

SUMMIT BIBLE READING PLAN



READING PLAN PURPOSE

One person said, "Christianity is not primarily about lifestyle change; it is about knowing God." In our reading the gospels, we see an aspect of who God is that we are incapable of finding elsewhere. The gospels reveal who God is personally. Walking through one of the gospel accounts will do this, but as we read the four accounts found in Scripture, we see how God chose to reveal himself to his people. Each gospel reveals who Jesus is from a different vantage point. From the four gospel accounts, we get a picture of Jesus' life and person. If we have seen Jesus, we have seen the Father; seeing Jesus in each of the gospel accounts enables us to engage with God personally throughout our lives. This reading plan will walk through the four gospel accounts in an effort to see how Jesus' story interrupts our own.

JOHN

OVERVIEW

John writes in chapter 20, “Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” Everything John writes in his gospel account is oriented toward answering the question, “Who is Jesus?” Through reflection on this question, we are able to deepen our understanding of the life of Jesus and the implications his life has on our own. The gospel of John leads us deeper into belief as we think through who we understand Jesus to be.

THURSDAY, APRIL 22

READ John Chapter 1: Who is Jesus?

READING PROMPT

In the first chapter of John, characters refer to Jesus using several different names. Jesus is referred to as the Word, the Lamb of God, Rabbi, the King of Israel, and so on. Throughout the first chapter, John is drawing the reader into the mystery of who Jesus is. How can so many people refer to him with such weighty titles? Who could this man be? Why do people think he's such a big deal? John invites his reader to think through these questions, and throughout the rest of his gospel account he aims to look into what answers might be suitable for such a character.

PRAYER PROMPT

Reflect on how you have answered the question, "Who is Jesus?" throughout your life. Prayerfully invite the Holy Spirit to speak through his word into how you answer this question today and into what your answer might mean for your life. Take a moment to read through the first chapter again as you ask the Spirit to draw your focus to one Jesus' specific titles, then spend a moment praising God for this reality of who Jesus is, and ask him to reveal what it might mean for your day today.

FRIDAY, APRIL 23

READ John Chapter 2: Jesus Wasn't Caught Up In Religion.

READING PROMPT

Religious rituals and customs were at the center of the Jewish culture. The water jars would have been used to accomplish these Jewish requirements, so when Jesus works a miracle in this chapter, he is simultaneously reworking how we think about the way we relate to God. Later in the chapter, Jesus cleanses the temple as he calls out the flaws in a religious and stagnant approach to God. As you read the second chapter of John, think through what Jesus might be reworking in how we think about approaching God.

PRAYER PROMPT

Today as you read, pray that the Spirit would reveal to you the ways you've been trying to earn God's approval throughout your life. In what areas are you striving and wearing yourself out as an attempt to please him? Pray that Jesus' grace would flood these areas of your life, and that you may experience freedom in the gospel.

TUESDAY, APRIL 27

READ John Chapter 6: Loving Jesus for who He is More Than for What He Does

READING PROMPT

After the feeding of the five thousand in John 6, Jesus will point out the tendency in people to value what he can do for them more than they value him for who he is. As you read through the sixth chapter of John, focus on the weight of who Jesus is, and what it might mean for your life beyond the immediate benefits that come from following him.

PRAYER PROMPT

Spend a moment praising God for who he is, then prayerfully reflect on what your prayers typically look like. If you have allowed God to become a resource you use to try to get him to do what you want, consider entering into a time of surrendering your desires as you ask God to mold you more into his likeness.

WEDNESDAY, **APRIL 28**

READ John Chapter 7: Do Not Judge by Appearances

READING PROMPT

In verse 24 of John 7, Jesus challenges the Jewish leaders to judge not by appearance, but by right judgement. This challenge to the Jewish leaders still confronts our culture today. So often, we are compelled to judge a situation, person, or idea right away based on the appearance alone. How, then, are we supposed to make good and right judgement calls? In verse 17, Jesus says, "If anyone's will is to do God's will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority." Jesus is claiming that the difference between falling into judging a book by its cover and walking with healthy discernment begins with a battle over our desires. In John 7, we can see the difficulty that our own desires can present in how we think through good and right judgement calls.

PRAYER PROMPT

As you pray through John 7 today, ask God to rework your desires to be aligned with his heart for this world. In the moments our will is aligned with Christ's, we are offered a perspective toward people, situations, and ideas that we could never have understood on our own. In the aligning of our will to Christ's, we gain a new vantage point altogether.

THURSDAY, **APRIL 29**

READ John Chapter 8: Jesus and the Father are one

READING PROMPT

The God of the Old Testament and the Jesus we see in the New Testament are often perceived as independent from one another. In the eighth chapter of John, Jesus makes it clear that this is far from the truth. Throughout this chapter, Jesus' words remind us that he is, and has been, connected to the Father in all things. In this relationship shared between the Father and the Son, we are able to see that Jesus is not just some good guy and the Father is not just the angry and vengeful god that people make him out to be. The Father is incredibly involved in the redemption narrative of humanity, and the Son is united to the powerful Creator-God we see in the Old Testament.

PRAYER PROMPT

Today as you pray, praise God for the beauty in his united plan for humanity's redemption, and for how the Father, Son, and Spirit work toward the flourishing of humanity through the life of Jesus.

SUNDAY, MAY 2

READ John Chapter 11: The Promise of the Resurrection

READING PROMPT

As chapter 11 unfolds, we see Jesus' response to the reality of his friend's death. In verse 25, we see that in Christ we are not offered complete avoidance of pain and suffering here on Earth, but we are offered a resurrection. And in Jesus' response and presence throughout the chapter we get to see that, when we do find ourselves in seasons of difficulty, grief, and mourning, our grief does not have to be in competition with our faith. Jesus reveals how deep mourning and complete trust in God can exist alongside one another.

PRAYER PROMPT

If you are in a difficult time where you have found yourself grieving and mourning, set aside time to bring your hurt to God in prayer. If you are not in a season of mourning or grief, pray for someone you know who is going through a difficult time.

LUKE

OVERVIEW

The narrative of Luke has a consistent focus on what God has done and continues to do as it emphasizes the upside-down nature of the kingdom of God, the journey of Christ, and the embodiment of God's purpose through Jesus. As you read through Luke's account of the gospel, allow yourself to be encouraged and challenged in your faith.

THURSDAY, MAY 13

READ Luke Chapter 1: Mary's Song

READING PROMPT

Choosing the words to launch Luke's account of the gospel would have taken a massive amount of intention and thoughtfulness. As writings were produced on scrolls in Luke's culture and time, the first portion of writing would have served to set up his gospel account as a whole. In Chapter 1v3, Luke makes clear the motive to present an orderly account of Jesus's life here on Earth. In verses 46-55 he expands on some major themes through Mary's song. In Mary's song, we get a taste of what will follow throughout the book of Luke. In these verses, almost every verb points to God's action as Luke illustrates the upside-down nature of the kingdom of God, and speaks of Jesus as the embodiment and interpreter of God's mission. As you read through the first chapter of Luke, think through what Luke might be looking to as he recounts the greatest story ever told.

PRAYER PROMPT

As you read today, pray that God would make his story refreshing to you. If you have been in a season where God's word has seemed monotonous or you have grown numb to Scripture, pray that God would move through his word in a striking way. If you are in a season where you cannot get enough of his word, pray that God would continue to move in you as you read through Luke's account of the gospel.

SATURDAY, MAY 29

READ Luke Chapter 17: Pay Attention to Yourself

READING PROMPT

We naturally tend to care about ourselves more than others. In verse 3 of Luke 17, Jesus encourages his disciples to pay attention to themselves so that they would avoid causing others to fall into temptation. So much of our culture is centered on the next best thing and one-upping each other. But Jesus urges his followers to avoid living as though we are bait for the people around us to chase after, and instead live in a way that points them toward a gospel-centered life.

PRAYER PROMPT

Today as you pray, confess to God the things you've wanted others to notice about you. In honesty with God, pray through the things you want others to envy. As you pray through these things, surrender to God your desire for others' approval, and ask God to give you the restraint to serve those around you by living with a healthy awareness of yourself.

MARK

OVERVIEW

Mark is written towards a primarily non-Jewish audience and is incredibly action-oriented. Jesus is understood as the Messiah and Son of God, whose death and resurrection paid the penalty for our sins and achieved victory over Satan, sin, and death. With this joyful announcement comes the call to all believers for faith and cross-bearing discipleship.

The first half of Mark's gospel highlights the identity of Jesus as Messiah and Son of God. The second half (beginning in Mark 8:31) emphasizes the mission of Jesus as the suffering servant of the Lord. Shockingly, the Messiah is not here to conquer the Roman legions but to suffer and die as an atoning sacrifice for sins. Mark writes to show that Jesus' crucifixion does not negate his claim to be the Messiah, but rather affirms it! His faithfulness to this mission becomes the model for all discipleship. Following Jesus means denying yourself, taking up your cross, and following him.

TUESDAY, JUNE 8

READ Mark Chapter 3: The Calling

READING PROMPT

Jesus spends the majority of this chapter bringing freedom to people - healing disease and deformity, casting out demons and restoring wholeness to lives - but he does this in the face of opposition from the religious, confusion from his family and amidst accusations that he is possessed by the devil. As you read, pay attention to how Jesus is able to continually assert the truth of his identity and mission as being grounded in his identity in God.

PRAYER PROMPT

Invite God to remind you of your identity in him alone today. Ask him to show you how your value, mission and purpose on this earth are grounded in him alone. Speak the truth aloud of being a daughter or son of the King and practice reminding yourself today that you are not what you do; you are not what you have, and you are not what others say that you are. You are a chosen, loved and desired child of God!

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 9

READ Mark Chapter 4: The Parables

READING PROMPT

Across this chapter, Jesus teaches to the masses in parables; stories used to explain or illustrate incredible kingdom truths. Verses 10-13 are the hinge for the entire chapter as Jesus explains that everything he says and does can only be understood in light of God himself. We see that to know and hear God one must live a life that is both surrendered to him and spent actively listening for his voice.

PRAYER PROMPT

We don't somehow "solve" God, instead we learn more and more about his nature and character as we examine the life of Jesus and spend time in his presence. Today, set aside some time to simply be still in the presence of God. Allow yourself to rest here, with no agenda or hurry and see how God speaks to you (and yes, it's ok if you don't "hear" anything, this is part of a life-long practice).

THURSDAY, JUNE 10

READ Mark Chapter 5: The Power

READING PROMPT

We see Jesus healing both out of mercy and in response to faith, and often it is the unexpected people (the outsiders) who receive this healing. Why do you think it's the "insiders" who seem to miss what Jesus is doing, even as he preaches, heals and serves the people he encounters?

PRAYER PROMPT

It's easy to mock the Pharisees and the religious of Jesus' time as we read of their arrogance and ignorance. But how often are we the arrogant and ignorant? How easy is it for us to believe we are the ones who have it "solved" and are doing it "right?" Set aside some time today and pray through Psalm 139:23-24 // Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life. Allow the Spirit to reveal any pride or arrogance you may be harboring and not even aware of in your life. Then spend a few minutes in confession and repentance, allowing God to heal and encourage you!

SATURDAY, JUNE 12

READ Mark Chapter 7: The Hypocrites

READING PROMPT

In this segment, we see the character of God revealed through Jesus, in a series of encounters with people at opposite ends of the social, economic and political spectrum. Again, it is the proud who are humbled, and the humble who are lifted up. It is the arrogant who are called out, and the unassuming who are called up! The only time Jesus is declared as "Lord" in Mark's entire gospel, it comes from the lips of a Gentile woman - someone who would have been unseen at best, and hated at worst. Notice that God doesn't just see the people society ignores, he actively uses them to advance his kingdom on earth!

PRAYER PROMPT

Ask the Spirit to open your eyes to the people you tend to move right past in your daily life. Is it a cashier? The crossing guard? A coworker? The person on the corner with the sign asking for help? Whoever it is, ask that the Spirit would help you truly see them as an image bearer of God and then honor and dignify them accordingly.

SUNDAY, JUNE 13

READ Mark Chapter 8: The Pivot

READING PROMPT

Chapter 8 is the pivot for Mark’s gospel. Jesus identity as the Messiah is finally declared by those closest to him! But the moment Jesus begins to explain that part of his calling is to die, those same followers begin to lecture him! It is clear they don’t yet understand what the way of the cross is, or what it will ultimately cost to follow Jesus.

PRAYER PROMPT

Even with the full Word of God in front of us, how often do we still find ourselves “lecturing” God when we don’t understand his plans, or when he isn’t operating on our time table? Jesus makes it clear that following Him is not for the faint of heart! Take some time in prayer today and ask God what it could look like for you to “lose your life” for the sake of Christ and Gospel. Is there something he is inviting you to surrender? O perhaps it’s something he wants you to step into, to begin doing, as you follow Him.

MONDAY, JUNE 14

READ Mark Chapter 9: The Prediction

READING PROMPT

Across this chapter, Jesus explains and models what the Kingdom of God looks like as it breaks into the world. There is incredible freedom and incredible power, but there is also incredible cost. In spite of hearing the words of Jesus and watching his example, the disciples continue to misunderstand the purpose and power in this new kingdom.

PRAYER PROMPT

At some level our faith is always shaped and influenced by things like our culture, background, family of origin and upbringing. This is not a bad thing, but we always want to bounce those beliefs and understandings off of God’s Word and see if they match up. As you read the words of Jesus, how would you describe the kingdom he explains? Is that how you would have described it? Allow a few moments for God to show you anywhere your vision for his kingdom doesn’t align with his vision, and then ask for a refreshed perspective as you move into your day.

TUESDAY, JUNE 15

READ Mark Chapter 10: The Upside Down Kingdom

READING PROMPT

The Kingdom of God is often described as being the “upside down kingdom” because it reverses nearly every value system our kingdoms operate by. It values serving over titles, generosity over acquisition and humans inherently have value as an image bearer of God, not because of their position in society or their possessions. As you read this chapter notice how Jesus elevates the status of people who had none, and turns the values of the culture upside down!

PRAYER PROMPT

Take some time today to write out what your personal values are and what you see valued in our culture, city and the Church. What things or ideas sit in positions of influence in your own mind and heart, and in the spaces around you? Celebrate the things you see that match up with the words and actions of Jesus in this chapter and look for ways to bring those things to life throughout your day.

FRIDAY, JUNE 18

READ Mark Chapter 13: The Future

READING PROMPT

This entire section is devoted to Jesus telling his disciples what lies ahead of them; the destruction of the city and temple, their own persecution and one day, the return of Jesus. He tells them what to expect so that they will stay alert, on guard and focused on continuing the mission he has begun, and will be handing over to them.

PRAYER PROMPT

When you think of the “mission of God” what comes to your mind? How do you fit into the work of restoration God is doing on this earth? As you walk through your day, ask the Spirit to open your eyes to how he wants to use you in the renewal and restoration of the people and creation around you!

SUNDAY, JUNE 20

READ Mark Chapter 15: The Death

READING PROMPT

Watch how pride wreaks havoc on the human heart in this chapter. The priests were too proud to acknowledge God physically in their midst, Pilate was too proud to stand against the wishes of the crowd in spite of seeing their corruption; the crowd, the soldiers, the people passing by, all of them were so convinced of their own righteousness that they put the Son of God to death. In fact, it is only a Roman soldier, an outsider and even an “enemy” of the people, who grasps who Jesus truly is; that this Jesus of Nazareth is the crucified son of God, the Messiah.

PRAYER PROMPT

Ask God to reveal a blindspot, or place of pride in your life today. Perhaps there is someone you wouldn’t ordinarily turn to for input who could speak truth into your life. Pray for an opportunity to simply listen today, and the patience and grace to be present to that moment!
