

READ YOUR BIBLE IN 2015

The goal of every follower of Jesus Christ is to become like Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:28-29; Col. 1:18, 28). And one of the primary means God uses to transform the believer is the Word of God (Ps. 1; 1 Pt. 2:1-3; 2 Pt. 1:3; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). The believer will not grow spiritually if he is not regularly taking in the Word of God through reading, meditation, memorization, and study.

And of those, the most basic means of assimilating Scripture is through reading. Just read the Bible. The questions then are, “what should one read?” and “how should one read the Bible?” There are a great many plans that exist; each year we provide [links](#) to a variety of helpful plans, and over the years, we have also developed several of [our own plans](#):

- ✓ A chronological reading of the Bible in one year
- ✓ A chronological reading of the OT in one year
- ✓ A chronological reading of the NT in one year (plus Psalms)

This year, we’d like to adapt a plan I first heard suggested by John MacArthur. Quite simply, the plan is to read one book of the Bible each day for a month. His [explanation](#) is helpful:

The pattern that has worked best for me over the years is repetition. Not the kind of shallow, mindless repetition recommended in various spiritual formation methods. I’m not talking about disengaging your mind and waiting for a mystical word from the Lord. Cherry-picking disjointed words and phrases from the Bible is a recipe for confusion, frustration, and theological error. Instead, we need to dig deeply to understand the context and content of God’s truth.

I’ll take a New Testament book or a large section from a book and read it over and over, day after day. Sometimes I’ll read it for thirty days—sometimes much longer. The point is to saturate my mind with the text. I want to know it from every angle, to be able to explain its major themes, and to understand what the author had to say to his original audience, and the implications his teaching has for my life.

The whole point of reading is to understand what the Bible says. And it’s helpful for more than just the passage immediately in front of you. As your knowledge of Scripture increases, you’ll start to see how one passage informs and explains other passages. You’ll start to see the connections between the biblical authors, how the Old and New Testaments work together in harmony, and how the Bible is the best resource for explaining the Bible.

That obviously works easily for shorter books like Philippians or 1 John. It’s

obviously harder for one of the Gospels or many of the Old Testament books. So what we are suggesting for the shorter books is to read them through each day for a month (at least 6 days per week) and for the longer books, divide the book into manageable chunks (perhaps 4-6 chapters) and read each of those sections daily for one week so that the entire book can still be read in one month.

Again, the intention of this plan is to read more narrowly and focused so that as we read we will retain more of what we are reading and comprehend more clearly the message and focus of the books.

As we considered which books to read over the course of the year, we recognized that we would read less than 20% of the books, so we gave priority to the NT books and then tried to select books that were both shorter and covered a variety of the rest of Biblical literature.

Here are our suggestions, along with some ideas about how to divide up the longer books into weekly readings:

January: James

February: Romans

— Week 1: Romans 1-4

— Week 2: Romans 5-8

— Week 3: Romans 9-11

— Week 4: Romans 12-16

March: Daniel

— Weeks 1-2: Daniel 1-6

— Weeks 3-4: Daniel 7-12

April: Colossians

May: Hebrews

— Week 1: Hebrews 1-3

— Week 2: Hebrews 4-6

— Week 3: Hebrews 7-10

— Week 4: Hebrews 11-13

June: Mark (4 chapters each week)

July: Philippians

August: Habakkuk

September: Titus

October: Acts (7 chapters each week)

November: 1 Peter

December: Proverbs (one chapter each day)

As you read each day, remember that, “If you want to know [the Bible], you have to read it carefully, intently, and faithfully.” [John MacArthur]