



**PRESENTED TO**

---

*Name*

---

*Date / Occasion*

*Personal Note*

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---





A YEAR  
WITH THE  
BIBLE





# A YEAR WITH THE BIBLE

---

SCRIPTURAL WISDOM  
FOR DAILY LIVING

PATRICK MADRID



SAINT  
BENEDICT  
PRESS

CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA

## DEDICATION

With gratitude to  
Father Luke Tancrell, O.P.

© 2012 Patrick Madrid

All rights reserved. With the exception of short excerpts in articles and critical reviews, no part of this work may be reproduced, transmitted, or stored in any form whatsoever, printed or electronic, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

ISBN: 978-1-61890-395-2

Cataloging-in-Publication data on file with the Library of Congress

Scripture quotations are from the Catholic Edition of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright © 1965, 1966 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Book design by A.R.T. Services  
Christopher J. Pelicano and Abby M. Pelicano

Printed in India.



Saint Benedict Press  
Charlotte, North Carolina  
2012







---

# Introduction



Perhaps the greatest Scripture scholar the Catholic Church ever produced was a man named Eusebius Sophronius Hieronymus, commonly known today as Saint Jerome (347–420). Born in what is now modern day Slovenia, Jerome was a both a master linguist in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, as well as a profoundly incisive and erudite scholar and translator. Ordained a bishop in 379, he studied under Saint Gregory Nazianzen (329–390) and then served for three years in Rome as a personal secretary and theologian to Pope Saint Damasus I (305–384), who commissioned him to translate from Hebrew and Greek the Catholic version of Scripture known ever since as the Latin Vulgate. Jerome spent the final 32 years of his life as a monk in Jerusalem, and then in Bethlehem, translating and commenting on Sacred Scripture.

Why all this detail about Saint Jerome by way of introduction to this book, you ask? The answer is simple. Jerome knew the Bible inside and out, forward and backward, in its original languages of Greek and Hebrew. If anyone could be trusted to give solid, compelling reasons for spending, not merely a “year with the Bible,” but indeed a whole lifetime, it was him. And he said the following:

I beg of you, my dear brother, to live among these books—to meditate upon them—to know nothing else, to seek nothing else. Does not such a life seem to you a foretaste of heaven here on earth?

Let not the simplicity of the Scripture or the poorness of its vocabulary offend you; for these are due either to the faults of translators or else to deliberate purpose: for in this way it is better fitted for the instruction of an unlettered congregation as the educated person can take one meaning and the uneducated another from one and the same sentence.

I am not so dull or so forward as to profess that I myself know it, or that I can pluck upon the earth the fruit which has its root in heaven, but I confess that I should like to do so. I put myself before the man who sits idle and, while I lay no claim to be a master, I readily pledge myself to be a fellow-student.

---

“For every one who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.” Let us learn upon earth that knowledge which will continue with us in heaven.

There could hardly be a better introduction, indeed a better recommendation, for a book titled *A Year With the Bible*.

Follow Saint Jerome’s holy advice and his admirable personal example. Make daily meditation on Scripture part of your life. Do not neglect to ask, to seek, and to knock at the door of divine revelation. The truth will be given to you. You will find it. The door will be opened to you.

Let your daily reading of Scripture be for you a foretaste of heaven, your roadmap to heaven, a trustworthy companion along the narrow, rough, and arduous ascent you are making toward heaven. And when that blessed morning dawns on which you finally enter into the eternal joys of heaven, you will see God face-to-face forever and praise him eternally in the glorious company of his angels and with his saints. What you learned and believed by meditating on the Holy Bible will have brought you there.

Just think: Right now, as you turn the page and begin reading this book, you are taking, as Saint Jerome says, another step toward heaven.

---

# How to Use this Book



Saint Jerome’s well-known dictum, “Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ,” is a good and necessary reminder of why reading the Bible is so important. In its pages, you will encounter him personally, hear him preaching and teaching, witness his miracles, and learn from his own lips what he desires for you to know and do and experience in the Christian life. You will see how, for countless generations, God gradually prepared the world for the coming of his son, Jesus Christ.

What’s more, in the Bible you will meet the Prophets and Apostles, the Blessed Virgin Mary, angels and devils, and all the innumerable figures—great and small, heroic and pathetic, holy and wicked—who played a role in the sweeping human drama that is God’s plan of salvation for mankind. This drama is truly “the greatest story ever told.” But, of course, the Bible tells us more than a mere “story.” It tells us the truth about God’s love for us and how Jesus Christ came to save us from our sins and enable us, by his grace, to know, love, and serve God in this life so that we may be happy with him forever in the life to come.

The Bible gives compelling answers to all of life’s Big Questions: Why am I here? How did I get here? What is the meaning of life? What is the purpose of my life? What will become of me when this life ends?

And so, as you take up this book, which gives you a kind of “guided tour” of the major themes and teachings contained in the Bible, you will encounter Jesus Christ on every page. His presence is imbued in the Old Testament, where he is implicitly anticipated, prefigured, and pointed toward, as well as in the New Testament, where the fullness of God’s revelation is unveiled for us definitively in the person of the Incarnate Word of God.

As the title of this book indicates, you can spend each of the 365 days in a year pondering some aspect of Jesus Christ and his teaching. The themes contained in this particular selection of Bible passages deal primarily with the issues, challenges, and opportunities that you personally face in your daily life. They will help you navigate through the often turbulent waters of this earthly life and deal more effectively with everything from your own weaknesses, anxieties, and uncertainties, to relationships with family, friends,

---

and even enemies. Day by day, this book unfolds for you what the Bible says about such things as temptation, virtues, vices, prayer, forgiveness, death, fear, faith, hope, love, children, parents, marriage, money, entertainment, sex, friendship, prayer, modesty, angels and devils, heaven and hell, salvation and damnation, atheism, the Cross of Christ (and your cross, too), the Church, the sacraments, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and even the antichrist and the End Times.

Keep in mind that, although it is not the whole Bible, of course, neither is *A Year With the Bible* merely a book “about” the Bible. Those who are more or less unfamiliar with Scripture, will discover in it a means of launching out into the deep to begin a life-long project of deepening their knowledge of and love for Jesus Christ as he is revealed, implicitly and explicitly in the pages of the Bible. Even those who are already experienced with regularly studying and praying with Scripture will find *A Year with the Bible* to be a helpful companion for their daily life and growth in Christian maturity, for it will bring to mind many things the Lord is telling us that can easily be overlooked or forgotten in the hurly burly of one’s daily routine.

Psalm 119 proclaims “Your Word, O Lord, is a lamp for my feet.” If you truly desire to walk in the light of the truth, rather than stumble blindly downward in the darkness of the world, the Bible will guide your steps in the right direction. Along the way, as Saint Jerome teaches, you will come to know the Lord Jesus Christ ever more fully, and he will guide you and teach you many things that he wants you to know and understand. Apply these things to your life and when you have reached the conclusion of your earthly path, you will find to your ineffable joy that, by walking in the light of Christ’s truth, your steps will have brought you to your heavenly homeland, where you will live in glory, peace, and perfect happiness with the Triune God and all his angels and saints for all eternity.

That is how to use this book.

---

## A Prayer for Grace and Illumination



Stay with me, Lord, for it is necessary to have You present so that I do not forget You. You know how easily I abandon You.

Stay with me, Lord, because I am weak and I need Your strength, that I may not fall so often.

Stay with me, Lord, for You are my life, and without You, I am without fervor.

Stay with me, Lord, for You are my light, and without You, I am in darkness.

Stay with me, Lord, to show me Your will.

Stay with me, Lord, so that I hear Your voice and follow You.

Stay with me, Lord, for I desire to love You very much, and always be in Your company.

Stay with me, Lord, if You wish me to be faithful to You.

Stay with me, Lord, for as poor as my soul is, I wish it to be a place of consolation for You, a nest of Love.

Stay with me, Jesus, for it is getting late and the day is coming to a close, and life passes, death, judgment, eternity approaches. It is necessary to renew my strength, so that I will not stop along the way and for that, I need You. It is getting late and death approaches. I fear the darkness, the temptations, the dryness, the cross, the sorrows. O how I need You, my Jesus, in this night of exile!

Stay with me tonight, Jesus, in life with all its dangers, I need You.

Let me recognize You as Your disciples did at the breaking of bread, so that the Eucharistic Communion be the light which disperses the darkness, the force which sustains me, the unique joy of my heart.

Stay with me, Lord, because at the hour of my death, I want to remain united to You, if not by Communion, at least by grace and love.

Stay with me, Jesus, I do not ask for divine consolation, because I do not merit it, but, the gift of Your Presence, oh yes, I ask this of You!

Stay with me, Lord, for it is You alone I look for. Your Love, Your Grace, Your Will, Your Heart, Your Spirit, because I love You and ask no other reward but to love You more and more.

With a firm love, I will love You with all my heart while on earth and continue to love You perfectly during all eternity.

Amen.

—Saint Padre Pio of Pietrelcina (1887–1968)





A YEAR WITH THE BIBLE

# *The Daily Readings*





## To the pure, all things are pure

*This world is filled with many vulgar and dishonorable things that will claw and tear at your Christian purity if you allow them to. Don't let them! Seek instead the things of God. He will purify you and free you from your slavery to profane and inconsequential things.*



This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, instead of giving heed to Jewish myths or to commands of men who reject the truth. To the pure all things are pure, but to the corrupt and unbelieving nothing is pure; their very minds and consciences are corrupted. They profess to know God, but they deny him by their deeds; they are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good deed.

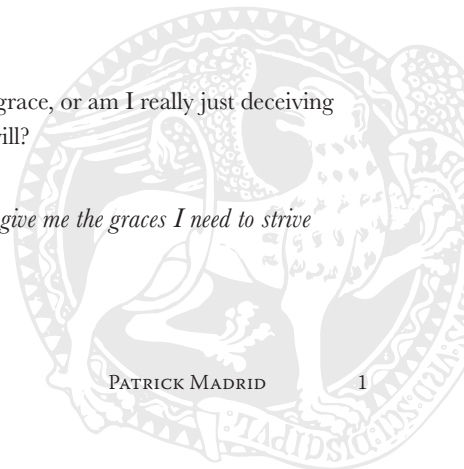
(Titus 1:13–16)

### IN GOD'S PRESENCE, CONSIDER . . .

Do I actively cooperate with God's purifying grace, or am I really just deceiving myself by wallowing lazily in disobedience to his will?

### CLOSING PRAYER

*Lord, I want to be pure as you are pure! Please give me the graces I need to strive faithfully for holiness and purity out of love for you.*



## God loves you freely

*If you only realized the vastness of God's burning love for you. What a profoundly undeserved gift he gives by loving us; and yet most people rarely, if ever, ponder with gratitude this great treasure.*



For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

(John 3:16)

But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).

(Ephesians 2:4–5)

### IN GOD'S PRESENCE, CONSIDER . . .

Do I take God's great love for me for granted? Do I presume that "all will be well," even though I get so caught up in distractions and worldly cares that I forget to thank and praise him for loving me?

### CLOSING PRAYER

*Oh, Lord. The fact that I am so unworthy of your fatherly love serves only to magnify the glorious beauty and richness of your generosity to me, a sinner. Help me, Lord, to love you with all my heart, now and forever.*

## Why do you worry so? Trust in God

*Worldly fear is a negative condition arising from our fallen human nature. God wants to free you from that kind of fear, which breeds worry, and give you joy and peace, even if your circumstances are difficult. Learn, therefore, to trust his loving providence and thus banish your worldly fears.*



“Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O men of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the Gentiles seek all these things; and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well.”

“Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Let the day’s own trouble be sufficient for the day.”

(Matthew 6:25–34)

### IN GOD’S PRESENCE, CONSIDER . . .

Do I trust in God my loving Father or in my own puny efforts to “control” the circumstances of my life? Do I worry so much that I have become a person “of little faith?”

### CLOSING PRAYER

*Lord, I know that you love me. Please grant me the graces I need each day to have faith and confidence in your loving providence, come what may. Jesus, I trust in you.*

## Be a doer of the gospel, not merely a hearer

*Remember, in this life, there are ultimately only two kinds of people: winners and losers. Winners go to heaven and losers go to hell. Jesus tells us that winning the reward of eternal life requires not merely hearing the gospel but obeying it. Which kind of person are you?*



“Not every one who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you evildoers.’”

“Every one then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house upon the rock; and the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And every one who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house upon the sand; and the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell; and great was the fall of it.”

And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching.

(Matthew 7:21–28)

### IN GOD’S PRESENCE, CONSIDER . . .

Have I built my house on the solid rock of Christ’s promises or on the shifting sand of my own preferences, appetites, and opinions?

### CLOSING PRAYER

*Lord Jesus, I want to live my life on the rock of your truth, that unshakeable rock upon which you are building your Church, that mighty rock of your love that cannot be shaken or overcome by any passing danger. Lift me up onto that rock, Lord, so that I may remain there with you always.*

## Beware of false teachers

*Not everything that glitters is gold and not everyone who presumes to teach, teaches the truth. So guard against being duped by false prophets and blind guides, who lead others astray with their spurious teachings. Listen to the Church and the saving gospel of Jesus Christ which She proclaims.*



As I urged you when I was going to Macedónia, remain at Ephesus that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine, nor to occupy themselves with myths and endless genealogies which promote speculations rather than the divine training that is in faith; whereas the aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and sincere faith. Certain persons by swerving from these have wandered away into vain discussion, desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make assertions.

Now we know that the law is good, if any one uses it lawfully, understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, immoral persons, sodomites, kidnapers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, in accordance with the glorious gospel of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted.

(1 Timothy 1:3–11)

### IN GOD'S PRESENCE, CONSIDER . . .

There are countless voices out there clamoring for my attention. What practical steps do I take (am I even taking any?) to filter out and ignore the seductive errors that beckon me so that I can concentrate on hearing and following Jesus Christ and His message?

### CLOSING PRAYER

*Lord, You have the words of eternal life! Strengthen my faith in you and your promises and never let any false teacher ever separate me from you and your Church.*

## God's offer of salvation is easy for you to accept

*We all make excuses of one kind or another for not responding to God's loving call—usually out of fear and laziness. Think for a moment about your own excuses. Don't they look foolish?*



“For this commandment which I command you this day is not too hard for you, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that you should say, ‘Who will go up for us to heaven, and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’ Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, ‘Who will go over the sea for us, and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’ But the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it.”

(Deuteronomy 30:11–14)

### IN GOD'S PRESENCE, CONSIDER . . .

Do I make excuses for not doing what God wants of me and for doing things I know are incompatible with his will for me?

### CLOSING PRAYER

*Lord, you know how quickly I give up and give in when following you requires sacrifice or becomes the least bit difficult. Help me, my God, to rely faithfully on your strength and not hide behind my own frivolous excuses.*

## The Holy Angels are God's messengers

*The Holy Angels are vast conflagrations of love for God; mighty and indomitable spirits beholding God, face-to-face, for all eternity. At God's command they guide, guard, illuminate, and minister to human beings in countless unseen ways.*



And in that region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. And the angel said to them, “Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased!”

(Luke 2:8–14)

This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be made worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering—since indeed God deems it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to grant rest with us to you who are afflicted, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire.

(2 Thessalonians 1:5–7)

For I have derived much joy and comfort from your love, my brother, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you.

(Hebrews 1:7)

### IN GOD'S PRESENCE, CONSIDER . . .

Do I have a devotion to the Holy Angels? Do I invoke their protection and intercession as I ought?

### CLOSING PRAYER

*Lord, the dazzling beauty and prodigious power of your holy angels are reminders to me that your love for creation knows no bounds. The angels reflect your resplendent beauty in ways too awesome and lofty for me to fully comprehend. Help me emulate their single-minded fidelity to you.*

## Never publicize the good you do for others to see

*It's tempting to publicize our good deeds so that others will think well of us and praise us. But doing so only debases any merit such deeds might have had in God's eyes because pride and human respect have replaced true love for God and for our neighbor.*



“Beware of practicing your piety before men in order to be seen by them; for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.

“Thus, when you give alms, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by men. Truly, I say to you, they have their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

“And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” . . .

“And when you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by men but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”

(Matthew 6:1–6, 16–18)

### IN GOD'S PRESENCE, CONSIDER . . .

What are my true motivations for doing whatever good I may do for others? Am I serving others in a spirit of humility, or am I really just seeking applause?

### CLOSING PRAYER

*Lord, you know how weak and vain I am. Please forgive me for all the times I have sought human respect rather than seeking first your Kingdom out of love for you.*



## A blessing or a curse—which will you choose?

*God wants to bless you with a superabundance of gifts, especially eternal life. But you must first relinquish the burden of empty and insignificant trifles that you clutch. If you are overloaded with such things, you cannot receive God's blessings. And, eventually, those trifles will drag you down to hell.*



“Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse: the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day, and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside from the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods which you have not known. And when the Lord your God brings you into the land which you are entering to take possession of it, you shall set the blessing on Mount Geri’zim and the curse on Mount Ebal. . . .

“You shall be careful to do all the statutes and the ordinances which I set before you this day.”

(Deuteronomy 11:26–29, 32)

### IN GOD’S PRESENCE, CONSIDER . . .

Am I truly open to God’s will for my life? Are my arms and my heart open wide to him? Do I sincerely desire his blessings, in whatever form he may choose to give them to me?

### CLOSING PRAYER

*Lord, help me each day to say firmly “Yes.” to your will and “No!” to anything that would prevent me from knowing, loving, and serving you in this life and being happy with you forever in the life to come.*

## What is impossible for you is not impossible for God

*Even if God permits you to have prosperity in this life, be on guard lest money and material things become false gods. As Christ warns, that is a real and present danger. Far better that you be poor and holy than wealthy and on the wide, easy road to hell.*



And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it will be for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!” And the disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said to them again, “Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to him, “Then who can be saved?” Jesus looked at them and said, “With men it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God.” Peter began to say to him, “Lo, we have left everything and followed you.” Jesus said, “Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life.”

(Mark 10:23–30)

### IN GOD'S PRESENCE, CONSIDER . . .

Do I trust fully in God's grace for my happiness and salvation, or is my confidence really in my bank account?

### CLOSING PRAYER

*Lord, I believe your teaching that, left to myself, it would be impossible for me to be saved. But I trust in you and in your love for me. For with you, O God, all things are possible, even the salvation of a sinner like me.*