



FBC Reading Plan

December 2020

Why a Reading Plan: God speaks to people through His Word. It is what He uses to transform our lives by orienting our minds toward His truth and aligning our heart toward what He loves. The aim of this reading plan is not to merely check a box off a list, but to encourage our church body to spend time hearing from God. Reading the Bible is critical to a Christian's growth. But it is especially powerful to read the Bible with others. This reading plan is the basis for all of our D-Groups, and we hope it fosters deeper spiritual conversations in our families and between our members.

How to use this booklet: Each day has a passage of Scripture for you to read. There are also some questions to prompt your reading and reflecting on the passage. We encourage the H.E.A.R. method for reading Scripture, especially if it is a new discipline for you. First, **highlight** a verse or verses that speak to you from the passage. Then, **explain** what those verses mean in relation to the broader context and how they support the big idea the author is trying to communicate. Next, **apply** this verse to your everyday life. For example, how should this change your desires, your behavior, or your relationships? Application should always be done in a spirit of prayer, as you are asking God to reveal to you how it applies. Finally, it is not enough to settle for knowing some truth or how it might apply to your life without a specific response. So finally **respond**. This can be a prayer or a specific action you will take after hearing this verse or passage.

Memory Verse: Because Scripture is God's Word, it is important that a Christian spend regular time memorizing God's Word so that he or she can always find encouragement and guidance from God. This month's memory passage is provided on the next page in the ESV, NIV, and NLT.

December's Memory Verses

1 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. 2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Romans 12:1-2 (ESV)

1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. 2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Romans 12:1-2 (NIV)

1 And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. 2 Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

Romans 12:1-2 (NLT)

Week 1: Genesis — Abraham & Isaac

Starting Date December 7th

Day 1

Highlight: Genesis 18-19 *Memory Verse:* Romans 12:1

Sunday's Message: Romans 13:1-7

Explanation:

God personally visits Sodom to see if its evil matches the outcry that has come from it (18:20-21). What does this story teach you about God?

Sodom seems like a pretty horrible place. Yet Lot's sons-in-law think God's coming judgment is a joke, Lot himself lingers and is dragged out by the angels, and Lot's wife looks back (presumably wanting to go back) and is turned to salt. What do these actions tell you about the characters and about human nature?

Week 1: Genesis — Abraham & Isaac

Starting Date December 7th

Application:

What relevance do these chapters have for your life?

Response:

Nothing is too hard for the Lord (18:14), and he hears the outcry of those who are suffering injustice (18:20-21). Pray that you would see God at work in your life and in those around to you accomplish his purposes.

Week 1: Genesis — Abraham & Isaac

Starting Date December 7th

Day 2

Highlight: Genesis 20-21

Memory Verse: Romans 12:1

Explanation:

How do you see God's promise in 12:1-3 being fulfilled in these chapters?

Week 1: Genesis — Abraham & Isaac

Starting Date December 7th

Application:

Sarah's blessing results in contempt toward Hagar (21:8ff). What are reasons that you have contempt toward others?

Response:

In these chapters, God protects Abimelech in his innocence, uses Abraham despite his deception, gives Abraham a son after years of waiting, and protects Hagar and Ishmael after being cast out. How do these things help you live with confidence in God today?

Week 1: Genesis — Abraham & Isaac

Starting Date December 7th

Day 3

Highlight: Genesis 22

Memory Verse: Romans 12:1

Explanation:

What is the purpose of God testing Abraham?

Week 1: Genesis — Abraham & Isaac

Starting Date December 7th

Application:

Abraham had waited years for a son, and then God threatens that very promise to test Abraham. What level of commitment does God expect from you? Have you grown in your commitment to God over time?

Response:

This story points forward to a day when God will provide another lamb, when he himself does not withhold his only Son but rather gives him up as a sacrifice for our sin. Give thanks to your Father who has provided forgiveness for you.

Week 1: Genesis — Abraham & Isaac

Starting Date December 7th

Day 4

Highlight: Genesis 24

Memory Verse: Romans 12:1

Explanation:

This is the longest single narrative account in Genesis. Why does the author give so much to this story? Why is it so important?

Week 1: Genesis — Abraham & Isaac

Starting Date December 7th

Application:

How does Abraham's servant see God's steadfast love and faithfulness at work? How might that help you see him at work today?

Response:

God is faithful to provide for his people in the midst of life's complexity. Pray for what you need today knowing that he hears.

Week 1: Genesis — Abraham & Isaac

Starting Date December 7th

Day 5

Highlight: Genesis 25:19-34; 26

Memory Verse: Romans 12:1

Explanation:

How are themes from Abraham's life repeated in the next generation?
How in particular does the theme of blessing appear in these chapters?

Week 1: Genesis — Abraham & Isaac

Starting Date December 7th

Application:

God commands Isaac to stay in the land while it is suffering from famine. Why does God call his people to endure times of “famine,” times of difficulty and lack? How will he see you through your own “famines”?

Response:

How can you respond to God today?

Week 2: Genesis — The Life of Jacob

Starting Date December 14th

Day 1

Highlight: Genesis 27-28

Memory Verse: Romans 12:2

Explanation:

Consider each of the main characters and their actions in these chapters. How would you describe each of them?

How are themes that appeared in the life of Abraham repeated in these chapters (especially compare 12:1-3)?

Week 2: Genesis — The Life of Jacob

Starting Date December 14th

Application:

How can God bless such a treacherous and deceitful man as Jacob (28:14-17)? What does that mean for you?

Response:

Jacob responds to the dream from God with worship (28:17ff). If in Christ we have already been blessed and if through Christ we know that God is with us, how much more should our lives be filled with awe and reverence toward God!

Week 2: Genesis — The Life of Jacob

Starting Date December 14th

Day 2

Highlight: Genesis 29-30:24

Memory Verse: Romans 12:2

Explanation:

How does the sin of the people in this story lead to difficulty and pain within their family?

Week 2: Genesis — The Life of Jacob

Starting Date December 14th

Application:

Throughout Jacob's marriages, we see two women trying to win the love and approval of their husband, but this is especially the case for Leah. Yet God sees and listens to Leah despite being neglected by her husband. Whose approval are you seeking? And are you believing that God sees you even when others do not?

Response:

How can you be a blessing and a source of peace for your family today?

Week 2: Genesis — The Life of Jacob

Starting Date December 14th

Day 3

Highlight: Genesis 31-32

Memory Verse: Romans 12:2

Explanation:

Jacob is treated by Laban similarly to the way he has treated others. How does Jacob respond to Laban? Why is Jacob afraid of Esau?

Week 2: Genesis — The Life of Jacob

Starting Date December 14th

Application:

Israel means “he strives with God” (32:28). How does that inform what it means to have a relationship with God?

Response:

How are you striving with God? How should you respond to a God who strives with people?

Week 2: Genesis — The Life of Jacob

Starting Date December 14th

Day 4

Highlight: Genesis 33; 35

Memory Verse: Romans 12:2

Explanation:

How has Jacob changed? How do his actions reveal this?

Week 2: Genesis — The Life of Jacob

Starting Date December 14th

Application:

After many years, Jacob finally makes the God of his fathers Abraham and Isaac his own God, the God of Israel (33:20; 35:1-4). What does this mean for how other might people come to worship and follow God today?

Response:

How should you respond to “God Almighty” today, who fulfills all his plans and purposes for his world?

Week 2: Genesis — The Life of Jacob

Starting Date December 14th

Day 5

Highlight: Genesis 37

Memory Verse: Romans 12:2

Explanation:

How do love, hatred, and jealousy motivate the characters in this story?

Week 2: Genesis — The Life of Jacob

Starting Date December 14th

Application:

Just as Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah, he loves Joseph more than his other sons. This favoritism caused trouble in his family for years. Do you see any patterns of sin that have affected your relationships in the same way over the years?

Response:

Our love, hatred, and jealousy will motivate our behavior. Ask God to reveal to you any love or hatred in your life that is misplaced.

Week 3: The Life of Joseph

Starting Date December 21st

Day 1

Highlight: Genesis 39-40 *Memory Verse:* Romans 12:1-2

Sunday's Message: Romans 13:8-10

Explanation:

The passage emphasizes that the Lord was with Joseph despite the difficulties he faced (39:2, 21). What happens as a result of the Lord being with Joseph? Does this protect him from all harm?

Week 3: The Life of Joseph

Starting Date December 21st

Application:

How can the Lord be with us and yet we still suffer and face evil?

Response:

Despite his unfortunate circumstances, Joseph remains above reproach. He points forward to Jesus, who will be falsely condemned to death, but the Lord will be with him too and raise him from the dead. Pray that God would empower you to follow him today no matter what difficulties or temptations you may face.

Week 3: The Life of Joseph

Starting Date December 21st

Day 2

Highlight: Genesis 41

Memory Verse: Romans 12:1-2

Explanation:

What is going to happen in the land of Egypt?

How is this chapter a fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob?

Week 3: The Life of Joseph

Starting Date December 21st

Application:

God reveals what is going to happen. But it seems that Joseph comes up with a plan to address the coming famine, and he also ends up being the one to oversee this plan. What does this teach you about how God interacts with the world?

Response:

How can you be a blessing to those around you today?

Week 3: The Life of Joseph

Starting Date December 21st

Day 3 **Highlight:** Genesis 42-43 *Memory Verse:* Romans 12:1-2

Explanation:

Why do you think Joseph treats his brothers the way that he does?
Regardless of his intent, what is the effect of Joseph's actions on his brothers?

How does the loss of Joseph still affect his brothers, his father, and the family all these years later?

Week 3: The Life of Joseph

Starting Date December 21st

Application:

How is this story an illustration of forgiveness?

Response:

Is there anyone whom you need to forgive?

Week 3: The Life of Joseph

Starting Date December 21st

Day 4

Highlight: Genesis 44-45 *Memory Verse:* Romans 12:1-2

Explanation:

How have the brothers (represented by Judah) changed since they sold Joseph into slavery?

Week 3: The Life of Joseph

Starting Date December 21st

Application:

How does God act through and despite human actions?

Response:

Judah went from the brother who sold Joseph to the one who stood in Benjamin's place. This story points to Jesus, who would stand in our place, and offers hope that God redeems and changes people. Give thanks to God for his grace, and ask him to continue his work of transformation in you.

Week 3: The Life of Joseph

Starting Date December 21st

Day 5

Highlight: Genesis 46-47 *Memory Verse:* Romans 12:1-2

Explanation:

God commands Israel to take his family to Egypt. Why might Israel be hesitant to do that? How does this add a twist to the story in light of God's promise to Abraham?

Do you see anything in this chapter that hints at the tension that will come about in the beginning of Exodus?

Week 3: The Life of Joseph

Starting Date December 21st

Application:

This chapter describes a partial fulfillment of God's promises. After three generations, Abraham's descendants total 70 people (46:27). They are not living in the land of Israel, and yet they are prosperous. They even fulfill the commission to Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply (47:27), and yet this will be the cause of their future oppression in Egypt. How does this illustrate the tension that we feel today as followers of Jesus?

Response:

Are there any circumstances in your life in which you are not trusting God?

Week 4: Israel in Egypt

Starting Date December 28

Day 1

Highlight: Genesis 48-49 *Memory Verse:* Romans 12:1-2

Sunday's Message: Romans 13:11-14

Explanation:

What is the significance of Israel taking Joseph's sons as his own and blessing them?

49:28 calls vv. 2-27 blessings on each of Jacob's sons. Based on what Jacob says, what does 'blessing' mean in this context? How are these verses blessings?

Week 4: Israel in Egypt

Starting Date December 28

Application:

Throughout Genesis, there has been a constant theme of the younger overtaking the older, the lesser overtaking the greater (48:14-19). How is this also a key theme of the gospel, and how does that influence your life today?

Response:

Jacob prophesies that the scepter will never depart from Judah and that all people will obey him. Although this came about partially through King David and his dynasty, it is ultimately fulfilled through Jesus in his kingdom. How can you respond obediently to your king today?

Week 4: Israel in Egypt

Starting Date December 28

Day 2

Highlight: Genesis 50-Exodus 1

Memory Verse: Romans 12:1-2

Explanation:

How does the Jewish people's situation change from Genesis 50 to Exodus 1?

What themes from Genesis are echoed in Exodus 1?

Week 4: Israel in Egypt

Starting Date December 28

Application:

Reflect on 50:20. How should you apply the truth of that verse to your own life?

Response:

Exodus begins by showing that God can fulfill his promises and bring about blessing even through suffering. How does that give you hope today?

Week 4: Israel in Egypt

Starting Date December 28

Day 3

Highlight: Exodus 2-3

Memory Verse: Romans 12:1-2

Explanation:

Describe the character of Moses. Why are these things important to the story?

What does God say he will do to the Egyptians? What will happen as a result?

Week 4: Israel in Egypt

Starting Date December 28

Application:

“God heard...God remembered...God saw...God knew” (vv. 24-25). These verbs recur throughout chapter 3 as well. How do these actions reveal God’s character?

Response:

How should you respond today to your God, who hears you, remembers his covenant with you, sees you, and knows you?

Week 4: Israel in Egypt

Starting Date December 28

Day 4

Highlight: Exodus 4-5

Memory Verse: Romans 12:1-2

Explanation:

Moses gives several objections to God's plan to use him (starting in chapter 3). What are those objections?

What is at the heart of what Pharaoh says in 5:2?

Week 4: Israel in Egypt

Starting Date December 28

Application:

What from these chapters has relevance for your life today?

Response:

Moses felt ill-equipped for the calling God gave him. But this actually seems to be why he was chosen. What has God called you to do today? How do you need his help in order to accomplish that?

Week 4: Israel in Egypt

Starting Date December 28

Day 5

Highlight: Exodus 6-7

Memory Verse: Romans 12:1-2

Explanation:

Why is God committed to bringing the people of Israel out of Egypt?

What does God want to make known? What does this mean?

Week 4: Israel in Egypt

Starting Date December 28

Application:

How does your life show that you know Yahweh, the one true God?

Response:

Praise God for his power, glory, and salvation.