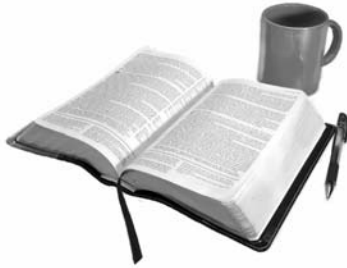


The ONE
YEAR®

Life Lessons FROM THE Bible



*365 meditations
on the lives of Bible people*

Neil S. Wilson



TYNDALE HOUSE PUBLISHERS, INC.
CAROL STREAM, ILLINOIS

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

TYNDALE and Tyndale's quill logo are registered trademarks of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.

One Year is a registered trademark of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.

The One Year Life Lessons from the Bible

Copyright © 1996 by The Livingstone Corporation. All rights reserved.

Developed for Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. by the Livingstone Corporation. Dr. James Galvin, Daryl Lucas, and Michael Kendrick, project staff.

Some of the *One Year Life Lessons from the Bible* are adapted from the Personality Profiles found in the *Life Application Bible*, copyright © 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991 by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.

Cover photo copyright © by Terje Rakke/Getty Images. All rights reserved.

Designed by Beth Sparkman

Published in 1996 as *365 Life Lessons from Bible People* by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. under 0-8423-3799-7.

The One Year Life Lessons from the Bible first published in 2006.

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

Scriptures marked NCV are taken from the *Holy Bible*, New Century Version, copyright © 1987, 1988, 1991 by Word Publishing, Dallas, Texas 75039. Used by permission.

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

Scripture quotations marked TLB are taken from *The Living Bible* copyright © 1971. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

ISBN-13: 978-1-4143-1195-1

ISBN-10: 1-4143-1195-8

Printed in the United States of America

12 11 10 09 08 07 06
7 6 5 4 3 2 1

We often learn our greatest lessons through the crucible of real life—the great school of hard knocks.

- A child learns to get up early enough for school when she misses the bus.
- A teenager learns not to procrastinate when he receives a failing grade on a test.
- A father learns to take his promises to his daughter seriously when he sees her tears after he fails to attend her ballet recital.

Our deepest convictions are often hammered out in the harsh reality of life. Yet when we're experiencing the pain of our mistakes, we often cry to God, "If only we'd *known* about the painful consequences of our careless actions."

This *One Year* devotional presents in a daily format a collection of life lessons learned by people in the Bible. These important principles were learned over a span of centuries, but you can benefit by studying them over the course of a year. They touch on the greatest issues of life: why there is pain and suffering; why the immoral appear so successful; why some are rich and others poor; why it's important to say what is true, act with courage, and take time to ask God what to do.

For 365 days, you'll explore the lives of hundreds of Bible people with different personalities and character traits, with different situations and problems, with different values and goals for their lives. You'll discover the lessons that God wanted to teach them and the lessons that God wants to teach you through their lives. Take time this year to spend a part of each day with God, meditating on the life lessons learned by people in the Bible.

Our hope and prayer is that God will use this book in your life to cultivate hope, values, and character that will help you endure life's storms, avoid life's pitfalls, and finish life's race well.

Failure, Frustration—and Hope

Adam

I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid. (Genesis 3:10)

It is almost impossible to imagine what Adam's life was like. He was first and one-of-a-kind: no childhood, no parents, no schooling, no guilt, close contact with God, perfect world, only one rule to follow. Life today is vastly different.

Yet we can identify with Adam's struggles: (1) He's embarrassed to admit mistakes and wants to avoid confronting his problems; (2) his kids get into big trouble, spoiling many of his dreams for their future; (3) he works harder and gets less done as life goes on; and (4) as an older adult, all his labors have little to show except a small farm and scattered grandchildren.

Yet even Adam had hope. Genesis 3:15 is God's first piece of good news: Satan will be defeated; a Savior will come. That promise gave Adam hope and still lifts us from the pits to the heavens, from "What's the use?" to "Praise the Lord!" When life seems barren and pointless, remember that even Adam had this hope.

Jesus has come, salvation is won, and the Bible promises another (the Second) coming at the end of time, when all of our tears will be wiped away. Whenever you're discouraged, remember that.

Each new day is another chapter in the unfolding promise of deliverance and life.

Adam's story is told in Genesis 1:26–5:5. Adam is also mentioned in 1 Chronicles 1:1; Luke 3:38; Romans 5:14; 1 Corinthians 15:22, 45; and 1 Timothy 2:13-14.

Following Dangerous Desires

Eve

*The woman was convinced. How lovely and fresh looking it was!
And it would make her so wise! (Genesis 3:6, TLB)*

We know very little about Eve, the first woman in the world, yet she is the mother of us all. She was the final piece in the intricate and amazing puzzle of God's creation. As her descendants, we have inherited her propensity for sin, particularly when it comes to questioning God's sufficiency in our lives.

Eve was vulnerable to Satan's line of attack, for he knew her weakness: lack of contentment. How could she be happy when she was not allowed to eat from one of the fruit trees? Eve fell for the idea that the one item that was not within her reach would make her happy. And Eve was willing to accept Satan's insinuations without checking with God.

Sound familiar? How often is our attention drawn from the much we possess to the little that we don't? We get that I've-got-to-have-it feeling. We open ourselves to envy, greed, and all kinds of selfish behavior in order to satisfy our longings. And when we follow through on our impulses, the satisfaction we find is hollow and vanishes quickly.

God has given us all we need to be happy. Why waste our time pursuing something that's second-rate?

Focus on all God has given you, not on the little you lack.

Eve's story is told in Genesis 2:19-4:2.

Passing the Buck

Eve

Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”
(Genesis 3:13)

Adam and Eve’s fall into sin provides the first instance in history of people who “passed the buck.” When God asked Adam about his sin, Adam blamed Eve. Eve said, in effect, “Don’t look at me—it was the serpent’s fault.” And if God had inquired of the serpent, he certainly would have passed the blame back to the woman and man. How relieved Eve must have been when God turned to the serpent and announced his punishment! Her relief was short lived, however. God refused to accept her rationalization and held her responsible for her wrongdoing.

The consequences of Eve’s rebellion are well known, and humans have followed her example ever since. It is so easy to excuse our sin by blaming someone else. It is a way of avoiding the pain of getting right with God and other people. But God knows the truth! And he holds each of us responsible for what we do. Admit your sin and confess it to God. Don’t make matters worse by blaming someone else.

Blaming someone else for our wrongdoing only increases the consequences of our sin.

Read more about Eve in Genesis 2:19–4:2.

Full Pardon Is Available

Cain

The Lord said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" "I don't know," he replied. "Am I my brother's keeper?" (Genesis 4:9)

Among his other distinctions, Cain is the first to offer the world an unforgettable quotation. These famous words have come to stand for excuse making, disregard for loved ones, and outright lying. A rough man, strong and impetuous, Cain despised weakness and had little patience for those whose work he judged inferior. He paid little heed to God. Independent and strong-willed, he was not above asking for a break when he knew he was beaten (4:13).

After Cain murdered Abel, God gave him a mark. It was a sign to keep hooligans away from him, but it was also a reminder that God still cares for even the worst of criminals.

Cain's story teaches us never to give up on anybody. God's love and mercy reach to people who do not deserve them, whose personalities are toughened and resistant. God never quits on anybody.

When you have opportunities to help toughened people, remember that God was merciful to Cain. If you are a prisoner or ex-con, remember that the very first criminal was still under God's care. If you are a victim of crime, hard as it may be, let God do the judging and sentencing so that your heart may be free to forgive and live again.

God takes control of the most sorry, desperate circumstances and keeps us in his watchful care.

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

Giving Your Best to God

Abel

Abel brought the fatty cuts of meat from his best lambs, and presented them to the Lord. (Genesis 4:4, TLB)

Every child who knows the Bible and every adult who has darkened the door of a church knows the name of this second son. He is the first innocent to suffer, the youth whose life was snuffed out by the jealous blow of his own brother.

Exactly why God favored Abel's offering is unknown to us but not to them. They knew. The pristine world was not cluttered with noise and distraction; God's will must have been crystal clear.

God's will for us today is clear enough, too. We know that loving service is the centerpiece, that greed and pride are spoilers. We know that "our way or no way" is offensive to God. We know that God wants our devotion, no matter what the cost.

Today give your best to God: your heart trusting in God's care, your mind devoted to knowing God deeply, your will eager to please the sovereign Creator.

Jealousy kills a relationship that God wants to nourish.

Abel's story is told in Genesis 4. He is also mentioned in Matthew 23:35; Luke 11:51; and Hebrews 11:4; 12:24.

Speaking without Words

Abel

By faith he still speaks, even though he is dead. (Hebrews 11:4)

Odd that a person can “speak” so effectively through centuries and millennia, though the Bible does not record a single word from his mouth. Cain, the perpetrator, gets to talk rather at length in Abel’s story (Genesis 4:1-14). Eve speaks, too. Adam had his say earlier. From Abel—nothing.

Except obedience. He brings the offering God desires.

Except eagerness. One cannot read of Abel without the sense that he enjoyed pleasing God.

Except innocent suffering. Abel follows brother Cain to the field and dies with a look of amazement and innocence in his eyes, as millions have since. Why the cancer? Why the accident? Why the war? Why *me*?

Abel’s story reminds us of the evil that darkens our world, of lives lost to treachery and hatred. His death begs for moral judgment, for God to make things right again.

And that is exactly what God promises to do through the victory of Jesus Christ, our Savior. On Easter morning, Abel’s life—and yours—was bought back, eternally, forever, by God’s mighty power. Jesus said, “I am . . . the life” (John 14:6). Today, and each day of your life, trust Jesus Christ, God’s Son, our Savior, for life eternal.

Jesus is God’s answer to Abel’s why.

Abel’s story is told in Genesis 4. He is also mentioned in Matthew 23:35; Luke 11:51; and Hebrews 11:4; 12:24.

The Rapid Growth of Sin

Lamech

If Cain is avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy-sevenfold.
(Genesis 4:24, NRSV)

Lamech earns just a few brief verses in Scripture, but those words say much about the rapid advance of sin in the days after Adam and Eve. A descendant of Cain, Lamech was the father of the first musician and the first metalworker. But Lamech's contribution to the spiritual condition of humankind was a pitiful one.

First, we note that Lamech was the first polygamist, taking two wives, Adah and Zillah. This attempt to “improve” on God's design for marriage would bear sorrow and frustration for many who followed in his footsteps: Jacob, David, and Solomon are obvious examples.

Second, Lamech had a cavalier disregard for the value of human life. He tells his wives that he killed a young man (actually, “child” in the Hebrew) for striking him. Instead of showing remorse, he boasts of his deed and throws down a challenge: If anyone would dare settle the score for this murder, Lamech would be avenged seventy-sevenfold! Unlike Cain, who took God's protection gladly, Lamech seems to laugh off the need for any divine discipline or refuge.

Sin is like a weed. It can grow rapidly, even in adverse conditions. Are you ignoring the sprouts that are shooting up in your life? Ask God to help you pull up the weeds of selfishness and rebellion before the problem gets out of control.

It doesn't take long for sin to bear its poisonous fruit.

Lamech's story appears in Genesis 4:18-24.

- Compassion** July 31, August 1, August 27, November 13, November 14
- Counsel** February 23, February 28, April 26, April 30, May 9, May 14, May 23, June 2, June 8, June 9, June 17, June 26, June 30, October 24
- Courage** February 2, February 20, March 2, March 15, March 17, April 15, April 19, May 18, May 25, June 4, June 13, June 28, July 6, July 11, July 27, July 29, August 12, August 14, September 9, September 21, October 17
- Deception** January 25, March 23, March 25, April 22, June 9, October 25, October 26
- Desires** January 2, January 27, February 12, March 8, April 24, May 6, May 28
- Difficult circumstances.** *See* Trials
- Discouragement** January 1, January 14, March 2, March 3, July 5, July 18, July 19, July 23, August 4, August 7, October 1, October 22, November 19
- Doubts** February 17, September 10, October 15, October 20, November 19, December 28, December 31
- Encouragement** June 5, July 19, August 4, September 22, October 11, October 13, October 23, November 2, November 14, November 17, December 11, December 12, December 22, December 23, December 30
- Evangelism** January 10, January 11, February 22, March 26, June 21, June 22, July 11, July 13, August 11, August 31, September 1, September 15, October 14, October 17, October 28, October 29, October 30, November 5, November 8, November 16, November 20, November 23, November 26, November 27, November 28, December 4, December 5, December 6, December 9, December 16
- Faith** January 8, January 12, January 13, February 17, February 22, March 2, March 3, March 7, March 10, March 13, March 14, April 13, April 18, April 19, May 18, June 5, June 13, June 15, June 21, July 27, July 31, August 3, August 10, August 13, August 14, August 24, September 14, September 16, September 20, September 21, September 27, October 1, October 8, October 13, October 15, October 20, October 23, November 3, November 23, November 26, November 29, December 20, December 21, December 28, December 31
- Faithfulness** January 8, January 10, March 27, April 3, April 12, April 20, April 25, May 19, May 24, June 1, June 3, June 7, August 11, September 20, September 29, October 21, October 30, November 15, November 18, December 10, December 13, December 18, December 30
- Family, dysfunctional** January 6, January 20, January 24, January 25, January 26, January 27, February 1, February 4, February 8, February 9, March 31, April 5, May 6, May 7, May 22, June 4, June 18, June 26, June 27, July 15, December 7
- Family, godly** March 1, March 16, March 26, March 27, April 1, April 2, April 7, April 8, May 12, July 14, September 22, November 24, December 21

Fear January 18, February 17, March 10, April 28, July 6, August 13,
December 27

Friendship March 25, March 26, March 27, April 12, April 20, April 25, April 26,
May 12, May 29, July 19, August 14, September 1, September 22, November 18,
November 30, December 10, December 16, December 18, December 23,
December 26

Generosity March 28, April 28, July 2, October 4, October 5, October 6,
October 12, November 25, December 1, December 10, December 19,
December 30

God's gifts January 2, January 29, February 26, March 28, May 2, May 30,
June 14, June 24, September 2, September 23, September 26, November 10,
November 17, November 18, November 19, December 12

God's judgment February 18, February 24, February 27, March 4, March 6,
March 8, March 19, April 10, May 1, May 13, June 11, June 18, June 19,
August 6, August 11, August 16, August 19, August 23, August 25, October 25,
October 26, November 12

God's love January 4, February 1, March 24, March 29, April 20, May 27,
August 18, August 21, September 12, October 8, October 11, November 1,
November 9

God's mercy January 4, March 24, April 27, May 11, June 6, July 8, August 6,
August 18, August 20, August 21, November 13, December 26

God's power January 14, January 21, February 3, March 12, April 13, April 18,
June 15, July 18, August 2, August 16, September 8, September 24, October 8,
October 28, November 8, November 16, December 27, December 31

God's presence January 8, March 23, May 21, June 12, June 13, June 23, June 24,
August 14, August 24, October 9, October 12

God's promises January 1, January 11, January 12, January 13, January 15,
January 20, January 21, March 10, April 13, August 5, August 7,
September 29

God's protection January 12, January 20, February 10, February 13, February 14,
April 18, May 3, June 16, July 16, July 27, August 10, August 23, October 2,
October 27

God's will January 16, January 18, January 23, February 25, March 11, March 16,
March 17, March 18, March 22, April 17, April 24, May 28, July 16, July 26,
July 28, July 29, August 5, August 9, August 20, August 27, September 2,
September 6, September 25, September 27, October 21, October 22, October 28,
November 6, November 22, December 14

God's Word February 16, March 18, April 6, April 17, July 9, July 11, July 12,
July 13, July 19, July 20, September 16, October 19, November 5, November 28,
December 24

Greed January 2, January 30, March 5, March 8, June 11

Guilt January 1, March 21, March 24, April 11, April 21, May 8, May 17, June 6,
September 9, October 3

Idolatry February 20, June 10, June 19, July 4, July 6, July 8, July 10, July 15, August 7, August 15

Injustice March 19, April 22, June 11, August 19, August 23

Jealousy January 5, January 28, February 5, February 6, February 21, March 4, March 31, April 12, April 14, August 30, September 26, October 21

Leadership February 19, February 20, February 21, February 28, March 9, March 13, March 14, April 24, May 10, May 15, May 19, May 20, May 25, May 26, June 8, June 26, July 18, July 21, July 23, October 31, November 26, December 9, December 29

Love January 24, January 26, February 1, March 29, March 30, August 8, September 12, September 22, October 3, November 1, November 9

Lust February 4, February 12, March 23, March 24, March 25, April 21, May 7

Obedience January 5, January 6, January 9, January 10, January 11, January 13, February 13, February 18, February 25, March 5, March 6, March 8, March 12, March 15, March 16, March 21, March 23, April 10, May 13, May 31, June 1, June 25, June 28, July 1, July 4, July 9, July 13, July 20, August 12, August 17, August 28, October 1, October 19, November 6, November 15

Parenting January 25, February 4, February 7, February 14, March 22, April 1, April 2, April 4, April 5, April 7, April 8, May 10, June 30, July 14, July 15, November 13, November 20

Patience. *See Perseverance*

Peacemaking January 22, March 20, April 29, July 21, December 26

Peer pressure January 10, January 16, February 16, February 20, March 14, March 23, May 22, August 14, September 9

Perseverance January 15, March 3, April 15, June 28, August 7, August 26, September 19, September 25, September 30, December 17

Plans January 16, January 23, February 15, March 11, March 12, April 17, April 24, May 23, June 9, July 22, August 9, September 6, September 8, September 25, November 21, December 14

Prayer January 29, February 15, March 11, March 13, March 21, March 22, March 24, April 1, April 17, April 19, April 30, May 3, May 13, June 4, June 7, June 24, July 22, July 23, July 24, August 5, August 12, August 13, August 22, August 29, September 29, September 30, October 20, October 30, November 3, November 4, November 11, December 15, December 16

Prejudice January 24, May 26, October 16, November 9

Pride. *See Self-centeredness*

Quitting. *See Perseverance*

Repentance January 3, February 3, February 24, April 11, May 14, June 18, June 22, July 8, July 9, July 10, August 6, August 11, August 20, October 2

Revenge January 28, February 10, April 29, July 30, September 3

Self-centeredness January 7, February 12, March 8, April 28, May 5, May 7, May 10, May 16, May 28, June 9, June 22, June 23, June 27, July 3, July 25,

July 30, August 15, August 30, November 4, November 12, November 29,
December 29

Service January 5, January 23, February 12, February 21, March 4, March 28,
April 2, May 5, May 15, May 27, June 14, July 27, July 28, September 23,
October 3, October 4, October 7, October 9, October 14, October 22,
October 31, November 4, November 7, November 10, November 22,
November 30, December 3, December 13, December 17, December 18,
December 19, December 22, December 23, December 30

Sorcery May 1, November 4

Success, worldly January 31, February 27, March 5, May 23, June 10, June 16,
July 2, July 3, July 25, August 15, September 7, September 18, November 12

Suffering. *See* **Trials**

Thankfulness January 9, February 3, February 7, March 1, March 4, April 27,
May 3, May 11, May 29, June 23, July 17, September 4, September 19,
October 5, October 6, October 8, October 10, October 18, November 7,
November 11, December 12

Trials January 6, January 14, January 19, February 5, February 7, February 9,
February 12, February 13, March 31, April 29, April 30, May 4, May 29, June 3,
June 4, June 13, July 5, July 21, July 22, July 24, July 26, July 31, August 1,
August 2, August 3, August 4, August 10, August 13, August 17, August 20,
August 25, August 27, September 16, September 17, September 20, October 18,
November 3, November 22, November 27, December 23, December 25

Vocation February 19, February 23, February 26, March 3, March 5, March 13,
March 29, May 2, May 5, May 30, June 14, July 20, September 2, September 7,
September 17, November 8, November 29, December 3, December 9

Wisdom February 8, February 11, February 23, February 28, March 9, March 11,
April 2, April 9, April 15, April 16, May 20, May 25, June 2, June 7, June 30,
July 7, September 8, October 27, October 31, December 28

Work. *See* **Vocation**

Worship January 17, April 6, April 19, April 23, May 13, July 12, July 17, July 19,
July 23, August 29, September 4, September 24, September 28, September 29,
September 30, October 10, October 18, November 25