

W	01/10	1 Timothy 06
T		2 Timothy 01
F		02
M	06/10	03
T		04
W		Titus 01
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M	13/10	Philemon
T		Hebrews 01
W		02
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M	20/10	05
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T		13
F	31/10	James 01



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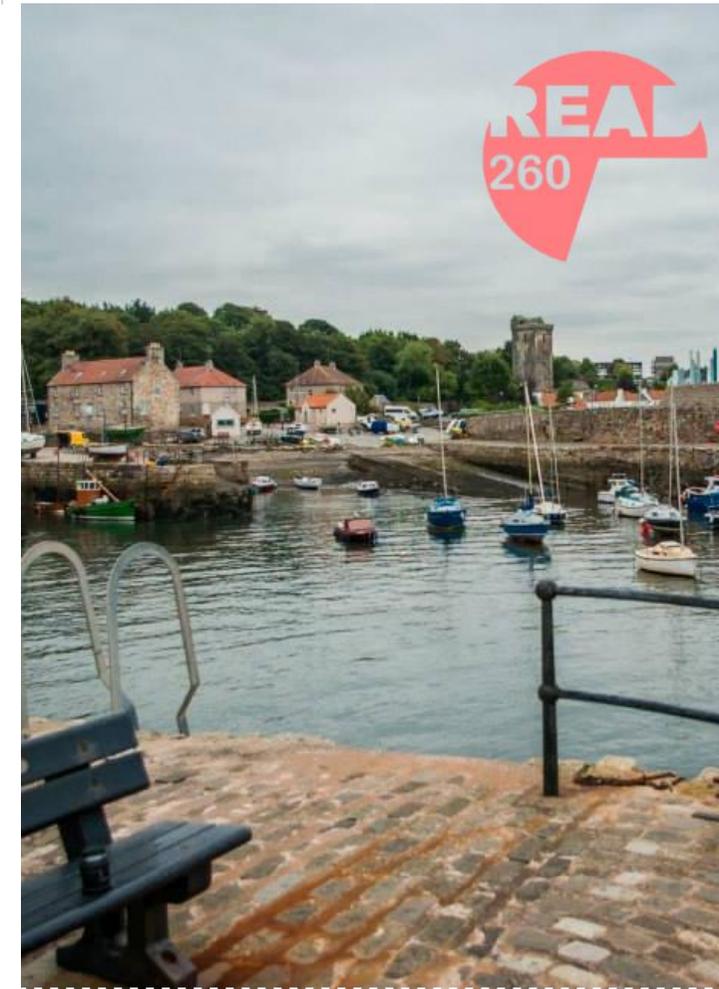
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**THE NEW TESTAMENT
IN ONE YEAR**

*October : 1 Timothy 6
- James 1*

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THE NEW TESTAMENT IN ONE YEAR

Did you know there are 260 chapters in the New Testament? Did you also know that there are 260 weekdays in a year? This seemed like an opportunity too good to miss, so here at Newcraigs we're reading the whole New Testament throughout 2014, from Matthew to Revelation.

How you take part is up to you; you might read a chapter each morning before you start the day or go to work, or read together with your family around the dinner table. You might meet up with a few friends, once a week, to read and discuss that week's chapters, or catch up online during your lunch break.

What really matters is that we're listening to God, as he speaks to us through his Word. We want this to be as flexible as it can be. We don't want to stress you out by giving you another thing you "have to do", or make you feel guilty if you miss a day, but we hope that you can carve out some time this year for READ260. The aim is simple; to listen to God, as we read his Word together, and let him transform us.



This month I've been reflecting on Psalm 119. As well as being the longest chapter in the Bible, it's an amazing meditation on the beauty of God's word. Here are some of the Psalmist's reflections on the Bible.

"How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word." (verse 9)

"I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word." (verse 16)

"Your word, LORD, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens." (verse 89)

"Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path." (verse 105)

As we start October, let's pray that God will give us the Psalmists passion for scripture.

Pastoral Letters

Last month we started reading 1 Timothy. This is the first of Paul's Pastoral Letters. The three letters were written to Timothy and Titus, young pastors leading churches in Ephesus and Crete. Unlike many of his other letters, written to whole churches, these are much more personal; Paul regards both men as his spiritual sons. This is probably a reference to the key role he played in their conversions, but it also expresses his love for them.

In these letters we see the fragility of the leaders God uses. Timothy suffered with regular ill health and seemed to find it hard to assert his authority as a young leader. Both men were in a battle to protect their congregations from false teaching, but despite the hostility Paul is confident that God will build his church, as his word is preached.

Philemon

Philemon was a wealthy Christian. One of his slaves, Onesimus, had run away and became a Christian whilst with Paul. In the letter we read how Onesimus is sent back to his master; he shouldn't run away from his duty now that he is a follower of Jesus. But at the same time Paul appeals to Philemon to show grace and forgiveness; to go above and beyond what is expected of him. The parable of the unmerciful servant comes to mind (Matthew 18:21-35).

Hebrews

In many ways, the message of the Hebrews is a simple one; "Jesus is better!" The letter is written to believers who seem to be tempted to revert back to the old, pre-Jesus way of relating to God. Mistakenly they elevate angels, Moses, and the priestly sacrificial system above the finished work of Jesus. The author warns them again and again, "Don't go back, Jesus is better!"

The book's climax is a picture of Mount Zion. There an immeasurable crowd of joyful believers are basking in God's presence, sprinkled with the blood of Jesus, which speaks forgiveness. This is the present reality for every Christian.

Try a New Translation

Many of us are so familiar with certain passages that we just cruise through our reading in autopilot. Swapping translations may really help you to hear familiar passages afresh. The NIV is probably default for most of us. Some will have stacks of verses committed to memory in the AV from Sunday school days. Why not give the English Standard Version a go? Its accuracy can be really helpful for carefully studying the Bible. The New Living Translation reads very naturally and might be a helpful alternative. If you want a vivid paraphrase of the New Testament, try The Message. It'll definitely help you to engage with the text in a new way and get you asking questions of the passage, you wouldn't have thought of before. You could try reading it alongside your normal translation.