

# Bible 101 [ericcardoza.com](http://ericcardoza.com)

## Getting Started

If you've recently started following Jesus—or if you're just searching and wondering what it means to know God—this guide is for you. You don't need to have all the answers. You don't need to feel spiritual. You don't need to clean yourself up first. You just need to start. And one of the best places to start is by reading the Bible.

This isn't a Bible study or a theology book. It's a simple, honest guide to help you pick up a Bible and start a relationship with the God who wrote it. I'm not a pastor or scholar—I'm someone who met Jesus because other people helped me get started. Now I want to help you.

## What Is the Bible?

The Bible isn't one book—it's a collection of 66 books written over centuries. Some parts are history. Others are poetry, wisdom, or letters. The Bible tells the story of real people living in real places, all pointing to one thing: God's plan to rescue and restore the world through Jesus.

The Bible is inspired by God. Some passages are commands to obey, some are stories to learn from, and some are parables to help us understand spiritual truths. It's not about checking boxes—it's about meeting the God who loves you.

## How to choose a Bible

Not all Bibles read the same. The message is the same, but the wording can be easier or harder depending on the translation. Here are a few trusted ones to start with:

- NLT (New Living Translation): Easy to read and understand
- NIV (New International Version): A balance of clarity and accuracy
- ESV (English Standard Version): A bit more formal, still clear
- The Message (Paraphrase): Helps bring Scripture to life, but not a word-for-word translation

You can get a Bible at a bookstore, online, or download one for free through apps like YouVersion or Bible Gateway. I personally like a physical Bible—it helps me stay focused and grounded.

## How to read my Bible

Don't start at the beginning. Start with Jesus. Begin with the Gospel of Mark or John. Mark is short and fast-paced. John focuses more on who Jesus is. Once you've read one of those, try Psalms (for prayer and emotion) or Proverbs (for daily wisdom).

## How to Approach the Bible

When I read the Bible, I do it for five reasons:

1. To study and understand truth
2. To learn about Jesus
3. To get wisdom from God
4. To know God's will for my life
5. To grow in relationship with God

I remind myself that these are real stories. Some are historical. Some are parables. Some apply directly to me. Others reveal who God is or how people have experienced Him. Approach the Bible with curiosity, humility, and a desire to know the Author—not just the stories.

## What Do I Do With What I Read?

After you read, ask yourself:

- What stood out to me?
- What does this teach me about God?
- Is there something I should do or think differently today?

Don't just read for information—read for transformation. Even one verse can speak deeply to your situation.

## What If I Have Questions?

Ask them. You're not expected to know it all. Write them down and bring them to a trusted friend, leader, or pastor. Use study resources. Look it up in a Bible app. But most importantly—stay curious and don't give up.

## Helpful Resources

Free Apps:

- YouVersion Bible App – reading plans, audio Bibles, devotions
- Bible Gateway – read and compare different translations

Beginner Reading Plans (Search for These):

- 'Life of Jesus'
- 'New to Faith'
- 'Bible in 5 Days'

Need Help?

Reach out to a local church or Christian friend. If you're not sure who to ask, you can email me through my website. You're not alone.

## Final Word

When I gave my life to Jesus, I had people around me who helped me grow. They encouraged me to read, to pray, to show up, and to ask questions. I wouldn't be where I am today without them. And now, I want to be that kind of help to someone else.

Galatians 6:9 says, 'Let us not grow weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest, if we do not give up.' That includes you. Keep going. Keep growing. God is with you.