

The Idea

I want to thank my good friend, Bart Segó, for suggesting that I write a daily devotion for the *One Year Chronological Bible*.

The Inspiration

I also want to thank my wife, Amy, for her ongoing encouragement and daily example of faithfulness to read God's Word.

The Translation

Scripture quotations are taken from the *One Year Chronological Bible NLT*

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Thank you for your interest in the *One Year Chronological Bible and Daily Reflections* devotional. I applaud your initiative and courage to take this challenge. I know that God will bless your time and effort in His Word. Reading the Bible from cover to cover and understanding its overarching storyline are tremendously rewarding. It is my hope that this experience will be the beginning of a journey that you will enjoy for the rest of your life.

On the next few pages you will find some helpful tools. First, you will find my answer to a question that I get asked a lot, **“Why read the chronological Bible?”** What’s the difference?

Second, you will find a challenge from me regarding the spiritual discipline of Scripture intake, which, in my opinion, is the discipline that informs the others — prayer, service, evangelism, worship, meditation, memorization, etc.

Third, you will find a table of contents called **Quick Look**. There you will be able to see ahead at what you will be reading and when, as well as what topics I cover in my devotions.

Finally, the *Daily Reflections* fill the rest of the book. Each day has the date, the corresponding passage, my summarization of the topics and events, and several application questions with space for you to answer. I trust that you will find the devotions helpful. My goal was to be concise so as not to take much time. However, I wanted you, the reader, to walk away each day understanding what you read and reflecting on what it means to you.

The *Daily Reflections* follow the reading schedule of Tyndale’s *One Year Chronological Bible in the New Living Translation (2000)*. If you want to use another translation, simply follow the Quick Look reading guide at the beginning of this book.

Do you have to start in January, or can you start any time during the year? You can start reading anytime during the year. Every devotion has a date (which will be helpful if you start in January) and a day number (which will be helpful if you start at another time). Do what’s best for you.

The *Daily Reflections* are a supplement to the *One Year Chronological Study Guide*. The study guide has helpful charts, visuals, maps, and weekly reviews and questions for reflection or discussion. You can order the *One Year Chronological Bible Study Guide* at www.BiAY.org. If you have any questions or comments, please contact me at aferguson@biay.org.



Why the Chronological Bible?

The people at Tyndale Publishers have put together a fantastic *One Year Chronological Bible* in the *New Living Translation*. But, why would anyone want to read the Bible chronologically? Why read it in a year, and what is unique about the *New Living Translation*?

While there are numerous read-in-a-year plans to choose from, the *Chronological Bible*, in my opinion, is the way to go. You are not trying to read the books of the Bible in canonical order (which is how most Bibles are organized), and you do not read a little of the Old Testament and a little of the New Testament each day, which can be confusing. Consider these advantages of the *One Year Chronological Bible*.

First, you read the Bible in the order that it was written. Hey, that makes sense to me! You don't read it in sections but as a story. Simple enough, don't you think?

Second, in the canonical order, you read the prophetic books long after you read the time in which the prophets lived. With the *One Year Chronological Bible*, you read the prophetic books in the historical period of their time.

Third, rather than read *Psalms* as a separate book from its authors, you will read the songs that the author wrote when he lived. For example, many of David's

psalms are intertwined with the story of his life. After his affair with Bathsheba, you immediately read *Psalms 32* and *Psalms 51*, in which he expressed his guilt and need for forgiveness.

Fourth, the Gospels — *Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke*, and *John* — are combined, rather than separated, and the combination makes for a smooth reading of the life and teaching of Jesus. Thus, you don't read the Gospel four times, only once.

Fifth, the letters of Paul are mixed with the history of *Acts*, and they fall during the time when he would have written them. They are not disjointed books, but rather they are integrated with Paul's life.

Sixth, the *New Living Translation (NLT)* is easy to read, which enables quick understanding of difficult texts and requires little time trudging through difficult words.

Finally, reading the Bible in a year allows you to get a quick fly-over of the book without overwhelming you day to day.

Though committing to anything for a year is challenging, the reward is worth the time and effort! So what are you waiting for? Open your *One Year Chronological Bible* and *Daily Reflections* and start enjoying an exciting journey through the Bible.



“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.” *2 Timothy 2:15 (NASB)*

A Diligent Pursuit

I have been a teacher now for more than 20 years, primarily in the subjects of history, government, and Bible. I’ve worked very hard to hone my craft. I get to practice every day. I’ve diligently poured into my subjects. I’ve spent countless hours in research and study. I’ve written curriculum for several classes. In the process, I’ve become a Master Teacher, at least by the standards set by my school. I’ve improved my skills and my courses, all to the benefit of the school, the students, and future teachers.

Why would I spend so much time in this pursuit? Yes, it is my job. That’s true. However, there is an incredible burden that bears down upon a teacher, a hidden weight that I sense every time I stand in front of students. **The burden is this – is what I’m saying true?** Is it accurate? That burden is intimidating at times and can even make me fearful.

There is so much bad history and misinformation being given in the academic world that I want to make sure that what I teach is solid and supported. I want to be accurate in what I teach, handling history and government with great care and excellence. I don’t want to be guilty of teaching something that is wrong, especially by God’s standards. I don’t want to be

ashamed by being ignorant in my subject area. This burden and expectation drives my diligent pursuit of excellence. However, a question that haunts me more than that is this — am I as diligent in my spiritual life as I am in my professional life? Do I work as hard in developing my “quiet time” as I do with my job?

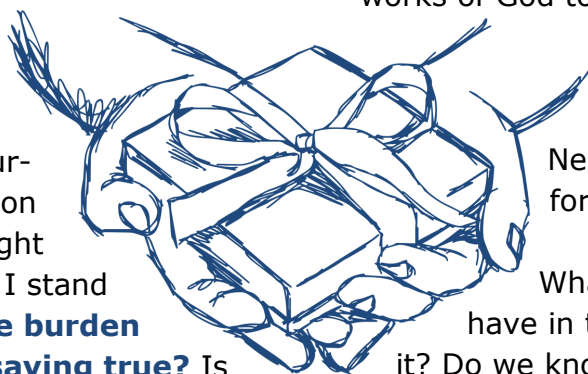
A Holy Treasure

More important than any course that I’ve written or class that I’ve taught is my personal relationship with the Lord and my study and understanding of His Word. The Lord has given us the Bible, His truth. What a blessing! What a gift!

We have the wisdom of the ages at our fingertips. We have the character and nature of God described for us. We have the works of God to reflect upon. We have the life and ministry of Jesus as our model for godliness. We have the Old and New Testaments as our guides for life and living.

What a precious package we have in the Bible, but do we read it? Do we know it? Can we share it with someone else? Can we explain it or teach it? Do we know where to find things, how to answer questions, and how to handle the Bible accurately? Do we make time for it each day and do we live by its words?

What about you? Are you as diligent in your personal time with the Lord as you are in your profession? Is your pursuit of God’s Word as passionate as your free time activities? What have you done with this wonderful treasure of the Bible?



To Whom Much Is Given

Several years ago I ran across a statistic that stunned me. Only 5% of Christians have read the Bible in its entirety. When I read that stat, I was mad at first; then, I was concerned. Only 5 out of 100 have read the entire Bible? Wow! Why is that I wondered? Perhaps it's because the Bible is long and difficult to understand.

Still, I find this number a bit hypocritical. How can we say that we live by a book that we have not read? Is this good stewardship of God's treasure? We have been given much in God's Word, and to whom much is given much is required. If all Scripture is God-given and useful, should we not endeavor to read it, study it, and know it?

An Approved Workman

How are we, as followers of Christ, supposed to handle the word of truth? Paul instructed Timothy (*2 Tim. 2:15*) to handle it accurately. To be accurate here literally means to "cut it straight." The King James Version uses the phrase "to divide it rightly." We are not to misapply what the Bible says. We are not to entertain false doctrine but rather we are to be discerning. But, how can we handle the Word rightly if we do not know it? And, how can we know it, if we do not read it?

Also, Paul told Timothy to "present himself approved to God." To be approved does not mean that we read the Bible to gain God's favor. Because of Christ, we already have God's favor. To be approved means to honor the Lord in our stewardship of His Word. It is not the kind of gift that we put on a shelf to look at; rather it is a tool that

we have been given to live the Christian life. With it He communicates His wisdom, His instructions, His standards, His desires, and His will. We use that tool as a workman would, through labor and hard work. We make good use of it. We are not negligent; we do not leave it idle. We open it, read it, wrestle with it, mark it up, reason through it, and apply it.

Finally, Paul told Timothy not to be ashamed when he shared God's word with others. In that we have been workmen, approved to God, and in that we handle accurately His Word of truth, we will have a confidence in what we know and believe, that what we say is right and true. If we do not read it, we will not know it. If we do not know it, we will not have confidence to live it, much less share it.

5%

All of these things require diligence. Diligence is "steady or constant effort." It requires hard work. Hard work requires us to "set our hearts" as Ezra the high priest did (*Ezra 7:10*). Before he taught, he practiced or applied God's words to his life. Still, before he practiced God's Word, he had to study and know it. Even then, to study it, he had to "set his heart" to do it.

What about you? Are you a good steward of God's Word? Are you an approved workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth? My prayer is that you will not be part of the 95%, who claims to live by a book that he has not read. I trust that the Lord will use this study guide to encourage you in your journey through the Bible. God bless your diligence.