

How to read the Bible

Which translation?

Why are there are so many English translations of the Bible?

Well it is a difficult task to translate something both accurately and clearly from another language, especially ancient languages such as Hebrew and New Testament Greek. English is a language which changes all the time. It's mostly a matter of personal preference which translation you use. It can be helpful to change the one you use from time to time.

- A paraphrase aims to make the Bible as easy to understand as possible at the risk of losing some of the accuracy. **The Message** is the current favourite but the **Street Bible** (aka **Word on the Street**) is also popular
- The **Youth Bible / New Century Version** is a fairly accurate translation but it aims to be as easy to read as possible. It is popular in youth groups. The **New Living Bible** is another good popular translation often favoured by youth leaders.
- If you wish to study the Bible more deeply/seriously, then you may want to use the **New International Version**. There is also the **New King James Version** and the **New American Standard**. These aim to be as accurate as possible. Or if you want to go one step further, there is even the **Young's Literal Translation**.

Where to start? There's no right or wrong way to read the Bible. Most of us find that different approaches work for us at different stages in our lives. The main thing is that we read it. It is a powerful, living, life-changing book and it keeps us healthy in mind and spirit. It gives us strength to cope with the battles that life brings. But do remember to ask the Holy Spirit to help you to understand what you are reading. He wrote it remember!

You can choose from

- Dated reading notes such as [Word 4U 2Day www.ucb.co.uk/w4u](http://www.ucb.co.uk/w4u)
- Undated reading notes
- Some Bibles such as the Youth Bible have reading schemes at the front
- Using a book with a selection of daily verses such as Daily Light.
- The Bible is a collection of 66 books, some of which are easier to read than others. You could select one at a time and read it right through. See the Traffic Light overview lists for some guidance on this.
- Using a concordance to look up a particular theme. Some Bibles have one at the end.
- Reading the whole Bible from cover to cover!

Have a chat with someone who knows about this kind of stuff.

Reading the whole Bible - Is this difficult?

Yes and no.

My Grandmother hardly ever went to school because her family couldn't afford the 2d a week that you had to pay. She couldn't read and write very well and was largely self-taught. However during her 90 year life, she managed to read the whole Bible through twice and that was in the old Authorised King James Version!

If you want to read it all in a year, one method is to read 2 chapters of Old Testament and one chapter of New Testament a day, but you don't have to do it like this.

The Traffic Light Scheme

The purpose of the **Traffic Light Scheme** is to help those who are interested in reading the Bible right the way through. It is helpful to do this at some point in your life as it helps you to see some of the themes that run through the Bible as well as getting the overall storyline. Many people attempt this but get stuck at some point. They start off okay but the going does get tough about half way through Exodus. This scheme breaks it down into stages.

- **Green** shows you which chapters to read in order to follow the main story.
- **Red** shows the areas that you can most afford to leave out until you feel you are ready to read the whole book. Even the difficult books have some gems in them.
- **Orange** covers the optional areas for the easy-read people. You can pick and choose these or leave them until your second trans-Bible journey.
- In the overview lists we have also included the colour **purple** to indicate books that are a mixture. These lists can help you to keep track of what you have read if you wish.
- The chapter summaries give you an idea of what you are missing out if you are going for a manageable approach.

So it's



GO for it each time

WAIT unless it catches your attention

STOP until you feel ready for the whole **set**

- Aim to read from both the Old and the New Testament regularly.
- Remember to ask the Holy Spirit to help you to understand it.
- It isn't about how much you read each day; it's about what you absorb.

On the next 2 pages we have given the short colour coded overview of each book of the Bible. The full Traffic Light scheme will be published in sections. Please contact if you are interested.

Other helpful books for understanding the whole Bible story

The Tabloid Bible: Nick Page.

This is short, funny and presented in newspaper style.

The MAP: Making the Bible Meaningful, Accessible, Practical: Nick Page.

This is helpful for serious modern readers.

The One-Stop Bible Guide: Mike Beaumont.

Storylines: Mike Pilavachi and Andy Croft

This covers some of the themes that run through the Bible.

The Walk Thru the Bible Ministries flashcards with the names of the books and a short summary of each are also helpful, especially if you like cheesy jokes.



Old Testament List - Traffic Light Overview

Aim to read from both the Old and the New Testament regularly.
Remember to ask the Holy Spirit to help you to understand it.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Genesis (50) | <input type="checkbox"/> Ecclesiastes (12) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exodus (40) | <input type="checkbox"/> Song of Solomon (8) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leviticus (27) | <input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah (66) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Numbers (36) | <input type="checkbox"/> Jeremiah (52) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Deuteronomy (34) | <input type="checkbox"/> Lamentations (5) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Joshua (24) | <input type="checkbox"/> Ezekiel (48) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Judges (21) | <input type="checkbox"/> Daniel (12) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ruth (4) | <input type="checkbox"/> Hosea (14) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Samuel (31) | <input type="checkbox"/> Joel (3) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Samuel (24) | <input type="checkbox"/> Amos (9) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Kings (22) | <input type="checkbox"/> Obadiah (1) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Kings (25) | <input type="checkbox"/> Jonah (4) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Chronicles (29) | <input type="checkbox"/> Micah (7) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Chronicles (36) | <input type="checkbox"/> Nahum (3) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ezra (10) | <input type="checkbox"/> Habakkuk (3) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nehemiah (14) | <input type="checkbox"/> Zephaniah (3) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Esther (14) | <input type="checkbox"/> Haggai (2) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Job (42) lovely bit 38-42 | <input type="checkbox"/> Zechariah (14) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psalms (150) | <input type="checkbox"/> Malachi (4) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Proverbs (31) | |



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PURPLE indicates a mixed book

Numbers in bracket refer to the number of chapters.



New Testament – Traffic Light Overview

Aim to read from both the Old and the New Testament regularly. The gospels are pretty straightforward although John is a little more difficult because it contains more spiritual depth. Acts also follows a story line.

The letters are more abstract. Many of them have quite a mixture of hard/easy interesting/ boring sections. We are using purple to indicate this here as this is such a concise list. For more details, refer to the expanded list.

Remember to ask the Holy Spirit to help you to understand it.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Matthew (28) | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Timothy (6) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mark(16) | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Timothy (4) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Luke (24) | <input type="checkbox"/> Titus (3) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> John (21) | <input type="checkbox"/> Philemon (1) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Acts (28) | <input type="checkbox"/> Hebrews (13) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Romans (16) (a paraphrase is helpful with this important book) | <input type="checkbox"/> James (5) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Corinthians (16) | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Peter (5) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Corinthians (13) | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Peter (3) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Galatians (6) | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 John (5) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ephesians (6) | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 John (1) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Philippians (4) | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 John (1) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Colossians (4) | <input type="checkbox"/> Jude (1) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Thessalonians (5) | <input type="checkbox"/> Revelation (22) very difficult – needs to be studied in a group |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Thessalonians (3) | |



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