

A Beginner's Bible Reading Plan by Pastor Tim Davis

If you are a Gentile (non-Jew), and “new” to the Bible, I recommend this custom Bible reading plan for you. Please take note of the reasons that I provide for the order.

Start with the New Testament

1. The Gospel According to Luke (aka Luke). Luke was a first century follower of Christ. Luke was also a Gentile, so his writings are from a non-Jewish perspective. Luke was not an eyewitness to the events in his Gospel; however, his approach to writing included what we would consider scientific historical research. Luke was a physician by trade.
2. The Acts of the Apostles (aka Acts). Acts is Luke's “second” writing. Acts begins where Luke's Gospel ends. Acts gives the historical account of the first several decades of Christianity. While the Gospel of Luke gives a historical account of who Jesus Christ is and what He did, Acts offers the historical account of what His followers did as a result of knowing Him. The book begins with the Ascension of Christ back to Heaven, and continues with the birth of the Christian movement during the Festival of Pentecost, the rapid growth of Christianity among Jews within Jerusalem and the immediate surrounding area, the ensuing persecution, and the spread of Christianity to the Gentile world through the work of missionaries such as Peter, Paul, Barnabas, Timothy, Silas, Luke, Apollos, and many others.
3. The Gospel According to Mark (aka Mark). John Mark was very likely a young eyewitness to Jesus' earthly ministry. In Acts we learn of his youthful immaturity as he abandoned his mentor, Paul. Also in Acts, we learn that John Mark was afforded another opportunity to mature as a follower of Christ under the tutelage of another missionary, Barnabas. Mark's Gospel repeats much of Luke's, but there is Divine wisdom in the repetition of what we call the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark & Luke), and the recording of the same events from different perspectives.
4. Paul's Letters (Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon). Luke introduces Paul in Acts. Paul was originally named Saul. While

he was originally the most zealous persecutor of the early Christian movement, Saul had an experience with Christ that led him to not only become a Christian and change his name to Paul, but also to become a zealous Christian missionary. The letters, or epistles, of Paul are generally divided between those written to churches, and those written to individuals. All of them provide priceless theological and practical truth. After reading about these places and people in Acts, it's wonderful to read such personal letters expanding on the continued relationships within God's Kingdom.

5. The Gospel According to Matthew (aka Matthew). Matthew was also named Levi. He was a Hebrew tax collector that Christ called to become a disciple. Matthew recorded his eyewitness account of the life and ministry of Christ in a notably Hebrew tone.
6. Hebrews, James, and Jude. Hebrews was written to an enclave of Jewish Christians, and deals intimately with the truth that Jesus of Nazareth is the priestly Messiah promised in the Old Testament. James and Jude were both half brothers of Jesus Christ (they shared Mary as their mother). During Jesus' earthly ministry, His earthly brothers did not believe in Him as the Messiah, but after they witnessed the miraculous events of His death, burial and resurrection, they trusted in their older half brother as the Savior of the World. Their writings also reflect their Hebrew heritage.
7. The Gospel According to John (aka John), 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Revelation. John was a Hebrew, generally considered to be the youngest of the Twelve Apostles of Christ, and generally accepted as the last of the Twelve to die. His writings are probably the latest of the New Testament. His Gospel is written from his eyewitness account, and includes mostly information not included in the Synoptic Gospels. John was known as the Beloved Disciple, probably because he was endeared to Jesus like a baby brother. John's Gospel, and his three letters, focus on the Christian's mandate to love one another. John's Revelation is reserved as the last New Testament book to read because it reveals future events, the events of the last days or end times. The symbolism used in its writing can be daunting, but the purpose of the Revelation is simply to remind God's people that in

the end, Christ and His people are eternally victorious over sin, death and evil.

Move to the Old Testament

8. Proverbs. Mostly written by King Solomon around 1000 BC, Proverbs is a 31-chapter collection of wisdom. Many people attest to the power and practical benefit of reading a chapter every day, usually in coordination with the date.
9. Psalms. Psalms is a collection of 150 songs. At least a third of them are mostly likely written by King David (Solomon's father). Within the Psalms, readers will find every possible human experience and emotion represented. Though Psalms is primarily a book of praise, it also serves as a priceless comfort to its readers during any and every season of life.
10. The rest of the Old Testament. It's probably best to start at the beginning, Genesis. The rest of the Old Testament includes historical narrative, poetry, law, prophecy (forth-telling and fore-telling), wisdom literature, and more. These writings provide the foundation for understanding who God is, who humans are, and God's masterful, eternal plan to restore humanity to a friendship relationship with Himself through the loving, self-sacrifice of the Messiah (God in human flesh).
11. Repeat. Change it up. Keep reading the Scriptures until you die. Remember these truths in the Bible, about the Bible:
 - Hebrews 4:12 (HCSB) "For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating as far as the separation of soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It is able to judge the ideas and thoughts of the heart."
 - 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (HCSB) "All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."

Reading and studying the Holy Scriptures is a spiritual discipline that should always be undertaken with sincerity and humility. It is important to remember that the Bible is God's Word, breathed by Him, recorded by around forty different human writers over the course of more than 1500 years. The Bible is Truth, it reveals God's heart, and it grows the Believer in Christlikeness.