



## Getting started with Paul's letters

This month in RBT we're covering a whopping 6 Bible books! But never fear; they are relatively short! In total there are 28 chapters, so read 1 chapter a day and you'll get through it all...

**Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and 1&2 Thessalonians** were all written by the apostle Paul, and when reading these books, lots of the same principles apply.

### 1. Bookends

Take note of the opening and closing verses. These often introduce the key themes found throughout the rest of the book. On first reading they might all look quite similar, but watch out for how the argument is developed.

### 2. Go with the flow

The letters are not just a random collection of thoughts, but rather a coherent argument. Try to follow the logical flow through the whole letter; look out for the big ideas that keep cropping up.

### 3. Look back to the cross

These letters are written THIS side of the cross of Jesus. The Old Testament all points forward to Jesus, the New Testament points back to Him. The letters are an outworking of what happened on the cross and what it looks like to live a life shaped by the cross.

### 4. Someone else's mail

Remember that these letters were originally written to particular churches in a particular setting and particular circumstances. Paul writes to address particular issues. Before jumping to apply what we read to ourselves, it's important for us to think about what it meant for the original audience. That will help us work out the specific ways it applies to us today.

## Main theme of each book

Below is the main theme for each book, courtesy of the NIV proclamation Bible.

**Galatians:** The grace of God in the gospel and the promised Spirit are sufficient both for salvation and the Christian life.

**Ephesians:** You are one in Christ now, so be united and stand firm in Him.

**Philippians:** Live joyfully as citizens of God's kingdom, in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.

**Colossians:** "Just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in Him" (ch 2v6)

**1 Thessalonians:** Be reassured in the truth of the gospel and press on in living it out, despite opposition, until Jesus returns.

**2 Thessalonians:** While waiting expectantly for Christ's glorious return, live lives of faithful perseverance, patient vigilance and obedience service.



## RBT Grow Group is on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> March

Bring along some things from your reading of Paul's letters to share with others.

### Some RBT reading ideas:

- Meet up once a week to read it with a friend.
- Listen online at [Biblegateway.com](http://Biblegateway.com)
- Write down a verse that struck you that day.
- Encourage someone by texting them a thought from what you've read.



Here are some questions the Bible wants you to ask of itself. Use these to help you as you read your way through this month's book: (please don't feel like you have to fill in every question in loads of detail. These are a guide to help you learn from what you are reading.)

- What did you learn about Jesus and what it means to trust him? (Luke 24:45-47)
- What did you learn about yourself? (James 1:23 & 2 Tim 3:16-17)
- How were you corrected or rebuked or equipped for every good work? (2 Tim 3:16-17)
- What did you learn from the book that will help you keep going as a follower of Jesus? (Romans 15:4)
- What did you learn that will help you serve and build up the church? (Eph 4:11-16)
- What have you learnt that helps you love the Lord your God with all your heart & with all your soul & with all your mind? (Matt 22:37-40)
- What has helped you love your neighbour as yourself? (Matt 22:37-40)