30 DAYS TO UNDERSTANDING

THE BIBLE

COMPANION GUIDE

KNOW THE BIBLE, FEAR THE LORD

NOVEMBER DEVOTIONAL BOOKLET

(PUBLISHED BY CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHINESE CHURCH)

How to Use the "Companion" with 30 Days to Understanding the Bible

60-Day Program: "30 Days to Understanding the Bible" is a great resource to help us understand the structure, story, major men and women, major events, and major points of geography of the Bible. In order to let the readers have enough time to interact with the material and to reflect, we are extending the study from 30 days to 60 days. This "Companion" will provide guidelines for reading and meditation for this 60-day program.

Read & Reflect: The book will provide information about the Bible, whereas this "Companion" will provide some reflective and meditative pointers so that the readers will not only gain knowledge, but also have time to reflect and to apply the related topics to their lives.

Using The "Companion" With The Book:

- ① Start your reading with a prayer and ask God to calm your heart and to open your eyes so that you can understand what God is trying to tell you.
- ② Read the sections of the Book "30 Days to Understanding the Bible" as assigned in the "Companion." Try to memorize the main points.
- ③ Do the Review and Self-Test section(s) as assigned to help you remember the main points.
- ④ Do the Reflect/Meditation section and make sure that you have ample time for reflection and meditation to see how the content or the assigned passage(s) relate to your life. Do not rush through it.
- © End your reading/devotion with a prayer to commit what you have learned to the Lord.

The Structure Of The Bible (1)

Chapter 1 November 1

PRAYER: Start your reading with a prayer and ask God to calm your heart, open your eyes, so that you can understand His Word.

READ & MEMORIZE: Read Chapter 1 until the section before "The New Testament" (i.e. Time Line of U.S. History, p. 16) and try to memorize the main points.

REVIEW & REFLECT: Review the structure and the time line of the Old Testament and reflect upon your own spiritual walk in this past year.

 Circle or put a check mark on the Bible books that you're not familiar with, and why? Are you willing to commit to read through those books in the near future? Please draft a plan on how you are going to accomplish it (e.g. commit half an hour every other Saturday to read through one of those shorter books, etc.).

2. Which book(s) are you most familiar with? Try stating the focus/theme of the book and what you have learned from it.

PRAYER: Pray and ask God to help you live out one of the spiritual lessons that you have learned from the book this coming week.

The Structure Of The Bible (2)

Chapter 1 November 2

PRAYER: Start your reading with a prayer and ask God to calm your heart, open your eyes, so that you can understand His Word.

READ: Read and review the main points of Day 1 and continue reading the rest of the chapter and memorize the main points.

SELF-TEST: Do the self-test on pp. 19-20 and check to see if you are correct. Try to memorize the main points.

MEDITATION: Read and meditate on 2 Timothy 3:16-17 —

"16All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

Meditate on how God has been equipping you through His words. In what ways has God been teaching, rebuking, correcting and training you in righteousness through the Scripture?

Teaching:			
Rebuking:			
Correcting:			
Training:			

PRAYER: Pray for a submissive heart and ask God to continue to equip you for every good work. If you are not involved in a ministry, pray that God will use you in a particular ministry.

The Geography Of The Old Testament (1)

Chapter 2 November 3

PRAYER: Start your reading with a prayer and ask God to calm your heart, open your eyes, so that you can understand His Word.

READ & MEMORIZE: Read Chapter 2 until p. 23 and try to memorize the "bodies of water" of the Old Testament.

REVIEW & REFLECT: Review the major points of the day and try to imagine (even with your eyes closed) all the magnificent things that God had done around these bodies of water — how He placed the beautiful Garden of Eden between the River of Euphrates and Tigris; how He parted the Red Sea (probably about 10 miles apart) to allow nearly six million of His own people to come out from Egypt; how the water of the Jordon River, even at its flood stage, stopped flowing and piled up in a heap about 20 miles away to allow the Israelites to enter into the Promised Land and start their conquest, etc.

PRAYER: Praise God for all His magnificent works and thank Him for His provision and deliverance, both in the past as well as in your life.

The Geography Of The Old Testament (2)

Chapter 2 November 4

PRAYER: Start your reading with a prayer and ask God to calm your heart, open your eyes, so that you can understand His Word.

READ: Read and review the main points of November 3 ("bodies of water"), and continue to read the rest of the chapter and memorize the geography of the Old Testament.

SELF-TEST: Do the review and self-test on p. 27-28 and check to see if you are correct. Try to commit that to memory.

MEDITATION: Read and meditate on Acts 17:26-27 —

*26 From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live.
*27 God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us."

Meditate on how God has set these boundaries and places for the purpose of leading men to seek Him, to reach out for Him and to find Him. Recall and record on the following time-line how God has drawn you towards Him through different circumstances and places.

birth now

PRAYER: Thank God for His "meticulous love" in paving your ways.

The Historical Books (1)

Chapter 3 November 5

PRAYER: Start your reading with a prayer and ask God to calm your heart, open your eyes, so that you can understand His Word.

READ & MEMORIZE: Read Chapter 3 until p. 34, and try to memorize the nine main eras and the nine central figures of the Old Testament.

REVIEW & REFLECT: Review the major points of the day and out of the nine central figures, whose footsteps would you like to follow? Why? What changes do you need to make in order to do that? Write down your thoughts in the space below:

PRAYER: Pray and commit to make what you have written down as one of your spiritual goals.

The Historical Books (2)

Chapter 3 November 6

PRAYER: Start your reading with a prayer and ask God to calm your heart, open your eyes, so that you can understand His Word.

READ: Read and review the nine main eras and the nine central figures of Chapter 3 again. Continue to read the rest of the chapter and do the review and self-test.

MEDITATION: Read and meditate on Nehemiah 9:30-31 —

"30 For many years you were patient with them.

By your Spirit you admonished them through your prophets.

Yet they paid no attention,
so you handed them over to the neighboring peoples.

31 But in your great mercy you did not put an end to them or abandon them, for you are a gracious and merciful God."

Meditate on how God has been gracious and merciful to His people throughout the various eras despite their disobedience. Recall how God has been gracious and merciful to you in the past and how He has touched your life through His words, His servants, and His loving discipline.

His words:		
His servants:		
His loving discipline:		

PRAYER: Thank God for His grace and mercy to guide, to discipline, and to sustain you through the hills and valleys of your life.

The Creation Era (1)

Chapter 4 November 7

PRAYER: Start your reading with a prayer and ask God to calm your heart, open your eyes, so that you can understand His Word.

READ & MEMORIZE: Read Chapter 4 until the section before "Self-Test" (p. 44), and try to memorize the main points.

REVIEW & REFLECT: Review the major points of the day and reflect upon how God has graciously and abundantly created everything for us; yet, we have been rebellious in many ways. In the space below, list some of the blessings that you have received through creation.

PRAYER: Thank God for all that He has provided for you and confess your sins before God and ask for His forgiveness.

The Creation Era (2)

Chapter 4 November 8

PRAYER: Start your reading with a prayer and ask God to calm your heart, open your eyes, so that you can understand His Word.

READ: Read and review the main points of Chapter 4 again.

SELF-TEST: Do the self-test on p. 44 and check to see if you are correct. Try to memorize the main points.

MEDITATION: Read and meditate on Psalm 8:3-4 —

"When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, 4 what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?"

Meditate on how God has been caring for you in the past; list at least three things (related to His tender loving care) for that you would like to thank Him.

PRAYER: Thank God for His tender loving care.

The Patriarch Era (1)

Chapter 5 November 9

PRAYER: Start your reading with a prayer and ask God to calm your heart, open your eyes, so that you can understand His Word.

READ & MEMORIZE: Read Chapter 5 until the section before "Self-Test" (p. 50) and try to memorize the main points.

REVIEW & REFLECT: Review the major points of the day and reflect upon how God has chosen the family of Abraham and has made them a blessing to the nations despite their many shortcomings and mistakes. Think of ways that God could use you as a blessings to others (i.e. family, relatives, neighbors, coworkers, friends, etc.).

PRAYER: Thank God for how He has chosen you to be His child and ask God to make you a blessing to others.

The Patriarch Era (2)

Chapter 5 November 10

PRAYER: Start your reading with a prayer and ask God to calm your heart, open your eyes, so that you can understand His Word.

READ: Read and review the main points of Chapter 5 again.

SELF-TEST: Do the self-test on p. 50 and check to see if you are correct. Try to memorize the main points.

MEDITATION: Read and meditate on Genesis 50:19-20 —

"19 But Joseph said to them, 'Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? 20 You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives."

Meditate on how God has often turned crises into opportunities. List out some incidences when you experienced God turn woes into blessings.

PRAYER: Thank God for His protection and His making everything beautiful in His time.

The Exodus Era (1)

Chapter 6 November 11

PRAYER: Start your reading with a prayer and ask God to calm your heart, open your eyes, so that you can understand His Word.

READ & MEMORIZE: Read Chapter 6 until the section before "Self-Test" (p. 56), and try to memorize the main points.

REVIEW & REFLECT: Review the major points of the day and reflect upon how God has miraculously delivered His people from bondage. Recall how He too has miraculously led you to salvation. At times, these miraculous deeds could appear to be just coincidences (i.e. you bumped into a friend and he invited you to church, etc.). List down some of the miraculous deeds, including these "coincidences," that God has planned to lead you to Him.

PRAYER: Thank God for His unique plan in saving you.

The Exodus Era (2)

Chapter 6 November 12

PRAYER: Start your reading with a prayer and ask God to calm your heart, open your eyes, so that you can understand His Word.

READ: Read and review the main points of Chapter 6 again.

SELF-TEST: Do the self-test on p. 56 and check to see if you are correct. Try to memorize the main points.

MEDITATION: Read and meditate on Deuteronomy 30:19-20 —

"19 This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live 20 and that you may love the LORD your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the LORD is your life, and he will give you many years in the land he swore to give to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."

Meditate on how God desires for us to choose Him so that we will be blessed. What are some of the blessings that you expect to receive if you live a life of obedience, and what do you foresee would happen if you choose to disobey?

PRAYER: Thank God for His promise, and commit to choose God over everything else.

The Conquest Era (1)

Chapter 7 November 13

PRAYER: Start your reading with a prayer and ask God to calm your heart, open your eyes, so that you can understand His Word.

READ & MEMORIZE: Read Chapter 7 until the section before "Self-Test" (p. 62) and try to memorize the main points.

REVIEW & REFLECT: Review the major points of the day and reflect upon how God has given you victories in various areas of your life. Please list out some of these experiences:

PRAYER: Humbly come before God and ask Him to give you power to face the various battles ahead of you.

The Conquest Era (2)

Chapter 7 November 14

PRAYER: Start your reading with a prayer and ask God to calm your heart, open your eyes, so that you can understand His Word.

READ: Read and review the main points of Chapter 7 again.

SELF-TEST: Do the self-test on p. 62 and check to see if you are correct. Try to memorize the main points.

MEDITATION: Read and meditate on Joshua 1:9 —

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous.

Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged,
for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."

Meditate on the promise above; write down your worries and fears and cast them upon the Lord.

PRAYER: Commit your struggles and your future in God's hand and ask Him to carry you through.

The Judges Era (1)

Chapter 8 November 15

PRAYER: Start your reading with a prayer and ask God to calm your heart, open your eyes, so that you can understand His Word.

READ & MEMORIZE: Read Chapter 8 until the section before "Self-Test" (p. 68) and try to memorize the main points.

REVIEW & REFLECT: Review the major points of the day and reflect upon how you, as the Israelites, have often failed God in many ways. What kind of "cycles" do you usually go through? List out these cycles and think of why it is difficult for you to break them. Think of ways that you could rely on God's resources to break these cycles.

PRAYER: Ask God to help you break these "cycles" and commit to follow His Word.

The Judges Era (2)

Chapter 8 November 16

PRAYER: Start your reading with a prayer and ask God to calm your heart, open your eyes, so that you can understand His Word.

READ: Read and review the main points of Chapter 8 again.

SELF-TEST: Do the self-test on p. 68 and check to see if you are correct. Try to memorize the main points.

MEDITATION: Read and meditate on Judges 2:2-3 —

'2 'and you shall not make a covenant with the people of this land, but you shall break down their altars.' Yet you have disobeyed me. Why have you done this? 3 Now therefore I tell you that I will not drive them out before you; they will be thorns in your sides and their gods will be a snare to you."

Meditate on God's discipline on Israel, and recall some of the disciplines that you have experienced in the past. In addition, ponder on how God may discipline you if you willfully disobey Him.

PRAYER: Ask God for strength so that you could keep your commitment to God and be faithful to Him until the end.

The Kingdom Era (1)

Chapter 9 November 17

PRAYER: Start your reading with a prayer and ask God to calm your heart, open your eyes, so that you can understand His Word.

READ & MEMORIZE: Read Chapter 9 until the section before "Self-Test" (p. 74) and try to memorize the main points.

REVIEW & REFLECT: Review the major points of the day and reflect upon how righteousness was related to God's blessings in the Kingdom Era. Please list down some of the ways that you have been righteous in His eyes, as well as areas that you have been unrighteous.

PRAYER: Ask God to continue to empower you so that you could put off your unrighteousness and put on His righteousness.

The Kingdom Era (2)

Chapter 9 November 18

PRAYER: Start your reading with a prayer and ask God to calm your heart, open your eyes, so that you can understand His Word.

READ: Read and review the main points of Chapter 9 again.

SELF-TEST: Do the self-test on p. 74 and check to see if you are correct. Try to memorize the main points.

MEDITATION: Read and meditate on 1 Kings 9:4-5 —

"As for you, if you walk before me in integrity of heart and uprightness, as David your father did, and do all I command and observe my decrees and laws, ⁵ I will establish your royal throne over Israel forever, as I promised David your father when I said, 'You shall never fail to have a man on the throne of Israel.'

Meditate on the verse above and see if you are touched and convicted by any of the terms, phrases, or concepts. Reflect upon your own spiritual walk and recall how God has blessed you when you follow His commands.

PRAYER: Ask God to give you a heart of integrity and uprightness as you face the various challenges and temptations ahead.

The Exile Era (1)

Chapter 10 November 19

PRAYER: Start your reading with a prayer and ask God to calm your heart, open your eyes, so that you can understand His Word.

READ & MEMORIZE: Read Chapter 10 until the section before "Self-Test" (p. 81), and try to memorize the main points.

REVIEW & REFLECT: Review the major points of the day and reflect upon how God has preserved and encouraged His people even during exile. Recall and jot down how God has preserved and encouraged you during some of your "down times."

PRAYER: Thank God for His presence even in your darkest hours.

The Exile Era (2)

Chapter 10 November 20

PRAYER: Start your reading with a prayer and ask God to calm your heart, open your eyes, so that you can understand His Word.

READ: Read and review the main points of Chapter 10 again.

SELF-TEST: Do the self-test on p. 81 and check to see if you are correct. Try to memorize the main points.

MEDITATION: Read and meditate on Daniel 1:8 —

"But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way."

Meditate on Daniel's determination in going against the flow. Consider the various challenges and hardship that he had to go through with such conviction and decision. List some of the similar challenges that you have to face as you live as a Christian in today's culture.

PRAYER: Pray and ask God to sustain and to empower you as you determine not to defile yourself.

The Return Era (1)

Chapter 11 November 21

PRAYER: Start your reading with a prayer and ask God to calm your heart, open your eyes, so that you can understand His Word.

READ & MEMORIZE: Read Chapter 11 until the section before "Self-Test" (p. 87), try to memorize the main points.

REVIEW & REFLECT: Review the major points of the day and reflect upon how God, through Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah, rebuilt the temple, His people, and Jerusalem's city wall. In what ways does your life (both physical and spiritual) need to be rebuilt?

PRAYER: Pray and ask God to start rebuilding your private world.

The Return Era (2)

Chapter 11 November 22

PRAYER: Start your reading with a prayer and ask God to calm your heart, open your eyes, so that you can understand His Word.

READ: Read and review the main points of Chapter 11 again.

SELF-TEST: Do the self-test on p. 87 and check to see if you are correct. Try to memorize the main points.

MEDITATION: Read and meditate on Nehemiah 8:5-6 —

⁶ Ezra opened the book. All the people could see him because he was standing above them; and as he opened it, the people all stood up. ⁶ Ezra praised the LORD, the great God; and all the people lifted their hands and responded, 'Amen! Amen!' Then they bowed down and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground."

Meditate on how the Israelites respected God's Word and revered the Lord; how does that inspire and encourage you? Evaluate your devotional life and your worship. In what ways do you need to improve in these areas? Please write in the space below.

PRAYER: Pray and commit to bring a change to your spiritual life.

The Silence Era (1)

Chapter 12 November 23

PRAYER: Start your reading with a prayer and ask God to calm your heart, open your eyes, so that you can understand His Word.

READ & MEMORIZE: Read Chapter 12 until the section before "Self-Test" (p. 95) and try to memorize the main points.

REVIEW & REFLECT: Review the major points of the day and reflect upon how God has moved in the political, as well as the religious realms to prepare the world for the coming of the Messiah. Recall and record how God has been preparing you along with your environment, in order for you to encounter Him.

PRAYER: Thank God for the coming of the Messiah and all that He has done in your life.

The Silence Era (2)

Chapter 12 November 24

PRAYER: Start your reading with a prayer and ask God to calm your heart, open your eyes, so that you can understand His Word.

READ: Read and review the main points of Chapter 12 again.

SELF-TEST: Do the self-test on p. 95 and check to see if you are correct. Try to memorize the main points.

MEDITATION: Read and meditate on Daniel 2:21 —

"He changes times and seasons; He sets up kings and deposes them. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning."

Meditate on how God has everything under His control and makes all things work together for good for those who love Him. Recall how God has done it in your past, thus give God all your concerns and write them down in the space below.

PRAYER: Commit all your concerns to God and ask Him to help you learn the lesson of "Let Go & Let God."

The Poetic Books (1)

Chapter 13 November 25

PRAYER: Start your reading with a prayer and ask God to calm your heart, open your eyes, so that you can understand His Word.

READ: Read Chapter 13 until the paragraph before section "III. Expansion" (p. 104); you do not have to memorize the content.

REVIEW & REFLECT: Review the major points of the day and reflect upon how God could turn problems into poems, and suffering into songs. Along with that, try to meditate on Psalm 118:5-6 and write your reflections in the space below —

⁵ In my anguish I cried to the LORD, and he answered by setting me free.
⁶ The LORD is with me; I will not be afraid.
What can man do to me?

PRAYER: Cast your burdens upon the Lord and affirm your faith and reliance upon the Lord.

The Poetic Books (2)

Chapter 13 November 26

PRAYER: Start your reading with a prayer and ask God to calm your heart, open your eyes, so that you can understand His Word.

READ: Read pp. 104-105, do the self-test, and try to memorize the main points.

MEDITATION: The poetical books of the Old Testament contain more than just beautiful poems, but also wisdom. Read and meditate on Proverb 24:33-34 —

⁴³³ A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest—
³⁴ and poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man."

Reflect on how you manage your time, how you could better make use of your time, and how you would rearrange your schedule to prioritize.

PRAYER: Pray and ask God to help you manage your time well.

The Prophetical Books (1)

Chapter 14 November 27

PRAYER: Start your reading with a prayer and ask God to calm your heart, open your eyes, so that you can understand His Word.

READ & MEMORIZE: Read Chapter 14 until the section before "Self-Test" (p. 110), and try to memorize the main points.

REVIEW & REFLECT: Review the major points of the day and reflect upon how God has control over the past, as well as the future. In what ways could this truth help you face the unknown uncertainties of the future? Use the space below to write down your insights.

PRAYER: Commit your future to the Lord and invite Him to be the master of your life.

The Prophetical Books (2)

Chapter 14 November 28

PRAYER: Start your reading with a prayer and ask God to calm your heart, open your eyes, so that you can understand His Word.

READ: Read and review the main points of Chapter 14 again.

SELF-TEST: Do the self-test starting from p. 110 and check to see if you are correct. Try to memorize the main points.

MEDITATION: Read and meditate on 2 Peter 1:19 —

"And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts."

We are to pay attention to God's Word until the day of Christ's return when we see Him face to face. In what ways have you been "paying (or not paying) attention to" God's Word? Are you satisfied with the quality of your devotional life and your Bible reading habit? Why or why not? List down the kind of adjustments you need to make to improve it.

PRAYER: Commit to paying attention to God's Word and ask God to help you put your devotional plan into practice.

The Geography And Structure Of The New Testament (1)

Chapter 15 November 29

PRAYER: Start your reading with a prayer and ask God to calm your heart, open your eyes, so that you can understand His Word.

READ & MEMORIZE: Read Chapter 15 until the section before "Self-Test" (p. 120) and try to memorize the locations and the main points.

REVIEW & REFLECT: Review the major points of the day and reflect upon how God has sent His Son into the world to save us. With the map in front of you, picture how Jesus was born in Bethlehem, how He was raised in Nazareth, how He called His disciples by the Sea of Galilee, how He went to Samaria to minister to the woman by the well, and how He was sentenced to death in Jerusalem, along with whatever events that you could recall from memory. Reflect upon Jesus' humility, compassion, power, and sacrificial love then and even now for you.

PRAYER: Praise God and thank Him for sending Jesus into this world — to tread on dusty roads, to preach on stinky fishing boats, to travel under harsh weather, and to die a terrible death on the cross...in order to bring life to His people — to YOU!

Chapter 15 November 30

PRAYER: Start your reading with a prayer and ask God to calm your heart, open your eyes, so that you can understand His Word.

READ AND REVIEW: Read and review the main points of Chapter 15. Continue reading the rest of the chapter and do the review.

MEDITATION: Read and meditate on the following poem about Jesus by Dr. James Allan Francis (1864-1928):

"Here is a man who was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another village. He worked in a carpenter shop until He was thirty. Then for three years He was an itinerant preacher. He never owned a home. He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never had a family. He never went to college. He never put His foot inside a big city. He never traveled two hundred miles from the place He was born. He never did one of the things that usually accompany greatness. He had no credentials but Himself...

While still a young man, the tide of popular opinion turned against him.

His friends ran away. One of them denied Him.

He was turned over to His enemies. He went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed upon a cross between two thieves.

While He was dying His executioners gambled for the only piece of property He had on earth – His coat. When He was dead, He was laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend.

Nineteen long centuries have come and gone, and today He is a centerpiece of the human race and leader of the column of progress.

I am far within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, all the navies that were ever built; all the parliaments that ever sat and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth as powerfully as has that One Solitary Life."

PRAYER: Thank God for that One Solitary Life, though He stayed within 200 miles of His birthplace, His impact extends to the ends of the earth.

Monthly Reflection

Write down the overall spiritual insights that you have learned in your daily devotion this month:

Acknowledgments

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