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## PREFACE

THE BIBLE is the greatest book on recovery ever written. In its pages we see God set out a plan for the recovery of his broken people and creation. We meet numerous individuals whose hurting lives are restored through the wisdom and power of God. We meet the God who is waiting with arms outstretched for all of us to turn back to him, seek his will, and recover the wonderful life he has for each of us.

Many of us are just waking up to the fact that recovery is an essential part of life for everyone. It is the simple but challenging process of daily seeking God's will for our life instead of demanding to go our own way. Recovery is letting God do for us what we cannot do for ourselves while also taking the steps necessary to draw closer to our Creator and Redeemer. It is allowing God to heal our wounded soul so we can help others in the process of healing. All of us need to take part in this process; it is an inherent part of being human.

Let us set out together on the journey toward healing and newfound strength—not strength found within ourselves, but strength found through trusting God and allowing him to direct our decisions and plans. This journey will take us through the Twelve Steps and other materials designed to help us focus on the provisions our powerful God offers for recovery. *The Life Recovery Bible* will enrich our experience and expand our understanding of the God who loves us and sent his Son to die that we might be made whole.

Without God there is no recovery, only disappointing substitutions and repeated failure. We pray that the resources within these pages will help us all better understand who God is and how he wants to heal our brokenness and set us on the path toward wholeness.

### **It's Not All Your Fault.**

When we struggle with any problem, it's easy to think it's our fault. But it's never solely our fault. Things in our families often happen to us because of patterns of behavior in other family members that are beyond our control. Life in a family can get chaotic, even overwhelming. Or sometimes the other people in our families may be so absent from any relationships that we feel we are either unwelcome or invisible to them. We may think there is

something wrong with us, or that we have no willpower, or that we don't even want to stop our behaviors. It may be that what started as a way for us to cope with pain has now become the problem.

Sometimes the hurt and pain inside of us become so deep that we feel we need to do something to ease those feelings. Sometimes we try to ease the pain through self-medication. We begin to drink beer, wine, or some hard liquor. At first, we get this mellow feeling that helps us forget what is causing our pain. But eventually it wears off, and we feel the pain again. Or we may try to numb our pain by turning to other behaviors that eventually become destructive.

### **Here's What You Need to Know:**

There are two types of addictions one can develop. One type is called a "chemical addiction." A person takes into his or her body either alcohol or some other drug in order to simply feel different. Not everyone can develop a chemical addiction to alcohol, but other drugs, which can be highly addictive, have the potential to capture everyone who uses them.

If you begin to use alcohol to ease your pain, here are some danger signs—signs that indicate you may be susceptible to becoming addicted to alcohol. People who develop serious alcohol issues are often able to drink a lot without it having much of an effect on them. They seem to be able to handle their drinking. Another danger sign is what is called "binge" drinking. A lot of alcohol is consumed in, say, a weekend or an evening, but then that person doesn't drink again for several weeks. They point to this to prove to themselves they don't have a dependency problem with alcohol, but they do. Another danger sign is that other people in our family are alcoholics. This means there is a much higher probability of us becoming addicted to alcohol. Watch for these signs—they spell trouble.

Becoming addicted to a drug can start innocently. You may use drugs in order to fit in with friends, not knowing how powerfully addictive they are. Sometimes, people get a legitimate prescription for pain medication from a doctor. It helps for a while, but then its effect wears off and soon more and more is needed. Some people may end up actually getting prescription medications on the street, as well as through a doctor. Others try to self-medicate by using illegal drugs. It begins as a way to escape the pain, but the need for more can easily become a compulsion and then an addiction. The user feels trapped and gradually gets loaded down with shame and guilt.

The other type of addiction is called "process addiction." Here one uses less obvious methods to try to handle their emotional pain. These are compulsive behaviors that are related to a process, not to particular substances like drugs or alcohol. These behaviors start out in small ways and are seemingly innocent. Some people may think they are in control of these behaviors, but when they try to stop them, they realize the repetitive behavior controls them.

Gambling or spending money may be a way we try to deal with our problems. We may find that we are always short of money, and are drawn to the excitement of gambling with its random rewards. Even video games may become our escape from a painful reality. Check it out—decide to not play any video games, do any online gambling, or spend any money for thirty days and see how uncomfortable it is. Each of these activities can become a process addiction.

Process addictions involving eating can be a big issue. Eating is one of the few things we think we can always control. But there are three ways eating can be a problem. One is to overeat. People who struggle with overeating look at food as a source of comfort. When they are in emotional pain, they turn to food in order to “feel good” again. Another eating problem is binge eating, and then having to purge what is overeaten. And then there is the very serious eating disorder of those who over-control their eating habits and chronically lose weight, yet still think they are fat. This can lead to serious, life-threatening physical problems.

Using the Internet can become a problem that leads to devastating addictions. It may be that we are always searching the web, which keeps us living in an unreal world. Or our search may involve pornography. Most think that viewing pornography is something limited to men, but it can be just as big of a problem for women. Research says that the age group most commonly looking at pornography on the Internet is young people—as young as eleven years old. When you start to view pornography early, it changes your brain, which in turn has devastating effects on all of your relationships.

You may know of someone who tries to get rid of their emotional pain by inflicting physical pain on themselves. They usually do this by cutting themselves. The reasons for this are complex, but basically it is a way to feel something different—physical instead of emotional pain—and it is a way for them to feel alive. If they bleed a little, they know they are still here—that they are not invisible. This can become a very serious addiction.

These are some of the ways we may attempt to handle life’s problems. We can get caught up in one of these chemical or process addictions and then get angry with ourselves because we can’t stop. It’s not all our fault, but the answer is always to take responsibility for the choices we make. What you do in response to these problems determines the course of your life, whether you know it or not. You are in control of your choices right now. If you don’t know your way around this book, start with Step One, on page 25. It’s time now to make the bold move to reclaim your life!

## THE TWELVE STEPS

1. We admitted that we were powerless over our problems—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. We made a decision to turn our wills and our lives over to the care of God.
4. We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. We humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.
8. We made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. We continued to take personal inventory, and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.
11. We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

*The Twelve Steps used in the Twelve Steps devotional reading plan in this Bible have been adapted from the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous.*

## THE TWELVE STEPS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him*.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

*The Twelve Steps are reprinted and adapted with permission of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. Permission to reprint and adapt the Twelve Steps does not mean that AA has reviewed or approved the contents of this publication, nor that AA agrees with the views expressed herein. AA is a program of recovery from alcoholism—use of the Twelve Steps in connection with programs and activities which are patterned after AA, but which address other problems, does not imply otherwise.*

# THE TWELVE STEPS AND SCRIPTURE

The 12 Steps have long been of great help to people in recovery. Much of their power comes from the fact that they capture principles clearly revealed in the Bible. The following page lists the 12 Steps and connects them to corresponding Scriptures that support them. This will help readers familiar with the 12 Steps to discover the true source of their wisdom—the very word of God.

## **STEP 1:** We admitted that we were powerless over our problems—that our lives had become unmanageable.

*"I know that nothing good lives in me. . . . I want to do what is right, but I can't" (Romans 7:18; see also John 8:31-36; Romans 7:14-25).*

## **STEP 2:** We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

*"God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him" (Philippians 2:13; see also Romans 4:6-8; Ephesians 1:6-8; Colossians 1:21-22; Hebrews 11:1-10).*

## **STEP 3:** We made a decision to turn our wills and our lives over to the care of God.

*"Dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable" (Romans 12:1; see also Matthew 11:28-30; Mark 10:14-16; James 4:7-10).*

## **STEP 4:** We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

*"Let us test and examine our ways. Let us turn back to the Lord" (Lamentations 3:40; see also Matthew 7:1-5; 2 Corinthians 7:8-10).*

## **STEP 5:** We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

*"Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed" (James 5:16; see also Psalms 32:1-5; 51:1-3; 1 John 1:2-6).*

## **STEP 6:** We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character. *"Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up in honor" (James 4:10; see also Romans 6:5-11; Philippians 3:12-14).*

## **STEP 7:** We humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.

*"If we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us*

*from all wickedness" (1 John 1:9; see also Luke 18:9-14; 1 John 5:13-15).*

## **STEP 8:** We made a list of all the persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.

*"Do to others as you would like them to do to you" (Luke 6:31; see also Colossians 3:12-15; 1 John 3:10-20).*

## **STEP 9:** We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

*"If you are presenting a sacrifice at the altar and . . . someone has something against you, leave your sacrifice there at the altar. Go and be reconciled to that person. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God" (Matthew 5:23-24; see also Luke 19:1-10; 1 Peter 2:21-25).*

## **STEP 10:** We continued to take personal inventory, and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.

*"If you think you are standing strong, be careful not to fall" (1 Corinthians 10:12; see also Romans 5:3-6; 2 Timothy 2:1-7; 1 John 1:8-10).*

## **STEP 11:** We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

*"Devote yourselves to prayer with an alert mind and a thankful heart" (Colossians 4:2; see also Isaiah 40:28-31; 1 Timothy 4:7-8).*

## **STEP 12:** Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

*"Dear brothers and sisters, if another believer is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself" (Galatians 6:1; see also Isaiah 61:1-3; Titus 3:3-7; 1 Peter 4:1-5).*

# THE TWELVE LAWS OF LIFE RECOVERY

These laws highlight irrefutable truths that you will discover in yourself as you experience recovery while following the Twelve Steps. They provide evidence of the progress you have made and highlight places where growth is still needed. As you experience these laws, you will find—perhaps to your surprise—that the laws of life recovery often give back what they initially seemed to take away.

## **1. Powerlessness will result in STRENGTH.**

We struggle with the feeling of powerlessness because it feels so much like we are helpless. But God often works healing in our lives through what to us is weakness. It is paradoxical that as we experience recovery in our lives, we will find there is great strength in recognizing our powerlessness.

"This foolish plan of God is wiser than the wisest of human plans, and God's weakness is stronger than the greatest of human strength." (1 Corinthians 1:25, page 1457)

## **2. Humility will result in HONOR.**

In our journey of life recovery, it is easy to take pride in the positive changes we are making in our lives. But in God's plan, honor is not something we should seek. It is something we receive as we learn to live in humility. Humility is the path to being honored by God and by others.

"Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up in honor." (James 4:10, page 1605)

## **3. Connection will result in LOVE.**

We all long to be loved, but we overlook the fact that being loved always takes place in an emotionally connected relationship. Prior to our recovery, we lived in emotional isolation from others. But God designed us for connection—for relationship. That's the only context in which we can experience true love.

"Let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love. . . . Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us." (1 John 4:7-8, 11-12, page 1632)

## **4. Willingness will result in GROWTH.**

There is the childlike part within all of us that wants to say, "I can do it on my own," and "I can do it my way." But true recovery in our lives begins when we are willing to do it God's way. That's not easy, but without a willingness to be open to God's plan, we will limit our growth. It all begins with a willing and open heart.

"Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people." (Colossians 3:23, page 1535)

## **5. Sacrifice will result in FULFILLMENT.**

Before we started on our recovery journey, it was easy to think and act as if fulfillment came from getting, or from what we owned. But again, God's ways are mysterious and not our ways. We learn in our recovery that sacrifice—doing good and sharing with others, not getting—is the true path to fulfillment.

"And don't forget to do good and to share with those in need. These are the sacrifices that please God." (Hebrews 13:16, page 1595)

## **6. Faith will result in HOPE.**

In God's plan for our recovery, problems and trials are a part of the path that leads to a hope that will not disappoint us. It is all in how we handle our problems and trials. When we endure the hard stuff, we build strength of character, which then builds our faith. It is that faith which leads to a hope built on knowing we are loved by God.

"We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love." (Romans 5:3-5, page 1437)

**7. Surrender will result in VICTORY.**

James describes surrendering as being "willing to yield to others." Here willingness is coupled with surrendering. When we truly surrender ourselves, we are saying to God, "Your will, not mine." And a truly surrendered life is a life lived out as a celebration of our victory.

"But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and the fruit of good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere." (James 3:17, page 1605)

**8. Service will result in REWARD.**

Our acts of service are not to be done in order to gain a reward. They are done out of obedience to what we are learning as we are equipped to do the work of ministry. We are God's hands, feet, and mouth. As we are faithful in our service, the reward is the peace and satisfaction that comes as the result of our obedience.

"Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ." (Ephesians 4:12, page 1514)

**9. Forgiveness results in FREEDOM.**

We are called to be forgiving people. When we hold a grudge, we are in bondage to the person we refuse to forgive. We forget that forgiveness involves only us, and that the person we need to forgive really isn't part of the process. So there is no real excuse for not being obedient and forgiving others as we have been forgiven by God.

"You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins. He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross." (Colossians 2:13-14, page 1533)

**10. Confession will result in HEALING.**

You may have wondered why it is so important to confess your inventory to another person as part of your recovery. Healing comes as a result of confessing. We experience something powerful when we confess our shortcomings and failures not only to God but also to another person.

"Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results." (James 5:16, page 1607)

**11. Restitution will result in CLOSURE.**

Not all acts of restitution are financial repayments, although that can be a very effective way in some circumstances to make restitution. But we need also to make restitution for emotional hurts, or for other non-financial issues. Until we explore ways to make all kinds of restitution, we will struggle with moving on and experiencing closure.

"They must confess their sin and make full restitution for what they have done, adding an additional 20 percent and returning it to the person who was wronged." (Numbers 5:7, page 177)

**12. Responsibility will result in SECURITY.**

This is one of the most obvious results of our experiencing life recovery. We have not only made restitution; we have also begun to act responsibly in all areas of our lives. Responsibility is living up to our part of life, not blaming or expecting someone else to make up for our lack. We experience a genuine sense of security when we are doing our part—living responsibly in our everyday lives.

"Then God said to Abraham, 'Your responsibility is to obey the terms of the covenant. You and all your descendants have this continual responsibility. This is the covenant that you and your descendants must keep.'" (Genesis 17:9-10, page 25)

# THE TWELVE MISSTEPS OF LIFE RECOVERY

These false thoughts and assumptions have derailed many in their recovery, and some reflect the mistaken thinking of people sincerely trying to do things God's way. Awareness is the first step in avoiding these common pitfalls.

## **1. "I can quit tomorrow."**

Tomorrow has no power or strength to initiate change into your life. Today—right now—is where the power is! Waiting even one more day is a decision to stay on a path that has proven to be destructive.

"How do you know what your life will be like tomorrow? Your life is like the morning fog—it's here a little while, then it's gone. . . . Remember, it is sin to know what you ought to do and then not do it." (James 4:14, 17, page 1606)

## **2. "I can handle it by just trying harder or having more willpower."**

Under your own strength you have lived a life that has led to disappointment for you and for those who care about you. Under your own strength you have found only momentary victory or short-term progress. Under God's strength you will experience transforming power that will last forever.

"But those who trust in the LORD will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint." (Isaiah 40:31, page 892)

## **3. "Turning my life over to Christ is the only step I need."**

Turning your life over to Christ and repenting of your sins is a huge first step. Surrendering to him is the most important step. But it is still just the beginning. It does not instantly build your character or make you mature in your faith. Working through the steps based on God's Word will lead you to a better place of maturity, wisdom, and transformed character.

"Solid food is for those who are mature, who through training have the skill to recognize the difference between right and wrong. So let us stop going over the basic teachings about Christ again and again. Let us go on instead and become mature in our understanding." (Hebrews 5:14–6:1, page 1582)

## **4. "Twelve Step groups that don't talk about Jesus aren't worth my time."**

A recovery group that focuses on Christ is helpful for anyone's recovery, but a group like that may not exist anywhere near you. And if we segregate ourselves from others who don't know Christ, they will not hear the message of hope and restoration that we have. You can be a light to another who is walking in darkness.

"I have come as a light to shine in this dark world, so that all who put their trust in me will no longer remain in the dark." (John 12:46, page 1363)

## **5. "While recovery might be good for some, it just isn't right for me."**

If you have made a decision to surrender your life and your problem to God, you have made a very bold move. But your enemy will be the tendency to drift—to move away from surrender and to compromise, jeopardizing the progress you've made. Recovery prevents you from drifting, providing a path to growth and maturity and the support you need to succeed.

"But you must continue to believe this truth and stand firmly in it. Don't drift away from the assurance you received when you heard the Good News." (Colossians 1:23, page 1532)

## **6. "If I follow the Bible, I don't really need to work the Twelve Steps."**

Working the Twelve Steps is following the Bible. It is a path through the Bible designed specifically for those who used to have a problem but whose problem now has them. It is a path of hope, healing, and restoration based on God's truth that will totally change the way you think.

"Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect." (Romans 12:2, page 1447)

**7. "Since I'm accountable to God, I don't need a sponsor."**

You certainly are accountable to God, but God has also instructed us to be in healthy and supportive relationships with others. You will grow much stronger and more quickly if you have someone to guide you, encourage you, and hold you accountable.

"As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend." (Proverbs 27:17, page 816)

**8. "Since God has forgiven me, I don't need to go back to rehash what I've done."**

Yes, God has forgiven you if you have confessed and changed your ways. But he clearly instructs us to not stop with him. When we open up to someone else, it connects us, keeps us humble and grounded in reality, and leads to healing.

"Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results." (James 5:16, page 1607)

**9. "Since Jesus would want me to help my old friends, I don't need to change where I go or whom I hang out with."**

The Bible is clear that we need to run from people and places that would tempt us to fall back into our old ways. Some call it changing playmates and playgrounds. But not only do we need time away from temptations so we can grow, we also need to seek out those who are on the same path. There will be plenty of time to reach out to those who need your help once you have established your own long-term recovery.

"Run from anything that stimulates youthful lusts. Instead, pursue righteous living, faithfulness, love, and peace. Enjoy the companionship of those who call on the Lord with pure hearts." (2 Timothy 2:22, page 1562)

**10. "Though I can forgive most things, some things are just beyond forgiveness."**

There are some things that are so damaging that they may seem to be beyond forgiveness. But forgiveness does not excuse what someone has done or minimize its impact. Forgiveness frees you from having to live in the pain any longer. Some say the most dangerous thing we can possess is justifiable resentment. It does nothing to the other person, but it robs you of the life of freedom God wants for you.

"Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you." (Ephesians 4:31-32, page 1515)

**11. "Since I'm involved in recovery, I don't need additional counseling or medication."**

When we fully surrender to God, we become willing to do whatever it takes to recover. You may not think you need additional help, but someone you love may need you to need it. Working through your pride and reaching out for additional help, like starting recovery, is never a sign of weakness, but a sign of the strength found in humility.

"Pride leads to disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom." (Proverbs 11:2, page 798)

**12. "After making good progress in my recovery, I can start using again in moderation."**

If you are on a solid recovery path, the last thing you want to do is try to control what has come to control you. The desire to fall back into it and try it again indicates that you need additional step work, meetings, and other support. Don't go back and relive the hurt and pain you experienced earlier in life.

"As a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool repeats his foolishness." (Proverbs 26:11, page 815)

# THE TWELVE GIFTS OF LIFE RECOVERY

These twelve attributes are not just results or outcomes for people in recovery, but truly gifts from God. They show that recovery doesn't merely provide escape from a destructive problem. It also points toward the possibility of a new and exceptional life.

**1. Hope**—“We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love” (Romans 5:3-5, page 1437).

**2. Power**—“For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength” (Philippians 4:13, page 1526). “For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline” (2 Timothy 1:7, page 1561).

**3. Character**—“But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!” (Galatians 5:22-23, page 1505).

**4. Clarity**—“Now we see things imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity” (1 Corinthians 13:12, page 1472).

**5. Security**—“Fear of the LORD leads to life, bringing security and protection from harm” (Proverbs 19:23, page 807). “If God is for us, who can ever be against us? Since he did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won’t he also give us everything else?” (Romans 8:31-32, page 1442).

**6. Abundance**—“And this same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19, page 1526).

**7. Wisdom**—“Fear of the LORD is the foundation of wisdom. Knowledge of the Holy One results in good judgment” (Proverbs 9:10, page 796). “If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking” (James 1:5, page 1600).

**8. Self-Control**—“But you are not controlled by your sinful nature. You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the Spirit of God living in you” (Romans 8:9, page 1441). “But the Holy Spirit produces . . . self-control” (Galatians 5:22-23, page 1505).

**9. Freedom**—“So Christ has truly set us free. Now make sure that you stay free, and don’t get tied up again in slavery to the law” (Galatians 5:1, page 1504).

**10. Happiness**—“Make me walk along the path of your commands, for that is where my happiness is found” (Psalm 119:35, page 764). “The hopes of the godly result in happiness, but the expectations of the wicked come to nothing” (Proverbs 10:2, page 796).

**11. Serenity**—“I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God’s love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God’s love” (Romans 8:38, page 1442).

**12. Peace**—“I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don’t be troubled or afraid” (John 14:27, page 1366).

# USER'S GUIDE

THE HOLY BIBLE is a book about recovery. It records how the world began and how God created it to be good. Then it tells us about the beginning of sin—about the first time people decided to reject God's plan. It spells out the fatal consequences that result from rejecting God's program. But the Bible doesn't leave us in despair. It reveals a plan for recovery and the source of the power to accomplish it. It provides us with the only pathway to wholeness—God's program for reconciliation and healing.

Each feature in *The Life Recovery Bible* leads readers to the powerful resources for recovery found in the Holy Scriptures:

## DEVOTIONAL READING PLANS



tyndale.es/lrbusersguide

Each devotional is set near the Scripture it comments on and directs the reader to the next devotional in the reading chain. To get a bird's-eye view of each of these reading plans, turn to the indexes at the back of this Bible.

- The **Twelve Step Devotional Reading Plan** includes eighty-four Bible-based devotionals built around the Twelve Steps. Videos introducing the 12 steps are linked to the MS Tags embedded in the first devotion for each step. A tag reader is available at: <http://tag.microsoft.com/consumer/index.aspx>  
*To begin this reading plan, turn to page 25.*
- The **Recovery Principle Devotional Reading Plan** is composed of fifty-six Bible-based devotionals shaped around principles important in the recovery process.  
*To begin this reading plan, turn to page 5.*
- The **Serenity Prayer Devotional Reading Plan** is made up of twenty-nine Bible-based devotionals related to the Serenity Prayer.  
*To begin this reading plan, turn to page 27.*

## RECOVERY PROFILES

In this feature sixty individuals and relationships are profiled, and important recovery lessons are drawn from their lives. For a quick view of the profiles included, see the Index to Recovery Profiles on page 1716.

## INTRODUCTORY MATERIAL FOR BIBLE BOOKS

Each book of the Bible is preceded by a number of helpful features.

- **Book Introductions** present the content and themes from the standpoint of recovery.
- **The Big Picture** gives a panoramic view of the book in outline form.
- **The Bottom Line** provides vital historical information for the book.
- **Recovery Themes** present and discuss important themes for people in recovery.

## RECOVERY COMMENTARY NOTES

The Bible text is supported by numerous **Recovery Notes** that pinpoint passages and thoughts important to recovery. The notes appear at the foot of each page and are indexed in the Life Recovery Topical Index beginning on page 1673.

- Additional commentary material is provided in the **Recovery Reflections** that follow many of the Bible books. The notes are arranged topically. The topics discussed in this feature are indexed in the Index to Recovery Reflections on page 1721.

## INDEXES

The **Topical Bible Verse Finder** at the front of this Bible lists topics that concern people who are trying to live by God's wisdom and connects those topics to helpful Bible verses. It's a great tool for finding out what God has to say about your everyday concerns.

The **Life Recovery Topical Index** at the back guides the reader to the important notes, profiles, devotionals, and recovery themes related to more than a hundred terms important to issues in the recovery process.

- The **Index to Recovery Profiles** alphabetically lists and locates the sixty Recovery Profiles that appear in this Bible.
- The **Index to Twelve Step Devotionals** lists and locates the eighty-four Twelve Step devotionals.
- The **Index to Recovery Principle Devotionals** lists and locates the fifty-six Recovery Principle devotionals.
- The **Index to Serenity Prayer Devotionals** lists and locates the twenty-nine Serenity Prayer devotionals.
- The **Index to Recovery Reflections** lists and locates the various topics discussed in the Reflections feature of this Bible.

# TOPICAL BIBLE VERSE FINDER

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- God cares about minorities (Exodus 22:21)  
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God protects those who are helpless (Psalm 12:5)  
... *page 687*  
Jesus was abused (Matthew 26:67-68)  
... *page 1240*  
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# OLD TESTAMENT

# GENESIS

## THE BIG PICTURE

### A. GOD SETS THE STAGE (1:1–11:32)

1. Formation of the Universe (1:1–2:25)
  - a. God creates matter, energy, and the natural order (1:1–2:3)
  - b. God prepares pristine surroundings for the first family (2:4–25)
2. Fall of the Human Race (3:1–24)
  - a. Commission of sin (3:1–8)
  - b. Curse on sin (3:9–24)
3. Failure of Society (4:1–9:29)
  - a. Failure of humankind (4:1–6:22)
  - b. Flood of judgment (7:1–9:29)
4. Folly of Rebellion (10:1–11:32)
  - a. Dispersal of the people (10:1–32)
  - b. Disobedience of the people (11:1–32)

### B. GOD CHOOSES THE PLAYERS (12:1–50:26)

1. Abraham (12:1–25:18)
2. Isaac (25:19–27:46)
3. Jacob (28:1–36:43)
4. Joseph (37:1–50:26)

The book of Genesis is a book of beginnings. It records how the world began and how God created it to be good. It tells us about the first people and how God made them to be excellent. But then it tells us about the beginning of sin—about the first time people decided to reject the program God had laid out for them. It records the first days of shame and of covering up. It records the beginning of our separation from God, each other, and the world God gave us.

We will see how people with perfect health, living in a perfect environment, rebelled against God. And we will see the consequences of their rebellion. We are given intimate glimpses of individuals dominated by hatred, drunkenness, lust, unhealthy family relationships, greed, cheating, irresponsibility, dishonesty, jealousy, violence, and other problems.

But the book of Genesis doesn't leave us in despair. It tells us of yet another beginning. It records how God chose a man named Abraham to father a special nation. And through this nation would come the solution for our separation from God, each other, and the world God gave us. Genesis begins the story of how God began his work of healing broken humanity—a healing to be expressed in the laws he would give his people and culminating in the coming of Jesus, the promised Messiah.

The book of Genesis reminds us of where all our problems began. It spells out the fatal consequences of rejecting God's program. But it also begins the agelong story of God's amazing love for the human race. Through this book we will discover that the only pathway to spiritual wholeness is in following God's program.

## THE BOTTOM LINE

**PURPOSE:** To tell us about the beginning of things, including human opportunities and difficulties, and to demonstrate that God's solutions are the only ones that work. **AUTHOR:** Moses. **AUDIENCE:** The people of Israel. **DATE WRITTEN:** Chapters 1–11 deal with the undatable past; the events of chapters 12–50 are to be dated between about 2000 and 1800 B.C. The book was probably written shortly after 1445 B.C. **SETTING:** Mesopotamia, then Canaan, finally Egypt. **KEY VERSE:** "And Abram believed the LORD, and the LORD counted him as righteous because of his faith" (15:6). **KEY EVENTS:** Creation, the Fall, the Flood, the Tower of Babel. **KEY PEOPLE:** Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph.

## RECOVERY THEMES

**A Good Creation:** Everything about God's creation was described as being good except the fact that Adam was alone. In fact, Adam's isolation is the only thing in the first two chapters of Genesis that God considered to be a problem. When God created a partner for man, God was pleased with everything in his creation. Because God was pleased with what he created, he stayed involved, even after Adam and Eve disobeyed him. In fact, ever since the Fall, God has been seeking to make things right again. Our sinfulness always leads us away from God and distorts the way God created us to be. But recovery always involves growth toward God's original ideal for the human race. As we progress in recovery, we take part in God's re-creation of our fallen world.

**A Ruined World:** Adam's and Eve's disobedience affected all of God's creation. The idyllic world of the garden was gone forever, and life became a struggle. Our futile attempts to avoid the realities of a ruined world have led us into all kinds of destructive behaviors. Recovery begins when we squarely face the broken realities of our world—its daily struggles and hardships. Once we have done this, we have started down the road of recovery. We have entered the spiritual arena where battles are fought to regain what has been lost.

**Promises of Healing:** The book of Genesis presents us with a series of *new beginnings* that come out of the ruin of our sinfulness. In the original Fall, God promised hope and healing for us when he told the serpent that the offspring of the woman would crush his head. When people generally continued to disobey, God sent the Flood as judgment for their sinfulness. After the Flood, God again promised victory and confirmed that promise with a rainbow. Then the people rejected God again, building a great tower as a memorial of their pride. In response, God confused their languages, further fragmenting society. Then God chose a man named Abram and promised to bless all nations of the world through his offspring. Each time human sin brought ruin, God promised victory and recovery in the face of it.

**Hope for Reconciliation:** As people began to experience the terrible consequences of their disobedience, God didn't leave them to figure out a plan for recovery all alone; nor did he leave a long list of principles or rules to follow that would repair their damaged relationships. Instead, God always worked with people on a very personal level in the recovery process. As we enter into the recovery process, we find it to be relational in nature. It requires us to seek reconciliation with people close to us, and this includes God. In Genesis, God modeled this pattern for us time and again. He chose certain individuals and worked patiently in their lives, reconciling them with himself and the people around them.

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## CHAPTER 1

### The Account of Creation

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

<sup>3</sup>Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. <sup>4</sup>And God saw that the light was good. Then he separated the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup>God called the light "day" and the darkness "night."

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

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, . . .*

<sup>6</sup>Then God said, "Let there be a space between the waters, to separate the waters of the heavens from the waters of the earth." <sup>7</sup>And that is what happened. God made this space to separate the waters of the earth from the waters of the heavens.

<sup>8</sup>God called the space "sky."

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

<sup>9</sup>Then God said, "Let the waters beneath the sky flow together into one place, so dry ground may appear." And that is what happened. <sup>10</sup>God called the dry ground "land" and the waters "seas." And

**1:4** God was pleased with his creation. He declared that it was good. God stopped now and then to approve of what he had designed and created (1:4-5, 9-10, 11-12, 18, 21-22, 25, 31). Many of our problems and dependencies result from the misuse of God's good creation. Recovery sometimes involves discovering the good things that we have misused and learning how to enjoy them in the way God intended.

**1:24** The phrase "And that is what happened" (also in 1:9-12, 14-15) shows us that God's creative activity was done in complete conformity to the specifications he had originally intended. God accomplishes his will with certainty and precision. It should reassure us to know that God's good desires for us can be accomplished with the same certainty.

God saw that it was good.<sup>11</sup>Then 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.<sup>12</sup>The 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.

<sup>13</sup>And evening passed and morning came, marking the third day.

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

<sup>19</sup>And evening passed and morning came, marking the fourth day.

<sup>20</sup>Then God said, “Let the waters swarm with fish and other life. Let the skies be filled with birds of every kind.”<sup>21</sup>So 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.<sup>22</sup>Then God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply. Let the fish fill the seas, and let the birds multiply on the earth.”

<sup>23</sup>And evening passed and morning came, marking the fifth day.

<sup>24</sup>Then 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.<sup>25</sup>God 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.

<sup>26</sup>Then God said, “Let us make human beings\* in our image, to be like us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the

## SELF-PERCEPTION

### READ GENESIS 1:26-31

If we have lived in bondage to our compulsive behaviors for a while, we probably see more bad than good inside us. Many of us tend to see life in terms of all or nothing. As a result, we probably think we are all bad. But in recovery, we need a balanced understanding of ourself. We need to see that along with our bad points we have also been gifted with strengths. It's not an either/or proposition. A balanced view of ourself will help us better understand our shortcomings while also giving us greater hope in our potential.

At the end of the fifth day of creation God had made everything except the first people. The Bible tells us that when he looked at what he had made so far, “God saw that it was good.” Then God created the first man and woman. “So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; . . . Then 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.’ . . . Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good!” (Genesis 1:25, 27-31).

God distinguished between the human race and the rest of creation. He made us in his very image, with capacities far beyond those of mere animals. God was (and is) excited about us! He gave us abilities and responsibilities to reflect his own nature in all of creation. When he created us, he was proud of what he had made!

Although we have a sinful nature that came as a result of the Fall, we also must remember that we were created in the likeness of God. There are excellence and dignity inherent in being human that should cause us to ponder our potential for good as well as for bad. *Turn to page 31, Genesis 22.*

<sup>1:26a</sup> Or man; Hebrew reads adam.

wild animals on the earth,\* and the small animals that scurry along the ground.”

<sup>27</sup>So God created human beings\* in his own image.

In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

<sup>28</sup>Then 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.”

<sup>29</sup>Then God said, “Look! I have given you every seed-bearing plant throughout the earth and all the fruit trees for your food. <sup>30</sup>And 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.

<sup>31</sup>Then 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.

## CHAPTER 2

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

<sup>4</sup>This 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, <sup>5</sup>neither wild plants nor grains were

**1:26b** As in Syriac version; Hebrew reads *all the earth*. **1:27** Or *the man*; Hebrew reads *ha-adam*. **2:2** Or *ceased*; also in **2:3**. **2:6** Or *mist*. **2:19** Or *Adam*, and so throughout the chapter.

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growing on the earth. For the LORD God had not yet sent rain to water the earth, and there were no people to cultivate the soil. <sup>6</sup>Instead, springs\* came up from the ground and watered all the land. <sup>7</sup>Then the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into the man’s nostrils, and the man became a living person.

<sup>8</sup>Then the LORD God planted a garden in Eden in the east, and there he placed the man he had made. <sup>9</sup>The 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.

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

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

<sup>18</sup>Then 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.” <sup>19</sup>So 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. <sup>20</sup>He gave names to all the livestock, all the birds

**2:2-3** This is the first mention of Sabbath rest—one day of rest in seven. By his example God encourages us to designate a portion of our life to rest and spiritual rejuvenation. Without proper rest, it is very difficult to deal with the other matters in our life, especially our progress in recovery.

**2:8-14** God provided a perfect environment for the first people. We often blame our outward circumstances for our difficulties. It is important to note here that in spite of their ideal surroundings, our first parents fell—they failed. Although the environments we live in can certainly add to our problems, they are never entirely at fault. We need to take responsibility for our own mistakes and failures.

**3:1-5** The account here pictures for us the process of temptation. The serpent offered something that had been forbidden by God as a very attractive option. The serpent also caused Eve to doubt God and the truth of his word. During the debate, Eve offered some halfhearted opposition, but her growing doubt in God weakened her resolve. In the end she gave in. Satan strengthened his temptation by weakening Eve’s faith in God. Staying close to God and maintaining our faith in him will weaken the power of temptation in our life.

# ADAM & EVE

It was an ideal situation: a man and his wife living harmoniously together in a lush, beautiful garden that God had created for their pleasure. They each enjoyed a perfect relationship with God and with each other. But when Adam and Eve gave in to temptation, they overstepped their God-given boundaries and plunged the human race into sin. Harmony was broken. Shame and guilt penetrated their lives and created an invisible barrier between them and God. The consequences of their disobedience and lack of self-control are with us to this day.

Adam and Eve knew that they had gone against God's plan—a plan that was created with their best interests in mind. And the consequences of their sin followed immediately. Right away they became afraid of the God who loved them so much, and they hid from his presence. They also became ashamed of their nakedness and set out to cover themselves. The relationship between Adam and Eve began to show cracks and strains. Accusations were made. Blame was shifted. Neither of them wanted to be held accountable. Both of them refused to admit that they were wrong. Needless to say, their relationship was damaged. Their sin had separated them from each other and from God.

But the story doesn't end there. Adam and Eve stayed together in spite of the shame and guilt they felt. Their lives were marred by sin and scarred by wounds inflicted on one another. However, they faced the reality that life had to go on and began to build a new life together. And by love, commitment, and the grace of God, they persevered through life's trials.

The story of Adam and Eve is found in the opening chapters of Genesis. Adam and/or Eve are also mentioned in 1 Chronicles 1:17; Romans 5:12-19; 1 Corinthians 15:22, 45-49; 2 Corinthians 11:3; and 1 Timothy 2:13-15.

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of the sky, and all the wild animals. But still there was no helper just right for him.

<sup>21</sup>So 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.<sup>22</sup>Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib, and he brought her to the man.

<sup>23</sup>"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.'"

<sup>21</sup>Or took a part of the man's side.

## STRENGTHS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- They were the parents of the entire human race.
- They were committed to each other through the trials they faced.
- Their story provides us with the first illustration of God's grace.

## WEAKNESSES AND MISTAKES:

- They were disobedient to the plan that God had revealed to them.
- They were not willing to take responsibility for their sin.
- They made excuses rather than admit the truth.
- Their actions brought sin into the world.

## LESSONS FROM THEIR LIVES:

- A good marriage requires love and commitment even through tough times.
- Relationships that accept God's grace and forgiveness persevere through life's difficulties.
- Complacency is a breeding ground for temptation—be on guard against Satan's schemes.
- The mistakes of parents are often passed on to their descendants.

## KEY VERSES:

"Then 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.' So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them" (Genesis 1:26-27).

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

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

## CHAPTER 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?"

<sup>26</sup>"Of course we may eat fruit from the

trees in the garden," the woman replied.  
<sup>3</sup>"It's only the fruit from the 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.'"

<sup>4</sup>"You won't die!" the serpent replied to the woman. <sup>5</sup>"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."

<sup>6</sup>The 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. <sup>7</sup>At that moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves.

<sup>8</sup>When 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. <sup>9</sup>Then the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"

<sup>10</sup>He replied, "I heard you walking in the garden, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked."

<sup>11</sup>"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?"

<sup>12</sup>The man replied, "It was the woman you gave me who gave me the fruit, and I ate it."

<sup>13</sup>Then the LORD God asked the woman, "What have you done?"

"The serpent deceived me," she replied. "That's why I ate it."

<sup>3:8</sup> Or Adam, and so throughout the chapter. <sup>3:15</sup> Or bruise; also in 3:15b. <sup>3:16</sup> Or And though you will have desire for your husband, / he will rule over you.

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<sup>14</sup>Then 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.

<sup>15</sup>And 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."

<sup>16</sup>Then 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.\*"

<sup>17</sup>And 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.

<sup>18</sup>It will grow thorns and thistles

for you,

though you will eat of its grains.

<sup>19</sup>By the sweat of your brow

will you have food to eat

**3:12-13** When Adam was questioned, notice that he blamed the woman for his problem. He even backhandedly blamed God by reminding God that he was the one who had given him the woman in the first place. Then Eve blamed the serpent for the problem. Passing the buck is a standard human response to guilt. But true recovery requires that we take a thorough inventory of our life, accepting responsibility for everything we have done or failed to do.

**3:21** The very first death occurred on the same day as Adam's and Eve's sin; it was the death of an animal to provide a covering for their nakedness. God's immediate provision for sin was the slaying of an innocent substitute to provide skins to clothe the guilty couple. The clothing they wore must have served as a reminder—engraving the sight of the dying animal in their minds—a picture of the terrible consequences of their sin. As we recognize the suffering we may have caused others, we also are reminded of the consequences of rejecting God's program for our life.

**4:6-7** When God rejected Cain's offering, Cain reacted with dejection and anger. God did not reject Cain for his strong feelings; he offered him an opportunity for a new start. How sad that Cain refused this second chance and instead went out to kill his brother. We need to be careful when we face obstacles to the recovery process. We need to carefully weigh the strong feelings we encounter within ourselves before acting on them. If we don't, we may be passing up an excellent opportunity for a fresh start. God is not put off by our strong feelings. Recovery is based on God's grace, which always offers us an opportunity to begin again.

# STEP 4

## Coming Out of Hiding

BIBLE READING: Genesis 3:6-13

We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

Many of us have spent our life in a state of hiding, ashamed of who we are inside. We may hide by living a double life, by using drugs or other addictions to make us feel like someone else, or by self-righteously setting ourselves above others. Step Four involves uncovering the things we have been hiding, even from ourselves.

After Adam and Eve disobeyed God, "they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves. . . . Then the LORD God called to the man, 'Where are you?' He replied, 'I heard you walking in the garden, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked'" (Genesis 3:7-10). Human beings have been covering up and hiding ever since!

Jesus consistently confronted the religious leaders about their hypocrisy. The word *hypocrite* describes a person who pretends to have virtues or qualities that he really doesn't have. One time Jesus said to these leaders, "Hypocrites! For you are so careful to clean the outside of the cup and the dish, but inside you are filthy—full of greed and self-indulgence! . . . First wash the inside of the cup and the dish, and then the outside will become clean, too" (Matthew 23:25-26).

When the real person inside us comes out of hiding, we will have to deal with some dirt! Making this inventory is a good way to "wash the inside"; some of that washing may involve bathing our life with tears. It is only by uncovering the hidden parts of ourself that we will be able to change the outer person, including our addictive/compulsive behaviors. *Turn to page 611, Nehemiah 8.*



tyndal.es/lrbstep4

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

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

<sup>22</sup>Then 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!" <sup>23</sup>So 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. <sup>24</sup>After 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.

### CHAPTER 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!" <sup>2</sup>Later she gave birth to his brother and named him Abel.

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

<sup>6</sup>"Why are you so angry?" the LORD asked Cain. "Why do you look so dejected? <sup>7</sup>You 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."

<sup>8</sup>One 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.

<sup>3:20</sup> Eve sounds like a Hebrew term that means "to give life." <sup>3:22</sup> Or *the man*; Hebrew reads *ha-adam*. <sup>4:1a</sup> Or *the man*; also in 4:25. <sup>4:1b</sup> Or *I have acquired*. Cain sounds like a Hebrew term that can mean "produce" or "acquire." <sup>4:8</sup> As in Samaritan Pentateuch, Greek and Syrian versions, and Latin Vulgate; Masoretic Text lacks "Let's go out into the fields."

<sup>9</sup>Afterward the LORD asked Cain, "Where is your brother? Where is Abel?"

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

<sup>10</sup>But the LORD said, "What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground! <sup>11</sup>Now you are cursed and banished from the ground, which has swallowed your brother's blood. <sup>12</sup>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."

<sup>13</sup>Cain replied to the LORD, "My punishment\* is too great for me to bear! <sup>14</sup>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!"

<sup>15</sup>The 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. <sup>16</sup>So Cain left the LORD's presence and settled in the land of Nod,\* east of Eden.

### The Descendants of Cain

<sup>17</sup>Cain 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. <sup>18</sup>Enoch had a son named Irad. Irad became the father of\* Mehujael. Mehujael became the father of Methushael. Methushael became the father of Lamech.

<sup>19</sup>Lamech married two women. The first was named Adah, and the second was Zillah.

<sup>20</sup>Adah gave birth to Jabal, who was the first of those who raise livestock and live in tents.

<sup>21</sup>His brother's name was Jubal, the first of all who play the harp and flute. <sup>22</sup>Lamech's other wife, Zillah, gave birth to a son named Tubal-cain. He became an expert in forging tools of bronze and iron. Tubal-cain had a sis-

ter named Naamah. <sup>23</sup>One 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.

<sup>24</sup>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

<sup>25</sup>Adam 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." <sup>26</sup>When Seth grew up, he had a son and named him Enosh. At that time people first began to worship the LORD by name.

## CHAPTER 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.

<sup>2</sup>He created them male and female, and he blessed them and called them "human."

<sup>3</sup>When Adam was 130 years old, he became the father of a son who was just like him—in his very image. He named his son Seth. <sup>4</sup>After the birth of Seth, Adam lived another 800 years, and he had other sons and daughters. <sup>5</sup>Adam lived 930 years, and then he died.

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

<sup>4:13</sup> Or *My sin.* <sup>4:16</sup> *Nod* means "wandering." <sup>4:18</sup> Or *the ancestor of*, and so throughout the verse. <sup>4:25</sup> *Seth* probably means "granted"; the name may also mean "appointed." <sup>5:1</sup> Or *man*; Hebrew reads *adam*; similarly in 5:2. <sup>5:6</sup> Or *the ancestor of*; also in 5:9, 12, 15, 18, 21, 25. <sup>5:7</sup> Or *the birth of this ancestor of*; also in 5:10, 13, 16, 19, 22, 26.

**4:15** The "mark on Cain" was not, as some have taught, a badge of guilt. It was a sign that God gave to Cain for his protection. Even after Cain's great failure, God desired to protect him from harm. Many of us look back and marvel at how God protected us before we began the recovery process. He wants us to be restored and often protects us in the midst of evil so that we are not destroyed. Our gracious God desires only our healing and recovery, even after our greatest failures. **5:1-32** This chapter has often been called the obituary column. Its recurring refrain is "He died . . . he died . . . he died." Although physical death did not come to Adam and Eve on the day they sinned, it did eventually come. They had reestablished their relationship with God, but the physical consequences of their sin could not be avoided forever. We may hope that after reestablishing our relationship with God, our troubles will be over. But a relationship with God rarely frees us from the consequences of past sins. The consequences usually catch up with us sooner or later. But if we suffer for past mistakes, we can know that God will be with us each step of the way.

# CAIN & ABEL

How often parents of two children have been heard to exclaim, "There have never been two children who were more different!" Adam and Eve could well have been the originators of that comment. Cain apparently felt himself to be in direct competition with Abel. This led to a rivalry that was never resolved, resulting in a major tragedy.

Cain became a farmer and Abel a shepherd. It was their offerings, however, not their occupations, that revealed the true nature of their character. Abel did things God's way, following his requirements. He is called "righteous" in Matthew 23:35, and Hebrews 11:4 says his offering was made by faith. Cain, on the other hand, did things his own way. Jude suggests that his "way" was that of rebellion (Jude 1:11). Cain brought an offering of produce from his gardens, while Abel brought the fatty cuts of meat from his best lambs.

Abel's altar must have been ugly, assaulting every sense with the bloody carcasses lying across it. But the blood was a part of God's plan according to Hebrews 12:24. Cain's offering had the potential of being beautiful. Picture fresh produce, just out of the garden—fruits, vegetables, flowers, and grain—probably lovingly and artistically arranged. Perhaps Cain wanted to be accepted by God on the basis of his own merits. He may not have been willing to have a relationship with God based on a bloody sacrifice. When God accepted Abel's offering and rejected Cain's, Cain became angry. But God did not reject him for his anger. Even at that point, God reasoned with him. He offered Cain another opportunity to change his mind and accept divine grace, but still Cain refused. Jealous of Abel, whose offering had been accepted, and raging because God had rejected his own, Cain murdered his brother.

Cain tried to hide his terrible deed, but God was not fooled. God confronted Cain with the murder and assigned the consequence of lifelong exile. Cain spent the rest of his life as an alien, wandering in lands far from his family. But God protected Cain, even when he was in exile; God placed his mark upon Cain to keep him from being killed.

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

<sup>12</sup>When Kenan was 70 years old, he became the father of Mahalalel.<sup>13</sup>After the birth of Mahalalel, Kenan lived another 840 years, and he had other sons and daughters.

<sup>14</sup>Kenan lived 910 years, and then he died.

## STRENGTHS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Abel was obedient to God.
- Abel is the first hero mentioned in the "Gallery of Faith" in Hebrews 11.
- Both sons developed skills and worked hard in the occupations they chose.

## WEAKNESSES AND MISTAKES:

- Cain insisted on doing things his own way.
- When rejected, Cain reacted with rage.
- Cain allowed his rage to lead him to commit the first murder.

## LESSONS FROM THEIR LIVES:

- Our righteousness is based on our willingness to follow God's program by faith.
- Feeling angry does not separate us from God unless we express it in destructive ways.
- Though we may try to hide our sins for a time, God's justice will prevail.

## KEY VERSE:

"It was by faith that Abel brought a more acceptable offering to God than Cain did. Abel's offering gave evidence that he was a righteous man, and God showed his approval of his gifts. Although Abel is long dead, he still speaks to us by his example of faith"<sup>1</sup> (Hebrews 11:4).

The account of Cain and Abel is given in Genesis 4. Both are also mentioned in Hebrews 11:4 and 1 John 3:12. Cain alone is referred to in Jude 1:11; Abel is spoken of in Matthew 23:35; Luke 11:51; and Hebrews 12:24.

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

<sup>18</sup>When Jared was 162 years old, he became the father of Enoch.<sup>19</sup>After the birth of Enoch, Jared lived another 800 years, and he had other sons and

- daughters.<sup>20</sup>Jared lived 962 years, and then he died.
- <sup>21</sup>When Enoch was 65 years old, he became the father of Methuselah.<sup>22</sup>After the birth of Methuselah, Enoch lived in close fellowship with God for another 300 years, and he had other sons and daughters.<sup>23</sup>Enoch lived 365 years,<sup>24</sup>walking in close fellowship with God. Then one day he disappeared, because God took him.
- <sup>25</sup>When Methuselah was 187 years old, he became the father of Lamech.<sup>26</sup>After the birth of Lamech, Methuselah lived another 782 years, and he had other sons and daughters.<sup>27</sup>Methuselah lived 969 years, and then he died.
- <sup>28</sup>When Lamech was 182 years old, he became the father of a son.<sup>29</sup>Lamech 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."<sup>30</sup>After the birth of Noah, Lamech lived another 595 years, and he had other sons and daughters.<sup>31</sup>Lamech lived 777 years, and then he died.
- <sup>32</sup>After Noah was 500 years old, he became the father of Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

## CHAPTER 6 A World Gone Wrong

Then the people began to multiply on the earth, and daughters were born to them.<sup>2</sup>The sons of God saw the beautiful women\* and took any they wanted as their wives.<sup>3</sup>Then the LORD said, "My Spirit will not put up with\* humans for such a long time, for they

<sup>5:29</sup> Noah sounds like a Hebrew term that can mean "relief" or "comfort." <sup>6:2</sup> Hebrew *daughters of men*; also in 6:4. <sup>6:3</sup> Greek version reads *will not remain in*. <sup>6:14a</sup> Traditionally rendered *an ark*. <sup>6:14b</sup> Or *gopher wood*.

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are only mortal flesh. In the future, their normal lifespan will be no more than 120 years."

<sup>4</sup>In 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.

<sup>5</sup>The LORD observed the extent of human wickedness on the earth, and he saw that everything they thought or imagined was consistently and totally evil.<sup>6</sup>So the LORD was sorry he had ever made them and put them on the earth. It broke his heart.<sup>7</sup>And 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."<sup>8</sup>But Noah found favor with the LORD.

### The Story of Noah

<sup>9</sup>This 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.<sup>10</sup>Noah was the father of three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

<sup>11</sup>Now God saw that the earth had become corrupt and was filled with violence.<sup>12</sup>God observed all this corruption in the world, for everyone on earth was corrupt.<sup>13</sup>So 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!"

<sup>14</sup>"Build a large boat\* from cypress wood\* and waterproof it with tar, inside and out.

**5:21-24** Little is said about the spiritual state of these patriarchs of the human race. But the account of Enoch's life provides us with a bright spot in this otherwise dismal chapter. Enoch was known for "walking in close fellowship with God." His example should give us hope. Enoch wasn't trapped by the mistakes or apathy of his peers and ancestors. Instead, he made a new start. And he did it by constantly walking with God.

**6:1-12** Some people insist that the human race is developing and becoming better and better. But when we compare the condition of the world in these verses to the way things were back in the Garden of Eden, it is obvious that the trend has gone in the opposite direction. Without God's help, we only get worse. It is only by following God's program and receiving his grace that we can hope to escape the natural slide toward pain and destruction.

**6:8-10** God did not destroy the righteous with the wicked. These verses are another statement of God's grace. God extended grace to Noah and his family. Noah, like Enoch, lived his life in constant fellowship with God. He broke the mold set by his ancestors and neighbors by drawing close to God. As a result, Noah lived through the Flood and became the second father of the human race.

Then construct decks and stalls throughout its interior.<sup>15</sup> Make the boat 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high.\*<sup>16</sup> Leave 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.

<sup>17</sup>“Look! I am about to cover the earth with a flood that will destroy every living thing that breathes. Everything on earth will die.<sup>18</sup> But I will confirm my covenant with you. So enter the boat—you and your wife and your sons and their wives.<sup>19</sup> Bring a pair of every kind of animal—a male and a female—into the boat with you to keep them alive during the flood.<sup>20</sup> Pairs 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.<sup>21</sup> And be sure to take on board enough food for your family and for all the animals.”

<sup>22</sup>So Noah did everything exactly as God had commanded him.

## CHAPTER 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.<sup>2</sup> Take 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.<sup>3</sup> Also take seven pairs 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. “Seven 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.”

<sup>5</sup>So Noah did everything as the LORD commanded him.

<sup>6</sup>Noah was 600 years old when the flood covered the earth.<sup>7</sup> He went on board the boat to escape the flood—he and his wife

<sup>6:15</sup> Hebrew 300 cubits [138 meters] long, 50 cubits [23 meters] wide, and 30 cubits [13.8 meters] high. <sup>6:16</sup> Hebrew an opening of 1 cubit [46 centimeters]. <sup>7:2</sup> Hebrew of each clean animal; similarly in 7:8. <sup>7:20</sup> Hebrew 15 cubits [6.9 meters].

and his sons and their wives.<sup>8</sup> With 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.<sup>9</sup> They entered the boat in pairs, male and female, just as God had commanded Noah.<sup>10</sup> After seven days, the waters of the flood came and covered the earth.

<sup>11</sup>When 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.<sup>12</sup> The rain continued to fall for forty days and forty nights.

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

<sup>17</sup>For forty days the floodwaters grew deeper, covering the ground and lifting the boat high above the earth.<sup>18</sup> As the waters rose higher and higher above the ground, the boat floated safely on the surface.<sup>19</sup> Finally, the water covered even the highest mountains on the earth,<sup>20</sup> rising more than twenty-two feet\* above the highest peaks.<sup>21</sup> All the living things on earth died—birds, domestic animals, wild animals, small animals that scurry along the ground, and all the people.<sup>22</sup> Everything that breathed and lived on dry land died.<sup>23</sup> God wiped out every living thing on the earth—people, livestock, small animals that 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.<sup>24</sup> And the floodwaters covered the earth for 150 days.

<sup>6:22</sup> One has to wonder whether God's instructions made any sense to Noah. God told him to build a gigantic boat far from the nearest body of navigable water. But here we see that Noah was obedient even though God's instructions were hard to understand. This is one of the secrets of success in any recovery program. We may not understand how everything works, but we must do what God tells us is necessary for a successful recovery. When we step out in faith, as Noah did, God will give us the success we seek.

## CHAPTER 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.<sup>2</sup> The underground waters stopped flowing, and the torrential rains from the sky were stopped.<sup>3</sup> So the floodwaters gradually receded from the earth. After 150 days,<sup>4</sup> exactly five months from the time the flood began,\* the boat came to rest on the mountains of Ararat.<sup>5</sup> Two and a half months later,\* as the waters continued to go down, other mountain peaks became visible.

<sup>6</sup> After another forty days, Noah opened the window he had made in the boat<sup>7</sup> and released a raven. The bird flew back and forth until the floodwaters on the earth had dried up.<sup>8</sup> He also released a dove to see if the water had receded and it could find dry ground.<sup>9</sup> But 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.<sup>10</sup> After waiting another seven days, Noah released the dove again.<sup>11</sup> This time the dove returned to him in the evening with a fresh olive leaf in its beak. Then Noah knew that the floodwaters were almost gone.<sup>12</sup> He waited another seven days and then released the dove again. This time it did not come back.

<sup>13</sup> Noah 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.<sup>14</sup> Two more months went by,\* and at last the earth was dry!

<sup>15</sup> Then God said to Noah,<sup>16</sup> "Leave the boat,

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*.

all of you—you and your wife, and your sons and their wives.<sup>17</sup> Release 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."

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

<sup>20</sup> Then 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.\*<sup>21</sup> And 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.<sup>22</sup> As long as the earth remains, there will be planting and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night."

## CHAPTER 9

### God Confirms His Covenant

Then God blessed Noah and his sons and told them, "Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth.<sup>2</sup> All 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.<sup>3</sup> I have given them to you for food, just as I have given you grain and vegetables.<sup>4</sup> But you must never eat any meat that still has the lifeblood in it.

<sup>5</sup>\* 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.<sup>6</sup> If anyone takes a human life, that person's life will also be taken by human hands. For God

**8:1** Noah had listened to God and obeyed all his requests. But now the boat was floating over the earth on the floodwaters—not an ideal situation to be in. But God didn't forget about Noah. It is comforting to know that when we obey God, he will not forget us. He will stand by us until his plans for us are complete.

**9:1-17** Noah and his family were the only people left after the Flood. The comforts of civilization had been washed away. They had to start all over again. God gave Noah his special blessing and instituted a program that, if followed, would result in a healthy society. God has given us his Word, which contains the ultimate blueprint for healthy living. And just as God gave the human race a new start with Noah, he can give each of us a new start, too.

**9:20-21** Since the Bible talks so much about Noah's righteousness and his fellowship with God, it is surprising to read that he gave in to the excesses of alcohol. The account of Noah's drunkenness and shame comes as a shock to us, but it is a reminder that even in ideal conditions it is easy for us to slip and fall. We can never completely let down our guard or feel as if we have it made, for that is when we become most vulnerable to failure.

# NOAH & SONS

Parents often wonder if they can have a positive effect on their children in our corrupt world. Noah leaves us with a good model of what a godly parent should be like. Noah was the only righteous man left in a generation of corrupt individuals. He led his family by example in a world that looked upon Noah as being "out of touch." Society mocked him for his belief in and obedience to God.

The principles of obedience to God, consistency, and patience were taught to Noah's sons and their wives. When judgment came upon the world, Noah, his wife, his sons, and their wives were spared. The Bible tells us that later in his life, after the Flood, Noah became drunk on the wine of his vineyard. Two of his sons (Shem and Japheth) responded to the situation in a godly manner while one (Ham) did not. Noah's drunkenness and Ham's subsequent indiscretion resulted in the suffering of some of Ham's descendants.

As we look at Noah's life, we are reminded that our children learn from our examples. They often receive great blessings from the good things we do, but they also suffer from our mistakes. Like Noah, all of us have made mistakes. But those mistakes can become insignificant through our repentance and obedience to God's Word. We must remember that children become like the adults who surround them.

made human beings\* in his own image.<sup>7</sup> Now be fruitful and multiply, and repopulate the earth."

<sup>8</sup>Then God told Noah and his sons, <sup>9</sup>"I hereby confirm my covenant with you and your descendants,<sup>10</sup>and 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.<sup>11</sup>Yes, I am confirming my covenant with you. Never again will floodwaters kill all living creatures; never again will a flood destroy the earth."

<sup>12</sup>Then God said, "I am giving you a sign of my covenant with you and with all living creatures, for all generations to come.<sup>13</sup>I have placed my rainbow in the clouds. It is the sign of my covenant with you and with all the earth.<sup>14</sup>When I send clouds over the earth, the rainbow will appear in the clouds,<sup>15</sup>and I will remember my covenant with you and with all living creatures. Never again will the floodwaters destroy all life.<sup>16</sup>When I see the rainbow

## STRENGTHS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Noah was the only follower of God left in his generation.
- Noah was the second father of the human race.
- Noah taught his sons patience, consistency, and obedience to God.

## WEAKNESSES AND MISTAKES:

- Noah embarrassed himself by getting drunk in front of his sons.
- Ham acted in an ungodly manner, which resulted in a curse upon some of his descendants.

## LESSONS FROM THEIR LIVES:

- God is faithful to those who trust and obey him.
- Obedience to God is a lifelong commitment.
- Good parents teach their children by example.

## KEY VERSE:

"So Noah did everything exactly as God had commanded him"  
(Genesis 6:22).

The story of Noah and his sons is told in Genesis 5:29–10:32. Noah is referred to 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; and 2 Peter 2:5.

in the clouds, I will remember the eternal covenant between God and every living creature on earth."<sup>17</sup>Then 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

<sup>18</sup>The sons of Noah who came out of the boat with their father were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. (Ham is the father of Canaan.)

<sup>19</sup>From these three sons of Noah came all the people who now populate the earth.

<sup>20</sup>After the flood, Noah began to cultivate the ground, and he planted a vineyard.

<sup>21</sup>One day he drank some wine he had made, and he became drunk and lay naked inside his tent. <sup>22</sup>Ham, the father of Canaan, saw that his father was naked and went outside and told his brothers. <sup>23</sup>Then Shem and Japheth took a robe, held it over their shoulders, and backed into the tent to cover their

<sup>9:6</sup> Or man; Hebrew reads *ha-adam*.

father. As they did this, they looked the other way so they would not see him naked.

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

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

<sup>26</sup>Then Noah said,

"May the LORD, the God of Shem, be blessed,  
and may Canaan be his servant!  
<sup>27</sup>May God expand the territory of Japheth!  
May Japheth share the prosperity of Shem,\*  
and may Canaan be his servant."

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

## CHAPTER 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

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

<sup>3</sup>The descendants of Gomer were Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah.

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

### Descendants of Ham

<sup>6</sup>The descendants of Ham were Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan.

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

<sup>8</sup>Cush was also the ancestor of Nimrod, who was the first heroic warrior on earth.  
<sup>9</sup>Since he was the greatest hunter in the

<sup>9:27</sup> Hebrew *May he live in the tents of Shem.* <sup>10:4</sup> As in some Hebrew manuscripts and Greek version (see also 1 Chr 1:7); most Hebrew manuscripts read *Dodanim*. <sup>10:9</sup> Hebrew *a great hunter before the LORD*; also in 10:9b.  
<sup>10:10</sup> Hebrew *Shinar*. <sup>10:11</sup> Or *From that land Assyria went out.* <sup>10:14</sup> Hebrew *Castellites, from whom the Philistines came, and Caphtorites.* Compare Jer 47:4; Amos 9:7. <sup>10:15</sup> Hebrew *ancestor of Heth.* <sup>10:21</sup> Or *Shem, whose older brother was Japheth.* <sup>10:24</sup> Greek version reads *Arphaxad was the father of Cainan, Cainan was the father of Shelah.* Compare Luke 3:36.

world,\* his name became proverbial. People would say, "This man is like Nimrod, the greatest hunter in the world." <sup>10</sup>He built his kingdom in the land of Babylonia,\* with the cities of Babylon, Erech, Akkad, and Calneh.

<sup>11</sup>From there he expanded his territory to Assyria,\* building the cities of Nineveh, Rehoboth-ir, Calah, <sup>12</sup>and Resen (the great city located between Nineveh and Calah).

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

<sup>15</sup>Canaan's oldest son was Sidon, the ancestor of the Sidonians. Canaan was also the ancestor of the Hittites,\* <sup>16</sup>Jebusites, Amorites, Girgashites, <sup>17</sup>Hivites, Arkites, Sinites, <sup>18</sup>Arvadites, Zemarites, and Hamathites. The Canaanite clans eventually spread out, <sup>19</sup>and 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.

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

### Descendants of Shem

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

<sup>22</sup>The descendants of Shem were Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud, and Aram.

<sup>23</sup>The descendants of Aram were Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash.

<sup>24</sup>Arphaxad was the father of Shelah,\* and Shelah was the father of Eber.

<sup>25</sup>Eber 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.

<sup>26</sup>Joktan was the ancestor of Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, <sup>27</sup>Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, <sup>28</sup>Obal, Abimael, Sheba, <sup>29</sup>Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab. All these

**10:1-32** This chapter is often called the Table of Nations. It is refreshing to realize that the God we worship is not a local deity. He is sovereign over all ethnic and language groups, nations, and political entities. The God who holds kings and empires in his hands surely has the power to hold us, too.

# ABRAHAM & SARAH

Many give lip service to walking by faith; Abraham and Sarah modeled it. They were imperfect but willing instruments used by God to implement his perfect plan.

Abram, with Sarai, departed by faith from a pagan world for a new life of God's choosing. God promised a land and a nation of descendants, including One through whom all the peoples of the world would be blessed. The covenant defied human logic: Abram was seventy-five; Sarai was ten years younger and infertile. Their hopes of having children had long vanished. Yet Abram believed God's promises.

During their pilgrimage, the pair often strayed from God's will. They succumbed to fear and dishonesty in dealings with Pharaoh and Abimelech. Difficulty in persevering led them to second-guess God. Abram's subsequent union with Hagar resulted in domestic strife. Jealousy naturally erupted, and family relationships became strained. Abram behaved irresponsibly, and Sarai acted with deliberate cruelty. Years later a wiser Abraham would listen to God's instructions for handling the handmaid Hagar and her son.

Abram's and Sarai's failures neither diminished God's love for them nor altered his commitment to his promises. Through turmoil and temptation, the couple's mutual affection and respect for each other survived. Eventually God changed their names. Sarah's faith grew, and a quarter-century after God's promises were first given, she bore a son. They named him Isaac. The delayed gratification must have been sweet! Sarah enjoyed Isaac for many years. After her death she was tenderly mourned by both husband and son.

Worship and obedience were such a part of Abraham's life that when God tested Abraham's faith, he willingly surrendered his son Isaac as a sacrifice. Then God provided a lamb as a burnt offering to take Isaac's place on the altar. God's provision in Abraham's life can bring hope to us even today.

were descendants of Joktan.<sup>30</sup> The territory they occupied extended from Mesha all the way to Sephar in the eastern mountains.

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

## Conclusion

<sup>32</sup>These are the clans that descended from Noah's sons, arranged by nation according to their lines of descent. All the nations of the

11:2 Hebrew *Shinar*.

## STRENGTHS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- They voluntarily left comfortable, familiar surroundings in obedience to God's will.
- Scripture heralds both as examples of faithful obedience.
- Abraham's physical descendants include the Jewish nation, from which came Jesus the Messiah.
- Abraham's spiritual descendants include all who have trusted Jesus for salvation.

## WEAKNESSES AND MISTAKES:

- They at times presumed to know God's plans before he revealed them and foolishly attempted to assist him.
- When victimized by fear, Abraham was not above protecting himself at the expense of his wife's safety and integrity.
- Both acted intolerably toward Hagar and her son.

## LESSONS FROM THEIR LIVES:

- A fresh start is possible at any stage of life.
- The fulfillment of God's promises does not depend upon our performance but upon his grace.
- It is dangerous to move ahead without first seeking God's direction.

## KEY VERSES:

"The LORD kept his word and did for Sarah exactly what he had promised. She became pregnant, and she gave birth to a son for Abraham in his old age" (Genesis 21:1-2).

The story of Abraham and Sarah is found in Genesis 11-25. Among the many other references to Abraham are Romans 4:1-24; 9:7-9; Galatians 3:6-9, 14, 18; Hebrews 6:13-15; 7:1-2, 4-6; 11:8-12, 17-19; James 2:21-23. Sarah is mentioned in Romans 4:19; 9:9; Hebrews 11:11; and 1 Peter 3:6.

earth descended from these clans after the great flood.

## CHAPTER 11 The Tower of Babel

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

<sup>33</sup>They began saying to each other, "Let's

# JOHN

## THE BIG PICTURE

- A. THE GLORIOUS SOURCE OF RECOVERY IS REVEALED (1:1-18)
- B. JESUS GIVES NEW LIFE (1:19-3:36)
- C. SATISFYING THE LONGINGS OF THE SOUL (4:1-7:53)
- D. COMING INTO THE LIGHT TO BE FREED FROM A PAINFUL PAST (8:1-9:41)
- E. EMBRACING AND CELEBRATING AN ABUNDANT LIFE (10:1-12:50)
- F. LOVING OTHERS AS JESUS HAS LOVED US (13:1-17:26)
- G. THE CRUCIFIXION: EVERYTHING SEEMS TO FALL APART (18:1-19:42)
- H. THE RESURRECTION: MIRACULOUS RECOVERY (20:1-21:25)

From the vast stretches of eternity to the confines of time—so the Son of God entered into this world. Jesus was the Creator of this world, but then he immersed himself in his creation. God became a man and willingly sacrificed himself so that all who would receive him could have forgiveness and redemption.

John used a number of images to illustrate who Jesus is and how he gives us eternal life: Jesus is the unblemished Lamb of God who is sacrificed for us; the bread of life who satisfies our spiritual hunger; the living water who satisfies our spiritual thirst; the light who guides us; the good shepherd who leads us; the true vine who gives us life; and the counselor who comforts and teaches us. Through these images, John demonstrated that Jesus can give us all we need for a new, abundant life.

John also used the miracles Jesus performed to show us Jesus' power to transform lives. This Gospel is filled with examples of the power of God in lives needing recovery. With God's help, we can drink the new wine of a changed life; take responsibility to walk away from the sins that paralyze us; recover from our sicknesses; be healed of our blindness to the truth; escape from our sinful addictions and the people who condemn us; and be raised to new life from a dead and empty existence.

John collected this series of images and miracles to help us recognize who Jesus is—the Son of God. When we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we can begin to experience the new life that he offers to all who believe in him.

## THE BOTTOM LINE

**PURPOSE:** To reveal Jesus as the Son of God and show that by faith in him we can experience true love, forgiveness, and recovery. **AUTHOR:** John the apostle, brother of James, called a "Son of Thunder." **AUDIENCE:** All people everywhere. **DATE WRITTEN:** Probably between A.D. 80 and 90. **SETTING:** After many years of reflecting on his experience as a disciple of Jesus, the apostle John recorded his unique perspective on the gospel. **KEY VERSE:** "These [things] are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life" (20:31). **KEY PEOPLE AND RELATIONSHIPS:** Jesus with John the Baptist, the disciples, Mary, Martha, Lazarus, the religious leaders, Pilate, and Mary Magdalene.

## RECOVERY THEMES

**The Power of God:** Each of the miracles recorded by John, six of which are not recorded in the other Gospels, clearly demonstrates God's power. Jesus healed a man born blind; he walked on water and then calmed a storm; he healed a nobleman's son without even being there; he raised Lazarus from the dead after the man had been dead for more than three days. John did not simply tell us about the life of Christ—he made the important point that Jesus is the embodiment of all of God's power. That power is promised to us when we come to him in our powerlessness and turn our life over to him.

**God's Power Can Be within Us:** Recovery is based on God's power at work within us. Jesus gave us several pictures of how we can have God's power. He described how the branch abides in the vine and draws life and power from the vine. He told us that he is the bread of life, and that we are to eat that bread. He said that he has water for us to drink that will quench our thirst forever. Each of these images illustrates the promise he made in the upper room: The Holy Spirit would be available to teach us, comfort us, and empower us daily. When we turn our life over to God, the Holy Spirit comes to live within us and take us step-by-step to wholeness and healing.

**The Dangers of Denial:** In Jesus' early ministry, large crowds followed him. But as Jesus confronted the people with the truth of their sins, the crowds gradually dwindled. Eventually, as people were unwilling to face the realities Jesus exposed in their lives, they rejected the only one who could help them. Times have changed, but the pattern of denial remains the same: We begin with some question about the truth and over time develop rigid resistance to it. Gradually our heart becomes hardened, and we no longer see the obvious truth. Just as he confronted the crowds, Jesus also confronts us with the changes we need to make. It takes courage to be open and willing to face the truth; admitting the truth is the first step toward recovery.

**The Invitation to Relationship:** Although each of the Gospels shows us the love of Jesus, John presented it as a central theme. In the upper room, Jesus said that the mark of following him is loving others. He prayed that we would be united in love as he and the Father are. John referred to himself in this Gospel as "the disciple Jesus loved" (21:20). In one of his later letters, John wrote that the greatest evidence of God's presence in our life is our love for others (see 1 John 4:11-12, 20-21). Central to the recovery process and to our relationship with God is our recognition of God's love for us and our willingness to value and respect others.

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## CHAPTER 1

### Prologue: Christ, the Eternal Word

<sup>1</sup>In the beginning the Word already existed.

The Word was with God,  
and the Word was God.

<sup>2</sup>He existed in the beginning  
with God.

<sup>3</sup>God created everything through him,  
and nothing was created except  
through him.

1:3-4 Or and nothing that was created was created except through him. The Word gave life to everything. 1:5 Or and the darkness has not understood it. 1:6 Greek a man named John.

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<sup>4</sup>The Word gave life to everything that was created,\*  
and his life brought light to everyone.

<sup>5</sup>The light shines in the darkness,  
and the darkness can never extinguish it.\*

<sup>6</sup>God sent a man, John the Baptist,\*<sup>7</sup>to tell about the light so that everyone might believe because of his testimony. <sup>8</sup>John himself

**1:1-13** The same Power that created the universe is available to create a new life from our shattered hopes. The light of life that exposes and drives away the darkness of the human race is the same light that brightens the dark corners of our world. This source of all life and true light of the world is the source of all recovery. Eternal life and true recovery are ours when we believe what God says, renounce our tendency to do things our way, and receive the one whom God sent to help us.

**1:14-18** The true light of the world became a human being known to us as Jesus Christ, who was full of God's unfailing love and faithfulness. Through Jesus, who was both fully God and fully human, we can know what God is like and enjoy a relationship with him. Jesus Christ came to bring us God's unfailing love and forgiveness and to reveal God's faithfulness to us. God's forgiving grace says, "I forgive you for your wrongs; I love and accept you freely for the person you are." His faithfulness says, "I will follow through on all I have promised."

# JOHN THE BAPTIST

A thunderstorm swept in from the wilderness of Judea, stirring many from their slumber, demolishing old structures and soaking the moisture-starved fields. Many were afraid of the fierce deluge, but others were thankful for the future bounty its rain would provide. In the same way, John the Baptist broke onto the scene in Judea. He challenged the power structure of the Jewish leadership and paved the way for what was to come.

From the day an angel appeared to John's father to announce his birth, it was clear that John was special, set aside for a unique purpose. John boldly preached a clear and powerful message: The Kingdom of God was coming, and people were called to turn from their sins and be baptized as a sign of their repentance.

Some were deeply moved by John's words and humbly sought to change their lives; others were hardened in their pride and arrogance. When King Herod married Herodias, his brother's wife, John did not remain silent but pointed out the king's neglect of God's law. Herodias was angered by John's words of condemnation and had him killed. She was able to stomp out the messenger but not the message. The way had been prepared; the Messiah had broken onto the scene. John had done his job.

John felt he was not worthy even to be Jesus' slave. Jesus, however, said that there was no one greater than John in the history of the human race. John did not have a self-esteem problem; he had appropriate humility. When we truly understand the greatness of Jesus, our own self-importance, pride, and self-sufficiency will be transformed into humble gratitude and a desire to please him.

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was not the light; he was simply a witness to tell about the light. <sup>9</sup>The one who is the true light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.

<sup>10</sup>He came into the very world he created, but the world didn't recognize him. <sup>11</sup>He came to his own people, and even they rejected him. <sup>12</sup>But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. <sup>13</sup>They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God.

<sup>14</sup>So the Word became human\* and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness.\* And we have seen his

glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son.

<sup>15</sup>John testified about him when he shouted to the crowds, "This is the one I was talking about when I said, 'Someone is coming after me who is far greater than I am, for he existed long before me.'"

<sup>16</sup>From his abundance we have all received one gracious blessing after another.\*

<sup>17</sup>For the law was given through Moses, but God's unfailing love and faithfulness came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup>No one has ever seen God. But the unique One, who is himself God,\* is near to the Father's heart. He has revealed God to us.

<sup>1:14a</sup> Greek became flesh. <sup>1:14b</sup> Or grace and truth; also in 1:17. <sup>1:16</sup> Or received the grace of Christ rather than the grace of the law; Greek reads received grace upon grace. <sup>1:18</sup> Some manuscripts read But the one and only Son.

## STRENGTHS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- John spoke the truth no matter what the cost.
- He cared about God's opinion, not what others thought.
- He fulfilled God's will for him by preparing the way for the Messiah.
- He put God first in everything he did and said.
- He honestly expressed his feelings of confusion and doubt.

## LESSONS FROM HIS LIFE:

- Standing for the truth may be costly, but it is worthwhile in the end.
- There is joy in telling others about God's Kingdom and Jesus the King.
- An accurate self-perception is a key to faithful service.

## KEY VERSE:

"John replied in the words of the prophet Isaiah: 'I am a voice shouting in the wilderness, 'Clear the way for the LORD's coming!'" (John 1:23).

John's story is found in Matthew 3:1-17; 11:18-19; 14:1-12; Mark 1:1-11; 6:14-29; Luke 1:5-25, 39-45, 57-80; 3:1-22; 7:18-35; 9:7-9; John 1:6-9, 19-37. He is also mentioned in Acts 1:5, 21-22; 10:36-37; 11:16; 13:24-25; 18:25-26; 19:3-4.

## The Testimony of John the Baptist

<sup>19</sup>This was John's testimony when the Jewish leaders sent priests and Temple assistants\* from Jerusalem to ask John, "Who are you?" <sup>20</sup>He came right out and said, "I am not the Messiah."

<sup>21</sup>"Well then, who are you?" they asked.

"Are you Elijah?"

"No," he replied.

"Are you the Prophet we are expecting?"\*

"No."

<sup>22</sup>"Then who are you? We need an answer for those who sent us. What do you have to say about yourself?"

<sup>23</sup>John replied in the words of the prophet Isaiah:

"I am a voice shouting in the wilderness,  
'Clear the way for the LORD's coming!'\*\*"

<sup>24</sup>Then the Pharisees who had been sent<sup>25</sup>asked him, "If you aren't the Messiah or Elijah or the Prophet, what right do you have to baptize?"

<sup>26</sup>John told them, "I baptize with\* water, but right here in the crowd is someone you do not recognize.<sup>27</sup>Though his ministry follows mine, I'm not even worthy to be his slave and untie the straps of his sandal."

<sup>28</sup>This encounter took place in Bethany, an area east of the Jordan River, where John was baptizing.

## Jesus, the Lamb of God

<sup>29</sup>The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!<sup>30</sup>He is the one I was talking about when I said, 'A man is coming after me who is far greater than I am, for he existed long before me.'<sup>31</sup>I did not recognize him as the Messiah, but I have been baptizing with water so that he might be revealed to Israel."

<sup>32</sup>Then John testified, "I saw the Holy Spirit descending like a dove from heaven and resting upon him.<sup>33</sup>I didn't know he was the one, but when God sent me to baptize

1:19 Greek *and Levites*. 1:21 Greek *Are you the Prophet?* See Deut 18:15, 18; Mal 4:5-6. 1:23 Isa 40:3. 1:26 Or *in*; also in 1:31, 33. 1:34 Some manuscripts read *the Son of God*. 1:41 *Messiah* (a Hebrew term) and *Christ* (a Greek term) both mean "anointed one." 1:42 The names *Cephas* (from Aramaic) and *Peter* (from Greek) both mean "rock."

1:45 Greek *Moses in the law*.

with water, he told me, 'The one on whom you see the Spirit descend and rest is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.'<sup>34</sup>I saw this happen to Jesus, so I testify that he is the Chosen One of God.\*"

## The First Disciples

<sup>35</sup>The following day John was again standing with two of his disciples.<sup>36</sup>As Jesus walked by, John looked at him and declared, "Look! There is the Lamb of God!"<sup>37</sup>When John's two disciples heard this, they followed Jesus.

<sup>38</sup>Jesus looked around and saw them following. "What do you want?" he asked them.

They replied, "Rabbi" (which means "Teacher"), "where are you staying?"

<sup>39</sup>"Come and see," he said. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon when they went with him to the place where he was staying, and they remained with him the rest of the day.

<sup>40</sup>Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of these men who heard what John said and then followed Jesus.<sup>41</sup>Andrew went to find his brother, Simon, and told him, "We have found the Messiah" (which means "Christ"\*\*).

<sup>42</sup>Then Andrew brought Simon to meet Jesus. Looking intently at Simon, Jesus said, "Your name is Simon, son of John—but you will be called Cephas" (which means "Peter"\*\*).

<sup>43</sup>The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Come, follow me."<sup>44</sup>Philip was from Bethsaida, Andrew and Peter's hometown.

<sup>45</sup>Philip went to look for Nathanael and told him, "We have found the very person Moses\* and the prophets wrote about! His name is Jesus, the son of Joseph from Nazareth."

<sup>46</sup>"Nazareth!" exclaimed Nathanael. "Can anything good come from Nazareth?"

"Come and see for yourself," Philip replied.

<sup>47</sup>As they approached, Jesus said, "Now

1:19-28 John the Baptist was an original messenger of repentance and recovery. He was not the true light or source of recovery; he merely pointed to the one who was. Likewise, those of us in recovery reflect God's light and merely point the way to recovery. We should not draw followers to ourself any more than John did. We are mere beggars telling other beggars where to find food. When we lay aside pride in our achievements and abilities as John the Baptist did, we are better able to serve Christ by showing fellow strugglers the way to recovery.

here is a genuine son of Israel—a man of complete integrity.”

<sup>48</sup>“How do you know about me?” Nathanael asked.

Jesus replied, “I could see you under the fig tree before Philip found you.”

<sup>49</sup>Then Nathanael exclaimed, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God—the King of Israel!”

<sup>50</sup>Jesus asked him, “Do you believe this just because I told you I had seen you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than this.” <sup>51</sup>Then he said, “I tell you the truth, you will all see heaven open and the angels of God going up and down on the Son of Man, the one who is the stairway between heaven and earth.”\*

## CHAPTER 2

### The Wedding at Cana

The next day\* there was a wedding celebration in the village of Cana in Galilee. Jesus’ mother was there, <sup>2</sup>and Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the celebration. <sup>3</sup>The wine supply ran out during the festivities, so Jesus’ mother told him, “They have no more wine.”

<sup>4</sup>“Dear woman, that’s not our problem,” Jesus replied. “My time has not yet come.”

<sup>5</sup>But his mother told the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.”

Standing nearby were six stone water jars, used for Jewish ceremonial washing. Each could hold twenty to thirty gallons.\* Jesus told the servants, “Fill the jars with water.” When the jars had been filled, <sup>8</sup>he said, “Now dip some out, and take it to the master of ceremonies.” So the servants followed his instructions.

<sup>9</sup>When the master of ceremonies tasted the water that was now wine, not knowing where it had come from (though, of course,

the servants knew), he called the bridegroom over. <sup>10</sup>A host always serves the best wine first,” he said. “Then, when everyone has had a lot to drink, he brings out the less expensive wine. But you have kept the best until now!”

<sup>11</sup>This miraculous sign at Cana in Galilee was the first time Jesus revealed his glory. And his disciples believed in him.

<sup>12</sup>After the wedding he went to Capernaum for a few days with his mother, his brothers, and his disciples.

### Jesus Clears the Temple

<sup>13</sup>It was nearly time for the Jewish Passover celebration, so Jesus went to Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup>In the Temple area he saw merchants selling cattle, sheep, and doves for sacrifices; he also saw dealers at tables exchanging foreign money.

<sup>15</sup>Jesus made a whip from some ropes and chased them all out of the Temple. He drove out the sheep and cattle, scattered the money changers’ coins over the floor, and turned over their tables. <sup>16</sup>Then, going over to the people who sold doves, he told them, “Get these things out of here. Stop turning my Father’s house into a marketplace!”

<sup>17</sup>Then his disciples remembered this prophecy from the Scriptures: “Passion for God’s house will consume me.”\*

<sup>18</sup>But the Jewish leaders demanded, “What are you doing? If God gave you authority to do this, show us a miraculous sign to prove it.”

<sup>19</sup>“All right,” Jesus replied. “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”

<sup>20</sup>“What!” they exclaimed. “It has taken forty-six years to build this Temple, and you can rebuild it in three days?” <sup>21</sup>But when Jesus said “this temple,” he meant his own body. <sup>22</sup>After he was raised from the dead, his

<sup>1:51</sup> Greek *going up and down on the Son of Man*; see Gen 28:10-17. “Son of Man” is a title Jesus used for himself.

<sup>2:1</sup> Greek *On the third day*; see 1:35, 43. <sup>2:6</sup> Greek *2 or 3 measures* [75 to 113 liters]. <sup>2:17</sup> Or “Concern for God’s house will be my undoing.” Ps 69:9.

**2:1-12** Jesus was at a wedding celebration with family and friends when the wine ran out. So Jesus turned the water in six stone waterpots into enough wine for the rest of the celebration. If we are in recovery, this abundance of wine would be dangerous. But one truth should be encouraging to us all: Jesus valued the celebration of people at a wedding feast. God is concerned about the seemingly mundane needs we have and has the power to meet those needs. He may call us to do some painful things in the process of recovery, but his ultimate goal for us is a life of peace and wholeness.

**2:13-16** Jesus was angry at those who turned the Temple courts into a marketplace of unjust profit. The merchants forced the people to buy “approved” sacrificial animals at exorbitant prices and exchanged their currency for Temple currency at inflated rates. They abused the public trust and mocked holy worship. Anger that is measured and authorized by God’s purposes is justified. Sometimes this kind of anger can play an important role in our spiritual, emotional, and physical recovery. We may need to stand up to the abusive forces in our life and make changes that will set us free from their grip. As we do, God will stand by us.

disciples remembered he had said this, and they believed both the Scriptures and what Jesus had said.

### **Jesus and Nicodemus**

<sup>23</sup>Because of the miraculous signs Jesus did in Jerusalem at the Passover celebration, many began to trust in him. <sup>24</sup>But Jesus didn't trust them, because he knew all about people. <sup>25</sup>No one needed to tell him about human nature, for he knew what was in each person's heart.

## CHAPTER 3

There was a man named Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader who was a Pharisee. <sup>2</sup>After dark one evening, he came to speak with Jesus. "Rabbi," he said, "we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miraculous signs are evidence that God is with you."

<sup>3</sup>Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, unless you are born again,\* you cannot see the Kingdom of God."

<sup>4</sup>"What do you mean?" exclaimed Nicodemus. "How can an old man go back into his mother's womb and be born again?"

<sup>5</sup>Jesus replied, "I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit.\* <sup>6</sup>Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life.\* <sup>7</sup>So don't be surprised when I say, 'You\* must be born again.' <sup>8</sup>The wind blows wherever it wants. Just as you can hear the wind but can't tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can't explain how people are born of the Spirit."

<sup>9</sup>"How are these things possible?" Nicodemus asked.

<sup>3:3</sup> Or *born from above*; also in 3:7. <sup>3:5</sup> Or *and spirit*. The Greek word for *Spirit* can also be translated *wind*; see 3:8.

<sup>3:6</sup> Greek what is born of the Spirit is spirit. <sup>3:7</sup> The Greek word for *you* is plural; also in 3:12. <sup>3:13</sup> Some manuscripts add who lives in heaven. "Son of Man" is a title Jesus used for himself. <sup>3:15</sup> Or everyone who believes will have eternal life in him. <sup>3:16</sup> Or For God loved the world so much that he gave. <sup>3:21</sup> Or can see God at work in what he is doing.

<sup>10</sup>Jesus replied, "You are a respected Jewish teacher, and yet you don't understand these things? <sup>11</sup>I assure you, we tell you what we know and have seen, and yet you won't believe our testimony. <sup>12</sup>But if you don't believe me when I tell you about earthly things, how can you possibly believe if I tell you about heavenly things? <sup>13</sup>No one has ever gone to heaven and returned. But the Son of Man\* has come down from heaven. <sup>14</sup>And as Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up,<sup>15</sup>so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life.\*

<sup>16</sup>For this is how God loved the world: He gave\* his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. <sup>17</sup>God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him.

<sup>18</sup>"There is no judgment against anyone who believes in him. But anyone who does not believe in him has already been judged for not believing in God's one and only Son.

<sup>19</sup>And the judgment is based on this fact: God's light came into the world, but people loved the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil. <sup>20</sup>All who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near it for fear their sins will be exposed. <sup>21</sup>But those who do what is right come to the light so others can see that they are doing what God wants.\*"

### **John the Baptist Exalts Jesus**

<sup>22</sup>Then Jesus and his disciples left Jerusalem and went into the Judean countryside. Jesus

**3:1-12** Spiritual rebirth is as necessary to the recovery process as it is to entering God's Kingdom. Being born again is the beginning—a baby step in the process. The hard part comes each subsequent day as we submit our stubborn heart and will to the control of God's Spirit. True recovery is not attained by our trying harder to live a better life. As we repent, entrust our life to God, and seek to obey him, we will receive forgiveness and true recovery.

**3:16-18** Faith says yes to God's loving overtures to us. God cared enough to send his own Son, Jesus Christ, to pay for our sins. True faith has nothing to do with our human efforts, social achievements, or material wealth. True faith says to God, "I'm a helpless sinner, unable to effect my own recovery. I trust your forgiveness, which you freely offer me in Jesus Christ." This faith delivers us from the ultimate consequence of our sins—eternal separation from God. It also empowers us to make changes in the present that will plant the seeds for a new life.

**4:4-27** The disciples were surprised to find Jesus speaking with the woman at the well: She was a Samaritan (half Jew and half Gentile), she was a woman, and she had a questionable past. Any one of these factors would have disqualified her from speaking with a "righteous" Jewish man. Jesus broke down the traditional barriers, accepting her as she was and giving her a fresh start in life. Jesus demonstrated God's love for all who have been rejected, condemned, or shunned, which should encourage us. No matter what we have done, God offers us his unconditional acceptance in Jesus. With his powerful help, nothing can stand between us and recovery.



# STEP 11

## Friends of the Light

BIBLE READING: John 3:18-21

We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contacts with God, praying only for knowledge of his will for us and the power to carry that out.

Sometimes we don't want to know God's will because there are areas in our life that we aren't ready to deal with yet. Recovery is a process for us. We may be ready to pray for God's will in some areas but feel uncomfortable having God's light shine into the areas that are still hidden in shame.

When talking about those who refuse to trust him with their life, Jesus said, "God's light came into the world, but people loved the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil. . . [They] refuse to go near it for fear their sins will be exposed." (John 3:19-20). Later, in one of his talks, Jesus said to the people, "I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life" (John 8:12).

Darkness is great when we are trying to hide something, but light is needed when we are trying to walk without falling. When we were hiding our shameful behavior and holding on to our addiction, the darkness seemed like our friend. Now that we are trying to walk toward recovery, we need the light to keep us from stumbling. We don't have to be afraid of God's light anymore since we have his forgiveness through Christ. He wants to safely guide us on the right path. *Turn to Step Twelve, page 917, Isaiah 61.*

spent some time with them there, baptizing people.

<sup>23</sup>At this time John the Baptist was baptizing at Aenon, near Salim, because there was plenty of water there; and people kept coming to him for baptism. <sup>24</sup>(This was before John was thrown into prison.) <sup>25</sup>A debate broke out between John's disciples and a certain Jew\* over ceremonial cleansing. <sup>26</sup>So John's disciples came to him and said, "Rabbi, the man you met on the other side of the Jordan River, the one you identified as the Messiah, is also baptizing people. And everybody is going to him instead of coming to us."

<sup>27</sup>John replied, "No one can receive anything unless God gives it from heaven. <sup>28</sup>You yourselves know how plainly I told you, 'I am not the Messiah. I am only here to prepare the way for him.' <sup>29</sup>It is the bridegroom who marries the bride, and the bridegroom's friend is simply glad to stand with him and hear his vows. Therefore, I am filled with joy at his success. <sup>30</sup>He must become greater and greater, and I must become less and less.

<sup>31</sup>"He has come from above and is greater than anyone else. We are of the earth, and we speak of earthly things, but he has come from heaven and is greater than anyone else.\* <sup>32</sup>He testifies about what he has seen and heard, but how few believe what he tells them! <sup>33</sup>Anyone who accepts his testimony can affirm that God is true. <sup>34</sup>For he is sent by God. He speaks God's words, for God gives him the Spirit without limit. <sup>35</sup>The Father loves his Son and has put everything into his hands. <sup>36</sup>And anyone who believes in God's Son has eternal life. Anyone who doesn't obey the Son will never experience eternal life but remains under God's angry judgment."

### CHAPTER 4

#### Jesus and the Samaritan Woman

Jesus\* knew the Pharisees had heard that he was baptizing and making more disciples than John <sup>2</sup>(though Jesus himself didn't baptize them—his disciples did). <sup>3</sup>So he left Judea and returned to Galilee.

<sup>4</sup>He had to go through Samaria on the way. <sup>5</sup>Eventually he came to the Samaritan village of Sychar, near the field that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. <sup>6</sup>Jacob's well was there; and Jesus, tired from the long walk, sat wearily beside the well about noontime. <sup>7</sup>Soon a Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to

3:25 Some manuscripts read *some Jews*. 3:31 Some manuscripts do not include *and is greater than anyone else*. 4:1 Some manuscripts read *The Lord*.

## **The Serenity Prayer**

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,  
the courage to change the things I can,  
and the wisdom to know the difference.

Living one day at a time, enjoying one moment at a time,  
accepting hardship as the pathway to peace.

Taking, as Christ did, this sinful world as it is,  
not as I would have it.

Trusting that He will make all things right  
if I surrender to His will.

That I may be reasonably happy in this life  
and supremely happy with Him forever in the next.

Amen

# LIFE RECOVERY TOPICAL INDEX

This index locates the notes, profiles, devotionals, and recovery themes related to key issues in recovery. Page numbers are provided to make it easy to find all the features listed. Related issues are named in parentheses to make an expanded study on any topic a simple task. For additional information, see the other specialized indexes that follow this topical index: Index to Recovery Profiles, Index to Twelve Step Devotionals, Index to Recovery Principle Devotionals, Index to Serenity Prayer Devotionals, Index to Recovery Reflections.

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