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GUIDE Nº 5 OF 15 · FREE

Reading the Bible

Where to start, how to read, and how to hear God in His Word

— PSALM 119:11 (KJV)

A free guide for new believers · slgrace.com

A letter to you, dear friend

Dear friend, you now hold the most precious book on earth. The Bible is not first of all a rule book or a history book — it is God's own Word to you, His letter to His children. Yet many new believers open it, land in a difficult page of names or ancient laws, and quietly close it, feeling the Bible is 'too hard.' If that has happened to you, this guide is your answer. The Bible is a big house, but it has a front door, and we will show you where it is.

You will learn where to start (the Gospel of John, and why), how to read a passage step by step so it speaks to you, how one verse a day can feed you when time is short, and how to handle the parts you do not understand without losing heart. Bring a pencil and a notebook. By the end of this guide, you will not just know about the Bible — you will have a daily way of feeding from it for the rest of your life.

Start at the front door: the Gospel of John

Begin with John. The Gospel of John was written, in its own words, 'that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.' It is the story of Jesus told by His closest friend, written simply and deeply at the same time. Read one chapter a day. There are twenty-one chapters — in three weeks you will have walked with Jesus through His miracles, His teaching, His cross and His resurrection, and you will know Him far better.

After John, read Mark (short, fast, full of action), then Luke and Matthew. Then read Acts, the story of the first church — you will see believers like yourself learning to walk. Then begin the letters: Romans, Ephesians, Philippians, James, 1 John. Keep the Psalms open alongside everything — one Psalm a day gives words to your prayers. Leave Revelation and the heavy prophetic books until your roots are down; milk before meat is God's own order, not a mark of failure.

One warning given in love: do not read the Bible by opening it at random and pointing at a verse for daily guidance, like a fortune teller. God speaks through passages read in their place and meaning. Read books whole, chapter by chapter, and the verses will feed you far more richly — and safely.

> *"But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."*
> **— John 20:31 (KJV)**

Do this:

1. Start John chapter 1 today; one chapter a day for 21 days.
2. Keep a Psalm open beside it — read one Psalm daily.
3. After John: Mark, Luke, Acts, then Ephesians and James.

How to read a passage: five simple questions

Here is a method any believer can use with any passage. Read the passage twice, slowly. Then ask five questions and write short answers. One: What does this passage say about God — His character, His ways? Two: What does it say about Jesus, or point to Him? Three: Is there a promise to believe or a warning to heed? Four: Is there an example to follow or a sin to avoid? Five: What one thing will I do differently today because of this passage? That fifth question turns reading into growing.

Work an example with us. John 1:12 says those who received Jesus were given power to become God's children. About God: He gives generously and adopts freely. About Jesus: receiving Him is the door into God's family. A promise: I am God's child — present tense, not future hope. An example: believers receive; they do not achieve. My action today: when shame speaks, I will answer aloud, 'I am a child of God.' Five questions, five minutes, and the verse is now inside you, working.

Keep your answers short and honest. One true sentence from a passage, obeyed, feeds you more than ten pages of notes never practised. God blesses doers of the Word, not collectors of it.

> *“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”*
> **— James 1:22 (KJV)**

A verse a day: small food, daily strength

Some days are crowded — work from dawn, children, traffic, tiredness. On such days, do not let the perfect rob you of the good. Take one verse — from your chapter reading, from the ‘Verses to hold on to’ lists in these guides, or from Sunday’s sermon — and carry it through the day. Read it in the morning. Repeat it at noon. Whisper it at night. This is what the Bible calls meditating: turning a verse over in your mind the way you turn a treasure in your hand, looking at every side.

Write your verse on paper and keep it in your pocket or as your phone’s lock screen. Say it aloud when fear or temptation rises. Verses memorised in calm seasons become weapons in stormy ones; the Word hidden in your heart rises to your mouth exactly when you need it. Start with short, strong ones: John 3:16, Psalm 23:1, Philippians 4:13, Isaiah 41:10, Romans 8:1.

Families can do this together: one verse on the table each week, repeated at meals, until even the smallest child carries it. You are building a house of Scripture, one brick a day, and no storm will wash it away.

> *“This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein.”*
> **— Joshua 1:8 (KJV)**

What you do not understand — yet

Every Bible reader meets hard passages. Names you cannot pronounce, customs from another age, deep teachings that need time. Here is the rule that has carried believers for centuries: hold fast to what is clear, and be patient with what is not. The main things in Scripture — God's love, Jesus' cross, salvation, how to live — are written plainly, in many places, impossible to miss honestly. The hard places are not a wall; they are a classroom you will enter gradually, with teachers, with time, with growth.

Practical help: read a hard passage in its surrounding verses — context answers most confusion. Compare with clearer verses on the same subject. Ask your pastor or a mature believer; write the question down so you do not forget to ask. Use a simpler translation alongside the King James Version for study if it helps you grasp meaning, while keeping the KJV as your main text. And pray before you read: the Author is present, and He loves to open His own book to His children.

Never let one hard verse rob you of a hundred clear ones. A traveller does not abandon the road because of one stone. Mark the hard place, keep walking in the light you have, and you will be surprised how many 'hard' passages open themselves after a year of faithful reading.

> *"Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law."*
> **— Psalm 119:18 (KJV)**

Do this:

1. Read the verses around any hard verse before concluding.
2. Keep a 'questions' page in your notebook; ask a leader weekly.
3. Obey what is clear today; trust God with what is not — yet.

Making the habit unbreakable

Tie Bible reading to something you already do daily — after waking, before breakfast, on the journey to work, before sleep. Same time, same place, Bible and notebook ready. Fifteen minutes daily is a strong beginning. Protect it like an appointment with a king, because it is one. If you miss a day, do not double up in guilt; simply resume. The enemy of this habit is not busyness — it is discouragement. Refuse it.

Read aloud when you can. Hearing the Word with your ears while your eyes follow builds faith and memory together, and it fills your room with God's truth. Read with your family or a friend when possible and talk about one verse together. Children who see a parent reading Scripture daily receive a sermon no pulpit can match.

In one year of daily chapters you will have read the whole New Testament and much more. In a few years, the whole Bible. But the true gain is not finishing a book — it is being finished, shaped, washed and guided by it, day after day, into the likeness of Jesus. Open it tomorrow morning with expectation. Your Father has something to say to you.

> *"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."*
> **— Romans 10:17 (KJV)**

A PRAYER BEFORE READING

Father, thank You for Your Word. Open my eyes to see, my ears to hear, and my heart to obey. Holy Spirit, You wrote this book — teach me from it. Feed me today, correct me where I am wrong, comfort me where I hurt, and lead me in the way of Jesus. Let Your Word live in me richly, all my days. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Verses to hold on to

Keep these verses near you. Read one each morning. Say it aloud. God's Word will hold you on days when feelings are weak.

> *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."*
> **— 2 Timothy 3:16 (KJV)**

> *"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."*
> **— Matthew 24:35 (KJV)**

> *"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."*
> **— Psalm 119:105 (KJV)**

> *"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."*
> **— Matthew 4:4 (KJV)**

You are not walking alone

Dear friend, you have finished this guide — well done. Keep it near your Bible and return to it whenever you need it. Growth is day by day, and your Father is patient, present and proud of every honest step you take toward Him.

If you would like someone to pray with you, answer your questions, or walk with you in these first steps, our free Salvation Follow-Up team would be honoured to hear from you. Visit slgrace.com and open the chat — ask for the "Salvation Follow-Up" desk. It is completely free, and you will be received with love.

The other free guides in this series

1. You Are a New Creature — free from the Salvation Follow-Up Desk at slgrace.com

2. First Steps With Jesus — free from the Salvation Follow-Up Desk at slgrace.com

3. How to Pray — free from the Salvation Follow-Up Desk at slgrace.com

4. Sure of Heaven — free from the Salvation Follow-Up Desk at slgrace.com

5. The Holy Spirit, Your Helper — free from the Salvation Follow-Up Desk at slgrace.com

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14. Your First 30 Days — free from the Salvation Follow-Up Desk at slgrace.com

May the Lord bless you and keep you, make His face shine upon you, and give you peace — today and all your days. (Numbers 6:24-26)