

ROOKIE CHRISTIAN | FACT SHEET

Getting Started in Bible Reading

The Bible is the book that tells us the truth about God, about ourselves, and about the world around us. It grounds us in reality. Because God speaks through the Bible, it feeds our souls, strengthening our inner life. Reading the Bible fuels our spiritual growth. It is a powerful book which transforms how we think and feel. The Bible is so rich, we will never exhaust its treasures. And, on the other hand, a beginner can start reading and experience immediate results. For leaving the old life behind and becoming stronger in the new life, one really must be consistent in Bible reading and study.

A Books of Books: The Bible is a collection of books, 66 of them, large and small, representing different kinds of literature – history, poetry and music, prophecy (which is like a collection of sermons), the book of Proverbs is a collection of wise insights expressed in short sayings (someone called it God’s Twitter account)... there are the Gospels which are somewhat like biographies of the life and ministry of Jesus... and there are Epistles, which are letters written to churches or individual Christians.

Each book of the Bible was written with a back story. Our own communications are written in the context of what is going on at the time. Sometimes, something of significance happens in a person’s life and they write a song or a poem about it. Sometimes, they may text a friend to tell them about it or post the news on social media. The big difference is that the biblical writings were inspired and guided by God in their writing.

Two Main Sections: The Bible is divided into two main parts, the Old Testament... and the New Testament, which is the part that tells us about Jesus and about the early Christians who followed Jesus.

Where to Start Reading: Start in the New Testament. The New Testament

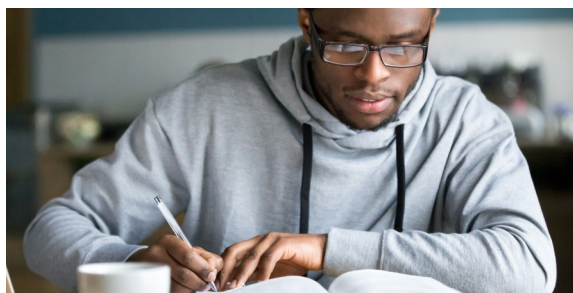
has four books about the earthly life and ministry of Jesus. These are called Gospels. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. **Mark** is the quickest read; start there. As you read Mark you will see Jesus saying and doing things... and he is so different and demonstrates so much power, that people keep asking, “Who is this guy?” ...all the way to a climax in chapter 8. Then, from that point forward, the question is: “Why did he come here?” That’s the Gospel of Mark.

After Mark, a good book to read is **Ephesians**, which is a letter from Paul to the church in a town called Ephesus. Pay close attention to his descriptions of what God has done in the lives of Christians.

After Ephesians, read the **Gospel of John**. It is about the life and ministry of Jesus like Mark, but is written in a different style and has some different stories about Jesus.

After the Gospel of John, turn toward the back of your Bible and read **The First Epistle of John**. This five-chapter book has as its theme, “How we can know.”

Luke and Acts were written by the same author. Luke is about



Jesus and Acts is about what happened after Jesus returned to Heaven... as the church is established. So next, read Luke and then Acts.



As you read, it's OK to underline verses, check-mark key phrases, circle key words, and things like that. Do it in a way that works for you.

Matthew tells us how Jesus was the fulfillment of the promises in the Old Testament... as seen in his earthly life and ministry. A good book after that might be Philippians, a letter to Christians in Philippi.

I would suggest reading all of the New Testament, with the possible exception of Revelation, before moving to the Old Testament.

Some Suggestions for Better Bible Reading:

First, buy a good Bible with a good size type face.

Buy a modern translation. Christians who are not big readers may find the New Living Translation helpful. If you want explanatory notes and introductions to the books, the ESV Study Bible and the CSB Study Bible are the two best. A lot of believers have a smaller Bible they take to church and keep their larger, heavier study Bible at home for their personal study.

As you begin your daily reading each day, ask God to speak to you through His Word.

Each day as you read a chapter or so... think about what was for you the key verse. Some folks use the abbreviation, SPECKA – which stands for:

- Sin to avoid
- Promise to claim
- Example to follow
- Command to obey
- Knowledge to know
- Application

Don't allow this to become a big burden. Just think through your SPECKA acrostic and decide what was the big thing that stood out in your daily reading... to you.

Remember, You Are Meeting With God: You are reading your Bible to hear God speak to you. Don't allow it to feel like a homework assignment. Concentrate on your appointment with God and enjoy the blessing and the challenge!