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THE BIBLE FOR PEOPLE IN
12-STEP RECOVERY



THE LIFE
RECOVERY[®]
SECOND EDITION **BIBLE**



Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.
Carol Stream, Illinois

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CONTENTS

A4	The Books of the Bible
A4	Alphabetical Listing of Bible Books
A5	Preface
A9	A Word about Addictions
A11	An Early History of Life Recovery
A13	The Twelve Steps
A14	The Twelve Steps and Scripture
A15	User's Guide
1	OLD TESTAMENT
1193	NEW TESTAMENT
1672	The Serenity Prayer
1673	The Twelve Laws of Life Recovery
1675	The Twelve Missteps of Life Recovery
1677	The Twelve Gifts of Life Recovery
1678	The Twelve Christian Foundations of Life Recovery
1678	The Twelve Self-Evident Truths of Life Recovery
1679	Life Recovery Facilitator's Guide
1681	Step-by-Step Life Recovery Meeting Guide
1687	Thriving in a Secular Recovery Group
1693	Life-Giving Recovery Groups in the Church
1695	Life Recovery Topical Index
1738	Index to Recovery Profiles
1739	Index to Twelve Step Devotionals
1741	Index to Recovery Principle Devotionals
1742	Index to Serenity Prayer Devotionals
1743	Index to Recovery Reflections
1747	Topical Bible Verse Finder
1767	A Note to Readers
1768	Introduction to the New Living Translation
1773	NLT Bible Translation Team
1775	Contributors
1776	Resources List

THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

The Old Testament

3 Genesis
 77 Exodus
 133 Leviticus
 171 Numbers
 221 Deuteronomy
 265 Joshua
 301 Judges
 335 Ruth
 343 1 Samuel
 387 2 Samuel
 425 1 Kings
 463 2 Kings
 503 1 Chronicles
 541 2 Chronicles
 587 Ezra
 601 Nehemiah
 623 Esther
 635 Job
 679 Psalms
 785 Proverbs
 823 Ecclesiastes
 837 Song of Songs

847 Isaiah
 929 Jeremiah
 1003 Lamentations
 1013 Ezekiel
 1073 Daniel
 1095 Hosea
 1113 Joel
 1119 Amos
 1131 Obadiah
 1135 Jonah
 1141 Micah
 1151 Nahum
 1157 Habakkuk
 1163 Zephaniah
 1169 Haggai
 1173 Zechariah
 1187 Malachi

The New Testament

1195 Matthew
 1249 Mark
 1285 Luke
 1339 John

1379 Acts
 1429 Romans
 1455 1 Corinthians
 1479 2 Corinthians
 1497 Galatians
 1509 Ephesians
 1519 Philippians
 1529 Colossians
 1537 1 Thessalonians
 1543 2 Thessalonians
 1549 1 Timothy
 1559 2 Timothy
 1567 Titus
 1573 Philemon
 1577 Hebrews
 1599 James
 1609 1 Peter
 1621 2 Peter
 1627 1 John
 1637 2 John
 1639 3 John
 1643 Jude
 1647 Revelation

ALPHABETICAL LISTING OF BIBLE BOOKS

1379 Acts	1599 James	601 Nehemiah
1119 Amos	929 Jeremiah	171 Numbers
503 1 Chronicles	635 Job	1131 Obadiah
541 2 Chronicles	1113 Joel	1609 1 Peter
1529 Colossians	1339 John	1621 2 Peter
1455 1 Corinthians	1627 1 John	1573 Philemon
1479 2 Corinthians	1637 2 John	1519 Philippians
1073 Daniel	1639 3 John	785 Proverbs
221 Deuteronomy	1135 Jonah	679 Psalms
823 Ecclesiastes	265 Joshua	1647 Revelation
1509 Ephesians	1643 Jude	1429 Romans
623 Esther	301 Judges	335 Ruth
77 Exodus	425 1 Kings	343 1 Samuel
1013 Ezekiel	463 2 Kings	387 2 Samuel
587 Ezra	1003 Lamentations	837 Song of Songs
1497 Galatians	133 Leviticus	1537 1 Thessalonians
3 Genesis	1285 Luke	1543 2 Thessalonians
1157 Habakkuk	1187 Malachi	1549 1 Timothy
1169 Haggai	1249 Mark	1559 2 Timothy
1577 Hebrews	1195 Matthew	1567 Titus
1095 Hosea	1141 Micah	1173 Zechariah
847 Isaiah	1151 Nahum	1163 Zephaniah

PREFACE

THE BIBLE is the greatest book on recovery ever written. In its pages we see God set out on a plan for the recovery of his broken people and creation. We meet numerous individuals who are able to take their lives back through the wisdom and power of God. And we meet the God who is waiting with arms outstretched for all to turn to him, seek his will, and experience his healing. Some of us come to the Bible with baggage. We may wonder whether God exists. Or even if we think he does exist, we may wonder whether he is good, or whether he cares about us. Our hope is that you will encounter the God of grace, love, and redemption in the pages of *The Life Recovery Bible*.

Many of us are just waking up to the fact that we need recovery. We might define recovery this way: It is the simple but challenging process of daily seeking God's will for our lives instead of demanding to go our own way. It involves 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 souls so we can help others in the process of their own healing. All of us need to take part in this process because no one is perfect. It's 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 a path toward wholeness.

A Willingness to Surrender

The goal of this Bible is to help us move from wherever we are to a place closer to God, closer to those who love us, and closer to those who may have given up on us. It is likely that if you are reading this, you are aware you have some kind of problem. Being aware of our struggles is certainly better than remaining blind to them. It is the place where we start our journey toward recovery. Some of us become aware of our problems during a moment of quiet reflection. Some of us wake up through a confrontation with a friend brave enough to tell us the truth. Still others of us become aware of our brokenness through a tragic, life-changing event like incarceration, divorce, separation, or the death of a loved one. Although coming to this point of awareness is painful, it is essential to move us along toward

repair, resolution, and recovery. But awareness alone cannot produce lasting change.

In this Bible you will see examples of good things in our world, things created by God, who is the source of everything good. But you will also discover truth about the evil found in this world. The Bible introduces us to Satan and his plan for stealing, killing, and destroying the good in our lives. Satan has been working to plant destruction in God's good world from the beginning, and he's been doing the same to each of us. What Satan really wants is for us to become like him. He wants us to turn away from worshipping God and to begin to worship ourselves instead. He wants us to think of ourselves as all-knowing, all-powerful, and in control of our own lives. He wants us to think of ourselves as God.

If we think we are in control, it becomes hard for us to deal with the problems in our lives. First, we will likely be slow in even recognizing them. Then when things get so bad that we can't deny our problems, Satan's work intensifies, and he leads us to believe that we have what it takes to fix ourselves. So even if we're aware of our problems, we can still remain blind to the real solution. We can fall right in line with millions of others who are the "supreme beings" in their own lives. We hang on to the false belief that we have all we need to produce a healed, happy, and fulfilled life. So just being aware that we have a problem isn't enough. We must also become aware of our limitations. We need to become convinced that we need help from the outside. And we need to want help badly enough to swallow our pride and ask for it.

But even when we are aware of our problems and understand our limitations, we still need something more. We must have the desire and the courage to change what we see. We must be willing to change. The psalm writer rightly prays in Psalm 51:12, "Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and make me willing to obey you." Willingness is not easy or the psalm writer wouldn't have asked God to help him with it.

When we have a willing heart, then we no longer need to worry about whether or not we have the power to heal ourselves or transform our own hearts. We are in the best position to change when we have surrendered ourselves completely to God—that is, when we can finally admit that we have a problem we are powerless to change, and when we are willing for God to not only change the problem but to change our hearts along with it.

The Life Recovery Bible is the most powerful tool available to help with all phases of recovery: becoming aware of our problems and our need for help, developing the desire to change, and gaining the willingness to do whatever it takes.

Staying the Course in Life Recovery

The Life Recovery Bible is a unique tool that brings Twelve Step recovery back to its original source—God's Word. The founders of Alcoholics Anonymous drew on the Bible's wisdom as the source for the Twelve Steps, especially the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7), the book of James, and the famous "love chapter" (1 Corinthians 13). There is nothing in the Twelve Steps that opposes truth found anywhere in Scripture. As we work through the Twelve Steps, it will become clear how these Steps reflect the path God has chosen and revealed in Scripture for the rescue and transformation of broken lives.

No matter where we are in the recovery process or how many defective plans we've tried in the past, if we stay the course on our Life Recovery

journey, there is hope. We can rely on the strength found by walking with others, entrusting our lives to God, and allowing him to direct our decisions and plans. If we stay the course, we will journey through the Twelve Steps and utilize other Life Recovery resources to help us focus on the provisions that our all-knowing and all-powerful God provides for recovery. *The Life Recovery Bible* is designed to enrich and expand our experience of this God who loves us so much that he provided a way for us to find an abundant life now and ultimately to spend eternity with him in heaven.

We are delighted that you have chosen this second edition of *The Life Recovery Bible* as a tool to help you discover what God wants for you or someone you care about. As you study God's Word and progress through the steps, please use our website to share your recovery progress and experiences (www.liferecoverygroups.com). Or perhaps for you, this is your first step toward starting and leading a Life Recovery meeting or group. If so, look up the articles at the back of this Bible related to starting and leading a group. Also, log on to our website so we can interact with you more directly.

A WORD ABOUT ADDICTIONS

SOMETIMES THE FIRST STEP toward overcoming an addiction is to learn something about it. There are two general categories of addictions. One category, chemical or substance addiction, results from someone ingesting alcohol or some other drug simply to feel different. Not everyone develops a chemical addiction to alcohol, but other highly addictive drugs can trap anyone who tries them.

Those who have begun to use alcohol to ease pain should watch for danger signs that indicate they are susceptible to addiction. People who develop serious alcohol issues often have the ability to “handle” their drinking (that is, they can drink a lot without it having much of an effect on them). Another danger sign is binge drinking, when a person consumes a lot of alcohol in an evening or a weekend but doesn’t drink again for several weeks. They point to their long stretches without alcohol as proof that they don’t have a dependency problem, but they do. Another danger sign is having others in the family tree who have been alcoholics. Heredity is a factor and indicates a much higher probability of becoming addicted to alcohol. Watch for these signs—they spell trouble.

Becoming addicted to a drug can start innocently. We may use drugs in order to fit in with friends, not knowing how powerfully addictive the drugs are. Sometimes, people get a legitimate prescription from a doctor. It may help for a while, but then its effects wear 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 general category of addiction, process addiction, involves using less obvious methods to try to handle emotional pain. These compulsive behaviors are related to a process instead of a substance, like drugs or alcohol. These behaviors start out in small ways and are seemingly innocent. Some people may think they can control these behaviors, but when they try to stop, they realize the repetitive behavior controls them.

Gambling or compulsively spending money may be a way we try to deal with our problems. We may find that we are always short of money or 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, gamble online, or spend 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 things we think we can always control, but there are three ways eating can be a problem. One problem, overeating, happens when people 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 involves binge eating and then having to purge what was eaten. And then there is the very serious problem of people not eating enough. Because they think they are fat, some people control their eating habits and chronically lose weight, leading to life-threatening physical problems.

Using the Internet can become a problem that leads to devastating addictions. Spending too much time searching the web, even too much interaction on social media, can keep us from living in the real world. Or our Internet use may involve pornography. Many think that viewing pornography is a problem limited to men, but it can be just as big 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. Habitually viewing pornography can affect the brain in the same ways as a chemical addiction and can have devastating effects on our relationships.

Sometimes, people inflict pain on themselves to distract them from their emotional pain. They usually do this by cutting themselves. The reasons for this behavior are complex, but basically it is a way to feel something different—physical pain 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 and 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. We can begin recovery by recognizing that it's not all our fault, but then we also need to begin to take responsibility for the choices we make. What you do in response to these problems will determine the course of your life, whether you know it or not. You are in control of your choices right now. Look to the resources in this Bible and to others who understand you and love you. You should not—you cannot—walk this path of recovery alone.

AN EARLY HISTORY OF LIFE RECOVERY

IN 1935 Bill W. and Dr. Bob, who were deeply involved with the Oxford Group movement, founded Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). They were seeking to live out the Oxford Group's Four Absolutes—absolute honesty, absolute purity, absolute unselfishness, and absolute love—as they helped others find the sobriety they were experiencing.

In those beginning days of the program, there were no Twelve Steps. Instead, they had six precepts relayed by Ebby T., who was Bill W.'s sponsor. Here are the six precepts:

- We admitted we were licked.
- We got honest with ourselves.
- We talked it over with another person.
- We made amends to those we had harmed.
- We tried to carry the message to others with no thought of reward.
- We prayed to whatever God we thought there was.

From these precepts, the Twelve Steps emerged. Dr. Bob, Bill W., and Dr. Samuel Shoemaker spent hours discussing as they studied portions of the Bible that aligned with their Oxford Group experiences and supported their own recovery journeys.

Three portions of Scripture were specifically identified as foundational in the development of the Twelve Steps: the Sermon on the Mount, which includes the Beatitudes (Matthew 5–7); the book of James, which focuses on several Twelve Step fundamentals; and “the love chapter” (1 Corinthians 13). All three of these portions of Scripture clearly established the Christian and biblical roots of AA and the Twelve Steps. Having come out of their study of the Bible, these early pioneers were careful to include nothing in the Steps that would counter any truth found in God's Word.

In the early days of AA, when conservative Christian values and truths were unapologetically used to help others in recovery, the success rate was quite amazing. The book *Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers* tells how Dr. Bob called every newcomer to the first AA group to “say a prayer to God admitting you were powerless over alcohol and your life was unmanageable.” Nearly 93 percent of those surveyed in the Akron group never relapsed. For an addiction that had resulted in hopelessness and helplessness for centuries, this result was truly amazing.

We can only imagine what it was like to hear of alcoholics being “cured” (as the unknowing world called it) when anyone getting better from a real addiction to alcohol was considered the result of a divine miracle. We can

compare what was happening there to what people would think today if 93 percent of people with stage IV incurable and inoperable brain cancer who went to Akron, Ohio, miraculously found healing there. Every media outlet would send someone to discover what was going on. Back then, 93 percent of alcoholics getting better caused such a stir that the wealthy John D. Rockefeller Jr. sent his son to find out what was going on to produce this miracle. When he reported back, he told his dad that they all had experienced a conversion experience with God.

In order to remove any barriers to inclusion based on religious views, AA did not use explicitly Christian language in their literature. They referred to God mostly as “God as we understood Him” or as the “Power greater than ourselves,” allowing for a variety of religious perspectives. As time passed, most people forgot the strong connection between the Twelve Steps and the Bible, and recovery became a secular practice with many connections to medicine and psychology. In recent years it has been difficult to reestablish the connection between Christian values and successful recovery programs that use the Twelve Steps. We are honored to be part of a movement that brings the Twelve Steps back to Scripture through the publication of *The Life Recovery Bible*, the creation of additional Life Recovery resources, the formation of The Life Recovery Institute, and the establishment of Life Recovery groups around the world.

At a meeting in 1991, Tyndale House Publishers partnered with Stephen Arterburn and David Stoop to create *The Life Recovery Bible*, which includes traditional study Bible features along with devotionals to give fellow strugglers a meaningful connection to God’s Word. This Bible is designed for people involved in Twelve Step recovery programs who have longed for a tool that integrates the Twelve Steps with Scripture. Introducing them to the true Power greater than ourselves, the God of the Bible, *The Life Recovery Bible* provides a strong biblical foundation for recovery. And for people who know the Bible but are in need of recovery, it introduces them to the Twelve Steps in a Christ-centered recovery program.

Using this Bible as your primary tool in the context of Twelve Step meetings and working the Steps, your life can be transformed. You can become one of many people who have allowed God to take over what they could not control and now believe what they once found so hard to accept.

One of the first readers of *The Life Recovery Bible* was suicidal and addicted to crack cocaine. After six months with this Bible, her life was completely transformed by Jesus, and she quickly stepped forward to help other women find recovery. When asked what happened, she replied, “I stopped believing the lies of Satan and started believing the truths of Jesus Christ.” She was the first in the history of Life Recovery to experience a transformed life while using and applying the truths found in this Bible. History has since repeated itself with millions of others. The transforming truth in God’s word is now available to you. We pray that God’s truth in this Bible will provide the foundation for an amazing life of recovery and restoration.

Steve A. and Dave S.

THE TWELVE STEPS OF LIFE RECOVERY

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 Twelve 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 Twelve Steps and connects them to corresponding Scriptures that support them. This will help readers familiar with the Twelve 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).

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. And it spells out the fatal consequences that result from rejecting God's plan. 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.

In this second edition of *The Life Recovery Bible*, the content has been thoroughly edited and refreshed. A few new notes and articles have also been added. However, with this revision a page-perfect correspondence for all the feature content was maintained from the first edition to the second. This allows users of both editions to communicate easily with each other regarding the location of notes and other features.

OVERVIEW ARTICLES	This Bible includes a number of helpful overview articles at the front. These focus on giving individuals perspective as they begin their recovery journey. Preface (page A5) A Word about Addictions (page A9) An Early History of Life Recovery (page A11)
NEW ARTICLES IN THE SECOND EDITION	The articles new to the second edition of <i>The Life Recovery Bible</i> focus primarily on giving guidance to facilitators as they lead recovery groups and use the Bible in a group context. Life Recovery Facilitator's Guide (page 1679) Step-by-Step Life Recovery Meeting Guide (page 1681) Thriving in a Secular Recovery Group (page 1687) Life-Giving Recovery Groups in the Church (page 1693)
DEVOTIONAL READING PLANS	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. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Twelve Step Devotional Reading Plan includes eighty-four Bible-based devotionals built around the Twelve Steps. <i>To begin this reading plan, turn to page 25.</i>• The Recovery Principle Devotional Reading Plan is composed of fifty-six Bible-based devotionals shaped around principles important in the recovery process. <i>To begin this reading plan, turn to page 5.</i>• The Serenity Prayer Devotional Reading Plan is made up of twenty-nine Bible-based devotionals related to the Serenity Prayer. <i>To begin this reading plan, turn to page 27.</i>
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 1738.
INTRODUCTORY MATERIAL FOR BIBLE BOOKS	Each book of the Bible is preceded by a number of helpful features. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 1695.

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 1743.

INDEXES

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.
- The **Topical Bible Verse Finder** on page 1747 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.

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 age-long story of God's amazing love for the human race. Through this book we will discover that the only pathway to spiritual wholeness is found by following God's redemptive plan.

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, then 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: The disobedience of Adam and Eve 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 the serpent’s 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 that 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.

CHAPTER 1

The Account of Creation

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

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

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, . . .*

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

⁸God called the space “sky.”

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

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

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.

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 ourselves. 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 ourselves 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 is 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.**

God saw that it was good. ¹¹Then God said, "Let the land sprout with vegetation—every sort of seed-bearing plant, and trees that grow seed-bearing fruit. These seeds will then produce the kinds of plants and trees from which they came." And that is what happened.

¹²The land produced vegetation—all sorts of seed-bearing plants, and trees with seed-bearing fruit. Their seeds produced plants and trees of the same kind. And God saw that it was good.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1:26a Or *man*; Hebrew reads *adam*.

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

²⁷ So God created human beings* in his own image.

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

²⁸ 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.”

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

³¹ 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.

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

⁴ 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, ⁵ neither wild plants nor grains

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.

were 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. ⁶ Instead, springs* came up from the ground and watered all the land. ⁷ 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.

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

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

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

¹⁸ 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.” ¹⁹ 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. ²⁰ 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 lives to rest and spiritual rejuvenation. Without proper rest, it is very difficult to deal with the other matters in our lives, 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 lives.



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 1:1; Romans 5:12-19; 1 Corinthians 15:22, 45-49; 2 Corinthians 11:3; and 1 Timothy 2:13-15.

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 us. 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).

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

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

²³"At last!" the man exclaimed.

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

2:21 Or took a part of the man's side.

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

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

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?"

²"Of course we may eat fruit from the

trees in the garden," the woman replied. ³"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.'"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

¹⁴Then the LORD God said to the serpent,

"Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all animals, domestic and wild.

You will crawl on your belly, groveling in the dust as long as you live.

¹⁵ 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."

¹⁶Then he said to the woman,

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

¹⁷And to the man he said,

"Since you listened to your wife and ate from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat, the ground is cursed because of you.

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

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

¹⁹ By the sweat of your brow will you have food to eat

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

3:12-13 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 lives, 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 plan for our lives.

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.

until you return to the ground
from which you were made.
For you were made from dust,
and to dust you will return.”

Paradise Lost: God's Judgment

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

²²Then the LORD God said, “Look, the human beings* have become like us, knowing both good and evil. What if they reach out, take fruit from the tree of life, and eat it? Then they will live forever!” ²³So the LORD God banished them from the Garden of Eden, and he sent Adam out to cultivate the ground from which he had been made. ²⁴After sending them out, the LORD God stationed mighty cherubim to the east of the Garden of Eden. And he placed a flaming sword that flashed back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

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!” ²Later she gave birth to his brother and named him Abel.

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

⁶“Why are you so angry?” the LORD asked Cain. “Why do you look so dejected? ⁷You will be accepted if you do what is right. But if you refuse to do what is right, then watch out! Sin is crouching at the door, eager to control you. But you must subdue it and be its master.”

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

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

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 giving in to 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 ourselves that we will be able to change the outer person, including our addictive/compulsive behaviors. **Turn to page 611, Nehemiah 8.**

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

“I don’t know,” Cain responded. “Am I my brother’s guardian?”

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

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

¹⁵The LORD replied, “No, for I will give a sevenfold punishment to anyone who kills you.” Then the LORD put a mark on Cain to warn anyone who might try to kill him. ¹⁶So Cain left the LORD’s presence and settled in the land of Nod,* east of Eden.

The Descendants of Cain

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

¹⁹Lamech married two women. The first was named Adah, and the second was Zillah. ²⁰Adah gave birth to Jabal, who was the first of those who raise livestock and live in tents. ²¹His brother’s name was Jubal, the first of all who play the harp and flute. ²²Lamech’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 sister named Naamah. ²³One day Lamech said to his wives,

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

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

The Birth of Seth

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

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. ²He created them male and female, and he blessed them and called them “human.”

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

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

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

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.

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” (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.

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

¹¹Enosh lived 905 years, and then he died.

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

¹⁴Kenan lived 910 years, and then he died.

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

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

daughters. ²⁰Jared lived 962 years, and then he died.

²¹When Enoch was 65 years old, he became the father of Methuselah. ²²After the birth of Methuselah, Enoch lived in close fellowship with God for another 300 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ²³Enoch lived 365 years, ²⁴walking in close fellowship with God. Then one day he disappeared, because God took him.

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

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

³¹Lamech lived 777 years, and then he died.

³²After 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.

²The sons of God saw the beautiful women* and took any they wanted as their wives.

³Then the LORD said, "My Spirit will not put up with* humans for such a long time, for they are only mortal flesh. In the future,

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

their normal lifespan will be no more than 120 years."

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

⁵The LORD observed the extent of human wickedness on the earth, and he saw that everything they thought or imagined was consistently and totally evil. ⁶So the LORD was sorry he had ever made them and put them on the earth. It broke his heart. ⁷And the LORD said, "I will wipe this human race I have created from the face of the earth. Yes, and I will destroy every living thing—all the people, the large animals, the small animals that scurry along the ground, and even the birds of the sky. I am sorry I ever made them." ⁸But Noah found favor with the LORD.

The Story of Noah

⁹This is the account of Noah and his family. Noah was a righteous man, the only blameless person living on earth at the time, and he walked in close fellowship with God. ¹⁰Noah was the father of three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

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

¹⁴"Build a large boat* from cypress wood* and waterproof it with tar, inside and out.

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. ¹⁵Make the boat 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high.* ¹⁶Leave an 18-inch opening* below the roof all the way around the boat. Put the door on the side, and build three decks inside the boat—lower, middle, and upper.

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

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

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. ²Take with you seven pairs—male and female—of each animal I have approved for eating and for sacrifice,* and take one pair of each of the others. ³Also take seven pairs of every kind of bird. There must be a male and a female in each pair to ensure that all life will survive on the earth after the flood. ⁴Seven days from now I will make the rains pour down on the earth. And it will rain for forty days and forty nights, until I have wiped from the earth all the living things I have created.”

⁵So Noah did everything as the LORD commanded him.

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

and his sons and their wives. ⁸With them were all the various kinds of animals—those approved for eating and for sacrifice and those that were not—along with all the birds and the small animals that scurry along the ground. ⁹They entered the boat in pairs, male and female, just as God had commanded Noah. ¹⁰After seven days, the waters of the flood came and covered the earth.

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

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

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

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

6:22 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. ²The underground waters stopped flowing, and the torrential rains from the sky were stopped. ³So the floodwaters gradually receded from the earth. After 150 days, ⁴exactly five months from the time the flood began,* the boat came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. ⁵Two and a half months later,* as the waters continued to go down, other mountain peaks became visible.

⁶After another forty days, Noah opened the window he had made in the boat ⁷and released a raven. The bird flew back and forth until the floodwaters on the earth had dried up. ⁸He also released a dove to see if the water had receded and it could find dry ground. ⁹But the dove could find no place to land because the water still covered the ground. So it returned to the boat, and Noah held out his hand and drew the dove back inside. ¹⁰After waiting another seven days, Noah released the dove again. ¹¹This time the dove returned to him in the evening with a fresh olive leaf in its beak. Then Noah knew that the floodwaters were almost gone. ¹²He waited another seven days and then released the dove again. This time it did not come back.

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

¹⁵Then God said to Noah, ¹⁶“Leave the boat,

all of you—you and your wife, and your sons and their wives. ¹⁷Release all the animals—the birds, the livestock, and the small animals that scurry along the ground—so they can be fruitful and multiply throughout the earth.”

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

²⁰Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and there he sacrificed as burnt offerings the animals and birds that had been approved for that purpose.* ²¹And the LORD was pleased with the aroma of the sacrifice and said to himself, “I will never again curse the ground because of the human race, even though everything they think or imagine is bent toward evil from childhood. I will never again destroy all living things. ²²As long as the 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. ²All the animals of the earth, all the birds of the sky, all the small animals that scurry along the ground, and all the fish in the sea will look on you with fear and terror. I have placed them in your power. ³I have given them to you for food, just as I have given you grain and vegetables. ⁴But you must never eat any meat that still has the lifeblood in it.

⁵“And I will require the blood of anyone who takes another person’s life. If a wild animal kills a person, it must die. And anyone who murders a fellow human must die. ⁶If anyone takes a human life, that person’s life will also be taken by human hands. For God

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*.

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 example. 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.

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.

made human beings* in his own image. ⁷Now be fruitful and multiply, and repopulate the earth.”

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

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

see the rainbow in the clouds, I will remember the eternal covenant between God and every living creature on earth.” ¹⁷Then God said to Noah, “Yes, this rainbow is the sign of the covenant I am confirming with all the creatures on earth.”

Noah’s Sons

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

²⁰After the flood, Noah began to cultivate the ground, and he planted a vineyard. ²¹One day he drank some wine he had made, and he became drunk and lay naked inside his tent. ²²Ham, the father of Canaan, saw that his father was naked and went outside and told his brothers. ²³Then Shem and Japheth took a robe, held it over their shoulders, and backed into the tent to cover their

9:6 Or *man*; Hebrew reads *ha-adam*.

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

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).

THE TWELVE CHRISTIAN FOUNDATIONS OF LIFE RECOVERY

- The Bible supports all the truths expressed in the Life Recovery process.
- Jesus is not just the higher power of Life Recovery, but the higher power for all people.
- Life Recovery calls upon God the Creator, Jesus the Son of God, and the Holy Spirit as the source, model, and power for everything in the recovery process.
- Life Recovery is not an end unto itself but part of an eternal progression toward intimacy with God.
- The process of Life Recovery is not just recovery from a problem, but is the recovery of a soul.
- All activities and resources of Life Recovery are directed toward the saving, developing, and strengthening of the soul.
- Life Recovery begins when independent self-will is replaced by surrendering to God and cooperating with his work in us.
- Life Recovery is a unique form of discipleship, spiritual formation, and regeneration.
- Life Recovery is a path toward sanctification, a life set apart and holy.
- Life Recovery is not about self-preservation but is about learning to love and help others.
- Life Recovery is experienced best with the help of a sponsor or a coach.
- Life Recovery will build up the church, helping to transform it into an authentic, inviting, safe, and supportive community.

THE TWELVE SELF-EVIDENT TRUTHS OF LIFE RECOVERY

- Life Recovery can begin at any point in life, and that includes now.
- The seeds of Life Recovery are planted as we become aware that life is not what it could be.
- Hope for Life Recovery comes when awareness leads to a desire to find a better way to live.
- Life Recovery is not an event but a process that starts when awareness and desire result in a willingness to surrender to God.
- Surrender is shown either in the decision to comply with a program that has worked for others, or in the total submission of heart, mind, and body to God and his ways.
- While Life Recovery can begin in isolation, it must involve walking with others for both encouragement and confrontation.
- The first visible sign of Life Recovery is an openness to share your life with others through honest confession of past missteps and current struggles.
- The Life Recovery process will redeem past pain and transform it into a purposeful future.
- The end result of Life Recovery is experiencing more love from God, expressing more love for others, and feeling more love for yourself.
- Life Recovery helps us realize how our selfish behaviors hurt others and leads us to take action toward making things right again.
- The greatest enemy of Life Recovery is to completely deny our need for recovery, either rationalizing the causes of our plight or minimizing the depths of our despair.
- Lasting evidence of Life Recovery is a greater understanding of self, deeper relationships with others, and solid growth in character.

LIFE RECOVERY FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

WELCOME to Life Recovery. We want everyone to experience its benefits. We all have struggles in our lives—struggles with addictions, depression, anxiety, and challenging relationships, just to name a few. But we all approach recovery differently. Some want a formal recovery meeting with a traditional recovery experience. Others want a more relaxed recovery experience in a small, informal group or in a group they know from their church. Some may prefer learning about recovery at their own pace before jumping into a group or meeting experience. This is the beauty of Life Recovery. Unlike other Christian recovery approaches that mandate how or where recovery ministry can happen, Life Recovery brings Christian recovery to you—right where you are.

The Life Recovery Meeting

A Life Recovery Meeting is the most structured of the options we will explore here. It requires a minimum of two Life Recovery Leaders, one man and one woman. This will provide appropriate leadership for gender specific breakout groups, in addition to a main group time for everyone. Participants in Life Recovery Meetings will need some basic tools: *The Life Recovery Bible*, *The Life Recovery Workbook*, *The Life Recovery Devotional*, and *The Life Recovery Journey*.

When launching a Life Recovery Meeting, it can be helpful to approach it in four stages:

STAGE ONE: GATHERING INFORMATION

- Who will take the lead in planning? You need to decide who will be the primary organizer. Will it be you, the pastor of your church, or some other leader?
- Who else will be involved? We do not recommend that you start a group by yourself. Who else is interested in helping you lead a group or supporting you in the group?
- Who will be the official group leaders? The best way to identify qualified leaders may be to ask your pastor or other trusted leaders at your church. They will likely know who has the necessary experience, knowledge, and gifts to take this on. Or perhaps they could recommend an outside professional counselor to help get things started. Spend time in prayer, asking God to help you find the right people.
- Will your meetings be open or closed? Most recovery groups have open meetings, where people from the surrounding community are invited. This can lead to significant outreach into the neighborhood near your church. Some choose to have closed meetings, open only to people who attend the church. Some people feel safer with a closed format as it makes the meetings more predictable.

- Find a location in your home, church, workplace, or school, and obtain any necessary permission to meet there and form the group.
- Post flyers announcing the time and place, calling it a support group, recovery group, or Twelve Step group.
- Show up early, set up the meeting space, and welcome people as they arrive.
- Start on time by opening in prayer and by reading the Twelve Steps and corresponding Scripture passages.
- Ask if anyone would like to share for a few minutes. Don't allow members to offer advice to each other or to the speaker, and be sure to enforce the time limit.
- Make sure everyone has a copy of the workbook you choose. Ask them to study one of the Twelve Steps for discussion at each meeting.
- End on time by reciting the Lord's Prayer.
- Be sure that everyone has the necessary study materials.

The Life Recovery Study

A Life Recovery Study can be done with a group or as an individual. If you are not ready for a group experience but want to start learning about Life Recovery, or your small group wants to study Life Recovery together, all you need in order to begin is *The Life Recovery Bible* and *The Life Recovery Journey*. You could also use *The Life Recovery Workbook*, but *The Life Recovery Journey* is easier to use in a group study context.

The Life Recovery Journey studies through the Twelve Steps in the context of Scripture. Each of the Twelve Steps is supported by four studies focused on passages from God's Word. This provides for nearly a year of once-a-week studies. If you want to continue your studies beyond *The Life Recovery Journey*, turn to the devotionals, people profiles, and book introductions in *The Life Recovery Bible* for more excellent group discussion content. Other tools can be found under the Resources tab at www.liferecoverygroups.com.

STEP-BY-STEP LIFE RECOVERY MEETING GUIDE

Welcome *(read by the meeting leader)*

Hello and welcome to the Life Recovery meeting. My name is _____, and it is my turn to lead the meeting. Please join me for a moment of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer.

Reading of the Serenity Prayer *(read by all attendees)*

Please make sure everyone has a copy of this prayer.

THE SERENITY PRAYER

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

THRIVING IN A SECULAR RECOVERY GROUP

A Personal Perspective by Misty Arterburn

SINCE *The Life Recovery Bible* was published twenty-five years ago, many Christ-centered recovery groups have been launched. This has been a wonderful development for we who identify Jesus as our Higher Power.

However, over the years I have met many fellow strugglers who started their process of healing in a traditional secular recovery group, just as I did. And though these groups were not explicitly Christian, Jesus clearly revealed himself to me there. My recovery journey began with amazing people who referred to God only as the “Power greater than me” or “God as I understand Him.” But in this context, God showed me truths about Jesus that I hadn’t understood before, filling me with a deeper understanding and experience of him.

We’ve all had pivotal moments in our lives. I want to share one of mine with you. In 1994, I was married and had two young sons, a toddler and a new baby. My husband at that time and I both had problems that were just getting worse and were jeopardizing the security of our family. I turned on my radio during this time and discovered a nationally-syndicated call-in program. The hosts of this show were Christian counselors taking calls from folks all over the country. These people were openly talking about their problems, asking for guidance, and finding answers. The show was called *New Life Live*.

I began tuning in from time to time. And in time, I grew to love the hosts on the show. I loved Dave Stoop because he had a voice that made me feel safe back then, as it still does. And I loved listening to Steve Arterburn because he was boldly saying things most Christians wouldn’t talk about, and he also made me laugh.

The hosts never seemed shocked or offended by callers, and that struck me. They even found humor in the absurd and, in doing so, helped me to see and understand the absurd in my own life. They didn’t pretend to have it all together, genuinely seeming to care about and accept callers just as they were. The hosts didn’t judge or reject people for their problems or for engaging in the blatant sins that had entangled them. They reminded me of Jesus, how he just loves us where we are, and then offers us so much more.

Up until then, I thought counseling was for someone else and something I would never do. But because of what I was hearing on *New Life Live*, I began to think that if this is what it was like to talk with a counselor, maybe I could do that too. For the first time, I made a bold move and went to get help. It wasn’t long before my counselor referred me to my first Twelve Step group for codependency, and eventually I found my way to an open Al-Anon meeting. It was there that I began to work on the trauma I had experienced in my marriage and all the brokenness that led to our unhealthy patterns.

After another year of regularly attending that meeting, I made the

LIFE-GIVING RECOVERY GROUPS IN THE CHURCH

by Misty Arterburn

I FOUND FREEDOM in the secular recovery process, and it made an incredible impact on my life. I came to understand the dynamics of recovery groups and the beautiful simplicity of the unchanging steps, principles, and traditions of the recovery meeting. Eventually I learned to lead and facilitate in different types of meetings and settings, and I have recently had the honor of creating and leading several Christ-centered Life Recovery groups in the church context.

Though I have written about the value of staying involved in traditional secular groups, I want to share with you a bit more of what I have been doing in Christ-centered Life Recovery groups at Northview Church in Carmel, Indiana. Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of the Twelve Steps, I am carrying this message to others in a new way as our Life Recovery ministry to women continues to grow.

I still remain involved in the secular Al-Anon meeting where I started my Twelve Step journey years ago, but I have more recently become involved in these church-based Life Recovery groups. Believers in our churches have serious recovery needs and may not be comfortable in a secular meeting context. These church-based groups are opening doors to recovery for a whole new group of hurting people.

One group I have helped to create and facilitate is a Life Recovery group for women who are healing and growing with regard to sexual integrity. These women come together with different types of wounds, trauma, and behaviors, and they want to experience recovery. We call this meeting WholeHearted. The women in this meeting take an honest look at their lives and involvements, wounds and character defects, and work the Twelve Steps for the recovery of sexual and relational wholeness.

People at the church and others observing from a distance are somewhat surprised by the reality of this need within the church. Just like so many men twenty years ago who were just beginning to talk about their sexual integrity issues at church, these women are now having this deep need met. They are so grateful as they experience transformation through God's truth and redemptive relationships.

Our second group is the one we simply call Recovery Girls. This group is for any woman who wants to learn, grow, and mature in recovery. There is no specific designation to this recovery group, and any woman can come. We have welcomed women with many different struggles—including alcoholism and adult children of alcoholics, sex and love addictions, food addictions, codependency, and trauma recovery—and women who have never heard of recovery before and just want to learn more about it. Though these women gather together with many kinds of problems and from all walks of life—Christians and non-Christians, addicted or codependent or simply

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.

ABUSE (see also Incest, Oppression)

NOTES

2 Kings 19:35-37	493
Psalms 8:3-9	684
Psalms 109:1-5	758
Proverbs 23:10-11	811
Song of Songs 1:6	838
Song of Songs 5:1	842
Isaiah 10:1-19	859
Isaiah 11:1-10	861
Isaiah 18:7	868
Isaiah 26:3	874
Isaiah 42:1-4	894
Isaiah 62:1-5	918
Daniel 8:9-14, 25	1087
Hosea 9:7	1104
Joel 3:1-14	1117
Matthew 6:12, 14-15	1204
Matthew 18:2-6	1224
Matthew 27:26-54	1242
Mark 14:53-65	1277
Luke 14:12-24	1316
Luke 18:15-17	1322
John 2:13-16	1343
John 10:27-29	1358
John 13:20	1364
Romans 1:16-17	1430
Romans 13:1-7	1448
1 Corinthians 5:1-5	1461
2 Corinthians 8:9	1488
James 1:2-4	1600
Revelation 6:9-11	1655

PROFILES

Hagar & Ishmael	23
Amnon & Tamar	405

TWELVE STEP DEVOTIONAL

Step 1—Like Little Children	1267
---------------------------------------	------

RECOVERY PRINCIPLE DEVOTIONALS

Honesty	403, 701, 945, 1355, 1515, 1615
Forgiveness	751, 1203, 1299, 1631, 1671

SERENITY PRAYER DEVOTIONAL

1 Samuel 17:20-47	367
-----------------------------	-----

RECOVERY THEMES IN . . .

Daniel	1074
Philemon	1574

ACCOUNTABILITY (see also Responsibility)

NOTES

Exodus 22:1-15	105
Exodus 22:16-28	105
Exodus 23:1-8	106
Exodus 28:29-32	113
Leviticus 10:1-3	144
Numbers 3:1-4:49	174
Numbers 6:3-4	179
Joshua 23:14-16	295
Judges 19:11-29	329
1 Samuel 6:19	352
1 Samuel 11:13-15	357
1 Samuel 18:1-4	368
1 Kings 13:33-34	447
2 Kings 11:4-21	481
2 Kings 12:4-16	481
1 Chronicles 27:1-34	536
Ezra 8:24-30	597
Nehemiah 9:38	614
Esther 8:7-14	632
Psalms 82:1-4	738
Proverbs 12:15	799
Proverbs 15:31-32	802
Proverbs 29:15, 17	818
Ezekiel 18:2-4	1031
Ezekiel 34:2-10	1052
Amos 1:3-2:3	1120
Mark 14:32-42	1276
Luke 8:4-15	1302
Luke 19:11-27	1324
John 12:42-43	1363
John 18:28-38	1370
Acts 5:9-11	1386
Acts 20:1-6	1414

1 Corinthians 4:17	1460
1 Thessalonians 5:1-11	1541
2 John 1:10-11	1638

PROFILES

Ahab & Jezebel	451
Timothy	1551

TWELVE STEP DEVOTIONALS

Step 2—Persistent Seeking	651
Step 2—Grandiose Thinking	1081
Step 5—Escaping Self-Deception	1503

RECOVERY PRINCIPLE DEVOTIONAL

Accountability	1105, 1645
--------------------------	------------

SERENITY PRAYER DEVOTIONAL

1 Samuel 15:10-23	363
-----------------------------	-----

RECOVERY THEMES IN . . .

Numbers	172
1 Kings	426
Proverbs	786
Colossians	1530
Titus	1568
1 Peter	1610

ADDICTIONS (*see* Dependencies)

AFRAID (*see* Fear)

ALCOHOL ABUSE (*see* Dependencies)

AMENDS (*see* Restitution)

ANCESTORS (*see* Family, Inheritance)

ANGER (*see also* Hatred, Revenge)

NOTES

Genesis 4:6-7	8
Numbers 11:10-15	186
Judges 7:24–8:3	314
2 Samuel 6:16-23	394
Job 2:9-10	638
Psalms 25:1-7	695
Psalms 39:1-7	706
Psalms 58:1-5	719
Psalms 145:8-13	779
Proverbs 12:16	799
Proverbs 20:22	808
Lamentations 2:1-18	1006
Lamentations 3:1-20	1008
Obadiah 1:10	1132
Matthew 5:43-48	1204
Luke 4:28-30	1295
Luke 6:6-11	1298
Luke 11:4	1310
John 2:13-16	1343
Acts 15:36-41	1406
James 1:19-20	1600
Revelation 11:15-18	1659

PROFILES

Cain & Abel	11
Esau & Jacob	37

Job, His Family & Friends	637
James & John	1255

TWELVE STEP DEVOTIONALS

Step 4—Family Influence	615
Step 6—Removing Deeper Hurts	1139
Step 10—Dealing with Anger	1517

RECOVERY PRINCIPLE DEVOTIONAL

Faith	31, 655, 1221, 1321, 1331, 1439, 1591, 1593
-----------------	---

RECOVERY THEMES IN . . .

Esther	624
------------------	-----

ARROGANCE (*see* Pride)

AVENGE (*see* Revenge)

BACKSLIDING (*see* Relapse)

BALANCE (*see* Wholeness)

BELIEF (*see* Faith)

BETRAYAL (*see* Rejection)

BIBLE (*see* God’s Word)

BITTERNESS (*see also* Anger, Hatred)

NOTES

Genesis 40:23	60
Genesis 42:36	64
Numbers 21:7	200
2 Samuel 3:27	391
2 Samuel 14:28-33	406
Isaiah 42:1-4	894
Jonah 1:1-3	1136
Matthew 5:43-48	1204
Matthew 6:12, 14-15	1204
Luke 2:36-38	1292
Luke 23:32-34	1333
Hebrews 12:15	1592

PROFILES

David, Michal, & Bathsheba	395
Absalom	409

TWELVE STEP DEVOTIONALS

Step 8—The Fruit of Forgiveness	1481
Step 10—Dealing with Anger	1517

SERENITY PRAYER DEVOTIONAL

Jonah 4:1-4	1137
-----------------------	------

RECOVERY THEMES IN . . .

Esther	625
------------------	-----

BLAME (*see also* Criticism, Denial)

NOTES

Genesis 2:8-14	6
Genesis 3:12-13	8
Genesis 40:23	60
1 Kings 17:17-24	453
1 Chronicles 1:1	504
Proverbs 30:11-12	819

INDEX TO RECOVERY PROFILES

Adam & Eve	7	Hezekiah	487
Cain & Abel.	11	Josiah.	581
Noah & Sons.	15	Nehemiah	603
Abraham & Sarah	17	Esther & Mordecai.	625
Lot & Family	19	Job, His Family & Friends	637
Hagar & Ishmael	23	Isaiah	849
Isaac & Rebekah	35	Jeremiah	931
Esau & Jacob	37	Ezekiel	1015
Jacob & Sons.	51	Daniel	1075
Judah & Tamar	57	Nebuchadnezzar	1079
Joseph & Brothers	61	Joseph & Mary.	1197
Moses	83	Matthew & Simon the Zealot	1211
Aaron & Miriam.	187	Simon Peter.	1251
Caleb.	189	James & John.	1255
Joshua	271	Herod & Family	1261
Rahab & Family	273	Luke	1287
Deborah & Barak.	307	Elizabeth & Zechariah	1291
Gideon	311	Mary & Martha	1309
Samson & Delilah	321	John the Baptist.	1341
Ruth, Naomi, & Boaz.	337	Judas Iscariot	1361
Hannah	345	Mary Magdalene	1371
Samuel	347	Thomas	1373
Saul	353	Stephen.	1389
David & Jonathan	369	Cornelius & Family	1397
David, Michal, & Bathsheba	395	Paul.	1401
Amnon & Tamar	405	Barnabas & John Mark.	1403
Absalom	409	Priscilla & Aquila	1411
Solomon	429	Apollos	1413
Ahab & Jezebel	451	Timothy.	1551
Elijah & Elisha	465	James & Jude.	1603

INDEX TO TWELVE STEP DEVOTIONALS

Each of the Twelve Steps is supported by a video introduction featuring Stephen Arterburn and David Stoop. Find the videos at www.liferecoverybible.com.

STEP ONE

No-Win Situations	Genesis 16:1-15	25
Dangerous		
Self-Deception	Judges 16:1-31	325
A Humble		
Beginning	2 Kings 5:1-15	471
Hope amidst		
Suffering	Job 6:2-13	643
Like Little Children	Mark 10:13-16	1267
A Time to Choose	Acts 9:1-9	1395
The Paradox of		
Powerlessness.	2 Corinthians 4:7-10	1483

STEP TWO

Persistent Seeking	Job 14:1-6	651
Grandiose Thinking	Daniel 4:19-33	1081
Internal Bondage	Mark 5:1-13	1257
Healing Faith	Luke 8:43-48	1305
Restoration	Luke 15:11-24	1319
Coming to Believe	Romans 1:18-20	1431
Hope in Faith	Hebrews 11:1-10	1589

STEP THREE

Trusting God	Numbers 23:18-24	203
Free to Choose	Deuteronomy	
	30:15-20	255
Giving Up Control	Psalms 61:1-8	721
Redeeming the Past	Isaiah 54:4-8	909
Submission		
and Rest.	Matthew 11:27-30	1213
Discovering God	Acts 17:23-28	1409
Single-Minded		
Devotion	James 4:7-10	1607

STEP FOUR

Coming out		
of Hiding	Genesis 3:6-13	9
Facing the Sadness	Nehemiah 8:7-10	611
Confession.	Nehemiah 9:1-3	613
Family Influence.	Nehemiah 9:34-38	615
Finger Pointing	Matthew 7:1-5	1207
Constructive		
Sorrow	2 Corinthians 7:8-11	1489
God's Mercy	Revelation 20:11-15	1667

STEP FIVE

Overcoming Denial	Genesis 38:1-30	59
Unending Love	Hosea 11:8-11	1107
The Plumb Line	Amos 7:7-8	1125
Feelings of Shame	John 8:3-11	1353
Receiving		
Forgiveness	Acts 26:12-18	1421
Freedom through		
Confession	Romans 2:14-15	1433
Escaping		
Self-Deception	Galatians 6:7-10	1503

STEP SIX

Taking Time to		
Grieve	Genesis 23:1-4;	
	35:19-21	33
Healing the		
Brokenness.	Psalms 51:16-19	715
God's Abundant		
Pardon.	Isaiah 55:1-9	913
Removing Deeper		
Hurts	Jonah 4:4-8	1139
Discovering Hope	John 5:1-15	1347
Removed,		
Not Improved	Romans 6:5-11	1443
Attitudes and		
Actions.	Philippians 3:12-14	1525

STEP SEVEN

Clearing the Mess	Isaiah 57:12-19	915
Giving Up Control	Jeremiah 18:1-6	957
Pride Born of Hurt	Luke 11:5-13	1311
A Humble Heart.	Luke 18:10-14	1323
Declared Not		
Guilty.	Romans 3:23-28	1437
Into the Open	Philippians 2:5-9	1523
Eyes of Love.	1 John 5:11-15	1633

STEP EIGHT

Making Restitution.	Exodus 22:10-15	107
Unintentional Sins	Leviticus 4:1-28	139
Scapgoats	Leviticus 16:20-22	153
Overcoming		
Loneliness	Ecclesiastes 4:9-12	829

Forgiven to Forgive . . . Matthew 18:23-35 . . . 1225
The Fruit of
 Forgiveness 2 Corinthians 2:5-8 . . . 1481
Harvesting Goodness . . . Galatians 6:7-10 1505

STEP NINE

Long-Awaited
 Healing Genesis 33:1-11 49
Keeping Promises 2 Samuel 9:1-9 399
Covering the Past Ezekiel 33:10-16 1051
Making Peace Matthew 5:23-25 1201
From Taker to Giver . . . Luke 19:1-10 1325
Unfinished Business . . . Philemon 1:13-16 1575
A Servant's Heart 1 Peter 2:18-25 1613

STEP TEN

Personal Boundaries . . . Genesis 31:45-55 45
Repeated
 Forgiveness Romans 5:3-5 1441
Dealing with Anger . . . Ephesians 4:26-27 1517
Spiritual Exercises 1 Timothy 4:7-8 1553
Perseverance 2 Timothy 2:1-8 1561

Looking in the
 Mirror James 1:21-25 1601
Recurrent Sins 1 John 1:8-10 1629

STEP ELEVEN

A New Hiding Place . . . 2 Samuel 22:1-33 419
Thirst for God Psalm 27:1-6 697
Joy in God's
 Presence Psalm 65:1-4 723
Finding God Psalm 105:1-9 753
Powerful Secrets Psalm 119:1-11 765
Patient Waiting Isaiah 40:28-31 891
Friends of the Light . . . John 3:18-21 1345

STEP TWELVE

Our Mission Isaiah 61:1-3 917
Our Story Mark 16:14-18 1279
Sharing Together John 15:5-15 1367
Listening First Acts 8:26-40 1393
Talking the Walk 1 Timothy 4:14-16 1555
Never Forget Titus 3:1-5 1571
The Narrow Road 1 Peter 4:1-4 1617

INDEX TO RECOVERY PRINCIPLE DEVOTIONALS

Self-Perception	Genesis 1:26-31	5	Honesty	John 8:30-36	1355
Faith	Genesis 22:1-19	31	Love	John 14:15-26	1365
Self-Protection	Exodus 20:8-11	103	Love	John 21:14-25	1375
Love	Ruth 2:4-18	339	Self-Perception	Romans 3:10-12	1435
Peer Pressure	1 Samuel 13:1-14	359	Faith	Romans 4:1-5	1439
Self-Protection	1 Samuel 14:1-12, 20-29	361	Self-Perception	Romans 7:18-25	1445
Honesty	2 Samuel 13:1-24	403	Self-Perception	Romans 12:1-2	1449
Perfectionism	1 Kings 19:1-21	455	Delayed Gratification	1 Corinthians 6:1-13	1463
Faith	Job 19:8-27	655	Love	1 Corinthians 13:1-7	1471
Self-Perception	Psalms 8:1-9	685	Self-Perception	2 Corinthians 5:12-21	1485
Honesty	Psalms 32:1-11	701	Self-Control	Galatians 5:16-23	1501
Hope	Psalms 42:1-11	709	Self-Perception	Ephesians 2:1-13	1513
Forgiveness	Psalms 103:1-22	751	Honesty	Ephesians 4:12-27	1515
Self-Protection	Proverbs 15:16-33	803	Perseverance	Philippians 1:2-6	1521
Denial	Ecclesiastes 3:16-4:1	827	Self-Protection	Colossians 3:1-4	1533
Honesty	Jeremiah 9:1-9	945	Self-Protection	2 Thessalonians 3:1-8	1545
Hope	Jeremiah 17:1-14	955	Self-Protection	Hebrews 10:23-34	1587
Hope	Lamentations 3:1-26	1007	Faith	Hebrews 12:1-4	1591
Love	Hosea 3:1-5	1099	Faith	Hebrews 12:5-11	1593
Accountability	Hosea 10:1-12	1105	Wisdom	James 3:13-18	1605
Hope	Zechariah 9:9-17	1181	Hope	1 Peter 1:3-7	1611
Delayed Gratification	Matthew 4:1-11	1199	Honesty	1 Peter 3:10-17	1615
Forgiveness	Matthew 6:9-15	1203	Self-Control	2 Peter 1:2-9	1623
Faith	Matthew 15:22-28	1221	Forgiveness	1 John 2:1-6	1631
Delayed Gratification	Matthew 16:24-26	1223	Accountability	Jude 1:20-23	1645
Perfectionism	Matthew 25:14-30	1235	Love	Revelation 3:14-22	1653
Forgiveness	Luke 6:27-36	1299	Forgiveness	Revelation 22:1-5	1671
Faith	Luke 17:1-10	1321			
Faith	Luke 22:31-34	1331			

INDEX TO SERENITY PRAYER DEVOTIONALS

Reading 1	Genesis 18:20-33	27	Reading 16	Proverbs 2:1-22	787
Reading 2	Genesis 37:19-29	55	Reading 17	Proverbs 3:13-26	789
Reading 3	Joshua 1:1-9	267	Reading 18	Proverbs 4:1-23	791
Reading 4	Judges 5:1-12	309	Reading 19	Jonah 4:1-4	1137
Reading 5	Judges 7:8-25	313	Reading 20	Matthew 6:25-34	1205
Reading 6	1 Samuel 15:10-23	363	Reading 21	Matthew 14:23-33	1219
Reading 7	1 Samuel 17:20-47	367	Reading 22	Matthew 26:36-39	1239
Reading 8	1 Samuel 24:1-22	375	Reading 23	Mark 14:3-9	1275
Reading 9	1 Samuel 25:18-39	377	Reading 24	Luke 11:37-44	1313
Reading 10	2 Samuel 15:1-26	407	Reading 25	1 Corinthians 10:12-14	1469
Reading 11	1 Chronicles 28:1-21	537	Reading 26	Philippians 4:10-14	1527
Reading 12	2 Chronicles 15:1-19	557	Reading 27	Colossians 1:2-14	1531
Reading 13	2 Chronicles 32:1-19	577	Reading 28	2 Timothy 4:5-15	1563
Reading 14	Psalms 111:1-10	759	Reading 29	Titus 2:11-14	1569
Reading 15	Psalms 139:1-16	775	Reading 30	Revelation 21:3-6	1669

INDEX TO RECOVERY REFLECTIONS

Reflections on GENESIS	74	Insights from Samson's Life	
Insights from the Names of God		Insights from the Tribe of Dan	
Insights from God's Creation			
Insights about Temptation			
Insights about Sin and Its Consequences			
Insights from Cain and Abel			
Insights from Noah's Life			
Insights from Abraham's Life			
Insights from Joseph's Life			
Reflections on EXODUS	129	Reflections on RUTH	342
Insights from Moses' Life		Insights from the Story of Ruth	
Insights from Pharaoh's Life			
Insights from Israel's Exodus			
Insights Discovered at Mount Sinai			
Insights from God's Laws			
Reflections on LEVITICUS	169	Reflections on 1 SAMUEL	384
Insights from the Offerings		Insights from Hannah's Life	
Insights from the Purification Ceremony		Insights from Eli's Life	
Insights from God's Laws		Insights from Samuel's Life	
		Insights from Saul's Life	
		Insights from David's Life	
Reflections on NUMBERS	220	Reflections on 2 SAMUEL	422
Insights from the Tabernacle		Insights from David's Life	
Insights from the Nazirite Vow		Insights from Amnon's Rape of Tamar	
Insights from the Wilderness			
Reflections on DEUTERONOMY	262	Reflections on 2 KINGS	502
Insights from the Past		Insights from the Ministry of Elisha	
Insights for the Present		Insights from the Lives of Judah's Kings	
Insights from the Ten Commandments			
Insights for the Future			
Reflections on JOSHUA	297	Reflections on 2 CHRONICLES	585
Insights from Rahab's Life		Insights from God's Priests and Prophets	
Insights from Israel's Ceremonies		Insights from the Victories of Judah's Kings	
of Remembrance		Insights from the Failures of Judah's Kings	
Insights from Joshua's Life		Insights from the Perspective of Genesis	
Reflections on JUDGES	333	Reflections on NEHEMIAH	621
Insights from Gideon's Life		Insights from the Ministry of Nehemiah	
Insights from Jephthah's Life		Insights from the Ministry of Ezra	
		Insights from the People's Experience of Worship	
		Reflections on JOB	676
		Insights into Satan's Activity	
		Insights about Job's Relationship with God	
		Insights about Giving and Receiving Comfort	
		Insights about Grief and Suffering	
		Reflections on PSALMS	782
		Insights into God's Protection	
		Insights into God's Deliverance	
		Insights into God's Forgiveness	

Insights into the Value of Confession
Insights into the Value of Praise

Reflections on PROVERBS 821

Insights into Our Relationships with God
and Others
Insights for Everyday Life and Recovery

Reflections on ECCLESIASTES 835

Insights about Work and Success
Insights into Our Identity As Human Beings
Insights about God
Insights for Real Life

Reflections on ISAIAH 924

Insights about Our Responsibility
Insights about the Person of God
Insights about the Dangers of Idolatry
Insights about God's Grace
Insights about the Messiah and his Kingdom

Reflections on JEREMIAH 1000

Insights about the Danger of Idolatry
Insights about Denial and Hypocrisy
Insights about the Person of God
Insights into the Process of Recovery
Insights from Israel's History
Insights into the Value of God's Discipline
Insights into the Value of God's Laws
Insights concerning False Teachers

Reflections on EZEKIEL 1070

Insights about the Person of God
Insights into the Responsibilities of Recovery
Insights about Denial

Reflections on DANIEL 1093

Insights from Daniel's Life
Insights from the Lives of the Three Friends

Reflections on HOSEA 1110

Insights about God's Compassion
Insights into the Importance of a Relationship
with God

Reflections on AMOS 1130

Insights into God's Person and Will

Reflections on JONAH 1140

Insights from Jonah's Life

Reflections on MICAH 1150

Insights about God's Discipline
Insights about God's Justice

Reflections on ZECHARIAH 1186

Insights about God's Discipline
Insights into the Hope God Offers

Reflections on MATTHEW 1244

Insights about the Person of Jesus
Insights concerning Obstacles to Recovery
Insights about Honesty and Denial
Insights about God's Priorities
Insights into Sharing the Good News
Insights about Prayer
Insights concerning True Faith

Reflections on MARK 1281

Insights concerning True Faith
Insights about God's Power to Save
Insights about God's Priorities
Insights concerning Obstacles to Recovery
Insights about the Person of Jesus
Insights about Honesty and Denial

Reflections on LUKE 1336

Insights about the Person of Jesus
Insights about God's Power to Save
Insights about Prayer
Insights concerning True Faith
Insights concerning Obstacles to Recovery
Insights about Honesty and Denial

Reflections on JOHN 1377

Insights from Jesus' Words and Deeds
Insights from the Disciples' Lives
Insights about Our Relationship with God
Insights concerning the Holy Spirit

Reflections on ACTS 1426

Insights concerning the Holy Spirit
Insights from the Early Christian Community
Insights from Philip's Life
Insights from Paul's Life

Reflections on ROMANS 1453

Insights about the Power of Christ's Resurrection
Insights about Our Helplessness
Insights about Faith
Insights about Prayer
Insights about the Benefits of Submission to God

Reflections on 1 CORINTHIANS 1477

Insights about Our Powerlessness and God's Power
Insights into Finding God's Will
Insights into Healthy Relationships
Insights about Love

Reflections on 2 CORINTHIANS	1495	Insights about True Faith
Insights about Prayer		Insights about God’s Discipline
Insights about Restoring Relationships		
Insights for Survival During Tough Times		
Insights about Sharing the Good News		
Insights about Confrontation		
Reflections on GALATIANS	1507	Reflections on JAMES
Insights into God’s Will		1608
Insights about Consequences		Insights about True Faith
		Insights about Honest Confession
Reflections on 1 TIMOTHY	1558	Reflections on 1 PETER
Insights about God’s Law		1618
Insights about God’s Transforming		Insights about the Person of God
Power		Insights about the Danger of Relapse
		Insights about Our New Life in Christ
		Insights about Persevering through Trials
Reflections on HEBREWS	1596	Reflections on 2 PETER
Insights about the Person of Christ		1626
Insights about Angels		Insights about Our Role in Recovery
Insights about God’s Transforming Power		Insights about God’s Truth
Insights about Accountability and		
Responsibility		
		Reflections on 1 JOHN
		1635
		Insights into Confession and Forgiveness
		Insights about the Danger of Worldly Values
		Insights about the Importance of Right Beliefs
		Insights about Assurance in Salvation and Recovery

TOPICAL BIBLE VERSE FINDER

ABORTION

- God cares for the unborn (Exodus 21:22-25)
... *page 104*
- We should protect the helpless (Psalm 82:3-4)
... *page 738*
- Children are from God (Psalm 127:3)
... *page 770*
- God forms every child (Psalm 139:13-16)
... *page 775*
- God plans the future of every child (Jeremiah 1:5)
... *page 930*

ABUSE

- God cares about minorities (Exodus 22:21)
... *page 106*
- God protects those who are helpless (Psalm 12:5)
... *page 687*
- Jesus was abused (Matthew 26:67-68)
... *page 1240*
- Abuse has no place in healthy families (Ephesians 5:21-6:4) ... *page 1516*

ACCOUNTABILITY

- God will judge our work (2 Chronicles 19:5-10)
... *page 561*
- Sin has consequences (Ezekiel 18:20) ... *page 1031*
- God will hold us accountable for our sin (Ezekiel 18:30) ... *page 1032*
- We are accountable for every word that we speak (Matthew 12:36) ... *page 1215*
- Confronting others should be done in private (Matthew 18:15) ... *page 1226*
- We should hold each other accountable (Luke 17:3) ... *page 1320*
- We are accountable for what we believe (John 3:18) ... *page 1344*
- God holds Christians accountable (Romans 14:11-12) ... *page 1450*
- God will reward Christians for their good deeds (1 Corinthians 3:8) ... *page 1459*
- God will examine our actions (2 Corinthians 5:10)
... *page 1485*

ACCUSATIONS

- Satan accuses God's people of doing wrong (Zechariah 3:1) ... *page 1176*
- Jesus was falsely accused (Matthew 26:59-60)
... *page 1239*
- Christians' sins are forgiven (Colossians 1:22)
... *page 1532*
- Accusations must come from more than one person (1 Timothy 5:19) ... *page 1556*
- Satan is known as the Accuser (Revelation 12:10)
... *page 1660*

ADOPTION, SPIRITUAL

- God helps his children grow (Deuteronomy 8:5)
... *page 232*
- God's children should obey him (Deuteronomy 26:18) ... *page 250*
- God disciplines his children (2 Samuel 7:14)
... *page 396*
- Do not despise God's discipline (Proverbs 3:11-12)
... *page 790*
- God is our Father (Matthew 6:9) ... *page 1204*
- Christians are God's children (John 1:12)
... *page 1341*
- God's Spirit leads his children (Romans 8:14-17)
... *page 1442*
- Christians should be separate from the world (2 Corinthians 6:17-18) ... *page 1487*
- All of God's children are equal in God's eyes (Galatians 3:28) ... *page 1502*
- God's children will receive a spiritual inheritance (Galatians 4:4-7) ... *page 1503*
- God chose us to be his children (Ephesians 1:4-5)
... *page 1510*
- Jesus is our spiritual brother (Hebrews 2:11)
... *page 1580*

ADULTERY

- God forbids adultery (Exodus 20:14) ... *page 102*
- Adultery has consequences (Proverbs 6:26)
... *page 794*
- Adultery is foolish (Proverbs 6:32) ... *page 794*
- Adultery is disgusting to God (Jeremiah 7:9-10)
... *page 941*
- God considers lust as sinful as adultery (Matthew 5:27-28) ... *page 1203*
- Divorce often leads to adultery (Mark 10:11-12)
... *page 1268*
- God can forgive the adulterer (John 8:1-11)
... *page 1353*

ADVICE

- Leaders should consider the advice of others (Exodus 18:13-26) ... *page 100*
- Older people often give wise advice (1 Kings 12:1-11) ... *page 444*
- Stay away from people who give wicked advice (Psalm 1:1) ... *page 680*
- God's advice is best (Psalm 73:24) ... *page 730*
- Wise people seek advice (Proverbs 1:5)
... *page 786*
- Advice helps provide success (Proverbs 11:14)
... *page 798*
- Foolish people do not listen to advice (Proverbs 12:15) ... *page 799*
- Give advice to those in need (1 Thessalonians 5:14) ... *page 1542*

ALCOHOL (see also Drinking)

- Being controlled by alcohol is foolish (Proverbs 20:1) . . . *page 807*
- Becoming drunk is sin (Romans 13:13-14) . . . *page 1450*
- God hates drunkenness (Galatians 5:19-21) . . . *page 1505*
- Church leaders should not be controlled by alcohol (Titus 1:7) . . . *page 1569*

ANGELS

- Angels carry out God's judgment (2 Samuel 24:16-17) . . . *page 421*
- Angels serve God (Psalm 103:21) . . . *page 750*
- Angels praise God (Psalm 148:2) . . . *page 780*
- Angels are messengers (Daniel 4:17) . . . *page 1081*
- Angels protect God's people (Daniel 6:22) . . . *page 1085*
- Angels do not marry (Matthew 22:30) . . . *page 1232*
- Angels do not die (Luke 20:36) . . . *page 1327*
- Angels will be judged by people (1 Corinthians 6:3) . . . *page 1462*
- Satan disguises himself as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14) . . . *page 1492*
- Angels encourage Christians (Hebrews 1:14) . . . *page 1579*
- Angels who sinned were thrown into hell (2 Peter 2:4) . . . *page 1624*
- Angels are holy (Jude 1:14) . . . *page 1645*
- Angels are in the presence of God (Revelation 4:8) . . . *page 1653*
- Angels should not be worshiped (Revelation 22:8-9) . . . *page 1670*

ANGER

- Anger can lead to murder (Genesis 4:3-8) . . . *page 9*
- Anger leads to evil actions (Psalm 37:8) . . . *page 704*
- Showing anger is foolish (Proverbs 12:16) . . . *page 799*
- Gentle words can soothe anger (Proverbs 15:1) . . . *page 802*
- Being quick-tempered is foolish (Ecclesiastes 7:9) . . . *page 830*
- God becomes angry when we are ruled by anger (Amos 1:11) . . . *page 1121*
- Anger is like murdering someone (Matthew 5:21-22) . . . *page 1202*
- Jesus grew angry at sin (John 2:13-17) . . . *page 1343*
- Anger can give Satan a place in your life (Ephesians 4:26-27) . . . *page 1514*
- Christians should get rid of anger (Colossians 3:8) . . . *page 1534*
- Leaders in the church should not be quick-tempered (Titus 1:7) . . . *page 1569*
- Be slow to become angry (James 1:19) . . . *page 1601*

APPEARANCE

- God is not impressed by someone's appearance (1 Samuel 16:7) . . . *page 365*
- Physical beauty fades (Proverbs 31:30) . . . *page 821*

- Do not worry about clothes (Matthew 6:25-34) . . . *page 1206*
- Appearances can be deceiving (Matthew 23:27) . . . *page 1233*
- Christians should care more about spiritual welfare (1 Timothy 2:9-10) . . . *page 1552*
- Do not judge others by their appearance (James 2:2-4) . . . *page 1602*
- Inner beauty is more important than physical beauty (1 Peter 3:1-6) . . . *page 1614*

ARGUMENTS

- Arguments can be avoided by using gentle words (Proverbs 15:1) . . . *page 802*
- Loving arguments is a sin (Proverbs 17:19) . . . *page 805*
- A fool is quick to argue (Proverbs 20:3) . . . *page 808*
- Avoid becoming entangled in others' arguments (Proverbs 26:17) . . . *page 815*
- Avoid arguing with a weak Christian (Romans 14:1) . . . *page 1450*
- We should avoid arguments (Philippians 2:14) . . . *page 1523*
- Arguments between Christians are useless (Titus 3:9) . . . *page 1571*

ARMOR

- Armor for physical battle (1 Samuel 17:38) . . . *page 368*
- Soldiers need armor (Jeremiah 46:3-4) . . . *page 987*
- Weapons cannot stop God's power (Ezekiel 38:4) . . . *page 1056*
- Spiritual armor prepares us for life (Romans 13:12) . . . *page 1450*
- Righteousness is a spiritual weapon (2 Corinthians 6:7) . . . *page 1486*
- God's weapons conquer Satan's strongholds (2 Corinthians 10:4) . . . *page 1490*
- Put on the armor of God (Ephesians 6:11-18) . . . *page 1517*

ASSURANCE

- God always holds on to his children (Psalm 37:23-24) . . . *page 705*
- God will never abandon his people (Psalm 138:8) . . . *page 774*
- God's promises last forever (Jeremiah 32:40) . . . *page 976*
- False assurance is dangerous (Luke 18:18-30) . . . *page 1323*
- We can be assured of eternal life (John 5:24) . . . *page 1348*
- God will not refuse any who come to him (John 6:37-40) . . . *page 1350*
- Our place in God's family is secure (John 10:27-28) . . . *page 1358*
- Christians have peace with God (Romans 5:1-5) . . . *page 1437*
- Nothing can separate us from God's love (Romans 8:35-39) . . . *page 1442*
- Salvation cannot be canceled (Romans 11:29) . . . *page 1447*
- Accountability should help others (Galatians 6:1) . . . *page 1506*

Our salvation was guaranteed before Creation
(Ephesians 1:4-5) . . . *page 1510*
Assurance comes from faith (Ephesians 3:12)
. . . *page 1513*
God will guard what has been entrusted to him
(2 Timothy 1:12) . . . *page 1561*

ATONEMENT

God required a perfect sacrifice (Exodus 12:5)
. . . *page 92*
God required blood for our atonement
(Leviticus 17:11) . . . *page 155*
Jesus paid for all of our sins (Isaiah 53:3-12)
. . . *page 907*
Atonement is good news (Luke 4:18-19)
. . . *page 1295*
Jesus willingly died for our sins (John 10:17)
. . . *page 1358*
Christ secured salvation through his blood
(Acts 20:28) . . . *page 1415*
Jesus provided the atonement for sins
(Romans 3:23-25) . . . *page 1435*
Jesus' death purchased forgiveness
(1 Corinthians 7:23) . . . *page 1464*
Jesus died for sins (1 Corinthians 15:3)
. . . *page 1473*
Our atonement allows us to know God
(Ephesians 2:13) . . . *page 1512*
Jesus' death rescues us from eternal punishment
(Colossians 1:13) . . . *page 1531*
Christ's death purifies God's people (Titus 2:14)
. . . *page 1570*
Sin requires that a sacrifice be made (Hebrews
9:22) . . . *page 1587*
Jesus' sacrifice was perfect (1 Peter 1:18-19)
. . . *page 1611*
Jesus took our punishment (1 Peter 2:21-24)
. . . *page 1613*
We cannot improve Jesus' sacrifice (1 Peter 3:18)
. . . *page 1615*

ATTITUDE

Bad attitudes hurt our relationship with God
(Genesis 4:6-7) . . . *page 9*
Bad attitudes lead to poor decisions (Numbers
14:1-4) . . . *page 191*
Always trust God for your life (Proverbs 29:25)
. . . *page 818*
Choose a positive attitude (Habakkuk 3:17-19)
. . . *page 1161*
God will reward the meek (Matthew 5:5)
. . . *page 1202*
God gives Christians a new attitude (Philippians
1:20-25) . . . *page 1521*
We should imitate Jesus' attitude (Philippians 2:5)
. . . *page 1522*
Christians should always rejoice (Philippians 4:4)
. . . *page 1525*
Never be anxious (Philippians 4:6-7) . . . *page 1525*

AUTHORITY (see also Respect)

God will hold people in authority accountable
for their actions (Daniel 4:31) . . . *page 1082*
Jesus is the highest authority (Matthew 28:18)
. . . *page 1243*

God gave government its authority (John 19:11)
. . . *page 1372*
Christians should obey the government (Romans
13:1-2) . . . *page 1449*
Parents are authorities to their children
(Ephesians 6:1) . . . *page 1516*
The Bible is our authority (2 Timothy 3:16)
. . . *page 1564*
Church leaders are authoritative (Hebrews 13:17)
. . . *page 1595*

BELIEF (see also Faith)

Believing God makes us righteous (Genesis 15:6)
. . . *page 22*
Belief in God should be accompanied by action
(Deuteronomy 27:10) . . . *page 251*
Belief affects the way we live (Mark 1:15)
. . . *page 1250*
Right beliefs are important for salvation
(Romans 10:9) . . . *page 1445*
Believing is more than acknowledging (James
2:21) . . . *page 1602*

BIBLE

The Bible is perfect (Psalm 18:30) . . . *page 690*
The Bible is true (Psalm 33:4) . . . *page 701*
The Bible will last forever (Psalm 119:89)
. . . *page 766*
The Bible gives us wisdom (Psalm 119:99)
. . . *page 766*
The Bible can be trusted (Psalm 119:138)
. . . *page 767*
The Bible reveals the truth (Acts 18:28)
. . . *page 1412*
The Bible is holy (Romans 1:2) . . . *page 1430*
God's Holy Spirit helps us understand the Bible
(1 Corinthians 2:12-16) . . . *page 1458*
The Bible is authoritative (Galatians 3:10)
. . . *page 1501*
The Bible is a Christian's spiritual weapon
(Ephesians 6:17) . . . *page 1517*
The Bible is inspired by God (2 Timothy 3:16)
. . . *page 1564*
The Bible judges our life (Hebrews 4:12)
. . . *page 1582*
The Bible helps us grow spiritually (1 Peter 2:2)
. . . *page 1612*

BIRTH

God is the Life-Giver (Genesis 2:7) . . . *page 6*
Children are a blessing from God (Psalm 127:3-5)
. . . *page 770*
God carefully creates each person (Psalm
139:13-14) . . . *page 775*
God's Son was born (Isaiah 9:6) . . . *page 858*
God plans the lives of people before they are born
(Jeremiah 1:5) . . . *page 930*
Jesus' birth (Luke 2:7) . . . *page 1290*
God's children are reborn spiritually (John 1:12-13)
. . . *page 1341*
People must be reborn spiritually to enter heaven
(John 3:3) . . . *page 1344*

BLESSING

God blesses those who obey him (Leviticus 26:3-5)
. . . *page 165*

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Check out these other great resources to help you on your path to recovery:

The Life Recovery Journal

Reflection, writing, and prayer often play a huge part in recovery. This journal offers prompts to jump-start your writing, inspirational verses, questions for reflection, and thoughtful prayers.

The Life Recovery Journey

This essential resource studies the Twelve Steps in a biblical context and provides nearly a year of weekly studies.

The Life Recovery Workbook

This workbook explores each of the Twelve Steps through a real-life recovery profile, using guided questions to connect to Scripture. Foundational verses point to the ultimate source of recovery—God's Word.

The Life Recovery Devotional

This encouraging devotional is designed to help you through the struggles faced in going through recovery, overcoming temptation, and getting back on track after a relapse.

The Twelve Gifts of Life Recovery

This book illuminates the twelve gifts God will impart to you as you walk the Twelve Steps. These

life-changing blessings will serve as pillars of strength as you weather life's storms.

The Twelve Laws of Life Recovery

This book highlights fundamental recovery truths to bring freedom from bondage and direction from confusion. Understanding and following these laws will awaken you to the ways God is faithful and present in your everyday walk.

Take Your Life Back

This book contains wisdom to guide you from reactive attitudes and behaviors to healthy, God-honoring responses. Take your life back and live the life you were meant to live!

Take Your Life Back Workbook

This companion workbook offers a five-session guided journey toward meaningful change as you overcome the fears, wounds, and patterns holding you back in life.

Take Your Life Back Day by Day

This book daily Scripture readings, inspiring reflections, and thought-provoking questions to help keep your eyes fixed on God day by day.

For additional resources and support, visit New Life Ministries at www.newlife.com and www.liferecoverygroups.com, or call them at 800-639-5433. Find the *New Life Live!* radio program on a station in your area, on Sirius XM Radio, or online at www.newlife.com. Watch New Life TV, a subscription channel, at tv.newlife.com.

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