

Visit Tyndale's exciting Web site at www.tyndale.com

Discover the Book God Wrote

Copyright © 2004 by Bright Media Foundation. All rights reserved.

Cover photograph copyright © 2003 by Michael Hudson. All rights reserved.

Designed by Ron Kaufmann

Edited by Lynn Vanderzalm

"Great Is Thy Faithfulness" by Thomas O. Chisholm is copyright © 1923. Renewal 1951 by Hope Publishing Co., Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

The One Year Bible reading plan is copyright © 1986 by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

Appendix A is adapted from Brian R. Coffey's *Quick and Easy Guide: The Bible* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale, 2002). Used by permission.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois 60189. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked NIV are taken from the *Holy Bible*, New International Version®. NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked NASB are taken from the *New American Standard Bible*, © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

Scripture quotations marked "NKJV" are taken from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1979, 1980, 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked KJV are taken from the *Holy Bible*, King James Version.

Scripture quotations marked NRSV are taken from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyrighted, 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America, and are used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked TLB are taken from *The Living Bible* copyright © 1971. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois 60189. All rights reserved.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Bright, Bill.

Discover the book God wrote / Bill Bright.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 0-8423-8618-1 (hc) — ISBN 0-8423-8619-X (sc) — ISBN 0-8423-6238-X (spec. ed.)

1. Bible—Introductions. I. Title.

BS475.3.B75 2004

220.6'1—dc22

2003026041

Printed in the United States of America

10 09 08 07 06 05 04

8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

CONTENTS

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xiii
1. Discover the Treasure of Your Life	1
PART 1: Why Should I Believe the Bible?	
2. Who Wrote the Bible?	15
3. Is the Bible Trustworthy?	25
4. What Is the Bible's Message?	39
5. What Does the Bible Promise?	53
PART 2: How Can I Understand the Bible?	
6. How Can the Bible Guide My Life?	65
7. How Can I Unlock the Bible's Meaning?	75
8. How Do I Apply Bible-Study Principles?	87
9. How Can I Strengthen My Commitment to Bible Study?	97
PART 3: What Is the Bible About?	
10. Our Powerful Creator	107
11. Our Perfect Judge	117
12. Our Loving Savior	127
13. Responding to God.	137
PART 4: How Does the Bible Change My Life?	
14. How Does the Bible Strengthen My Faith?	147
15. How Does the Bible Connect Me to God's Power?	163
16. How Does the Bible Help Me Live a Holy Life?	173
17. How Does the Bible Help My Love Grow?	183
18. The Challenge	191
<i>Appendix A: Summaries of the Books of the Bible</i>	197
<i>Appendix B: The One Year Bible Reading Plan</i>	209
<i>Appendix C: "Say, Mean, Apply, Fit" Method of Bible Study</i>	225
<i>Appendix D: The 4T's Method of Bible Study</i>	227
<i>Notes</i>	229
<i>About the Author</i>	235

LAST WORDS OF DR. BILL BRIGHT

My beloved partners in the Gospel:

I embrace you with the love of Christ. I want to share some things with you because I love you. Even in my death the Holy Spirit can use me to glorify the Father. I would be remiss not to share what He wants me to share. So thank you for these moments.

First, I am now experiencing what I have longed for ever since I met Jesus in 1945, when I asked Him into my heart. I fell in love with Him deeply as He revealed Himself to me through His Word. For decades my greatest joy has come from being in His presence and serving Him alongside Vonette. Today, I am experiencing God face-to-face in ways so magnificent that they cannot be described in words. For “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him” (1 Corinthians 2:9).

So I offer you the same advice that Jesus offered His disciples in John 14:28, when He said they should rejoice at His going to be with the Father. Rejoice with me because I am no longer in this earthly tent. I am in the presence of the living God, satisfied at the deepest core of my being. And rejoice with me because I have finished all He called me to do. It has been a marvelous adventure to serve alongside my precious Vonette for over fifty years. Together we have raised two sons who love God. They, their godly wives, and our four grandchildren have been our joy.

God has laid a message on my heart for you all. Do not settle for mediocrity. You are a child of the God of the universe. Surrender to Him. Become His slave. I can assure you, after more than fifty years of experience, there is no greater adventure than following Him. He cares for you. Take Him at His Word. When Vonette and I signed a contract in 1951 to become slaves of Jesus, we did so with the utmost confidence that “everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for [His] sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life” (Matthew 19:29, NIV). It made perfect sense that since He created the heavens and the earth, died on the cross for our sins, and is obviously far more intelligent than we are, His ways are better than ours. So we turned over everything to Him. I can say unequivocally that you will find no greater joy than in total surrender.

Finally, I want to pray for you. I pray that you will follow Jesus as a fully surrendered slave.

BILL BRIGHT

I now see my Savior with my own eyes, and I hear Him with my own ears as I worship Him in a way I have never understood. This is a good day for me. I pray it will be a good one for you.

God bless each of you.

(Adapted from the transcript of a video prepared by Bill Bright before his death.)

1

Discover the Treasure of Your Life

*H*ave you ever dreamed of discovering something that would be worth a fortune? All of us have heard stories about someone who found a treasure in an attic or in a box forgotten in an aunt's basement. One television show, *Antiques Roadshow*, travels around the country stopping at many places and allowing people to bring in their antiques for appraisal by experts. Once in a while, the show unearths a valuable artifact, thrilling the owners.

Recently, a true-life story of a magnificent find hit the national news. It started in the mid-1990s when a female trucker named Teri was traveling through the Southwest and stopped to meander through Dot's Thrift Shop near San Bernardino, California. She spotted a colorful painting and thought it would make a great gag gift for a friend who was having difficulties. Teri bought the painting for \$5.00.

What a buy it turned out to be! Ten years later, art experts have concluded that the painting was created in the 1940s by Jackson Pollock, a leading American artist. His "drip paintings" are so unique that they are almost impossible to imitate or forge. Art restoration expert Peter Paul Biro examined the painting and found a partial fingerprint that he compared to a known fingerprint of Pollock and noted twelve characteristics that are identical between the two prints. Biro also writes that the paint and the style used are just like Pollock's.

BILL BRIGHT

Although no one can be sure how the painting got to the thrift store, it most likely was purchased in an estate sale in Victorville, California. Wrapped in burlap and covered with dust and spider webs, it was a gem shrouded in secrecy, a gem that even the owner of Dot's Thrift Store failed to recognize. Yet one current estimate is that the painting may be worth as much as \$25 million!

Can you imagine what Teri felt when she first had an inkling of the painting's value? I can imagine her calling her friends and exclaiming, "Guess what! That old painting I got at the thrift store turns out to be a treasure!" What had seemed at first to be just a run-of-the-mill purchase was truly a fine work of art.¹

A TREASURE IN DISGUISE

That story reminds me of a discovery I made years ago.² As a high school and college student I occasionally tried to read the Bible, but it made no sense to me. I found it boring and concluded that no really intelligent person could ever believe what it said. I certainly didn't think that the Bible was trustworthy.

Then I became a Christian. From that moment, my life was transformed, and my attitude concerning the Scriptures changed dramatically. It was as if the Holy Spirit had unwrapped God's words from a covering of dusty burlap, and I discovered what a treasure I had in my hands! I realized that the Bible was truly the holy, inspired, and infallible Word of the greatest author in the universe, our Father God.

Since that great discovery, I have spent nearly sixty years studying the Bible, including five years of theological study at Princeton and Fuller Theological Seminaries. One of the important things I learned in seminary was a greater and more profound respect for the Bible. Even more significant, I have seen in my own life—and in the lives of so many others—what the Bible can do! Today my excitement over the Bible is undiminished. Indeed, it grows with each passing day.

I praise God that He used His Word to change me dramatically. As a young man, I was especially ambitious. I was a humanist and a materialist. The only way I knew of measuring success was through the accumulation of wealth. And that's what I was doing. I started my own fancy foods business and put all my energies into making it a financial success. But with the prompting of the Holy Spirit and through my study of God's Word, I began to learn about our great God and Savior, why He came in the person of

Discover the Book God Wrote

Jesus of Nazareth to this planet Earth, and all that He accomplished for me. Over time as I studied and read, the great benefits of receiving Jesus as my Savior and Lord and walking with Him daily began to become more and more real to me. I learned that all the blessings of heaven could be added to me if I would faithfully seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. This revolutionized my life. In time, the desire to get rich waned, and the thrill of serving God and seeing eternal results superseded my other ambitions.

Today I cannot imagine returning to my self-centered plans. Over the years I've come to the conclusion that I would be the fool of fools to do anything that would rob me of the incredible privilege of living in the light of God's Word and enjoying the supernatural adventure of walking in fellowship with Him. Each day is an opportunity to be part of His great strategy to share His love with all people everywhere in fulfillment of the Great Commission. Discovering God through the Bible has been the greatest find of my life!

Since 1945, I have known many of the world's rich, famous, and powerful people. Many of them achieved what I dreamed of doing as a young man—and are as unhappy as ever without God. I can assure you from experience and observation, true happiness comes from loving God with all of our hearts, souls, minds, and strength, and seeking first His kingdom. I know without a doubt that I made the right choice.

Even today I live every moment with the Bible. It is my constant companion. As a believer for fifty-six years, I have tested God's Word and found it true. In more than five decades I have not encountered one situation in which I have not been able to turn to God's Word for comfort, wisdom, guidance, joy, and blessing.

At eighty-one years of age, I would rather have the Bible on my shelf and in my heart than any other book written in history because it contains the message of God. It is a love letter to me and to all other human beings, who are created in His image. Not only have I been transformed and enriched through reading the Bible, but I have also seen it change the lives of multitudes of people.

THE BOOK OF YOUR LIFE

At this point you may be thinking, Sure, it's easy for you to understand the Bible. You had seminary training and have studied the Scriptures for years. But I don't have those advantages. I want to know what God says to me, but reading the Bible seems so

BILL BRIGHT

difficult. I have trouble finding a Bible reference when my pastor reads from the Bible, especially if the passage comes from the Old Testament. When I read the Bible myself, I can't understand how the ideas apply to me.

I understand your situation. I had the same perspective when I first discovered the Bible. And I want you to overcome those difficulties. That's why I wrote this book. I want to share with you easy ways to make the Bible the book of your life. Rather than merely telling you about the content of the Bible, I want this book to give you a start in reading and studying the Bible on your own. With this ability, you will see the Lord transform your life through His Word and His Spirit. God works uniquely in each of our lives, and He will emphasize different parts of His message for you because He knows and sees your unique personality, situations, and needs. If you can learn how to mine God's Word for yourself and find the countless treasures He has for you, you will have a lifetime of adventure in walking with God.

Keep in mind that God's great desire is to reveal Himself to us. One of the most heartwarming and inspiring life stories of the twentieth century is that of the remarkable Helen Keller. If you remember, she was born blind and deaf, and everyone assumed that she would live out her life in darkness and ignorance. Then her parents hired a teacher, Anne Sullivan, who pierced the shroud that enveloped the child by introducing her to words, and thereby to communication. Using a unique form of "finger language," Anne began "spelling" words into the child's hand, and eventually Helen recognized the link between the words and objects. Once Anne Sullivan had given Helen the names of several physical objects, Miss Sullivan attempted to explain the existence of God. She tapped out the symbols for the name *God*.

Much to Miss Sullivan's surprise, Helen spelled back, "Thank you for telling me God's name, Teacher, for He has touched me many times before." Even in her darkness, Helen Keller already knew that God existed. With the help of Anne Sullivan, the young blind girl had the ability to "see" and learn more about who God is and what He does for us.

Each of us has an inborn spiritual need to know God, but we must go beyond our soul's instinct to find out the specific details of what He is like and what He has done. The primary way we discover God's nature is through the Bible. It is His special revelation to us, His way of communicating with us.

One thing I have learned over the years is that the Bible is a living book. The apostle John writes these intriguing lines: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning" (John 1:1-2, NIV). This is a mysterious and super-

Discover the Book God Wrote

natural concept. The *Word* in this verse refers to Jesus Christ. What John is saying is that the text of the Bible is not just black ink on white paper, but it is infused with the character and message of Jesus Christ, who is the visible image of God. When we read the Bible, we discover the very essence of God's nature.

Does this excite you as it does me? No other book can make this claim. The Bible is so interconnected with God that we cannot separate it from His being. In fact, when we read the Bible with the right attitude, God, in the person of the Holy Spirit, joins with our spirit to help us understand it and apply it. The book comes alive! The words in the Bible have life-changing power.

WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

Let me start our "treasure hunt" by giving you some facts that show the Bible's influence. It is by far the best-selling book of all time. No other book comes close in the number of copies printed, distributed, reprinted, and passed down from one generation to the next. This remarkable book has been translated into more than fourteen hundred languages and dialects. People of extremely diverse backgrounds wrote it over a period of fifteen hundred years, and yet all sixty-six books of the Bible are uniquely in accord with each other. And most certainly there are more books written about the Bible than about any other work in the history of mankind. God's holy and inspired Word towers above every other volume in terms of its positive impact on individuals and nations.

In fact, the Bible is the cornerstone of Western civilization. Let me give you one of my favorite examples. George Washington, one of the greatest figures in American history, was a man completely devoted to God and to His Word. Washington said, "It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible."³ The first American president lived this out. From his youth, George Washington began and ended every day on his knees, reading his Bible and praying for God's guidance and blessing. He taught the American troops that God's Word was the standard to live by. What a tremendous example!

MINING FOR TREASURE

When approaching the Bible, we must recognize that it has a definite form and organization. Understanding this format will help us in our reading and study. To give you an overview of what is in the Bible, I have included four sections in this book.

BILL BRIGHT

Part 1—“Why Should I Believe the Bible?”—gives important information about the Bible’s author and the Scriptures’ reliability, basic message, and promises. Each chapter concludes with a section called Discover the Treasure, which includes material to help you dig into God’s Word for yourself. The discovery material in the next chapter will give a map of the major sections of the Bible. The next two chapters will help you establish a habit of reading and memorizing Scripture and of using Scripture to build a more effective prayer life.

Part 2—“How Can I Understand the Bible?”—gives the basic elements of how to study the Bible and apply what you learn. The discovery material includes simple Bible studies for you to try on your own.

Part 3—“What Is the Bible About?”—presents an amazing look at who God is and how we can respond to Him. The discovery material includes simple Bible studies that will illuminate God’s roles as Creator, judge, and Savior.

By the time you reach Part 4—“How Does the Bible Change My Life?”—you will begin to feel more comfortable about using your Bible. You will be ready for these practical chapters on how the Bible builds faith, power, holiness, and love in our hearts and relationships. The discovery material that accompanies these chapters leads you through several biographical studies.

The appendixes include more aids to help you continue to study the Bible long after you have closed this book.

The discovery material at the end of this chapter will help you select a Bible if you don’t already have a favorite version. You will also get a glimpse of the differences between several versions of the Bible. I encourage you to select one main version to use in your study but also have on hand several others so that you can compare passages of Scripture from time to time. Most of the verses quoted in this book are from the *New Living Translation* of the Bible. All others are marked.

BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

At this point, you may be thinking, *This sounds so hard. I’m not sure I can do it all.* Take heart. The steps to the Bible studies in this book are simple, clear, and short. They are written with not only the beginner in mind but also the person who has a busy schedule and still wants to make reading and studying Scripture a priority.

This is not a deep theological book that digs out the most difficult concepts in the Bible. What I want above all is to give you the basic tools to help

Discover the Book God Wrote

you begin your adventure with the Bible. God is so practical, and He wants us to live a glorious life. There is so much we can learn about who we are in God's eyes and what He wants to do through us! Your life can truly be transformed by God's Word, as mine has been.

Since I became a follower of Jesus, the desire of my heart has been to please Him, to love Him, to trust Him, and to obey Him. Christ, in turn, has graciously caused my faith to grow and my relationship with Him to be enhanced. Now I find that having walked with Jesus for nearly sixty years, I am far more in love with Him, more excited about Him, and more enthusiastic about sharing my faith in Christ with others with every passing day. So you can see why I am so excited about the Scriptures. This is where I learn of His love for me and how I can love and serve Him and others better.

My goal through this book is to encourage a true "revival of the Bible" in your life. Certainly the Bible contains far more than what I have condensed in these pages. Let this book inspire you to learn all you can about God's supernatural Word so that you can go on to spend a wonderful lifetime of discovering God's treasures. You will be the richer for it.

Before you turn to the next page, stop and ask God to open your heart and mind to understanding the marvelous gift of Scripture. In our sinful condition, we cannot change ourselves. But through opening ourselves to the work of God's Spirit and reliance on God's Word, He will do the changing in us!

The Bible is the greatest treasure you will ever own. It is priceless. What a tragedy it would be if you let its cover accumulate dust on a bookshelf through neglect. I encourage you to treasure the Bible as the greatest source of hope, strength, encouragement, peace, and blessing known to mankind.

Discover the Treasure

Spending time with your own Bible is an important way of learning about God through His Word. The Bible is the most important book you will own, and it's important that you have the right one for your needs. If you don't own a Bible that helps you want to read God's Word, consider the options we discuss in the following paragraphs.

Bibles are found in two different types—translations and paraphrases.

BILL BRIGHT

Since the Bible was written mostly in Hebrew and Greek, our English versions are translations that biblical scholars have made from the original languages, preferably from the oldest manuscripts available. The scholars who work on a translation of the Bible must follow certain defined translation rules to ensure the accuracy of the English text. A paraphrase, on the other hand, is not a translation of the original languages. Paraphrases take existing translations and make them easier to read and understand by using contemporary idioms and phraseology.

When you are doing Bible study, I recommend that you use a translation because it will offer you the most accurate rendering of a passage. Translators use one of two methods in translating the Scriptures: formal equivalence or dynamic (functional) equivalence. Formal equivalence tries to render a word-for-word equivalent of the original language. Dynamic equivalence tries to render a thought-for-thought equivalence of the original language, an attempt to recreate the same “dynamic impact” on modern readers as the original text had on its readers.⁴

I recommend reading the Bible in several translations, chosen for the unique characteristics of each Bible. By using different translations, you will gain a fuller understanding of the meaning of the original text. The list below will help you with selecting the right Bibles, and the comparisons of translations will give you a flavor of the differences you will encounter.

When you are doing devotional reading, you may want to use a paraphrase, which is sometimes easier to understand. I have enjoyed using *The Living Bible* as a paraphrase that speaks to my heart.

When choosing a Bible, also consider using a study Bible. Study Bibles come in various translations and include not only the full biblical text but also study notes, maps, time lines, outlines, and other helpful tools. We think study Bibles are so important that we are putting together a Discover God Study Bible that will accompany the books in this Discover God series. Our study Bible will be available around 2006. If you choose to buy a study Bible before then, consider some of the many study Bibles that Tyndale publishes.⁵

Technology has had a great impact on the resources available to us to study the Bible. A typical Bible-study software package offers thousands of commentary notes from dozens of Bible reference works for a fraction of the price of owning all of the separate resources. For instance, Tyndale’s *iLumina*, a Bible and encyclopedia suite, links over thirty-five thousand commentary notes to the verses of the Bible, along with hundreds of

Discover the Book God Wrote

relevant photos. With many Bible software programs, you can instantly search everyday topics—such as love, friendship, or troubles—to find out what the Bible says about such topics. Plus, with a visually animated Bible, such as *iLumina*, you can explore virtual re-creations of the world of the Bible—the streets of Jerusalem, the Temple, and the Tabernacle. Such visual and written resources are invaluable for understanding the context of Bible passages and their meaning. A solid Bible software package is a great start for a home Bible reference library and a powerful tool for understanding God’s Word.⁶

The following list describes the main versions of the English Bible used today.⁷ Consider them when you purchase a new Bible. Then make that Bible your own. Underline key passages that speak to you. Make notes in the margins. Record dates of the times you claim a promise found in a certain verse. Read and hear the words in your Bible as a love letter from your heavenly Father.

Strictly literal

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

Literal

King James Version (KJV)

American Standard Version (ASV)

New King James Version (NKJV)

Revised Standard Version (RSV)

Literal with freedom to be idiomatic

New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

Thought-for-thought

New International Version (NIV)

New Jerusalem Bible (NJB)

Revised English Bible (REB)

Dynamic (functionally) equivalent (modern speech)

Today’s English Version (TEV)

New Living Translation (NLT)

Contemporary English Version (CEV)

Paraphrastic

The Living Bible (TLB)

The Message (MESSAGE)

BILL BRIGHT

Looking at how various Bibles render the same passage can give you a sense of the distinctives of the various translations. Read how several Bibles (in alphabetical order) render this passage from John 1:1-5:

King James Version

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²The same was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

⁵And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

The Living Bible

¹⁻²Before anything else existed, there was Christ, with God. He has always been alive and is himself God. ³He created everything there is—nothing exists that he didn't make. ⁴Eternal life is in him, and this life gives light to all mankind. ⁵His life is the light that shines through the darkness—and the darkness can never extinguish it.

New American Standard Bible

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

²He was in the beginning with God.

³All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

⁴In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.

⁵The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

New International Version

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was with God in the beginning.

³Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴In him was life, and that life was the light of men. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

New Living Translation

¹In the beginning the Word already existed. He was with God, and He was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³He created every-

Discover the Book God Wrote

thing there is. Nothing exists that He didn't make. ⁴Life itself was in Him, and this life gives light to everyone. ⁵The light shines through the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it.

New Revised Standard Version

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

APPENDIX A

Summaries of the Books of the Bible

These summaries of the books of the Bible will help you not only gain an overview of the Bible's whole message but also see each book in the larger context of the whole message.*

THE PENTATEUCH

The first five books of the Bible, often called the Pentateuch or Torah, serve as the foundation of all that follows.

Genesis: Beginnings

Literally the book of beginnings, Genesis explains the origin and purpose of everything from the physical universe to human relationships to good and evil. The book begins with a stunning presentation of the creation of all physical matter, culminating with the creation of humankind (chapters 1–2). Then we learn of the fundamental problem of human life—the rejection of God's command—and the birth of evil and suffering (chapters 3–4). Following that, the story of Noah and the great flood introduces the dual themes of God's judgment and salvation. The rest of Genesis lays the foundation for the nation of Israel through the stories of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph.

Exodus: Deliverance

Exodus is the book of deliverance. Where Genesis ends with Joseph and his family living in Egypt, Exodus begins four hundred years later with the Hebrew people living in bondage to the Egyptian pharaohs. God raises up Moses to lead His people out of slavery into freedom. Exodus includes the story of the first Passover, the giving of the Ten Commandments, the installment of a system of sacrifice, and the building of the Tabernacle, where God's presence dwelt with His people.

Leviticus: Holiness

As the Israelites prepare to take possession of the land God promised them, God gives them careful instructions about how to worship Him, a holy God (chapters 1–17), and how to live as a holy people (chapters 18–27).

Numbers: Obedience and Disobedience

Numbers tells the story of Israel's preparing to enter the Promised Land, beginning with the taking of a census (thus the title of the book, Numbers). The people fail to believe God's promises and so wind up spending forty years

*These summaries are adapted from chapters 2 and 3 of Brian Coffey's book *Quick and Easy Guide: The Bible* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale, 2002), 27–59. Used by permission.

APPENDIX B

The One Year Bible Reading Plan

JANUARY 1

Genesis 1:1–2:25
Matthew 1:1–2:12
Psalm 1:1-6
Proverbs 1:1-6

JANUARY 2

Genesis 3:1–4:26
Matthew 2:13–3:6
Psalm 2:1-12
Proverbs 1:7-9

JANUARY 3

Genesis 5:1–7:24
Matthew 3:7–4:11
Psalm 3:1-8
Proverbs 1:10-19

JANUARY 4

Genesis 8:1–10:32
Matthew 4:12-25
Psalm 4:1-8
Proverbs 1:20-23

JANUARY 5

Genesis 11:1–13:4
Matthew 5:1-26
Psalm 5:1-12
Proverbs 1:24-28

JANUARY 6

Genesis 13:5–15:21
Matthew 5:27-48
Psalm 6:1-10
Proverbs 1:29-33

JANUARY 7

Genesis 16:1–18:15
Matthew 6:1-24
Psalm 7:1-17
Proverbs 2:1-5

JANUARY 8

Genesis 18:16–19:38
Matthew 6:25–7:14
Psalm 8:1-9
Proverbs 2:6-15

JANUARY 9

Genesis 20:1–22:24
Matthew 7:15-29
Psalm 9:1-12
Proverbs 2:16-22

JANUARY 10

Genesis 23:1–24:51
Matthew 8:1-17
Psalm 9:13-20
Proverbs 3:1-6

JANUARY 11

Genesis 24:52–26:16
Matthew 8:18-34
Psalm 10:1-15
Proverbs 3:7-8

JANUARY 12

Genesis 26:17–27:46
Matthew 9:1-17
Psalm 10:16-18
Proverbs 3:9-10

JANUARY 13

Genesis 28:1–29:35
Matthew 9:18-38
Psalm 11:1-7
Proverbs 3:11-12

JANUARY 14

Genesis 30:1–31:16
Matthew 10:1-23
Psalm 12:1-8
Proverbs 3:13-15

JANUARY 15

Genesis 31:17–32:12
Matthew 10:24–11:6
Psalm 13:1-6
Proverbs 3:16-18

JANUARY 16

Genesis 32:13–34:31
Matthew 11:7-30
Psalm 14:1-7
Proverbs 3:19-20

JANUARY 17

Genesis 35:1–36:43
Matthew 12:1-21
Psalm 15:1-5
Proverbs 3:21-26

JANUARY 18

Genesis 37:1–38:30
Matthew 12:22-45
Psalm 16:1-11
Proverbs 3:27-32

JANUARY 19

Genesis 39:1–41:16
Matthew 12:46–13:23
Psalm 17:1-15
Proverbs 3:33-35

JANUARY 20

Genesis 41:17–42:17
Matthew 13:24-46
Psalm 18:1-15
Proverbs 4:1-6

JANUARY 21

Genesis 42:18–43:34
Matthew 13:47–14:12
Psalm 18:16-36
Proverbs 4:7-10

APPENDIX C

“Say, Mean, Apply, Fit” Method of Bible Study

In addition to learning how to study a Bible passage using observation, you can understand a passage readily using the “say, mean, apply, fit” method outlined here.

1. What does the passage **say**?

With this question, determine simple facts, such as who is speaking, the person(s) the passage is talking about, the general subject and subtopics, and the setting. Also look for basic information such as when the event occurred (historical and cultural background) and the characteristics of the main character(s).

2. What does the passage **mean**?

From the basic facts, you can then find the meaning in the text. Identify the main principles and the lessons learned. To help you understand areas that are not clear to you in the passage, look up cross-references before you consult your study aids. Remember that the Bible is its own best commentary.

3. How can I **apply** the passage to my daily life?

Design an action plan to put the principles and lessons into practice. Then write out a personal prayer related to the main application, asking the Holy Spirit to help you apply it to your life.

4. How does the passage **fit** into or relate to the rest of Scripture?

No passage of Scripture stands alone. Each correlates with the whole theme of a chapter, book, and the entire Bible. Read other portions of Scripture related to the passage you are studying to see how they fit together. Also scan the entire book in which the passage is recorded to get a clearer idea of how the passage relates to the whole.

Prayer Points:

APPENDIX D

The 4T's Method of Bible Study

The 4T's are **Then**, **Timeless**, **Today**, **To me**. This method is especially useful when doing biographical or character studies. Feel free to customize and expand on the questions for the particular passage you are studying.

Then:

Perspective: What is the historical and/or cultural setting and background of the passage? What is the emotional/spiritual atmosphere of the story? (Discover this first from the passage itself, but you may also want to check a Bible dictionary, study notes in a study Bible, or other resources to understand historical details about the setting and background.)

People: Who are the principal characters? Observe their ages, roles, positions, status in society—anything that will help you understand who the people are. What role does faith play in their story? What are their strengths and weaknesses? What growth in maturity did you observe? Who influenced these characters, and whom did they influence? What problems did the characters encounter? (Again, discover what you can from the passage itself. *After* you are finished with your personal study, you may want to consult a Bible dictionary or study notes, but don't let those do your thinking for you.)

Timeless:

Preview: What is the main focus of each chapter?

Principles: What are the most important lessons to be learned? What do they teach about the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

Today:

Purpose for today: How do the timeless truths apply to today's society?

Pattern: How are the people and situations the same today as they were in Bible times?

To me:

Promises: What possible promises can I claim from this passage?

Practical application: What example do the characters set for me? Does the passage convict me of a sin I need to confess?

Prayer: Is there a prayer for me to echo?

Prayer Points:

NOTES

Chapter 1—Discover the Treasure of Your Life

1. Story taken from Peter Paul Biro, “Teri’s Find: A Forensic Study in Authentication,” http://www.askart.com/interest/advertisement_pollock.asp.
2. Even though Dr. Bright died during the final revisions and editing of this book, the publishers decided to retain the verb tenses in the present tense to reflect his thoughts in his initial writing of the book.
3. This comment is quoted on several Web sites. For example, see “Notable Sayings about the Bible,” by Henry H. Haley, http://www.bible-history.com/quotes/henry_h_haley_1.html.
4. If you want to learn more about these two schools of translation, see Philip W. Comfort, *Essential Guide to Bible Versions* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale, 2000), 99–108.
5. Tyndale’s wide selection of study Bibles—including its popular Life Application Bibles—offers various translations and paraphrases. For a full list of study Bibles available, go to the Tyndale Web site at www.tyndale.com, click on the Bibles button, and search for “study Bibles.”
6. The *iLumina* software includes small-group discussion questions linked to every chapter of the Bible and Life Application Bible Studies linked to every chapter of the New Testament, all instantly available and printable for the individual and for Sunday school classes and other small groups. You can find *iLumina* at Christian bookstores, or go to the Tyndale Web site at www.tyndale.com, and search for the title.
7. Adapted from Comfort, *Essential Guide to Bible Versions*, 235.

Chapter 2—Who Wrote the Bible?

1. Donald L. Roberts, “John Wycliffe and the Dawn of the Reformation,” *Christian History*, vol. II, no. 2 (1983): 30.
2. John C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on the Gospel of John* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1908), notes to the preface.
3. David McCullough, *John Adams* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001), 19–20.

Chapter 3—Is the Bible Trustworthy?

1. *Today in the Word* (December 1989): page 7.
2. Although the original source of this quotation is not known, you can read it on <http://www.biblenet.net/showcase/showArticle.html?subID=109>.
3. Arthur W. Pink, *The Divine Inspiration of the Bible* (Swengel, Pa.: Bible Truth Depot, 1917), 113–14, quoted in Henry Clarence Thiessen, *Introductory Lectures in Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949), 83.
4. Henry Clarence Thiessen, *Introductory Lectures in Systematic Theology*, 84.
5. Millar Burrows, *The Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York: Gramercy, 1986), 304.
6. *Ibid.*