

Kootenai Communicator

January
2024

The monthly newsletter of Kootenai Community Church, Kootenai, Idaho

Important Dates <<<

1 Happy New Year!
6 Baby Shower, Annika Gibson
27 Baby Shower, Amy Anderson
Coming February 4: Business Meeting and Potluck

*Expounding the Scriptures,
Equipping the Saints,
Exalting the Savior*



Reading through the Bible in 2024

By Jim Osman, pastor/teacher

1 Timothy 4:6–8: “In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following. But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness; for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.”

What resolutions, if any, do you make at the dawn of each new year? If statistics are any indicator, most are forgotten by January 31. Within a month, the resolve we felt so intensely on December 31 vanishes like the morning dew. The good intentions to eat less, exercise more, go to the gym, read more, watch less TV, save money, and spend more time with the family may all be noble and praiseworthy, but it doesn't take long for the zeal to fade and the old habits to return. Resolutions are fickle things. Or maybe it is the resolvers who are fickle.

In one sense, January 1 is just another day. The sun comes up and the sun goes down. It's really no different in substance than, say, July 19. But since we turn the page on the year instead of the month or day, it *feels* different. You write a different number at the end of the date on your documents, and that feels significant. We don't feel like we are getting older when we note the change of date from day to day. But when we write 2024 instead of 2023, we have to reckon with the fact that yet another year has passed by, and almost without our notice. It crept by day by day, slowly, steadily, relentlessly.

Personally, I am not big on New Year's resolutions. However, there is one thing that I begin again each and every New Year's Day. I see this through all the way to the end of the year and then begin afresh on January 1. It's something I wish to strongly commend to you: read through the Bible in a year. This isn't a resolution suggestion. It is a discipline recommendation.

Before you dismissively set this article aside thinking such a thing is unachievable or unrealistic, please hear me out. I

think the guidelines, suggestions, and recommendations you'll find below will be a great help and encouragement to you.

Please don't take what you are about to read in a way I don't intend. I'm not trying to lay down my own man-made, pharisaical, legalistic formula for you to follow. I wouldn't want to impose some false standard of spirituality upon your life which could only produce guilt and frustration. That isn't my goal. I want to encourage you to consider prioritizing this most fruitful practice. Over the course of the last twenty-seven years, this one discipline has proved to be of tremendous spiritual blessing and benefit to me. If it isn't your practice to regularly and systematically read Scripture, I hope this article will encourage and motivate you to make it a fixture in your routine.

THE WORD

The Bible makes lofty claims of itself. It claims to be the Word of the living God—powerful, divine, eternal, and everlasting truth. The Scripture is the mind of God, His wisdom, containing all that is necessary for life and godliness.

If you are not convinced of the benefit of reading, studying, memorizing, and meditating on Scripture, take some time to slowly read and think through Psalm 119. Most of you reading this will readily affirm the supernatural nature of Scripture and the blessing of regularly reading it. Given that, let me ask you this: do you have a systematic and consistent way of exposing yourself to that Word?

Reading through the Bible one (or more) times each year is **the single greatest spiritual discipline I have ever adopted**. You may be wondering, “What about prayer?” “What about serving others?” or, “What about pursuing holiness by mortifying sin?”

The discipline of regular Scripture reading supplies the energy, direction, and foundation to all other spiritual disciplines. Your prayer life will be enhanced when you know God's will as revealed in Scripture. Your prayers will be more intelligent, thoughtful, and purposeful. Reading Scripture informs our prayers and motivates them.

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The saints of old recognized the benefit of praying through passages of Scripture, allowing the Word of God to inform the language and content of their prayer.

Knowing God's Word helps us resist temptation and put sin to death. When the words of Scripture course through our minds, we will not be conformed to this world but instead transformed as our minds are renewed by the Word of God (Rom. 12:1–2). Reading through the Bible makes our prayers more meaningful, our service more fruitful, and our war against sin more powerful. That is why I say without hesitation that reading the Bible through each year is ***the single greatest spiritual discipline I have ever adopted.***

AN ATTAINABLE GOAL

Reading through the Bible each year is a far more attainable goal than you might at first imagine. It'll seem daunting if you've never tried it. When I have encouraged others to do this, the response I most often get is something like this: "The *whole* Bible! That is a lot! I don't know if I can do that in only a year."

It might seem overwhelming at first. But I'm not suggesting you read through it in a week or a month. I am suggesting you stretch it out over a whole year. A year is a very long time. It is so long, in fact, that you are only going to live through eighty or so of them during your whole life. Three hundred and sixty-five days offers you 8,760 hours to fit it all in. That is plenty!

When you spread the reading out over the whole year, it isn't that much per day/week. You take it in small amounts. That is the way to tackle a big project: one small step followed by another, then another. As the old adage says, "How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time." I would rather read Scripture than eat an elephant, but you get the idea.

The NASB has 807,361 words. If you read two hundred words a minute, it'll take you sixty-seven hours and fifteen minutes to read the entire Bible.¹ When you spread that over a year, that averages out to eleven minutes per day.² If you allow yourself one day off per week, you would only need to read fifteen minutes a day, six days a week. That is all it takes to read through the Bible in a year.

Is eleven minutes a day really that much? Will you spend eleven minutes a day scrolling through social media, getting updates on your favorite sports team, researching some obscure detail from your childhood memories, absorbing news headlines, or catching up on the latest political outrage? We can burn through eleven minutes before we even realize we're being unproductive.

I knew a professor who taught at the Bible college I attended who read through the Old Testament once and the New Testament twice each year. Doing that would only add a couple of minutes to your eleven-minute commitment. If you really want to be aggressive, try keeping up with another of my professors who read the Old Testament twice and the New Testament four times a year. I don't share that to shame you, but to encourage you. Once a year is doable! Few people could keep up with my professor's schedule consistently, but anyone can spare eleven minutes. Don't set an unrealistic goal at first. Just purpose to read the Bible through once in 2024.

MY OWN SYSTEM

I started reading through the Bible once a year on January 1, 1997, one month after I took over as pastor at Kootenai Community Church. Almost immediately, I found a system and a rhythm I have maintained with little deviation since. Starting January 1, 2024, I will begin my twenty-eighth read through Scripture.

Over the years, I've refined my own habits and found a number of things which are helpful in maintaining discipline and reaping spiritual fruit from it. I'll share some of those with you in hopes that they'll set you off on the right foot if you

are just starting. If you already do this, I hope the following will encourage your continued progress in it.

First, find a place in your routine that'll provide consistency. If the time you choose for reading is prone to disruption or normally scheduled for other things, you'll never maintain the practice. Something will always come up, and you'll sacrifice the reading to the tyranny of the urgent. You could read early in the morning before others are awake, on your lunch break at work, while the kids are doing schoolwork, after dinner while others clean up, or after others have gone to bed.

Second, find a pace that'll help you reach your goal and then ***mark and monitor your progress.*** This is important! It'll encourage you throughout the year to see your progress. I prefer to pace my reading not by time spent but by chapters read. I read five to six chapters a day, depending on the length of the chapters. Sometimes I read more. Sometimes I read less. I read five days a week. I usually skip Fridays and Sundays. On Fridays, I have an early morning appointment, after which I *sometimes* read. On Sundays, I review my sermon manuscript from 5:00 a.m. until I step into the pulpit. If I don't preach on a Sunday, then I read that morning. I aim for five chapters a day, five days a week.

You might suspect this takes more than eleven minutes a day. It does, but my goal is to finish by Thanksgiving each year, not December 31. In twenty-seven years, I've seldom missed that goal. This allows me to do something special for the month of December. During December each year, I pick a single book or section of Scripture to read through multiple times at the same pace of five to six chapters a day. I select my December reading according to need or interest.

For two Decembers prior to preaching through the Gospel of John, I read the book repeatedly. When doing something like that, I break in different locations each time through so I'm always reading different contexts together. For instance, the first time through I'll read chapters 1–5, then 10–15, etc. The next time through I read chapters 20–21 and 1–3, then 4–8, 9–13, etc. That allows me to see different passages next to each other in a variety of ways.

One December, I read through Titus (three chapters) each day, five days a week. Another year, I read Hebrews over and over. Once I spent December reading, meditating on, and memorizing Psalm 73. I read Leviticus through multiple times one December. One year, I read Psalm 37 two or three times each day. You really get to know a book well when you read it a couple dozen times in a month. This year (2023), I added a chapter a day, upping my pace to six to seven a day. This year, I finished by Canadian Thanksgiving (the second Monday in October). Since then, I've been reading through the New Testament a second time, and I will easily finish by Christmas.

It is important to find something that works for you. Set a goal, set your pace, and mark your progress.

Third, find a Bible-reading plan that will help maintain both your pace and your progress. There are dozens available, offering various approaches to the Scriptures. You can try a chronological approach, reading the passages in the chronological order of the events they describe. Those plans fit the various books into the flow of history. If you take this approach, you might be surprised to find yourself reading Job before Joshua, and Isaiah before Nehemiah. You might consider purchasing a chronological Bible that puts the passages in that order.

There are reading plans that split the daily allotment into two: a morning and an evening reading. That allows you to begin and end your day with God's Word. Some plans offer readings from three different sections of Scripture: historical (Genesis–Nehemiah), Psalms and prophets (Job–Malachi), and the New Testament. Grace to You offers a *MacArthur Daily Bible* that follows a similar division and provides helpful devotional and explanatory notes. In 2022, I used that for my

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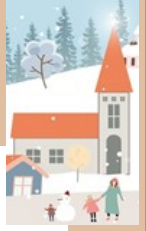
Sunday School

1st & 2nd Grade: Mark & Holly Haymond, Brad & Jenny Stevens, teachers

What a great beginning to the school year we have enjoyed with our (mostly) new 1st and 2nd grade students! After spending the summer wading through the OT prophets and Israel's ups and downs, we were all so excited to begin making our way through the life of Christ, the Redeemer!

During the weeks leading up to Christmas, we make our way through the Bible, reading key passages from the history of salvation, and light candles on an Advent wreath while we sing Christmas carols. During the first week of Advent, we studied the prophecies concerning the Messiah and sang "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel."

Our Redeemer has come, and with Him, salvation! What a gift and privilege to study these deep and profound things with such eager and well-informed little minds.



**Sunday
school
begins at
9:30 a.m.**

>>> Special Report: Women's Ministry Team, by Marcia Whetsel

"You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love." Galatians 5:13

Our Women's Ministry Team is dedicated to encourage, love, support, and care for the women at KCC. There are many ways that this team endeavors to do that and fulfill the roles given by Scripture.

We host three main events annually:

WOMEN'S RETREAT

Our main event is the women's retreat or conference. This year it will be held at Camp Lutherhaven on beautiful Lake Coeur d'Alene on April 26-27. Our speaker will be Tina Carns from Boise, who has brought the Word of God to women here in the US and abroad. This is a time when we dig deep into the Word. Save the date.

FALL BRUNCH

This event is held on a Saturday in September and has a focus on ways women can serve the church and what ministry opportunities are available. It is also a wonderful time to get to know each other better, especially the newer ladies that have just started attending KCC.

CHRISTMAS TEA

The Ladies' Christmas Tea is a highlight for us. A devotional is given with a focus on the Word. There is a fun gift exchange. We also have a wonderful time of food and fellowship. Ladies are also paired with a prayer partner, if they choose to take part in this.

Other Events

Other ways the team ministers to the ladies in our church body are baby showers (for ladies who are expecting their very first child) and bridal showers. There is always a Scripture-focused devotional at these events. A wedding packet will also be provided to brides to assist them with the planning of their wedding. Either one or both of the engaged couple needs to be members of KCC if they plan to be married in the church.

CURRENT TEAM MEMBERS

Jennifer Barba
Maryanne Britten
Diane Carlson
Jenny Kariker
Becky Feezor
Sarah Pennell
Marcia Whetsel
Lori Wood



>>> **Young Adult/Young Married Fellowship****YOUNG ADULT
FELLOWSHIP**

For information, contact
Olga Curiel at 909-996-5770
or Gerimiah Pennell at 208-920-3426.

**YOUNG MARRIED
FELLOWSHIP**

Contact Gina Hall
for more information.
713-292-6562

Women's Ministry <<<

2024 Women's Retreat, April 26-27

Get ready to **GROW!**

Featuring speaker Tina Carns

SAVE THIS AMENDED DATE!



Baby Clara
came early!
Shower date
yet to be
determined.

BABY SHOWER

~~January 6~~
~~10:00 a.m.~~

at the church

For Annika
Gibson, who is
having a girl

**BABY SHOWER**

January 27
10:00 a.m.

at the church

For Amy Anderson,
who is
having a boy

**CAN YOU HELP?**

If you are able to help
with the setup or cleanup
of the Annual Business
Meeting and Potluck on
Sunday, February 4,
please contact
Kathy Conger.

>>> **Cocolalla Lake Bible Camp**

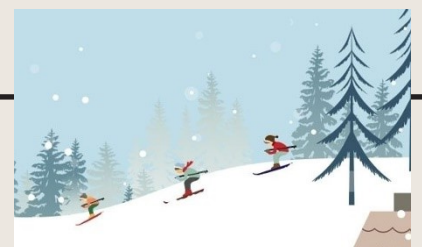
Please visit the camp website at clbcamp.org for more details.

Teen Winter Camp, January 12-14, 2024

Time: Register at 4 p.m. Friday; ends 3 p.m. Sunday.

For: Ages 13 and up—all teens and young adults are welcome. Come and be encouraged by the word of God!

Do you love plummeting down a hill on a piece of plastic? Bring your sled and hit the slopes! (The camp has a few sleds.)



Student Ministries <<<

HAPPY
NEW YEAR!
2024



JANUARY

3 Bible Studies, 7:30–9 p.m.
10 Youth Group, 7–9 p.m.
17 Bible Studies, 7:30–9 p.m.
24 Youth Group, 7–9 p.m.
31 No Meetings



>>>Kootenai Thunder

kootenaithunder.com

For the most current information, please check our website and Facebook page.

THUNDER NEWS

The JV boys and varsity girls and boys teams are in full swing. You can check out our game schedule on our website, and scores on our Facebook page. You can also track our status in the league at mountainchristianleague.org.

We are playing most of our home games on the new court at Cocolalla Lake Bible Camp. What a huge blessing the new floor has been. We are so grateful that the Lord has provided the funds to fix up the gym.

Please remember to pray for the teams, coaches, and players. Athletics are a great venue to share the gospel, teach discipline, and learn life lessons.



JUNIOR HIGH BASKETBALL TEAMS start up at the end of January. If you homeschool or attend a private school, this Christian sports program could be for you. It's a great way to get to know other families and new friends.



FUNDRAISING: Thunder is a non-profit organization and depends on fundraising and donations. If you feel like giving to this program, you can do that by going to our website and using PayPal, or giving directly. Please contact Tracy Jensen for more information.

Kootenai Classifieds >>>

EGGS & PRODUCE



Farm fresh eggs;
\$4/dozen.

Current produce:
potatoes, squash,
apples, and strawflower and
grain wreaths.

Contact Andrea Kinne.
208-265-0102
(landline; no texts please)

To have your items listed
in this section, please
send your information to
Lisa Slippy
by the 15th of the month
prior to publication.
Email her at
lisaslippy@gmail.com.

SHARPENING SERVICES

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blades, hatchets,
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David Forsyth (208) 610-1532



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Call/text Andrea Lundgren
(360-900-9121)



Happy New Year! We are wrapping up our second term this month with our discussions on the Bible. Each fun-filled Friday night, our clubbers are engaged in theology, music, small group discussions, games, and snacks.

>>>Adventure Club News

Questions? Call Lori Thomson (208-610-1916) or Emily Brambila (208-304-6881), or email ac@kootenaichurch.org

How can you help? We are looking to fill up our Leader Feeder sign-up sheet. If you'd like to bless our leaders and LITs (leaders-in-training) with a snack or meal, please scan the QR code or sign up at the Welcome Table in the foyer.



INVITE A FRIEND

Do you have a friend that might like to try out Adventure Club? Invite them to join us as a guest. Both the clubber and their guest will get to pick a stuffie from the "Welcome Wag-on" to take home!

January

5 Club Night: *The Bible Helps Christians Grow*

12 Flashlight Night: *The Bible Must Be Read*

19 Club Night: *The Bible Must Be Proclaimed*

26 Club Night: *Angels Worship and Serve God*

Church News <<<

MEN'S BIBLE STUDY

Resumes January 22

Monday evenings at 6:00 p.m.

*Starting a new topic,
"How to study your Bible"*

For book/syllabus information, please contact Dave Forsyth.



Do you need help finishing that 2,000-piece puzzle you started last month? Are you looking for a place to ask others if they want that thing you got for Christmas that you didn't want? Do you want to organize a sledding party?

Put it on the ...

KCC Activity Board on Facebook!



Last names A-M: Main dish and dessert
Last names N-Z: Main dish and salad

Thursday Moms Group

Moms with children five and under are invited to a playgroup on Thursday mornings from 9:30-11:30 a.m. to visit and let the kids play! Please contact Emily Hill at 208-596-6904 with any questions.



daily reading and read every note along with the text. It was a nice change of pace from my normal pattern.

Speaking of my own normal pattern, I usually work my way through both Testaments at the same time, varying the order of books slightly each year. That looks something like this:

Genesis–Deuteronomy

Matthew

Joshua–Ruth

Mark (by this point it is Resurrection Sunday)

1 Samuel–2 Chronicles

Luke–Acts, etc.

I divide the Psalms into three fifty-Psalm blocks and read those sections between other books. The Psalter is already divided into five books (Psalm 1–41, 42–72, 73–89, 90–106, 107–150). One year I used that division and sprinkled those blocks of Psalms through the rest of my reading. Thus, I alternate from the Old Testament to the New and back again.

I group books that are similar, or books written by the same author. For instance, I read the books of Moses (Genesis–Deuteronomy) in one stretch. I read Jeremiah and Lamentations together. I group the Pastoral Epistles (1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus). I prefer to take in the whole kingdom history of Israel in one long stretch (1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah). Sometimes I break that up with another book that fits within that history, thus mingling a bit of chronological structure into my schedule. For instance, I will read Ecclesiastes in the middle of reading about Solomon in 1 Kings.

The book of Proverbs is a bit of an outlier in my plan. I don't read five to six chapters of Proverbs in one sitting, as I find it difficult to appreciate any one proverb when I am reading so many. I sprinkle the chapters of Proverbs throughout the year, reading a chapter when I need one to bring me up to my goal of five to six chapters for the day. For instance, Deuteronomy has thirty-four chapters. At a pace of five or six chapters a day, my last day in Deuteronomy will include only four chapters, so I will put one from Proverbs in there to fill up the quota. Variety really is the spice of life.

Once again, find your own system, plan, and pace, and enjoy.

SOME HANDY TOOLS

When I first started, I tracked my progress on paper. I used a small Bible-reading plan published by the Gideons. Each day, I would cross off the chapter or book I read. Now I do the same thing on my iPhone. The most customizable and versatile app I have found is called ReadingPlan. It offers dozens of premade reading plans to choose from. If you are a bit more tech-savvy, you can use the app to create your own. I use their plan called "Not a Plan" that allows me to check off individual chapters. The app keeps track of the amount (percentage) of the Bible I have read, which helps me stay on pace through the year.

If you prefer reading on an electronic device (tablet or Kindle), there are some great apps available. In my opinion, the best option is Literal Word. It's an easy-to-use, simple, and ad-free app that offers the NASB, LSB, ESV, and KJV translations. The search function is fantastic, and it includes lexical information for every word in Scripture. If you just want the Bible text, Literal Word is the best option. If you want some helpful notes, the best app is called Study Bible. It is published by Grace to You (John MacArthur's ministry). The app with Bible text from the ESV is free; however, for only \$6 you can get *all* the *MacArthur Study Bible* notes integrated, as well as links to articles, blog posts, and MacArthur's sermons, all provided through Grace to You. I love this app!

If you want a great app for helping you memorize Scripture, get Scripture Typer (scripturetyper.com). This is an *amazing* system for Bible memorization that you can take with you everywhere. I am not going to describe this for you. You just have

to check it out!

SOME POINTERS FOR PROFITABLE READING

Here are a few things to remember while reading.

1. Always be looking for something. To keep my mind from wandering, I find it helpful to intentionally look for something as I read. For example, one year I watched for every passage in the Gospels where Jesus addressed human sexuality or immorality, writing down the references as I read. When reading through Genesis to Deuteronomy one year, I took note of every mention of God hardening a heart. Reading through the minor prophets one year, I noted every passage that mentioned God's kingdom, rule, or sovereignty. I mentioned that this year I am reading through the New Testament a second time. As I do, I am writing down every reference (with a brief description) that mentions Satan, demons, evil spirits, exorcisms, or deliverance. This ends up being a daily Bible reading that helps me with some research I need to do for a future writing project.

If you are attentively looking for things in the passage, your mind will be engaged and your reading will be more fruitful and interesting.

2. Don't be afraid of genealogies. When I read through passages that are long lists of names, tribes, or families, I don't get bogged down trying to pronounce in my mind each and every name. Instead, I let my eyes land on the name long enough to see if it's familiar. In fact, in genealogies, that is what I am looking for—familiar names I know from other books, passages, or stories. One of the benefits of genealogies is the reminder that millions have had their time on this globe and played their part in God's redemptive plan before I ever showed up. I read the list and remind myself that they all lived, served God, and died. Likewise, I will pass from the scene and be lost in the blank spaces of history between names more notable than my own.

3. Don't be discouraged if you don't understand everything you read. You aren't going to, so don't expect to. You won't grasp the significance of every name or place. References to geography may mean nothing to you. Some of the events will sound odd and you won't know how they fit with everything else. You won't comprehend the details of every prophecy. Don't worry about it. Read, glean what you can, and remember that next year, about the same time, you'll be back in that passage to read it again!

You'll be *amazed* how much better your understanding of these passages is after you have read them ten times over the next ten years. It is far better to read the Word and not understand everything than to not read it because you don't understand everything.

4. Don't be discouraged if you fall behind. If you miss a few days because of circumstances you can't control, don't abandon the project. Simply add a little bit more to each day's reading for a couple of weeks. You'll catch up in no time!

In 2000, Diedre and I built our home. I was working over forty hours a week on the house and preparing a weekly message. I wasn't able to keep up my daily reading routine. I fell behind by a third of a year. After we moved in, I added a little bit to my daily reading, a chapter here and a chapter there. I maintained the pace, and after two years, I caught up and was back on track. In fact, that is when I started reading five to six chapters, five days a week.

5. Consider an audio Bible. The technology available has eliminated every excuse for not knowing our Bibles. If you can't read or genuinely can't find the time, you can have the Bible read to you. Nearly all Bible apps have an option to read the text to you. You can listen while you shower, drive, work in the garden, walk, or cook dinner.

6. You are never too old to start. If I had started this practice when God saved me instead of waiting until I was twenty-



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www.kootenaichurch.org



four, I would be starting on my thirty-eighth year instead of my twenty-eighth. I would love to get those ten years back! I would know my Bible that much better, and I'm convinced my high school years would've turned out differently!

If God should grant you just one more year of life, can you think of anything more profitable and productive than reading through His Word one more time? If I knew I were to die next week, I would not give up this discipline! If God should grant that I live to be ninety, I will be able to read His Word through forty more times! What a delight!

Don't delay!

I am absolutely sincere when I say to you that reading my Bible through once a year is ***the single greatest spiritual discipline I have ever adopted***. It has produced the greatest blessings. It has yielded fruit beyond what I could have imagined. If I had known this earlier, I would have started earlier. I commend it to you. A fresh new year is ahead of you.

If resolutions are your thing: resolved, to read through the Bible in 2024.

Without wax,

¹If you know your reading speed, you can easily calculate how long you have to spend each day to read through the Bible each year. 807,361 words/200 wpm = 4,037 minutes. You can read the whole Bible in 4,037 minutes. How many hours is that? 4,037/60 = 67.28 hours. To find minutes/day, divide 4,037 by 365 and you get 11 minutes per day.

²You would be encouraged to check out the infographics at <https://www.crossway.org/articles/infographic-you-can-read-more-of-the-bible-than-you-think/>. It will surprise you to see just how easy this goal truly is.



"He does it all; He is the great Winter King and rules in the realms of frost, and therefore you cannot murmur. Losses, crosses, heaviness, sickness, poverty, and a thousand other ills are of the Lord's sending and come to us with wise design.

Frosts kill harmful insects and restrain raging diseases; they break up the clods and sweeten the soul. O that such good results would always follow our winters of affliction!"

*C. H. Spurgeon, revised and updated by
Alistair Begg*