



How Do You Find Verses in the Bible?

“Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the word of truth.” (2 Timothy 2:15b, NLT)

Suppose you were given a computer, a musical instrument or a video game. If you wanted to learn how to use your gift correctly and quickly, you would read the instruction book or get someone to teach you. To learn to be a Christian, God has provided an instruction book and a teacher. Your instruction book is the Bible, and your teacher is the Holy Spirit (you will learn more about him in future devotionals).

The first thing you will want to do is to learn how to use your Bible – either the *Student New Testament* or your own Bible. The *Student New Testament* has many additional articles that will help you understand what you read. Through his Word, God will teach you about himself and everything you need to know about how to live the Christian life. If you have never read or studied the Bible, it can be very overwhelming as you attempt to find the different books, chapters, and verses referred to in these devotionals. However, if you are familiar with the Bible and can find things easily, this will be a review. You may even discover something new!

The Testaments

The Bible is divided into two sections: The Old Testament (OT) and The New Testament (NT). The word testament means covenant or agreement. All 39 books of the Old Testament were written before Jesus came to earth. The 27 books of the New Testament were written after Jesus came to earth and ascended back to heaven. If you only have the *Student New Testament* or similar version, you will want to get a copy of the entire Bible as soon as possible.

The books of the Bible

In the front of your Bible, find the “Contents” page. The entire Bible lists the Old and New Testament books. The *Student New Testament* lists only the New Testament books. Look in the front of your Bible at the “Contents” and read the names of each one. Don’t worry about the correct pronunciation. Notice that sometimes a book is divided into two or even three books – for example, 1 (First) and 2 (Second) Corinthians and 1, 2, and 3 John. Using the list of contents, find the first and last books of the Old Testament – Genesis and Malachi. Now find the first and last books of the New Testament – Matthew and Revelation.

Hold your entire Bible together and open to the middle. Did it open to the book of Psalms? It should unless you have a Bible with lots of notes in the front or back. Now hold the books of Psalms and Revelation together and open to the middle. Did it open to Matthew? If you are using only the New Testament, open the Bible to the middle. Did it open to the book of Acts? If not, try again.

The chapters and verses

Originally, the manuscripts and Bibles did not have chapters and verses. These were added later to help you find specific passages and verses. Open your New Testament to the book of John (use your “Contents”). Look for the large number at the top of the page. This is the chapter number. Sometimes the first chapter is not numbered. If not, look for the large “2” in the next chapter. The small numbers are the numbers of the verses. How many chapters are there in Matthew? How many verses are there in chapter 1? Do you see how easy it is to find any verse if you know the name of the book, the chapter number and the verse number?

How do you find a specific verse? You have to know the “reference” or “address.” A reference would be written this way: John 3:16. John is the name of the book; the three tells you what chapter in John and the 16 tells you what verse. Would you look up John 3:16 and read it? If the reference of more than one verse is given, it would look like this: John 3:16-18. But suppose the verses skip around within a chapter? It would be written like this: John 3:16, 20, 24. There are occasions when only part of a verse is to be read, and it would be written like this: John 3:16a or John 3:16b, indicating the first or last part of the verse.

Practice looking up the following verses and read them (all in the New Testament):

John 10:28

Hebrews 13:5b

Philippians 4:6, 7

Acts 1:9-11

Matthew 7:12

1 Corinthians 13:13

Did you find them all? Congratulations! It will become easier and easier. **Practice is the key!** If you want to learn more quickly, memorize the books of the Bible in their order.

The book to treasure

God speaks to you through the Bible. He tells you all about who he is, who you are and his wonderful plan for your life. He tells you how deeply he loves you and gives you promises, comfort and hope. He teaches you how to live to please him, how to be successful and how to live in peace and be full of joy. There is no other book like it. You will want to work as faithfully to learn his Word as you would to learn how to use a computer or to play a musical instrument. The Bible is your greatest treasure!

Attitude Check:

- How would you rate your attitude toward learning new things?

Explore:

- Perhaps you wonder, “How does God speak to me through the Bible?” Try this. Look up John 10:28-29 and read. Read again and make it personal by putting your name at the beginning and saying “you” instead of “them” and “they.” “*I give them [your name] eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them away from me, for my Father has given them to me, and he is more powerful than anyone else. So no one can take them from me.*” Did you listen to what God said to you? **You can never lose eternal life!** Yes, that promise is for you! Now look up Hebrews 13:5b for another great promise. Don’t forget to put your name in the verse! Would you try to memorize these short verses? Always memorize the reference along with the verse.
- Read, “Study the Bible” (in the front of the *Student New Testament*.)

Talking with God:

- Thank you for your promises to me in your Word. Increase my faith to believe your promises and to trust you to fulfill them.