

The ONE  
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MINI

FOR  
Leaders



TYNDALE HOUSE PUBLISHERS, INC.  
CAROL STREAM, ILLINOIS

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*The One Year Mini for Leaders*

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Designed by Beth Sparkman

Edited by Linda Schlafer

Published in association with the literary agency of Mark Sweeney & Associates, Bonita Springs, Florida 34135.

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ISBN-13: 978-1-4143-1188-3

ISBN-10: 1-4143-1188-5

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Printed in China

13	12	11	10	09	08	07
7	6	5	4	3	2	1

## **THANKS AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

O for a thousand tongues to sing my thanks and gratitude to God for allowing me to experience the incredible blessings of this project. I have never worked so hard, nor felt God's presence so certainly.

My wife, Rhonda, and daughter, Noelle, sacrificed a lot during the six months when this book was being written, because I was frequently gone—both physically and mentally—as the pages came to life. My words are better because of their patience, love, and support.

I could always count on my mom for an encouraging word. She said she “got teary eyed” over a couple of my stories.

A handful of people tossed ideas around with me when I got stuck. Thanks to Andy Butcher, Andy Hyde, Joe Bubar, Jim Seybert Sr., John Seybert, Joe Brown, Eric Grimm, Fred Frank, Bob Turner, and Tom Buckles.

My agent and friend, Mark Sweeney, kept my head straight. Jon Farrar and Ron Beers at Tyndale House shared the vision and gave me a long leash.

Finally, I thank and acknowledge the people who have passed through my life, providing experiences that became examples for this book. Some are mentioned by name in the stories. Others are woven into the fabric of compiled stories, but all are part of God's great plan for my life. Only he knows what tomorrow has in store—I can hardly wait to find out.

## **INTRODUCTION**

All truth is God's truth. He is the foundation of all truth.

This book will remind you of some basic leadership lessons by drawing connections between the truth God placed in Scripture and the experiences we've all had in leading companies and organizations.

Although I do believe that God is complex enough to weave tertiary levels of truth into his words, the daily lessons are not intended to challenge standard interpretations of biblical passages, as if to suggest, "This is what God *really* wanted to say."

To write this book, I simply read the Scriptures and noted each passage that reminded me of a leadership lesson I have learned during a career of more than thirty years in a variety of professions.

May God strengthen your relationship with him. He cares deeply about your professional life and wants to bless you more than you could possibly hope or imagine.



## ***HOW TO USE THIS BOOK***

Where space allows, I've included some background information to bring the daily Scripture passage into perspective, but you may want to have a Bible handy to read a few verses before and after the selected verses to provide greater context.

The Bible is a dynamic compilation of God's message to everyone. That certain passages are not relevant to you at the particular time you read them doesn't negate their truth, but makes the point that God is bigger—much bigger—than your individual perspective.

Finally, I guarantee that God will reward you for diligently seeking him. So, have a great year exploring his truth.

Jim Seybert

<http://www.jimseybert.com>



## ***Do Something***

In the beginning God created. *GENESIS 1:1*

The first sentence of the Bible introduces us to one of God's notable characteristics. In the beginning, God did something.

He didn't think, study, see, feel, or plan. He created.

He didn't wait for the heavens and the earth to fall into place. He didn't assume they would feel empowered to create themselves. He didn't delegate the task to his assistant. The text is very clear—God created.

God took action and did things on his timeline in the way he wanted them done.

Sometimes you and I need to step up to the plate and swing the bat. There's a time for waiting and a time for doing. In our desire to strike a balance, we often fail to act in a timely manner. We wait for one more opinion or one last focus group when we know that we should move, now!

Perhaps you're facing something today that just needs to be tackled. Look to Genesis 1:1 for encouragement.

❖ *When the time was right, God stepped through the front door of time and did something.*



## ***Communicate***

When the people saw how long it was taking Moses to come back down the mountain, they gathered around Aaron. "Come on," they said, "make us some gods who can lead us. We don't know what happened to this fellow Moses, who brought us here from the land of Egypt."

*EXODUS 32:1*

You embody your organization's vision. When the staff sees you, they see the vision. When you're away, they begin to lose sight of where they are headed. This can happen very quickly.

Make it a practice to keep your staff updated from wherever you are. If you are attending a conference or convention, send an e-mail every evening to the entire staff, giving them a glimpse of what you are learning.

Don't manage from the road. You have subordinates at the office who can do that. Instead, learn as much as you can at the conference or convention. When you return, you can use the opportunity to tell your staff how the things you learned fit with your mission statement and share your thoughts about how new ideas might be applied.

❖ *Be out of sight, but not out of mind.*



## ***Be Yourself***

What do you benefit if you gain the whole world but are yourself lost or destroyed? *LUKE 9:25*

God made you. He knit you together in your mother's womb, and before time began, he had a plan for you. He designed your personality and gave you your talents. You were created with a specific purpose in God's mind.

God created the *self* that you are.

I am happiest when I'm living the life God planned for me, using the personality and talents he gave me. In other words, I'm happiest when I am being myself.

Conversely, I am most miserable when I barter a portion of my God-given self for short-term earthly gain.

This question from Jesus—"What do you benefit if you gain the whole world but are yourself lost or destroyed?"—is quite often used in a spiritual context, but you can use it to evaluate career decisions as well.

Are you living the life God intended for you? Are you using the talents and personality he gave you? Are you being yourself?

❖ *Self-regard is not always a bad thing, especially if you're protecting the self God gave you.*



## ***Play Fair***

They refuse to understand, break their promises, are heartless, and have no mercy. . . . Worse yet, they encourage others to do [these things], too. *ROMANS 1:31-32*

“God shows his anger from heaven against all sinful, wicked people,” writes Paul in Romans 1:18.

He describes all sorts of vile conduct—wickedness, murder, sexual perversion—that you’d expect to see under the heading of “Stuff God Hates.” Then he concludes with four types of behavior that are common in the business world:

- ◆ Refusal to understand: *My mind is made up. It’s my way or the highway.*
- ◆ Breaking of promises: *I know you were counting on it, but we gave Bob the promotion.*
- ◆ Heartlessness: *It’s not personal; it’s business. We need to make a profit.*
- ◆ Lack of mercy: *Nothing short of perfection is good enough.*

Profit earned at the expense of someone’s family is greed.

Promises that can never be fulfilled are lies.

Stubborn refusal to consider new ideas is pride.

- ❖ *As a leader, treat your team as God would if he were their boss.*

## ***Don't Waste Time***

When Saul returned to his home . . . a group of men whose hearts God had touched went with him. But there were some scoundrels who complained, "How can this man save us?" And they scorned him and refused to bring him gifts. But Saul ignored them. *1 SAMUEL 10:26-27*

Some people in your circle of influence are draining your organization of its vitality.

They are wasting your time and casting doubt on your decisions.

They are scoundrels and complainers who constantly question your motives and hamper your ability to lead.

Here's some good news: You have God's permission to ignore them.

At this point in his life, Saul was walking with God. He had a group of godly advisors as he began his reign as Israel's first king.

There is no evidence that God was upset with Saul for ignoring the people who scorned him and refused to honor his leadership. Paying attention to such people eventually caused him a lot of grief.

You know who these people are, so steer clear of them.

❖ *Not every voice is worth listening to. Don't let scoundrels waste your time.*



## ***Plant Your Crop***

Does a farmer always plow and never sow? Is he forever cultivating the soil and never planting?

ISAIAH 28:24

My wife is from a family of farmers in Nebraska. My father-in-law, Ken, spends a lot of time each spring working the soil. The fields look great when he's finished.

You could put everything I know about farming into a very small bucket, but I have figured out one thing: *You have to plant seeds if you expect to harvest anything in the fall.*

If all Ken did was plow the dirt, he'd have some really great-looking dirt.

Nothing is certain for farmers, but the yield is related to the amount and quality of the seeds they plant.

Have your harvests been less than you expected lately? Could you be spending too much time getting things ready? Is it time to put away the plow and start sowing seeds?

In Isaiah 28:26, the prophet concludes, "The farmer knows just what to do." I'm sure you do too.

❖ *If you want a harvest, you must put some good seeds in the ground.*



## ***Play It Straight***

Even my prophets and priests are like that. . . . They give assurances of peace when there is no peace. *JEREMIAH 8:10-11*

I was managing a small business for absentee owners who had made some unwise financial decisions. Cash flow had dried up. Sales were on the rise, but we couldn't meet our obligations.

My bosses wanted me to keep a happy face and lie about our dire straits as they tried to finagle their way out of the mess they had created, but I couldn't lie to my staff.

I called them together and laid it out in plain English. Paychecks might be late. Benefits such as coffee and free sodas were over. It wasn't pretty.

I also told them that we could work hard and pull off a miracle despite the albatross around our necks. And they agreed.

Since I was up-front with them and didn't give "assurances of peace when there [was] no peace," the staff was willing to go the extra miles needed to get the business back on track—and we did it.

❖ *Always give it to them straight.*

## ***Keep Moving Forward***

Then Moses led the people of Israel away from the Red Sea. *EXODUS 15:22*

Here's a sad paradox:

Success breeds failure.

The company had enjoyed a few years of stellar growth. An aggressive public relations campaign had positioned them as their industry's dominant player.

To cut costs, the executive team decided to scale back and allow the firm's reputation to speak for itself.

Within two years, the company was the subject of some very damaging rumors about their motives for a controversial new product line. Longtime customers were leaving, staff morale hit rock bottom, and the company's leaders were forced into crisis communication mode.

The new product was actually quite good, but an anemic PR effort had left too many unanswered questions, and negative perceptions had filled the void.

Moses knew that crossing the Red Sea wasn't an end in itself, and he quickly directed the people's attention toward the future.

❖ *Incremental success is not the ultimate objective. Once you successfully cross the Red Sea, take a moment to mark the occasion, then fix your sights on your destination and keep moving forward.*

## ***Ask for What You Need***

The leaders of the tribe of Levi came to consult with Eleazar the priest, Joshua son of Nun, and the leaders of the other tribes of Israel. They came to them at Shiloh in the land of Canaan and said, “The LORD commanded Moses to give us towns to live in and pasturelands for our livestock.” *JOSHUA 21:1-2*

I was mentoring a bright young man in his first organizational-leadership role. He became frustrated when his board of directors allocated staff increases to every department but his.

I asked what the board had said when he requested the increase. He said, “I never actually asked. I just figured they knew how important this was. I mean, they’re always talking about how much we need to grow.”

It was common knowledge that the Levites would be given property within each of the other tribes’ regional land grants.

Joshua, the Levites, and all the people knew this, but the Levites didn’t just assume that Joshua would do what was right. They made their request.

My student had committed a common leadership error: He *presumed* and was not proactive with his requests. The board had committed to a growth strategy that included his department, but he had not followed through.

❖ *Never presume. Always ask.*



## ***Trust God's Plan***

Let us not become conceited, or provoke one another, or be jealous of one another.

GALATIANS 5:26

Why do we cheer for the underdogs?

They struggle to reach the next rung on the ladder and constantly feel the pressure of being a step behind. These perennial holders of honorable-mention trophies have chronic jealousy over other people's success.

It is easy to criticize those who brag about their accomplishments. We frown on bullies who inflame unhealthy situations, but we tend to condone feelings of jealousy because we have an intrinsic desire to see the underdog come out on top.

Paul ties these three traits together because God has uniquely created each of us for a specific purpose. If everything you have comes from God, you have no right to be conceited, no warrant for being a bully, and no reason to crave what you don't have.

❖ *Do your best for God, and be satisfied that he has a plan chosen especially for you, even if you're an underdog.*



# INDEX

## **ACTION**

Genesis 1:1 *January 1*  
Isaiah 28:24 *January 6*  
Joshua 21:1-2 *January 9*  
James 4:2 *January 15*  
Ephesians 5:1-2 *January 21*  
Judges 5:2 *January 22*  
Exodus 14:22 *January 29*  
Joshua 8:26 *January 30*  
Genesis 43:10 *February 23*  
Matthew 7:7 *February 26*  
Genesis 2:2 *March 2*  
Revelation 3:15-16 *March 23*  
Habakkuk 2:3 *March 25*  
Acts 19:32 *April 3*  
Romans 13:1-2 *April 14*  
Exodus 13:22 *April 16*  
Genesis 1:20 *May 8*  
Esther 8:10 *May 10*  
Isaiah 40:31 *May 21*  
Joshua 17:3-4 *May 23*  
1 Samuel 17:51 *May 25*  
Exodus 7:3 *June 7*  
Nehemiah 2:12 *July 2*  
Ezra 10:4 *July 6*  
Amos 3:3 *July 9*  
Revelation 3:3 *July 12*  
Acts 20:1-3 *July 16*  
Judges 10:9-10, 15-16 *August 2*  
1 Thessalonians 5:11 *August 7*  
Esther 1:7-8 *August 13*  
Exodus 3:4 *August 18*  
Matthew 12:30 *August 20*  
Judges 1:3 *August 22*  
Genesis 6:7 *September 7*  
Genesis 14:14 *October 2*  
Joshua 2:1 *October 26*  
Galatians 1:16-18 *October 29*  
Jude 1:10 *November 30*

Daniel 1:12 *December 10*  
1 Timothy 6:18 *December 28*

## **COMMUNICATION**

Exodus 32:1 *January 2*  
Jeremiah 8:10-11 *January 7*  
1 Samuel 16:7 *January 12*  
Ephesians 5:10 *February 7*  
Colossians 2:4 *February 15*  
Daniel 4:19 *February 20*  
Judges 19:29-30 *March 3*  
1 Samuel 15:6 *March 6*  
Ecclesiastes 5:3 *March 13*  
Genesis 1:3 *March 19*  
Genesis 17:5 *March 27*  
1 Corinthians 2:4 *April 1*  
Ezra 7:11-12 *April 11*  
Genesis 1:6-7 *April 18*  
Matthew 5:11-12 *April 23*  
Acts 2:13-14 *April 25*  
Genesis 1:22 *April 29*  
Matthew 5:15 *May 30*  
Mark 9:38-39 *May 31*  
1 Samuel 14:24-25 *June 3*  
Romans 1:7 *June 10*  
Matthew 10:5-6 *June 17*  
Mark 1:45 *July 3*  
Genesis 8:21 *July 4*  
Genesis 7:21-23 *July 19*  
Genesis 1:26 *July 22*  
Judges 8:2-3 *July 27*  
Genesis 14:23 *August 15*  
Genesis 3:6 *August 21*  
Mark 3:4 *August 25*  
Mark 6:26 *August 31*  
Exodus 4:29-30 *September 2*  
John 16:12 *September 4*  
Romans 5:19 *September 6*



Galatians 3:20	<i>September 28</i>	Matthew 9:17	<i>June 29</i>
Ecclesiastes 7:1	<i>October 8</i>	Romans 8:28	<i>July 8</i>
Matthew 2:1-3	<i>October 9</i>	Exodus 33:22-23	<i>July 31</i>
Exodus 24:14	<i>October 13</i>	Acts 1:21	<i>August 6</i>
Mark 5:19-20	<i>October 18</i>	Genesis 25:33	<i>September 11</i>
Genesis 6:22	<i>November 6</i>	Isaiah 8:11	<i>September 14</i>
Matthew 15:32	<i>November 9</i>	1 Samuel 18:14-15	<i>September 25</i>
Genesis 32:19	<i>November 13</i>	Luke 14:28	<i>October 4</i>
John 5:31-32	<i>December 6</i>	Matthew 25:7-8	<i>October 14</i>
Lamentations 3:22-23	<i>December 15</i>	Luke 12:47-48	<i>October 27</i>
Hebrews 13:2	<i>December 20</i>	Matthew 1:18	<i>December 25</i>
2 John 1:12	<i>December 21</i>	Romans 12:2	<i>December 30</i>
Exodus 4:16	<i>December 22</i>		
Matthew 9:30-31	<i>December 26</i>		

## FOCUS

Esther 6:6	<i>January 17</i>
Matthew 13:28-30	<i>January 24</i>
Genesis 32:7-8	<i>February 10</i>
1 John 5:21	<i>March 1</i>
Judges 8:27	<i>March 24</i>
Judges 17:6	<i>April 10</i>
Luke 6:41	<i>June 9</i>
1 Corinthians 13:1	<i>June 18</i>
1 Corinthians 14:33	<i>July 7</i>
Jeremiah 2:13	<i>August 3</i>
Exodus 14:10-11	<i>August 26</i>
1 Corinthians 9:26	<i>September 10</i>
Matthew 5:29	<i>September 16</i>
Mark 6:3	<i>October 23</i>
Joshua 1:7-8	<i>October 25</i>
Nehemiah 6:8-9	<i>November 21</i>
Genesis 25:18	<i>December 27</i>

## FUTURE

Isaiah 3:6	<i>March 9</i>
Joshua 10:11	<i>March 16</i>
Mark 7:5	<i>April 24</i>
Ecclesiastes 3:11	<i>May 5</i>
John 21:6	<i>May 13</i>
Isaiah 48:6-7	<i>May 17</i>
Genesis 12:11-13	<i>June 15</i>

## HISTORY

Joshua 4:6-7	<i>January 26</i>
Genesis 5:1	<i>February 9</i>
Philippians 3:13	<i>March 11</i>
Matthew 1:1	<i>May 19</i>
Matthew 3:15	<i>June 25</i>
Exodus 16:32	<i>July 23</i>
Exodus 12:24-25	<i>July 26</i>
Daniel 5:10	<i>August 8</i>
1 Samuel 8:1-3	<i>August 19</i>
Genesis 45:7-8	<i>September 13</i>
Genesis 26:28	<i>November 12</i>

## INTEGRITY

Job 2:9-10	<i>January 28</i>
Galatians 6:3	<i>February 2</i>
Nehemiah 9:8	<i>February 5</i>
Jude 1:16	<i>February 8</i>
Matthew 6:2	<i>February 12</i>
Isaiah 2:11	<i>February 17</i>
1 Samuel 15:22	<i>February 25</i>
James 5:4	<i>March 18</i>
Genesis 23:13	<i>March 20</i>
Hebrews 10:23	<i>April 2</i>
Exodus 22:22-24	<i>April 4</i>
Exodus 29:18	<i>April 6</i>
Matthew 20:25-27	<i>April 13</i>
Mark 12:17	<i>April 15</i>
Zechariah 7:9-10	<i>April 22</i>

Micah 6:8	May 2	Ecclesiastes 1:8	May 11
Isaiah 58:6	May 12	Exodus 7:5	May 15
Ruth 1:16	May 26	Joshua 1:16	May 28
1 Samuel 13:11-12	May 27	Romans 4:4	June 2
Galatians 6:9	June 1	1 Samuel 14:45	June 4
Matthew 7:12	June 5	Malachi 3:5	June 11
Mark 4:22	June 6	Exodus 15:20	June 16
Luke 6:37	June 13	Luke 16:13	June 22
Romans 7:18-19	June 14	Ecclesiastes 3:22	June 23
Isaiah 57:15	June 19	Esther 1:5	June 28
Job 29:11-14	June 27	Exodus 5:10-11	July 17
Joshua 6:22	July 14	Galatians 5:22-23	July 24
Genesis 41:45	July 18	2 Thessalonians 3:11	July 25
Hosea 7:10	August 9	Matthew 16:15	July 28
Hebrews 10:24	August 12	Genesis 49:28	August 4
Genesis 17:26-27	August 27	Matthew 6:24	August 5
Genesis 39:17	September 18	Matthew 6:21	August 16
Matthew 5:45	September 21	Genesis 3:9	August 17
Ephesians 4:15	October 1	Genesis 18:33	August 29
Daniel 2:30	October 6	Exodus 39:42-43	September 24
Mark 1:5-6	October 15	Genesis 9:17	September 29
2 Corinthians 1:18-19	October 28	Genesis 21:5-6	October 7
1 Samuel 26:7-8	November 16	Exodus 21:23-25	October 12
1 Samuel 30:23-24	November 17	Exodus 28:1	October 16
Ephesians 4:25, 28	November 20	Exodus 29:1	October 17
Isaiah 5:20	November 22	Luke 15:31-32	November 1
Philemon 1:8-9	December 12	Genesis 7:4	November 7
Exodus 23:6	December 24	Matthew 25:19	November 11

## STAFF

Romans 1:31-32	January 4
Isaiah 56:1	January 13
Exodus 17:12	January 19
Genesis 17:13	January 27
1 Samuel 30:13-15	February 16
1 Corinthians 3:7-8	March 10
Exodus 32:9-11	March 12
Jeremiah 1:6-8	March 26
Genesis 46:33-34	March 31
Daniel 1:4	April 21
Mark 6:30-31	May 3
Luke 10:2	May 4

## SUCCESS

Exodus 15:1	January 11
Joshua 7:4-5	February 4
Romans 12:9-18	February 14
1 Corinthians 9:7	February 21
Acts 10:28	March 21
Matthew 4:1	March 29
Genesis 1:16	April 5
Genesis 24:12	April 17

Isaiah 52:12	<i>April 20</i>	Acts 13:44-45	<i>March 30</i>
1 Samuel 7:3	<i>April 28</i>	Acts 15:37-39	<i>April 8</i>
Genesis 12:8	<i>June 24</i>	Isaiah 51:15-16	<i>April 19</i>
Matthew 14:17-18	<i>July 5</i>	Ecclesiastes 4:9, 12	<i>April 26</i>
Daniel 2:49	<i>July 13</i>	Jeremiah 17:8	<i>May 18</i>
1 Peter 5:7	<i>July 21</i>	Ecclesiastes 5:18	<i>May 22</i>
Luke 16:10	<i>July 29</i>	Matthew 10:2-4	<i>June 21</i>
Genesis 4:1	<i>September 1</i>	Romans 12:6	<i>July 1</i>
Genesis 24:27	<i>September 5</i>	2 Timothy 3:16-17	<i>July 15</i>
Romans 5:3	<i>September 9</i>	Genesis 2:18	<i>August 14</i>
Jeremiah 29:7	<i>September 15</i>	Mark 1:35	<i>August 24</i>
Genesis 41:12	<i>September 20</i>	Genesis 39:22-23	<i>September 19</i>
Nehemiah 1:11	<i>September 26</i>	1 Corinthians 12:14-15	<i>September 27</i>
Genesis 12:2	<i>October 3</i>	John 4:9	<i>November 2</i>
Genesis 24:33	<i>October 11</i>	John 4:7	<i>November 18</i>
Joshua 3:7	<i>October 30</i>	John 13:3-5	<i>December 3</i>
Genesis 6:13	<i>November 4</i>	Isaiah 49:4	<i>December 9</i>
Galatians 6:4	<i>November 19</i>		
Philippians 2:3-4	<i>November 25</i>		
Nehemiah 8:10	<i>November 27</i>		
Hebrews 8:13	<i>December 13</i>		

## TIME

1 Samuel 10:26-27	<i>January 5</i>
Esther 5:4	<i>January 16</i>
John 9:16	<i>January 20</i>
Romans 1:23-24	<i>February 1</i>
Titus 3:10	<i>March 5</i>
Job 12:1-3	<i>April 12</i>
2 Corinthians 11:19-20	<i>May 14</i>
Matthew 13:3-8	<i>May 20</i>
Exodus 20:11	<i>May 29</i>
Exodus 23:27-30	<i>July 30</i>
Exodus 18:25-26	<i>September 8</i>
Matthew 10:14	<i>September 22</i>
Genesis 26:14-15	<i>December 4</i>
Genesis 26:22	<i>December 5</i>

## UNIQUENESS

Luke 9:25	<i>January 3</i>
Galatians 5:26	<i>January 10</i>
Exodus 31:2-3	<i>March 15</i>

## VISION

Exodus 15:22	<i>January 8</i>
Matthew 4:19	<i>January 14</i>
Genesis 28:12	<i>January 18</i>
Judges 2:10	<i>January 23</i>
Ruth 4:17	<i>January 31</i>
Isaiah 43:18-19	<i>February 6</i>
Nehemiah 4:14	<i>February 11</i>
Genesis 3:1	<i>February 18</i>
Joshua 24:15	<i>February 24</i>
Joshua 5:11-12	<i>March 8</i>
Genesis 29:20	<i>April 27</i>
Isaiah 55:8	<i>May 1</i>
Genesis 37:19-20	<i>May 7</i>
Exodus 3:16-17	<i>May 9</i>
Judges 2:18-19	<i>June 8</i>
1 Corinthians 15:51-52	<i>June 30</i>
Ezra 3:1	<i>July 10</i>
Genesis 2:16-17	<i>August 1</i>
1 Corinthians 1:9	<i>August 11</i>
Mark 4:33-34	<i>August 30</i>
Genesis 39:6	<i>September 17</i>
Genesis 15:16	<i>September 23</i>
Matthew 9:11-12	<i>October 10</i>

Numbers 13:30	<i>October 21</i>	1 Samuel 16:23	<i>April 7</i>
Exodus 35:21	<i>October 22</i>	1 Corinthians 5:7	<i>April 9</i>
2 Corinthians 4:8-9	<i>November 3</i>	Exodus 34:21	<i>April 30</i>
Genesis 6:17	<i>November 5</i>	Judges 7:11-12	<i>May 6</i>
2 Corinthians 9:6	<i>November 10</i>	Judges 6:36-37	<i>May 16</i>
Luke 19:5	<i>November 14</i>	Genesis 34:24-26	<i>May 24</i>
John 4:34	<i>November 23</i>	Isaiah 30:9-11	<i>June 12</i>
Revelation 3:20	<i>November 29</i>	Hosea 12:1	<i>June 20</i>
Numbers 22:30	<i>December 2</i>	Luke 12:22-31	<i>June 26</i>
Philippians 4:8	<i>December 7</i>	Romans 14:22-23	<i>July 11</i>
Isaiah 25:1	<i>December 8</i>	James 1:5	<i>July 20</i>
Genesis 41:37	<i>December 19</i>	Romans 11:36	<i>August 10</i>
Hebrews 12:12-13	<i>December 23</i>	Matthew 7:20	<i>August 23</i>
Philippians 1:6	<i>December 29</i>	Genesis 18:25	<i>August 28</i>

## **WISDOM**

1 Corinthians 8:2	<i>January 25</i>	1 Timothy 6:10	<i>September 3</i>
Genesis 8:12	<i>February 3</i>	Exodus 20:1	<i>September 12</i>
Mark 5:30	<i>February 13</i>	Daniel 1:20	<i>September 30</i>
Job 1:1	<i>February 19</i>	Romans 11:9	<i>October 5</i>
James 1:2	<i>February 22</i>	Exodus 34:27	<i>October 19</i>
Titus 1:15	<i>February 27</i>	Luke 11:34	<i>October 20</i>
Acts 5:24-25	<i>February 28</i>	Luke 11:34	<i>October 24</i>
Romans 12:2	<i>March 4</i>	1 Samuel 25:33	<i>October 31</i>
Genesis 13:8	<i>March 7</i>	Genesis 8:8	<i>November 8</i>
John 15:2	<i>March 14</i>	John 7:24	<i>November 28</i>
Colossians 3:5	<i>March 17</i>	Isaiah 26:3	<i>December 1</i>
Colossians 4:5	<i>March 22</i>	1 Timothy 4:12	<i>December 11</i>
Genesis 33:11	<i>March 28</i>	Genesis 16:2	<i>December 14</i>
		James 1:19	<i>December 17</i>
		Genesis 41:16	<i>December 18</i>
		Romans 12:2	<i>December 31</i>

## About the Author

**JIM SEYBERT** has worked with leaders of small and large organizations, helping them think differently about what they do. His clients include entertainment and publishing giants, health-care providers, retailers, nonprofits, and real estate developers.

In his free time, he likes to take deep breaths along the High Sierra trails of Yosemite National Park.

For this book, Jim draws from years of experience as a corporate executive, small-business manager, and rank-and-file employee to provide insight into leadership principles.

**To learn more about Jim Seybert, visit**

**<http://www.jimseybert.com>**