

ONE-TO-ONE MINISTRY TO WOMEN

Bible Reading Resource

Let's Read the Bible Together!

Do you have a desire to connect more intentionally with others? Can you think of someone in your life that you would like to see progress spiritually—perhaps a non-Christian colleague, a Christian friend at church or a family member? Are you equipped? The answer is, yes you are! God has given us his written Word.

“His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence” (1 Peter 1:3).

Ministry to Women wants to encourage and equip you in a simple and personal way through *One-to-One Bible Reading*. But, what is *One-to-One Bible Reading*? To put it succinctly, its reading the Bible—but done in the context of reading *with* someone. It is something a Christian does with another person, on a regular basis, for a mutually agreed upon length of time, with the intention of reading through and discussing a book or part of a book of the Bible.

It is strikingly simple.

Yet, maybe you are not ready to just get started. Maybe you lack confidence. Maybe you think you don't know enough about the Bible and somebody should be seeking you out to read. We want to challenge you to prayerfully consider someone in your life—that God has entrusted you to—and ask them to read the Bible with you. There is great joy in *One-to-One Bible reading*. In Colossians 1:28-29 Paul says, “Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, with all his energy that he powerfully works within me”.

Where do I begin One-to-One Bible?

1. Download the PDF for more information on how to begin.
2. Consider the names of a few people you know that might be willing to read one-to-one.
Write them down.
3. Pray for opportunity.
4. Invite someone to join you.
5. Plan to meet.

During the first meeting:

- Agree on the duration of each meeting.
Ex. 1hr-1.1/4 hrs.
If you're meeting over a meal, it will take longer.
- Agree on the frequency of meeting.
Ex. weekly, every other week.
Anything less frequent than monthly becomes difficult to sustain.

- Agree on a period over which you will meet.
Ex. Weekly for 2 months, or monthly for 6 months etc.
It's always helpful to have an end point, to give an opportunity to evaluate and an exit point for both parties. You can always choose to keep meeting for another period.
Overall it needs to be a time commitment that is sustainable for that period.
- Agree on which book of the Bible you'll read.
Ex. With a non-Christian, you may agree to meet weekly and read a chapter of Mark's gospel each time. Be clear on why you're meeting to read the Bible, and not something else.
- You'll need to spend some time to get to know each other, if you don't already. There may not be time for much Bible reading during this first meeting, but it's time well spent in establishing the expectations for the times you do meet.

What Will a Typical Meeting Look Like?

1. Before you meet. Pray that God will guide and lead your One-to-One reading time together.
2. When you meet, R.E.A.D. One-to-One:

R—Request God's help to understand (as you start) and apply the passage (as you end). Pray, and ask God to help you understand and apply the passage together.

E—Examine the passage together. Read the passage aloud together, alternating between the two of you. Be sure each person participates. Remember to ask what the other person thinks. Don't be afraid of not having all the answers. Both relationship and study should be evident during a meeting. Work through the following four areas using the C.O.M.A. method of reading.

Ask these questions of the passage:

1. Read the passage aloud.
2. **Context** questions:
 - What sort of writing is this (letter, narrative, poem?)
 - Any clues about situation in which it was written?
 - What has happened so far?
3. **Observation** questions
 - Any major sub-sections or breaks in the text?
 - What is the main point or points?
 - Are there any surprises?
 - Key words? Repeated words or ideas?
4. **Meaning** questions
 - How does this text relate to other parts of the book?
 - How does this passage relate to Jesus?
 - What does this teach us about God?
 - How could we sum up the meaning of this passage in our own words?
5. **Application** questions
 - How does this passage challenge (or confirm) my understanding?
 - Is there some attitude I need to change?
 - How does this passage call on me to change the way I live?
6. Pray together about what you have learned.

Download: One to One C.O.M.A. Method questions. At <http://www.matthiasmedia.com.au/Samples/otobr/OTOBR-Sheets-for-copying-A4.pdf>

Choose from:

- The Gospels and Acts
- Old Testament Narrative
- Epistles
- Hebrew wisdom literature and poetry
- Prophetic literature
- Apocalyptic literature
- Eight weeks through Mark's Gospel (designed for the unbeliever)

A—Apply the passage daily to life by sharing with each other ways you plan to do this. Good applications should always spring out of the text or the context. Pray together based on the passage and commitments you've discussed.

D—Determine the time of your next meeting together.

*Adapted from One-to-One Bible Reading, David Helm

Q&A

Here are a few frequently asked questions along with our best attempts at answers for you to read.

Q. This is called reading “one-to-one.” Does that mean it only works with one other person?

A. No, not really. If you are reading with a natural pair (e.g. married couple, best friends), reading with two or even more people is certainly useful. And especially in cases where the goal is training people to read with others rather than reading with non-Christians or young Christians, group work can be a really efficient way of reading. Just remember, the more you grow the group, the more you trade in each person’s ability to be in intimate dialogue with you. As such, we strongly urge you to keep the group as small as possible.

Q. It seems like there is a relational cost to asking somebody I know well. How do I get over the awkwardness of introducing this very concrete idea of how we should spend time?

A. This is an indication that the people with whom it is the hardest to get started are the people who are closest to us. First, we would encourage you to pray. Of course, pray that the person would be receptive. But also, pray that you would count the cost and willingly embrace the results either way. Second, we would encourage you to look for the right opportunity in the course of normal conversations rather than setting out to ask the person by the end of the week. Third, do everything you can (especially logistically) to protect the relationship and show the person that you are acting out of love.

Q. Do I need to be prepared to read one-to-one? Or can I handle it on the fly?

A. You can do it either way. There is some undeniable value to preparing, but most people do not want too much preparation. We would encourage you do some preparation or, at least, read the text. This may help maximize discussion and may benefit your time together—especially if both are new to Bible reading. We don’t want the other person to become suspicious of an agenda being something different than simply reading the Bible. Not to prepare also has advantages. It makes it clear it is not a teaching session, but instead a discussion. It also demonstrates Scripture’s clarity—all can understand much of it even without extensive preparation. Without preparation, both of you will be starting from the same place and it may help a weaker partner to learn how to read and understand as you work through it “from scratch” together.

Q. What book of the Bible should I read?

A. With unbelievers: Mark’s Gospel (See C.O.M.A. method questions for the Gospel of Mark) or Genesis 1-12
With new believers: Any of the New Testament letters such as Colossians, Ephesians, Titus, 1 John
With established Christians: Romans, Psalms, Micah

Q. Why do you start with the Gospel of Mark?

A. We like it because it is short and simple. Most people who have not spent a lot of time in the Bible really need something that has a simple structure and conclusion. It is also good, especially with non-Christians, to be in a Gospel. Of course, you will know what is the right book (or section of a book) to read with someone.

Q. Do I need to be connected in physical space in order to read the Bible one-to-one?

A. Not necessarily. We know of people who are reading one-to-one across the world, literally, using Internet video-conferencing tools (e.g. FaceTime, Skype). But this only really works on the basis of a previously established relationship. As long as you have the established relationship, you can definitely read one-to-one online.

Q. What comes after reading the Bible one-to-one?

A. Life in community is important. Reading one-to-one is not a strategy for evangelism or discipleship that marks some kind of discernible achievement for the people who participate. That is, you don't graduate from reading the Bible one-to-one. Rather, it is a way of strengthening and expanding relationships. So, for some, the next step is to read another book of the Bible with the same person. For others, the next step is challenging the other person to read with someone else. Reading one-to-one is simply a way of enriching a community of believers around Scripture.

Q. What about reading other things?

A. Reading other things is good. Churches make use of popular books, commentaries, and other literature all the time. We are all for it. But none of it is the Bible. As such, we strongly encourage everyone to dedicate some time to intentional conversation about God's Word. Maybe it's a season. Maybe it's all you do from now on. In either case, there is immeasurable value to being in the foundational document of our faith and organizing relationships around it at least some of the time.

Q. Why do I want to read One-to-One with someone?

A. The joy of one-to-one reading is stated clearly in Scripture. Paul says, "Him [Jesus] we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, with all his energy that he powerfully works within me" (Colossians 1:28-29). And, it's a privilege to watch each other grow in Christ!

Adapted from *One to One Bible Reading*, David Helm: <http://www.reading121.org>

Need Some Further Encouragement?

<http://www.reading121.org>