recounts the stories in an order that communicates most clearly the *theological* message of who Christ is

and what he did for us. This book is almost like poetry, so it is best to read it in short segments. When you read a segment, stop to think about the actual words John uses to tell the story, as these sometimes carry the meaning most clearly just like in poetry.

Psalms

The book of Psalms is often called "the prayer book of the Bible." Various approaches can be used to understand the Psalms, but the most important thing to remember about them is that they are the real prayers of real people throughout time just like you and me. Every sentiment of the human heart is expressed in them: "joy, gratitude, thanksgiving, love, tenderness, enthusiasm, but also intense suffering, complaint, pleas for help and for justice, which sometimes lead to anger and imprecation (scoffing)." As John Paul II said, "In the Psalms, the human being fully discovers himself."

The most important thing to do when reading the psalms is allow them to guide you in prayer and realize that they all point to Christ, for the risen Christ said, "Everything written about me in the law



of Moses and the prophets *and the psalms* must be fulfilled." (Luke 24: 44).

Individual psalms can be read at any time, and are often read along with some other part of Scripture as part of a Christian's daily Bible reading.