

## BIBLE READING PLAN

There are three basic questions we must answer about following a careful Bible reading plan:

- 1) Where do I start?
- 2) How long do I spend reading the Bible?
- 3) How often do I read the Bible?

### WHERE DO I START?

The Bible is divided into two major sections, the Old Testament (39 books) and the New Testament (27 books). The Old Testament was written to predict that a Messiah (a.k.a. a Savior) would come and save the world from sin. The New Testament tells the story of how God fulfilled those promises by sending His Son, Jesus.

The time between the last written book of the Old Testament and the first book of the New Testament is just over 400 years. Since there is a natural 400-year gap between the Testaments, the Bible is divided up into those two parts.

#### **If you are brand new to Bible reading...**

- Start by reading "The Gospel of John" (the 4th "book" of the New Testament). You'll learn about Jesus Christ in a way that will help you believe in Him more (the purpose of John is in John 20:31).
- Then, read "The New Testament" through twice (the 27 "books" of the New Testament). You'll learn about Jesus in "the Gospels" (the 1st 4 books), the early church in "Acts" (the 5th book), Christian principles in "Romans" through "Jude" (the 6th-26th books), and prophecy in "Revelation" (the 27th/ last book of the Bible).
- Then, read both the Old Testament and the New Testament by alternating in each Testament (see below).

#### **If you have been reading the Bible for a while but still need a plan that will help out...**

Read both the Old Testament and the New Testament by alternating in each Testament. Here are 2 plans for reading the Bible systematically:

##### **PLAN #1: OT & NT ALTERNATING**

Read Genesis (OT book #1), then read Matthew (NT book #1), then read Exodus (OT book #2), then read Mark (NT book #2), then read Leviticus (OT book #3), then read Luke (NT book #3), etc. When you finish Revelation (NT book #27), read Hosea (OT book #28) through Malachi (OT book #39) in order (use Bible's table of contents for order).

##### **PLAN #2: OT, OT & NT ALTERNATING**

Read Genesis (OT book #1), then Proverbs (OT book #20), then Matthew (NT book #1), read Exodus (OT book #2), then Ecclesiastes (OT book #21), then Mark (NT book #2), read Leviticus (OT book #3), then Song of Songs (OT book #22), then Luke (NT book #3), etc.

When you finish James (NT book #20), continue reading the rest of the New Testament from 1 Peter (NT book #21) through Revelation (NT book #27) in order (use your Bible's table of contents for order).

## HOW LONG DO I SPEND READING THE BIBLE?

- If you are brand new to Bible reading, start with at least 10 minutes per day.
- If you have read the Bible a bit, but still haven't read it all the way through, start with at least 15 min/day.
- If you have read the Bible for a while but still need a plan that will help, start with 20-30 min/day, depending on how long it takes you to read about 3-4 chapters (so you can read it in a year!)
- The key is not how much time you spend reading the Bible but making it a consistent habit in your life so that its Truth can change you.

## HOW OFTEN DO I READ THE BIBLE?

Strive to read it every day. If you miss a day, don't get frustrated! Just keep making it a priority and it will become a habit! One person said reading the Bible is like brushing your teeth... do it daily to avoid TRUTH decay!

As we read the Bible, we begin to see how God responds to things. Doing daily devotions re-patterns the way we think, transforms the spirit of our mind, and helps us become more like Jesus! S.O.A.P. journaling is a simple and excellent way to both record and process what God has spoken to you. It's also a useful tool to use at a later time when you want to reflect on and review some of the 'gems' that you have received.

### **S.O.A.P. Journaling Method:**

#### ***S - Scripture***

Open your Bible to your reading for the day. Take time reading and allow God to speak to you. When you are done, look for a verse that particularly spoke to you that day, and write it in your journal.

#### ***O - Observation***

What do you think God is saying to you in this scripture? Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you and reveal Jesus to you.

#### ***A - Application***

Personalize what you have read, by asking yourself how it applies to your life right now. Perhaps it is instruction, encouragement, a new promise, or corrections for a particular area of your life. Write how this scripture can apply to you today.

#### ***P - Prayer***

This can be as simple as asking God to help you use this scripture, or even a prayer for a greater insight on what He may be revealing to you. Remember, prayer is a two-way conversation, so be sure to listen to what God has to say!