

A FIELD GUIDE FOR MEN

# Make It Stick

---

Reading the Bible when you always quit by February

Jake McCluskey

You know the pattern. January 1 you make a plan. Genesis to Revelation, a few chapters a day, the whole book by New Year's Eve. You're locked in for three weeks. Then you hit Leviticus, all those chapters on skin disease and grain offerings, and something in you just stalls out. By February the Bible's back on the nightstand, closed, and you've quietly stopped talking about it.

Here's what I want you to hear first. That's not a willpower problem. It's a plan problem. You started in a spot that was never meant to be your entry point, treated the whole thing like a book you had to finish instead of a Person you were meeting, and set a pace no man keeps for long. Fix those three things and the quitting stops being the story.

I'm not writing this to shame you. Half the men I know have started that same plan and stalled at the same book. This isn't about discipline you don't have. It's about a better way in.

## **1. It's not a book to conquer**

You're not cramming for a test. You're not reading a manual you have to finish before you're allowed to use the tool. Paul told the young man he'd left leading the church at Ephesus: "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16). That's not "profitable for checking a box." God breathed it out so He could talk to you through it. Treat it like a to-do list and it'll feel like one. Treat it like God speaking and it starts to feel like what it is.

## **2. Start with a Gospel, not Genesis**

Don't open at page one. Open with Jesus. Start in Mark, short and fast-moving, or John if you want the deeper end. Meet Him first. Once you know who He is, the rest of the Bible makes a different kind of sense, because none of it was ever separate from Him anyway.

## **3. Small and daily beats big and sporadic**

Ten real minutes every day will take you further than a heroic Saturday you won't repeat. You're not building a monument. You're building a habit. A soldier doesn't train for a fight by doing one brutal workout and calling it done. He shows up small, every day, until it's just what he does. Same principle here.

## **4. Three questions, every time you read**

Don't overcomplicate it. Every time you open the page, ask three things: What does this show me about God? What does this show me about me? What do I do about it today? You don't need a seminary degree to ask those. You need to actually stop and ask them instead

of reading past the page like it's a headline.

## **5. It's all one story, and it's about Him**

You're not reading a stack of random rules and old family history. You're reading one story with one main character. After the resurrection, Jesus walked with two men on the road to Emmaus and did this: "beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures" (Luke 24:27). Moses. The prophets. All of it, about Him. When a passage feels strange or distant, ask where it's pointing. Some verses point to Him straight on. Others point by being part of the one story that ends at Him. Either way, it was always about Him.

## **6. Reading it isn't the finish line**

A man can read his Bible every morning and still walk out the door and live like he never opened it. James didn't let that slide: "prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves" (James 1:22). Reading without doing is how a man fools himself into feeling close to God while nothing in his life actually changes. Ask that third question above, what do I do about it today, and then go do the one thing.

## **7. A simple rhythm to start with**

Pick one time of day. Morning coffee, lunch break, before you close your eyes. Read one short passage, ten to fifteen verses. Ask the three questions. Write one line if you want to, on your phone or a notecard, doesn't matter. That's it. That's the whole system. One inch at a time, every day, is how this actually sticks.

## **8. The day you miss is not the end**

You will miss a day. Maybe a week. That's not the point where you failed. That's just a day you missed. The plan that dies in January dies because a man treats one missed day like proof the whole thing was a mistake, closes the book, and doesn't open it again for eleven months. Don't do that math. You missed a day, not the point. Open it back up tomorrow and keep going.

This isn't about becoming a Bible scholar. It's about a man getting to know the God who's been talking to him the whole time, one short passage at a time, and actually doing something with what he hears. Start today. Start small. Start with Jesus.

## **The verses to have ready**

Keep these close. Write them down, put them where you'll see them.

**2 Timothy 3:16** "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness."

**Luke 24:27** "Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures."

**James 1:22** "But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves."

**Psalms 119:105** "Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path."

**Hebrews 4:12** "For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart."

*Scripture quotations are from the New American Standard Bible (NASB), 1995, by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.*