

What if I fall behind in my reading?

The reading plan we are recommending has only 25 readings each month, leaving time for reflection or, if you are like most of us, time to catch up. If you fall so far behind that you are inclined to quit rather than catch up, then you ought to just start anew with the readings for that week. You can always go back and read portions you missed after the end of the year. Keeping up will be very helpful because each week the sermons will be drawn from the Scripture readings for the week before. Thus, when you are reading Genesis, the preachers will be preaching from Genesis.

What if I'm starting after January 1?

The reading plan is set up so that you can jump in at any point during the year. Regardless of where you start the reading plan, so long as you read for twelve months, you'll get all the way through the Bible.

Are there other resources that will help me?

We will be posting links to helpful websites at www.standrewccl.org. You'll be able to get to everything right from the home page. I will also be re-starting my blog with a renewed commitment!

A blog?!

Yes . . . after letting my blog accumulate cobwebs, I will be dusting it off for this project. I will post thoughts, reflections, and helpful links regularly. My blog can be found at www.scottengle.blogspot.com. You will be able to post comments on the blog and read the comments posted by others.

What if I have a question?

You are welcome to e-mail me questions at sengle@standrewccl.org. I get many great questions about the Bible from our congregation. Unless you ask me to keep your question private, I'll post the question and my response on the blog. Chances are that many other people will have the same question!

I'm not a "Bible answer man" but many questions have come up in my Bible studies. I've got a pretty extensive research library and can probably help you with your question.



Tips on Reading *Thru the Bible*

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Why Thru the Bible?

The Bible is the story of our life with God. It is God's Word for his people and it is our own spiritual journal. We come to the Bible seeking knowledge, understanding, and transformation. Though these sixty-six diverse books reveal a great deal about God, about our world, and about ourselves, this is not the only reason to read the Bible. God's Spirit uses our reading of Scripture to reshape our hearts and minds so that we become evermore Christlike. It is this reshaping, this renewing of ourselves, that has brought many of us to this one-year Bible reading journey.

We will learn more about God on this journey, but even more, we will come to know God better. People often ask me how they can grow closer to God and become more mature Christians. The practice of regular Bible reading is one of the most important ways. Not surprisingly, being a disciple entails living a more disciplined life and one of the Christian disciplines is regular Bible reading and study.

How long are the readings for each day?

The typical reading consists of three or four chapters. Twenty minutes a day ought to be plenty of time to finish the reading at a leisurely pace. This is no place for speed reading. A slower pace will let the Word seep into your mind and heart a little better.

Which Bible should I read?

There are many excellent English translations of the Bible. We at St. Andrew most often use the NRSV translation. Because the translators sought to be as close to the ancient Hebrew and Greek as reasonably possible, the NRSV can be a little difficult to understand in spots. Thus, I'd recommend using the NRSV primarily (the TNIV and NIV are good too), but also using an easier-to-read translation in places. The NLT (New Living Translation) is a good choice. Our youth department uses it a lot. You might also enjoy reading from Eugene Peterson's biblical paraphrase *The Message*. Bear in mind, however, that to get an "easier" translation, the translators have to get further and further from the original Hebrew and Greek. So, I'd go with the NRSV and supplement your reading elsewhere. You can pick up very inexpensive paperback copies of other translations at nearly all bookstores.

Should I use a study Bible?

Yes. You will get much more out of your Bible reading if you have some help. The truth is that it can be pretty hard to make sense of some parts of the Bible. It can also be difficult to see the larger picture. Maps and timelines are also very helpful. A good study Bible will help with all this. A word of caution though – remember that the study notes and the book introductions are not part of Scripture. They are not "God-breathed," as Paul put it (2 Timothy 3:16).

The NRSV and other translations are used in many excellent study and devotional Bibles. I will be using the *Renovaré Spiritual Formation Bible* (NRSV) this year, as its editors and many of its writers are Christians whom I and others at St. Andrew read regularly. They include Richard Foster, Tom Oden, Eugene Peterson, Dallas Willard, Walter Brueggemann, William Willimon, Ellen Charry, Marva Dawn, and Ben Witherington. Many of these names may not mean much to you, but they are among the most highly respected disciples and scholars in the Christian community. I'm excited about being in conversation with them as I read through the Bible. The *Renovaré* team has tried to combine the best of a study Bible and a devotional Bible in a single volume. The introductory materials and the book introductions are particularly helpful.

There are many excellent study and devotional Bibles that would help you get more out of your reading. If you have questions, please e-mail me at sengle@standrewccl.org or go to www.standrewccl.org for more information. I've written a brief guide to some of the leading NRSV study Bibles and other study aids. It is posted on the website.

What reading plan will we use?

Rather than reading from Genesis straight through to Revelation, which doesn't work for many people, we will be using the *Discipleship Journal* "Book-at-a-Time Bible Reading Plan." This will enable us to read a book, such as Romans, in its entirety, and still move back and forth from the Old and New Testaments during the year. The *Discipleship Journal* plan should also help you to grasp the Bible's over-arching story. Copies of the reading plan will be available at St. Andrew and can also be downloaded online at www.standrewccl.org.