

“Oh, how I love your instructions! I think about them all day long.” - Psalm 119:97

“Blessed are those hearing the word of God and keeping it.” - Luke 11:28

We are challenging all of our people to be in the Word of God daily. We are challenging the people who love God to also love his word enough to listen to it regularly. Love is often not a feeling but a choice: a choice to dedicate oneself towards another. Usually, after the choice to love someone, the emotion of Love follows. In the same way, the choice to love and read The Word proceeds our emotional eagerness and joy to do so. Yet the more we read the word, the more our hearts come alive with passion for knowing the words of Jesus and living in his ways.

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### THE CHALLENGE: First, Love the word. Then, Live the Word

#### LOVE THE WORD

Dedicate yourself to reading the Bible daily so that your love for the Word and, ultimately, love for God would grow as you discover more clearly who God is, what He's done, and who you now are in Him.



#### LIVE THE WORD

Dedicate yourself to living out what your read in light of the great things Jesus has done for you!

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### THE PLAN

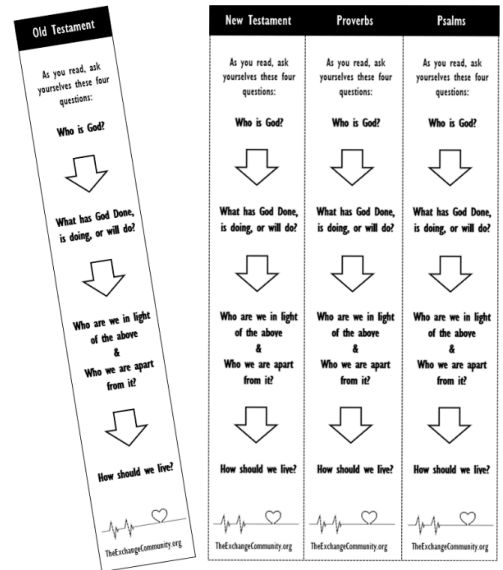
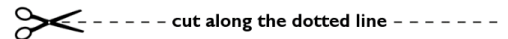
While reading straight through the Bible from Genesis to Revelation is good, there are potentials to get bogged down in certain sections of scripture or miss out on very important elements that explicitly point to the Good News or apply to everyday life problems. We propose a balanced reading program where you read one reading from each section:

1. **A Psalm/Day.** Read the psalm. Pray through the themes of the psalm. Learn to pray like the psalmist, especially in the confession of sin and weakness as well as the praise and confidence of God. If it helps, sing or write songs, poems, or prayers in your own language to express the heart of the psalm as a prayer concerning your own life. (NOTE: Some psalms contain prayers where David or others pray for justice and judgment on their enemies in sometimes violent ways. Remember A) In these psalms David almost always entrusts judgment to God, also B) these psalms should be read with the “Son of David,” Jesus, in mind who prayed for his enemies and gave his life for them. His love redefines how we pray concerning our enemies.
2. **A Proverb/Day.** Read the Proverb that matches the day of the month. Ask the Lord to give you wisdom and to root out folly in your life. If your life lines up with the folly spoken of in proverbs, ask yourself how the Gospel/the truth of God can free you from living a foolish life. Ask the Lord for Wisdom in that area of life.
3. **New Testament.** Start by reading through the Gospels and then read the rest of the New Testament. Read a chapter/story/section a day.
4. **Old Testament.** Read from one book into the next through the Old Testament starting in Genesis, skipping over the proverbs and psalms since you're already reading those daily. Read a chapter/story/section a day.

On the last page in this document we have printed out two sets of bookmarks in cardstock for you to cut out. They correspond to the balanced reading plan above. Cut out each bookmark from that page and use them to track your progress through each of your daily reading sections.

We have given you two sets of book marks, one to keep and one to share. God always intended that we be disciples who make disciples. In the ways that you have been discipled, God intends to disciple others through you.

As you commit yourself to daily seeking the Lord through reading the scriptures, your love for the word and for the Lord will grow. You will find increasing faith, peace, hope, and confidence plus other blessings in reading God’s word! You’ll end up wanting to share the gift that you’ve been given. So, start praying now. Ask, “Lord, who do you want me to disciple in daily bible readings?” It may be a significant other, a child, coworker, a neighbor, or friend. Over the next few weeks and months, listen to how God responds to that prayer and follow where he leads.



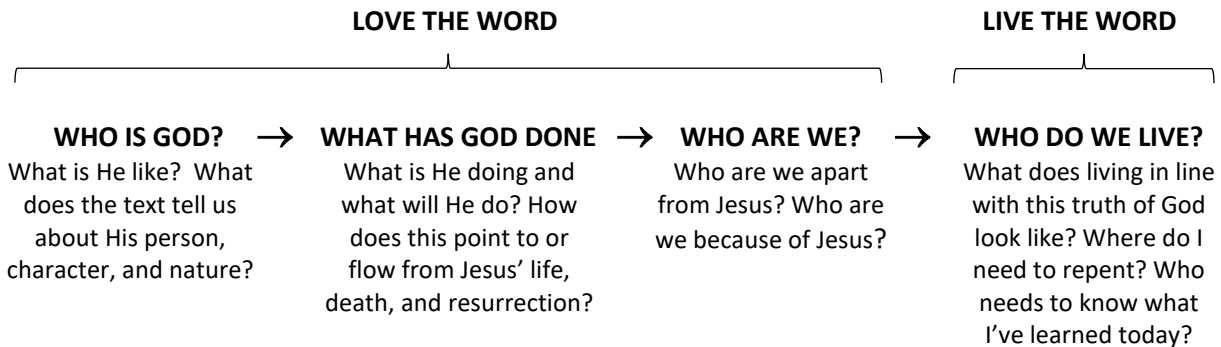
## TIPS FOR MAKING SURE YOU WILL READ DAILY

- **Set An Alarm.** I find that the things I intentionally plan for are the only things that get done with excellence and regularity in my life. We need to be intentional with loving the word of God through daily reading. Set a daily alarm to go off when you regularly have free time. Some best times to do this are first thing in the morning, on your lunch break, or in the evening when the kids are in bed.
- **Feed Your Soul Before You Feed Your Body.** “Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Mt. 4:4). Some have found it helpful to read first thing in the morning before breakfast as a small time of fasting to seek their life in the Lord.
- **Have An Accountability Partner.** This could be a family member or friend with whom you are actually reading the scriptures with daily. Yet, more likely, this is someone who is committed to reading God’s word daily themselves and to help you do the same. Daily, send each other a text or message and tell them something you read and you were encouraged. Tell them how good Jesus is! Ideal people to be your accountability partner would be found in your DNA group.
  - Side Note: If you’re a parent make sure to tell your kids regularly about Jesus and his goodness. Let them catch you reading the Bible. Talk regularly about how you are experiencing the beneficial, life-giving, Word!
- **Remember Grace!** Jesus is gracious so we don’t have to prove ourselves! The Lord loves you and desires you to know his word and live it out! However, he also knows that you are often weak even in the things that you desire to do for God (Mt 26:41). His grace covers your sin and every weakness! If you miss a day, or can’t read all four readings, or have trouble understanding something, It’s okay! Jesus loves you! Don’t give up. Just rejoice in the love of God and continue pursuing Jesus in reading your Bible the next day.
- **Remember You’re Free!** Some people have chosen to have 3 book marks: Old Testament, New Testament, and Wisdom Literature (Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes). Often people get caught up reading one reading and don’t get to the rest. That’s okay! Some people find that they only have 10 minutes to devote to reading scriptures. Some, because of life situations, find it hard to read more than a few times a week. You are free! There is no “right way” to progress through the scriptures. Don’t live under a burden. In your freedom, pursue God in reading the scriptures in the way that works best for you!
- **Rest!** The goal of this isn’t to read the whole bible in a year, or to read as much as you can in a day. The goal is to meet God and to learn from Him. Take the time you need to in order to understand what you read and to meditate on what you learn. Feel free to rest from reading on Sunday and take a break since you’ll be gathering with God’s people for the Word!

## HOW TO READ THE BIBLE

Find a quiet place and time so you can focus. If you have trouble concentrating, read the section out loud. Repeat it if you don't at first understand what you read. It is better to reread the same section a couple times than to read a lot and retain little. Always pray before, during, and after the reading for wisdom and discernment as well as the ability to trust and live out what you read.

Maybe the best way of understanding what God is trying to teach you in a Bible reading is to look at the verse, within its *context* (the surrounding paragraphs, chapters, and even the particular book itself) and ask the following questions:



Sometimes you have to infer from your reading the answers to the above questions. The more you do this the easier it will become.

It is helpful to have a good comprehensible translation. From easiest to hardest, here are some good translations to choose from: NLT, CSB, NIV, ESV. A good study Bible will give you great book explanations and notes on many of the difficult passages. The Bible Project has a great series of videos called "Read Scripture," which explain the major themes of each book. You can find them at [www.youtube.com/jointhebibleproject](http://www.youtube.com/jointhebibleproject).

## CAN THE BIBLE BE TRUSTED?

It is common today for many to say that you cannot trust the Bible. Often people either dismiss the Bible as fairy tales or call it an unreliable record. This simply isn't true. There are many reasons why you can trust the Bible and what it says. Lengthy books have been written on this topic, but let me quickly give you a few reasons why you can read the Bible and trust what it says.

### 1. The Old and New testament Texts are Reliable and our English translations are accurate.

Critics will often dismiss the Bible as a copy of a copy of a copy. They say it's like the telephone game, where one person whispers a phrase to the next, and they to the next, until the message returns to the original person and they see how hilariously distorted it has become. This is not the case with the Bible. The Bible was reproduced by scribes who took their jobs with the utmost seriousness. They viewed the writing that they copied as the Word of God and believed that if they added or removed words that they may do so at the cost of losing their lives or souls. We have 24,000 early manuscripts of the new testament. Almost all the differences in those early manuscripts are repeats of words or homophones (that is two words that sound identical but are spelled different like our words "sea" and "see"). Our English translations are based off of these early texts.

### 2. Prophecy fulfilled.

As we will discuss further in the next section, the Bible isn't really *a book* but a *book of books*, a library of books all recording God's interaction with man. It was written over a 1600 year period. It contains over 2000 prophecies fulfilled. It contains 300 Specific and vivid prophecies fulfilled concerning Jesus' birth, life, death, and resurrection. Most of these prophecies were recorded in one book and decades or centuries later God fulfilled those prophecies and they were recorded again in another book.

### 3. The New Testament books were written within a generation that saw and experienced Jesus

The accounts of Jesus' life contained in the Bible were all written within the lifetimes of the 12 apostles when any could go back and check with eye witnesses to verify if what they said was true. The Apostle Paul seems to invite this in 1 Corinthians 15:16. Luke claims he did just this in collecting research for his historical biography of Jesus.

### 4. Eyewitness Accounts

The disciples of Jesus wrote accounts of, and referenced in their writings, Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. Their refrain throughout the New Testament is, "We saw Jesus. We ate with Jesus. We heard him teach like no other. We saw his power to do miracles, heal the sick, control creation, cast out demons, and raise the dead. We saw him suffer and die. We, and many others, saw him rise and ascend into heaven. You can trust our words."<sup>1</sup> The disciples also demonstrated that you can trust their words because they clung to them and lived and died for them. All of the followers of Jesus suffered greatly because of their belief in him. His 12 closest followers (called the 12 disciples/apostles) all lived lives of poverty, many were imprisoned and tortured for their faith. All but one, died vicious deaths rather than to deny that what they had written and preached was true.<sup>2</sup>

## WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

The Bible is the manual for human existence. It is also the record of our Creator's interaction with us, his creation of, as well as his intentions for, our lives. The Bible isn't really *a* book. It is a book *of* books. It's a library of 66 different books bound together, written by 40 authors, in three different languages, over 1600 years, all telling one unified story about the heart and mission of God to rescue and redeem all of creation, including you!

The Bible is the most distributed book in the world. It's the most loved and the most hated, the most debated book out there. It's the most neglected book, and also the most read and reread book that has ever been printed. The Bible is a book that has changed countless lives from people of every background and ethnicity, from every economic or social status. The Bible is *the* book that offers life to the full as we find our identity, purpose, and provision in God.

Now while the Bible is, in part, a manual for life, it doesn't mean that we are to live like each person in the scriptures. Only God is good in everything He does (mark 10:18). The Bible is filled with flawed people who make many mistakes along the way. If you look to anyone as a hero of faith, in scriptures, you'll find yourself disappointed. Jesus is the only human who does good without fail.

The Bible is often thought of as a book of laws. It does have laws, a lot of them, yet they are laws that are meant to keep you from harm (and causing harm) and to help you have life (and give life). In fact, there is a whole book called Proverbs that sets out to show that this is true in everyday life. That said, one can follow the manual for life as faithfully as they can and still have difficulties and struggles in life. After all, the entire creation in which we live our lives, and we ourselves, are still broken and in need of repair. Because of this, the Bible isn't primarily about what we are to do. Rather, the Bible is all about what God has done, is doing, and will do for broken humans and all of creation.

The Bible is ultimately telling the big story of God, His heart, and His plans for humanity. This is fully revealed in the person and work of Jesus, the promised Rescuer. All of the scriptures point to Jesus!

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<sup>1</sup> See Luke 1:1-4, John 20:30, 1 Corinthians 15:1-9, 2 Peter 2:16,

<sup>2</sup> See 1 Corinthians 4:9-13, 2 Corinthians 11:23-28

## THE BIG STORY OF GOD

Below are the major parts of the story of God. It's a quick way to understand the main plot of the Bible. Many have found knowing this story helps them make sense of whatever they read in the Bible. These are the main acts or scenes in the story told in the Bible **Creation → Rebellion → Promise → Redemption → Church → Restoration**. Memorize these six acts of the story. Try to look at the headings and, in your own words, summarize each of them. It always helps to do this by telling a friend.



### Creation

God overflows so much with love that he created us to experience and participate in his love. He created a perfect world where this was to happen. It was everything we yearn for. The world was good. We had peace with God, with each other, with the animals, and with nature. We had everything we needed to live life to the full! We had all this by faith (trust) in our good Father and Creator. Together with God, we were to lovingly cultivate and grow God's good creation through the words we spoke and the lives we lived. It was heaven on earth and we were meant to enjoy it forever!



### Rebellion

An Enemy entered God's good creation and convinced humanity that they didn't need God and that they could run their lives better. We chose to believe the lie and rebelled. All rebellion against God is called sin. Because of that rebellion, we aren't what we should be. The world isn't how it should be. There are natural disasters, wars, famine, hatred, suffering, disease, and death. Yet God, in his love, couldn't bear for this to go on forever.



### Promise

God made a promise to our first parents that He would rescue them through one of their descendants. Through this man God promised to crush the Enemy, undo his work, and bless the world. The story of the Old Testament is the story of God's pursuit of rebellious humanity, his call for them to return to him and live, and his progressive revealing of what the Promised Rescuer would look like and what he would accomplish.



### Redemption

God sent his one and only son, Jesus, into the war zone of this world to offer a truce. He lived the life we were always meant to live and died the death our rebellion invites. He was the perfect human. Yet, he paid the price of our rebellion on the cross so that we could be pardoned and forgiven. God raised him from the dead and restored Jesus to a place by His side. Jesus has made it possible for a relationship with God again – to be Children of God once more by Faith in him!



### Church

All who are baptized and believe are becoming a new type of people, led by the Spirit of God, and are being transformed into the likeness of Jesus. These people, called the Church, are sent out, by the power of the Spirit, as a Family of Missionary Servants. We show the world what God is like by the words that we speak and the lives that we live together. We live to bring glory to His name and the message of our Father's love



### Restoration

Yet God didn't leave it there. One day, Jesus will come back and restore all of the creation to what it was originally meant to be, including us! There will be no more wars, sorrow, weeping, or pain. There will be no more death! Everything will be made right. It will be heaven on earth once more! We will enjoy life to the full forever in the presence of God!

## READ TO MEET JESUS

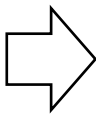
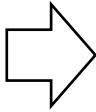
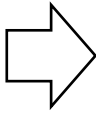
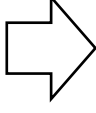
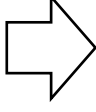
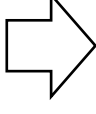
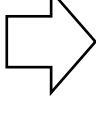
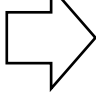
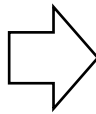
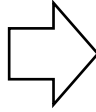
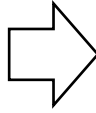
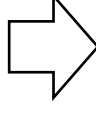
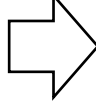
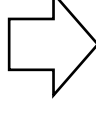
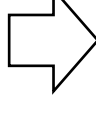
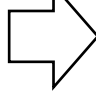
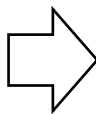
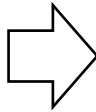
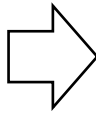
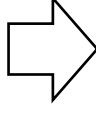
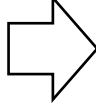
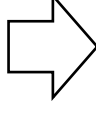
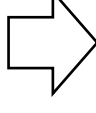


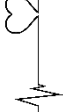

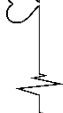

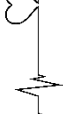


Ultimately, the goal of reading the Bible is the goal of meeting with Jesus and learning from him. At the end of his eyewitness account of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, John says these words, “But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life by the power of his name” (John 20:31). That is the goal not just of the Gospels, or just the New Testament, but all of the Bible. Jesus taught his disciples that all of the Bible pointed to him. The scriptures are given that you might believe in Jesus, and continue to believe in Jesus.

As you read in the Old Testament, look for how it points to Jesus:

- 1. If a prophecy, how is it fulfilled in the life and ministry of Jesus?**
- 2. If a promise of God’s faithfulness, favor, and saving power, how do we have something even greater in Jesus?**
- 3. How do the people of faith foreshadow the life and ministry of Jesus?** For example:
  - *Jesus is a greater Adam.* Adam is the first man of the sinful human race. He is unfaithful to his father and work. Jesus is the first man of a new human race who is always faithful to his Father and his work.
  - *Jesus is the greater Moses.* Moses led God’s people, gave them the law, and interceded for them. Jesus now leads God’s people, fulfilled the law, enables us to follow the law through His Spirit, and intercedes for us with his own blood.
  - *Jesus is the greater Elijah.* Elijah shows that there is one God at Mt. Carmel, when fire from heaven accepts Elijah’s offering but not that of the false prophets of Baal. Jesus shows that there was one God on Easter morning when his sacrifice is shown to be accepted by His father when he is risen from the dead.
- 4. How does Jesus fulfill offices described in scripture?** For example:
  - *Jesus is the greater Judge.* Judges were given to lead God’s people and deliver them out of the hands of their enemies, which they found themselves in every time they rebelled. Jesus is our greater judge who delivers us from the consequences of all of our sin, once and for all.
  - *Jesus is the greater Prophet.* Prophets revealed God to the people as they spoke the word of God, told and reminded them of His promises, and promised the punishment of sin and salvation of God’s people. Jesus is the greater prophet who fully reveals who God is and reveals His will for them as he gives himself to save them.
  - *Jesus is the greater Priest.* Priests makes sacrifices in the temple day and night to deal and cover the continual sin of the people. Jesus makes one sacrifice, once and for all, for the people to make us right with God.
  - *Jesus is the greater King.* All the kings were meant to selflessly rule in all the ways of God for the good of the people. Yet those kings ruled for the good of themselves most of the time. Jesus came not to be served but to serve and gave his life for those under his rule.
- 5. How does Jesus, the wisdom of God, demonstrate and fulfill the wisdom spoken of in proverbs?**
- 6. How does Jesus answer the cries for justice, retribution, salvation, a sign from God, in the Psalms? How does he ultimately answer their prayers and show that God is their stronghold, life, and salvation?**

## A FINAL WORD

I pray that you love the Word (diligently seek it, learn it, study it, ingest, and memorize it), and in doing so that you would start to *emotionally* Love the word, with Joy and enthusiasm because all your hopes are caught up in Him! I pray that as you are filled with Joy, you’d start to live out the word because you would see that Jesus is worthy and that others would see that through you as you live for him!

Old Testament	New Testament	Proverbs	Psalms	Old Testament	New Testament	Proverbs	Psalms
As you read, ask yourselves these four questions:	As you read, ask yourselves these four questions:	As you read, ask yourselves these four questions:	As you read, ask yourselves these four questions:	As you read, ask yourselves these four questions:	As you read, ask yourselves these four questions:	As you read, ask yourselves these four questions:	As you read, ask yourselves these four questions:
<b>Who is God?</b>	<b>Who is God?</b>	<b>Who is God?</b>	<b>Who is God?</b>	<b>Who is God?</b>	<b>Who is God?</b>	<b>Who is God?</b>	<b>Who is God?</b>
							
<b>What has God Done, is doing, or will do?</b>	<b>What has God Done, is doing, or will do?</b>	<b>What has God Done, is doing, or will do?</b>	<b>What has God Done, is doing, or will do?</b>	<b>What has God Done, is doing, or will do?</b>	<b>What has God Done, is doing, or will do?</b>	<b>What has God Done, is doing, or will do?</b>	<b>What has God Done, is doing, or will do?</b>
							
<b>Who are we in light of the above &amp; Who we are apart from it?</b>	<b>Who are we in light of the above &amp; Who we are apart from it?</b>	<b>Who are we in light of the above &amp; Who we are apart from it?</b>	<b>Who are we in light of the above &amp; Who we are apart from it?</b>	<b>Who are we in light of the above &amp; Who we are apart from it?</b>	<b>Who are we in light of the above &amp; Who we are apart from it?</b>	<b>Who are we in light of the above &amp; Who we are apart from it?</b>	<b>Who are we in light of the above &amp; Who we are apart from it?</b>
							
<b>How should we live?</b>	<b>How should we live?</b>	<b>How should we live?</b>	<b>How should we live?</b>	<b>How should we live?</b>	<b>How should we live?</b>	<b>How should we live?</b>	<b>How should we live?</b>
							
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