



Where to Start in God's Word

A simple guide for opening the Bible and learning to read it faithfully

You do not need to know everything before you begin. Open your Bible, ask the Lord for understanding, and start reading. The goal is not to finish a certain number of pages. It is to know God through His Word and respond to what He says.

Where should I begin?

If you are new to reading Scripture: Begin with the Gospel of Mark. Read a short section at a time, paying attention to who Jesus is, what He says, and what He does.

If you want to understand who Jesus is: Read the Gospel of John. Start with John 1 and continue through the book, taking time to notice what John teaches about believing in Christ.

If you are struggling to find words to pray: Read a psalm alongside your other reading. The Psalms teach us to bring praise, sorrow, confession, and trust before the Lord.

A simple way to read

1. Pray. Ask God to help you understand and obey His Word.
2. Read. Choose a manageable passage and read it slowly, more than once if helpful.
3. Observe. Who is speaking? What is happening? What does the passage actually say?
4. Understand. What does the passage reveal about God? How does the surrounding context help explain it?
5. Respond. What truth should you believe, sin should you confess, or command should you obey?

Do not rush to make every verse about yourself. First ask what God is saying in the passage. Then consider how you should respond.



When Reading Feels Difficult

When you do not understand

Read the verses before and after the passage. Look for repeated words and the main point. Write down your question. Keep reading, and ask a mature believer or your pastor for help when needed. You do not have to solve every question in one sitting.

When you do not feel like reading

Do not measure the value of God's Word by how you feel that morning. Pray honestly, open your Bible, and read a small portion carefully. Faithfulness often looks ordinary. Return again tomorrow.

When you have missed several days

Begin again where you left off. You do not need to catch up on a schedule before you can return to Scripture. A reading plan can be helpful, but it is a tool, not the goal.

When life is especially hard

Bring your concerns to the Lord in prayer. Read what Scripture actually says about His character and promises. Do not ignore difficult circumstances, but do not let them become the only voice you listen to. Ask, "What is true about God, even now?"

Questions to keep beside your Bible

- What does this passage teach me about God?
- What did the author intend his readers to understand?
- What does this passage show me about sin, salvation, or following Christ?
- What would faithful obedience look like today?
- Who could I encourage with what I am learning?

A place to begin today

Today's passage: _____

One truth I learned: _____

One way I will respond: _____



Five Passages to Return To

Read each passage in its context in your ESV Bible. These references are starting points, not substitutes for the full passage.

2 Timothy 3:16–17

God's Word is breathed out by God and equips His people for every good work. Ask what Scripture is teaching, correcting, or training you to do.

Psalms 119:105

God's Word is a lamp for our feet and a light for our path. Seek His direction in Scripture rather than demanding to see every step ahead.

James 1:22–25

Hearing Scripture matters, and so does doing what it says. Ask how you will respond in obedience.

John 15:4–5

Jesus calls His disciples to abide in Him. Remember that fruitfulness comes from dependence on Christ, not merely from completing a reading plan.

Hebrews 4:12

God's Word is living and active. Read with humility, allowing Scripture to examine the thoughts and intentions of your heart.

A simple plan for your first week

Day 1: Mark 1:1–15

Day 2: Mark 1:16–34

Day 3: Mark 1:35–45

Day 4: Mark 2:1–17

Day 5: Mark 2:18–28

Day 6: Mark 3:1–19

Day 7: Mark 3:20–35

Use the same questions each day. If a passage takes more than one day, stay with it. The aim is not speed but faithful attention to God's Word.