

FOUNDATIONS

NEW TESTAMENT

A 260-DAY BIBLE READING PLAN FOR BUSY BELIEVERS



ROBBY & KANDI GALLATY

WITH GUS HERNANDEZ & TIM LAFLEUR

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS



ROBBY GALLATY is the senior pastor of Long Hollow Baptist Church in Hendersonville, Tennessee. He was radically saved from a life of drug and alcohol addiction on November 12, 2002. In 2008 he founded Replicate Ministries to educate, equip, and empower men and women to be disciples who make disciple makers (replicate.org). He's the author of *Growing Up: How to Be a Disciple Who Makes Disciples* (B&H, 2013), *The Forgotten Jesus: How Western Christians Should Follow an Eastern Rabbi* (Zondervan, 2017), *Rediscovering Discipleship: Making Jesus' Final Words Our First Work* (Zondervan, 2015), and *Here and Now: Thriving in the Kingdom of Heaven Today* (B&H, 2019). He's the coauthor with his wife, Kandi, of *Foundations: A 260-Day Bible Reading Plan for Busy Believers* (LifeWay, 2015).



KANDI GALLATY has been investing in the lives of women for over a decade. She believes there are three major sources to draw from when investing in the lives of others: God's Word, God's work in one's life, and God's Spirit. She's passionate about cultivating a biblical worldview from the truths of Scripture and about teaching women how to steward the life experiences and lessons God has allowed in their lives. Together Kandi and Robby lead Replicate Ministries. Kandi loves being a pastor's wife and serving alongside her husband at Long Hollow Baptist Church. Kandi and Robby are the proud, thankful parents of two boys, Rig and Ryder. Kandi is the author of *Disciple Her: Using the Word, Work, and Wonder of God to Invest in Women* (B&H, 2019) and the coauthor with Robby of *Foundations: A 260-Day Bible Reading Plan for Busy Believers* (LifeWay, 2015).



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TIM LAFLEUR served for twenty years as the campus minister at Nicholls State University in Thibodaux, Louisiana. He pastored churches for thirty years, many while at Nicholls State. Tim was the disciple-making pastor at Brainerd Baptist Church in Chattanooga, Tennessee, for four years. He assisted in expanding the discipleship ministry from twelve people the first year to more than twelve hundred in 2015. He currently serves as the equipping pastor at Long Hollow Baptist Church.



LAURA MAGNESS is the director of children's ministry at Trinity Church in Nashville, Tennessee. Originally from Lexington, Kentucky, she moved to Nashville by way of Samford University and Dallas Theological Seminary, where she received a BA in English and an MA in biblical studies, respectively. Previously, Laura spent ten years as an editor and a writer at LifeWay Christian Resources. Laura has contributed to several books and Bible-study resources, including *Foundations: A 260-Day Bible-Reading Plan for Busy Believers* and *smallgroup.com*. She and her husband, Nathan, are the parents of two boys.

INTRODUCTION

When I (Robby) was a new believer, I used the OPRA technique for reading the Bible: I randomly *opened* the Bible, *pointed* to a passage, *read* the verse, and tried to figure out a way to *apply* it to my life. Thankfully, I didn't land on the Scripture that says, "He [Judas Iscariot] went and hanged himself" (Matt 27:5). Reading random Scriptures won't provide solid biblical growth any more than eating random foods from your pantry will provide solid physical growth. An effective reading plan is required.

My wife, Kandi, and I, along with the help of Tim LaFleur and Gus Hernandez, have developed a reading plan called the Foundations 260 New Testament. The F-260 NT is a 260-day reading plan that follows the New Testament, covering one Gospel each quarter and moving chronologically through Acts and the Letters one chapter a day. Every chapter in the New Testament will be covered during the course of one year. After using the original Foundations reading plan, we wanted to create an alternative plan that would help provide variety and be more easily digested by new believers.

The plan expects believers to read one chapter a day for five days each week, with an allowance for weekends off. The two off days a week are built in so that you can catch up on days when you're unable to read. With a traditional reading plan of four to five chapters a day, unread chapters can begin to pile up, forcing you to skip entire sections to get back on schedule. It reduces Bible reading to a system of box checking instead of a time to hear from God. The required reading also makes it difficult to sit and reflect on what you've read for that day.

The F-260 NT encourages believers to digest more of the Word by reading less and by keeping a HEAR journal.

HOW DO I LOG A HEAR JOURNAL ENTRY?

The HEAR journaling method promotes reading the Bible with a life-transforming purpose. No longer will you focus on checking off the boxes on your daily reading schedule; instead, your purpose will be to understand and respond to God's Word.

The acronym HEAR stands for *highlight*, *explain*, *apply*, and *respond*. Each of these four steps helps create an atmosphere to hear God speak. After establishing a place and a time to study God's Word each day, you'll be ready to hear from God.

For an illustration let's assume that you begin your quiet time in the Book of 2 Timothy and that today's reading is chapter 1 of the book. Before reading the text, pause to sincerely ask God to speak to you. It may seem trite, but it's absolutely imperative that we seek God's guidance in order to understand His Word (see 1 Cor. 2:12-14). Every time we open our Bibles, we should pray the simple prayer that David prayed:

*Open my eyes so that I may contemplate
wondrous things from your instruction [Word] (Ps. 119:18).*

After praying for the Holy Spirit's guidance, open your notebook or journal and at the top left-hand corner write the letter H. This exercise will remind you to read with a purpose. In the course of your reading, one or two verses will usually stand out and speak to you. After reading the passage of Scripture, *highlight* each verse that speaks to you by copying it under the letter H. Record the following.

- The name of the book
- The passage of Scripture
- The chapter and verse numbers that especially speak to you
- A title to describe the passage

This practice will make it easier to find the passage when you want to revisit it in the future.

After you've highlighted the passage, write the letter E under the previous entry. At this stage you'll *explain* what the text means. By asking some simple questions, with the help of God's Spirit, you can understand the meaning of a passage or verse. Here are a few questions to get you started.

- Why was this text written?
- To whom was it originally written?
- How does this text fit with the verses before and after it?
- Why did the Holy Spirit include this passage in the book?
- What does the Holy Spirit intend to communicate through this text?

At this point you're beginning the process of discovering the specific, personal word God has for you from His Word. What's important is that you're engaging with the text and wrestling with its meaning.

After writing a short summary of what you think the text means, write the letter A below the letter E. Under the A write the word *apply*. This application is the heart of the process. Everything you've done so far culminates under this heading. As you've done before, answer a series of questions to uncover the significance of these verses to you personally, questions like:

- What does this text teach me about God?
- What does this passage mean today?
- What would the application of this passage look like in my life?
- Does the text identify an action or attitude to avoid or embrace?
- What is God saying to me?

These questions bridge the gap between the ancient world and your world today. They provide a way for God to speak to you from the specific passage or verse. Answer these questions under the A. Challenge yourself to write between two and five sentences about how the text applies to your life.

Finally, below the first three entries, write the letter R for *respond*. Your response to the passage may take on many forms. You may write a call to action. You may describe how you'll be different because of what God has said to you through His Word. You may indicate what you're going to do because of what you've learned. You may respond by writing a prayer to God. For example, you may ask God to help you be more loving or to give you a desire to give more generously. Keep in mind that this is your response to what you've just read.

Notice that all of the words in the HEAR formula are action words: *highlight*, *explain*, *apply*, and *respond*. God doesn't want us to sit back and wait for Him to drop truth into our laps. Instead of waiting passively, God wants us to actively pursue Him. Jesus said:

Keep asking, and it will be given to you. Keep searching, and you will find. Keep knocking, and the door will be opened to you (Matt. 7:7).

Think of the miracle of the Bible. Over centuries of time, God supernaturally moved in a number of men in an unusual way, leading them to write the exact words of God. He led His people to recognize these divine writings and to distinguish them from everything else that had ever been written. Next God's people brought these sixty-six books together. The preservation and survival of the Bible are as miraculous as its writing. Then God gave men, beginning with Gutenberg's printing press, technological knowledge to copy and transmit the Bible so that all people could have it. All because God has something to say to you.

MEMORIZING THE WORD

Each week the F-260 NT provides three options for Scripture memory. Options 1 and 2 come from Psalms and Proverbs, while option 3 is a one-year plan to memorize the Sermon on the Mount, a couple of verses a week. You (and your group if you're leading one) can choose one of the three options or mix them up as desired to best meet your needs.

While many plans for memorizing Scripture are effective, a simple system has been effective for me. All you need is a pack of index cards and a committed desire to memorize God's Word. It's easy. Write the reference of the verse on one side of the card and the text of the verse on the other. Focus on five verses at a time and carry your pack of Scripture cards with you.

Whenever you have a few minutes throughout the day, pull out your pack of Scripture cards and review them. Read the reference first, followed by the verse. Continue to recite the verse until you get a feel for the flow of the passage. When you're comfortable with the text, look only at the reference side of the card to test your recall.

It's important to recite the reference first, then the verse, finishing with the reference again. This will prevent you from becoming a concordance cripple. As a new believer, I was forced to look up every verse in the concordance at the back of my Bible. Sometimes when I quoted a Scripture while witnessing, the person asked me, "Where did you get that?" I could only respond, "Somewhere in the Bible." As you can imagine, that answer isn't effective when sharing with others! By memorizing the references, you'll speak with authority and gain the respect of your hearers when you quote Scripture.

After you master five verses, begin studying five more. Review all of the verses you've learned at least once a week. As your pack grows, you'll be encouraged to keep memorizing Scripture, and you'll experience its powerful effects in your life. For a sample HEAR entry, refer to page 270. For disciple-making resources, check out our website, replicate.org.

1//LUKE 1

MEMORY VERSES

OPTION 1: **Psalm 1:1-2**OPTION 2: **Proverbs 1:7**OPTION 3: **Matthew 5:1-2**

The Bible is divided into two sections, the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament gives the accounts of God's creation of a perfect world; the corruption of that perfect world by sin (rebellion against God); and the redemptive relationship God established with the Israelites, whom God appointed as His chosen people. In the Old Testament God repeatedly promised that He would send a Savior to redeem His people from their sin. The Israelites clung to these promises, but four hundred years passed between the Old and New Testaments when God was silent. He made no promises; He offered no new hope. Thankfully, God didn't remain silent forever.

The Gospel of Luke begins with angelic announcements of two historic births—John the Baptist's and Jesus'. The birth stories of these two men were intricately linked. The angels' descriptions of both men reveal key information about who Jesus was and why He came. Jesus was the Son of God, and His name means "Deliverer" or "Savior." He came to save God's people from their bondage to sin. But for Jesus, that didn't mean saving just God's people, the Israelites. As Luke will show us, it meant offering His gift of salvation to anyone and everyone who would believe in Him as "the way of peace" (v. 79). This is the gospel, the good news with which the New Testament begins.

H I G H L I G H T • E X P L A I N • A P P L Y • R E S P O N D

2//LUKE 2

MEMORY VERSES

OPTION 1: **Psalm 1:1-2**

OPTION 2: **Proverbs 1:7**

OPTION 3: **Matthew 5:1-2**

Luke 2 provides the account of Jesus' birth and childhood. Mary gave birth to Jesus in Bethlehem, an event that became a reason for all people to celebrate. An angel reported the good news to shepherds as a heavenly host sang God's praise. After Jesus' birth Mary and Joseph fulfilled the important Jewish rites of the circumcision and purification sacrifice at the temple in Jerusalem. At age twelve Jesus traveled with Mary and Joseph to the temple. He spent time speaking with the teachers, who were amazed by His wisdom. He then returned with His family to Nazareth.

From the beginning of Jesus' story, we learn that God's Son wouldn't fit people's expectations of the Messiah, the great Deliverer of the Jews. In fact, we quickly realize that the invitation to know Jesus extends to everyone, regardless of class, education, race, or position. God has limitless, unconditional, and equal love for all people. Likewise, we're called to have the same unconditional mindset as we obey His call to share the gospel.

H I G H L I G H T • E X P L A I N • A P P L Y • R E S P O N D

3//LUKE 3

MEMORY VERSES

OPTION 1: **Psalm 1:1-2**

OPTION 2: **Proverbs 1:7**

OPTION 3: **Matthew 5:1-2**

Luke began his Gospel with Gabriel's prediction of John the Baptist's birth and the critical role John would play in preparing people to meet Jesus, the Messiah. In Luke 3 we see the fulfillment of that prediction. John's ministry also fulfilled the prophet Isaiah's prophecy about one who would "prepare the way for the Lord" (v. 4) and help bring God's salvation into focus. The message John preached wasn't a pleasant one, but it was critical and life-changing. He called people to repentance, turning from their sin toward the right living God prescribed in the Old Testament law. Because of his bold call to repentance, people wondered whether John was the Messiah, but he quickly corrected them by drawing attention to Jesus.

The climactic moment of John's ministry came when he baptized Jesus. Unlike all the other baptisms John performed, this one set Jesus apart as God's chosen Son, the One whom He had sent to save the world from its sins. Through baptism Jesus initiated His earthly ministry, aligned Himself with the message of salvation and repentance John preached, and provided us with an example to follow.

This chapter ends with Jesus' genealogy, which Luke traced through David all the way back to Adam in order to highlight Jesus' authority to carry out God's mission of salvation.

H I G H L I G H T • E X P L A I N • A P P L Y • R E S P O N D

4//LUKE 4

MEMORY VERSES

OPTION 1: **Psalm 1:1-2**

OPTION 2: **Proverbs 1:7**

OPTION 3: **Matthew 5:1-2**

After validating Jesus' identity and establishing His authority as the Son of God, Luke began chapter 4 with Satan's temptation of Jesus in the desert. Before Jesus' earthly ministry even began, Satan called into question Jesus' divine nature and tried to convince Him to turn against His Heavenly Father. But because Jesus was "full of the Holy Spirit" (v. 1), the devil really stood no chance. Jesus' responses to Satan remind us that obedience to the Word of God and dependence on Him give us the power we need to withstand the temptations and accusations Satan levels against us.

Still "in the power of the Spirit" (v. 14), Jesus returned to Galilee from the desert and officially began His ministry of salvation. The quoted text from Isaiah 61 establishes key responsibilities God gave His Messiah, ones Jesus intended to fulfill. The responsibilities listed in Luke 4:18-19 center on the good news of the gospel and the freedom from sin's bondage that the gospel provides. Jesus makes new life available to all of us who are spiritually poor, captive, blind, and oppressed. Although not everyone appreciated Jesus' message of hope and ministry of healing, He was fully committed to His mission. The teachings in verses 31-32, 42-44 highlight the unique authority of Jesus' words, and the healings in verses 38-41, the first of many the physician Luke recounted, back up His words with divine power. Jesus is the Messiah, and true freedom is found in Him alone.

H I G H L I G H T • E X P L A I N • A P P L Y • R E S P O N D

MEMORY VERSES

OPTION 1: **Psalm 1:1-2**

OPTION 2: **Proverbs 1:7**

OPTION 3: **Matthew 5:1-2**

5//LUKE 5

Early in His ministry Jesus called disciples to join Him. He asked these men to give up their professions and become fully devoted followers who would learn from Him, travel with Him, and eventually continue His ministry by spreading the gospel throughout the world. After witnessing a miracle that revealed Jesus' power over the natural world, the first disciples "left everything, and followed him" (v. 11).

Near the end of Luke 5, Jesus made a critical statement about the goal of His ministry on earth: "It is not those who are healthy who need a doctor, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (vv. 31-32). Through the miracles recorded in this chapter, we learn that Jesus used physical healing to prove that He also had the power to forgive sins. Miraculous acts like the cleansing of a leper and the healing of a paralytic may seem more powerful to us, but the more important and much more costly miracle Jesus provides is to offer a way for people who are dead in their sins to find new life in God. Jesus' forgiveness and grace make that possible.

Jesus' encounter with the tax collector Levi (see vv. 27-32) reminds us that Jesus' grace has no limits. No one has sinned so greatly or wandered so far that God's love and forgiveness can't reach him or her. From the first disciples to the religious leaders that bookend this chapter, we're reminded that Jesus cares about every individual heart.

H I G H L I G H T • E X P L A I N • A P P L Y • R E S P O N D

6//LUKE 6

MEMORY VERSES

OPTION 1: **Psalm 1:3-4**OPTION 2: **Proverbs 2:6-7**OPTION 3: **Matthew 5:3-4**

Luke 5 ends and Luke 6 begins with the first signs of tension between Jesus and the religious leaders of His day, the scribes and Pharisees. At issue in Luke 6 is obedience to observe the Sabbath, the day of holy rest God appointed in the Fourth Commandment. While the Pharisees elevated the law as most important, Jesus, the lawmaker Himself, taught that to love and care for others is true obedience to God. When Jesus healed the lame man's hand, He set Himself apart from the religious leaders in a conflict that would escalate until it ended at the cross.

From that scene Luke shifted to the calling and teaching of Jesus' disciples. The series of teachings recorded in verses 20-49 reveals the countercultural way of life to which Jesus calls His disciples. In a world that values riches, personal satisfaction, happiness, and acceptance, Jesus calls blessed those who are poor, hungry, sorrowful, and hated. Jesus called His disciples to adopt this blessed way of life, because with it comes a recognition of need and a dependence on God alone.

Jesus' teachings in this chapter highlight the character of a disciple, the chief quality being love. Among the marks of a disciple's love is the ability to love enemies and to extend forgiveness and generosity. The high standard of love to which Jesus calls His followers is made possible only through His love for us. The ability to love others as we've been loved sets us apart from the world.

H I G H L I G H T • E X P L A I N • A P P L Y • R E S P O N D

7//LUKE 7

MEMORY VERSES

OPTION 1: **Psalm 1:3-4**

OPTION 2: **Proverbs 2:6-7**

OPTION 3: **Matthew 5:3-4**

After teaching His disciples about Christlike love, Jesus took the opportunity to model it for them. The accounts in Luke 7 reveal Jesus' love and compassion for all people, from a powerful Roman centurion to a sinful, disgraced woman.

One of the major themes of Luke's Gospel is that Jesus came to save all people from their sins, not just the Jews. The centurion man at the center of the first story was a Gentile, not of Jewish ethnicity. However, his faith in Jesus' authority far surpassed that of even the Jewish leaders who were anxiously awaiting the Messiah. Jesus affirmed this man's faith and healed his servant, despite his ethnic heritage.

In the next encounter a poor, desperate widow received one of Jesus' greatest miracles. Widows were easy to overlook in Jesus' day, but Jesus saw the woman's grief and raised her son from the dead, a power reserved for God alone. It's no wonder people began to question who Jesus really was (see vv. 18-35). He had the authority of God's promised Messiah, but He didn't look or act anything like the militaristic ruler people expected. That contrast would deepen as His ministry continued. Luke 7 ends much as it began, with a reminder of the importance of love and grace in the kingdom of God.

H I G H L I G H T • E X P L A I N • A P P L Y • R E S P O N D

8//LUKE 8

MEMORY VERSES

OPTION 1: **Psalm 1:3-4**

OPTION 2: **Proverbs 2:6-7**

OPTION 3: **Matthew 5:3-4**

The early chapters in Luke follow a pattern that alternates between Jesus' miracles and His teachings, the two foundational aspects of His earthly ministry. Jesus' words taught people about the kingdom of God, and His miracles gave authority and power to His teaching. Because Luke's Gospel highlights the fact that Jesus' grace and forgiveness are available to all people, it repeatedly features women as the recipients of Jesus' teaching and healing. This positive attention to women would have been countercultural in the first century. The women in verses 1-3 responded to Jesus' work in their lives by supporting Him in His ministry.

This chapter of Luke also includes Jesus' well-known parable about the soil and the sower. The parable of the soil (see vv. 4-15), along with the parable of the lamp (see vv. 16-18) and Jesus' teaching in verses 19-21, calls followers of Jesus to actively listen and respond to God's Word. As if to prove why God's Word is worthy of being listened to and obeyed, Luke next included three miracles that show the power of Jesus' words over both the physical world (wind and waves and the human body) and the spiritual world (demons). In each of these miracles, Jesus intervened to save people in need, showing again His mercy and love. We're reminded that the only appropriate response to Jesus' love and power is to place our faith in Him: "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace" (v. 48).

H I G H L I G H T • E X P L A I N • A P P L Y • R E S P O N D

9//LUKE 9

MEMORY VERSES

OPTION 1: **Psalm 1:3-4**

OPTION 2: **Proverbs 2:6-7**

OPTION 3: **Matthew 5:3-4**

Luke 9 is a key passage of Scripture for understanding what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. The teachings and miracles in this chapter provide instruction and demonstrate Jesus' ministry in action. Jesus showed His concern for people's physical needs when He fed the hungry crowd. Later He also displayed His power over supernatural evil by healing a boy sickened by demon possession.

Through Jesus' conversations with His disciples in this chapter, we learn about His true identity and mission as the Son of God, the Messiah, who would die and be resurrected as the atonement for sin. Jesus' transfiguration with Moses and Elijah validated God's approval of His Son and the mission He was living out.

As Jesus' disciples, we're challenged to live a life of self-denial that focuses on selflessly serving others. Jesus didn't idealize discipleship; instead, He taught that following Him requires placing the needs of others—both physical and spiritual—ahead of our own.

H I G H L I G H T • E X P L A I N • A P P L Y • R E S P O N D

MEMORY VERSES

OPTION 1: **Psalms 1:3-4**

OPTION 2: **Proverbs 2:6-7**

OPTION 3: **Matthew 5:3-4**

10//LUKE 10

After Jesus commissioned the twelve disciples in Luke 9, Luke began to place greater emphasis on what discipleship and life on mission involve. The sending of the seventy-two teaches that the disciples' mission was to mirror Jesus' mission: "Heal the sick who are there, and tell them, 'The kingdom of God has come near you' " (10:9). In other words, disciples of Christ are to meet people's needs and preach the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ. The way people respond to the gospel is never in the disciples' control, and many people will reject Jesus' disciples, just as He was rejected. The point, however, is that the disciples are obeying Jesus' command by preaching the gospel and giving people an opportunity to believe.

Jesus' interaction with the "expert in the law" (v. 25) and the teaching that follows help readers further understand what it means to follow Christ, who was the very fulfillment of the law. The expert's question was meant to put Jesus to the test by proving that Jesus' teachings stood in contrast to the Old Testament law. But Jesus' parable so perfectly summed up the law that no fault could be found. Obedience to God means wholeheartedly loving Him and loving others with the mercy and compassion the Samaritan showed to the desperate man in verses 30-37.

The brief narrative about Martha and Mary at the close of Luke 10 reminds us that only when we prioritize our love for Jesus over everything else will we be transformed into people who can love others as He loves us.

H I G H L I G H T • E X P L A I N • A P P L Y • R E S P O N D