

How to Read the Bible: A Guide

Hi, I'm Sherry Amor and I study the Bible!

This is a guide to reading the Bible if you are a first-time reader, experienced reader, or off and on! Below are some of my *suggestions* to reading God's Word, based on my own experiences.

This is not an exhaustive list, and you may want to start somewhere different! Wherever you are in your Bible study journey, remember to listen to your instincts (that's the Holy Spirit!) Read what *you* think you should read. Hopefully this guide will pull you in the right direction!

Happy studying!

I. Beginning to End

- There's no better place to start than at the beginning. Reading from Genesis to Revelation is an excellent way of reading the Bible as a *whole story* with a beginning, middle, and end. I've read the Bible this way for 3 years now, and the story is truly a love story. From Genesis 3, when God promises to pursue us to Him to Revelation 22, when Jesus completely fulfills that original promise.
- Now the Old Testament is *very* intense. In almost every book, there is division, trauma, and hatred. But there is also unity, relationship, and love. Reading from Genesis to Malachi may be very heavy for a first-time reader. But don't be discouraged! The point of the Old Testament is to remind us all how we are not perfect, and how we need a Savior to bring us to redemption. Once you've completed the Old Testament, you will see how God's love is stronger than anything, and that should encourage you!
- Reading the New Testament immediately after the Old was literally a breath of fresh air to me. Once Jesus entered the scene, everything else seemed to fall in place (that's how it should be! *See* Matthew 6:33). When learning about Jesus, you are introduced to a new type of Kingdom—an Upside Down Kingdom. Here, the humble are exalted, and the prideful are brought down. The poor become rich in God, and the rich die alone. Those who love others and are selfless receive infinite blessings. Those who don't even spare a glance at someone in pain will receive curses. In His teachings, Jesus encourages us to love God and love people, to serve without expecting anything in return, and to be ready to sacrifice everything...including our lives. This can be as intense as the Old Testament! But God is good, and we are made righteous in Him through Jesus' death and resurrection. Being redeemed changes you; it changes you to want to become like Jesus!

II. Gospels

- If you don't think you can read the entire Bible, that's okay! A lot of people try to start from the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) to introduce them to Jesus. This is a great idea, and less intense than the Old Testament. These books highlight different aspects of Jesus' ministry. These aspects are Jesus as Messiah, Jesus as the Suffering Son, Jesus as Savior, and Jesus as God.¹ Starting in the Gospels helps you to really understand Jesus and His purpose. And you can't go wrong with His parables!

¹ Four Gospels, One Jesus, thenivbible.com

III. Psalms

- The Book of Psalms is full of small chapters, filled with powerful prayers, songs, and laments. Psalms is a literally journal for some people, including one of the most famous kings, King David (yep, the one with Goliath!). Because of this, reading Psalms is the best book to relate to the people of Ancient Israel in every aspect of their lives. This book brings me peace, comfort, and reassurance. It also reminds me that God is holy and reverend, and without Him, I am nothing. The book is known for its praises, because at the root of it all, we are meant to praise God in everything that we do.

IV. Proverbs

- The Book of Proverbs is one of the three Wisdom Literature books (Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes). Proverbs is full of literal proverbs—single sentences that bring advice to the reader. Because there are also small chapters, this is an easy read for beginning readers who want something that relates to them in their current state. From topics of decision-making, learning, and destiny, the Book of Proverbs helps a reader to understand that with God, every step of their life has purpose.

V. Romans

- Romans is a New Testament book that I believe perfectly summarizes God's immense love and desire for us. This book is filled with the teachings of Jesus, the Gospel of Jesus resurrection, and the blueprint for how we are to receive Christ as our Lord.

VI. Prophets

- The Prophets (Major and Minor) are a collection of prophetic scripture by men and women who received divine guidance. These books contribute heavily to the intensity of the Old Testament, but they cover a whole lot! Both Major and Minor Prophets remind Israel of her sins to God but also remind that there is a greater Hope to look forward to. That Hope is Jesus. In fact, every Prophet speaks of Jesus' arrival in a different way! Reading the books of the Prophets will help solidify Jesus as God's promise of redemption and encourage you to look forward to Jesus' return to establish New Jerusalem!
 - Books of the Prophets
 - Major
 - Isaiah
 - Jeremiah
 - Ezekiel
 - Daniel
 - Minor
 - Hosea
 - Joel
 - Amos
 - Obadiah
 - Johan
 - Micah
 - Nahum
 - Habakkuk
 - Zephaniah

- Haggai
- Zechariah
- Malachi

VII. Controversial Topics

- If you feel skeptical about God's role in certain situations, then I have curated a list of books and their chapters which talk about heavy subjects. This list is not exhaustive, only some of the scriptures I read that apply to such subjects. Some of these verses should be taken in with the context of the times in Ancient Israel. Try to study their Books and discover what God is saying to *you*. Also, check out some blogs, podcast, or talking with someone to learn more!
- The subjects include:
 - “Bad Things Happening to Good People”
 - Slavery and Oppression
 - Abuse (Physical, Sexual, Emotional) and Rape
 - Racism and Prejudice
 - Sexism
 - LGBTQ
 - Cheating
 - Sex
 - Marriage/Divorce
 - Charity
 - Politics/Corruption/The Rich
 - The Church's Role
 - Idolatry
 - Murder
 - War
 - Broken Family
- [Click Link for Complete List](#)