

# HOW TO READ THE BIBLE

## 1

### WHAT'S IN THE BIBLE?

Knowing the basic makeup and structure of the Bible will help you feel more comfortable as you discern what is being said. Below is a short listing of what you can expect from your Bible.

- There are 66 books of the Bible.
- Approximately 40 different authors contributed to the Bible.
- The authors of the Bible range from kings, fishermen, priests, government officials, shepherds, doctors, and more.
- The Bible divides the books into two main sections: The Old Testament (pre-Jesus' life) and The New Testament (after Jesus' life).
- The three prominent genres in the books of the Bible consist of narratives, poetry, and pros-discourse (such as the letters). You can even break down the genres more and examine them as songs, prophecies, historical narratives, and more.

## 2

### WHERE DO I BEGIN READING?

If you are new to reading the Bible, begin reading a gospel book found in the New Testament. These books are **Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John**, and each record the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

The word gospel means good news, and the whole story of the Bible is wrapped up in the good news that though we have all sinned against a holy and perfect God, out of His abundant grace and love, He made a way for us to be united with Him for eternity through faith in Jesus (John 3:16, 2 Corinthians 5:21). Jesus is the central character of the Bible, and everything points to Him. So beginning with a book fixated on Jesus' time on earth will help the rest of the Bible come together.

After reading a gospel book, consider reading one of the letters written to the churches in the New Testament portion of your Bible. These letters will retell the gospel story while sharing more practical, godly living practices for those united with Christ.

## 3

### HOW DO I READ THE BIBLE?

**1. Begin in prayer.** The Bible is a spiritual book, so we need to ask God to open our hearts and minds for spiritual understanding. Consider praying something similar to Psalm 119:18, "Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law."

**2. Ask good questions.** Interacting with the text will bring about greater illumination and understanding. While you read, take moments to pause and ask: What do I learn about God/Jesus/Holy Spirit? What do I learn about people? What is my response?

**3. Use a study Bible.** A study Bible can help you understand some of the more complicated verses by giving you a theologically rich perspective.

**4. Find a mentor.** A mentor can guide you in your reading and offer you a safe space to ask questions about what the text means, how it applies to our world now, and what it means to respond in obedience.