

Understanding the Bible Beginner's Edition

Kelly McDonald, Jr.

**Understanding the Bible
Beginner's Edition**

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Introduction

What is the Bible? The Bible is a history of God's interactions with mankind. It details how the creator of all things plans to use us in His awesome plan. It shows His great mercy and grace in dealing with mankind from the very beginning. This book will guide you in your New Life as a believer in Jesus Christ. You will learn the daily lifestyle of a Christian and how to overcome many obstacles you face in your New Life. The Bible is an amazing book. It has guidance and revelation for all humans no matter your background or current situation. It has application for all time periods of human history – past, present, and future.

In this booklet, you will learn some important tips for helping you understand the Bible. The very first step to understanding the Bible is to pray and seek God. Ask God to open up the Bible to your understanding. Don't just try to learn it with human understanding. It takes the Holy Spirit of God to really understand the Bible.

As the Bible says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding" (Proverbs 3:5).

As Pastor Bill says, "The Bible is the greatest story never told." It is the greatest story because it details how an infinite God uses finite man to achieve God's infinite purposes. To think that a God who has everything He will ever need is actually interested in using us is an amazing thing to think about. The Bible is how we will learn God's dealings with mankind throughout history. God has always used one person or persons to be a light on earth.

I am passing on to you a series of things God has shown me over the years to help you understand how to get the most out of your Bible.

Chapter 1

Overview of the Bible

The Bible is also how we learn about daily living as a believer. I usually recommend an easy to read version like the New International Version or the New King James Version. There are also Bible apps for your phone that you can download to read. If you pick up an older version like the King James, you may not be able to understand what it is saying. This may discourage you.

The Bible has 66 separate volumes or books within it. Each of these separate books has verses, which are numbered. This will help you when you are trying to go back to a specific place in the Bible. The Bible is divided into 9 parts. I have listed every book of the Bible below as well as the different parts it is divided into:

- 1) **The Torah** – Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy
- 2) **The History Books** – Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther
- 3) **The Wisdom Books** – Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon
- 4) **The Major Prophets** – Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, and Daniel
- 5) **The Minor Prophets** – Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zachariah, and Malachi
- 6) **Gospels** – Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Acts
- 7) **Letters of Paul** – Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon

- 8) General Letters – Hebrews, James, I Peter, II Peter, I John, II John, III John, and Jude**
9) Final Prophecy - Revelation

In the front part of your Bible, you will see a page that looks like this:

the old testament	
Genesis	3
Exodus	53
Leviticus	92
Numbers	121
Deuteronomy	162
Joshua	199
Judges	222
Ruth	245
1 Samuel	249
2 Samuel	279
1 Kings	306
2 Kings	336
1 Chronicles	365
2 Chronicles	397
Ezra	430
Nehemiah	441
Esther	456
Job	467
Psalms	499
Proverbs	583
Ecclesiastes	613
Song of Songs	622
Isaiah	631
Jeremiah	695
Lamentations	756
Ezekiel	763
Daniel	813
Hosea	828
Joel	838
Amos	842
Obadiah	850
Jonah	852
Micah	854
Nahum	860
Habakkuk	863
Zephaniah	866
Haggai	870
Zechariah	872
Malachi	881

the new testament	
Matthew	889
Mark	922
Luke	943
John	977
Acts	1003
Romans	1037
1 Corinthians	1052
2 Corinthians	1065
Galatians	1074
Ephesians	1079
Philippians	1084
Colossians	1088
1 Thessalonians	1092
2 Thessalonians	1095
1 Timothy	1097
2 Timothy	1101
Titus	1104
Philemon	1106
Hebrews	1107
James	1118
1 Peter	1122
2 Peter	1126
1 John	1129
2 John	1133
3 John	1134
Jude	1135
Revelation	1137

Some people divide the Bible up into the “Old Testament” and the “The New Testament”. These are labels added by men and are not inspired by God. The Bible is one testament of one God redeeming one creation through One Plan. Sometimes I refer to them as Old Testament and New Testament only because this is a common way to refer to them.

This page in your Bible will show you what page number you can find each book of the Bible. Below, I have summarized what you will find in each 9 sections of the Bible:

You will learn in great detail all the events that I summarized above. In the Torah, you will learn about the early history of mankind, Abraham, and the early history of the nation of Israel. You will also learn about daily life for humans on earth.

In the history books, you will learn much about the history of Israel. You will learn both the good things and the bad things they did as a nation. You will see both the rewards and punishments of this nation as they either behaved or disobeyed the daily lifestyle God set forth in the Torah.

In the prophetic books, you will learn about God’s appeal to humans to obey the Torah. They contain some details in the Bible that help us better understand God’s daily living. They contain some history, but mainly revelations God gave to the people to help them return to Him. Furthermore, you will learn about prophecies that relate to specific nations on planet earth.

In the Gospels, you will learn about the life and ministry of Jesus and how that ministry was continued just after his death by His 12 Apostles. The book of Acts will show us some of the trials and issues the early church had as they spread the Word of God.

The Apostle Paul was a special Apostle sent to mainly Gentile churches. The Letters of Paul will explain specific situations and teachings in the early church. They are written to specific churches in a specific city or area. They show us how to handle

problems in the church and they further elaborate on the Torah's instruction for our lives.

The General Letters are similar to Paul's letters, but are addressed to broader groups of people.

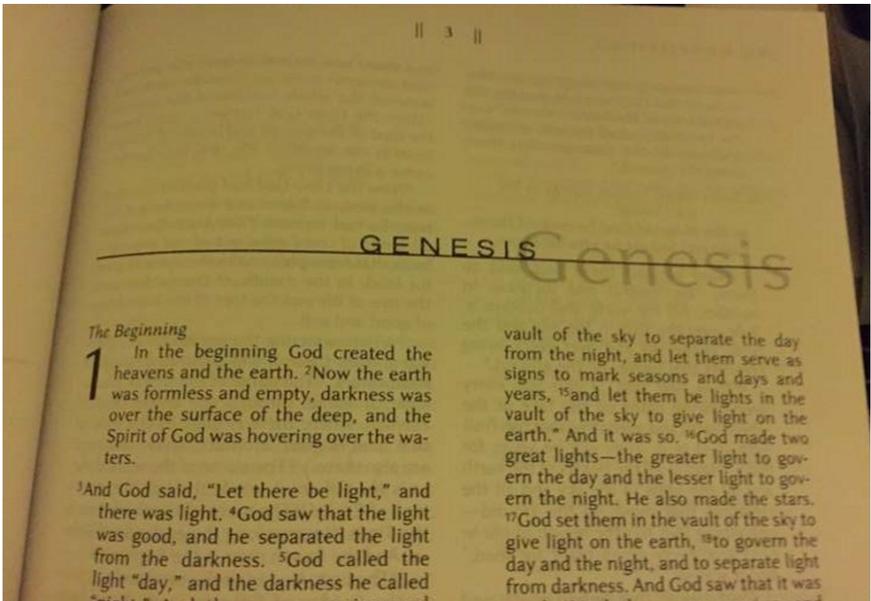
The book of Revelation is the final prophecy of the Bible, summing up all of the other prophecies and giving us further detail as to future events that will happen on earth.

Chapter 2

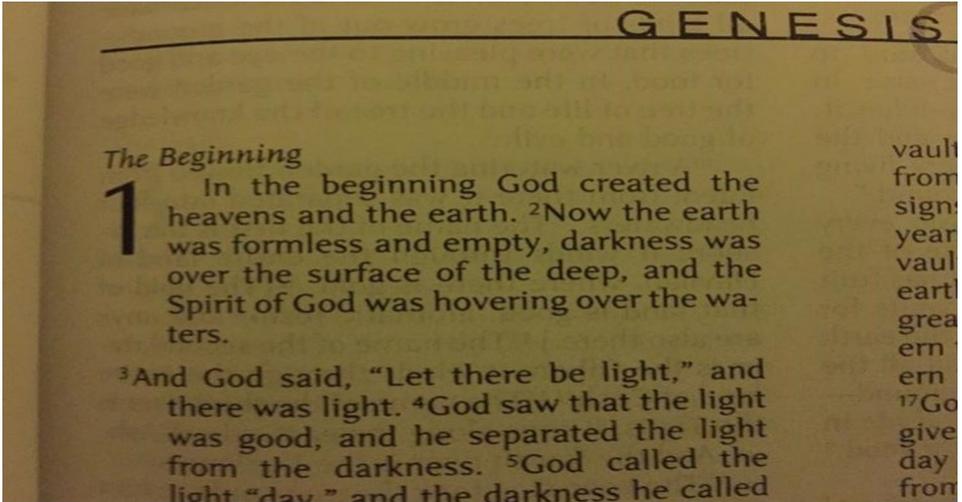
Reading the Bible

This will be a brief chapter teaching you to understand how to read the Bible on a very basic level. Open to the first book of the Bible, which is called Genesis.

You will see something like the following:



When you get to the beginning of a new book of the Bible, you will see the name of the book at the top. In this case, you can see Genesis at the top. Let's look a little closer (picture on the next page)



You will see a big number in bold on the left. In this case, that is a big **1**

This is the **CHAPTER** you are reading in. You will also see little numbers.

For instance, the very first part of Genesis Chapter 1 reads:

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. **2** Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

The little **2** that you see beside the words “Now the earth”. This is the **VERSE** of that Chapter.

When people refer to the Bible, they will type something like this: Genesis 1:2. This is a short way of referring to Genesis Chapter 1 Verse 2. Sometimes, you might see Genesis 1:2-4. This means Genesis Chapter 1 verses 2 through 4. This means starting to read in verse 2 and reading all the way until the end of verse 4.

You will see me quote the Bible in this manner in this booklet and in most Bible-related works.

Chapter 3

Read the Bible Through Every Year

The first step in your journey towards understanding the Bible is to establish a daily discipline of reading the Bible. I usually recommend at least 30 minutes a day reading through the Bible. This will really help you “download” the knowledge of God into your mind and spirit.

Where should you start reading the Bible? Some people think you should start with the first book of the New Testament, which is called Matthew. The New Testament is only about 33% or one-third of the Bible. Would you ever go to a movie, pay for a ticket, and only get to watch the last part of the movie? Absolutely not!

You should start reading the Bible with the very first book of the entire Bible, the book of Genesis. The Bible tells us that God declares the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:10). This means when we understand the first part of the Bible, the rest will make a lot more sense to us. The entire plan of God will make more sense because we will understand the entire story.

As of the writing of this booklet, I have read through the Bible 8 complete times. I have learned more about the Bible and God doing this than any other method of study. It sounds simple, and it is – but it works.

The goal is to read the Bible from Genesis all the way through the end of Revelation at least once every year. We start the yearly cycle from Feast of Tabernacles to Feast of Tabernacles, which usually falls in Late September or October. If you can read it through more than one time in a year, that is great! However, keep your goal simple. One time through in a year.

The first time you go through your Bible, you need to read it like a story book. Don't try to understand every detail. Just try to piece together the general story line. You really want to absorb what it is saying and just take it all in. Throughout your year, you will be amazed at how God will speak to you as you read the Bible. No matter what part of the Bible you are reading in at a given point in the year, you will find something fresh for your situation.

You might feel frustrated your first time through, but don't worry about it. There will be times that you don't feel or think you are getting anything out of reading the Word. Read it anyways. This is where your faith comes into play. You must have faith that God is going to help you understand the Bible. You must trust that He will "download" the Word into your heart and mind. This is why I pray before I read the Bible. Prayer is my request to God. I believe He answers prayers. Once I have prayed, I know that reading my Bible will be effective. He is faithful, and He will do it. Have faith that God will quicken or instantly bring the Word into your mind when you need it.

I always pray before I read the Bible. I pray the following:

"Lord, I ask that you would please write your Word on my heart and mind. Quicken your Word into my heart and mind whenever I need to know it, share it with someone else, or whatever other purpose you might have. Let me not go through your word, but let it go through me and manifest in my life."

When you read the Bible, always have a notebook handy. God will speak to you as you read the Bible. Your first time through the Bible you will notice certain Scriptures that really apply to your life at that time. Write them down and date the entry. As time goes on, these entries will be precious to you.

Your second time through the Bible, you will begin to make connections between different parts of the Bible. Moreover, you will begin to see themes and patterns. Your third time will deepen

these patterns. These get deeper and deeper each subsequent time you read through the Bible. Always write down the things that really stick out to you. You will need them later on! The awesome thing about God is that He prepares us for trials and tough times before they ever come. One way He does this is by reading His Word.

Many people say that they cannot hear from God. When you read your Bible consistently, then God will always speak to you. His Word is a spoken message to you for whatever your situation, trial, background, or age.

When is the best time to read your Bible? The best time to read the Bible is when you first wake up. The devil will try to beat you out of your Bible reading in the morning. We are in a spiritual warfare against our enemy, Satan the Devil. He is always trying to throw you off course.

You fight the devil in your Bible reading by simply reading it. You will keep the devil off track if you get your Bible reading in. While you schedule 30 minutes every day in the morning, just make sure to get 30 minutes in. You may have to get it in 10 minutes at a time throughout the day or 5 minutes at a time. Just get it in. In a war, there is always back and forth fighting. The goal is that we keep fighting to get that 30 minutes a day in.

This takes discipline, but it will change your life if you follow through and do it. I know it has completely transformed my life.

Chapter 4

Studying the Bible - Beginners

In addition to daily Bible reading 30 minutes a day where you are just reading the Bible through verse by verse and chapter by chapter, you also want to set aside a separate time period to actually study the Bible. You want to schedule specific times either daily or during the week to do this.

One way to do this is to study a specific subject. Let's choose one subject in the Bible: The Sabbath. One way to study the Bible through this method is by getting a concordance (there is one specific one called a Strong's concordance) and looking up the word "Sabbath". There are others available. Talk to someone in Church Leadership about a good tool to use for this purpose. A concordance has a list of every verse in the Bible that a specific word or subject is discussed.

You can also use online Bible search engines like www.biblegateway.com and search a specific subject. You just type in the word or words related to that subject and it will bring up a list of verses. There are apps for your phone as well as computer programs like E-Sword (which I highly recommend).

When you study a specific subject, you can always search for multiple words related to that subject. For the Sabbath, you would also want to search "seventh day" or "seven day". The word seven will generate a few more verses on this subject than the word "Sabbath" alone.

Let's take another study subject: The Baptism of the Holy Spirit. We could search for "Baptism", "fill", or "full" as it relates to God's Spirit. The Baptism is called the "infilling of God's Spirit"

or being “full of God’s Spirit”.

When you search, compile a list of scriptures on a specific subject. You should do this by writing in your Bible study notebook or typing them out. You don’t have to write down every word of a verse, but the actual reference itself.

For instance, let’s say you compiled these scriptures for Sabbath (compiling method):

Exodus 16 verses 23 through 29 (the abbreviated form of this is Exodus 16:23-29)

Exodus 20:8-11

Exodus 31:13-17

Matthew 12:8

Let’s say this is your list of verses on the Sabbath. Obviously, there are many more instances of the word Sabbath. I made a short list to give an example. After you have compiled a list of verses, look up every one of them and write down specific things you learned.

As an example:

Exodus 16:23-29 - God used the manna to show the Israelites when the Sabbath was.

Exodus 20:8-11 - God said not to work on the Sabbath and for our family not to work, but rest. This is how the day is kept holy.

Exodus 31:13-17 - God says that the Sabbath is how we know who the True Creator God is.

Deuteronomy 5:12-15 – Same as Exodus 20:8-11

Matthew 12:8 - This tells us that Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath

Let’s say a verse simply says the same thing. Simply write – same as “other verse”. I have an example above. In this first phase, you are simply compiling a list of scriptures and writing a brief description of what you learn from those verses. Look at all the different things we learned just from four verses.

Psychology was one of my minor studies in college. I took a class called “Educational Psychology”. We learned how the brain works and how we train the brain. One of the things I learned was that the brain learns things easier when it can attach a piece of information to something you already know. This creates a web of knowledge that will hold up over time.

Compiling a list of scriptures in the way I have presented above will help you achieve this. Your brain will connect one verse to another because the subject matter of those verses is the same. This will assist you in remembering Bible verses.

Let’s use the example listed above. As you study the Bible in this manner, you will eventually remember that there are multiple instances of the word Sabbath in Exodus. As you go back to those references, you will remember the chapters better. The more you study a subject, the deeper these memories become engrained. You will eventually be able to remember chapter and verse. This reinforces other verses on the Sabbath you have studied. This creates the web of knowledge I discussed earlier.

The combination of prayer before you study the Bible and the method I am sharing with you will bring a powerful “quickening” of the Scripture to your mind. Prayer is spiritual and the compiling method is natural.

God had shown me to study this way before I took the educational psychology class. However, God allowed me to be in that class so I could share the natural aspect of studying the Bible with you.

When you study the Bible, something else to remember is that Context is important to understanding the meaning of a verse. Context is simply reading a Bible verse in comparison to the verses around it and the subjects as repeated in the Bible. There are five **basic** types of context in the Bible. I have listed them below with specific examples:

- 1) Within Verse**
- 2) In Surrounding Verses**
- 3) In Chapter**
- 4) In Book or Letter**
- 5) In the Entire Bible**

1) Within Verse — This method is reading the entire content of a specific verse. It would be easy to quote half a verse to teach the Bible, but the entire verse can reveal the complete truth to us.

Example: In the King James Version of the Bible, the first part of Romans 8:1 reads, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus...” I have often heard the first part of this verse quoted. However, the second half of the verses reads, “...who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” The full context teaches us that we stay out of condemnation by not living after the desires of our flesh.

2) In Surrounding Verses—This is reading a verse in the Bible based upon the surrounding verses.

Example: “8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast.” (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Many people use these verses to say that there are no works to being a Christian at all. The next verse gives us a fuller understanding of this context. The next verse reads: “10 for we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

Now, we get a fuller picture of faith. Works do not save us, but there are good works that will manifest in a Christians’ life because they have faith in Christ.

3) In Chapter– Sometimes a specific verse references something from earlier or later in the chapter.

In Matthew 10:18, Jesus said that, “On my account you will be brought **before governors and kings as witnesses to them** and to the Gentiles.” Who are the “them” that the Apostles would be witnesses to? In Matthew 10:6, Jesus sent the 12 Apostles out to the lost sheep of Israel. Earlier in the chapter, we learn the “them” to which Jesus was sending them to. They were sent to the lost sheep of Israel. The chapter bears witness to the context.

4) In Book – There are some verses and words used that have a context throughout a book. For instance, one of the themes of the book of Acts is the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

In Acts 18:24-26, a man named Apollos was ministering to a group of people. In Acts 18:25, it is written, “He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervor and taught about Jesus accurately, though **he knew only the Baptism of John.**” In verse 26, the Bible records that Priscilla and Aquila invited this man of God to their home to explain to him the way of God more adequately. Apollos **only** knew the Baptism of John. This word only is an important word for God to mention. Apollos only had the baptism in water; he needed to learn about another baptism. The very next story in the book of Acts is Acts chapter 19 where Paul travels to Ephesus. In this town, Paul encounters people who have not been baptized in the Holy Spirit. He then prays for them to be filled with the Spirit, and they speak in tongues. The mention of Apollos only having the Baptism of John at the end of Acts chapter 18, and then Paul praying for people to receive the Baptism in the Spirit at the beginning of Acts 19 is not coincidental! The Bible is inspired; God is connecting these verses for us.

Don’t let chapter endings and beginning keep you from connecting them together. Too many times, we separate the verses in one chapter from another. As you can see from the example

above, we can miss out on valuable insight if we do this. For instance, Jeremiah 30:4-6 discuss a prophetic time period called “the Time of Jacob’s Trouble”. This prophecy goes the entire length of Chapter 30 and the entirety of chapter 31. Learn to connect chapters together and look at the book as a whole.

Look at how verses connect to each other within surrounding chapters and the context of an entire book.

5) In Bible – Sometimes things can be looked at through the scope of the entire Bible to help us understand.

Example: Some think that people in the Old Testament did not have the Holy Spirit. They think it was only done in the New Testament. When we read the entire Bible, we see that God has had people in every era of time with the infilling of God’s Spirit.

Exodus 31:2-3

“2 ‘See, I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, 3 and **I have filled him with the Spirit of God**, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills...’ ”

Acts 2:1-4

“1 When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. 2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.”

I certainly hoped you learned some new insight by looking at the different contexts of verses in the Bible. You may be asking yourself: How do I learn when to apply these different contexts?

There are some different tools to help you learn the information I mentioned above. These are tips to help you get more out of your Bible. Simply reading the entire verse and the verses around it will help you understand the meaning. Again, prayer is important in this process. The God who authored the book will help you understand it.

Conclusion

I hope you enjoyed this booklet. I know these study tips have been tremendous in helping me understand the Bible over the years. I am imparting them unto you through this booklet. With this precious knowledge downloaded, God will quicken these things to you when you need them. He will guide you in when and how to use them. You will be equipped to really fight this world and the devil. It will help you reach the fullness of the stature of Christ (Ephesians 3:19-20).

Please continue your journey to learn more about the Bible in the next booklet in this series: Studying the Bible: Advanced Edition.

All books and sermon sets are gift for donation!

Order yours today by mail, PO Box 10334, Jackson TN 38308; email, hungryheartsmen@aol.com; or by phone (731) 736-1055.

US in Bible Prophecy

Many people wonder if countries such as the United States can be found in Bible Prophecy. If God mentions small countries like Ethiopia in end-time prophecies, then how could He miss out on the greatest country on earth, the United States? In this 5-CD sermon set, learn the identity of the United States in Bible Prophecy. Did you know that prophecies about the United States were first made in the book of Genesis? Did you know that the United States is actually one of the Northern "lost" tribes of Israel? Find out the Biblical evidence showing that the United States is one of the tribes of Israel and learn what will happen to the United States in these last days!

Yours for a suggested donation of \$25

Holy Spirit and Fire

There has always been a Holy Fire burning in the hearts of God's Holy people. It has burned down through the ages to our present time. It will give us strength today if we will let it. This fire is called the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, and it will quench the deepest longings of every human. This fire will produce spiritual fruit and activate spiritual gifts in our lives. It will set us apart to God Almighty. Learn about the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and how it will change your life!

Yours for a suggested donation of only \$9

HUNGRY HEARTS MINISTRIES

Is Your Heart Hungry For The Lord?

The purpose of Hungry Hearts Ministries is to teach Christians how to LIVE according to the way of life taught in the Law of God, and to BAPTIZE them in the Holy Spirit, so they can WORSHIP the Living God both in Spirit and in Truth. We accomplish this with a five point outreach: a local service, a Feast of Tabernacles Celebration, a weekly message ministry, books on our purpose, and missions overseas.

We are a Ministry dedicated to serve the God of Israel. Too many Christian organizations are focused around men. It takes men and women to serve God, we just need to change the focus from us to Him. Our purpose and our outreach is focused on bringing people to Him. That is, to God our Father and to His Son, (Yeshua) Jesus Christ. We live by His laws, because he told us to live that way. We accept His son as our Savior because, Jesus paid for our sins with His death on the cross. We want the fullness of His Spirit, because it is the power of God living in us. We want Him and all of Him that we can have. We worship God because it is the whole duty of mankind. We worship God because He has redeemed us to Himself. We worship God because we know Him.

We are a people who are hungry for more of God. We are sick and tired of man-made church. We want to feel His Spirit stir within us. We are focused on the real God to help us with our real needs in our real lives. We are hungry for His Presence, we are thirsty for His Spirit, and we are willing to offer Him our lives.

Meet the Author

Kelly McDonald Jr. is an ordained Evangelist at Hungry Hearts Ministries in Jackson, TN. For 21 years, Kelly attended Trinity Baptist Church in Bemis, TN, where he was saved in 1992. While at Trinity, a small independent Baptist church, Kelly learned boldness for the Kingdom of God and that being a Christian is an all or nothing experience. In June 2006, Kelly was called to his first ministry, going door to door in the Bemis community and inviting people to church. In September 2006, Kelly was called to begin a Christian men's group at his then college, Lambuth University. In February 2007, Kelly was called to preach. Less than a month later, he became introduced to Hungry Hearts Ministries.

Since becoming a member of Hungry Hearts, Kelly has taken on many roles to further the ministry's work, from going door-to-door to pass out booklets, preaching, administering the prison ministry, teaching Bible Studies, and starting churches. Due to his service in the ministry, he was ordained a Deacon during the Feast of Pentecost on May 31st, 2009. His spiritual growth and desire to serve God led to his ordination as an Evangelist during the Feast of Pentecost on May 25th, 2012.

Kelly has written for a local Christian magazine, *The Christian to Christian Connection*, and for the international Sabbatarian magazine, *The Sabbath Sentinel*. He currently writes for and serves as the Editor for the Ministry's magazine, *Pursuit*. Kelly has written five books on how to live a holy life. Kelly graduated *summa cum laude* from Lambuth University in Jackson, TN in 2009. He earned a Bachelor of Science with a double major in Political Science and Sociology with a minor in Legal Studies. As a Torah Observant/Spirit Filled minister, Kelly has spoken at several different congregations in four different states, and is available to speak at your church upon request.

The Bible is God's love letter to mankind. In it, we learn how He plans to use us despite our downfalls. This booklet will help you understand the Bible on a very basic level. This will help you later when you are trying to dig out something deeper. These simple tips will transform your view of the Bible and your walk with God.



Kelly McDonald, Jr. is an ordained Evangelist at Hungry Hearts Ministries in Jackson, TN. Kelly writes for the international Sabbatarian magazine, *The Sabbath Sentinel*. He also writes and serves as the Editor for the ministry's magazine, *Pursuit*. Kelly graduated *summa cum laude* from Lambuth University, where he earned a Bachelor of Science with a double major in Political Science and Sociology with a minor in Legal Studies. Kelly has been preaching for seven years and is available to speak at your church upon request.