

A special Bible reading challenge for our time of isolation ...

We often find it frustrating when circumstances beyond our control disrupt our regular daily habits, but that's often the best time to make some changes and to pick up new habits. I think many of you will have a little extra time on your hands and I would like to suggest that you try something new. Many of us pick up the Our Daily Bread devotional at church, and I hope that many of you read the very encouraging devotionals it offers each day.

But in smaller print at the bottom of each page is "Bible in a year" in bold with two references. At the rate of three or four chapters a day, this plan will take you through the Bible in a year. At an average reading speed, it would only take you a five to seven minutes each day. Don't worry about the whole year yet. Starting now, while you have a little more time on your hands, would you give it five to seven minutes every day to see whether you might be able to start a good habit during this COVID 19 crisis?

There are two or three chapters from the Old Testament, and a short chapter from the New Testament each day. You could either read just the New Testament in a year or try the whole Bible. How neat would that be?

And this is a great time to start because the readings for both the Old and New Testaments are just starting another book. Check on the website <http://montrealpresbyterian.com>. We will post the text to read each day, and I'll post some encouraging background stuff each couple of days to keep you reading and thinking.

Thursday March 19th, 2020, the Old Testament reading began the book of Joshua. Chapters 1-3. Yesterday's reading (Friday March 20th, 2020) covered chapters 4-6. I know it's two days reading to catch up, but let's see if we can catch ourselves up over the weekend.

You're going to love the book of Joshua. It is packed with action. It is a transition book between the five books of Moses that start the story from creation to God's covenant with the Israelites, and the history books that tell the story of how they settled in the Promised Land after Moses led them across the desert. The story includes a lot of history and geography – if you like that the reading will be easy. If you struggle with that, I'll try to give you some of the background.

As you read the first 6 chapters over these two days, be on the lookout for the way God and the people celebrate their relationship, face transitions and take faith because of what God has done in the past.

The New Testament readings also give us a new start in the Gospel of Luke. Yesterday's text takes us through Luke 1:1-20. In these verses God breaks 400 years of silence. It has been over 400 years since God last spoke to his people in the book of Malachi. They have been waiting to hear from Him again, and when He does break his silence, he appears to an old man, a very faithful and devout old man, who has been waiting for God to visit his people again. How would you feel if after 400 years of silence, God chose you to speak to? Would you be scared?

Your pastor
Rev. Joel Coppieters