

Welcome to the Bible-Reading Coach podcast. My name is Karl Vaters, I will be here to help you read through the entire Bible in 52 weeks. I've been a pastor for over 40 years, and I've taught from the Bible 1000s of times. And I've also done several extensive in depth series on the entire Bible. And in those series, I don't just cover the content of the Bible, but I talk about the structure of it as well. Because when we understand the structure of the Bible, then we know how each passage fits into the overall story arc of Scripture. And I'll be using that experience throughout this podcast to help you get through the next 52 weeks and understand the Bible more clearly than maybe you've ever understood before. I also teach other pastors through my books, my seminars, and the *Can This Work In A Small Church?* podcast. You can find all of that at my website at KarlVaters.com. Now, as a pastor and as a pastor to pastors, I teach with a regular reader in mind. In fact, my aim is to help the person who feels lost or intimidated by the Bible, feel more at home with it by making it not just understandable, but approachable. This episode is a short introduction, to tell you all about the podcast, and how to use it to make the most of your journey through God's word. So whether you're a beginner or a longtime Bible reader, this podcast is here to help you in your next Bible reading journey. Mostly though, it's for people who've wanted to read through the Bible. And maybe you've even made a New Year's resolution about it. But you've never made it past the books of Genesis or Exodus, we want to help you get all the way through to the book of Revelation this time. And we're going to do so by using three basic principles. We want to help you make your Bible reading journey simple, understandable, and rewarding. First of all, let's make it simple.

So each week, we're going to give you a podcast of about 10 or 15 minutes each. And in that podcast, we'll introduce you to the passage for that week, we'll tell you what to look for. And we'll give you an idea of where it fits into the overall Bible. We'll go through from the book of Genesis to Revelation, the way it's laid out, in any Bible, you're going to pick up or that you'll find on any app that you might want to use. The Bible is generally chronological. Genesis talks about the beginning of things, and Revelation talks about the end of things, but it isn't always chronological. So as we go through we'll help you understand what section of the Bible you're in, so you can understand where it fits in the chronology. Also, we're going to do this weekly and not daily. And here's why. Reading through the Bible every single day is best. But for a whole lot of us part of the reason that we flame out when we decide we want to read through the Bible is because you're going from not reading at all, to reading it every single day. And going from zero to daily is too big a jump for most people to make. If you want to read through the entire Bible in a year, the Bible is about 1000 pages long, which means about three pages a day, that's about 20 pages a week, when you break it down that way, it doesn't sound all that intimidating. But again, if you haven't been reading it, and now you go to read it every single day, even if it's just three pages, it can be a bit much, and then you miss three or four days and you start feeling like you're behind. By breaking it down into a weekly reading, where you can miss a couple of days, and you can still make it up. It's easier to make it up on a week by week basis for most people who haven't been reading through the Bible a whole lot. So that's one of the ways we want to make it simple. By making it weekly, you can find the daily breakdown by going to KarlVaters.com/Bibleoutline if that's how you want to read it. But the podcast, we'll be taking you through it on a weekly basis. Another way to make your Bible reading simple as this, you can listen to it instead of reading it. There are several ways to do this right now that are very easy. In fact, many of them are free, you can go to Biblestudytools.com, the YouVersion app, biblica.com

Faithcomesbyhearing.com and several others and all of those links will be in the show notes. If you go there, every single one of them has a listen option for free so that you can listen to the Bible as you're driving to and from work or while you're doing your daily chores. This is especially helpful for people who are not big readers, but who do want to understand the Bible better. And this is not a secondary way of going through the Bible. Because for most of history, the people who knew the Bible heard it read by others instead of reading it for themselves. In fact, the Bible was written at a time with the expectation that the people who would be hearing it would in fact be hearing it and not reading it for themselves. So listening to the Bible is just as valuable as reading it for yourself. If you miss a week, if you miss a month, if you miss more, pick up where you left off, don't try to make up for lost time. We want to make this as simple as possible. So that's the first principle we want to make it simple. Second principle is this. We want to help make the Bible understandable for you. There's no sense reading it if you don't understand what you're reading. Now, we realize that you're never going to understand at all, the Bible is so rich and so deep and has so much in it, that every single time you read it, you'll discover new things in it. And that's one of the great things about reading the Bible. But we do want to help you understand more through this reading than you understood before you did this reading. So each week, I'm going to show you what to look for in the passage for that week, I'm going to help to explain ancient ideas for modern minds. We're going to talk about how to translate eternal principles, from an era of bartering and camels, to our era of smartphones and satellites. And how do we take the eternal principles from one and apply them in the other day, there are a couple of keys to making the Bible understandable.

The first key is this, you need to pick the translation that's right for you. For most people in the English speaking world, this is probably going to not mean using what we call the King James Version of the Bible, the one with all these 1000 of "thee's" and "thou's". It's a great Bible, it has done so much value to the world. But it's simply hard for most of us to read. And the great news for that is this, the Bible was not written that way. The Bible wasn't written in English, the Old Testament was written in Hebrew, the New Testament was written in Greek. And any English translation you pick up is in fact a translation from those other languages. So reading a new translation is not reading a less-than Bible, it's simply reading a more understandable Bible. Now, finding the right translation is easier now than it's ever been before. So go to a Bible app like YouVersion. And when you go there, go to Genesis one, or go to one of the Gospels like Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John, and read it through in several of the translations that they have there. Just read a few verses and see how it feels to you. One of the keys that you want is use a translation that has the word translation or version in it. You probably don't want to read through a paraphrase. The Message and the Living Bible are paraphrases, they're helpful for certain things, but they're not quite as accurate. So you want something that has a good balance of understandability, and accuracy. And most of the time, that's going to be a translation that has the word translation, or version in the title. So pick a translation that's right for you. That's the first key to making the Bible understandable. The second key to making the Bible understandable, is to realize that the Bible is a library more than it is a book. So when you open up your Bible, imagine walking into a physical library with multiple volumes on multiple shelves. The Bible has sections in it, just like a library has sections in it. In a library, the poetry books are all together. In the Bible, the poetry books are all together. In the Bible, the prophecy books are together, the biography books are together, the history books together. And as we go through

these different sections of the Bible, I'll let you know which section we're in, and how you read that section differently than others. What does that mean? Well think about it. If you were to go to a library and pick up a poetry book and pick up a history book and pick up a science book, you wouldn't read the three of them in the same way, you understand that poetry and science and history have different rules in the way that they're read. What's the same way in the Bible, we don't read the poetry books the same way we read the prophecy books, or the same way that we read the biography books. So I'll walk you through that as it happens. Also, you're going to, we're going to be spending more time on some segments of the Bible than others. Every single part of the Bible is equally inspired by God. But it's not all equally applicable to our lives. For instance, about half the Bible 47% To be exact, is narratives or story. So the stories are easier to understand, and they're going to be more familiar to us. That means the other half of the Bible is not narrative, it's not story, it's going to be prophecies, or it's going to be poetry, or it's going to be lists of laws or of genealogy. There's even major sections about how to construct the Ark of the Covenant and the tabernacle in the wilderness. All of these are important, all of them are helpful, all of them are inspired by God. But quite frankly, reading several chapters on how exactly they constructed the tabernacle in the wilderness doesn't quite have the same application to our lives today as reading about the story of Jesus' life. So some weeks like at the beginning of Genesis, we're going to give you very little to read. So you can spend some time in that and get more out of it. On other weeks, like your Leviticus or Deuteronomy and Chronicles, I'm going to walk you through how to scan through long sections of them to get the meat out of them without getting bogged down in the details of them. So the entire outline is in the shownotes and as we've said already at KarlVaters.com/Bibleoutline. The third way that we want to help you walk through this in a simple way is that we want to make the Bible rewarding. First of all we need to understand reading the Bible is its own reward. But let's be honest, when you first start, it's hard to feel that reward. So each week, what we're going to do is we're going to give you some things to look for. In the weeks where the passages are a little bit more difficult to understand, we're going to make it like a treasure hunt, or like, Where's Waldo, we're going to give you something to look for little treasures to find so that you can make it through and understand what you're reading. We're always going to tell you how each passage fits into the narrative or the overall story arc of the Bible. I will coach you through that because that is, quite frankly, the easiest way to understand where you are. And the way to get the most out of it, is to see how it fits into the entire story arc of the Bible. So understanding and application will always be our goal. And in fact, that's our ultimate reward, to understand God's word and to be able to apply it to our lives. So if you're a follower of Jesus, who's tried and failed before in reading the entire Bible through our plan is that this time, you'll finish. On the other hand, if you're here because you don't know much about the Bible, or the Christian faith, and you're wanting to hear a little bit from a Christian about why this book means so much to us. We welcome you. I hope that this will be a helpful first step in understanding what the Bible says why this particular collection of ancient texts is such an essential part of the life and faith of billions of people, and hopefully will inspire you to dig even deeper on your own. I'm Karl Vaters and I would love to be your Bible-Reading Coach.