

Bible Reading Plans for 2012

Tis' the season for Bible reading plans to start appearing! I hope you'll consider how you'll make God's word a bigger part of your life in the coming year...

There are a number of great reading plans. Many of these assembled here are from Justin Taylor, a vice president of editorial at Crossway publishing.

Stephen Witmer has a helpful [introduction](#)—on the weaknesses of typical plans and some advice on reading the Bible together with others—as well as offering his own [new two-year plan](#).

The Gospel Coalition's [For the Love of God Blog](#) takes you through the M'Cheyne reading plan, with a meditation each day by D. A. Carson related to one of the readings.

George Guthrie has a very helpful [Read the Bible for Life Chronological Bible Reading Plan](#). Guthrie has also made a booklet version of the [Read the Bible for Life 4+1 Reading Plan](#). The plan is similar to the Discipleship Journal plan, but in addition to reading in four different places in the Scriptures, you also read a psalm a day, cycling through the psalms twice in the year. This plan is semi-chronological, placing the prophets and the NT letters in rough chronological order.

[The Bible Reading Plan for Shirkers and Slackers](#) (Pastor Andy Perry [explains](#) the plan and why he recommends it.)

Don Whitney has a simple but surprisingly effective tool: [A Bible Reading Record](#). It's a list of every chapter in the Bible, and you can check them off as you read them at whatever pace you want.

For the highly motivated and disciplined, [Grant Horner's plan](#) has you reading each day a chapter from ten different places in the Bible. (Bob Kauflin read the whole Bible this way in five and a half months and [explains](#) why he likes this system a lot.)

[Joe Carter](#) and [Fred Sanders](#) explain James Gray's method of "How to Master the English Bible." "How to Master the English Bible" is a book that was written by James Gray around the 1900's. The basic plan by Gray is to pick a book of the Bible, pray for God's guidance and then read that one book over and over and over again. Then once you have "mastered" a book move on to another book.

There are [10 Reading Plans for ESV Editions](#), and the nice thing is the way in which Crossway has made them accessible in multiple formats:

- **web** (a new reading each day appears online at the same link)
- **RSS** (subscribe to receive by RSS)
- **podcast** (subscribe to get your daily reading in audio)
- **iCal** (download an iCalendar file)
- **mobile** (view a new reading each day on your mobile device)
- **print** (download a PDF of the whole plan)

Reading Plan	Format
Daily Reading Bible Daily Old Testament, New Testament, and Psalms	Web RSS iCal Mobile Print
Outreach Bible Daily Old Testament, Psalms, and New Testament	Web RSS iCal Mobile Print
Outreach Bible New Testament Daily New Testament. Read through the New Testament in 6 months	Web RSS iCal Mobile Print
M'Cheyne One-Year Reading Plan Daily Old Testament, New Testament, and Psalms or Gospels	Web RSS iCal Mobile Print
ESV Study Bible Daily Psalms or Wisdom Literature; Pentateuch or the History of Israel; Chronicles or Prophets; and Gospels or Epistles	Web RSS iCal Mobile Print
Literary Study Bible Daily Psalms or Wisdom Literature; Pentateuch or the History of Israel; Chronicles or Prophets; and Gospels or Epistles	Web RSS iCal Mobile Print
Every Day in the Word Daily Old Testament, New Testament, Psalms, Proverbs	Web RSS iCal Mobile Print
Through the Bible Daily Old Testament and New Testament	Web RSS iCal Mobile Print
Chronological Through the Bible chronologically (from Back to the Bible)	Web RSS iCal Mobile Print
Book of Common Prayer Daily Office Daily Psalms, Old Testament, New Testament, and Gospels	Web RSS iCal Mobile Print

You can also access each of these Reading Plans as **podcasts**:

- Right-click (Ctrl-click on a Mac) the “RSS” link of the feed you want from the above list.
- Choose “Copy Link Location” or “Copy Shortcut.”
- Start iTunes.
- Choose Advanced > Subscribe to Podcast.
- Paste the URL from step three into the box.
- Click OK.

The entire Bible on audio is usually about 75 hours (or 4500 minutes). If you commute to work 5 days a week, that's about 260 days a year. And if it takes you, say, 17 minutes to commute each way to work—and if you listen to the Bible on audio during your drive each way—you'll get through the entire Bible twice in a year. This probably isn't the only way to do Bible intake—but it's one most of us should take advantage of more.

ESV Study Bible (The ESV Literary Study Bible contains the same plan)

With this plan there are four readings each day, divided into four main sections:

- Psalms and Wisdom Literature
- Pentateuch and the History of Israel
- Chronicles and Prophets
- Gospels and Epistles

The **introduction** explains:

In order to make the readings come out evenly, four major books of the Bible are included twice in the schedule: the Psalms (the Bible's hymnal), Isaiah (the grandest of the OT prophets), Luke (one of the four biblical Gospels), and Romans (the heart of the Bible's theology of salvation). The list of readings from the Psalms and the Wisdom Literature begins and ends with special readings that are especially appropriate for the opening and closing of the year. The list of readings from the Pentateuch and the History of Israel proceeds canonically through the five books of Moses and then chronologically through the history of the OT, before closing the year with the sufferings of Job. The list of readings from the Chronicles and the Prophets begins with the Chronicler's history of the people of God from Adam through the exile, followed by the Major and Minor Prophets, which are organized chronologically rather than canonically.

You can **print out this PDF**, which is designed to be cut into four bookmarks that can be placed at the appropriate place in your Bible reading. There are boxes to check off each reading as you complete it.

M'Cheyne One-Year Reading Plan

With this plan you read through:

- the NT twice
- the Psalms twice
- the rest of the OT once

The plan begins with the four great beginnings or “births” of Scripture: Genesis 1 (beginning of the world), Ezra 1 (rebirth of Israel after her return from Babylonian exile), Matthew 1 (birth of the Messiah), Acts 1 (birth of the body of Christ). **John Stott** says of this reading schedule: “Nothing has helped me more to gain an overview of the Bible, and so of God's redemptive plan.”

If you go with this route, I'd recommend D.A. Carson's For the Love of God ([vol. 1](#) and [vol. 2](#) are available- vols. 3 and 4 are forthcoming). Carson's introduction and preface—which includes a layout of the calendar—are [available for free online](#).

Since there are four readings each day, it's easy to modify this one so that you read through the Bible once in two years, by reading just the first two readings each day for the first year and the second two readings each day for the second year.

The Discipleship Journal Reading Plan

With this plan you read through the entire Bible once.

With this plan there are “catch-up” days:

- To prevent the frustration of falling behind, which most of us tend to do when following a Bible reading plan, each month of this plan gives you only 25 readings. Since you'll have several “free days” each month, you could set aside Sunday to either not read at all or to catch up on any readings you may have missed in the past week.
- If you finish the month's readings by the twenty-fifth, you could use the final days of the month to study passages that challenged or intrigued you.

Bethlehem makes available bookmarks that you can place in the relevant parts of your Bible:

- [Bookmarks](#) for 1st half of the year
- [Bookmarks](#) for 2nd half of the year

The Journey Engage Scripture Reading Plan

[The Journey](#) is doing a church-wide reading plan this year.

This plan has you read whole chapters (a feature I like):

- one New Testament chapter
- two Old Testament chapters

They also have a couple of features designed to help those of us who have trouble persevering through a schedule like this: (1) there are lots of reflection/catch-up days; (2) they have pulled from the daily plan

some of the slower-paced, harder-to-understand books. These then become “Monthly Scripture Snapshots” that are to be speed-read, along with online videos and overviews to put these books in context. See their [website](#) for more resources related to this plan.