

Hi there

WELCOME TO S2:3 | WHERE TO READ

Welcome back! Today Cassidy and Abigail discuss on the podcast: where should you send people to read in the Bible? It's a question that we have both encountered. We often think well just send them to John or Romans, but Abigail has an interesting take on the conversation that is contrary to what most Christians suggest.

It is important to note that each person asking this question is part of a different season. Thinking about questions as: are they a new believer, are they struggling with something specific, do they have a theology question, are they facing a dilemma.

2 Timothy 3:16-17: All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Regardless of where someone starts reading God's Word, it is still God's Word. His Spirit convicts, teaches, leads, and transforms. It was the book of Habbakuk that was quoted three times in the New Testament stating "The Just Shall Live by faith" and it was this line from Romans that changed Martin Luther's mind. Jonathan Edwards was reached by 1 Timothy 2:17. Charles Spurgeon it was Isaiah 45:22.

The two most common places to tell new believers to start reading the Bible are John and Romans. If you're familiar with the Bible, you probably would have guessed that. The third most common answer would simply be the Gospels. Abigail has collected a few quotes that she thinks give a fairly good answer and rationale behind the answer.

"Here are four books called the Gospels — Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. These are the books about the historical foundations of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.



Second, here is the book of Acts. This is the story of how the early church got started and launched by the power of the Holy Spirit after Jesus went back to heaven, and how the church took root because of what Jesus had done. And then here is this group called Letters. These are the authoritative apostles — the spokesmen for the risen Christ — teaching the church how to live in the church and in society. And then here is this strange book at the end called Revelation which describes the victory of God at the end of the age.” - John Piper [Where Should a New Believer Start in the Bible?](#) | [Desiring God](#)

“Begin by reading the Gospel of John, for it tells us of Christ, of the ‘greatest life ever lived,’ and what He has done for us. Next read Acts, for it tells us what His first disciples did in the power of God’s Holy Spirit. Then perhaps the letters of John and the letter to the Philippians. Then you may want to read Romans, which sets forth the great doctrines which Paul taught.” Billy Graham [Where should I begin in my Bible reading?](#)

“There’s no “wrong place” to start when a person picks up a Bible. All 66 books tell one story, and all of it points in the same direction.” [Discipling a New Christian? 3 Reasons to Start With This Book of the Bible - Lifeway Research](#)

With all that being said, I (Abigail) typically tell new believers to start in Colossians, Genesis, and James. Colossians and James are both short, easy to read in one sitting, and easy to read through multiple times before feeling “bored”. Colossians briefly goes back over the person of Christ, His role in creation, redemption, and sanctification, and also covers how to live the Christian life. James also is an excellent read for how to practically live the Christian life and where to get started. Genesis instructs the new believer on how we got here. It gives them context to history and the story of not only God’s people, but God’s mercy to His fallen creation. With this, I do typically put in the admission that many people also suggest starting with Romans, John, and the Gospels as a whole.

Why I typically do not jump to suggest the gospels or Romans. My husband and I were discussing this, and I think he had a good point when he said, a new believer or unbeliever doesn’t understand a lot of what they’re reading. They don’t have a deep theological understanding, and most of what they catch in the gospels is exciting ministry and messages of Jesus. I can read many of Jesus’ teachings and feel very confused—“why did he just say that? What does He mean by that? This seems extreme, how do I reconcile this?”. Jesus used a lot of literary devices and hyperbole in general that can sometimes be perplexing as you read into it more. Romans are theologically rich. Again, there is theology and doctrine that can be hard to understand, hard to discern, and the more you study into it, it can feel weighty. I look at the way that I sometimes struggle in various passages and look to various commentaries for help—these aren’t necessarily the areas that I would start a new believer off in.



I want to be clear here, however, we are talking about, what are the FIRST books of the Bible that you might suggest. ALL of God's word should be read. ALL of God's word should be studied—especially the areas that we don't understand and still have questions on. The reason I don't typically suggest Romans, John, or the Gospels first is because I know my personal struggles, and I don't want to start a new believer off with confusion, frustration, and feeling like “quitting the Bible” after the first book. I look back on where I started growing as an early teenager and it was in the epistles learning what my life as a Christian should look like, how to serve the Lord. And it was in the Old Testament seeing how God moved and worked with His people.

Cassidy and I talk a lot about “hooks”. When I am introducing someone to the Bible, I want them to get hooked. The reality is that different people are hooked in by different books, passages, and attributes of God. Having an idea of where this person is coming from, what season they are walking through, their zeal, interest, and maturity are valuable insights for pointing someone in the right direction—it is also of utmost importance to have personal familiarity with the Scriptures. This is one reason I do suspect many people are quick to suggest the Gospels—they don't know where else to point someone.

Cassidy's perspective came from starting in the gospels or maybe specifically John as a baseline, it comes to knowing Christ and knowing who he is. The whole Bible is really about God, including Jesus, it's all about Him. When we are digging into why we say, go to John first, because that's where it's so easy to pick out the story of Christ, the story of the gospel, his mission, why is he here, what is he doing here? And I think that's why it's so easy to say, go to John. There's nothing wrong with going to John, okay? I think if you're looking for a baseline, looking for hope and needing to be reminded about who is Jesus Christ, how is he having a part in my life, in my own daily struggles, Christ is always a good place to go and find who He is again, be reminded about His goodness and the story. I don't necessarily disagree with Abigail on the fact that we should, we can and should go to other places in the Bible. But I think why I feel going to the Gospels is so profitable is because when people are asking you for help, we can't honestly help them with anything of our own power, but we can send them to the one who can help them and who can change their heart. And so it ultimately starts at the heart, starts with Jesus and starts by offering true hope and hope is found in Christ.

Much love,

Claudia Alvarez



We end the conversation with pointing out the fact that you can't knowledgeably send people in the Bible to read it if you don't really know it for yourself. So we are inspired to go and dig into the Word and know it better. God's Word is beautiful and it should be studied no matter where you choose to begin or start fresh today. The more that you get into the word and find Him there, the excitement you can feel to know Him and experience the fruit of that.

Much love,

Abigail & Cassidy



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