

Reading the New Testament in 40 Days

There are many possible ways of reading the whole New Testament (or the entire Bible) in a certain amount of time (one year, two years, etc.). Some plans suggest reading the Bible in canonical order (from the Book of Genesis all the way to the Book of Revelation). For people who might want to read the whole New Testament more quickly (in just 40 days, reading about 30 minutes daily), here is a plan that intersperses the four Gospels with the Epistles and other books of the New Testament.

Day	Biblical Texts	Day	Biblical Texts
1	Mark 1-4	21	Luke 8-11
2	Mark 5-8	22	Luke 12-16
3	Mark 9-12	23	Luke 17-21
4	Mark 13-16	24	Luke 22-24
5	1 & 2 Thessalonians	25	Acts 1-6
6	Galatians	26	Acts 7-10
7	Philippians & Colossians	27	Acts 11-16
8	Philemon & Ephesians	28	Acts 17-22
9	Matthew 1-7	29	Acts 23-28
10	Matthew 8-12	30	1 & 2 Timothy & Titus
11	Matthew 13-18	31	Hebrews 1-10
12	Matthew 19-24	32	Hebrews 11-13 & James
13	Matthew 25-28	33	John 1-5
14	1 Corinthians 1-9	34	John 6-10
15	1 Corinthians 10-16	35	John 11-16
16	2 Corinthians 1-13	36	John 17-21
17	Romans 1-8	37	1 & 2 & 3 John & Jude
18	Romans 9-16	38	1 & 2 Peter
19	Luke 1-3	39	Revelation 1-11
20	Luke 4-7	40	Revelation 12-22

Notes:

- Each day includes about 200 verses of the NT, although the daily totals range from as few as 136 to as many as 266 verses.
- Chapter numbers are given after names of longer books; if no chapter numbers are listed, then the whole book is to be read.
- Most daily selections can be read in about 20-30 minutes, or slightly more or less, depending on your own reading speed.
- This plan for reading the NT can be used at any time, but may be especially appropriate in Lent or during the Easter Season.
- You would do well to take some extra time each day to reflect on what you have read, on its meaning and application for you:
- What "good news" is God revealing to us in this text? What is God saying to me personally? How can I apply this in my life?
- Aside from "reading" these texts in a Bible, you could also "listen" to them daily using audio CDs, the Internet, or Podcasts.

A Prayer of Self-Examination

Preparation (3 minutes)

Quiet yourself. Put away your phone. Turn off the TV. Take a long, deep breath. Be silent for at least three minutes. Be still before God.

Thanksgiving (3 minutes)

Think about the ways you have been blessed by God. Give thanks to God. Thank him for at least three blessings in your life.

Review (5 minutes)

Now, begin with a simple prayer for insight. For example: *Heavenly Father, as I review my day (week, experience, etc.), grant me wisdom and insight to know you more fully and to know myself as you see me.*

Then, review your day. When were you joyful? Troubled? Mad? Heartbroken? Content? What has challenged you today? Where have you seen the presence of God today?

Focus on one or two of these thoughts and feelings and begin to explore them. Who, if anyone, is involved with these thoughts/feelings? When and where do these thoughts/feelings occur? What is causing these thoughts/feelings? What might be underneath the feelings? What is an appropriate response to these feelings?

Ask God to give you insights into your thoughts/feelings. SIT AND LISTEN.

Read (5 minutes)

Next, read over these verses slowly.

Philippians 4:6-7 (NIV) ⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Matthew 11:28-30 (NIV) ²⁸ “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

James 1:17 (NIV) ¹⁷ Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

Response (5 minutes)

Respond to God. You might be moved to thank him for his goodness. You might be moved to confess and ask for forgiveness. You might need to express your frustration. You might need to ask God for help. Respond with prayer.

Rest (5 minutes)

After you offer your prayers to God, sit quietly. Reflect on the fact that the God of the universe is listening to you. Reflect on his unconditional love for you. Be mindful that God wants the best for you and is with you always. Be still and enjoy God’s presence. After some time, you can conclude with “Amen” (that is, “So be it”).