

The New Testament in a Year

Introduction

by Greg Smith-Young (editor)

For us who are seeking to follow Jesus, the New Testament writings are the primary documents we need. From the earliest decades of the Christian movement, the Holy Spirit has led people as they wrote, collected and preserved them. They are a great treasure. Yes, they the indispensable source of information about the early Church. Much more, these writings, diverse in their authorship, style, occasion and perspective, all bear witness to fullness of Jesus Christ.

This series of guides is simply a tool to help you read the New Testament. Its writers hope it will help you. It will only serve its purpose, though, if it leads you deeper into the Bible. May the Holy Spirit, who always points us to Jesus, uses this for your blessing, and to the glory of God.

The Project

This project began with an idea from Trinity United Church in Uxbridge, Ontario. It went to the 2006 meeting of the United Church's General Council, where this motion was passed:

"...to encourage our membership (ministry and lay) and adherents... to re-acquaint ourselves with the primary written source of our faith by making a commitment to personally and prayerfully read through the entire New Testament once a year over the next three years, opening ourselves to the Spirit of God to speak to us afresh through the written witness to Christ as to how we might live out Christ's message in our lives today."

After I heard about this, the idea rested in my mind for a year or so. I felt God's leading to bring this idea to life in the congregations I serve.

I thought about putting together a schedule of daily readings for folks to use. Then I thought about providing a short reflection for each reading. Then I thought, "Yikes! How could I do this?"

I realized it would work best as a team effort. I asked various people to participate as writers for the daily reflections. They are colleagues and friends in various types of ministries: secular, ordered and lay.

Each writer has taken responsibility for a week's worth of readings, usually 3 or 4 times through the year. Each week has five chapters, and the writers prepared a reflection of 150-175 words for each chapter.

The writers emailed their submissions to me, which I edited, formatted and distributed. I sent the guide to various congregations, which in turn passed it on to their participating members. Some individuals also participated.

The Results

These guides were prepared and first used in 2009.

There were 22 writers, with some of these working in teams. They exemplified different styles, experiences, backgrounds and approaches to Scripture.

A total of 21 congregations participated, along with 1 hospital chaplaincy. I have no idea how many individuals received these guides from these ministries. In addition, 10 individuals received the guides directly from me.

What is most important to me is not that they used these guides, but that they read, sat with and were shaped by God's Word in these Scriptures.

How did God use this? Really, I doubt I will ever really know.

But here are some of the stories I've heard:

A couple sat for ½ hour each morning, before the kids got up, to read the Bible together, work through the reflection, and pray

Someone who pulled a group together to talk about what they were been reading and discovering.

A mom with 3 young children, who was part of no church, but heard about this and she wanted to be part of it.

"I am not a Minister, just a lay person. I do the music in my Church and also with another man lead a Bible study with music and prayer. So it makes a nice morning."

"It has brought me back to reading my Bible every day, something I have not done faithfully for quite awhile. I need His words of encouragement especially now that I have been diagnosed with Melanoma which has begun to spread. His words of love and healing have been a great comfort to me. Thank you."

(From a guide writer): *"this really has been an amazing project to be part of."*

Using this Resource

Each week you will read 5 chapters. The guide runs Monday to Friday. This leaves you the weekend off, or as time to catch up.

Some of the guides include an introduction by the writer. Others have some general questions to consider.

The guides *do not* follow the biblical order of the New Testament books. Instead . . .

. . . they start with Luke, then Acts. Written by the same author, they will give you an overview of the life of Jesus and his ongoing life in the early church.

. . .the other 3 Gospels are spread through the years. I put them in the order most scholars believe they were written in (Mark, Matthew, John).

. . . the remaining New Testament writings are spread in between the Gospels, roughly in the order in which they were likely written.

One final note. Remember that these guides were written during the course of one year, 2009. There might be references to the time and season that don't fit when you are reading the guide. Still, I think and pray you will find it useful.

1	Luke 1-5
2	Luke 6-10
3	Luke 11-15
4	Luke 16-20
5	Luke 21-24, Acts 1
6	Acts 2-6
7	Acts 7-11
8	Acts 12-16
9	Acts 17-21
10	Acts 22-26
11	Acts 27-28; 1Thess 1-3
12	1Thess 4; 2 Thess 1-3; James 1
13	James 2-5; Mark 1
14	Mark 2-6
15	Mark 7-11
16	Mark 12-16
17	1Cor 1-5
18	1Cor 6-10
19	1Cor 11-15
20	1Cor 16; 2Cor 1-4
21	2Cor 5-9
22	2Cor 10-13; Gal 1
23	Gal 2-6
24	Col 1-4; Philem
25	Eph 1-6
26	Eph 6; Phil 1-4
27	Matt 1-5

28	Matt 6-10
29	Matt 11-15
30	Matt 16-20
31	Matt 21-25
32	Matt 26-28; Rom 1-2
33	Rom 3-7
34	Rom 8-12
35	Rom 13-16; 1Tim 1
36	1Tim 2-6
37	2Tim 1-4; Titus 1
38	Titus 2-3; 1Pet 1-3
39	1Pet 4-5; 2Pet 1-3
40	John 1-5
41	John 6-10
42	John 11-15
43	John 16-20
44	John 21; 1John 1-4
45	1John 5; 2John; 3 John; Jude; Hebr 1
46	Hebr 2-6
47	Hebr 7-11
48	Hebr 12-13; Rev 1-3
49	Rev 4-8
50	Rev 9-13
51	Rev 14-18
52	Rev 19-22