

Student's Life Application Bible



**STUDENT'S
LIFE APPLICATION
BIBLE**



**New Living
Translation®**

SECOND EDITION

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Wheaton, Illinois

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Welcome to the *Student's Life Application Bible*. Most power tools come with a user's manual or instructions of some kind. This book is no exception! God gave us his Word to tell us about himself: how he operates, what he's done, and what his plans are for the people he created. This book is a "power tool" you can use. Wanna know more? Check this out: "All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

So, what're we to make of that? For starters, it reminds us to make Bible reading a priority. That's why the *Student's Life Application Bible* was written—to help you understand and apply God's Word. It's easy to use and packed with helpful notes and other features. You'll find the notes within the text, at the beginnings and endings of books, and at the back of the Bible.

At the back of the Bible you'll find . . .

A LOOK AT THE BOOK

By following this simple Bible-reading plan, you'll read through all the important biblical stories and passages in a year.

LIFE CHOICES REFERENCE INDEX

You'll face many choices and questions in life—questions that need answers; choices that need wisdom. More than 100 topics are listed in this index. Each topic has a selection of relevant Bible passages and notes that relate.

INDEXES FOR "CHOICES," "I WONDER," ULTIMATE ISSUES, CHARTS, PERSONALITY PROFILES, MAPS, AND "KEEPING IT REAL"

Again, Scripture references listed for these notes are to help you locate the notes easily. The notes may or may not actually relate to the Scripture listed.

"WHERE TO FIND IT" INDEX

More than 70 of the best-known Bible stories are listed in this index, along with Jesus' parables and miracles. Use either the Scripture references or the page numbers to quickly and easily find the story, parable, or miracle you want.

It's all here. Just about everything you'll need to understand and apply God's word. The next step—actually taking time to read and study the Bible—is yours. *So, what are you waiting for?*

The following spread is a quick look at each of the special features:

GENESIS

EVER TURN ON a TV show a few minutes after it began? Chances are you turned it off before the show ended or flipped to a different channel because you couldn't figure out what was going on. To fully understand the plot, you needed to see the beginning of the show.

The same truth applies to the Bible. If you're having a hard time figuring out the "plot," Genesis is the right place to begin your search for answers. Why? Genesis is the book of beginnings. In it you see the creation of the universe, the introduction of sin into the world, the beginning of God's plan to rescue his people from the sin habit, and the birth of the nation of Israel.

In Genesis we also get our first glimpse into God's character. Unlike everything else, God didn't have a beginning. He always existed. Chapters 1 and 2 showcase his creativeness and power, while chapter 3 reveals his holiness and judgment of sin. Through the sad saga of Adam and Eve and their descendants, we view God's incredible love for his people even when they constantly disobey him.

As you read Genesis, what other beginnings do you see? How do they enlarge your view of God?

genesis



timeline

Creation

(undated)

Noah

2166 B.C.

Abram born

2091

Abram enters Canaan

2066

Isaac born

2006

Jacob & Esau born

1929

Jacob flees to Haran

1915

Joseph born

1898

Joseph sold into slavery

1885

Joseph rules Egypt

1805

Joseph dies

stats

PURPOSE: To record God's creation of the world and his desire to have a people set apart to worship him

AUTHOR: Moses

AUDIENCE: The people of Israel

DATE WRITTEN: 1450–1410 B.C.

SETTING: The region presently known as the Middle East

KEY PEOPLE: Adam, Eve, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob, Joseph

KEY points

BEGINNINGS

Genesis introduces God as Creator of all that exists: the planets, plants, and people. All people were created in God's own image.

DISOBEDIENCE

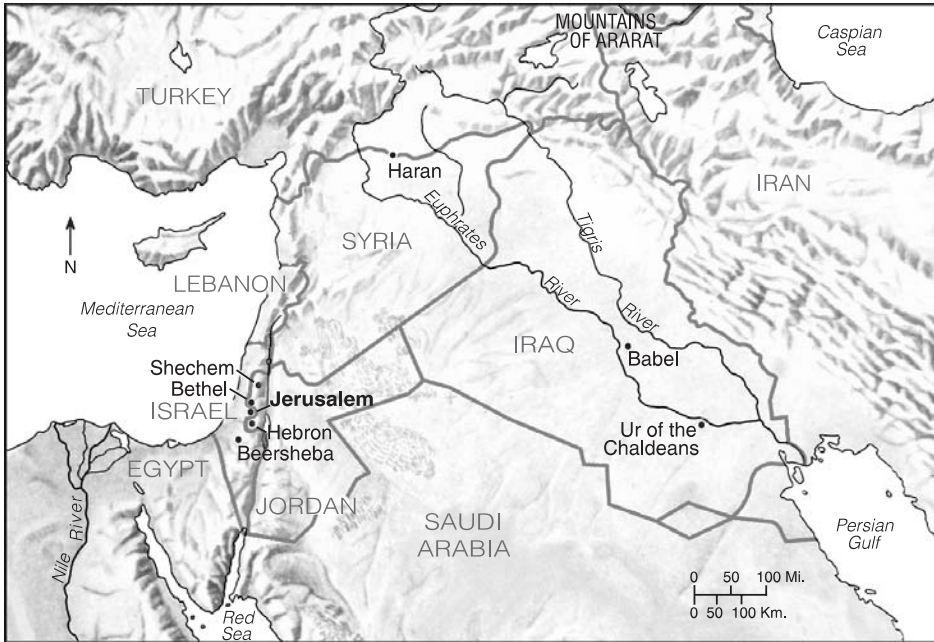
Sin results when people choose their own way instead of obeying God. Adam and Eve learned this the hard way. Only God can reverse the consequences of sinful choices.

PROMISES

God promised to protect and provide for his people. He specifically made promises known as *covenants*, which are binding agreements. God made a covenant with his people as a guarantee of what they could expect from him.

OBEDIENCE AND PROSPERITY

Obedience to God keeps our relationship with him intact and causes us to prosper like Abraham. Prosperity doesn't necessarily mean wealth or other material possessions. Rather, true prosperity means living life as God created it to be lived—in the fullness of his blessings.



Modern names and boundaries are shown in gray.



KEY PLACES IN GENESIS

God created the universe and the earth. Then he made man and woman, giving them a home in a beautiful garden. Unfortunately, Adam and Eve disobeyed God and were expelled from the garden (3:24).

- **MOUNTAINS OF ARARAT** Adam and Eve’s sin brought sin into the human race. Years later, sin had run rampant and God decided to destroy the earth with a great flood. All except for Noah, his family, and two of each animal who were all safe in a huge boat. When the floods receded, the boat rested on the mountains of Ararat (8:4).
- **BABEL** People never learn. Again sin abounded and the pride of the people led them to build a huge tower as a monument to their own greatness—obviously they had no thought of God. As punishment, God scattered the people by giving them different languages (11:8-9).
- **UR OF THE CHALDEANS** Abram, a descendant of Shem, was born in this great city (11:27-28).
- **HARAN** Terah, Lot, Abram, and Sarai left Ur and, following the fertile crescent of the Euphrates River, headed toward the land of Canaan. Along the way, they settled in the city of Haran for a while (11:31).
- **SHECHEM** God urged Abram to leave Haran and go to a place where he would become the father of a great nation (12:1-2). So Abram, Lot, and Sarai traveled to the land of Canaan and settled near a city called Shechem (12:5-6).
- **HEBRON** Abraham moved on to Hebron, to “the oak grove belonging to Mamre,” where he put down his deepest roots (13:18). Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob all lived and were buried there.
- **BEERSHEBA** After a dispute over ownership of the well here, Abraham made a covenant with Abimelech (21:31). Years later, as Isaac was moving from place to place, God appeared to him here and passed on to him the covenant he had made with his father, Abraham (26:23-25).
- **BETHEL** After deceiving his brother out of both his birthright and his blessing, Jacob left Beersheba and fled to Haran. Along the way God revealed himself to Jacob in a dream and again passed on the covenant he had made with Abraham and Isaac (28:10-22). Jacob lived in Haran, worked for Laban, and married Leah and Rachel (29:15-28). After a tense meeting with his brother, Esau, Jacob returned to Bethel (35:1).
- **EGYPT** Jacob had 12 sons, including Joseph, Jacob’s favorite. The other brothers grew jealous, until one day, out in the fields, the brothers sold him to Ishmaelite traders who were going to Egypt. Eventually, Joseph rose from Egyptian slave to Pharaoh’s “right hand man,” saving Egypt and the surrounding country from famine. His entire family moved from Canaan to Egypt and settled there during the severe famine (46:3-4).

1 THE ACCOUNT OF CREATION

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*
 2The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep waters. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters.

3Then God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. 4And God saw that the light was good. Then he separated the light from the darkness. 5God called the light “day” and the darkness “night.”

1:1 Or *In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, . . . Or When God began to create the heavens and the earth, . . .*

And evening passed and morning came, marking the first day.

⁶Then God said, “Let there be a space between the waters, to separate the waters of the heavens from the waters of the earth.” ⁷And that is what happened. God made this space to separate the waters of the earth from the waters of the heavens. ⁸God called the space “sky.”

And evening passed and morning came, marking the second day.

TRUE WORTH 1:1-26

God created everything there is—the heavens, earth, plants, and animals. When God finished creating the earth, he then chose to make people in his image. The phrase “Let us make human beings in our image” in verse 26 does not mean that God created us exactly like himself, especially in a physical sense. Instead, we are reflections of God’s glory. We can reflect his characteristics like love, patience, forgiveness, kindness, and faithfulness.

Our worth is not defined by possessions, achievements, physical attractiveness, or popularity. Instead, it is based on knowing that God created us in his likeness. Knowing that you are a person of infinite worth gives you the freedom to love God, know him personally, and make a valuable contribution to the lives of those around you. ■

⁹Then God said, “Let the waters beneath the sky flow together into one place, so dry ground may appear.” And that is what happened. ¹⁰God called the dry ground “land” and the waters “seas.” And God saw that it was good. ¹¹Then God said, “Let the land sprout with vegetation—every sort of seed-bearing plant, and trees that grow seed-bearing fruit. These seeds will then produce the kinds of plants and trees from which they came.” And that is what happened. ¹²The land produced vegetation—all sorts of seed-bearing plants, and trees with seed-bearing fruit. Their seeds produced plants and trees of the same kind. And God saw that it was good.

¹³And evening passed and morning came, marking the third day.

¹⁴Then God said, “Let great lights appear in the sky to separate the day from the night. Let them mark off the seasons, days, and years. ¹⁵Let these lights in the sky shine down on the earth.” And that is what happened. ¹⁶God made two great lights, the sun and the moon—the larger one to govern the day, and the smaller one to govern the night. He also made the stars. ¹⁷God set these lights in the sky to light the earth, ¹⁸to govern the day and night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good.

¹⁹And evening passed and morning came, marking the fourth day.

²⁰Then God said, “Let the waters swarm with fish and other life. Let the skies be filled with birds of every kind.” ²¹So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that scurries and swarms in the water, and every sort of bird—each producing offspring of the same kind. And God saw that it was good. ²²Then God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply. Let the fish fill the seas, and let the birds multiply on the earth.”

²³And evening passed and morning came, marking the fifth day.

²⁴Then God said, “Let the earth produce every sort of animal, each producing offspring of the same kind—livestock, small animals that scurry along the ground, and wild animals.” And that is what happened. ²⁵God made all sorts of wild animals, livestock, and small animals, each able to produce offspring of the same kind. And God saw that it was good.

²⁶Then God said, “Let us make human beings* in our image, to be like ourselves. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground.”

²⁷ So God created human beings* in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

²⁸Then God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground.”

MARRIAGE 2:18-24

God’s creative work was not complete until he made woman. He could have made her from the dust of the ground, as he made man. God chose, however, to make her from the man’s flesh and bone. In so doing, he illustrated that in marriage man and woman symbolically become one flesh. This is a mystical union of the couple’s hearts and lives. Throughout the Bible, God treats this special partnership seriously. If you are planning to be married, are you willing to keep the commitment that makes the two of you one? What are some helpful habits you can begin to develop that will help you honor that commitment? ■

²⁹Then God said, “Look! I have given you every seed-bearing plant throughout the earth and all the fruit trees for your food. ³⁰And I have given every green plant as food for all the wild animals, the birds in the sky, and the small animals that scurry along the ground—everything that has life.” And that is what happened.

THE ORIGIN OF HUMANITY



ULTIMATE ISSUES

“Ever been part of the great ape debate? Wondering what that is? If you’ve read a biology textbook or those of other life sciences lately, you’ll find the theory that humans descended from apes. Or so Darwin’s theory of evolution goes. On the other side of the coin, however, is a quote like this from Genesis: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

But many educators, philosophers, and others tell us that we evolved from nothing into one-celled animals, then progressed up the zoological chain to evolve into *Homo sapiens*. Or perhaps a third option exists—God created people, using the process of evolution as his “laboratory.”

An uneasy tension exists between these views. Are you feeling it? Maybe you’re wondering which viewpoint is the “right” viewpoint.

According to the Bible, humans, animals, and everything else in the universe were created by God. The idea that we simply materialized out of nothing is a logical and scientific impossibility. Check this out. The first law of thermodynamics tells us that matter can neither be created nor destroyed by natural causes. That’s a big problem for an evolutionist. If only natural causes are involved, how did nothing turn into something? Also, how did that “something” develop intelligence, a definite personality, morality, and spirituality? By chance? Impossible!

So, what does this all add up to? Three words: *God did it*. This truth does not rule out the possibility of some kind of God-directed evolution; neither does it give it any support. And frankly, honest evolutionists will admit that their beliefs involve as much faith and speculation—if not more—as the creationists’.

The Bible (Genesis in particular) gives us one core fact about the origin of humanity: God created us in his own image. Exactly how he did that remains a matter of faith. So, what do you believe?

³¹Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good!

And evening passed and morning came, marking the sixth day.

2

So the creation of the heavens and the earth and everything in them was completed. ²On the seventh day God had finished his work of creation, so he rested* from all his work. ³And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because it was the day when he rested from all his work of creation.

⁴This is the account of the creation of the heavens and the earth.

THE MAN AND WOMAN IN EDEN

When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, ⁵neither wild plants nor grains were growing on the earth. The LORD God had not yet sent rain to water the earth, and there were no people to cultivate the soil. ⁶Instead, springs* came up from the ground and watered all the land. ⁷Then the LORD God formed the man from the dust

2:2 Or *ceased*; also in 2:3. 2:6 Or *mist*.

of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into the man’s nostrils, and the man became a living person.

⁸Then the LORD God planted a garden in Eden in the east, and there he placed the man he had made. ⁹The LORD God made all sorts of trees grow up from the ground—trees that were beautiful and that produced delicious fruit. In the middle of the garden he placed the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

¹⁰A river watered the garden and then flowed out of Eden and divided into four branches. ¹¹The first branch, called the Pishon, flowed around the entire land of Havilah, where gold is found. ¹²The gold of that land is exceptionally pure; aromatic resin and onyx stone are also found there. ¹³The second branch, called the Gihon, flowed around the entire land of Cush. ¹⁴The third branch, called the Tigris, flowed east of the land of Ashur. The fourth branch is called the Euphrates.

¹⁵The LORD God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to tend and watch over it. ¹⁶But the LORD God warned him, “You may freely eat the fruit of every tree in the garden—¹⁷except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat its fruit, you are sure to die.”

¹⁸Then the LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him.”



Days of Creation

- DAY 1** LIGHT so there was light and darkness
- DAY 2** SKY AND WATER waters separated
- DAY 3** SEA AND LAND waters gathered
- DAY 4** SUN, MOON, AND STARS to preside over day and night, to mark off seasons, days, and years
- DAY 5** FISH AND BIRDS to fill the waters and the sky
- DAY 6** ANIMALS to fill the earth MAN AND WOMAN to care for the earth and commune with God
- DAY 7** GOD RESTED AND WAS PLEASED

tree in the middle of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God said, 'You must not eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die.'

⁴'You won't die!' the serpent replied to the woman. ⁵'God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil.'

⁶The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too. ⁷At that moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves.

⁸When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man* and his wife heard the LORD God walking about in the garden. So they hid from the LORD God among the trees. ⁹Then the LORD God called to the man, 'Where are you?'

¹⁰He replied, 'I heard you walking in the garden, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked.'



Satan's Plan

- DOUBT** Makes you question God's Word and his goodness
- DISCOURAGEMENT** Makes you look at your problems rather than at God
- DIVERSION** Makes the wrong things seem attractive so you want them more than the right things
- DEFEAT** Makes you feel like a failure, so you don't even try
- DELAY** Makes you put off doing something, so it never gets done

¹⁹So the LORD God formed from the ground all the wild animals and all the birds of the sky. He brought them to the man* to see what he would call them, and the man chose a name for each one. ²⁰He gave names to all the livestock, all the birds of the sky, and all the wild animals. But still there was no helper just right for him.

²¹So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep. While the man slept, the LORD God took out one of the man's ribs* and closed up the opening. ²²Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib, and he brought her to the man.

²³'At last!' the man exclaimed.

'This one is bone from my bone,
and flesh from my flesh!
She will be called 'woman,'
because she was taken from 'man.'

²⁴This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.

²⁵Now the man and his wife were both naked, but they felt no shame.

3 THE MAN AND WOMAN SIN

The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the LORD God had made. One day he asked the woman, 'Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?'

²'Of course we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden,' the woman replied. ³'It's only the fruit from the

¹¹'Who told you that you were naked?' the LORD God asked. 'Have you eaten from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat?'

¹²The man replied, 'It was the woman you gave me who gave me the fruit, and I ate it.'

¹³Then the LORD God asked the woman, 'What have you done?'

“The serpent deceived me,” she replied. “That’s why I ate it.”

¹⁴Then the LORD God said to the serpent,

“Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all animals, domestic and wild. You will crawl on your belly, groveling in the dust as long as you live.

¹⁵And I will cause hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will strike* your head, and you will strike his heel.”

¹⁶Then he said to the woman,

“I will sharpen the pain of your pregnancy, and in pain you will give birth. And you will desire to control your husband, but he will rule over you.*”

¹⁷And to the man he said,

“Since you listened to your wife and ate from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat,

the ground is cursed because of you.

All your life you will struggle to scratch a living from it.

¹⁸ It will grow thorns and thistles for you, though you will eat of its grains.

¹⁹ By the sweat of your brow will you have food to eat until you return to the ground from which you were made. For you were made from dust, and to dust you will return.”

PARADISE LOST: GOD’S JUDGMENT

²⁰Then the man—Adam—named his wife Eve, because she would be the mother of all who live.* ²¹And the LORD God made clothing from animal skins for Adam and his wife.

²²Then the LORD God said, “Look, the human beings* have become like us, knowing both good and evil. What if they reach out, take fruit from the tree of life, and eat it? Then they will live forever!” ²³So the LORD God banished them from the Garden of Eden, and he sent Adam out to cultivate the ground from which he had been made.

3:15 Or *bruise*; also in 3:15b. 3:16 Or *And though you will have desire for your husband, / he will rule over you.* 3:20 *Eve* sounds like a Hebrew term that means “to give life.” 3:22 Or *the man*; Hebrew reads *ha-adam*.

UPS:

- The first human male and female, husband and wife
- First to be made in the image of God
- First caretakers of creation
- First to know God personally

DOWN:

- Both tended to handle mistakes and sin by excuses or blaming others
- Acted without considering consequences
- Together they brought sin into the creation

STATS:

- Where: Garden of Eden
- Occupation: Caretakers of Eden
- Relatives: Cain, Abel, Seth (sons); numerous other children

BOTTOM LINE:

As Adam and Eve’s descendants, we all reflect to some degree the image of God.

The basic tendency to sin goes back to the beginning of the human race.

God wants people who are free to sin to choose instead to trust and love him.

God’s design for marriage was part of Creation.

ADAM & EVE

Adam and Eve were the only two humans who never experienced being young. Depending on how you feel, they may or may not have missed a lot! But try to imagine starting out life as an adult—no memories, no mistakes, no past little lessons to help you make adult decisions. . . . Most of us don’t realize how much we learn or fail to learn during our growing years until it’s too late.

For instance, we have many opportunities to learn as children that while there are some trustworthy people in our lives, not everyone can be trusted. We learn not to immediately trust new advice. Instead, we learn to compare it to wisdom we already have, or even to ask someone who has been trustworthy to evaluate the new advice.

Eve received some advice: “The fruit is great . . . God’s being selfish . . . you will be like him if you try it.” She trusted this advice even though it was contrary to what God told her to do. She ate the fruit. She failed to trust the one who had never failed her. Adam made the same mistake. New advice, no questions, no checking . . . he ate the fruit. Both of them disobeyed God. They had to live with the painful consequences.

Like Adam and Eve, we often have to live with the painful consequences of accepting bad advice. But consequences are reminders of hard lessons. They are not excuses to give up or to repeat the same mistakes.

How do you evaluate the advice you receive? Why is it important to consider the source as well as the advice?



ADAM & EVE

Adam and Eve’s story is told in Genesis 1:26–5:5. They also are mentioned in 1 Chronicles 1:1; Luke 3:38; Romans 5:12–19; 1 Corinthians 15:21–22, 45–49; 1 Timothy 2:13–14.

BIG MISTAKE 4:3-10

Adam and Eve's disobedience (Gen. 3) brought sin into the human race. They may have thought their sin (eating a "harmless" piece of fruit) wasn't very bad, but notice how quickly the sin habit developed in the lives of their children. Simple disobedience blossomed into outright murder. Adam and Eve acted only against God, but Cain acted against both God and man. A small sin has a way of growing out of control. Feeling controlled by the sin habit? The best way to break free is to put yourself under God's control. ■

²⁴After sending them out, the LORD God stationed mighty cherubim to the east of the Garden of Eden. And he placed a flaming sword that flashed back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

4 CAIN AND ABEL

Now Adam* had sexual relations with his wife, Eve, and she became pregnant. When she gave birth to Cain, she said, "With the LORD's help, I have produced* a man!"² Later she gave birth to his brother and named him Abel.

When they grew up, Abel became a shepherd, while Cain cultivated the ground.³ When it was time for the harvest, Cain presented some of his crops as a gift to the LORD.⁴ Abel also brought a gift—the best of the firstborn lambs from his flock. The LORD accepted Abel and his gift,⁵ but he did not accept Cain and his gift. This made Cain very angry, and he looked dejected.

"Why are you so angry?" the LORD asked Cain. "Why do you look so dejected? ⁷You will be accepted if you do what is right. But if you refuse to do what is right, then watch out! Sin is crouching at the door, eager to control you. But you must subdue it and be its master."

⁸One day Cain suggested to his brother, "Let's go out into the fields."* And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother, Abel, and killed him.

⁹Afterward the LORD asked Cain, "Where is your brother? Where is Abel?"

"I don't know," Cain responded. "Am I my brother's guardian?"

¹⁰But the LORD said, "What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground!¹¹ Now you are cursed and banished from the ground, which has swallowed your brother's blood.¹² No longer will the ground yield good crops for you, no matter how hard you work! From now on you will be a homeless wanderer on the earth."

¹³Cain replied to the LORD, "My punishment* is too great for me to bear!¹⁴ You have banished me from the land and from your presence; you have made me a homeless wanderer. Anyone who finds me will kill me!"

¹⁵The LORD replied, "No, for I will give a sevenfold punishment to anyone who kills you." Then the LORD put a

mark on Cain to warn anyone who might try to kill him.¹⁶ So Cain left the LORD's presence and settled in the land of Nod,* east of Eden.

THE DESCENDANTS OF CAIN

¹⁷Cain had sexual relations with his wife, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Enoch. Then Cain founded a city, which he named Enoch, after his son.¹⁸ Enoch had a son named Irad. Irad became the father of* Mehujael. Mehujael became the father of Methushael. Methushael became the father of Lamech.

¹⁹Lamech married two women. The first was named Adah, and the second was Zillah.²⁰ Adah gave birth to Jabel, who was the first of those who raise livestock and live in tents.²¹ His brother's name was Jubal, the first of all who play the harp and flute.²² Lamech's other wife, Zillah, gave birth to a son named Tubal-cain. He became an

4:1a Or *the man*; also in 4:25. **4:1b** Or *I have acquired*. Cain sounds like a Hebrew term that can mean "produce" or "acquire." **4:8** As in Samaritan Pentateuch, Greek and Syriac versions, and Latin Vulgate; Masoretic Text lacks "*Let's go out into the fields.*" **4:13** Or *My sin*. **4:16** *Nod* means "wandering." **4:18** Or *the ancestor of*, and so throughout the verse.

What does God really expect from me? Do I have to be perfect in order to please him?

When you look at Abel's life (Genesis 4), do you ever think that you have to be perfect in order to please God?

Some people view God as an impossible taskmaster with impossibly high expectations. Ever think that way?

Here's the deal: like any loving parent, God has expects his kids to act a certain way. (Think of your parents' expectations for you.) Some Christians may tell you about God's expectations based on where they are in their walk with him. An abundance of advice often contributes to the belief that God expects way too much. If you are feeling overwhelmed, you might be listening to others' expectations, rather than God's.

So, how can you please God? The story of Cain and Abel gives a significant piece to the puzzle. Both of these men brought something to God; yet only Abel's sacrifice pleased God. One reason was because Cain's heart was not really in his offering. He tried to please God out of obligation instead of love.

The first step in pleasing God is to examine our motivation for doing so. Do we really want to please him, or are we going through the motions because someone told us we should?

Obedience is the second step to pleasing God. It means loving him enough to listen to what he says, then following through on what we know he tells us to do.

Through the Holy Spirit, God speaks to us as we come to him with willing hearts. He gently shows us areas in our lives that we need to examine and change according to his timetable, not someone else's.

expert in forging tools of bronze and iron. Tubal-cain had a sister named Naamah. ²³One day Lamech said to his wives,

“Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;
listen to me, you wives of Lamech.
I have killed a man who attacked me,
a young man who wounded me.

²⁴ If someone who kills Cain is punished seven times,
then the one who kills me will be punished seventy-seven times!”

THE BIRTH OF SETH

²⁵Adam had sexual relations with his wife again, and she gave birth to another son. She named him Seth,* for she said, “God has granted me another son in place of Abel, whom Cain killed.” ²⁶When Seth grew up, he had a son and named him Enosh. At that time people first began to worship the LORD by name.

5 THE DESCENDANTS OF ADAM

This is the written account of the descendants of Adam. When God created human beings,* he made them to be like himself. ²He created them male and female, and he blessed them and called them “human.”

³When Adam was 130 years old, he became the father of a son who was just like him—in his very image.

4:25 *Seth* probably means “granted”; the name may also mean “appointed.” 5:1 Or *man*; Hebrew reads *adam*; similarly in 5:2. 5:6 Or *the ancestor of*; also in 5:9, 12, 15, 18, 21, 25. 5:7 Or *the birth of this ancestor of*; also in 5:10, 13, 16, 19, 22, 26.

He named his son Seth. ⁴After the birth of Seth, Adam lived another 800 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ⁵Adam lived 930 years, and then he died.

⁶When Seth was 105 years old, he became the father of* Enosh. ⁷After the birth of* Enosh, Seth lived another 807 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ⁸Seth lived 912 years, and then he died.

⁹When Enosh was 90 years old, he became the father of Kenan. ¹⁰After the birth of Kenan, Enosh lived another 815 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ¹¹Enosh lived 905 years, and then he died.

¹²When Kenan was 70 years old, he became the father of Mahalalel. ¹³After the birth of Mahalalel, Kenan lived another 840 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ¹⁴Kenan lived 910 years, and then he died.

¹⁵When Mahalalel was 65 years old, he became the father of Jared. ¹⁶After the birth of Jared, Mahalalel lived another 830 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ¹⁷Mahalalel lived 895 years, and then he died.

¹⁸When Jared was 162 years old, he became the father of Enoch. ¹⁹After the birth of Enoch, Jared lived another 800 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ²⁰Jared lived 962 years, and then he died.

²¹When Enoch was 65 years old, he became the father

UPS:

- First member of the “Hall of Faith” in Hebrews 11:4
- First shepherd
- First martyr for truth (Matt. 23:35)

STATS:

- Where: Just outside of Eden
- Occupation: Shepherd
- Relatives: Adam and Eve (parents); Cain (brother)

BOTTOM LINE:

God hears those who come to him.
God recognizes the innocent person, and sooner or later he judges the guilty.
God prefers wholehearted, rather than halfhearted offerings.

Abel’s story is told in Genesis 4:1-10. He also is mentioned in Matthew 23:35; Luke 11:51; Hebrews 11:4; 12:24.

ABEL Let’s face it. The first time you read Abel’s story, maybe you thought you knew all about him. Maybe you had him pegged as the teacher’s pet—the one who got all A’s in class and always raised his hand with the right answer on his lips. Or maybe he’s too close in personality to someone in your family who seems “perfect.” Does that sound like your view of him?

Abel was the second child born into the world, but the first one to obey God. He worshiped in a way that pleased God. That really bothered his brother Cain. Maybe Abel suspected that Cain was angry with him. Brothers and sisters know things like that about each other. Yet Abel trusted his brother even when Cain suggested they go out to the field together.

The Bible doesn’t tell us why God accepted Abel’s gift and rejected Cain’s, but both brothers knew what God expected. Cain seemed to take a shortcut. Only Abel fully obeyed. He is remembered for his obedience and faith (Hebrews 11:4), and he is called “righteous” (Matt. 23:35).

When it comes to obeying God, what’s your style? Wholehearted like Abel? Halfhearted like Cain?



ABEL



keeping it real

I admit I want my own way most of the time. I'm not going to lie to you. And I want God to accept my will, rather than the other way around. Sometimes, I find myself reacting like Cain—y'know, mad at God for not accepting my half-hearted efforts.

Submitting to God's will is the hardest part for me about being a Christian. I know it means giving up what I want and totally giving in to what God wants. It also means giving God my best instead of the least I can give. Sometimes, I want to say, "Cut me some slack, God!" But when I think about what God's done for me and how much he's always willing to give up for me, I find myself wanting to do things his way.

—Tynisha



of Methuselah. ²²After the birth of Methuselah, Enoch lived in close fellowship with God for another 300 years, and he had other sons and daughters.

²³Enoch lived 365 years, ²⁴walking in close fellowship with God. Then one day he disappeared, because God took him.

²⁵When Methuselah was 187 years old, he became the father of Lamech. ²⁶After the birth of Lamech, Methuselah lived another 782 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ²⁷Methuselah lived 969 years, and then he died.

²⁸When Lamech was 182 years old, he became the father of a son. ²⁹Lamech named his son Noah, for he said, "May he bring us relief* from our work and the painful labor of farming this ground that the LORD has cursed." ³⁰After the birth of Noah, Lamech lived another 595 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ³¹Lamech lived 777 years, and then he died.

³²By the time Noah was 500 years old, he was the father of Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

6 A WORLD GONE WRONG

Then the people began to multiply on the earth, and daughters were born to them. ²The sons of God saw the beautiful women* and took any they wanted as their wives. ³Then the LORD said, "My Spirit will not put up with* humans for such a long time, for they are only mortal flesh. In the future, their normal lifespan will be no more than 120 years."

⁴In those days, and for some time after, giant Nephilites lived on the earth, for whenever the sons of God had intercourse with women, they gave birth to children who became the heroes and famous warriors of ancient times.

⁵The LORD observed the extent of human wickedness

5:29 *Noah* sounds like a Hebrew term that can mean "relief" or "comfort." 6:2 Hebrew *daughters of men*; also in 6:4. 6:3 Greek version reads will not remain in. 6:14a Traditionally rendered an *ark*. 6:14b Or *gopher wood*. 6:15 Hebrew *300 cubits* [138 meters] long, *50 cubits* [23 meters] wide, and *30 cubits* [13.8 meters] high. 6:16 Hebrew *an opening of 1 cubit* [46 centimeters].

on the earth, and he saw that everything they thought or imagined was consistently and totally evil. ⁶So the LORD was sorry he had ever made them and put them on the earth. It broke his heart. ⁷And the LORD said, "I will wipe this human race I have created from the face of the earth. Yes, and I will destroy every living thing—all the people, the large animals, the small animals that scurry along the ground, and even the birds of the sky. I am sorry I ever made them." ⁸But Noah found favor with the LORD.

THE STORY OF NOAH

⁹This is the account of Noah and his family. Noah was a righteous man, the only blameless person living on earth at the time, and he walked in close fellowship with God.

¹⁰Noah was the father of three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

¹¹Now God saw that the earth had become corrupt and was filled with violence. ¹²God observed all this corruption in the world, for everyone on earth was corrupt. ¹³So God said to Noah, "I have decided to destroy all living creatures, for they have filled the earth with violence. Yes, I will wipe them all out along with the earth!"

¹⁴"Build a large boat* from cypress wood* and waterproof it with tar, inside and out. Then construct decks and stalls throughout its interior. ¹⁵Make the boat 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high. ¹⁶Leave an 18-inch opening* below the roof all the way around the boat. Put the door on the side, and build three decks inside the boat—lower, middle, and upper.

¹⁷"Look! I am about to cover the earth with a flood that will destroy every living thing that breathes. Everything on earth will die. ¹⁸But I will confirm my covenant with you. So enter the boat—you and your wife and your sons and their wives. ¹⁹Bring a pair of every kind of animal—a male and a female—into the boat with you to keep them

VIOLENCE

On Friday nights at seven o'clock you're practically guaranteed to find Tyrice and Jordan in one of two places. Check first at Tyrice's. If they're not there, munching pizza and watching horror movies on DVD, try the mall. They probably will be standing in line at the movie theater, anxiously waiting for the chance to purchase tickets for the newest cinematic tale of gore.

In the last couple of years, these guys have seen hundreds of violent movies and played even more violent video games. It doesn't matter what the plot is—deranged killers on the loose, murderous monsters on the rampage, the latest hitman roleplay game—as long as there are some gruesome torture scenes, lots of mutilated bodies, and gallons of blood and guts, Tyrice and Jordan are satisfied.

"That one scene was so weak," Jordan complains as he ejects a DVD one Friday.

"Which one?" Tyrice responds.

"You know, the one where he shoved the girl into that giant meat grinder. . . . I mean, the blood didn't even look real."

"Tell me about it!" Tyrice agrees. "Every scene in the whole movie was just ripped off from another movie."

"Want to watch *Babies with Rabies* now?"

"Naw, let's play *Hitman Heist*. I wanna try out your new game system. But let me go get some more cherry soda first."

Ever think that the violent scenes on the news, in movies, or in video games seem almost "tame"? That's what's known as being desensitized. It means you're so used to violence, it doesn't bother you anymore. Know what? Even though God has seen it all, he'll never be desensitized.

Check out his response to violence in Genesis 6:11-13. What's your response?

alive during the flood. ²⁰Pairs of every kind of bird, and every kind of animal, and every kind of small animal that scurries along the ground, will come to you to be kept alive. ²¹And be sure to take on board enough food for your family and for all the animals."

²²So Noah did everything exactly as God had commanded him.

7 THE FLOOD COVERS THE EARTH

When everything was ready, the LORD said to Noah, "Go into the boat with all your family, for among all the people of the earth, I can see that you alone are righteous. ²Take with you seven pairs—male and female—of each animal I have approved for eating and for sacrifice,* and take one pair of each of the others. ³Also take seven pairs

7:2 Hebrew of each clean animal; similarly in 7:8. 7:20 Hebrew 15 cubits [6.9 meters].

of every kind of bird. There must be a male and a female in each pair to ensure that all life will survive on the earth after the flood. ⁴Seven days from now I will make the rains pour down on the earth. And it will rain for forty days and forty nights, until I have wiped from the earth all the living things I have created."

⁵So Noah did everything as the LORD commanded him.

⁶Noah was 600 years old when the flood covered the earth. ⁷He went on board the boat to escape the flood—he and his wife and his sons and their wives. ⁸With them were all the various kinds of animals—those approved for eating and for sacrifice and those that were not—along with all the birds and the small animals that scurry along the ground. ⁹They entered the boat in pairs, male and female, just as God had commanded Noah. ¹⁰After seven days, the waters of the flood came and covered the earth.

¹¹When Noah was 600 years old, on the seventeenth day of the second month, all the underground waters erupted from the earth, and the rain fell in mighty torrents from the sky. ¹²The rain continued to fall for forty days and forty nights.

¹³That very day Noah had gone into the boat with his wife and his sons—Shem, Ham, and Japheth—and their wives. ¹⁴With them in the boat were pairs of every kind of animal—domestic and wild, large and small—along with birds of every kind. ¹⁵Two by two they came into the boat, representing every living thing that breathes. ¹⁶A male and female of each kind entered, just as God had commanded Noah. Then the LORD closed the door behind them.

¹⁷For forty days the floodwaters grew deeper, covering the ground and lifting the boat high above the earth. ¹⁸As the waters rose higher and higher above the ground, the boat floated safely on the surface. ¹⁹Finally, the water covered even the highest mountains on the earth, ²⁰rising more than twenty-two feet* above the highest peaks. ²¹All the living things on earth died—birds, domestic animals, wild animals, small animals that scurry along the ground, and all the people. ²²Everything that breathed and lived on dry land died. ²³God wiped out every living thing on the earth—people, livestock, small animals that

WHY WORRY? 7:15-16

Many have wondered how this animal kingdom roundup happened. Did Noah and his sons spend years collecting them? Actually, God took care of that job while Noah and his sons built the boat. They didn't have to worry about how the animals would arrive. Often we do just the opposite of Noah. We worry about details in our lives over which we have no control, while neglecting specific areas (such as attitudes, relationships, responsibilities) that are under our control. What task has God given you? What aspects of your life seem out of your control? Are you willing to put aside worry over the things you can't change and concentrate on what God has given you to do? ■

scurry along the ground, and the birds of the sky. All were destroyed. The only people who survived were Noah and those with him in the boat. ²⁴And the floodwaters covered the earth for 150 days.

8 THE FLOOD RECEDES

But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and livestock with him in the boat. He sent a wind to blow across the earth, and the floodwaters began to recede. ²The underground waters stopped flowing, and the torrential rains from the sky were stopped. ³So the floodwaters gradually receded from the earth. After 150 days, ⁴exactly five months from the time the flood began,* the boat came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. ⁵Two and a half months later,* as the waters continued to go down, other mountain peaks became visible.

⁶After another forty days, Noah opened the window he had made in the boat ⁷and released a raven. The bird flew back and forth until the floodwaters on the earth had dried up. ⁸He also released a dove to see if the water had receded and it could find dry ground. ⁹But the dove could find no place to land because the water still covered the ground. So it returned to the boat, and Noah held out his hand and drew the dove back inside. ¹⁰After waiting another seven days, Noah released the dove again. ¹¹This time the dove returned to him in the evening with a fresh

8:4 Hebrew *on the seventeenth day of the seventh month*; see 7:11. **8:5** Hebrew *On the first day of the tenth month*; see 7:11 and note on 8:4. **8:13** Hebrew *On the first day of the first month*; see 7:11. **8:14** Hebrew *The twenty-seventh day of the second month arrived*; see note on 8:13. **8:20** Hebrew *every clean animal and every clean bird*.

olive leaf in its beak. Then Noah knew that the floodwaters were almost gone. ¹²He waited another seven days and then released the dove again. This time it did not come back.

¹³Noah was now 601 years old. On the first day of the new year, ten and a half months after the flood began,* the floodwaters had almost dried up from the earth. Noah lifted back the covering of the boat and saw that the surface of the ground was drying. ¹⁴Two more months went by,* and at last the earth was dry!

¹⁵Then God said to Noah, ¹⁶“Leave the boat, all of you— you and your wife, and your sons and their wives. ¹⁷Release all the animals—the birds, the livestock, and the small animals that scurry along the ground—so they can be fruitful and multiply throughout the earth.”

¹⁸So Noah, his wife, and his sons and their wives left the boat. ¹⁹And all of the large and small animals and birds came out of the boat, pair by pair.

²⁰Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and there he sacrificed as burnt offerings the animals and birds that had been approved for that purpose.* ²¹And the LORD was pleased with the aroma of the sacrifice and said to himself, “I will never again curse the ground because of the human race, even though everything they think or imagine is bent toward evil from childhood. I will never again destroy all living things. ²²As long as the



UPS:

- Only follower of God left in his generation
- Second father of the human race
- Man of patience, consistency, and obedience
- First major shipbuilder in history

DOWN:

- Got drunk and later cursed Canaan because his son Ham saw him naked

STATS:

- Where: We're not told how far from the Garden of Eden people had settled.
- Occupations: Farmer, shipbuilder, preacher
- Relatives: Methuselah (grandfather); Lamech (father); Ham, Shem, and Japheth (sons)

BOTTOM LINE:

God is faithful.
God does not always protect us from trouble, but cares for us in spite of trouble.
Obedience is a long-term commitment.
A man may be faithful, but his sinful nature always travels with him.

Noah's story is told in Genesis 5:29–10:32. He also is mentioned in 1 Chronicles 1:4; Isaiah 54:9; Ezekiel 14:14,20; Matthew 24:37–38; Luke 3:36; 17:26–27; Hebrews 11:7; 1 Peter 3:20; 2 Peter 2:5.

NOAH Ever been disgusted by the amount of evil you hear about in the world? Welcome to Noah's world. The story of Noah's life involved not one, but two great and tragic floods. The first was a flood of evil. The world had become so bad that there was only one person left who remembered the God of creation, perfection, and love.

God's response to this flood of evil was a 120-year-long last chance. During those years, he had Noah build a large advertisement of what God was going to do. There's nothing like a huge boat built on dry land to make a point! Of course, everyone thought Noah was crazy. Despite the jeers of his friends and neighbors, Noah continued to build. When the flood came, no one could say he or she hadn't been warned. For Noah, obedience to God meant a long-term courageous commitment to a project.

Many of us have trouble sticking to any project, whether or not it is directed by God. (Does that describe you?) Or we back off when opposition occurs. Noah obeyed God and worked on one project longer than we even expect to live. The only project we have that is like Noah's is our life. What is God building in your life? A stronger faith? Perseverance? How are you aiding or hindering his building plan?

earth remains, there will be planting and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night.”

9 GOD CONFIRMS HIS COVENANT

Then God blessed Noah and his sons and told them, “Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth. ²All the animals of the earth, all the birds of the sky, all the small animals that scurry along the ground, and all the fish in the sea will look on you with fear and terror. I have placed them in your power. ³I have given them to you for food, just as I have given you grain and vegetables. ⁴But you must never eat any meat that still has the lifeblood in it.

⁵“And I will require the blood of anyone who takes another person’s life. If a wild animal kills a person, it must die. And anyone who murders a fellow human must die. ⁶If anyone takes a human life, that person’s life will also be taken by human hands. For God made human beings* in his own image. ⁷Now be fruitful and multiply, and repopulate the earth.”

WHAT’S WRONG WITH MURDER? 9:5-6

Here God explains why murder is so wrong: to kill a person is to kill someone made in God’s image. All people possess the qualities that distinguish us from animals: morality, reason, creativity, and self-worth. When we interact with others, we interact with beings made by God, beings to whom God offers eternal life. How do your actions show the value you place on human life? ■

⁸Then God told Noah and his sons, ⁹“I hereby confirm my covenant with you and your descendants, ¹⁰and with all the animals that were on the boat with you—the birds, the livestock, and all the wild animals—every living creature on earth. ¹¹Yes, I am confirming my covenant with you. Never again will floodwaters kill all living creatures; never again will a flood destroy the earth.”

¹²Then God said, “I am giving you a sign of my covenant with you and with all living creatures, for all generations to come. ¹³I have placed my rainbow in the clouds. It is the sign of my covenant with you and with all the earth. ¹⁴When I send clouds over the earth, the rainbow will appear in the clouds, ¹⁵and I will remember my covenant with you and with all living creatures. Never again will the floodwaters destroy all life. ¹⁶When I see the rainbow in the clouds, I will remember the eternal covenant between God and every living creature on earth.” ¹⁷Then God said to Noah, “Yes, this rainbow is the sign of the covenant I am confirming with all the creatures on earth.”

NOAH’S SONS

¹⁸The sons of Noah who came out of the boat with their father were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. (Ham is the father of Canaan.) ¹⁹From these three sons of Noah came all the people who now populate the earth.

²⁰After the flood, Noah began to cultivate the ground, and he planted a vineyard. ²¹One day he drank some wine he had made, and he became drunk and lay naked inside his tent. ²²Ham, the father of Canaan, saw that his father was naked and went outside and told his brothers. ²³Then Shem and Japheth took a robe, held it over their shoulders, and backed into the tent to cover their father. As they did this, they looked the other way so they would not see him naked.

²⁴When Noah woke up from his stupor, he learned what Ham, his youngest son, had done. ²⁵Then he cursed Canaan, the son of Ham:

“May Canaan be cursed!
May he be the lowest of servants to his relatives.”

²⁶Then Noah said,

“May the LORD, the God of Shem, be blessed,
and may Canaan be his servant!

²⁷ May God expand the territory of Japheth!
May Japheth share the prosperity of Shem,*
and may Canaan be his servant.”

²⁸Noah lived another 350 years after the great flood. ²⁹He lived 950 years, and then he died.

10

This is the account of the families of Shem, Ham, and Japheth, the three sons of Noah. Many children were born to them after the great flood.

DESCENDANTS OF JAPHETH

²The descendants of Japheth were Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras.

³The descendants of Gomer were Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah.

⁴The descendants of Javan were Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and Rodanim.* ⁵Their descendants became the seafaring peoples that spread out to various lands, each identified by its own language, clan, and national identity.

DESCENDANTS OF HAM

⁶The descendants of Ham were Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan.

⁷The descendants of Cush were Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabteca. The descendants of Raamah were Sheba and Dedan.

⁸Cush was also the ancestor of Nimrod, who was the first heroic warrior on earth. ⁹Since he was the greatest hunter in the world,* his name became proverbial. People would say, “This man is like Nimrod, the greatest hunter in the world.” ¹⁰He built his kingdom in the land of Babylonia,* with the cities of Babylon, Erech, Akkad, and Calneh. ¹¹From there

9:6 Or man; Hebrew reads *ha-adam*. 9:27 Hebrew *May he live in the tents of Shem*. 10:4 As in some Hebrew manuscripts and Greek version (see also 1 Chr 1:7); most Hebrew manuscripts read *Dodanim*. 10:9 Hebrew *a great hunter before the LORD*; also in 10:9b. 10:10 Hebrew *Shinar*.

he expanded his territory to Assyria,* building the cities of Nineveh, Rehoboth-ir, Calah,¹² and Resen (the great city located between Nineveh and Calah).

¹³Mizraim was the ancestor of the Ludites, Anamites, Lehabites, Naphtuhites, ¹⁴Pathrusites, Casluhites, and the Caphtorites, from whom the Philistines came.*

¹⁵Canaan's oldest son was Sidon, the ancestor of the Sidonians. Canaan was also the ancestor of the Hittites, ¹⁶Jebusites, Amorites, Girgashites, ¹⁷Hivites, Arkites, Sinites, ¹⁸Arvadites, Zemarites, and Hamathites. The Canaanite clans eventually spread out, ¹⁹and the territory of Canaan extended from Sidon in the north to Gerar and Gaza in the south, and east as far as Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, near Lasha.

²⁰These were the descendants of Ham, identified by clan, language, territory, and national identity.

DESCENDANTS OF SHEM

²¹Sons were also born to Shem, the older brother of Japheth.* Shem was the ancestor of all the descendants of Eber.

²²The descendants of Shem were Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud, and Aram.

²³The descendants of Aram were Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash.

²⁴Arphaxad was the father of Shelah,* and Shelah was the father of Eber.

²⁵Eber had two sons. The first was named Peleg (which means "division"), for during his lifetime the people of the world were divided into different language groups. His brother's name was Joktan.

²⁶Joktan was the ancestor of Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, ²⁷Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, ²⁸Obal, Abimael, Sheba, ²⁹Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab. All these were descendants of Joktan. ³⁰The territory they occupied extended from Meshah all the way to Sephar in the eastern mountains.

³¹These were the descendants of Shem, identified by clan, language, territory, and national identity.

CONCLUSION

³²These are the clans that descended from Noah's sons, arranged by nation according to their lines of descent. All the nations of the earth descended from these clans after the great flood.

11 THE TOWER OF BABEL

At one time all the people of the world spoke the same language and used the same words. ²As the people migrated to the east, they found a plain in the land of Babylonia* and settled there.

³They began saying to each other, "Let's make bricks and

harden them with fire." (In this region bricks were used instead of stone, and tar was used for mortar.) ⁴Then they said, "Come, let's build a great city for ourselves with a tower that reaches into the sky. This will make us famous and keep us from being scattered all over the world."

TOWERING PRIDE 11:4

The tower of Babel was a great human achievement, a wonder of the ancient world.

But it was a monument to the builders rather than to God. We often build monuments to ourselves (closets full of expensive clothes, the best CD collection in the state, shelves crammed with trophies) to call attention to our achievements. These may not be wrong in themselves, but when we depend on what we have to gain our identity and value, they take God's place in our lives. What are the "monuments" in your life? ■

⁵But the LORD came down to look at the city and the tower the people were building. ⁶"Look!" he said. "The people are united, and they all speak the same language. After this, nothing they set out to do will be impossible for them! ⁷Come, let's go down and confuse the people with different languages. Then they won't be able to understand each other."

⁸In that way, the LORD scattered them all over the world, and they stopped building the city. ⁹That is why the city was called Babel,* because that is where the LORD confused the people with different languages. In this way he scattered them all over the world.

THE LINE OF DESCENT FROM SHEM TO ABRAM

¹⁰This is the account of Shem's family.

Two years after the great flood, when Shem was 100 years old, he became the father of* Arphaxad.

¹¹After the birth of* Arphaxad, Shem lived another 500 years and had other sons and daughters.

¹²When Arphaxad was 35 years old, he became the father of Shelah. ¹³After the birth of Shelah, Arphaxad lived another 403 years and had other sons and daughters.*

¹⁴When Shelah was 30 years old, he became the father of Eber. ¹⁵After the birth of Eber, Shelah lived another 403 years and had other sons and daughters.

¹⁶When Eber was 34 years old, he became the father of Peleg. ¹⁷After the birth of Peleg, Eber lived another 430 years and had other sons and daughters.

¹⁸When Peleg was 30 years old, he became the father of Reu. ¹⁹After the birth of Reu, Peleg lived another 209 years and had other sons and daughters.

²⁰When Reu was 32 years old, he became the father of

10:11 Or *From that land Assyria went out.* **10:14** Hebrew *Casluhites, from whom the Philistines came, and Caphtorites.* Compare Jer 47:4; Amos 9:7. **10:21** Or *Shem, whose older brother was Japheth.* **10:24** Greek version reads *Arphaxad was the father of Cainan, Cainan was the father of Shelah.* Compare Luke 3:36. **11:2** Hebrew *Shinar.* **11:9** Or *Babylon.* *Babel* sounds like a Hebrew term that means "confusion." **11:10** Or *the ancestor of;* also in 11:12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24. **11:11** Or *the birth of this ancestor of;* also in 11:13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25. **11:12-13** Greek version reads ¹²*When Arphaxad was 135 years old, he became the father of Cainan.* ¹³*After the birth of Cainan, Arphaxad lived another 430 years and had other sons and daughters, and then he died. When Cainan was 130 years old, he became the father of Shelah. After the birth of Shelah, Cainan lived another 330 years and had other sons and daughters, and then he died.* Compare Luke 3:35-36.



a look at the book

INTRODUCTION

We usually think of the Bible as one book. That's logical because it looks like one book and claims to come from one Author. We also speak of it as God's Word. But when we read and study the Bible, we discover that it is actually an entire library between two covers. Not one book, but 66 (39 in the Old Testament; 27 in the New Testament)! Each book has its own style and uniqueness—yet each book contributes to the message God wants to get across with the whole Bible. What's more, though we use the word *book*, some parts of the Bible are letters (like Paul's letter to the Romans) or collections (like the Psalms). Still, the overall message of the Bible is one message because it has one main Author—God. The reason the styles throughout the Bible vary is because God teamed up with dozens of people to write his Word.

HOW THIS PLAN IS DIFFERENT

There are many plans to help you read through the Bible library. You can even start at page one and read straight through. The approach taken here, however, is designed to help you get a flavor of the whole Bible by reading selections from it throughout a year. You'll read the best-known stories and many important lessons. Some parts of the Bible offer so much help that they can be read every day. Among these are the Gospels, Psalms, and Proverbs.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Each day's reading has a title and a question. These application questions can help you as you read. So, get ready. You're about to start the awesome adventure of reading God's Word and getting to know him.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 1:1—2:3 How It All Began*Why do human beings have value and worth?***Genesis 2:15—3:24** Adam and Eve*In what ways are you like those first humans?***Genesis 4:1-16** Cain and Abel*How do you handle anger?***Genesis 6:9-22** Noah Builds a Boat*What is the most difficult act that God has asked you to do?***Genesis 7:1-24** All Aboard?*If you were alive at this time, would you have been invited to get on the boat? Why or why not? Would you have accepted? Why or why not?***Genesis 8:1-22** A Long Wait*How would you have spent your time on the boat?***Genesis 9:1-17** Rules and Rainbows*What could you do the next time you see a rainbow to show that you take God's covenant seriously?***Genesis 11:1-9** The Tower of Babel*Is there anyone you trust more than God? Why or why not?***Genesis 12:1-9; 17:1-8, 15-16** God's*Promises to Abraham and Sarah
How do you usually make decisions? How is God involved in those decisions?***Genesis 18:1-15** Unusual Visitors*How do you make guests feel welcome in your home? at school?***Genesis 19:1-29** Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah*How does God feel about sin?***Genesis 21:8-21** Hagar and Ishmael*In what ways have you seen God work through the messes in your life?***Genesis 22:1-19** Abraham's Painful Decision*Could you have made the same decision as Abraham? Why or why not?***Genesis 24:1-27** A Faithful Servant*How do you approach difficult tasks?***Genesis 24:28-67** Isaac and Rebekah*How has God surprised you recently?***Genesis 25:19-34** Jacob and Esau*How do you treat your brothers or sisters?***Genesis 27:1-40** Jacob Tricks His Father*On a scale of 1 to 5 (with 5 being really**important) how important is honesty in your relationship with your parents? Why?***Genesis 28:10-22** Jacob Meets God*In what places in your life has God seemed the most real?***Genesis 29:14-30** Jacob's Marriages*How do you show your love for others?***Genesis 32:1—33:18** Jacob Returns Home*What happens inside you when you try to avoid a problem?***Genesis 37** Jacob's Children*How are disagreements settled in your family?***Genesis 39** Joseph in Trouble*How do you react when you're treated unfairly?***Genesis 40** Dreams in Prison*When have you helped someone even though you had your own problems?***Genesis 41:1-36** Dreams in the Palace*Whom has God used to give you guidance?***Genesis 41:37-57** Joseph in Charge*How well do you handle big responsibilities?***Genesis 42** Joseph Sees His Brothers Again*If you had the chance to get back at someone who wronged you, would you take it? Why or why not?***Genesis 43** Back to Joseph*How quick are you to forgive? Why?***Genesis 44** Crisis in the Palace*How do you react when someone points out a mistake you've made? Why?***Genesis 45; 46:26-30** Finding a Lost Son*What do you appreciate about your parents? How do you show your appreciation?***Genesis 49** Jacob's Final Words*What legacies have your parents or grandparents passed on to you?***Exodus 1:8—2:10** Moses Is Born*How has God protected you from birth till now?***Exodus 2:11-25** Moses on the Run*When was the last time you found yourself running from God? Explain.***Exodus 3** God's Burning Bush*In what ways has God made himself known to you?***Exodus 4:1-17** Moses Isn't Sure*How willing are you to do what you feel God wants you to do? Explain.*

Exodus 5 Resistance

How do you handle others' resistance toward doing what's right?

Exodus 6:1-13 Rejection

What would it cost you to do what God wants?

Exodus 7:1-14 A Stubborn Ruler

What decisions, if any, have you tried to resist that you knew God wanted you to make?

Exodus 7:15—9:7 Five out of Ten Plagues

When do you try to bargain with God? Why?

Exodus 9:8—10:29 Four More Plagues

What are the worst consequences you've seen that were a result of wrong actions?

Exodus 11; 12:29-36 The Ultimate Plague

In what amazing way has God rescued you from a problem?

Exodus 13:17—14:31 A Narrow Escape

When have you experienced God's protection?

Exodus 15:22-27; 17:1-7 God Provides Water

When are you most tempted to complain? Why?

Exodus 16 God's Unusual Food Supply

For what specific gift did you last say thanks to God?

Exodus 18 Helpful Advice

Who are the dependable advisers in your life?

Exodus 19 An Appointment with God

How would you prepare to meet with God?

Exodus 20:1-21 The Ten Commandments

How important are these rules to you? Explain.

Exodus 32 The Gold Calf

What distracts you from obeying God?

Exodus 40 Instructions about God's Tent

When are you most aware of God's presence in your life?

Numbers 12 Trouble in the Family

What do you do when you find yourself feeling jealous of someone?

Numbers 13:1—14:4 Spying on the Promised Land

What do you usually do when you're faced with an impossible task?

Numbers 14:5-45 A Majority That Was Wrong

How often are your decisions based on peer pressure?

Numbers 21:4-9 Another Hard Lesson

What can you do to avoid repeating mistakes?

Numbers 22:5-35 Balaam and His Donkey

How do you avoid making a wrong choice when the right choice seems hard?

Deuteronomy 29 Moses Reviews God's Actions

How do you keep track of what God has done for you?

Deuteronomy 30 Moses Challenges the People

How do you show that you love God?

Deuteronomy 31:1-8 Moses Appoints New Leaders

In what ways have you been a leader?

Deuteronomy 34 The Death of Moses

How would you most like to be remembered?

Joshua 1 God Takes Over

Which of the qualities listed in this chapter would you most need to be like Joshua? Why?

Joshua 2 Spies Visit Jericho

What surprising individuals has God used in your life? Why do you think God chose them?

Joshua 3 The Invasion of Canaan

What instructions has God given you recently? How carefully did you follow them? Why?

Joshua 5:13—6:27 The Battle of Jericho

In what way has God worked through you to bring about something that would normally be impossible?

Joshua 7 Ultimate Consequences

What strongly negative or positive consequences have you experienced?

Joshua 10:1-15 The Longest Day

How do you know that God is powerful? Explain.

Joshua 23 Joshua Warns the Leaders

Which of Joshua's warnings do you most need to obey?

Joshua 24:1-31 Joshua's Last Words

How have the events of history provided hope for you?

Judges 4:4-24 Deborah Goes to War

What do you do to help suffering people?

Judges 6 Gideon Becomes a Judge

What examples of obedience can be found in your life?

Judges 7 Gideon and the Midianites

In what area of your life do you need to trust God more? Explain.



“So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God.” (Romans 5:11).

You know someone who’s just started a relationship with Jesus Christ . . . so what can you do to help?

First of all, you can be excited about this opportunity. Second, you need to be serious about this responsibility. Read Romans 5:11 again. You have the privilege of helping someone grow in his or her new relationship with your friend Jesus Christ. Here are some ways you can help a new Christian and Jesus grow closer. Remember, we all need FRIENDS.

Follow up with your new Christian friend by getting together regularly. Get together within 48 hours after your friend receives Christ, and at least once a week during the next six weeks (Matthew 28:20).

Reinforce what Christ has done in your friend’s life. Do this by looking at Scriptures that affirm God’s commitment to Christians (John 14:20; Hebrews 13:5; Colossians 2:13-14; 1 John 5:13; Galatians 5:25).

Involve your friend in your church activities. Take your friend with you and help answer any of his or her questions (Hebrews 10:24-25).

Exhibit Christ in your life through your actions and words. You don’t have to be perfect, just someone who wants to obey and please God (Colossians 3:17).

Nurture your friend’s spiritual growth. A new Christian is like a newborn baby who needs spiritual food and care. Try using the 14 encounters with God included in this section (1 Peter 2:2-3).

Do things together. Spending time together will give you opportunities to encourage your friend and put your faith into practice (Acts 14:21-22).

Stand by your friend in both the good and bad times. Your friend will fall down spiritually. Get ready to help him or her to get up and go again (Ephesians 4:11-16).

You have recently trusted Jesus Christ to be your Savior . . . so now what do you do?

First of all, you must know that through Christ you have become friends with God. Read Romans 5:11. Remember:

- You realized that your sin was keeping you from a relationship with God.
- You understood that Jesus Christ died on the cross to pay the penalty for your sin and that he rose again from the dead.
- You prayed, asking Jesus to forgive your sins and be your Savior.

Next, please understand that you have begun an exciting and lasting friendship. As in any relationship, getting to know someone takes time—it doesn’t just happen by itself. (Make sure you have a friend who has been a Christian for a while who can help you grow in your new faith. If no one has contacted you, you should go back to the person who helped you become a Christian and ask for help.)

You can grow closer to God just like you grow closer to people. God created you to have a relationship with him, to be his very own son or daughter. Now that you're his child and friend, he will patiently help you get to know him better and better.

Here are some ideas you can use to help you and God become close friends. Remember, all it takes is TIME:

Talk to God through prayer. To help you learn how to talk to God, the 14 encounters with God include ideas for prayer. Give them a try. God will listen when you talk to him.

Investigate God's Word. Decide on a time and place to read the Bible each day. The schedule for 14 encounters with God will help you know what to read. This will help you grow.

Make it practical. One of the best ways to learn is by doing. The 14-encounter schedule includes action steps to help you make your friendship with God active and practical.

Express your thoughts. You know how important it is to show appreciation to a friend. As you finish your daily time with God, tell him thank you. During the next 14 encounters with God, try to keep a personal journal. Simply write down your thoughts, your questions, and, most important of all, why you're thankful to God!

Finally, to get to know God better, try using the following "14 Encounters with God" feature. These give you some great ways to spend time with God and find out more about who he is and who he wants you to be.



14 encounters with God

encounter 1 IT'S GUARANTEED

• ASSURANCE

You recently became a Christian. Have you had any doubts about whether or not Jesus really came into your life? Do you wonder if you'll really go to heaven someday?

Talk to God: "Father, thank you for giving me a relationship with you. Jesus, thank you for giving me life. Please teach me and help me learn more about you. Amen."

Investigate God's Word: Read 1 John 5:11-13. Memorize verse 13.

Make it Practical: Check out "I Wonder"—1 John 5:10-12, page 1290, or "Keeping It Real"—Matthew 7:24-27, page 969. How can you put the ideas presented here into action in your own life?

Express your thoughts: In your journal, write a description of when, where, and how you became a Christian. Say thanks to God!

encounter 2 PART OF THE FAMILY

• GOD, OUR FATHER

Everyone knows what it's like to not feel totally accepted by others. Did you know that when you became a Christian, God adopted you into his family and accepted you unconditionally?

Talk to God: "Dear God, thanks for making me part of your family. You accept me. That's awesome! Amen."

Investigate God's Word: Ephesians 1:3-8. Memorize verse 5.

Make it Practical: "I Wonder"—Hebrews 1:1-3, page 1253, or "Keeping It Real"—Mark 9-10, page 1011.

Express your thoughts: In your journal, make a list of what you like about being part of God's family. Don't forget to thank him.

encounter 3 NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

• GROWTH

OK, now that you're a new Christian, what's next? Well, the best relationships are those that grow and deepen. It's the same way in your relationship with Jesus Christ. It's time for growth.

Talk to God: "Lord, help me to let my roots sink down into you. Thanks for helping me grow. Amen."

Investigate God's Word: Colossians 2:6-7. Memorize the first part of verse 7.

Make it Practical: "I Wonder"—Colossians 2:6-7, page 1211, or "Keeping It Real"—2 Peter 1:5-8, page 1281.

Express your thoughts: Think of one way that you'd like to grow spiritually, share it with one friend, and write it in your journal. Then ask God to help you do what you've decided to do.

encounter 4 TIME TO TALK

• PRAYER

You know how good friends love to talk with each other. God, our heavenly Father, is ready for a heart-to-heart talk all the time. Conversation with God is a must!

Talk to God: “God, I’m so glad we can talk anytime. Thank you that you’ll listen to my needs. Help me learn to listen to you. Amen.”

Investigate God’s Word: Philippians 4:6-7. Memorize verse 6.

Make it Practical: “I Wonder”—1 Kings 3:3-14, page 344 or “Keeping It Real”—Ecclesiastes 5:1-7, page 658.

Express your thoughts: Commit yourself to spending at least three minutes in prayer every day. In your journal, keep a record of your prayer requests and answers. Tell God thanks for those answers.

encounter 5 DIG IN

• BIBLE

When you get something new, you often receive an instruction manual. With your new life in Christ, you need God’s instruction manual, the Bible. God communicates to us through his Word.

Talk to God: “Dear God, thank you for showing me what you’re like through your Word. Help me to read it, study it, and obey it. Amen.”

Investigate God’s Word: 2 Timothy 3:14-17. Memorize verse 16.

Make it Practical: “I Wonder”—John 20:31, page 1093, or “Keeping It Real”—Isaiah 41:10, page 710.

Express your thoughts: Commit yourself to spending five minutes a day reading the Bible. As a result of something you read, write down in your journal something you will do. Ask God to help you.

encounter 6 JESUS DID IT ALL

• JESUS, OUR SAVIOR

Friendships get stronger when you really get to know the other person. You have trusted Christ to be your Savior and to give you new life. Really get to know who he is and what he has done! It’s incredible!

Talk to God: “Jesus, you are so powerful! I’m thankful that you hold everything together, including me! Amen.”

Investigate God’s Word: Colossians 1:15-23. Memorize verse 17.

Make it Practical: “I Wonder”—Judges 17:6, page 258.

Express your thoughts: Ask a friend to tell you what he or she really likes about Jesus. In your journal, write a note to Jesus about what you really appreciate about him.

encounter 7 SOLID ROCK

• OBEDIENCE

A good foundation is essential for a house to stand strong. Jesus wants you to realize that obeying God will give your life a solid foundation.



life choices reference index

Need answers to nagging questions? Check out the Scriptures under each topic.

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(See also BELIEVING IN GOD, FUTURE, GOD'S WILL, PRAYER)

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