



# How to Get Started

READING YOUR BIBLE

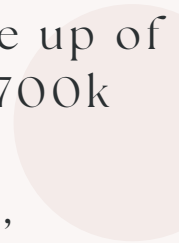
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# “I WANT TO READ MY BIBLE MORE...BUT I DON'T KNOW WHERE TO START.”

This is a common struggle. You are not alone.

The Bible is a large and daunting volume made up of 66 different books, 1.2k chapters, 31k verses, 700k words, 3.5m letters, and a host of genres like narrative, history, poetry, prophecy, proverb, allegory, and legal writings.



*Whew!* No wonder many of us don't know how to get going.

But the best way to start is to simply *start*.

And the best way to grow your appetite for Scripture is to begin feeding on it.

That said, here is a brief guide to getting started in engaging with your Bible.



## #1: ASK GOD FOR HELP.

Many of us know what it's like to feel defeated in our Bible reading before we even start. The desire just isn't there (or it isn't very strong). So we trudge down the stairs in the morning, grab a cup of coffee, and intend to sit down and read...only to find our phones too intriguing, our mental list too pressing, or our kids' needs too distracting.

These common scenarios expose the deeper problem within our hearts: We are helpless to want what we ought to want, to love what we ought to love, and to see what we ought to see. Reading the Bible to encounter Jesus is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit. We cannot desire our Bibles or see with eyes of faith unless God helps us (Ps. 119:36)!

So we approach the word prayerfully, asking God to help us desire it and see him more clearly as we read.



## #2: MAKE A COMMITMENT.

We all have good intentions—but intentions are only as good as the actions we take to fulfill them. It is one thing to think, *I'd like to read my Bible more*. It is quite another to make a commitment to do so, and then follow through with it.

Verbalize your commitment before God in prayer, and ask for his help to keep you going even when it gets hard. You might also want to write it down in a journal where you can physically see the commitment and return to it.

Then, verbalize your commitment to a spouse, family member, pastor, or trusted friend—someone who can check in with you about how it's going, hold you accountable, and pray for you.



### #3: GREET THE DAY.

There is no biblical command about reading Scripture in the morning, but there is a wise principle attached to it: we have not yet been conformed to the world and have a fresh opportunity to be transformed in the renewing of our minds before the day begins (Rom. 12:2). We also see examples in Scripture of people seeking the face of God first-thing (Is. 50:4; Ps. 90:14; Mark 1:35).

Again, this is not a command, only a suggestion for preparing your mind and heart for the day. If mornings are hard for you—if you struggle to sleep at night or your work requires you to start early—then leverage whatever time you can find, even if it's midday or before bed.

What matters is your pursuit of Jesus, not the practical details.



## #4: START SMALL.

When it comes to Bible reading, start with a *realistic* goal. Instead of saying you will wake up one hour earlier every day and study an entire passage, aim to set your alarm five minutes earlier for one week and meditate on a verse. The following week, set your alarm five minutes earlier and so on, until your body adjusts and you're happy with your new starting time. Small adjustments can bring meaningful change.

Similarly, rather than setting out to read the whole Bible in one year, start with smaller sections of Scripture. Make your way through a few verses at a time or use a plan, but take as much time as you need with it. Most study Bibles contain reading plans, or you can find them for free online. You might also email or call your pastor and ask for suggestions about where to begin reading.

Every deposit you make adds up, however small.



## #5: CREATE A HABIT.

We are creatures of habit, thriving on routine. If possible, choose a time and place that can stay (mostly) the same every day. You might even set up your space before reading so it is welcoming and ready for you. Try committing yourself to this new habit for 30 days, and see what happens.

One important habit I recommend is “Bible before screens.” Our phones and computers are distracting tools vying for our attention, so we will benefit by leaving them alone until after we’ve spent time with God in his word.

Of course, there are seasons when our habits get thrown off, and seasons of the heart when we need a change of plan. Don’t hesitate to mix it up and get creative. Habit is less about the *how* and more about the *what*. The point is that we prioritize feeding our souls with Scripture.



## #6: DON'T READ ALONE.

Sometimes, reading the Bible is best done in company. Not only does this hold us accountable to the commitment we've made, it brings wisdom and insight we might not otherwise have gained while reading alone. One person's discovery can end up feeding the souls of everyone else reading!

Maybe you and a friend could follow the same reading plan or Bible study and talk about it along the way; or maybe you could meet up in person and read Scripture side by side. Bible-based small groups at your church are also great ways to get started (and stay committed to) reading the word.

Lastly, don't discount the value of feasting on God's word alongside your church family at worship services. There is multiplied joy in meditating on God's precious word with other believers!

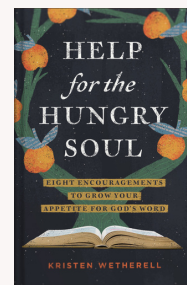




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Eager for more? Read my book *Help for the Hungry Soul: Eight Encouragements to Grow Your Appetite for God's Word.*



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