



A Beginner's Guide to Reading the Bible

Did you know that the Bible is the world's best seller? Each year a staggering 100 million copies of the Bible are printed. It has been translated into more than 2000 different languages. What is it that makes the Bible consistently outsell every other book ever produced? It does it every year and has done so for many years.

Don't be daunted

Don't be daunted by the size of the book. True, there are approximately 1000 pages, but these are made up of many smaller books and poems. There is history and celebration, hatred and love, justice and mercy, sadness and joy.

Where to get one

First check the bookshelves in the house where you live. Most people have been given a Bible at some time in their lives. If not, check the yellow pages under 'Bible'. There will be a Christian bookshop nearby where you can buy one. You will probably pay about \$30 for an attractively bound volume. A cheap "pew Bible" can cost less than \$10.

Test yourself

You probably know a lot more than you realise. Have you heard of the Psalms? These songs were mainly written by King David. Have you heard of Daniel in the lions' den? What was Jonah famous for? Or Moses?

Where to start

- If you are interested in the origins of things, read the very first book—Genesis.
- For some comfort and guidance in difficult times, try the Psalms.
- If you know very little about the life of Jesus and his disciples, start with Mark, the shortest gospel.

Some suggestions

Pray. God will help you to understand the Bible and to apply it if you ask him.

Use a reading plan. Once you have read a couple of books you will want to be more systematic. Bible reading charts can be obtained from the address below or at Christian bookshops.

Take your time. Bible reading is most effective if you are not rushed. Set aside 15–20 minutes each day to read a few chapters and think about what they mean. Be patient, and over time it will start to fit together.

Ask questions. You will get far more out of your Bible if you ask yourself questions as you read. If you can't find answers, take them to a more experienced Bible reader to see if he or she can help.

Warning!

Most people who set out to read the Bible seriously soon find it a disturbing book. The Bible claims to be the word of God, and lays down rules for living and outlines the consequences of obedience and disobedience.

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16–17)

No wonder the Bible has a real impact on any serious reader!

This leaflet has been produced by the *Dandenong Bible Education Centre*. Check out our website at www.dandenongbec.org.au. If you would like a free booklet on this subject, or information about the beliefs and activities of the Christadelphians, write to us at ask@dandenongbec.org.au or to PO Box 2076, Dandenong East VIC 3175. Bible quotations in this leaflet are taken from the New International Version.