

St. Andrew's United Methodist Church
2021



Reading Guide
OLD TESTAMENT

Tips for Reading

The Essential 100 (E100) Bible Reading Plan is a carefully selected list of short Bible passages - 50 from the Old Testament and 50 from the New Testament - that, when read together, will give you a wonderful overview of the Bible, the story of God, and its message to all of us. Most daily readings are 1 to 2 chapters in length and can be completed within 15 to 30 minutes.

The readings cover all major types of biblical writing, including History, Poetry and Wisdom, Prophets, Gospels, Epistles, etc. They're organized into 20 sets of 5 readings each, so within each 7-day week, you will have a little "grace space."

Whether you are new to the Bible or you've been reading it for years, this reading plan is a unique and meaningful way to get an overview of the Bible's message!

To successfully complete the Essential 100 Bible Reading Plan, here is some "essential" information to get you get started:

- **Pick Your Bible(s):** Select a Bible that is easy for you to understand or that speaks to you. You may want to have Bibles in several translations handy (e.g. NIV, NRSV, Message, CEB, King James), in case you want to see how other translations present the passages. If you don't have a Bible, please contact St. Andrew's (752-2903), and we will be happy to provide you with one.
- **Pick Your Spot:** Select a quiet time and place to read your Bible by yourself each day. While your schedule may require that your time and place change from time to time, it is important that you be able to spend uninterrupted time in a comfortable place.
- **Pick Your Method:** Do you like to let the words of scripture wash over you without stopping? Do you like to read the footnotes in your study Bible? Do you like to take notes, highlight verses? All of the above? No matter your style, make sure you are prepared (notebook, highlighter, study Bible, soft music).
- **Be Open:** Let the Holy Spirit accompany you as you read. Open your heart and mind to the words. Don't get discouraged if you don't understand everything - none of us do! Also don't get discouraged if you find yourself feeling uncomfortable or even disagreeing (gasp!) with what you are reading. The Spirit may not show you the full picture immediately, and that's okay. Be patient! Most of all

Enjoy your 100 days of essential Bible stories!

The Old Testament

1. In the Beginning

In these readings, we discover some important things about both God and humankind. The Bible doesn't attempt to prove the existence of God but simply asserts that God was in the beginning. It also asserts that God created everything, including humankind, and gave humans certain responsibilities. However, sin (disobeying God) soon came on the scene and people began wreaking havoc with God's plan for the world. God decided to rid the world of sin through a great flood and so destroyed all life on earth - except for Noah and his family.

Sadly, not long after the flood, the effects of sin again were evident. In a prideful attempt to prove they were as mighty as God, people began building a great tower up to heaven. God destroyed the tower and confused people's languages so they could never again join together in such a way.

Day 1

CREATION

July 5

Pray

Thank you, God, that you made the world and that it is very, very good. You are a great God!

Read

Genesis 1 - 2

Reflect

Not everyone believes in God or that God created everything. Do you? If so, on what basis? How important is it to believe in God, and why?

Day 2

THE FALL

July 6

Pray

Lord God, I thank you for the many truths in the Bible, even those that make me uncomfortable.

Read

Genesis 3

Reflect

The idea of "sin" is old fashioned to many people today. What do you think? Is sin real and how do you define it? What major effects of sin do you see?

Day 3 THE FLOOD

July 7

Pray

Lord, I want to learn more today about what the Bible says about you and your ways in the world.

Read

Genesis 6:5 - 7:24

Reflect

How does the world today compare with that in Noah's time? What would God say about it? Do you ever feel like Noah as you try to live the right way today?

Day 4 GOD'S COVENANT WITH NOAH

July 8

Pray

Thank God for his constant and good care for the earth which he so lovingly created.

Read

Genesis 8:1 - 9:17

Reflect

What do you think of when you see a rainbow? What promises of God are special to you? What reminds you of them?

Day 5 TOWER OF BABEL

July 9

Pray

Lord God, language and speech are good gifts from you and I offer you my thanks for them today.

Read

Genesis 11:1-9

Reflect

The motivation for building the Tower of Babel was pride. How can pride be both a good and a bad thing? What examples of both kinds of pride have you seen?

2. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob

Abram (whose name was later changed by God to Abraham) was promised by God that he, Abram, would become the father of many descendants. As Abraham and his wife grew older without any children, they decided to take matters into their own hands and have a child through a maid-servant. In spite of this, God re-affirmed his promise to Abraham and a son, Isaac, was born to Abraham's wife, Sarah. Later, God asked Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. While Abraham was preparing to obey, Isaac asked Abraham where the customary lamb for the sacrifice was. Abraham responded that "God himself will provide the sacrifice," which he did then and does now for all who follow the Lord Jesus Christ. The story continues with the unhappy relationship of Isaac's sons, Jacob and Esau. It's the story of a dysfunctional family that God uses for his great purposes.

Day 6

THE CALL OF ABRAM

July 12

Pray

Thank you, God, that you have called me to know you and have a close relationship with you.

Read

Genesis 12

Reflect

Have you ever felt "called" by God to do something or go somewhere? What methods do you think God may use to call people today?

Day 7

GOD'S COVENANT WITH ABRAM

July 13

Pray

Thank God for his many promises to you and that you can count on him to keep them all.

Read

Genesis 15

Reflect

Because Abram was childless, it seemed impossible for God to keep his promise. What obstacles seem to prevent God from keeping his promises to you?

Day 8 **ISAAC'S BIRTH AND "SACRIFICE"**

July 14

Pray

Lord, sometimes your word is hard to understand but please help me because I really want to.

Read

Genesis 21:1 - 22:19

Reflect

Do you think God tests people? What in the Bible supports your answer?

Day 9 **JACOB AND ESAU COMPETE**

July 15

Pray

Thank God for your family and close friends. Ask God to help you keep those relationships strong and healthy.

Read

Genesis 27 - 28

Reflect

How has your family made you the person you are today? What have you learned about making and maintaining good family relationships? What must healthy families avoid?

Day 10 **JACOB AND ESAU RECONCILE**

July 16

Pray

Teach me from this passage, Lord, and give me a teachable spirit whenever I read the Bible.

Read

Genesis 32-33

Reflect

What was the key to the reconciliation of these two brothers? What do you think is the most vital element in healing strained family relationships?

3. The Story of Joseph

Joseph, the son of Jacob (the grandson of Abraham) is the central character in these readings. As a young man, Joseph had a dream. When he told it to his brothers, they got so angry that they decided to sell him into slavery in Egypt. There, he was falsely imprisoned, but continued to be faithful to God and God gave him the ability to interpret dreams. This eventually led to his release from prison and his promotion to the position of highest authority in the country, second only to the Pharaoh. When a famine hit the entire region, Joseph's brothers were forced to come to Egypt to buy food - from none other than Joseph. After some struggle, his family was reconciled and reunited. Joseph knew and declared to his brothers that, though they had intended to harm him, God used that situation to work out his saving purposes for Joseph's family, God's people Israel and even the Egyptians!

Day 11 **SOLD INTO SLAVERY**

July 19

Pray

God, I'm thankful today for all those whom I love and who love me. I pray your blessing on them.

Read

Genesis 37

Reflect

What are some of the problems you see in Joseph's family? How could they have been avoided? How have you dealt with any problems or conflicts in your family?

Day 12 **PRISON AND A PROMOTION**

July 20

Pray

Ask God to share wisdom from his Word with you as you read this next passage about Joseph.

Read

Genesis 39-41

Reflect

How can a person deal with situations where they may be severely mistreated (as Joseph was)? How can one continue to trust God in such situations?

Day 13 TEN BROTHERS GO TO EGYPT

July 21

Pray

Lord God, I thank you that you know me inside out and all that I think and feel - and still love me so much.

Read

Genesis 42

Reflect

Joseph was harsh and distant in dealing with his brothers. Is that kind of behavior ever justified within families?

Day 14 THE BROTHERS RETURN

July 22

Pray

Lord, my life is a journey with you and I'm thankful to be on it. Guide me in that journey today, I pray.

Read

Genesis 43-44

Reflect

Joseph's brothers had begun to change. What helps family members grow and change beyond past mistakes and sins?

Day 15 JOSEPH REVEALS HIS IDENTITY

July 23

Pray

God, I want to know you and know more about you. Draw me closer to you today, I pray.

Read

Genesis 45:1 - 46:7

Reflect

Can you look back on troubles and disappointments of the past and see how God has used them for good in some way? What difference will that make in the future?

4. Moses and the Exodus

In these readings, we meet Moses, one of the greatest and most significant Old Testament figures. Moses grew up as a privileged member of Pharaoh's royal family, but had to flee Egypt when he murdered an Egyptian who had been abusing one of the Israelites. Years later, the Lord appeared to him in a burning bush and called him to go to Egypt and tell Pharaoh to "let my people go" free from their slavery. In these passages from the book of Exodus, we'll see how God called Moses and how God was intimately controlling the "defining moments" (for example, the plagues and the crossing of the Red Sea) by which he delivered his people and brought about their exodus.

Day 16 BIRTH OF MOSES

July 26

Pray

When you pray, ask God to meet you in his Word and to speak to you as you read it now.

Read

Exodus 1-2

Reflect

God protected Moses at his birth and as he grew. How has God been active in caring for you through your life? Why do you suppose God has done this?

Day 17 THE BURNING BUSH

July 27

Pray

Lord, I want to see you more clearly, love you more dearly and follow you more nearly today and each day.

Read

Exodus 3:1 - 4:17

Reflect

What are the most significant ways you "meet" with God? What means does God use most often to get your attention?

Day 18 THE TEN PLAGUES

July 28

Pray

God, you are a holy God who is right and good in all you do. I give you my worship and all honor.

Read

Exodus 6:28 - 11:10

Reflect

God judged Egypt harshly with the plagues. Do you think God still judges nations today?

Day 19 PASSOVER AND EXODUS

July 29

Pray

Lord, help me be patient today as I remember that my calendar and your calendar are not always the same! Yours is the one that counts.

Read

Exodus 12:1-42

Reflect

The Passover and Exodus are central biblical events. Why do you think they are still memorable today? What meaning do they have in your daily life?

Day 20 CROSSING THE RED SEA

July 30

Pray

My God, I trust my day to you today. You are the one who I know I can count on no matter what happens.

Read

Exodus 13:17 - 14:31

Reflect

Have you ever had a time when, like the Israelites, you had to rely totally on God? What did you learn? How did that time affect your relationship with God?

5. The Law and the Land

Having delivered his people from Egypt, God continued to guide them. When they reached Mt. Sinai, God spoke to them and gave them the Ten Commandments to shape their worship and their relationships. This would set them apart to be his special people, “a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” But the people disobeyed God’s ways and had to spend 40 years wandering in the wilderness before reaching the border of the Promised Land. Moses was allowed to see it but not go in. Joshua led the people across the Jordan River and into the land God had promised them. God was with them every step of the way.

Day 21 THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

August 2

Pray

Lord, thank you for giving us the wisdom for fruitful living that is contained in your laws.

Read

Exodus 19:1 - 20:21

Reflect

Are the Ten Commandments still relevant today? Which ones do we need most?

Day 22 THE GOLDEN CALF

August 3

Pray

God, you and you alone are the true and living God, worthy of all worship, honor and praise.

Read

Exodus 32-34

Reflect

What are some things that people make into idols?

Day 23 **JOSHUA SUCCEEDS MOSES**

August 4

Pray

Lord, I know you are always with me, and I thank you that I can have the courage to face whatever comes my way.

Read

Joshua 1

Reflect

What are your sources of guidance when you face difficult situations (not counting God)?

Day 24 **CROSSING THE JORDAN**

August 5

Pray

Show me more today, O Lord, about how to live in a way that pleases and honors you the most.

Read

Joshua 3-4

Reflect

Joshua's men gathered stones to be a sign for future generations. What "stones" will you leave behind to testify to God's work in your life?

Day 25 **THE FALL OF JERICHO**

August 6

Pray

Powerful God, I trust your power and I want to learn to trust it more and more each day.

Read

Joshua 5:13 - 6:27

Reflect

Have you ever felt God asking you to do something seemingly impossible? What happened? How did that experience affect your faith today?

6. The Judges

The Book of Judges describes a period in Israel's history before they had a king. It was a time when everyone did whatever they thought was right; consequently, it was also a time of unfaithfulness, disobedience to God and one in which Israel suffered many defeats by her enemies. Yet, all was not dark. In Judges we meet amazing individuals such as Deborah, a female judge who courageously obeyed God and set an example of courage in the midst of adversity. We meet Gideon, the reluctant leader who nonetheless obeyed God, and Samson, whose life ended in disaster because he was unable to look past the beauty of the women around him. We'll also read the story of Ruth, one of the greatest love stories of all time.

Day 26 ISRAEL'S DISOBEDIENCE

August 9

Pray

Lord God, I want to know what you say is right and wise, and then to live that way. Teach me more today.

Read

Judges 2:6 - 3:6

Reflect

What causes us to ignore God's ways, suffer as a result, see him help us, and then turn away from him again?

Day 27 DEBORAH LEADS ISRAEL

August 10

Pray

God, I thank you for those people who set a good example for me and others in following you.

Read

Judges 4-5

Reflect

What spiritual mentors have you learned the most from? How can you pass on to others what you've learned?

Day 28 GIDEON DEFEATS THE MIDIANITES

August 11

Pray

Lord, thank you that when I am afraid and unsure, you provide the assurance of your presence with me.

Read

Judges 6-7

Reflect

When have you felt inadequate to carry out God's purpose for you? How did God provide the help and assurance you needed?

Day 29 SAMSON DEFEATS THE PHILISTINES

August 12

Pray

Thank God now for the many good and rewarding relationships you share with others.

Read

Judges 13-16

Reflect

Samson's pride got him in big trouble. What dangers could pride pose in your relationships with others?

Day 30 THE STORY OF RUTH

August 13

Pray

Thank God for the gift of love, for his love for you and the love that you share with others.

Read

Ruth 1-4

Reflect

Why do you think this is regarded as such a special story?

7. The Rise of Israel

Samuel was the last of Israel's judges and the first of its prophets. His mother, Hannah, had been unable to have children and cried out to God for a son. When Samuel was born, she dedicated his life to God. When Samuel was old, Israel chose to reject God's kingship and asked for an earthly king like other nations. At God's command, Samuel anointed Saul as Israel's first king. In the course of time, however, Saul proved unworthy and God chose David to be king. Under David, a man after God's own heart, Israel experienced great prosperity.

Day 31 SAMUEL LISTENS TO GOD

August 16

Pray

Thank you, God, that you speak to me in the Bible. Help me to listen and learn well today.

Read

1 Samuel 1-3

Reflect

When you speak to God, how do you know he really hears you?

Day 32 KING SAUL

August 17

Pray

Thank God for the leaders of government and pray for him to give them wisdom to lead well.

Read

1 Samuel 8-10

Reflect

The people rejected God as their king. What evidence of faith (if any) do you expect in a political leader?

Day 33 DAVID AND GOLIATH

August 18

Pray

Lord, may I confront any challenges this or any day, trusting in your awesome power and your love for me.

Read

1 Samuel 16:1 - 18:16

Reflect

Was David courageous or foolhardy to fight Goliath? How can you judge when its right to take on such a fight?

Day 34 DAVID AND SAUL

August 19

Pray

Ask God to help you maintain a healthy relationship with anyone in authority over you.

Read

1 Samuel 23:7 - 24:22

Reflect

Is there a coworker or supervisor that you find it difficult to get along with? What can you do to help make the relationship better?

Day 35 KING DAVID

August 20

Pray

Lord God, I pray to know you better so that I can be more and more the person you want me to be.

Read

2 Samuel 5-7

Reflect

David wanted to build a "house" for the Lord. If you could do anything for God, what would it be?

8. The Fall of Israel

In these readings, we see that David, though a great king and a man of God, committed adultery and murder, with tragic consequences not only for himself but for his family and his nation, also. His son, Solomon, famed for his God-given wisdom and wealth, fell into idolatry and soon Israel fell into the depths of defeat under successive kings. Through the prophet Elijah, the Lord clearly demonstrated that he is the one true God, but because of its sin, the nation became divided and eventually was taken into exile.

Day 36 DAVID AND BATHSHEBA

August 23

Pray

Lord, I thank you for the wisdom and guidance in your word that shows me the best way to live.

Read

2 Samuel 11:1 - 12:25

Reflect

What do you think David did wrong or right in this story? How could he have avoided this tragedy? What can you learn from David?

Day 37 KING SOLOMON

August 24

Pray

I praise you for your great wisdom, Lord. You are such a wise and good God, and you share your wisdom with me.

Read

1 Kings 2-3

Reflect

If God promised to give you anything you asked for, what would you request?

Day 38 **SOLOMON'S TEMPLE**

August 25

Pray

Thank God today that he is with you every second of the day, and that nothing can change that.

Read

1 Kings 8:1 - 9:9

Reflect

The Temple was a special place where God's glory was present. Do you sense God's presence clearly when you go to church? What might "cloud" that sense?

Day 39 **ELIJAH AND THE PROPHETS OF BAAL**

August 26

Pray

Lord, I'm grateful for the good people who teach me so well what it means to follow you.

Read

1 Kings 16:29 - 19:18

Reflect

The people didn't trust God to feed them so they worshipped both the Lord and the idol Baal. Have you ever been tempted to do something like that?

Day 40 **THE FALL OF JERUSALEM**

August 27

Pray

Thank God that he is in control of all things that will come your way during this day.

Read

2 Kings 25

Reflect

Do you believe God uses disasters to punish people today?

9. Psalms and Proverbs

The Psalms describe every form of human emotion from the depths of despair to the heights of joy. The Psalms teach us a great deal about what an authentic relationship with God is like. Although there are times when the psalmist expresses deep anguish and pain to God, there is also a constant refrain of Thanksgiving and praise to the One who can always be relied on in times of trouble.

The book of Proverbs is full of wisdom and practical advice on how to lead a life that pleases God and avoid the many pitfalls we can so easily fall into.

Day 41 THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

August 30

Pray

God, I thank you for all the beauty, comfort, inspiration and guidance found in your word.

Read

Psalm 23

Reflect

What do you learn about the nature and character of God in this beloved psalm? Which verse is most significant to you?

Day 42 HAVE MERCY ON ME

August 31

Pray

Lord, prepare my heart and mind to be with you now. I bow before you as Lord and God.

Read

Psalm 51

Reflect

Why is it so important to confess your sins? What help does this psalm give you?

Day 43 PRAISE THE LORD

September 1

Pray

Lord, you are a wonderful God, Creator and Sustainer of all! I marvel at all that you are!

Read

Psalm 103

Reflect

What would you most praise God for?

Day 44 GODLY WISDOM

September 2

Pray

You are the source of all true wisdom, Lord. I come to you seeking more of your wisdom.

Read

Proverbs 1-4

Reflect

People have many ideas about what wisdom is. What do you think it means to be truly wise?

Day 45 PROVERBS OF SOLOMON

September 3

Pray

Ask God to give you some real, practical wisdom for right living as you read these proverbs today.

Read

Proverbs 16-18

Reflect

Which of these proverbs are most helpful to you?

10. The Prophets

The prophetic writings make up approximately one third of the Bible. They are divided into two sections: the major prophets and the minor prophets (given those names because of the length of their writings not the importance). First, we'll look at a prophecy of great significance found near the middle of the Bible. Then, we'll see how three of the prophetic writers responded to their calling. Their response was not always a positive one, but God was working in and through them all to achieve his good purposes. Finally, we'll look briefly at a prophetic vision of judgment day.

Day 46 THE SUFFERING SERVANT

September 6

Pray

Lord, it's amazing to me how rich the Bible is with the story of your wonderful work in the world.

Read

Isaiah 51-53

Reflect

There's both bad news and good news in this reading. What is the bad news and where do you see the foreshadowing of good news?

Day 47 JEREMIAH'S CALL AND MESSAGE

September 7

Pray

Lord, give me ears and a heart to be ready to hear and obey whenever you call me.

Read

Jeremiah 1:1 - 3:5

Reflect

Have you ever felt called to deliver a hard message?

Day 48 DANIEL IN THE LION'S DEN

September 8

Pray

Lord, you know it's not easy for me to do the right thing all the time, but I really do want to.

Read

Daniel 6

Reflect

Daniel may have been tempted to go along with the King's decree. What temptations to downplay your faith do you face?

Day 49 THE STORY OF JONAH

September 9

Pray

Lord, I want to share your desire that all people everywhere come to know you.

Read

Jonah 1-4

Reflect

Have you ever wanted to run away from God?

Day 50 THE DAY OF JUDGMENT

September 10

Pray

My God, I want to know you and draw closer to you as I spend this time with you today.

Read

Malachi 1-4

Reflect

Some people think that the notion of a judgment day is outmoded. What do you think?

About Scripture Union

Scripture Union is an interdenominational Christian ministry with a twofold mission: helping people of all ages meet God in the Bible and prayer, and reaching at-risk children with God's Word.

Scripture Union produces Bible reading programs for churches and groups, including The Essential 100 Bible Challenge and The Essential 100 Jesus Challenge, and publishes Bible reading guides for individuals, including *Encounter with God* and *Discovery*. Scripture Union also conducts Bible-based outreach programs for at-risk children including *SuperKids* summer missions and *PrimeTime* after school programs. Scripture Union was founded in 1867 and has national ministries in 130 countries.