



# A Good Place to Start



**T**he book that you are holding—the Bible—is an amazing book. It is the best-selling book ever, with more than three billion copies distributed worldwide. It is the book where untold millions have found hope and joy and peace—and the answer to life. This is because the words of the Bible are truth and life. They are the very words of God.

This *Truth* Edition of the ESV Bible is designed especially to help you read the Bible and to discover the treasures of God’s Word.

First, this edition of the Bible is a “word-for-word” translation that expresses the depth and beauty of the original Bible words. Second, the *Truth* Bible includes a number of features to help you discover the life-giving truth and power of God’s Word, including:

- 0—x The Truth About Truth
- 0—x How to Read the Bible
- 0—x What the Bible Says About Truth
- 0—x The Truth About...
- 0—x Getting Started: A Forty-Day Bible Reading Plan
- 0—x Treasuring God’s Truth in Your Heart

This edition also includes introductions to each book of the Bible (page 1047), and introductions to the Old Testament (page xiii) and the New Testament (page 805), as well as “The Truth of the Gospel” (page 1043) and a “One-Year Bible Reading Plan” (page 1065).

So we invite you to begin a lifelong journey—discovering the words of truth and life, and discovering God in the words of His Book. A good place to start would be to take a look at the next eight or ten pages and embark on an adventure that will ultimately lead to discovering Truth in Jesus Christ.

# TRUTH

T H E B I B L E



English Standard Version

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# The Truth About Truth



**A**re you confused about what's true? About reality? Do you want to know the truth? Do you want something authentic to hold on to? Well, the book you've got in your hands right now is a good place to look.

Do you ever wonder why original paintings by great artists are so expensive when replicas, which look exactly the same, are but a fraction of the price? It's precisely because the one is original. It's authentic. Real truth is precious and costly. "So," you may ask, "where is this precious truth about life and reality? How can I find it?"

Or perhaps your question is more basic: "What is truth, anyway?"

A long time ago, a man asked that question to a very unique person. Pontius Pilate asked that question to Jesus Christ. But Jesus did not answer him. Just days before, Jesus had told His followers about the truth. He said, "I am . . . the truth" (John 14:6, page 901). So the answer to Pilate's question was standing right in front of him—staring him right in the eyes. Jesus was the answer. Jesus is the answer.

Even if you don't believe that Jesus is the truth, please read on. Just give it a try. Check out this book that has in many ways shaped history. Take a look at Jesus' life—He's arguably the single most influential person in history.

Now, back to the previous question: "How do I find this truth?" Well, the Bible says that if you seek the truth with your whole heart, you will find it. God says, "When you seek me with all your heart, I will be found by you" (Jeremiah 29:13, page 656). And, "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened" (Matthew 7:7-8, page 812).

Look for the truth and you will find it, by the goodness of God. Come with an open heart, ready to receive the truth when it is found. Look for truth; look in this book—you will not be disappointed.



# How to Read the Bible



**R**eading the Bible is different from reading any other book. So it helps to have a few suggestions on how to get started. The most important thing is to open your heart by faith and to understand that these are God's words to you. Believe that God's truth is contained in His Book, and you'll discover that it has the power to transform your life.

Getting started is the most important step, and to help you get started we've provided "A Forty-Day Bible Reading Plan," as shown on page x. This plan provides a good way to get an overview of the Bible by reading some of its best-loved key passages. Another good way to get started is to read through some of the key books in the Bible. For example, you could set aside 20 or 30 minutes a day to read through the following books, either in this order or in your own order:

The Gospel of John (page 886)

Genesis (page 1)

Romans (page 939)

Selections from the Psalms

Psalm 1 (page 448), Psalm 23 (page 458),

Psalm 27 (page 460), Psalm 51 (page 474),

Psalm 91 (page 497), Psalm 103 (page 502),

Psalm 121 (page 516), Psalm 139 (page 521)

Exodus (page 45)

The Gospel of Luke (page 855)

Ephesians (page 976)

To help you get an overview of the message, be sure to read the brief book introductions found on pages 1047-1063. Also note the introductions to the Old Testament (page xiii) and the New Testament (page 805).

It is especially helpful to read the Bible daily and to ask God to show you His truth for your life as you read. Your prayer can be as simple as "Dear Father, show me what your words mean and help me apply them to my life—I want to know the truth." As you seek to know God through reading His Word, He will send His Holy Spirit to guide you in your reading. You may also find it helpful to write down what you discover. You'll be surprised by the

insights that you've received.

Lastly, it will be especially helpful to find other people and a church that love and read the Bible—a place where you can find fellowship and can discover the riches of God's truth together. So don't be afraid to get started. You are about to begin the most important adventure of your life!



## What the Bible Says About Truth



- Jesus is the *truth*. (John 14:6, page 901)
- The *truth* is in Jesus. (Ephesians 4:21, page 978)
- The *truth* comes through Jesus. (John 1:17, page 886)
- The Holy Spirit is the *truth*. (1 John 5:6, page 1023)
- The Holy Spirit will guide believers into all the *truth*. (John 16:13, page 902)
- God's word is *truth*. (John 17:17, page 903)
- The gospel is *truth*. (Galatians 2:5, 14, page 972; Ephesians 1:13, page 976; Colossians 1:5, page 983)
- The *truth* will set you free. (John 8:32, page 894)
- The *truth* of Christ dwells in believers. (2 Corinthians 11:10, page 969; 2 John 2, page 1025)
- Repentance leads to knowledge of the *truth*. (2 Timothy 2:25, page 996)
- Following Christ is the way of *truth*. (2 Peter 2:2, page 1018)
- We should believe in and love the *truth*. (2 Thessalonians 2:10-13, page 989; 1 Timothy 2:4, page 991)
- Believers should walk in the *truth*. (2 John 4, page 1025; 3 John 3-4, page 1026)
- Believers should love in *truth*. (1 John 3:18, page 1022)
- Believers should worship in *truth*. (John 4:23, page 889)
- Believers should speak the *truth* in love. (Ephesians 4:15, 25, page 978)
- Unbelievers exchange the *truth* for a lie. (Romans 1:25, page 939)
- Unbelievers don't obey the *truth*. (Romans 2:8, page 940)
- Unbelievers refuse to love the *truth*. (2 Thessalonians 2:10, page 989)
- Unbelievers turn away from listening to the *truth*. (2 Timothy 4:4, page 996)



# The Truth About . . .



## ACCEPTANCE

1 Samuel 16:7 (238); Psalm 139:16 (522); John 6:37 (892); Romans 12:3, 6 (948); Ephesians 1:5 (976)

## CHURCH

Acts 2:41 (911); Romans 12:5 (948); 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 (959); Colossians 1:18 (983); Hebrews 2:11-12 (1002); 10:24-25 (1007)

## COURAGE

Joshua 1:5-9 (178); Psalm 18:29-33 (455); Isaiah 41:10 (601); 43:2-3 (603); 50:7 (611); Acts 4:13-31 (912); Ephesians 6:10-18 (979)

## DEATH

Psalm 23:4 (458); John 11:25 (897); 14:1-3 (901); 1 Corinthians 15:54 (962); 2 Corinthians 5:1 (966); Philippians 1:21 (980); 3:20-21 (982); 2 Timothy 1:10 (995)

## DEMONS

Matthew 10:1 (814); Luke 7:21 (864); Acts 8:6-7 (916); Ephesians 6:10-18 (979)

## DRINKING AND DRUGS

Proverbs 20:1 (542); Galatians 5:16-24 (975); Ephesians 5:18 (978)

## FAITH

Matthew 17:20 (823); Mark 11:22-26 (847); Romans 1:17 (939); 3:21-28 (941); 4:3-5 (941); 5:1-2 (942); 10:8-11, 17 (946); Ephesians 2:8-9 (976); Hebrews 11:1-6 (1007); 12:2 (1008); 1 Peter 1:6-9 (1014); 1 John 5:4 (1023)

## FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES

Psalm 50:10-15 (473); Matthew 6:28-33 (812); Philippians 4:11-13, 19 (982); 1 Timothy 6:10 (993); James 2:15-16 (1012); 1 John 5:14-15 (1023)

## FORGIVENESS

Psalm 32:1-7 (462); 51:1-19 (474); 103:12 (502); Matthew 6:14-15 (811); 18:21-22 (823); Luke 23:34 (884); 1 John 1:9 (1021)

## FRIENDSHIP

1 Samuel 18:1-3 (241); Proverbs 18:24 (541); 22:24-25 (544); Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 (555); John 15:12-15 (902)

## GIVING

Deuteronomy 15:11 (159); Proverbs 3:9-10 (528); 21:13 (543); Malachi 3:10 (802); Matthew 6:3-4 (811); 25:40 (831); Luke 6:38 (863); 2 Corinthians 9:6-12 (968); James 2:15-16 (1012)

## GOD'S LOVE

John 3:16 (888); 15:13-16 (902); Romans 5:8 (942); 8:38-39 (945); 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 (959); 1 John 3:1 (1022); 4:9-18 (1023)

## GRACE

John 1:14-18 (886); Romans 5:1-2 (942); 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 (970); Ephesians 1:3-10 (976); 2:1-10 (976); Titus 2:11-13 (998); Hebrews 4:15-16 (1003)

## GUIDANCE

Proverbs 3:5-6 (528); James 1:5-6 (1011)

## HEALING

Psalm 103:1-5 (502); 147:3 (525); James 1:6 (1011); 5:13-16 (1013)

## HEAVEN

2 Corinthians 5:1-10 (966); Philippians 1:21-24 (980); 1 John 3:2 (1022); Revelation 21 (1041)

## HELL

Daniel 12:2 (750); Matthew 5:22 (810); 10:28 (815); Mark 9:44 (845); Luke 16:19-31 (876); 2 Thessalonians 1:9 (989); Hebrews 9:27 (1006); Revelation 20:9-15 (1040)

## HOPE

Psalm 42:11 (470); 71:5 (484); Romans 15:13 (949); Colossians 1:3-5, 27 (983); 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 (989); Hebrews 11:1 (1007)

**JOY**

Nehemiah 8:10 (404); Psalm 16:11 (454); 30:5 (461); Isaiah 61:3, 10 (621); Luke 15:7 (874); John 15:11 (902); Romans 5:11 (942); Galatians 5:22 (975); Philippians 2:1-2 (980); 4:4 (982); Colossians 1:11-14 (983)

**JUDGMENT**

Matthew 12:36-37 (817); John 5:24 (890); Romans 8:1 (944); 1 Corinthians 3:11-15 (953); 2 Corinthians 5:10 (966); Hebrews 9:27 (1006); Revelation 20:12-15 (1041)

**LOVE**

Deuteronomy 10:12 (155); Matthew 22:37-40 (828); John 13:34-35 (900); 14:21-24 (901); Romans 12:9-10 (948); 1 John 3:14 (1022); 4:7-21 (1023)

**MONEY**

Psalm 62:10 (479); Proverbs 11:28 (535); 23:5 (545); 28:19 (549); Ecclesiastes 5:10, 19 (555); Matthew 6:24 (811); 25:14-30 (830); Luke 6:38 (863); 12:15 (871); 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 (987); 1 Timothy 6:7-10 (993); Hebrews 13:5 (1009)

**OCCULT**

Deuteronomy 18:10-13 (161); Malachi 3:6 (802); Galatians 5:19-21 (975); Revelation 21:8 (1041)

**PATIENCE**

Psalm 37:7 (466); 40:1 (468); Isaiah 40:31 (600); Romans 8:25 (944); 12:12 (948); Galatians 5:19-21 (975); Philippians 4:11 (982); Hebrews 10:35-36 (1007); James 1:2-4 (1011); 5:7-8 (1013)

**PEACE**

Psalm 34:14 (464); 119:165 (516); Isaiah 26:3 (586); 48:18 (609); John 14:27 (901); 16:33 (903); Romans 5:1 (942); 8:6 (944); 14:17-19 (949); Philippians 4:6-7 (982); Colossians 3:15 (984)

**PERSECUTION / SUFFERING**

Jeremiah 20:11 (648); Matthew 5:10-12 (810); John 15:18-20 (902); Romans 8:35-39 (945); 2 Corinthians 12:10 (970); 2 Timothy 3:12 (996); 1 Peter 4:12-14, 16 (1016)

**PLEASURE**

Nehemiah 8:10 (404); Psalm 16:11 (454); Proverbs 21:17 (543); Ecclesiastes 2:1-11 (553); Jeremiah 15:16 (644); 1 Peter 1:8 (1014)

**PRAISE**

Psalm 50:23 (474); 92:1 (498); 97:1, 12 (499); 100:1-2 (500); 101:1 (501); 105:1-2 (503); 149:1-5 (526); 150:1-6 (526); Acts 16:25 (925); Hebrews 13:15 (1010)

**PRAYER**

Matthew 6:6-7 (811); Mark 11:24 (847); John 14:13-14 (901); 15:7 (901); Ephesians 3:12 (977); 6:18 (979); Philippians 4:6 (982); 1 Timothy 2:8 (991); Hebrews 4:16 (1003); James 5:16 (1013)

**PRIDE**

Psalm 101:5 (501); Proverbs 16:5, 18, 25 (539); 18:12 (541); Isaiah 14:12-15 (578); James 4:6 (1013); 1 Peter 5:5-7 (1016)

**SALVATION**

John 1:12 (886); 3:3, 16-18 (887); 14:6 (901); Romans 1:16 (939); 3:23 (941); 6:23 (943); 10:13 (946); Ephesians 1:13-14 (976); Philippians 2:12 (981); 1 Thessalonians 5:9-10 (988); Titus 2:11-14 (998); 1 Peter 1:8-9 (1014)

**SATAN / DEVIL**

John 8:44 (895); 2 Corinthians 4:4 (965); 11:3 (969); Ephesians 6:11-18 (979); James 4:7-8 (1013); 1 Peter 5:8-9 (1017); Revelation 12:9-10 (1035); 20:10 (1040)

**SEXUAL PERVERSION**

Proverbs 5:17-23 (530); Matthew 5:27-30 (810); Romans 1:27-32 (939); 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, 14-20 (955); 10:13 (957); Ephesians 4:19-24 (978); 5:3-5 (978); Hebrews 13:4 (1009)

**SIN**

Psalm 1:1-6 (448); Romans 6:12-23 (943); Galatians 5:19-21 (975); Colossians 3:5-6 (984); Hebrews 12:3-4 (1008); James 1:14-15 (1011); 1 John 1:7-9 (1021)

**SPIRITUAL POWER**

Acts 1:8 (909); Romans 6:14 (943); 8:31-39 (944); 1 Corinthians 1:17-18 (952); 15:20-28, 54-57 (961); Ephesians 2:4-7 (976); 6:10-18 (979); Philippians 3:10 (981); 4:13 (982)

**STRENGTH**

Nehemiah 8:10 (404); Psalm 27:1 (460); 31:24 (462); 105:4 (504); Isaiah 40:28-31 (600); 41:10 (601); 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 (970); Ephesians 3:14-19 (977); 6:10 (979); Philippians 4:13 (982)

**WORSHIP**

Exodus 15:1-2 (57); 1 Chronicles 16:29 (347); Psalm 91:2 (451); 29:2 (461); 43:4 (470); 95:6 (499); John 4:23-24 (889)



# Getting Started: A Forty-Day Bible Reading Plan



If you're new to the Bible and are looking for suggestions on where to start, we offer a forty-day reading program that will help you gain an overall understanding of what the Bible is all about. It will introduce you to some of the most important passages of the Bible, it will help you see the big picture of what God has done, and it's easy to accomplish.

Day 1	Genesis 1–2	The Creation Account
Day 2	Genesis 3	The Beginning of Sin
Day 3	Genesis 15; 17:15-27	God's Covenant with Abraham
Day 4	Genesis 21:1-7; 22	God's Faithfulness and Abraham's Faith
Day 5	Exodus 3–4	God Calls Moses to Deliver His People
Day 6	Exodus 20	The Ten Commandments
Day 7	Joshua 1	Conquering the Promised Land
Day 8	1 Samuel 16–17	David and Goliath
Day 9	1 Kings 3; 8:1–9:9	King Solomon's Wisdom and the Temple
Day 10	1 Kings 18	The Prophet Elijah and the Prophets of Baal
Day 11	2 Kings 25	The Siege of Jerusalem and Exile of Judah
Day 12	Daniel 2–3	Daniel in Babylon; The Fiery Furnace
Day 13	Ezra 3	Rebuilding the Temple in Jerusalem
Day 14	Isaiah 9, 53, 61	Isaiah's Prophecy of the Coming Messiah
Day 15	Luke 1–2	The Birth of Jesus
Day 16	John 1:1-18	Who Jesus Is
Day 17	Matthew 4:14-44	Jesus Begins His Ministry
Day 18	Matthew 5–6	The Core of Jesus' Teaching
Day 19	John 3	God's Love for the World
Day 20	John 5	Jesus' Miracles and Authority
Day 21	John 11	Jesus' Power Over Death
Day 22	John 15	The Christian Life Defined
Day 23	John 17	Jesus' High Priestly Prayer
Day 24	Matthew 26–27	The Arrest and Crucifixion of Jesus
Day 25	John 20	The Resurrection of Jesus
Day 26	Luke 24	The Ascension of Jesus
Day 27	Acts 2	The Coming of the Holy Spirit
Day 28	Acts 9	The Conversion of Saul
Day 29	Acts 16	The Gospel Spreads to Europe
Day 30	Acts 26	Paul's Defense of the Christian Faith
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Day 37	Philippians 1:18—2:18	Christ's Example
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Ephesians .....	976	Nahum .....	782
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Habakkuk .....	785	Philippians .....	980
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# The Old Testament



## Introduction

**T**he Old Testament consists of 39 books written and compiled at various times from as early as the fifteenth to as late as the third century B.C. by various leaders from the nation of Israel—primarily prophets, priests, and kings, although some of the authors remain unknown. The entirety of the Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew, except for a few selections in the Aramaic language, a sister language of Hebrew that became the common language of the ancient Near East.

The Old Testament begins with God's creation of the universe and ends about 400 years before the birth of Jesus Christ. It provides the inspired record of God's love for mankind and particularly the nation of Israel, and reveals God's plan of salvation. That the Old Testament records God's actions before the creation of mankind underscores the fact that it is God's word to us—His personal revelation of His thoughts and will for us.

You'll find that the Old Testament is filled with remarkable historical stories that demonstrate God's power and love, as well as fascinating individuals such as David and Samson, whose exploits have become legendary. Keep in mind, however, that the historical events, the personal encounters of individuals with God, and the marvelous lessons of faith and courage have one unifying theme—they all point to the person of the coming Messiah, Jesus Christ.

The redemptive story of forgiveness through Christ dominates the Old Testament from beginning to end. If you read its words closely, you'll find many foreshadowings and symbols of Christ's coming.

Throughout the centuries, the Hebrew Bible went through the lengthy process of transmission. Jewish scholars were scrupulous in preserving the integrity of the original manuscripts through successive generations. Numerous groups of Jewish scribes were succeeded in the sixth century A.D. by a group known as the Masorettes, who diligently maintained the text for another 500 years in a form known as the Masoretic text. The discovery in 1947–1956 of the Dead Sea Scrolls, which take the text back to 200–100 B.C., confirms the amazing accuracy in the preservation of the Old Testament.

## Introduction

Most English translations of the Old Testament divide the books into four major categories:

### **THE BOOKS OF LAW**

The first five books—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy—make up the “Pentateuch,” which means “five scrolls.” The Jews called these five books the “Torah,” or Law. An understanding of these five Books of Law is fundamental to an understanding of the Bible. They begin with the self-revelation of God to man in creation, the origin of sin, and the establishment of Abraham’s family in God’s plan of salvation for mankind. In these first five books we find the miraculous beginning of Israel and its purpose as a nation. The Books of Law contain the many laws God gave to govern the Jewish people and to keep them as His special people.

### **THE BOOKS OF HISTORY**

The next 12 books—Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1–2 Samuel, 1–2 Kings, 1–2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther—continue the history of Israel. Beginning with Joshua’s leadership, God demonstrates His faithfulness in giving the Israelites the Promised Land and establishing a kingdom that lasted almost 500 years. From the victory over the Canaanites to the dismal failures that led to the “judges” and the coming reigns of the kings (such as Saul and David and Solomon), we discover the national and individual consequences for obedience and disobedience to God. The historical books take us forward to the overthrow and captivity of Israel by other nations, then to the amazing return of God’s people to the Promised Land.

### **PSALMS AND WISDOM LITERATURE**

Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon represent nearly one-third of the Old Testament and were written in poetry. The ancient Hebrews had a highly sophisticated poetic format that featured both rhyme and meter. Poetry forces the reader to slow down and meditate on the meaning of the words. Whether in beautiful words of prayer and praise to God or as wise sayings or as personal reflections on suffering, these writings touch our emotions and imagination as well as our intellect. Many of the poems and songs were used during the Jewish feasts and festivals to celebrate God’s goodness. Many of today’s worship songs contain the words found in these books.

### **THE BOOKS OF THE PROPHETS**

The final 17 books of the Old Testament are the prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. During the years when kings ruled Israel and Judah, God’s spokesmen were “prophets.” Though some of the prophets predicted future events, their primary task was to call people back to obedience to God.