



TRUSTED WISDOM
PRACTICAL APPLICATION
REFRESHING INSIGHT



THE
SWINDOLL
STUDY BIBLE

CHARLES R. SWINDOLL

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New Living
Translation®

Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.
CAROL STREAM, ILLINOIS

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ISBN 978-1-4143-8725-3	Hardcover
ISBN 978-1-4143-9540-1	LeatherLike Brown/Teal/Blue
ISBN 978-1-4143-9541-8	LeatherLike Brown/Teal/Blue Indexed
ISBN 978-1-4143-9542-5	LeatherLike Brown/Tan
ISBN 978-1-4143-9543-2	LeatherLike Brown/Tan Indexed
ISBN 978-1-4964-3111-0	LeatherLike Black (SPEC)
ISBN 978-1-4964-3112-7	LeatherLike Black Indexed (SPEC)

Printed in China

23	22	21	20	19	18	17
7	6	5	4	3	2	1

Tyndale House Publishers and Wycliffe Bible Translators share the vision for an understandable, accurate translation of the Bible for every person in the world. Each sale of the *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, benefits Wycliffe Bible Translators. Wycliffe is working with partners around the world to accomplish Vision 2025—an initiative to start a Bible translation program in every language group that needs it by the year 2025.

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Dear Reader,

There is nothing quite like the Bible. This Book is unique because it is *God's very Word*.

When God wanted to communicate with us, He didn't simply speak His message. Nor did He merely reveal it in the clouds or communicate it through dreams and visions. No, He did much more. The Lord saw to it that His Word was actually written down by His prophets and apostles and then preserved and translated through the ages by His faithful followers. The Spirit of God has communicated the Word of God in clear, understandable terms so that people of all generations can read it, understand it, and be transformed by it.

Because God felt it was so important to give us the Bible, we should take the time to read it, study it, and even commit portions of it to memory. Ultimately, we should allow its transforming truths to change us. Make no mistake: The Bible—God's Word—is our final authority for faith and practice. It is living, infallible truth from our living, infallible God. Knowing and loving Him requires knowing and loving His Word.

The Bible you hold in your hands will help you do just that.

The notes you'll find throughout this Bible come from literally thousands of hours of my personal study over more than fifty years of ministry. This study Bible was designed with you in mind. As you read the Scriptures, imagine my sitting beside you and sharing personal stories, important insights, and hard-earned lessons that will encourage you to walk more closely with Jesus Christ. You'll discover the *who, what, where, when, why, and how* of the Bible. *Who* wrote it and *when*? *What* does it mean, and *where* did its events occur? *Why* should I trust it? And most importantly, *how* can I apply it today?

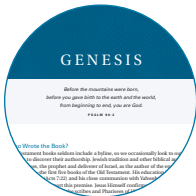
It's that last question more than any other that has fed my passion to publish this Bible. My primary focus in ministry has been teaching biblical *insight for living* . . . for genuine life change. After all, that's why God has communicated His Word to us—so that we may become like His Son, Jesus Christ, the central figure of this Book.



CHARLES R. SWINDOLL
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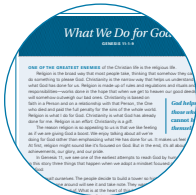
The Swindoll Study Bible User's Guide

Every page of *The Swindoll Study Bible* is filled with content that is designed to help you grow closer to Jesus as you engage with God's Word. It all starts with the clear and accurate New Living Translation, which communicates the message of Scripture powerfully in contemporary English. The text of Scripture itself should always be the primary feature of any edition of the Bible. In *The Swindoll Study Bible*, you will also find several different ways that Chuck Swindoll will come alongside you to help you understand and apply the message of the Bible.



BOOK INTRODUCTIONS will help you understand what each individual book of the Bible is all about. These introductions follow the format of answering five key questions: *Who Wrote the Book?* gives you insight into the person or people God used to record this book of Scripture. *Where Are We?* addresses the key details about the book's setting, such as the date of writing and the political or social situation the author and audience were facing. *Why Is This Book So Important?* covers the unique contribution each book makes to the Bible. *What's the Big Idea?* highlights one or more big themes that the book covers, giving you an idea of what to look for as you read. *How Do I Apply This?* brings the message of the book right home to you, reminding you that the Bible is always about life change.

Each book introduction also includes a chart showing the book's structure and highlighting important verses, themes, and events that will help you see how the book holds together. Most books also include a map to help orient you to the real-world places where the events of the book took place.



APPLICATION ARTICLES are full-page articles where Chuck explains important passages in his winsome and engaging style. These articles have all the wit, charm, personal stories, and clear biblical wisdom that you have come to expect from listening to Chuck's sermons on the radio, each complete with a few main points from the passage for you to take away and apply directly to your life.



PEOPLE PROFILES highlight key figures in the biblical story with an eye to the lessons from their lives that will hit home for Christians today. Each of these full-page features also contains a section highlighting key facts about the person's family and setting, the key lessons you can take away from their life, and guidance on where in the Bible you can learn more about them.

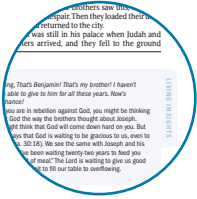


HOLY LAND TOUR will take you on a journey through the lands of the Bible. This tour visits many major archeological and geographical sites that relate to the Bible in some way, and each tour stop explains why a site is important in the Scriptures and includes a photo of the site or an artifact related to that place. It is almost like being on a bus tour of the Holy Land with Chuck and his team! You will find six unique guided tours that will walk you through several tour stops arranged around a theme. Check out the Holy Land Tour Itineraries beginning on page 1955.

Note on the maps in the Holy Land Tour: The borders of Israel have expanded and contracted over the centuries and continue to be a point of contention even today. The tour maps in this Bible represent the modern State of Israel, and the dotted lines denote the cease-fire line—which once enclosed what was called the West Bank—that came as a result of the armistice following the 1948 War of Independence. There is an expectation that final borders still need to be negotiated. Amazingly, in the future Kingdom of God, the borders of Israel will reach “all the way from the border of Egypt to the great Euphrates River” (Gen. 15:18).



PRAYER MOMENTS are brief prayers adapted from the ones Chuck delivers at the end of each of his sermons. These prayers apply the message of the Scriptures, asking God for help in living out the truth He is teaching His people.



LIVING INSIGHTS are found on almost every page of this Bible. Drawn from Chuck's sermons during his ministry of fifty-plus years, these brief notes highlight important teachings from the Scriptures. It is like having Chuck sit right alongside you as you read Scripture, pointing out the things he'd like to pass along to you.



APP

Your purchase of this Bible entitles you to download a complete digital edition of *The Swindoll Study Bible* that includes all text, notes, and features. Additional app-only features include searching, note taking, bookmarking, social media sharing, and much more. *The Swindoll Study Bible* app is available for both Android and iOS. Your individual code is located on the pages immediately following the color maps at the back of the Bible. Secure your copy today by visiting SwindollStudyBible.com/App and entering your unique code.

THE PENTATEUCH

Pentateuch is from a Greek word that means “five books.” It is a common name for the first five books of the Old Testament: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. These books were each written by Moses and chronicle God’s creation of the world, God’s choice to draw humanity to Himself through the family of Abraham, the growth of that family into a large nation, Moses’ delivery of God’s law to the people, and God’s leadership of the Israelites out of slavery, through the wilderness, and to the edge of their Promised Land.

GENESIS

*Before the mountains were born,
before you gave birth to the earth and the world,
from beginning to end, you are God.*

PSALM 90:2

Who Wrote the Book?

Old Testament books seldom include a byline, so we occasionally look to outside sources to discover their authorship. Jewish tradition and other biblical authors name Moses, the prophet and deliverer of Israel, as the author of the entire Pentateuch—the first five books of the Old Testament. His education in the courts of Egypt (Acts 7:22) and his close communion with Yahweh—the Hebrew name for God—support this premise. Jesus Himself confirmed Moses’ authorship (see John 5:45-47), as did the scribes and Pharisees of His time (Matt. 19:7; 22:24).

The first book of the Bible gets its name from the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Jewish Scriptures. *Genesis* is a Greek word that means “beginning” or “origin” and serves as a translation of the first word in the original Hebrew version of Genesis: *bereshith*.

Moses wrote Genesis for the people of Israel, whom he led out of slavery in Egypt back to the land of their forefathers. Genesis provides a history of those forefathers—their origins, their journeys, and their covenants with God. Because the events contained in the rest of the Pentateuch are responses to the promises of God found in Genesis, such a history of God’s interaction with their ancestors would have provided encouragement and inspiration to the former slaves seeking freedom and prosperity in the Promised Land.

Where Are We?

The first eleven chapters of Genesis paint the early history of the human race in broad strokes. After the great flood, the focus narrows to God’s dealings with one family living in Mesopotamia, a family headed by Abram (later called Abraham). From the Euphrates River (in modern-day Iraq) over to what is now Syria, events move south into Canaan (modern-day Jordan and Israel) and Egypt. See the map on the following page for a helpful visual reference to important places in Genesis.

Genesis covers a longer period of time than all the other books in the Bible combined. While the ancient history recounted in the first eleven chapters gives no indication of time span, Abram's story begins (Gen. 12:1) around 2091 BC, and the book ends with Joseph's death in Egypt (Gen. 50:26) around 1805 BC.



Why Is Genesis So Important?

To the original readers of Genesis, the book was valued as a history of their people. It told them the story of how God created the world and dealt with all humanity until He initiated a personal relationship with their forefather Abraham. Genesis revealed to them the eternal promises God made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—promises that extended to their descendants. It provided comfort and hope for the downtrodden Israelites as they waited to return to their Promised Land.

Genesis offers a thorough background to the rest of the Bible.

For later readers, Genesis offers a thorough background to the rest of the Bible. Here we learn ancient history and geography and are introduced to significant people and events found later in the Bible. In Genesis God reveals many facets of His nature through His dealings with people. We also learn of the origin of sin, of its destructive effect on humanity, and of God's plan to atone for that sin through a future Son from the people of Israel (Gen. 3:15; 22:18; 49:10).

What's the Big Idea?

The Bible is divided into two major parts, the Old and New Testaments. *Testament* is another word for *covenant*. Covenants figure prominently in the story of Genesis, for they help define God's relationship with His people at various times. Sin broke the perfect peace between God and humanity (see Gen. 3). But God established His plan for redemption through covenants. He made a covenant with Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3), then reaffirmed it with Isaac (Gen. 26:2-5) and with Jacob (Gen. 28:13-15). God's promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob applied to the Israelites in Egypt and to later generations. Genesis sets the stage for the rest of God's plan to redeem the world through His Son, Jesus Christ.

How Do I Apply This?

It's easy to get lost in the genealogies and stories in Genesis without seeing the big picture. Keep God, not the people, in mind as you read through the book. Consider His character qualities. If you were an Israelite just released from slavery and reading this for the first time, would you marvel at God's power over creation? Or His anger over sin? Or the way He fulfilled His promises to everyone? Awareness of each of these characteristics should evoke worship—and hope. Remember that the Lord is strong, faithful, and just. And His desire to bless His creation will one day be fully realized.

	Creation	Fall	Flood	Nations	Abraham	Isaac	Jacob	Joseph
	Genesis 1–2	Genesis 3–5	Genesis 6–9	Genesis 10–11	Genesis 12–25	Genesis 26–27	Genesis 28–36	Genesis 37–50
Beginnings	Beginning of the human race				Beginning of the chosen race			
Result	Confusion and scattering				Bondage in Egypt			
History	Primeval history				Patriarchal history			
Emphasis	Four major events				Four important people			
Time	Over 2,000 years				Approximately 300 years			
Key Words and Phrases	“In the beginning” (Gen. 1:1); “account” (Gen. 2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10, 27; 25:12, 19; 36:1; 37:2)							
Theme	God promises to redeem and bless His people.							
Key Verses	Genesis 3:15; 12:3							
Christ in Genesis	Pictured in the seed of the woman (Gen. 3:15); Melchizedek, the high priest (Gen. 14:18); the humiliation and exaltation of Joseph (Gen. 37–41)							

The Account of Creation

1 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.

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 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.”

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, . . .

A BOOK OF BEGINNINGS *Gen. 1:1* The book of Genesis is the book of beginnings. Whatever begins, begins here. It is the beginning of time, the beginning of matter, and the beginning of humanity. Even sin had its beginning here, and thus, so did God’s judgment. In Genesis we see, for the first time, the plan of God begin to unfold and the promise of the Messiah’s coming. Genesis is the beginning of the family as God created it—the husband-and-wife relationship—and the product of their union, the birth of children. This first book in the Book of books is the beginning of life as we know it. It all starts in Genesis.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Man and Woman in Eden

When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, ⁵neither wild plants nor grains were growing on the earth. For the LORD God had not yet sent rain to water the earth, and there were no people to cultivate the soil. ⁶Instead, springs* came up from the ground and watered all the land. ⁷Then the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into the man's nostrils, and the man became a living person.

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

⁹The LORD God made all sorts of trees grow up from

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

REMEMBER YOUR GENESIS *Gen. 1:26-27* We each have our own genesis. We have all had our beginnings. I have never seen any two people with the same beginning. God has created us all unique—every individual is different. Think back to your genesis, the beginning of your walk with the Lord. Remember how old you were. Recall who first shared the gospel with you. Think back to that time when you released your right to live your own way and surrendered yourself, in faith, to Christ. That was your genesis. True life began for you in that moment.

VERY GOOD *Gen. 1:31* God looked at His creation and said, in effect, “Everything is in its place. Everything is excellent. Nothing needs to be added. Nothing is lacking that I wanted. Life, light, matter, land, sea, vegetation, man, woman—it is all there, and it is very good!”

THE BEGINNING OF LEISURE *Gen. 2:2* God wasn't tired. He didn't rest because there was nothing else to do. Rather, He deliberately *stopped* His work so that there could be a deliberate *beginning* of leisure. This was a time to look at what He had made and to contemplate the value of it. It was a time for enjoyment.

We sometimes make an idol out of productivity. If we do take some time out for relaxation and enjoyment, we immediately start to feel guilty. But if we're serious about imitating God, then we must take time for leisure. We have to take time to rest, to think, and to appreciate. Whenever we do these things, we are doing exactly what God did.

The Image of God

GENESIS 1:26-27

THE CLIMAX OF THE CREATIVE WEEK is God's creation of humanity. The stars and planets are in place. The sun is ready to rule the day and the moon the night. The seas and the land have been formed. The plants and trees are bursting with life and in full bloom. Then God brings humanity onto the scene. It almost appears anticlimactic until we see that there is something altogether distinct about God's creation of the man and the woman in Genesis 1:26-27. The plants and animals were not made in His image. The stars too, as magnificent as they are, do not bear God's likeness. But the man and the woman do.

When God said, "Let us make human beings in our image," He was saying, in effect, "Humanity will be unlike anything I have created. No other being has a heart to love Me. No other created being has a mind to know Me or a will to obey Me. Nothing else in all of My creation has a destiny of eternity like these creatures will have. I will make humans distinct. They will have *imago Dei*, 'the image of God,' stamped on them. Only they will have a capacity within them to love and know and obey Me."

When we use the word *image* in our culture, our minds imagine something external and short-lived. We talk about celebrities, corporations, or brands that protect "their image." An "image" in these cases has more to do with perception than reality. But when we speak of the *image of God*, we're not talking about God's appearance as projected and presented through humanity. We're talking about portraying who God is. In a unique and amazing way, human beings relate to God and reflect something of His character and nature.

What does it mean to be made in God's image? Theologians have spilled oceans of ink on this topic, but I will offer a few simple proposals. Humans have a capacity not found in animals. God communicates with us in a way He does not communicate with animals. There are inner, secret chambers within our being where the Lord connects with us. He prods us with inner promptings. He urges, He moves, He convicts, He directs, He stops, He guards, He guides. When God made us, He gave us more than a body: He gave us an immaterial soul—a spirit. Animals do not have a spirit. They have no connection with God except by way of instinct and the natural order of things.

When God created the first humans, He made them to have a sense of community, connection, and communication with the One who fashioned them. But once sin entered the world, that connection broke down. It wasn't erased, but it was defaced. It wasn't destroyed; it was damaged. We live with a defaced and damaged image today. Nevertheless, unlike animals, we are able to connect with our God in the inner person.

Bearing the image of God means that humans have dignity. It also means that God has entrusted us with the responsibility and the capacity to love and obey Him.

The image of God is who we are as human beings. It is our most basic, original calling. God calls us to live in His image—in the light of who He is and who He has made us to be.

God created humans to have community, connection, and communication with the One who fashioned them.

the ground—trees that were beautiful and that produced delicious fruit. In the middle of the garden he placed the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

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

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

¹⁸Then the LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him.” ¹⁹So the LORD God formed from the ground

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

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

²³“At last!” the man exclaimed.

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

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

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

2:19 Or *Adam*, and so throughout the chapter. 2:21 Or *took a part of the man’s side*.

THE PRIVILEGE OF WORK *Gen. 2:15* The first thing God did with the first man on the earth was give him a job. Work is important to God. The job Adam had was a significant responsibility, an involved occupation: The man was to cultivate the garden.

Many people feel that work is a curse. But it isn’t. When we look at Genesis 2–3, we see that sweat upon the brow is part of the curse, but work itself is not a curse. In fact, work began in the context of innocence. Work remains one of the greatest privileges God has given us.

GOD TAKES CARE OF HIS CHILDREN *Gen. 2:18* Adam did not come to God one day and say, “God, I’ve had it with being in the garden alone. I am really just sick of all these lonely days and nights.” No, it was God who saw that it was “not good for the man to be alone.” Adam simply did his work faithfully, and God stepped in.

How did God know to do that? He took time to observe. He related. He anticipated the need before Adam even said it. He knew what Adam needed even though Adam didn’t know it himself and didn’t have the ability to say it.

Parents, take time to study how your children are made. Observe how each one is unlike other children, and then move in to help when you see a need. That’s relating. That’s building a friendship. It takes time and effort if you want it to be a real friendship. God takes time and effort with us. He notices who we are and what we need. He sees a lack, and He responds. This is what the love of God is all about.

THE HELPER SINGS HARMONY *Gen. 2:18* God holds the patent on marriage. It was His idea! It wasn’t ours. He came up with it. God’s truth, as revealed in Scripture, remains unchanged. God looks at the man as he is alone, and God says, “Not good. That’s not best.” The aloneness is not good. And then He says, “I will make a helper who is just right for him.”

Here’s the way I like to describe it. The Lord gave the man the melody line in the music, and He gave the woman the harmony part. It’s a beautiful duet put together by God.

The very first term used to describe the purpose of the wife is “helper.” She’s the one who assists in the fulfillment of this relationship. She’s the one who adds color and harmony and beauty to the relationship. Otherwise, it’s rather meat-and-potatoes, a plain and primitive melody. God says to Adam, in essence, “All alone, your voice can’t carry it, Adam. You working alone is not something that pleases Me, nor will it really satisfy you. I will provide someone you need who is just right for you.”

DELIGHTFUL INTIMACY *Gen. 2:24–25* God’s design shows His intent. In God’s plan, marriage is monogamy—a heterosexual relationship between a man and a woman joined by God. This plan is so lovely and fulfilling that the last verse of Genesis 2 describes the man and his wife as both being naked without shame. There is no self-consciousness. There is no uneasiness with one another. There is no reluctance. The heavenly Father who made them said, in effect, “Man alone is not as good as man joined.” And in the beauty and intimacy of this innocent setting, there is even freedom in their nakedness. That plan hasn’t changed. In the bonds of marriage as God designed it there is a delightful intimacy found nowhere else.

Guidelines for Marriage

GENESIS 2:24-25

I FIND IN GENESIS 2:24-25 four helpful guidelines for marriage we can summarize in one word each. When trouble comes in a marriage, it's because one or more of these four guidelines have been overlooked, ignored, or directly disobeyed.

The first is the principle of *severance*: "A man leaves his father and mother." Severance does not mean we no longer listen to our parents. Nor does it mean we never need them or talk to them. Of course not! Severance simply means we are not dependent on them. We either need to sever that dependence or not get married. This applies to both men and women, regardless of age.

The second principle is *permanence*: "A man . . . is joined to his wife." Think of glue bonding two substances together. If you've ever applied a professional-grade glue, you understand what it means when the directions say, "Don't put it on until you're ready for it to stick." Why? The things you glue together will be bonded. This is the principle of *permanence*. Following this principle means working through and dealing with anything that may cause the glue to break loose—anything disturbing the permanence. That means you don't do things that threaten the bond. You refuse to spend time with people who can weaken the permanence. You don't allow flexibility where there should be faithfulness. To be joined is to be permanently bonded—for life.

The third principle is *unity*: "The two are united into one." Paul would later refer to this union as a "great mystery" (Eph. 5:32). Can you imagine two people who are very different becoming one? It doesn't happen automatically or easily. The process only *begins* at the altar. It takes a long time and a lot of hard work for two people to become united in body, mind, and purpose. It requires a lifetime of adaptation and adjustment for two to become one.

The fourth and final principle is *intimacy*: "The man and his wife were both naked, but they felt no shame." Here stood Adam and Eve, arm in arm before the living God, not ashamed to stand naked before Him or each other. Their nakedness was more than physical; it was also emotional. They had no secrets. They had nothing to hide, from God or each other. It was not until sin entered the world that they experienced shame in nakedness (Gen. 3:7). If you are married, you and your spouse are either becoming more unified or you're hiding. God wants the two of you to develop intimacy by being open with each other. When you experience heartaches, discouragements, and even joys, a spouse can understand these things like no one else. It's remarkable what happens when intimacy grows.

Perhaps you realize you have not been following God's principles for marriage. Change works against our fallen nature, and it is tough work. But the good news? With God, you can do it. The way to make a change is to start today, follow God's Word, and determine to do the right thing each day. Believe me, it's worth it.

Adam and Eve had nothing to hide, from God or each other. It was not until sin entered the world that they experienced shame.

THE GARDEN OF EDEN

GENESIS 2



Unspoiled Creation. The Garden of Eden was an unsullied paradise, the perfect place for Adam and Eve.

TRYING TO DETERMINE the location of the Garden of Eden has given Bible students and scholars an unending quest. Genesis describes Eden as “in the east” and as having a river that watered the garden and divided, becoming four rivers. We can locate two of the four rivers—the Tigris and the Euphrates, which flowed through ancient Mesopotamia, or modern Iraq (Gen. 2:8, 10-14). With these scant geographical facts, scholars must put a question mark in the atlas beside any proposed location of the Garden of Eden.

The Hebrew term *eden* means “delight” and describes the ideal circumstances Adam and Eve enjoyed in the garden. Yet even a perfect environment had its challenges:

- ▶ There was a tree in the garden with fruit that God had commanded Adam and Eve not to eat (Gen. 2:16-17).
- ▶ Even in paradise, perfect humanity still faced temptation from the devil to disobey God’s command (Gen. 3:1-5; Rev. 12:9).
- ▶ Adam and Eve had within them the possibility of disobedience.

In other words, the delightful surroundings of the Garden of Eden didn’t remove the need to obey God.

It’s essential that we remember this as we pursue our goals in life. If paradise required obedience to God, how much more do our lives! To help us in our journey, we have what Adam and Eve also had—God’s direction. In spite of what the tempter would have us believe, God’s rules have good reasons. God gives us His prohibitions because He loves us—not because He is trying to keep us from our potential. In fact, it’s just the opposite. God’s purposes for our lives are best realized when we trust and obey His Word.

Searching for the Garden of Eden hasn’t ended with its physical location. Many people live their lives on a quest for the ideal life. But instead we should determine to remain obedient in whatever situation we find ourselves. Obedience is always God’s desire for us.

The Man and Woman Sin

3 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.

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.*

FORBIDDEN FRUIT *Gen. 3:1-7* God had clearly said, “Don’t eat from that tree.” But Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit anyway! Why in the world would they do that? Human nature? Curiosity?

We might ask ourselves the same question. We are warned about the danger of sin so often in Scripture—Sunday after Sunday, week after week, Bible study after Bible study, time with the Lord after time after time. Why is it that, when presented with the very thing God says we have no business doing, we take a big bite?

You and I will face choices just like Adam and Eve did. We will struggle with this thing inside each of us. Paul calls it the “old sinful self” (see Rom. 6:6). You will never be rid of it, nor will I, throughout this life. You will curse it, you will hate it, and you will find yourself attacking it. Yet you will later turn around and exalt it, try to please it, and protect it. The Christian life often feels like a yo-yo or a roller coaster: It goes up and down. The gravitational pull of the old sinful self is always there, saying, “Satisfy me.” We are burdened with the disease of selfishness. It is a malady only God can cure.

AFTER THE CURSE *Gen. 3:14-19* In Genesis 2, we see the beauty of the fellowship between Adam and Eve and their Creator. We see innocence. But in Genesis 3, sin steps onto the scene. As a result of sin’s entrance, a curse falls

upon the man, the woman, the serpent, and even upon the earth.

We cannot imagine a world free of this curse. Try to picture childbirth without pain, or a field without weeds, or even a heart that is absolutely innocent. We can’t imagine it. That’s because there are no such things. We live our entire lives on a sin-cursed earth. But Adam and Eve lived during the transition between paradise and life after the curse. How could they stand the incredible contrast between what they had in the garden and what they had as a result of their fall? It must have seemed overwhelming.

SATAN WAS CONQUERED AT THE CROSS *Gen. 3:15* Genesis 3 gives us a glimpse into the spiritual warfare that surrounds us. If we look at this chapter alone, it seems as if Satan has won the fight. Yet after mankind fell, God promised that the offspring of the woman would ultimately triumph over Satan. The devil succeeded in the first battle, but a second round would come that would deal the death blow to him. That promise was fulfilled at Calvary, when Jesus Christ, born of a woman, crushed the serpent’s head (see Gal. 4:4-5). At the cross of Jesus Christ, God judged Satan. He stripped the ancient serpent of his power. He took from Satan, as far as the believer is concerned, any right to rule over us.

18 It will grow thorns and thistles for you, though you will eat of its grains.
 19 By the sweat of your brow will you have food to eat until you return to the ground from which you were made. For you were made from dust, and to dust you will return.”

Paradise Lost: God’s Judgment

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

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

Cain and Abel

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

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

accept Cain and his gift. This made Cain very angry, and he looked dejected.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Descendants of Cain

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

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.” 4:13 Or My sin. 4:16 Nod means “wandering.”

ANGER IS A CANCER *Gen. 4:1-16* Some things don’t fix themselves. Take a flat tire, for instance. You will not go to bed with a flat tire and wake up in the morning and say, “Well, what do you know? It fixed itself!”

Anger is one of those things that won’t repair itself. Anger never vanishes—it only multiplies. That’s why you have to face it and deal with it. You have to confess it. Anger is like a cancer. You have to get rid of it.

A friend of mine who was camping in Colorado caught sight of an eagle as it was following its prey. The eagle came down to treetop level and suddenly swept down and grabbed a sizable animal in its talons. After the eagle took off again, my friend watched it ascend. All of a sudden, the eagle’s wings went limp, it fell into a tailspin, and the bird and its prey crashed to the ground! My friend ran over to see what had happened. The eagle had caught a weasel,

which had grabbed the eagle in retaliation and bit its main artery. Neither animal survived the fall.

That’s a perfect illustration of what anger does to us when we fail to deal with it. It takes us down. When we ignore our anger, it never fixes itself.

FEELINGS WILL FOLLOW *Gen. 4:6-7* In our day, we are sometimes told not to do something until we feel like it. With that mind-set, it seems that we will only be able to obey when we feel like it. But God says nothing about feelings when talking with Cain. God says, in effect, “Cain, do what is right and you’ll have a better attitude in life. Do what is right and you won’t be so dejected. Do what is right and you’ll be happier. Your attitude will be transformed.” We don’t need to wait until we feel like it to do what is right. We need to do what is right first, and the feelings will follow.

Cain

GOD'S MARK OF GRACE

CAIN AND ABEL WERE BROTHERS, sons of Adam and Eve. They gravitated to different occupations: Abel was a shepherd, caring for animals, while Cain chose to cultivate crops as a farmer. As adults, these two young men brought their offerings to the Lord.

Here is where the conflict began. Cain brought as his offering “some of his crops.” Abel brought “the best portions of the firstborn lambs from his flock” (Gen. 4:3-4). Cain did it his own way, a way that proved to be unacceptable to God, and his offering was rejected. Abel did it God’s way and found full acceptance because of his faith (Heb. 11:4).

Observe Cain’s response carefully: He became very angry (Gen. 4:5). Interesting, isn’t it? He knew what God expected, but he failed to do it. When God responded justly, Cain got angry. He was also jealous of Abel because God accepted Abel’s offering. God saw that anger and jealousy were consuming Cain, and He graciously gave him a warning: “Sin is crouching at the door, eager to control you” (Gen. 4:7). God said, in effect, “Don’t let anger get the best of you. If you continue to compound the problem of this disobedient sacrifice, you will fall deeper into sin.”

What happened next? The first murder. Through this monstrous act, Cain basically said, “You want a sacrifice? Here’s Your sacrifice, God!” Blood spilled onto the ground as Abel’s lifeless body collapsed into Cain’s arms.

But then God came along, asking a question He already knew the answer to, a question designed to make Cain think deeply: “Where is your brother?” Cain’s impudent answer has lived on through the centuries: “Am I my brother’s guardian?” (Gen. 4:9). The man had done an unconscionable deed, yet he defiantly refused to acknowledge any wrongdoing.

Only when God announces His judgment do we see a little emotion from Cain. Listen to him: “My punishment is too great for me to bear! . . . Anyone who finds me will kill me!” (Gen. 4:13-14). He’s afraid that others will treat him as he had treated his brother.

Now watch God’s incredible expression of grace. Had you or I been in charge of the case, we likely would have pounded the gavel and said, “Justice is served.” But God is gracious; He gave Cain a mark that warned people not to take revenge against him. What was that mark? We don’t know. Whatever it was, I see it as an act of grace. I believe that by sparing Cain’s life, God left an opportunity for Cain to repent. That mark was God’s way of saying, “I’m ready to listen. I’m ready to accept you. Not even this murder can keep you from Me permanently.” That’s a picture of God’s amazing grace in the life of every one of us—descendants of Cain that we are.

QUICK FACTS

- > **SETTING** Near Eden
- > **OCCUPATIONS** Farmer, wanderer
- > **RELATIVES** Parents: Adam and Eve; Siblings: Abel, Seth, and others not mentioned by name

KEY LESSONS

- > Anger is not necessarily a sin, but actions motivated by anger can be sinful. Anger should be the energy behind good action, not evil action.
- > What we offer to God must be from the heart—the best of who we are and what we have.
- > The consequences of sin may last a lifetime.

LEARN MORE

Cain’s story is told in Genesis 4:1-17. He is also mentioned in Hebrews 11:4; 1 John 3:12; and Jude 1:11.

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.

²⁴If 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.

The Descendants of Adam

5 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.

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.

A World Gone Wrong

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

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

⁵The LORD observed the extent of human wickedness 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.

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. 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.

Noah

THE SHIP-BUILDING PREACHER

NOAH LIVED IN A WORLD that had degenerated into complete rebellion against God (Gen. 6:5). These were dreadful days—days of moral contamination and compromise. But right smack in the middle of that flow of sewage was Noah, a godly man who would rear a godly family.

God had finally seen enough: He decided to wipe humanity out and start over (Gen. 6:6-7). Now that's what I call a frightening prophecy! But God's judgment would work slowly. For years, humanity had the opportunity to respond to God (see 1 Pet. 3:20). Noah was the model that humanity was to follow. He "walked in close fellowship with God" (Gen. 6:9).

The entire time that Noah was gathering wood and pounding nails, he was making a dramatic announcement to a wicked generation. The people of Noah's world had never seen the likes of Noah's ark! Here he was, building this huge ship in his backyard, hundreds of miles away from any navigable body of water. So during those long years, this ship-building preacher must have been a powerful witness to God's incredible patience and power.

After this mammoth construction project was completed, God closed the door of the ark. Inside were His only followers, along with the most amazing collection of animals you can imagine. Then God's terrible judgment fell on the rest of the outside world.

As we read on just a bit we notice the first thing Noah did when he left the ark: He "built an altar to the LORD" (Gen. 8:20). Why? I think it was because he was afraid. The world was completely different from the way it had been before. He saw strange new mountains and valleys; the climate was alien to him. Over all the world hung an eerie silence. So Noah knelt down before God and prayed, and God responded to him with an enduring and beautiful promise: "Never again will floodwaters kill all living creatures. . . . I have placed my rainbow in the clouds. It is the sign of my covenant with you and with all the earth" (Gen. 9:11, 13). Fear gone.

At times you may think you're at your end, that you're going to be wiped off the face of the earth. Let me offer you this gentle advice: When those times come, calm down and pray. God's plan is full of rainbows, and people who trust in His promises are especially honored and protected.

QUICK FACTS

- > **SETTING** We're not told how far from the Garden of Eden people had settled.
- > **OCCUPATIONS** Farmer, shipbuilder, preacher
- > **RELATIVES** Grandfather: Methuselah; Father: Lamech; Sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth

KEY LESSONS

- > God is faithful to those who obey Him.
- > God does not always protect us from trouble, but He cares for us in spite of trouble.
- > Obedience is a long-term commitment.
- > We may be faithful, but our sinful nature always travels with us.

LEARN MORE

Noah's story is told in Genesis 5:28-10:32. He is also mentioned in 1 Chronicles 1:4; Isaiah 54:9; Ezekiel 14:14, 20; Matthew 24:37-38; Luke 3:36; 17:26-27; Hebrews 11:7; 1 Peter 3:20; and 2 Peter 2:5.

THE GOSPELS

The Gospels record the narrative of the birth, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. They are not intended to be traditional biographies of our Lord. Instead, the Gospels take on a theological role, picking and choosing from three years of Jesus' teaching and ministry to present four unique but complementary portraits of the Savior. Due to their exclusive focus on Jesus Christ, it has been said that the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are the four pillars on which the church stands.

MATTHEW

Then he asked them, "But who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

MATTHEW 16:15-16

Who Wrote the Book?

While Matthew did not sign his name to this Gospel, the early church uniformly attested to the apostle's authorship of it. Matthew's name appears in all the biblical lists of the twelve apostles, though Mark and Luke refer to him as Levi. Early church tradition records that Matthew wrote his Gospel and then moved to India as a missionary.

Matthew's former employment as a tax collector distinguished him from the other apostles, and immediately after he was called to follow Jesus, Matthew hosted a feast for Jesus in his home with a guest list made up of his fellow tax collectors and other sinful friends (Matt. 9:9-13). Apparently Matthew did not think it odd that Jesus, the Messiah, would associate with the sinful and downtrodden of society.

Where Are We?

The Gospel according to Matthew is the most Jewish-centric of the four Gospels. Matthew regularly invokes the writings of the Old Testament prophets in an effort to illustrate Jesus' identity as the long-awaited Messiah (see, for example, Matt. 1:22-23; 2:5-6, 17-18; and 3:3). The five major sections where we see Jesus teaching (Matt. 5-7, 10, 13, 18, and 24-25) are reminiscent of the five books of the Pentateuch (Genesis through Deuteronomy). In addition, Matthew presents Jesus as someone who teaches and performs miracles like Moses, the most important figure in Jewish history and tradition. This is another indication that Matthew is intending to present Jesus as the Messiah (see Deut. 18:15).

Matthew's Gospel has been notoriously difficult to date, but several factors point to a date between AD 65 and AD 70. First of all, the book makes no mention of the destruction of the Temple, which occurred in AD 70. Such a cataclysmic event likely would have received some comment if it had happened already, particularly in a book so clearly influenced by Judaism. The largely Jewish character of the book

also suggests that it was written at a time before the relationship soured between the synagogues and the Jewish Christians worshiping in them, which happened late in the first century. Finally, many scholars believe that Mark's Gospel was the first to be composed (likely between AD 59 and AD 65), and it is probable that Matthew's was written soon after.

Why Is Matthew So Important?

The apostle Matthew, a Jew himself, offers a decidedly Jewish take on the ministry of Jesus. He includes more than fifty direct citations—and even more indirect allusions—to the Old

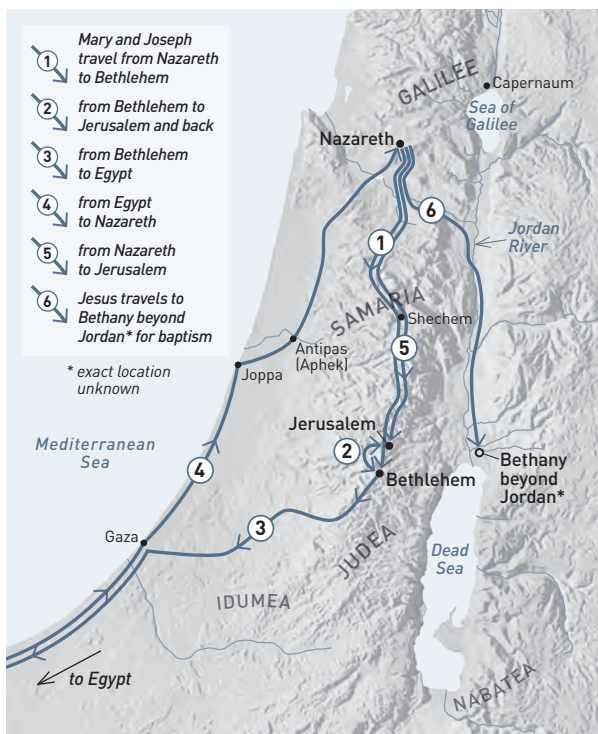
Testament. This exceeds the number given in any of the other Gospels and indicates that Matthew had the Jewish people in mind when he sat down to write. Matthew's extensive connections between Jesus and the Old Testament provide ample prophetic evidence for Jesus' ministry and also give contemporary readers a glimpse into how Matthew's first-century audience approached the Old Testament with a Christ-centered mind-set.

Matthew wrote this Gospel to show that Jesus was and is indeed the King, Israel's long-awaited Messiah.

What's the Big Idea?

Matthew wrote this Gospel to answer a lingering question: "If Jesus is the Messiah, the King of the Jews, why did the promised Kingdom not come?" Matthew shows that Jesus was and is indeed the King, Israel's long-awaited Messiah. This concern is reflected in his opening line: "This is a record of the ancestors of Jesus the Messiah, a descendant of David and of Abraham" (Matt. 1:1). From there, Matthew consistently takes his readers back to the Old Testament, providing Old Testament testimony regarding the birth of Jesus, Bethlehem as the location of Jesus' birth, the flight to Egypt, Herod's slaughter of the infants, and the beginning of Jesus' ministry. In a world where many in the Jewish

community had tried to claim the role of the Messiah for themselves, Matthew's commitment to grounding the life of Jesus in the Old Testament raises Jesus above the multitude of false messiahs. The apostle paints a portrait of our Lord that highlights His uniqueness among all others who have ever walked this earth.



Jesus' travels before beginning His three years of formal ministry

How Do I Apply This?

After enduring four hundred years of prophetic silence, God's people must have wondered whether He had deserted them. After centuries of intimate relationship with God, the people had found themselves without a single genuine prophet or spokesperson for God. However, the ministries of John the Baptist and Jesus reminded God's people that He had not forgotten them. God's silence during that period was merely a precursor to the greatest act of His redemptive plan. God hadn't forgotten—He always remembers His people. Matthew makes that clear. The question isn't whether or not God is with us but rather whether we are with Him. God sent Jesus to offer the Kingdom to Israel, but they rejected their Messiah, so the Kingdom of God on earth was postponed.

It was true that God had not forgotten His people then, and it is certainly still true today. Do you ever feel as though God has deserted you or that He sits in silence in the face of your requests? As we read through the pages of Matthew, not only do we see Jesus Christ revealed as our King and Messiah, but His coming to earth as God in the flesh also reminds us of His deep love for us. Now resurrected and ascended, He will always be with us, even to the end of time (Matt. 28:20). But will we choose to always be with Him?

	Announcement and Arrival of the King	Proclamation and Reception of the King	Opposition and Rejection of the King	Resurrection and Triumph of the King
	Matthew 1–4	Matthew 5–15	Matthew 16–27	Matthew 28
	<i>Main Emphasis: His Credentials</i>	<i>Main Emphasis: His Message</i>	<i>Main Emphasis: His Suffering and Death</i>	<i>Main Emphasis: His Conquest</i>
	Genealogy Birth Baptism Temptation	Sermon on the Mount Miracles Discourses Parables	Spread of Opposition Preparation of Disciples Final Predictions Crucifixion	Resurrection Great Commission
The King	His identity: Israel's promised King		His destiny: "Crucify Him!" and "He is risen!"	
Scope	Teaching the vast multitudes		Teaching the Twelve	
Location	Bethlehem and Nazareth	Galilee	Judea	
People's Reaction	Increasing popularity		Increasing hostility	
Theme	Jesus is the King, Israel's long-awaited Messiah.			
Key Verses	Matthew 16:16-19; 28:18-20			
Christ in Matthew	Jesus, the Messiah, fulfills the prophecies, promises, types, and expectations of the Old Testament Scriptures.			

The Ancestors of Jesus the Messiah

1 This is a record of the ancestors of Jesus the Messiah, a descendant of David and of Abraham*:

- 2 Abraham was the father of Isaac.
Isaac was the father of Jacob.
Jacob was the father of Judah and his brothers.
- 3 Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah (whose mother was Tamar).
Perez was the father of Hezron.
Hezron was the father of Ram.*
- 4 Ram was the father of Amminadab.
Amminadab was the father of Nahshon.
Nahshon was the father of Salmon.
- 5 Salmon was the father of Boaz (whose mother was Rahab).
Boaz was the father of Obed (whose mother was Ruth).
Obed was the father of Jesse.
- 6 Jesse was the father of King David.
David was the father of Solomon (whose mother was Bathsheba, the widow of Uriah).
- 7 Solomon was the father of Rehoboam.
Rehoboam was the father of Abijah.
Abijah was the father of Asa.*
- 8 Asa was the father of Jehoshaphat.
Jehoshaphat was the father of Jehoram.*
Jehoram was the father* of Uzziah.
- 9 Uzziah was the father of Jotham.
Jotham was the father of Ahaz.
Ahaz was the father of Hezekiah.
- 10 Hezekiah was the father of Manasseh.
Manasseh was the father of Amon.*
Amon was the father of Josiah.
- 11 Josiah was the father of Jehoiachin* and his brothers (born at the time of the exile to Babylon).
- 12 After the Babylonian exile:
Jehoiachin was the father of Shealtiel.
Shealtiel was the father of Zerubbabel.
- 13 Zerubbabel was the father of Abiud.
Abiud was the father of Eliakim.
Eliakim was the father of Azor.
- 14 Azor was the father of Zadok.
Zadok was the father of Akim.

- Akim was the father of Eliud.
15 Eliud was the father of Eleazar.
Eleazar was the father of Matthan.
Matthan was the father of Jacob.
- 16 Jacob was the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary.
Mary gave birth to Jesus, who is called the Messiah.

¹⁷All those listed above include fourteen generations from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the Babylonian exile, and fourteen from the Babylonian exile to the Messiah.

The Birth of Jesus the Messiah

¹⁸This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Joseph, to whom she was engaged, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement* quietly.

²⁰As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. "Joseph, son of David," the angel said, "do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. ²¹And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus,* for he will save his people from their sins."

²²All of this occurred to fulfill the Lord's message through his prophet:

- 23 "Look! The virgin will conceive a child!
She will give birth to a son,
and they will call him Immanuel,*
which means 'God is with us.'"

²⁴When Joseph woke up, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded and took Mary as his wife. ²⁵But he did not have sexual relations with her until her son was born. And Joseph named him Jesus.

Visitors from the East

2 Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the reign of King Herod. About that time some wise men* from eastern lands arrived in Jerusalem,

1:1 Greek *Jesus the Messiah, Son of David and son of Abraham*. 1:3 Greek *Aram*, a variant spelling of Ram; also in 1:4. See 1 Chr 2:9-10. 1:7 Greek *Asaph*, a variant spelling of Asa; also in 1:8. See 1 Chr 3:10. 1:8a Greek *Joram*, a variant spelling of Jehoram; also in 1:8b. See 1 Kgs 22:50 and note at 1 Chr 3:11. 1:8b Or *ancestor*; also in 1:11. 1:10 Greek *Amos*, a variant spelling of Amon; also in 1:10b. See 1 Chr 3:14. 1:11 Greek *Jecaniah*, a variant spelling of Jehoiachin; also in 1:12. See 2 Kgs 24:6 and note at 1 Chr 3:16. 1:19 Greek to *divorce her*. 1:21 *Jesus* means "The Lord saves." 1:23 Isa 7:14; 8:8, 10 (Greek version). 2:1 Or *royal astrologers*; Greek reads *magi*; also in 2:7, 16.

JOSEPH *Matt. 1:18-21* I really respect Joseph. His fiancée was pregnant, though not by him, and he knew exactly what that would mean in the gossip mill of their small hometown. But Joseph was told in a dream, "The child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 1:20). He believed and acted on what he had heard, taking Mary as his wife and walking with her through the following days. How many of us would have the same faith in something God spoke to us?

A VIRGINAL CONCEPTION *Matt. 1:24-25* The Bible does not teach the perpetual virginity of Mary. It simply teaches the virginal conception of Jesus. The terms of pregnancy and the birth were absolutely natural, but the conception—the actual event where Jesus' life was formed in Mary's womb—was miraculous. It was unique to Jesus. Only He is truly human and truly divine.

asking, ²“Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star as it rose,* and we have come to worship him.”

³King Herod was deeply disturbed when he heard this, as was everyone in Jerusalem. ⁴He called a meeting of the leading priests and teachers of religious law and asked, “Where is the Messiah supposed to be born?”

⁵“In Bethlehem in Judea,” they said, “for this is what the prophet wrote:

⁶And you, O Bethlehem in the land of Judah,
are not least among the ruling cities*
of Judah,
for a ruler will come from you
who will be the shepherd for my people
Israel. ⁷”

⁷Then Herod called for a private meeting with the wise men, and he learned from them the time when the star first appeared. ⁸Then he told them, “Go to Bethlehem and search carefully for the child. And when you find him, come back and tell me so that I can go and worship him, too!”

⁹After this interview the wise men went their way. And the star they had seen in the east guided them to Bethlehem. It went ahead of them and stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw the star, they were filled with joy! ¹¹They entered the house and saw the child with his mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasure chests and gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

¹²When it was time to leave, they returned to their own country by another route, for God had warned them in a dream not to return to Herod.

The Escape to Egypt

¹³After the wise men were gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. “Get up! Flee to Egypt with the child and his mother,” the angel said. “Stay there until I tell you to return, because Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.”

¹⁴That night Joseph left for Egypt with the child and Mary, his mother, ¹⁵and they stayed there until Herod’s death. This fulfilled what the Lord had

spoken through the prophet: “I called my Son out of Egypt.”*

¹⁶Herod was furious when he realized that the wise men had outwitted him. He sent soldiers to kill all the boys in and around Bethlehem who were two years old and under, based on the wise men’s report of the star’s first appearance. ¹⁷Herod’s brutal action fulfilled what God had spoken through the prophet Jeremiah:

¹⁸“A cry was heard in Ramah—
weeping and great mourning.
Rachel weeps for her children,
refusing to be comforted,
for they are dead.”*

The Return to Nazareth

¹⁹When Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt. ²⁰“Get up!” the angel said. “Take the child and his mother back to the land of Israel, because those who were trying to kill the child are dead.”

²¹So Joseph got up and returned to the land of Israel with Jesus and his mother. ²²But when he learned that the new ruler of Judea was Herod’s son Archelaus, he was afraid to go there. Then, after being warned in a dream, he left for the region of Galilee. ²³So the family went and lived in a town called Nazareth. This fulfilled what the prophets had said: “He will be called a Nazarene.”

John the Baptist Prepares the Way

3 In those days John the Baptist came to the Judean wilderness and began preaching. His message was, ²“Repent of your sins and turn to God, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near.*” ³The prophet Isaiah was speaking about John when he said,

“He is a voice shouting in the wilderness,
‘Prepare the way for the LORD’s coming!
Clear the road for him!’”*

⁴John’s clothes were woven from coarse camel hair, and he wore a leather belt around his waist. For food he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁵People from Jerusalem and from all of Judea and all over the Jordan Valley went out to see and hear John. ⁶And

2:2 Or star in the east. 2:6a Greek the rulers. 2:6b Mic 5:2; 2 Sam 5:2. 2:15 Hos 11:1. 2:18 Jer 31:15. 3:2 Or has come, or is coming soon. 3:3 Isa 40:3 (Greek version).

COMMITMENT *Matt. 2:9* This is quite a journey the wise men take. Miles and miles separated these men from the little town of Bethlehem. But so convinced were they of the truth of the prophecy and so committed were they to finding the Child that they made this enormous journey all the way across the desert landscape to find Him.

TURN AROUND *Matt. 3:2* What does it mean to repent? What is this biblical concept that we hear so little about in our world? The term literally means “to change one’s mind.” *But wait, you think. That sounds rather*

superficial. If I am going down one road and I decide to take a road going a different direction instead, does that mean I’ve repented? No, it’s not that simple. Repentance involves making a radical decision: You are moving in one direction and then come to terms with the wrongness of that direction, so you decide to turn around and go in the opposite direction. Repentance is a change of thinking that causes a change in direction.

Room for the Unusual

MATTHEW 3:13-17

JOHN HAD A DILEMMA on his hands. He'd been talking a lot about Jesus, explaining that the One coming was greater than he was. He remained adamant that his ministry simply pointed to Jesus. John even went so far as to say he wasn't worthy to carry Jesus' sandals as a slave. Then the Lord showed up and asked to be baptized by John. We can learn at least three things from this unique scene.

First, *sometimes the Lord asks us to do unusual things*. John immediately recognized the unorthodox nature of Jesus' request. Why would the sinless Jesus need to be baptized? Jesus' answer was simple: "It should be done" (Matt. 3:15). Maybe that didn't make sense to John, but Jesus knew that it was right and fitting. He didn't give John a long, theological explanation about the how and why of this act. He simply told John that it should be done.

I find myself reacting with resistance when God leads in unusual ways or directs me into decisions that seem odd. Perhaps you react similarly. But I've learned in my many years of walking with God that I am to submit to such things when they are clearly from Him. At times, He has helped me build a thriving ministry and then said, "Okay, time to go. I want you over here." I have wrestled with Him, protesting, "God, this doesn't make sense!" But, of course, when I have followed Him, He has led me to the next place of service, the exact place where both my family and I have been needed.

If God seems to be leading you into something unusual or in a direction that doesn't make sense, you may find yourself tapping the brakes. You may feel the pressure to know all the whats and whys of your actions. Don't require God to give you a full explanation. If John could be used by the Lord Jesus, who said at that moment, "It should be done," then the same can happen with you. Leave room for the unusual. Let God work. Trust Him completely.

The second thing we can learn from this scene is that *the Lord accomplishes unusual things in the way He knows is best*. He doesn't always accomplish His plans the same way every time—have you noticed? Furthermore, He doesn't work in everybody's life the same way. So my plea here is for tolerance, for breadth, for believing that God may lead someone else in an altogether different manner than He's led you. When He leads us, He does it *His way*.

Third, *when we are obedient, we become intimately linked with God in a work of righteousness*. I'm impressed that when Jesus said this to John, John immediately yielded. "So," the text says, "John agreed to baptize him" (Matt. 3:15). John permitted Jesus to have His way, and a moment later, the heavens opened and God reached down and said about Jesus, "This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy" (Matt. 3:17).

Could it be that the unusual nature of God's leading has caused you to be resistant and reluctant? My plea is that you will be like John, who—after a little initial resistance—simply did as Jesus said. God knows what He's doing with your life. Don't panic. You need only to trust and follow Him.

I find myself reacting with resistance when God leads in unusual ways or directs me into decisions that seem odd.

when they confessed their sins, he baptized them in the Jordan River.

⁷But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming to watch him baptize,* he denounced them. “You brood of snakes!” he exclaimed. “Who warned you to flee the coming wrath? ⁸Prove by the way you live that you have repented of your sins and turned to God. ⁹Don’t just say to each other, ‘We’re safe, for we are descendants of Abraham.’ That means nothing, for I tell you, God can create children of Abraham from these very stones. ¹⁰Even now the ax of God’s judgment is poised, ready to sever the roots of the trees. Yes, every tree that does not produce good fruit will be chopped down and thrown into the fire.

¹¹“I baptize with* water those who repent of their sins and turn to God. But someone is coming soon who is greater than I am—so much greater that I’m not worthy even to be his slave and carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.* ¹²He is ready to separate the chaff from the wheat with his winnowing fork. Then he will clean up the threshing area, gathering the wheat into his barn but burning the chaff with never-ending fire.”

The Baptism of Jesus

¹³Then Jesus went from Galilee to the Jordan River to be baptized by John. ¹⁴But John tried to talk him out of it. “I am the one who needs to be baptized by you,” he said, “so why are you coming to me?”

¹⁵But Jesus said, “It should be done, for we must carry out all that God requires.*” So John agreed to baptize him.

¹⁶After his baptism, as Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens were opened* and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and settling on him. ¹⁷And a voice from heaven said, “This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy.”

The Temptation of Jesus

4 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted there by the devil. ²For forty days and forty nights he fasted and became very hungry.

³During that time the devil* came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become loaves of bread.”

⁴But Jesus told him, “No! The Scriptures say,

‘People do not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth
of God.’*”

⁵Then the devil took him to the holy city, Jerusalem, to the highest point of the Temple, ⁶and said, “If you are the Son of God, jump off! For the Scriptures say,

‘He will order his angels to protect you.
And they will hold you up with their hands
so you won’t even hurt your foot on a stone.’*”

⁷Jesus responded, “The Scriptures also say, ‘You must not test the LORD your God.’*”

⁸Next the devil took him to the peak of a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. ⁹“I will give it all to you,” he said, “if you will kneel down and worship me.”

¹⁰“Get out of here, Satan,” Jesus told him. “For the Scriptures say,

‘You must worship the LORD your God
and serve only him.’*”

¹¹Then the devil went away, and angels came and took care of Jesus.

The Ministry of Jesus Begins

¹²When Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he left Judea and returned to Galilee. ¹³He went first to Nazareth, then left there and moved to Capernaum,

3:7 Or coming to be baptized. 3:11a Or in. 3:11b Or in the Holy Spirit and in fire. 3:15 Or for we must fulfill all righteousness. 3:16 Some manuscripts read opened to him. 4:3 Greek the tempter. 4:4 Deut 8:3. 4:6 Ps 91:11-12. 4:7 Deut 6:16. 4:10 Deut 6:13.

EXPECT, DETECT, REJECT *Matt. 4:1-11* Let me suggest three very practical thoughts on handling temptation.

First, *don't be alarmed—expect it.* Temptations start inner battles in the realm of the mind. They attack you in the deep recesses of your brain, in what Scripture calls your “heart.”

Second, *don't be blind—detect it.* Call temptation what it is. The adversary has innumerable methods of attack, and usually they are not overt. They're insidious and clever. The enemy knows exactly where he can wiggle in and win your attention. Be ready to detect temptation.

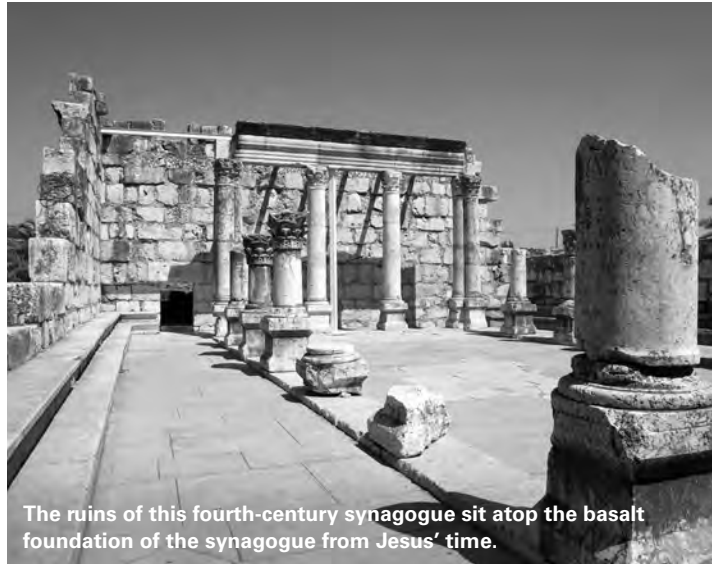
Third, *don't be clever—reject it.* Sometimes we roll up our sleeves and say, “Come on, devil. I'll take you on.” There's a great name for people like that: victims. The enemy would love to get you in a debate, in a sparring match. Resist him.

TEMPTED IN OUR STRENGTHS *Matt. 4:3-4* Most of us are tempted not only in the areas of our weaknesses but also—sometimes more often—in the areas of our strengths. Each of us has gifts in certain areas. We may not have the ability to turn stone into bread, but perhaps we do have the gift of turning words into pictures, of persuading, of teaching, of entertaining. Before we know it, we may be tempted to sell ourselves short on lower goals and objectives than God has for us. Resist that temptation! Let's use our gifts to glorify the Giver.

CAPERNAUM

Jesus' Adopted
Hometown

MATTHEW 4



The ruins of this fourth-century synagogue sit atop the basalt foundation of the synagogue from Jesus' time.

THE SITE OF CAPERNAUM contains a trove of archaeological treasures, including a millstone for grinding wheat, a second-century Roman mile marker, numerous marble capitals that once graced now-forgotten columns, Jewish carvings that used to adorn limestone reliefs, and a bas-relief of a seven-branch menorah. Perhaps the greatest find in Capernaum is an ancient synagogue made of white marble that dates back to the fourth century AD. Although the ruins date later than the time of Christ, they rest on top of the thick, black basalt foundation of the synagogue of Jesus' day. A number of historical and biblical events occurred here (see, for example, Mark 1:21-27 and John 6:35-59).

Immediately outside the synagogue, a unique building is raised over more basalt ruins. This modern structure is a church that stands above the remains of two ancient churches from the fourth and fifth centuries. These churches hallowed the ruins of a first-century home. Only one Capernaum home rises from the pages of Scripture—that of Simon Peter (Mark 1:29-35).

After Jesus left His hometown of Nazareth, He moved His base of ministry to Capernaum, beside the Sea of Galilee. This move fulfilled what the prophet Isaiah had predicted centuries earlier (Isa. 9:1-2; Matt. 4:14-16). Already having been in existence for two hundred years, Capernaum thrived as a first-century fishing village. It also served as a stop along the vast international highway that stretched from Syria in the north to Egypt in the south. This road ran the full length of Israel and also served as a first-century line of communication. In a single day, news could travel twenty miles along this route in both directions. Over several days, crowds in the multiple thousands could come to see the One they hoped would be the Messiah (Matt. 4:24-25). A simple move from Nazareth to Capernaum increased Jesus' visibility and gave His ministry a strategic edge.

beside the Sea of Galilee, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali. ¹⁴This fulfilled what God said through the prophet Isaiah:

¹⁵ “In the land of Zebulun and of Naphtali,
beside the sea, beyond the Jordan River,
in Galilee where so many Gentiles live,
¹⁶ the people who sat in darkness
have seen a great light.
And for those who lived in the land where death
casts its shadow,
a light has shined.”*

¹⁷From then on Jesus began to preach, “Repent of your sins and turn to God, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near.”*

The First Disciples

¹⁸One day as Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers—Simon, also called Peter, and Andrew—throwing a net into the water, for they fished for a living. ¹⁹Jesus called out to them, “Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!” ²⁰And they left their nets at once and followed him.

²¹A little farther up the shore he saw two other brothers, James and John, sitting in a boat with their father, Zebedee, repairing their nets. And he called them to come, too. ²²They immediately followed him, leaving the boat and their father behind.

Crowds Follow Jesus

²³Jesus traveled throughout the region of Galilee, teaching in the synagogues and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom. And he healed every kind of disease and illness. ²⁴News about him spread as far as Syria, and people soon began bringing to him all who were sick. And whatever their sickness or disease, or if they were demon possessed or epileptic or paralyzed—he healed them all. ²⁵Large crowds followed him wherever he went—people from Galilee, the Ten Towns,* Jerusalem, from all over Judea, and from east of the Jordan River.

The Sermon on the Mount

5 One day as he saw the crowds gathering, Jesus went up on the mountainside and sat down. His disciples gathered around him, ²and he began to teach them.

The Beatitudes

- ³ “God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for him,*
for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.
⁴ God blesses those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.
⁵ God blesses those who are humble,
for they will inherit the whole earth.
⁶ God blesses those who hunger and thirst for justice,*
for they will be satisfied.
⁷ God blesses those who are merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.
⁸ God blesses those whose hearts are pure,
for they will see God.
⁹ God blesses those who work for peace,
for they will be called the children of God.
¹⁰ God blesses those who are persecuted for doing right,
for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

¹¹“God blesses you when people mock you and persecute you and lie about you and say all sorts of evil things against you because you are my followers. ¹²Be happy about it! Be very glad! For a great reward awaits you in heaven. And remember, the ancient prophets were persecuted in the same way.

Teaching about Salt and Light

¹³“You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor? Can you make it salty again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless.

¹⁴“You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. ¹⁵No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone

4:15-16 Isa 9:1-2 (Greek version). 4:17 Or *has come, or is coming soon*. 4:25 Greek *Decapolis*. 5:3 Greek *poor in spirit*. 5:6 Or *for righteousness*.

DON'T HOARD *Matt. 4:18-20* The constant thrust of Jesus' work of discipling those who followed Him was, “Don't take this and hoard it. Take this and share it. Build it into the lives of others, who can in turn share it and build it into the lives of others.” Multiplication is to be carried on in the Christian life. When Jesus called His first disciples, He said, “Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!” (Matt. 4:19).

Basically, He was saying, “Right now you're fishing for fish. In following Me, you will have a mission that is much deeper and broader than catching fish: You'll be fishing for people. I want you to learn the techniques involved in catching people for the Kingdom of God.”

THE BE-ATTITUDES *Matt. 5:1-10* I notice something about all eight Beatitudes: They are character traits that mark an authentic servant of God. They are not unattainable goals. They are attainable experiences that begin as attitudes. Each attitude is a step on the road to happiness, and each has a corresponding promise connected to it. Jesus is explaining, “This is the way to satisfaction and contentment. It begins with these attitudes.”

Salt and Light

MATTHEW 5:13-16

SHAKE THE SALT. Shine the light. You know what I'm describing? Lifestyle evangelism, summarized in this sermon from Jesus. I'm not talking about giving a really "Christian" Christmas card to a neighbor you haven't talked with for two years. That likely won't accomplish anything. I'm talking about being salt and light in the world.

How do you go about this? Here are four simple suggestions.

First, *live right and start praying*. These two go together. Each of us lives in a neighborhood or a community. Each of us works or lives around people who are lost. Each of us is engaged in activities alongside lost people. Live right and start praying. When you pray, think outside the box. You're not just praying for another person. You're praying that you will have the opportunity to strike a match where there's only darkness or to shake some salt on a life that has become bland.

Second, *care about and reach out*. Start simply by being friendly. You might practice smiling regularly. People are drawn to those who smile. It is amazing! I've had the most fantastic conversations in grocery stores that have started just because I'm smiling. One day I had a lady ask me, "What have you done?"

I said, "I've done a lot of things."

She said, "No, I mean today. I mean, like, right now. Why are you smiling like that?"

"It's just the way I am," I answered.

She wanted to know how I could possibly be so happy. At that moment I could have pulled her aside because of the smile and talked to her directly about things that matter. I did not have the opportunity at that moment, but there's still a lesson in this. People will wonder how we can be happy in this difficult world. Then that will give us the opportunity to tell them that Jesus makes us smile. Jesus gives us a reason to be happy. Jesus makes life not just worth surviving but worth *living*.

Third, *be available and listen*. Listen, for a change. Don't do all the talking. When you're available—when people know you will listen—they will tell you their needs, their worries, their concerns. They will share their hearts with you. Care enough to enter into where they are. Laugh with them, cry with them, sigh with them. Tell them you care. You may not have the answers and you may not be able to solve their problems, but you can do a lot for people just by being available and listening.

Fourth, *share your faith openly and follow through*. Be ready. When the opportunity is right, when you sense that the Spirit is guiding you to share your faith, don't hold back. As Peter says, "If someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it" (1 Pet. 3:15).

When you're willing to be salt and light in the world, you cultivate in people an appetite for God—or at least a curiosity. You become a phenomenon to them because you live in the same world they do yet live with a totally different attitude. It makes them wonder what gives you that kind of joy. Trust me—people will ask, and they will listen. Be ready to tell them the answer: It's the Good News about Jesus Christ.

When you're willing to be salt and light in the world, you cultivate in people an appetite for God.

in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.

Teaching about the Law

¹⁷“Don’t misunderstand why I have come. I did not come to abolish the law of Moses or the writings of the prophets. No, I came to accomplish their purpose. ¹⁸I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not even the smallest detail of God’s law will disappear until its purpose is achieved. ¹⁹So if you ignore the least commandment and teach others to do the same, you will be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But anyone who obeys God’s laws and teaches them will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven.

²⁰“But I warn you—unless your righteousness is better than the righteousness of the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven!

Teaching about Anger

²¹“You have heard that our ancestors were told, ‘You must not murder. If you commit murder, you are subject to judgment.’* ²²But I say, if you are even angry with someone,* you are subject to judgment! If you call someone an idiot,* you are in danger of being brought before the court. And if you curse someone,* you are in danger of the fires of hell.*

²³“So if you are presenting a sacrifice* at the altar in the Temple and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you, ²⁴leave your sacrifice there at the altar. Go and be reconciled to that person. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God.

²⁵“When you are on the way to court with your adversary, settle your differences quickly. Otherwise, your accuser may hand you over to the judge, who will hand you over to an officer, and you will be thrown into prison. ²⁶And if that happens, you surely won’t be free again until you have paid the last penny.*

Teaching about Adultery

²⁷“You have heard the commandment that says, ‘You must not commit adultery.’* ²⁸But I say, anyone who even looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. ²⁹So if your eye—even your good eye*—causes you to lust, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. ³⁰And if your hand—even your stronger hand*—causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.

Teaching about Divorce

³¹“You have heard the law that says, ‘A man can divorce his wife by merely giving her a written notice of divorce.’* ³²But I say that a man who divorces his

wife, unless she has been unfaithful, causes her to commit adultery. And anyone who marries a divorced woman also commits adultery.

Teaching about Vows

³³“You have also heard that our ancestors were told, ‘You must not break your vows; you must carry out the vows you make to the LORD.’* ³⁴But I say, do not make any vows! Do not say, ‘By heaven!’ because heaven is God’s throne. ³⁵And do not say, ‘By the earth!’ because the earth is his footstool. And do not say, ‘By Jerusalem!’ for Jerusalem is the city of the great King. ³⁶Do not even say, ‘By my head!’ for you can’t turn one hair white or black. ³⁷Just say a simple, ‘Yes, I will,’ or ‘No, I won’t.’ Anything beyond this is from the evil one.

Teaching about Revenge

³⁸“You have heard the law that says the punishment must match the injury: ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.’* ³⁹But I say, do not resist an evil person! If someone slaps you on the right cheek, offer the other cheek also. ⁴⁰If you are sued in court and your shirt is taken from you, give your coat, too. ⁴¹If a soldier demands that you carry his gear for a mile,* carry it two miles. ⁴²Give to those who ask, and don’t turn away from those who want to borrow.

Teaching about Love for Enemies

⁴³“You have heard the law that says, ‘Love your neighbor’* and hate your enemy. ⁴⁴But I say, love your enemies!* Pray for those who persecute you! ⁴⁵In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven. For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the just and the unjust alike. ⁴⁶If you love only those who love you, what reward is there for that? Even corrupt tax collectors do that much. ⁴⁷If you are kind only to your friends,* how are you different from anyone else? Even pagans do that. ⁴⁸But you are to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.

Teaching about Giving to the Needy

6 “Watch out! Don’t do your good deeds publicly, to be admired by others, for you will lose the reward from your Father in heaven. ²When you give to someone in need, don’t do as the hypocrites do—blowing trumpets in the synagogues and streets to call attention to their acts of charity! I tell you the truth, they have received all the reward they will ever get. ³But when you give to someone in need, don’t let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. ⁴Give your gifts in private, and your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.

Teaching about Prayer and Fasting

⁵“When you pray, don’t be like the hypocrites who love to pray publicly on street corners and in the

5:21 Exod 20:13; Deut 5:17. 5:22a Some manuscripts add *without cause*. 5:22b Greek uses an Aramaic term of contempt: *If you say to your brother, ‘Raca.’* 5:22c Greek *if you say, ‘You fool.’* 5:22d Greek *Gehenna*; also in 5:29, 30. 5:23 Greek *gift*; also in 5:24. 5:26 Greek *the last kodrantes* (i.e., quadrans). 5:27 Exod 20:14; Deut 5:18. 5:29 Greek *your right eye*. 5:30 Greek *your right hand*. 5:31 Deut 24:1. 5:33 Num 30:2. 5:38 Greek *the law that says: ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’* Exod 21:24; Lev 24:20; Deut 19:21. 5:41 Greek *million* (4,854 feet or 1,478 meters). 5:43 Lev 19:18. 5:44 Some manuscripts add *Bless those who curse you. Do good to those who hate you*. Compare Luke 6:27–28. 5:47 Greek *your brothers*.

Searching the Scriptures

In my years of teaching and preaching the Word of God, I've encountered many followers of Jesus who express frustration and confusion about how to study the Bible: "It's long." "It's confusing." "I can't get through Leviticus." These frustrations are real, and they aren't easy to overcome without some guidance from wise mentors. Therefore, here I will share with you my time-tested method for studying the Bible. I learned this method from Dr. Howard G. Hendricks, one of my favorite professors during my time at Dallas Theological Seminary.

Once I learned Professor Hendricks's Bible study method, I began to realize how incomplete and inadequate my approach to the Scriptures had been for most of my life. Though I had slowly grown in my knowledge of God's Word prior to taking his class, I didn't have a consistent method of studying the Bible's truths and interpreting them—one that would lead to insightful and accurate applications of the Scriptures. While I had been sincere and committed during those earlier years, my method had lacked a systematic, trustworthy approach.

Thanks to what I learned in this magnificent course of study from "Prof" Hendricks, I finally discovered how to engage in a meaningful and reliable process of searching the Scriptures. I want to share it with you now.

Before Getting Started

Fruitful Bible study requires a good plan, but there are some things you need to get started—you need a few simple tools, and you need a particular condition of the heart. First and foremost, in order for you to do your own work in the Scriptures, it's essential to consider the crucial matters of the heart. In order to understand the Scriptures, you must know the Lord and be walking the path of daily purity and humility. Integrity and purity go hand in hand. You also need willingness—a personal desire to follow the Lord.

I can tell you from my experience over these many years that when I open the Scriptures I can't wait to get into them, because I have cultivated a willingness to allow the Word of God to get into me! Another essential for studying the Scriptures is passion. When you become motivated to study God's Word, such excitement becomes contagious and begins to rub off on others. You and I are to go after truth the way someone in love pursues his or her beloved. Another thing you need to do is set aside time specifically for studying the things of God. It takes time to pray, meditate, and turn thoughts over in your mind. These aren't things that happen overnight. You'll need to invest time in order to make them happen.

Having addressed those conditions of the heart—integrity, willingness, passion, and time—you'll also need some tools. First of all, you'll need a Bible—specifically, a Bible that is in a translation you can understand. You'll also need a concordance, an alphabetical listing of the primary words in the Bible, so that you can more easily

find what the Bible says about whatever topic or subject you're studying. Some people like to use websites or Bible software programs that allow you to search the Bible in almost any translation. While those are extremely useful tools in their own right, I have found that they are not good substitutes for a paper concordance tied to the translation you are using. Seeing everything arranged on the page can even help you notice other related words you might not have thought to search for in a software program. Additionally, a necessary resource for studying the Bible is a Bible dictionary. A good Bible dictionary will give you basic knowledge of the literary and cultural backgrounds of the Bible through numerous articles written by fine scholars. Finally, you will need a good set of maps in order to have a handle on what the world looked like during the various periods of history the Bible covers. With these things, your basic tool set will be complete.

The Basics of Studying the Bible

My method of studying the Bible has four main steps:

1. Observation
2. Interpretation
3. Correlation
4. Application

I suggest that you memorize these steps. The more you practice them as you read and study, the more they will become second nature for you. You want learning and engaging with the Bible to become as natural as breathing in and out so that God's Word becomes part of you and changes you. The Bible wasn't given simply to satisfy idle curiosity. The Bible wasn't written so ministers would have something to say on Sundays. The Bible has been preserved to transform the lives of people like you and me. So let's dive in and start studying.

Observation

To observe means to look at Scripture carefully and with attention to detail.

Carefully observing the text is always the first step of studying the Scriptures. Initially, pay attention to the terms. Slow down, read carefully, and note significant words or phrases. Don't think about how much time this takes—focus on one word at a time and read the passage as if for the first time. Give your full attention to each word.

As important as word study is, you must always keep in mind that you understand a verse of Scripture better when you grasp its context—when you acquaint yourself with the surrounding verses. Every verse sits within a larger context. Let me remind you of an important rule of Bible interpretation: Never isolate a verse from its context. Seizing isolated verses without having a bigger view of how they fit in with the rest of the passage or book leads to error. As you take notice of how a book is conveying its author's ideas, take in the flow of the sentences and the logic of the passage.

After spending time observing, write down in your own words a summary of all you have observed from the passage. As I observe more and more details, I pause

and allow my imagination to run freely. Perhaps you can try to picture the scene as it would have been experienced by the people who appear in it, or imagine the thoughts and feelings that would have been going through the minds of the original recipients of a letter.

Remember, we have an infinite text! The Bible's depths are unfathomable. Its truths are beyond measurement. You could take a verse or section of Scripture and keep yourself busy for hours. How? By digging into the words, observing the context, and examining the details in order to see how they relate to each other.

Interpretation

Interpretation is, very simply, coming to an understanding of what the Bible means.

Whether reading a novel, a magazine article, a verse of Scripture, an e-mail message, or a note from a friend, we must embrace interpretation in order to grasp meaning. Interpretation is the attempt to understand what the text means after we've gathered observations about it.

As you dig in and discover the truths of Scripture on your own, you will realize that biblical interpretation is both a science and an art. It's a science because it's guided by rules that form a system. But it's also an art—it requires Spirit-directed skill to follow those rules as you interpret the Bible. This might sound simple until you actually start digging into the Bible on your own.

In our modern context, we're faced with a couple of barriers to accurate interpretation of the Bible: a language barrier and a cultural barrier. We live in a time in church history with many faithful and readable translations of the Bible available, like the one you're now holding, to help us get past the language barrier. We are also blessed with a plethora of good commentaries and Bible dictionaries to help us understand the cultures and societies of the Bible and to take them into account when we interpret. Avail yourself of these tools as you study and interpret the Bible. They will help you immensely as you work to overcome the barriers of language and culture.

Interpreting the Bible accurately builds on top of the foundation laid by your observations of the text. Once you have a feel for what the passage you're studying is saying, examine the broader context. If you're focusing on a few verses, see how they fit in the structure of the whole book. Pay attention to genre, too. Part of interpretation hinges on the type of literature and what it communicates. Your Bible dictionary and the book introduction in this study Bible will help you learn more about the genre of the book you are studying. Read them! Dig into the cultural context, too. Understanding the mind-set of an ancient Near Eastern patriarch or a first-century Greek slave will help you better understand what a given author means. In your Bible dictionary, look up any word or topic that seems like it might be relevant to the passage you are studying. You'll learn a lot that will help you understand the Bible with more clarity. Even if what you learn doesn't immediately seem helpful to understanding your passage, don't be discouraged. Remember, you are on a path of lifetime learning about the Bible.

Correlation

Correlation amplifies our understanding of what the Bible is teaching. When you compare one Scripture with other Scriptures, precept upon precept and line upon line, the whole truth begins to emerge.

The most reliable students of the Bible are those who take the time to compare one Scripture with others. This discipline guards against error as you seek to gain a more thorough understanding of the truth. If you read a verse or passage of Scripture in isolation, without looking for other places where the Scriptures speak on the same issue or topic from different angles, you don't get the whole picture. At best, you will miss the full counsel of God on a topic. At worst, you can seriously misconstrue God's truth.

You can compare Scriptures by seeking out particular words or key phrases throughout the Bible. Searching for a key phrase is a great way to use Bible software tools, since your paper concordance is limited to organizing verses only around single words. No matter which method you use to find related verses, make sure that you are taking care to read the context, too. Don't simply rely on the snippet of the verse you might see in your concordance or search results. Flip to the passage in your Bible and do some basic observation and interpretation to make sure you understand what each passage is saying about your topic.

There are at least four major benefits to correlating Scripture with Scripture:

1. Correlation gives us clear discernment instead of vague opinions.
2. Correlation deepens our understanding of God, His character, and His will.
3. Correlation helps us cultivate a reasonable and balanced faith.
4. Correlation enables us to separate truth from error quickly.

Application

Application is allowing the truths of God's Word to grip us in areas that need attention and to call us to action.

Application is taking God's Word personally. It is seeing how it addresses specific areas of our everyday lives. It isn't just taking the time and effort to understand what the Scriptures are calling us to do in our lives today—it is doing this and then actually taking steps to live it out. In the simplest terms, application is obedience in action.

There are at least three reasons why personal application is important:

1. We need to practice what we say we believe.
2. Both the Old and the New Testaments exhort us to do this. We need to apply the commands of Scripture so we become obedient followers of Christ.
3. Application enables us to operate in the power of the Holy Spirit. When we apply truth personally, it also serves as a reminder that no matter where we find ourselves, including the most remote island in the sea, God is already there, awaiting our arrival.

2. Interpret: Now that you have your observations about Philippians 4:4-9, it's time to interpret this passage.

Read Philippians in its entirety (it probably won't take you more than fifteen or twenty minutes).

Review Philippians 1:1-30 to get some of the context in which Paul wrote this letter.

In spite of Paul's imprisonment, what did he command the young church in the city of Philippi to do in Philippians 4:4-9? Why?

Don't forget to consult resources! Read the Introduction to Philippians starting on page 1485 of this Bible, and pull out your Bible dictionary. Try looking up *Philippians*, *Paul*, *prison*, *joy*, or anything else you think might help you dig deeper into the meaning of this passage. Write down some of what you learn that you think might be significant:

3. Correlate: It's time to correlate Paul's teaching with other key passages that will help you understand what Paul means.

Carefully read Matthew 6:5-7, James 4:3, and Psalm 66:18, and observe what they say.

Use your concordance (or the NLT Dictionary/Concordance in this Bible beginning on page 1777) and find other passages that may be relevant. Look carefully at our passage in Philippians and identify key words you might want to try looking up. Don't forget to read the other verses in context! Write important findings below:

Verse: _____ Correlation: _____

Verse: _____ Correlation: _____

Verse: _____ Correlation: _____

Verse: _____ Correlation: _____

Verse: _____ Correlation: _____

Verse: _____ Correlation: _____

Verse: _____ Correlation: _____

How do these passages help us gain a broader understanding of Paul's statement about prayer in Philippians 4:4-9?

4. Apply: Review your study of Philippians 4:4-9, and then come up with three appropriate applications from this passage. How do the apostle Paul's commands play out in your own life, and how do you plan to implement them?

Bible Reading Plans

Most Christians understand that it is important to be reading the Bible regularly in order to continually grow more and more like Christ, but many often find it difficult to read it consistently. A proven method to help keep you on track is a well-made Bible reading plan.

Insight for Living Ministries has produced two great reading plans that will help you consistently read Scripture. Each of these plans is designed to last for an entire year, providing fifty-two weeks of readings with five readings per week. One plan will help you complete the entire Old Testament, and the other will get you through the New Testament along with Psalms and Proverbs. If you follow them both, you will read the entire Bible—including all of the Psalms and Proverbs twice!

Old Testament Reading Plan

WEEK ONE	WEEK TWO	WEEK THREE	WEEK FOUR
<input type="checkbox"/> Monday <i>Genesis 1–3</i> <i>Psalms 1</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Monday <i>Genesis 18–20</i> <i>Psalms 6</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Monday <i>Genesis 34–36</i> <i>Psalms 11</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Monday <i>Genesis 48–50</i> <i>Psalms 16</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Tuesday <i>Genesis 4–8</i> <i>Psalms 2</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Tuesday <i>Genesis 21–23</i> <i>Psalms 7</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Tuesday <i>Genesis 37–39</i> <i>Psalms 12</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Tuesday <i>Exodus 1–3</i> <i>Psalms 17</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Wednesday <i>Genesis 9–11</i> <i>Psalms 3</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Wednesday <i>Genesis 24–26</i> <i>Psalms 8</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Wednesday <i>Genesis 40–42</i> <i>Psalms 13</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Wednesday <i>Exodus 4–6</i> <i>Psalms 18:1–19</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Thursday <i>Genesis 12–14</i> <i>Psalms 4</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Thursday <i>Genesis 27–29</i> <i>Psalms 9</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Thursday <i>Genesis 43–45</i> <i>Psalms 14</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Thursday <i>Exodus 7–9</i> <i>Psalms 18:20–36</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Friday <i>Genesis 15–17</i> <i>Psalms 5</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Friday <i>Genesis 30–33</i> <i>Psalms 10</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Friday <i>Genesis 46–47</i> <i>Psalms 15</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Friday <i>Exodus 10–12</i> <i>Psalms 18:37–50</i>

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NLT Dictionary/Concordance

A

AARON

First high priest of Israel; elder brother and spokesman of Moses (Exod 4:14-31; 7:1-2); confronted Pharaoh with Moses (Exod 5–12); held up Moses' hands during battle (Exod 17:8-15); led Israel while Moses was absent (Exod 24:14); priestly clothing and accessories (Exod 28); his ordination (Exod 29; Lev 8); his failure with the gold calf (Exod 32; Acts 7:40); spoke against Moses, then interceded on behalf of sister, Miriam (Num 12:1-16); helped stop the plague (Num 16:45-48); priesthood confirmed (Num 17; Heb 5:1-4); failed at Meribah and was denied entry to Promised Land (Num 20:1-13); died (Num 20:22-29; 33:38-39).

ABANDON, ABANDONED, ABANDONS (v)

to desert or forsake

Josh 1:5 . . . will not fail you or **a** you.
Josh 24:16 . . . We would never **a** the LORD
Ezra 9:9 . . . God did not **a** us in our slavery.
Neh 9:31 . . . completely or **a** them forever.
Ps 22:1 . . . why have you **a-ed** me?
Ps 37:25 . . . never seen the godly **a-ed**
Ps 37:28 . . . he will never **a** the godly.
Prov 15:10 . . . Whoever **a-s** the right path
Matt 27:46 . . . why have you **a-ed** me?
John 16:1 . . . you won't **a** your faith.
Rom 1:24 . . . So God **a-ed** them to do
Rom 1:28 . . . **a-ed** them to their foolish
2 Cor 4:9 . . . down, but never **a-ed** by God.
Heb 13:5 . . . I will never **a** you.

ABASED (KJV)

Ezek 21:26 . . . mighty will be *brought down*.
Matt 23:12 . . . themselves will be *humbled*
Phil 4:12 . . . how to *live on almost nothing*

ABEL

Son of Adam and Eve, brother of Cain (Gen 4:1-2); his offering accepted (Gen 4:4; Heb 11:4); murdered by Cain (Gen 4:8; Matt 23:35; Luke 11:51; Heb 12:24; 1 Jn 3:11-12; Jude 1:11); replaced by Seth (Gen 4:25).

ABIDE(TH), ABIDING (KJV)

Luke 2:8 . . . shepherds *staying* in the fields
John 12:46 . . . no longer *remain* in the dark
John 15:4 . . . be fruitful unless you *remain*

ABILITY, ABILITIES (n)

talent, aptitude, or skill
Exod 35:34 . . . the **a** to teach their skills
Dan 6:3 . . . because of Daniel's great **a**,
Acts 2:4 . . . Spirit gave them this **a**.
1 Cor 12:1 . . . special **a-ies** the Spirit gives
1 Cor 14:1 . . . special **a-ies** the Spirit gives—
1 Cor 14:12 . . . special **a-ies** the Spirit gives,
2 Cor 1:8 . . . beyond our **a** to endure,

ABLE (adj)

marked by power, intelligence, competence, skill, giftedness

Deut 16:17 . . . must give as they are **a**,
Dan 3:17 . . . whom we serve is **a** to save
Rom 8:39 . . . ever be **a** to separate us from
Rom 16:25 . . . to God, who is **a** to
Eph 3:20 . . . all glory to God, who is **a**,
Eph 6:13 . . . you will be **a** to resist
2 Tim 1:12 . . . that he is **a** to guard
2 Tim 2:24 . . . be **a** to teach, and
Jude 1:24 . . . to God, who is **a** to keep

ABOUND(ED) (KJV)

Prov 28:20 . . . person will *get a rich reward*
Matt 24:12 . . . Sin will *be rampant everywhere*
Rom 5:15 . . . *even greater* is God's wonderful grace
Rom 5:20 . . . grace *became more abundant*
2 Cor 8:7 . . . *excel* also in this gracious act

ABRAHAM (ABRAM)

Father of the nation of Israel (Isa 51:2; John 8:37-59); friend of God (Isa 41:8); father of all people of faith (Gen 12–25; Rom 4; Heb 11); made covenant with the LORD (Gen 12:1-3; 13:14-17; 15:12-21; 22:15-18; 50:24; Exod 2:24; 32:13; Lev 26:42; 2 Kgs 13:23; 1 Chr 16:16; Neh 9:8; Ps 105:9; Luke 1:73; Acts 3:25; Gal 3:17-20; Heb 6:13); descendant of Terah from Ur (Gen 11:27-31); husband of Sarah (Sarai) (Gen 11:29); called to leave home (Gen 12:1-9; Acts 7:2-4; Heb 11:8-10); went to Egypt and deceived the Pharaoh (Gen 12:10-20); chose Canaan over the Jordan Plain (Gen 13); rescued Lot from enemies (Gen 14:11-16); blessed by Melchizedek (Gen 14:18-24; Heb 7:1); covenant restated by God (Gen 15); faith counted as righteousness (Gen 15:6; Rom 4:3; Gal 3:6-9; Jas 2:21-23); given son (Ishmael) by Hagar (Gen 16); circumcision commanded (Gen 17; Rom 4:9-12); name changed to "Abraham" (Gen 17:5; Neh 9:7); son promised to Sarah (Gen 17:16; 18:10); welcomed heavenly visitor (Gen 18:1-15); bargained to save Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 18:16-33); deceived Abimelech (Gen 20); named as a prophet (Gen 20:7); given son (Isaac) by Sarah (Gen 21:1-7; Heb 11:11-12); sent Hagar and Ishmael away (Gen 21:9-14; Gal 4:21-31); offered Isaac as test (Gen 22:1-19; Heb 11:17-19; Jas 2:21); secured burial ground for Sarah (Gen 23); found a wife for Isaac (Gen 24); descendants through wife Keturah (Gen 25:1-6); died (Gen 25:7-11).

ABUNDANCE (n)

great quantity, affluence; more than ample
Job 36:31 . . . giving them food in **a**.
Ps 66:12 . . . a place of great **a**.
Jer 31:14 . . . The priests will enjoy **a**,
Matt 13:12 . . . have an **a** of knowledge.
Matt 25:29 . . . they will have an **a**.
John 1:16 . . . From his **a** we have all

ABUNDANT (adj)

marked by great plenty, abounding
Deut 28:11 . . . livestock, and **a** crops.

Ps 68:9 . . . You sent **a** rain, O God
 Jer 31:12 . . . good gifts—the **a** crops
 John 16:24 . . . you will have **a** joy.
 2 Cor 8:2 . . . are also filled with **a** joy,

ABUSIVE (adj)

using harsh, insulting language; characterized by wrong or improper use or action
 1 Cor 5:11 . . . worships idols, or is **a**,
 1 Cor 6:10 . . . drunkards, or are **a**, or
 Eph 4:29 . . . use foul or **a** language.

ABYSS (KJV)

Luke 8:31 . . . send them into the *bottomless pit*
 Rev 9:1 . . . the shaft of the *bottomless pit*
 Rev 9:11 . . . the angel from the *bottomless pit*

ACCEPT, ACCEPTED, ACCEPTS (v)

to receive willingly
 Gen 4:4 . . . The LORD **a-ed** Abel
 Gen 4:7 . . . be **a-ed** if you do what is right.
 Deut 16:19 . . . Never **a** a bribe, for bribes
 Job 42:8 . . . I will **a** his prayer
 Job 42:9 . . . the LORD **a-ed** Job's prayer.
 Eccl 5:18 . . . to **a** their lot in life.
 Luke 4:24 . . . no prophet is **a-ed** in his
 Luke 10:16 . . . who **a-s** your message
 John 1:12 . . . believed him and **a-ed** him,
 John 17:8 . . . They **a-ed** it and know that
 Rom 11:12 . . . when they finally **a** it.
 Gal 2:9 . . . they **a-ed** Barnabas and me
 Col 2:6 . . . just as you **a-ed** Christ Jesus
 1 Tim 1:15 . . . everyone should **a** it:
 1 Tim 4:9 . . . everyone should **a** it.
 Jas 1:21 . . . **a** the word God has planted

ACCEPTABLE (adj)

capable or worthy of being accepted; welcome, pleasing, favorable
 Mark 7:19 . . . every kind of food is **a**
 Rom 4:2 . . . had made him **a** to God,
 Rom 12:1 . . . the kind he will find **a**.
 Rom 14:20 . . . all foods are **a**, but it is
 2 Cor 8:12 . . . is **a** if you give it eagerly.
 1 Tim 4:5 . . . made **a** by the word of God

ACCURSED (KJV)

Deut 21:23 . . . anyone who is hung is *curse*d
 Josh 6:18 . . . things *set apart for destruction*
 1 Cor 12:3 . . . will *curse* Jesus, and no one
 Gal 1:9 . . . let that person be *curse*d

ACCUSE, ACCUSED, ACCUSES, ACCUSING (v)

to charge with fault or offense; to blame
 Job 22:4 . . . **a-s** you and brings judgment
 Ps 27:12 . . . For they **a** me of things
 Dan 6:5 . . . grounds for **a-ing** Daniel
 Luke 23:14 . . . **a-ing** him of leading a revolt.
 John 5:45 . . . it isn't I who will **a**
 John 7:7 . . . because I **a** it of doing evil.
 John 8:46 . . . can truthfully **a** me of sin?
 Acts 18:13 . . . **a-d** Paul of "persuading
 Rom 2:15 . . . and thoughts either **a** them
 Rom 8:33 . . . Who dares **a** us whom God
 Rev 12:10 . . . who **a-s** them before our God

ACKNOWLEDGE, ACKNOWLEDGES (v)

to express a gratitude of debt; to recognize as valid; to confess (wrongdoing)
 Jer 3:13 . . . Only **a** your guilt. Admit

Matt 10:32 . . . Everyone who **a-s** me
 Luke 12:8 . . . Son of Man will also **a**
 Rom 1:28 . . . thought it foolish to **a** God,
 1 Jn 2:23 . . . anyone who **a-s** the Son
 1 Jn 4:3 . . . and does not **a** the truth

ACQUAINTED (v)

to make familiar; to know firsthand
 Isa 53:3 . . . sorrows, **a** with deepest grief.
 Acts 18:2 . . . **a** with a Jew named Aquila,

ACT (v)

to behave; to take action or do something
 Ps 119:126 . . . it is time for you to **a**,
 Eccl 6:8 . . . how to **a** in front of others?

ACTION, ACTIONS (n)

a thing done, deed; an exercise of will
 Jer 4:18 . . . Your own **a-s** have brought
 Phlm 1:6 . . . put into **a** the generosity
 1 Pet 1:13 . . . So prepare your minds for **a**
 Rev 3:2 . . . **a-s** do not meet the requirements

ADAM

First man (Gen 1:26–2:25; Rom 5:14; 1 Tim 2:13-14); son of God (Luke 3:38); sinned (Gen 3:1-19; Hos 6:7; Rom 5:12-21); descendants of (Gen 5); died (Gen 5:5; 1 Cor 15:22-49).

ADD, ADDED (v)

to make or serve as an addition
 Deut 4:2 . . . Do not **a** to or subtract from
 Deut 12:32 . . . You must not **a** anything to
 Prov 30:6 . . . Do not **a** to his words,
 Eccl 3:14 . . . Nothing can be **a-ed** to it
 Matt 6:27 . . . worries **a** a single moment
 Luke 12:25 . . . worries **a** a single moment
 Acts 2:47 . . . each day the Lord **a-ed** to their
 Rev 22:18 . . . God will **a** to that person

ADMIT (v)

to acknowledge, confess
 Hos 5:15 . . . until they **a** their guilt
 John 12:42 . . . But they wouldn't **a** it

ADMONISH(ED) (KJV)

Eccl 12:12 . . . give you *some further advice*
 Jer 42:19 . . . Don't forget this *warning* I
 2 Thes 3:15 . . . *warn* them as you would
 Heb 8:5 . . . God gave him this *warning*

ADMONITION (KJV)

1 Cor 10:11 . . . written down *to warn* us
 Eph 6:4 . . . *instruction* that comes from the Lord
 Titus 3:10 . . . a first and second *warning*

ADOPT, ADOPTED (v)

to take another's child into one's own family
 Rom 8:15 . . . when he **a-ed** you as his own
 Rom 8:23 . . . rights as his **a-ed** children,
 Rom 9:4 . . . to be God's **a-ed** children.
 Gal 4:5 . . . so that he could **a** us as
 Eph 1:5 . . . decided in advance to **a** us

ADULTERER, ADULTERERS (n)

one who commits adultery
 Job 24:15 . . . The **a** waits for the twilight,
 Jas 4:4 . . . You **a-s!** Don't you realize

ADULTERY (n)

unlawful sexual relations between a married person and someone other than their spouse; symbolic of idolatry
 Exod 20:14 . . . You must not commit **a**.
 Deut 5:18 . . . You must not commit **a**.
 Prov 6:32 . . . who commits **a** is an utter fool,
 Matt 5:27 . . . You must not commit **a**.
 Matt 19:18 . . . You must not commit **a**.
 Mark 10:11 . . . someone else commits **a**
 Luke 18:20 . . . You must not commit **a**.
 John 8:4 . . . caught in the act of **a**.
 1 Cor 6:9 . . . **a**, or are male prostitutes,

ADVICE (n)

recommendation regarding a decision or course of conduct; counsel
 1 Kgs 12:8 . . . rejected the **a** of
 2 Chr 10:8 . . . rejected the **a** of
 Prov 12:5 . . . **a** of the wicked is
 Prov 12:26 . . . godly give good **a** to their
 Prov 15:22 . . . Plans go wrong for lack of **a**;
 Isa 44:25 . . . I cause the wise to give bad **a**,
 Rom 11:34 . . . enough to give him **a?**

ADVISE (v)

to give advice; to counsel
 Ps 32:8 . . . I will **a** you and watch over
 1 Tim 5:14 . . . I **a** these younger widows
 Rev 3:18 . . . I **a** you to buy gold from me—

ADVISERS (n)

one who gives advice; counselor
 1 Sam 28:23 . . . his **a** joined the woman in
 1 Kgs 12:14 . . . counsel of his younger **a**.
 Esth 1:13 . . . consulted with his wise **a**,
 Prov 11:14 . . . safety in having many **a**.
 Prov 29:12 . . . all his **a** will be wicked.

ADVOCATE (n)

one who pleads the cause of another; defender
see also HOLY SPIRIT, COUNSELOR
 Job 16:19 . . . My **a** is there on high.
 John 14:16 . . . he will give you another **A**,
 John 14:26 . . . the Father sends the **A**
 John 15:26 . . . I will send you the **A**—
 John 16:7 . . . if I don't, the **A** won't come.
 1 Jn 2:1 . . . an **a** who pleads our case

AFFIRM (v)

to validate; to confirm
 John 3:33 . . . can **a** that God is true.
 Rom 8:16 . . . **a** that we are God's children.
 Heb 10:23 . . . hope we **a**, for God can

AFRAID (adj)

fearful or apprehensive about an unwanted or uncertain situation
 Gen 3:10 . . . I was **a** because I was naked.
 Gen 26:24 . . . Do not be **a**, for I am
 Exod 3:6 . . . he was **a** to look at God.
 Deut 1:21 . . . Don't be **a!**
 Deut 20:1 . . . your own, do not be **a**.
 Ps 23:4 . . . I will not be **a**, for you are
 Isa 10:24 . . . do not be **a** of the Assyrians
 Isa 41:10 . . . Don't be **a**, for I am
 Isa 43:1 . . . Do not be **a**, for I have
 Matt 8:26 . . . Why are you **a?**
 Matt 10:31 . . . So don't be **a**;
 Mark 5:36 . . . Don't be **a**.
 John 14:27 . . . don't be troubled or **a**.

2 Tim 4:5 . . . Don't be **a** of suffering
 1 Pet 3:14 . . . don't worry or be **a**

AFRESH (adv)

from a fresh beginning; anew, again
 Lam 3:23 . . . his mercies begin **a** each

AGED (adj)

showing the effects or characteristics of increasing age
 Job 12:12 . . . Wisdom belongs to the **a**,
 Prov 17:6 . . . crowning glory of the **a**;

AGES (n)

long period of time; a generation; a measure of history, geology, or culture
 Prov 8:23 . . . I was appointed in **a** past,
 Jer 23:40 . . . infamous throughout the **a**.
 Eph 2:7 . . . in all future **a** as examples

AGREE, AGREED, AGREEING (v)

to admit, concede
 Matt 18:19 . . . If two of you **a** here on
 Luke 7:29 . . . **a-d** that God's way was right,
 Rom 7:16 . . . that I **a** that the law is good.
 Phil 2:2 . . . make me truly happy by **a-ing**

AIR (n)

empty space, nothingness; atmosphere
 1 Thes 4:17 . . . meet the Lord in the **a**.

ALABASTER (adj)

a compact, fine-textured, usually white and translucent plaster often carved into vases and ornaments
 Matt 26:7 . . . with a beautiful **a** jar
 Mark 14:3 . . . with a beautiful **a** jar
 Luke 7:37 . . . she brought a beautiful **a** jar

ALCOHOL (n)

drink (as wine or beer) containing ethanol
 Prov 20:1 . . . **a** leads to brawls.
 Isa 5:22 . . . boast about all the **a** they

ALCOHOLIC (adj)

containing alcohol
 Num 6:3 . . . give up wine and other **a**

ALERT (adj)

quick to perceive and act
 Isa 21:7 . . . the watchman be fully **a**.
 Mark 13:33 . . . be on guard! Stay **a!**
 1 Pet 5:8 . . . Stay **a!** Watch out for

ALIEN (KJV)

Exod 18:3 . . . a *foreigner* in a foreign
 Job 19:15 . . . I am like a *foreigner* to them
 Eph 2:12 . . . were *excluded from citizenship*

ALIENATED (KJV)

Ezek 48:14 . . . traded or *used by others*
 Eph 4:18 . . . *wander far from* the life God
 Col 1:21 . . . were once *far away from God*

ALIVE (adj)

animate, having life; active; aware
 Gen 45:7 . . . keep you and your families **a**
 Ps 41:2 . . . them and keeps them **a**.
 Luke 24:23 . . . Jesus is **a!**
 Acts 1:3 . . . ways that he was actually **a**.
 Rom 6:11 . . . the power of sin and **a** to God
 Rev 2:8 . . . who was dead but is now **a**:

Holy Land Tour Itineraries

The tour stops throughout this Bible are meant to help you see and experience the Holy Land just like you would if you were visiting with Chuck and his team. We think you'll find each stop to be a rewarding experience on its own, but in the following pages we also provide some special guided tours, each based on a theme, like "Strategic Cities in Israel's History" and "Jesus' Ministry Travels." Here you will find six different tour experiences, each including a map of the route along with the Scripture references and page numbers for the tour stops on that route. Simply choose a route and turn to each tour stop for a memorable trip through some of the significant geographical and archeological sites of the Bible.

TRIP 1

Mountains and Valleys of Israel

Experience the geography of Israel by taking this guided tour through the valleys where battles were fought and God led His people to victory as well as the mountains where prophets proclaimed God's Word and denounced false gods. You will also get to know the place where one day we will all experience Christ's final return.



ITINERARY

A Mareshah in the Guvrin Valley pg 1076 Stomping Ground of Micah the Prophet—MICAH 1

B The Valley of Elah pg 354 How Your Ordinary Becomes Extraordinary—1 SAMUEL 17

C The Kidron Valley pg 1045 The Valley of Decision—JOEL 3

D The Valley of Trouble pg 1027 A Gateway of Hope—HOSEA 2

E The Hill of Moreh pg 456 Where Anxiety Finds Its Peace—2 KINGS 4

F Mount Tabor pg 297 A Panorama of Beauty and Praise—JUDGES 4

G Mount Carmel pg 439 Elijah's Place of Triumph—1 KINGS 18

H Mount Hermon pg 732 A Reminder of the Blessing of Unity—PSALM 133