



# Read the Bible for Life: Your Guide to Understanding and Living God's Word

By George Guthrie

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The Bible may be the most-purchased book in the world, but it is often the least read and least applied due to a basic lack of understanding and motivation on the part of readers. *Read the Bible for Life* aims to improve biblical literacy in the culture and the church by simultaneously moving readers toward greater skill in reading the Bible well and toward a deeper commitment to applying Scripture to everyday life.

Through a series of down-to-earth conversations with some of today's brightest scholars, author George Guthrie discusses the basic tools and attitudes needed to read the Bible more effectively. Chapters focus on the various types of literature in Scripture and how to read them well. For instance, how should we read a psalm differently than we read a parable?

How should we read a story of the Old Testament differently than we read a letter from Paul? How can we engage these various parts of Scripture in a way that is truly life-changing? The book also discusses issues such as reading the Bible in context, choosing and reading a Bible translation, reading in times of sorrow or suffering, and reading the Bible with your family. As we better understand how to read the Bible skillfully, we begin to see how every person of the Bible, every psalm, and every teaching fits into the Bible's powerful, overarching story, and we begin to realize our place in the story God is still writing in the world.

### Endorsements

"In the church's dry desert of biblical illiteracy, this book is a drink of cold, refreshing water. With pastoral sensitivity and practical skill, George Guthrie is equipping us to know, understand, and apply the treasures of God's Word in a way that will transform our lives and our communities for the glory of our God. I wholeheartedly recommend *Read the Bible For Life* for every Christian and every leader in the church."

—**David Platt**, *New York Times* best-selling author of *Radical*

"In a culture where biblical illiteracy continues to spread like the proverbial plague, George Guthrie has introduced a healing medicine in the form of *Read the Bible for Life*. This overview of the Bible's nature and content will be welcomed in churches intent on developing biblically grounded followers of Christ. The book's conversational approach provides an easy entry for a generation that tends to read only headlines. With fresh insights for the long time student of God's Word and accessible material for the new student, it is a resource I recommend for all believers."

—**Ed Stetzer**, coauthor, *Transformational Church*

"The genuine give and take of conversation is key to the Christian community's deeper grasp of the Scriptures. *Read the Bible for Life* is a celebration of biblical conversation between friends who really love the Word. Hopefully, lots of people will join in."

—**Michael Card**, award-winning musician and author

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

As a Bible scholar at Union University, one of the oldest American universities in the Southern Baptist tradition, Guthrie has tracked the decline in biblical literacy with consternation. With earlier books (*The Structure of Hebrews* and *Biblical Greek Exegesis*) best suited for academia, Guthrie has switched gears to produce a reader-friendly, digestible, biblical literacy study program that includes this book as well as a participant™s workbook, study leader™s CD-ROM, and three DVDs for group use. Anyone œtouched by the English language or Western culture,• argues Guthrie, should be conversant in biblical literature. Through informal kitchen-table conversations with evangelical scholars, Guthrie guides the reader through a study of historical context, differences in Bible translations, varieties of literary genres, and finally a heartfelt devotional on how to read the Bible in a postmodern world. Though successful in reaching beyond a Southern Baptist audience, Guthrie remains limited by the Protestant concept of œprogressive revelation,• which prefers later parts of the Bible over earlier ones, a concept not accepted by Roman Catholics or Orthodox Christians. (Jan.)

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Review

TOP PICK

The content presented is as relevant as it is comprehensive. Guthrie boils down the most significant, or most troubling, issues related to the given topic, making them accessible.

--Christian Retailing, Book Reviews, January 2011

5 STARS

The result is an easy-to-read yet in-depth approach . . . that focuses on connecting the dots of the big storyline of the Bible. --Trevin Wax, Christianity Today Magazine, March 2011

From the Author

Thank you for considering *Read the Bible for Life*. I enjoyed the process of dialoguing with friends, in community, as a foundation for what you will find here, and I hope you will enter into the conversation. I pray that you will enjoy the book and benefit from it as it not only leads you deeper into the Word of God but also leads you to the God of the Word. After all, the Bible is not just for information; it is a *relational book* about whole-life orientation and transformation. At times the Bible is not an easy book to read, but it is more than worth the effort, because reading it well leads us to the living God and helps us discover our part in the Story He is still writing on the world.

Just a word about the Publisher's Weekly review posted here on Amazon. I very much appreciate the author of the review taking time to read the book, and I am thankful for the positive comments! However, when at the end the reviewer writes that progressive revelation "prefers later parts of the Bible over the earlier ones," the comment demonstrates a basic misunderstanding of progressive revelation. The view presented throughout *Read the Bible for Life* is that all of Scripture is inspired by God. Whether we are dealing with the details of the Old Testament or the New, we respect God's choice of the time, place, and way He communicated truth by taking each passage seriously, reading it well in its context and valuing what God is communicating there. At the same time, every passage must also be read in its broader context. Since the Bible represents a developing Story, we need to be aware that there are earlier, foundational parts of the

Story, and later points in which those earlier bits come to a grand fulfillment in the person and work of Jesus. If you read *Read the Bible for Life* carefully, you will see that we actually can't understand the New Testament without having a deeper understanding of all aspects of the Old Testament Story. Like any good relationship or story, there is progression! Yet, to say that I prefer the latter parts of the Bible over the earlier ones is like saying I prefer my arms over my legs, or the last chapters of Tolkein's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy over the first chapters!

As Paul wrote, "All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable . . ." (2 Tim. 3:16). Again, my prayer is that you will enjoy *Read the Bible for Life* as it leads you deeper into the Bible as "profitable" in your walk with God!

## Users Review

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#### **Anthony Doucet:**

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