

**I try to read the Bible, but I don't understand it!  
I was never great at reading anyway...  
What can I do?**

### **Before You Begin Reading!**

- **First, understand that it's okay if you don't comprehend the whole Bible. In fact, EXPECT that you won't get it all, especially the first time reading through it! However, once you read it, each time you go back and re-read, you will likely gain new understandings!**
- **Choose a Bible version that is more easily understood. NIV, NRSV and most recently "The Message" are just a few Bible translations that have a more modern language.**
- **Begin your journey through the Bible with prayer. Ask God to reveal His meaning and to guide you through your misunderstandings.**
- **Realize that the purpose in reading the Bible is not a history lesson about Jesus. This is about strengthening your relationship with Him. If you approach the Bible with ONLY your brain, you have missed its purpose. Bring your brain along, but surround your journey with your heart.**

## Helpful Tools

- Once you've found a Bible translation that you're most comfortable with, you might want to consider a few helpful tools to help. If you are unable to purchase a new Bible translation, the links below is a free online site with multiple translations:

[Free site with many translations](#)

- Consider a journal notebook, or writing notes in the margins of your Bible. I know, I know... this sounds like school. But, hear me out! **There are no rules to this writing!** It can be short or long, no spelling requirements, handwriting isn't judged, pencil, pen, or marker – take your pick!

*So, why then? What's the point? What do I write with no directions?* There are many purposes actually, but the short version is, if reading isn't your thing, writing your thoughts keeps you involved in the reading. Do you get sleepy when you read? Does your mind wander off and you find yourself re-reading over and over? Writing in the margins or in a journal *while* you read prevents this from happening! Don't wait until the end to write your thoughts, read a few verses and pause for writing. Then read a few more and repeat.

If you don't know what to write, here are a few suggestions, but remember, there are no rules:

1. Write down a question you have about what you read.
2. Write a reaction to what you read.
3. Write a connection you may have to the verses. For instance, does this apply to a situation in your life?
4. Don't understand a word? Highlight it and then look up the definition and write it in the margin.
5. Write a memory. If this applies to something in your past, jot it down in the margin or in your journal.

If you're still unsure about the writing, take a look at this website for more ideas and even free templates you could use to help you get started!

### [Bible Journaling 101](#)

#### **Get Started With A Plan!**

- There are many ways to approach the Bible, so begin by picking a plan! The links below are all free and are helpful guides for a plan you choose!

### [Reading the Bible By Topic](#)

### [Reading the Bible Chronologically](#)

### [Reading the Bible by Characters and Events](#)

[AWESOME Guide to Reading the Bible](#) (This one is the BEST! Lots of short videos and information for anyone reading the Bible!)

- To help understand the Bible, it is also helpful to understand the historical times in the time period. If you're not a historian, try this site to help with background knowledge before you begin reading in a chapter. I like this site because the explanations are short and are great overviews of the authors of each chapter as well. It also features short video explanations that are very helpful!

[Overviews of the History and Authors in the Bible](#) (Great site for everyone!)

Now, you're ready. Set aside a time each day for reading your Bible. Find a place that is peaceful and comfortable for you. During this time of quarantine, in a time when you may find yourself with more spare time than normal, become stronger in your faith by spending this quality time with God.