

HOW TO READ THE BIBLE

1 WHAT'S IN THE BIBLE?

Knowing the basic makeup and structure of the Bible will help you feel more comfortable as you discern what is being said. Here is a short overview of what you can expect from your Bible.

- There are 66 books in the Bible.
- Approximately 40 different authors contributed to the Bible.
- The authors range from kings, fishermen, priests, government officials, shepherds, doctors, and more.
- **The Old Testament** (the story before Jesus' life on earth) and **The New Testament** (the story of Jesus and the early church).
- The three prominent genres in the Bible are narrative, poetry, and prose-discourse — such as the letters.

2 WHERE DO I BEGIN READING?

Begin with a Gospel Book

If you are new to the Bible, start with one of the four gospel books in the New Testament: **Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John**. Each one records the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

Why Start Here?

The word **gospel** means “good news.” Jesus is the central character of the entire Bible, and everything in Scripture points to Him. Starting with a book focused on His life will help the rest of the Bible come together.

Where to Go Next?

After finishing a gospel, consider reading one of the letters written to the early churches in the New Testament. These letters retell the gospel story while offering practical guidance for godly living. Or start at the very beginning — open Genesis and watch how God's plan for Jesus begins to unfold from the first pages of Scripture.

3 HOW DO I READ THE BIBLE?

- 1. Begin in prayer.** The Bible is a spiritual book, so ask God to open your heart and mind for spiritual understanding before you begin. Consider praying the words of Psalm 119:18: “Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.”
- 2. Ask good questions.** Interacting with the text brings greater understanding. As you read, pause and ask: *What do I learn about God/Jesus/Holy Spirit? What do I learn about people? What is my response?*
- 3. Use a study Bible.** A study Bible provides theologically rich notes and commentary that can help you understand more complex passages and their context.
- 4. Find a mentor.** A trusted mentor can guide your reading, answer your questions, and help you understand how Scripture applies to your life and what it looks like to respond in obedience.