

The Complete Guide to  
**Reading Your**  
**Bible Daily**

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FREEDOM  SPROUT

There have been over 6 billion Bibles printed to date.

There are well over 1,000 translations into new languages currently in progress.

It's the most popular book in history, hands down. Though, it's not really fair to other books, since it was written by God and it's technically 66 books, written by at least 40 different authors over a 1,600 year period.

And if that doesn't make the Bible appealing, there are plenty of other reasons to read it...

I dare you to find any other 66 books written over a 1,000+ year period that have anything to do with each other and here we have the Bible, which maintains the same theme over the course of almost a million words.

The Bible has been endorsed by Christians, Jews and people who claim to be neither of the two. It's an amazing work to say the absolute least. And I'll simply let N.T. Wright sum it up by saying:

*"The Bible is the book of my life. It's the book I live with, the book I live by, the book I want to die by."*

If you're reading this, you probably already believe in the supernatural nature of the Bible, so let's get into how we can read the Bible for all it's worth and glory.

The Bible can be overwhelming. It's long and quite frankly, some parts are boring. When we get into the begats, lineages and census numbers, it's easy to lose focus. So how do we create a reading plan that we stick with? What do people mean when they talk about reading the Bible daily? How much are they reading? What's their system?

I can't explain everyone's strategy for getting the most out of the Bible, but I can give you a strategy that works. It has worked for me and countless others and it can easily work for you. I'm going to give you a strategy to start with and build on. Create your own method and remember, a good reading plan that you stick with is better than the best reading plan that you don't.

## **1. Create Reading Time**

We all have the same 24 hours in our day. How we use them is what's important. We can choose to use them watching TV or scrolling Facebook or we can use the bulk of our hours to grow, learn and get closer to God.

The first step in any Bible reading plan is to create a time block for it, but not just one. I actually have two backup time slots. I schedule my Bible reading everyday at 4:00am. If I miss it for some reason, I try to catch up on a break at work. If I'm too busy to read it then, I'll read it during my regular reading time before bed.

I'm motivated to read it during the first time slot because I don't always have time for a break at work and I like to have my reading time before bed to read other books.

So create a time, preferably the same time everyday, to read your Bible and create a backup time slot for when you miss the first time. It's best for your backup slot to be slightly inconvenient, so you're motivated to finish it earlier.

## 2. Choose Your Translation

This is a debated topic and it can get heated quickly. I've found that most of the popular translations are similar in many ways and the best part is that you can always compare translations with different chapters and verses using a resource like [Logos](#), [Bible Gateway](#) or [Christianity.com](#) (formerly eWord Today).

When you're looking for the translation that best fits your needs, you should consider the different types:

- **Literal Translation** – This type of translation attempts to translate word for word, while keeping as close to the perceived original meaning. This is also known as a transliteration.
- **Equivalent Translation** – This is more of a “thought for thought” translation. This type of translation attempts to read beyond one word at a time and give an overall idea of the entire context.
- **Paraphrase Translation** – This type of translation is less precise, but still usable and helpful in reading. It seeks to give you the meaning of the words, but it is open to the translators' interpretation to an extent.

All types of translations can be useful. There is no “one-size-fits-all” translation for every need.

I'm going to go ahead and ease your nerves a little bit. You're not going to Hell for picking the wrong translation. There are advocates for every translation. A popular crowd is the “King James or nothing”. There are many people who believe that the King James version of the Bible is the only version you should use, which apparently means that there was not an accurate version on the Bible until 1,600 years after Jesus lived.

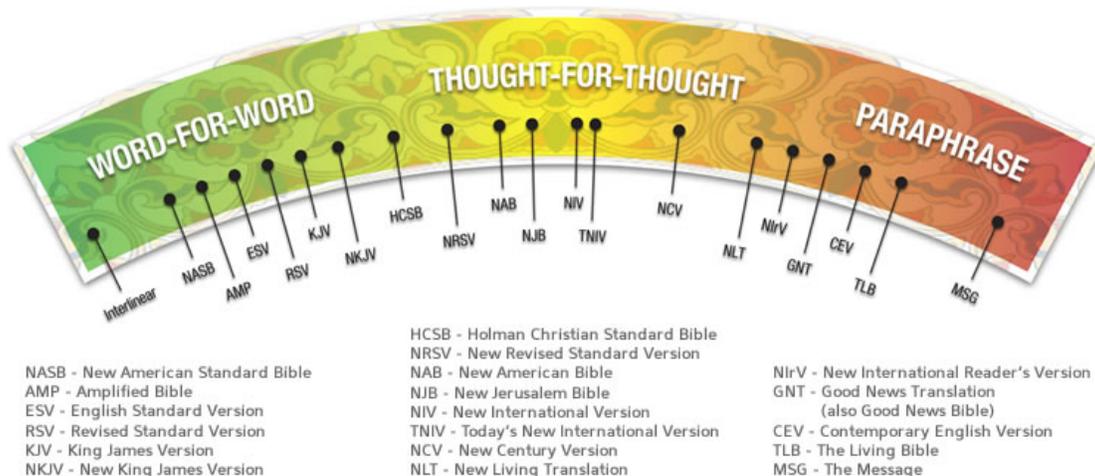
Feel free to draw your own conclusions about that.

I think the King James version is fine, but it is difficult to read for many people, which means they are more likely to get lost in the words and therefore get less out of their reading.

I prefer the ESV (English Standard Version) as my primary Bible for reading and study, but I do read other translations to get a better overall idea and understanding of certain verses.

Here's a quick guide for you:

## Types of Bible Translations



Try a few translations until you find one you like. It's important to get a solid translation, but just getting started is more important. I would recommend sticking with one primary translation so you can focus on your reading, but when you get stuck on a verse or want to study in greater depth, try reading a few different versions.

### 3. Find or Create a Plan

You can create your own plan or find a plan for reading the Bible. There are plenty of awesome free plans out there if you're trying to read through the entire Bible in a year. There are plans to read through the entire Bible faster and slower than that as well, but a year is the most common plan.

I prefer the [YouVersion Bible app](#). Once you create an account, you can access reading plans through the app and through [Bible.com](#). This is a super convenient way to always be able to access your plan on your phone or your computer and there are many different plans to choose from, whether you want to read through the Bible in a year or if you want something else.

[Christianity.com](#) offers many year plans in different formats, including:

- Beginning to End (From Genesis to Revelation)
- Chronological (In the order the events actually happened)
- Historical (In the order the books were written)
- New Then Old (New Testament first, then the Old Testament)
- Old and New (Passages from the Old Testament and New Testament, daily)

There are also a plethora of Bible reading plans at [ESV Bible](#) that you can read through RSS, email, mobile or print.

If you want to create your own plan, simply choose a method and stick with it. I wouldn't suggest spending the time to actually create your own plan that's exactly a year long, I would recommend creating a reading plan with four different sections. Here's the most common way to divide your daily reading:

1. Read one chapter from Psalms
2. Read one chapter from Proverbs
3. Read one chapter from the Old Testament
4. Read one chapter from the New Testament

That's a good foundation. I wouldn't worry too much about trying to complete your own plan in a certain time period. Just read at least one chapter a day from each section. If you can read more, great! If you can only read the one chapter, that's totally fine.

If you don't want to read that much each day or if you don't have the time right now, consider a daily devotional. Devotionals are a great way to read the Bible each day in just a few minutes. You can find plenty of devotionals on Amazon and for free online.

#### **4. Define Your Reading Goal**

I'm not talking about setting goals to read a certain amount of pages, though that's a good idea too. I'm talking about your desired outcome.

Do you simply want to read the Bible? Or are you wanting to study the Bible? If you do want to study it, are you wanting to study verse by verse, chapter by chapter or do you want to get down to word by word? These are questions you need to answer before you start a plan.

For most daily reading, you're probably just wanting to read the Bible, without doing an in-depth study. Most year-long plans are meant for just reading it without an in-depth study. If you do want to do more of a detailed study, you can always make notes and underline certain parts to come back to, which leads to my next point...

## 5. Write in Your Bible

The Bible is holy, but that doesn't mean you can't underline, highlight and write in it. You may have noticed that some people's Bibles are full of notes and writing. While some people do it because they think it makes them look more holy (I've been guilty of this), it really is a great way to dive deeper into the Word.

There are some great methods out there to help guide you. You could use colored pencils and use different colors for underlining specific topics. You could draw symbols beside certain Scriptures that signify further study. Or you can simply underline verses that jump out at you. There's no right or wrong. Just start and see where it goes.

My wife actually prefers to copy Scriptures down in her journal. She writes down entire verses straight out of the Bible so that she can come back and read them later. Even if she never came back to them, writing it down will help commit the words to memory.

## 6. Open With Prayer

There's no better way to start your Bible reading than by saying a simple prayer. This is a great way to relax and focus on what you're doing. I always pray for three things when I start my daily reading:

1. **Peace.** Ask for the peace and quiet to devote your entire mind to the reading at hand. Ask God to help you focus on what you're reading, instead of letting your mind drift.
2. **Revelation Knowledge.** I pray that God will make the Scriptures come alive in new ways and that He will help me to gain new knowledge and understanding, even if I have read this verse 1,000 times.
3. **God's Will.** I think it's important to ask God to show you how to apply your reading to your life. We are all going through a different time and season and God's Word is

applicable to whatever time we are in. Ask God to show you His will for your life through His Word.

Don't get caught up on saying the right things. God listens when you pray and thankfully, He knows your heart. He's not waiting on you to pray the exact "right" words.

## 7. Use Multiple Mediums

This is an extra step that can be extremely helpful. Though it's not technically part of your *reading* plan, it will really help to commit verses to memory and absorb more of the Bible.

Look for an audio bible. I actually prefer listening to a different translation from what I read to get a broader perspective. You can have it playing in your car on your commute, on road trips or just anytime you can listen. I have less than a one mile commute each day, but I still find that I can listen to quite a bit over time.

Here are a few great CD versions of the Bible:

- [Inspired by the Bible Experience](#) – *TNIV* – This is the version I use. It's a great dramatization, preformed by many award-winning actors and entertainers. I like it because it's easy to listen to and difficult to lose focus.
- [The Word of Promise: Complete Audio Bible](#) – *NKJV* – This is an awesome dramatized version of the Word. It will keep you engaged as if you're listening to a play.
- [The Complete Audio Bible](#) – *KJV* – This is a great audio version read James Earl Jones. Everyone knows James Earl Jones is a great narrator.
- [Voice Only Audio Bible](#) – *NKJV* – If you're not a fan of the music and sounds with the more dramatized versions, this one is for you.

If you don't want to purchase an audio Bible right now, you can get one for free online:

- [Bible.is](#) – This is a free online Bible that you can read, listen to or do both at the same time.

Finally, if you don't want to buy an audio Bible or listen online, you can actually download some versions here:

- [ESV New Testament](#) – *ESV* – This is an awesome version of the New Testament (mp3 version is free).
- [Bible.is](#) – *Multiple translations* – You simply sign up and download the version of your choice.
- [Divine Relations](#) – *Multiple translations* – These are downloadable mp3 versions compressed into .zip files.

## 8. Ask Yourself a Question (or 2 or 3)

There is a reason teachers give tests. It's to help the students better understand the subject and to help the information stick. Think of this as a personal test that you give yourself after each reading, but don't worry, you can't fail this test! Here's how it works...

Create a list with at least one question and no more than three. This will be a short list of what you can ask yourself after each time reading your Bible. This is a great way to help you get the most out of your reading and it works with other books as well.

You could choose any of the following questions or create your own:

- What was the **key idea** behind that chapter?
- What was the **overall message** of your reading?
- How can you **apply** what you just read in your life?
- What did all of the chapters you read have in **common**?
- What are the **similarities and differences** between you and the people you just read about?

Now create your own list! I say no more than three questions, because you will be more likely to do it every time and it won't take long. You can jot the answer(s) down in your journal or you could always start a separate journal just for your Bible reading.

I ask myself one question: “what was the main message behind that chapter?” I ask that question after each chapter, so I have decided to only ask one question instead of trying to ask several questions after each chapter. I have to be honest with myself – I probably wouldn’t stick with that many questions, even if merely for lack of time.

## **9. Study Your Patterns**

This is extremely important. Be realistic. Study your patterns and honestly discern whether or not your method is working. For example, if you decided two months ago that 5am is the best time for you to read your Bible, but you’ve only woke up at 5am twice in two months, you may want to rethink your method.

Do what seems to work for you.

You may be a night owl. You may be a morning person. You may prefer to read on your lunch break or you may prefer to read just before bed. Whatever keeps you consistent, do that. You may even find that you can’t consistently read the Bible, but you keep the audio Bible in your car for your commute...and that’s great!

If you find that nothing is working for you, the issue may be more with your discipline and level of commitment.

## 10. Keep Going

Once you have a method, start reading and keep reading. You may be surprised how much you enjoy reading your Bible when you have a system. I used to always struggle with my Bible reading, because I was never really sure of my intent. Was I reading to read, or reading to study? I never really knew. Once I defined it, it was much easier.

What happens if you miss a day? The Bible will still be there tomorrow. The best time to pick back up is right now. Don't feel guilty for missing it, just start where you left off. If I miss a few days, it will take a few more days to catch up, but once I'm caught back up, everything goes back to normal.

**The main point of this guide is this: read your Bible.** You don't need a perfect plan to get started. Plans are great and necessary, but if you're waiting on the perfect plan, stop waiting and start reading.

I've outlined many plans and ideas for plans above, but reading any of your Bible is better than nothing, so start where you're comfortable. It just takes a little discipline and dedication, but honestly, it doesn't take much.

### **Take Action: Find a Plan Today**

Go to one of the sources mentioned and find a plan or create your own plan with the outline I mentioned above. You don't even have to start reading today, you can start tomorrow, but get your plan together today.

Once you choose your plan, leave a comment and let me know which plan you chose or created. If you already have a plan, share it right now – this way other people can get even more ideas!

## Further Bible Study

These are a few good Bible books to start with and then a few great books to get even more out of your Bible reading:

- [Genesis](#)
- [Psalms](#)
- [Proverbs](#)
- [Isaiah](#)
- [Matthew](#)
- [Luke](#)

## Further Book Reading

- [How to Read the Bible for All It's Worth](#) by Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart
- [Knowing Scripture](#) by R.C. Sproul
- [Interpreting the Bible](#) by Mickelson
- [Better Bible Study](#) by Mickelson
- [Rick Warren's Bible Study Methods](#)
- [Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on the Whole Bible](#)
- [The New Strong's Expanded Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible](#)

## About Freedom Sprout

Freedom Sprout is a Christian finance blog dedicated to helping parents raise money-smart kids. Founded in Biblical wisdom, the topics range from kid's finances to Christian living.

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