



THE *Life*  
*Recovery*<sup>®</sup>  
BIBLE  
PERSONAL SIZE



New Living  
Translation<sup>®</sup>  
SECOND EDITION

Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.  
CAROL STREAM, ILLINOIS

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# CONTENTS

A6	The Twelve Steps
A8	Steps for Recovery
A10	The Books of the Bible
A11	Alphabetical Book Listing
A13	A Note to Readers
A15	Introduction to the New Living Translation
A21	NLT Bible Translation Team
A23	User's Guide
A25	Preface
1	OLD TESTAMENT
1193	NEW TESTAMENT
1673	Life Recovery Topical Index
1726	Index to Recovery Profiles
1727	Index to Twelve Step Devotionals
1729	Index to Recovery Principle Devotionals
1730	Index to Serenity Prayer Devotionals
1731	Index to Recovery Reflections

# THE TWELVE STEPS

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

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

# THE TWELVE STEPS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

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

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

# STEPS FOR RECOVERY

The 12 Steps have long been of great help to people in recovery. Much of their power comes from the fact that they capture principles evident in the Bible. The following chart lists the 12 Steps and connects them to various Scriptures that support them. A third column ties the 12 Steps to the 8 Recovery Principles of the Celebrate Recovery program. This will enable users of this Bible who are familiar with the 8 Recovery Principles to relate quickly to content tied to the 12 Steps.

## The 12 Steps

**Step 1:** We admitted that we were powerless over our dependencies—that our lives had become unmanageable.

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

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

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

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

**Step 6:** We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

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

## Help from the Scriptures

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

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

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

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

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

*“Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up in honor”* (James 4:10; see also Romans 6:5-11; Philippians 3:12-14).

*“If we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness”* (1 John 1:9; see also Luke 18:9-14; 1 John 5:13-15).

## 8 Recovery Principles

**Principle 1:** Realize I’m not God. I admit that I am powerless to control my tendency to do the wrong thing and that my life is unmanageable.

**Principle 2:** Earnestly believe that God exists, that I matter to Him, and that He has the power to help me to recover.

**Principle 3:** Consciously choose to commit all my life and will to Christ’s care and control.

**Principle 4:** Openly examine and confess my faults to myself, to God, and to someone I trust.

**Principle 5:** Voluntarily submit to every change God wants to make in my life, and humbly ask Him to remove my character defects.

## The 12 Steps

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

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

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

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

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

## Help from the Scriptures

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

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

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

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

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

## 8 Recovery Principles

**Principle 6:** Evaluate all my relationships. Offer forgiveness to those who have hurt me and make amends for harm I've done to others, except when to do so would harm them or others.

**Principle 7:** Reserve a daily time with God for self-examination, Bible reading, and prayer in order to know God and His will for my life and to gain the power to follow His will.

**Principle 8:** Yield myself to God to be used to bring this Good News to others, both by my example and by my words.



# THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

## *The Old Testament*

3	Genesis	847	Isaiah
77	Exodus	929	Jeremiah
133	Leviticus	1003	Lamentations
171	Numbers	1013	Ezekiel
221	Deuteronomy	1073	Daniel
265	Joshua	1095	Hosea
301	Judges	1113	Joel
335	Ruth	1119	Amos
343	1 Samuel	1131	Obadiah
387	2 Samuel	1135	Jonah
425	1 Kings	1141	Micah
463	2 Kings	1151	Nahum
503	1 Chronicles	1157	Habakkuk
541	2 Chronicles	1163	Zephaniah
587	Ezra	1169	Haggai
601	Nehemiah	1173	Zechariah
623	Esther	1187	Malachi

## *The New Testament*

635	Job	1379	Acts
679	Psalms	1429	Romans
785	Proverbs	1455	1 Corinthians
823	Ecclesiastes	1479	2 Corinthians
837	Song of Songs	1497	Galatians
		1509	Ephesians
		1519	Philippians
		1529	Colossians
		1537	1 Thessalonians
		1543	2 Thessalonians
		1549	1 Timothy
		1559	2 Timothy
		1567	Titus
		1573	Philemon
		1577	Hebrews
		1599	James
		1609	1 Peter
		1621	2 Peter
		1627	1 John
		1637	2 John
		1639	3 John
		1643	Jude
		1647	Revelation

## ALPHABETICAL LISTING OF BIBLE BOOKS

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

## A NOTE TO READERS

The *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, was first published in 1996. It quickly became one of the most popular Bible translations in the English-speaking world. While the NLT's influence was rapidly growing, the Bible Translation Committee determined that an additional investment in scholarly review and text refinement could make it even better. So shortly after its initial publication, the committee began an eight-year process with the purpose of increasing the level of the NLT's precision without sacrificing its easy-to-understand quality. This second-generation text was completed in 2004 and is reflected in this edition of the New Living Translation.

The goal of any Bible translation is to convey the meaning and content of the ancient Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts as accurately as possible to contemporary readers. The challenge for our translators was to create a text that would communicate as clearly and powerfully to today's readers as the original texts did to readers and listeners in the ancient biblical world. The resulting translation is easy to read and understand, while also accurately communicating the meaning and content of the original biblical texts. The NLT is a general-purpose text especially good for study, devotional reading, and reading aloud in worship services.

We believe that the New Living Translation—which combines the latest biblical scholarship with a clear, dynamic writing style—will communicate God's word powerfully to all who read it. We publish it with the prayer that God will use it to speak his timeless truth to the church and the world in a fresh, new way.

*The Publishers*  
July 2004

# INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW LIVING TRANSLATION

## *Translation Philosophy and Methodology*

English Bible translations tend to be governed by one of two general translation theories. The first theory has been called “formal-equivalence,” “literal,” or “word-for-word” translation. According to this theory, the translator attempts to render each word of the original language into English and seeks to preserve the original syntax and sentence structure as much as possible in translation. The second theory has been called “dynamic-equivalence,” “functional-equivalence,” or “thought-for-thought” translation. The goal of this translation theory is to produce in English the closest natural equivalent of the message expressed by the original-language text, both in meaning and in style.

Both of these translation theories have their strengths. A formal-equivalence translation preserves aspects of the original text—including ancient idioms, term consistency, and original-language syntax—that are valuable for scholars and professional study. It allows a reader to trace formal elements of the original-language text through the English translation. A dynamic-equivalence translation, on the other hand, focuses on translating the message of the original-language text. It ensures that the meaning of the text is readily apparent to the contemporary reader. This allows the message to come through with immediacy, without requiring the reader to struggle with foreign idioms and awkward syntax. It also facilitates serious study of the text’s message and clarity in both devotional and public reading.

The pure application of either of these translation philosophies would create translations at opposite ends of the translation spectrum. But in reality, all translations contain a mixture of these two philosophies. A purely formal-equivalence translation would be unintelligible in English, and a purely dynamic-equivalence translation would risk being unfaithful to the original. That is why translations shaped by dynamic-equivalence theory are usually quite literal when the original text is relatively clear, and the translations shaped by formal-equivalence theory are sometimes quite dynamic when the original text is obscure.

The translators of the New Living Translation set out to render the message of the original texts of Scripture into clear, contemporary English. As

they did so, they kept the concerns of both formal-equivalence and dynamic-equivalence in mind. On the one hand, they translated as simply and literally as possible when that approach yielded an accurate, clear, and natural English text. Many words and phrases were rendered literally and consistently into English, preserving essential literary and rhetorical devices, ancient metaphors, and word choices that give structure to the text and provide echoes of meaning from one passage to the next.

On the other hand, the translators rendered the message more dynamically when the literal rendering was hard to understand, was misleading, or yielded archaic or foreign wording. They clarified difficult metaphors and terms to aid in the reader’s understanding. The translators first struggled with the meaning of the words and phrases in the ancient context; then they rendered the message into clear, natural English. Their goal was to be both faithful to the ancient texts and eminently readable. The result is a translation that is both exegetically accurate and idiomatically powerful.

## *Translation Process and Team*

To produce an accurate translation of the Bible into contemporary English, the translation team needed the skills necessary to enter into the thought patterns of the ancient authors and then to render their ideas, connotations, and effects into clear, contemporary English. To begin this process, qualified biblical scholars were needed to interpret the meaning of the original text and to check it against our base English translation. In order to guard against personal and theological biases, the scholars needed to represent a diverse group of Evangelicals who would employ the best exegetical tools. Then to work alongside the scholars, skilled English stylists were needed to shape the text into clear, contemporary English.

With these concerns in mind, the Bible Translation Committee recruited teams of scholars that represented a broad spectrum of denominations, theological perspectives, and backgrounds within the worldwide Evangelical community. (These scholars are listed at the end of this introduction.) Each book of the Bible was assigned to three different scholars with proven expertise in the book or group of books to be reviewed. Each of these scholars made a thorough review of a

base translation and submitted suggested revisions to the appropriate Senior Translator. The Senior Translator then reviewed and summarized these suggestions and proposed a first-draft revision of the base text. This draft served as the basis for several additional phases of exegetical and stylistic committee review. Then the Bible Translation Committee jointly reviewed and approved every verse of the final translation.

Throughout the translation and editing process, the Senior Translators and their scholar teams were given a chance to review the editing done by the team of stylists. This ensured that exegetical errors would not be introduced late in the process and that the entire Bible Translation Committee was happy with the final result. By choosing a team of qualified scholars and skilled stylists and by setting up a process that allowed their interaction throughout the process, the New Living Translation has been refined to preserve the essential formal elements of the original biblical texts, while also creating a clear, understandable English text.

The New Living Translation was first published in 1996. Shortly after its initial publication, the Bible Translation Committee began a process of further committee review and translation refinement. The purpose of this continued revision was to increase the level of precision without sacrificing the text's easy-to-understand quality. This second-edition text was completed in 2004, and this printing of the New Living Translation reflects the updated text.

#### *Written to Be Read Aloud*

It is evident in Scripture that the biblical documents were written to be read aloud, often in public worship (see Nehemiah 8; Luke 4:16-20; 1 Timothy 4:13; Revelation 1:3). It is still the case today that more people will hear the Bible read aloud in church than are likely to read it for themselves. Therefore, a new translation must communicate with clarity and power when it is read publicly. Clarity was a primary goal for the NLT translators, not only to facilitate private reading and understanding, but also to ensure that it would be excellent for public reading and make an immediate and powerful impact on any listener.

#### *The Texts behind the New Living Translation*

The Old Testament translators used the Masoretic Text of the Hebrew Bible as represented in *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (1977), with its extensive system of textual notes; this is an update of Rudolf Kittel's *Biblia Hebraica* (Stuttgart, 1937). The translators also further compared the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Septuagint and other Greek manuscripts, the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Syriac Peshitta, the Latin Vulgate, and any other versions or manuscripts that shed light on the meaning of difficult passages.

The New Testament translators used the two standard editions of the Greek New Testament:

the *Greek New Testament*, published by the United Bible Societies (UBS, fourth revised edition, 1993), and *Novum Testamentum Graece*, edited by Nestle and Aland (NA, twenty-seventh edition, 1993). These two editions, which have the same text but differ in punctuation and textual notes, represent, for the most part, the best in modern textual scholarship. However, in cases where strong textual or other scholarly evidence supported the decision, the translators sometimes chose to differ from the UBS and NA Greek texts and followed variant readings found in other ancient witnesses. Significant textual variants of this sort are always noted in the textual notes of the New Living Translation.

#### *Translation Issues*

The translators have made a conscious effort to provide a text that can be easily understood by the typical reader of modern English. To this end, we sought to use only vocabulary and language structures in common use today. We avoided using language likely to become quickly dated or that reflects only a narrow sub-dialect of English, with the goal of making the New Living Translation as broadly useful and timeless as possible.

But our concern for readability goes beyond the concerns of vocabulary and sentence structure. We are also concerned about historical and cultural barriers to understanding the Bible, and we have sought to translate terms shrouded in history and culture in ways that can be immediately understood. To this end:

- We have converted ancient weights and measures (for example, “ephah” [a unit of dry volume] or “cubit” [a unit of length]) to modern English (American) equivalents, since the ancient measures are not generally meaningful to today's readers. Then in the textual footnotes we offer the literal Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek measures, along with modern metric equivalents.
- Instead of translating ancient currency values literally, we have expressed them in common terms that communicate the message. For example, in the Old Testament, “ten shekels of silver” becomes “ten pieces of silver” to convey the intended message. In the New Testament, we have often translated the “denarius” as “the normal daily wage” to facilitate understanding. Then a footnote offers: “Greek a *denarius*, the payment for a full day's wage.” In general, we give a clear English rendering and then state the literal Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek in a textual footnote.
- Since the names of Hebrew months are unknown to most contemporary readers, and since the Hebrew lunar calendar fluctuates from year to year in relation to the solar calendar used today, we have looked for clear ways to communicate the time of year the Hebrew months (such as Abib) refer to. When an expanded or interpretive rendering is given in

the text, a textual note gives the literal rendering. Where it is possible to define a specific ancient date in terms of our modern calendar, we use modern dates in the text. A textual footnote then gives the literal Hebrew date and states the rationale for our rendering. For example, Ezra 6:15 pinpoints the date when the post-exilic Temple was completed in Jerusalem: “the third day of the month Adar.” This was during the sixth year of King Darius’s reign (that is, 515 B.C.). We have translated that date as March 12, with a footnote giving the Hebrew and identifying the year as 515 B.C.

- Since ancient references to the time of day differ from our modern methods of denoting time, we have used renderings that are instantly understandable to the modern reader. Accordingly, we have rendered specific times of day by using approximate equivalents in terms of our common “o’clock” system. On occasion, translations such as “at dawn the next morning” or “as the sun began to set” have been used when the biblical reference is more general.
- When the meaning of a proper name (or a wordplay inherent in a proper name) is relevant to the message of the text, its meaning is often illuminated with a textual footnote. For example, in Exodus 2:10 the text reads: “The princess named him Moses, for she explained, ‘I lifted him out of the water.’” The accompanying footnote reads: “Moses sounds like a Hebrew term that means ‘to lift out.’”
- Sometimes, when the actual meaning of a name is clear, that meaning is included in parentheses within the text itself. For example, the text at Genesis 16:11 reads: “You are to name him Ishmael (*which means ‘God hears’*), for the LORD has heard your cry of distress.” Since the original hearers and readers would have instantly understood the meaning of the name “Ishmael,” we have provided modern readers with the same information so they can experience the text in a similar way.
- Many words and phrases carry a great deal of cultural meaning that was obvious to the original readers but needs explanation in our own culture. For example, the phrase “they beat their breasts” (Luke 23:48) in ancient times meant that people were very upset, often in mourning. In our translation we chose to translate this phrase dynamically for clarity: “They went home *in deep sorrow*.” Then we included a footnote with the literal Greek, which reads: “Greek *went home beating their breasts*.” In other similar cases, however, we have sometimes chosen to illuminate the existing literal expression to make it immediately understandable. For example, here we might have expanded the literal Greek phrase to read: “They went home beating their breasts *in sorrow*.” If we had done this, we would not

have included a textual footnote, since the literal Greek clearly appears in translation.

- Metaphorical language is sometimes difficult for contemporary readers to understand, so at times we have chosen to translate or illuminate the meaning of a metaphor. For example, the ancient poet writes, “Your neck is *like* the tower of David” (Song of Songs 4:4). We have rendered it “Your neck is *as beautiful as* the tower of David” to clarify the intended positive meaning of the simile. Another example comes in Ecclesiastes 12:3, which can be literally rendered: “Remember him . . . when the grinding women cease because they are few, and the women who look through the windows—see dimly.” We have rendered it: “Remember him before your teeth—your few remaining servants—stop grinding; and before your eyes—the women looking through the windows—see dimly.” We clarified such metaphors only when we believed a typical reader might be confused by the literal text.
- When the content of the original language text is poetic in character, we have rendered it in English poetic form. We sought to break lines in ways that clarify and highlight the relationships between phrases of the text. Hebrew poetry often uses parallelism, a literary form where a second phrase (or in some instances a third or fourth) echoes the initial phrase in some way. In Hebrew parallelism, the subsequent parallel phrases continue, while also furthering and sharpening, the thought expressed in the initial line or phrase. Whenever possible, we sought to represent these parallel phrases in natural poetic English.
- The Greek term *hoi Ioudaioi* is literally translated “the Jews” in many English translations. In the Gospel of John, however, this term doesn’t always refer to the Jewish people generally. In some contexts, it refers more particularly to the Jewish religious leaders. We have attempted to capture the meaning in these different contexts by using terms such as “the people” (with a footnote: Greek *the Jewish people*) or “the religious leaders,” where appropriate.
- One challenge we faced was how to translate accurately the ancient biblical text that was originally written in a context where male-oriented terms were used to refer to humanity generally. We needed to respect the nature of the ancient context while also trying to make the translation clear to a modern audience that tends to read male-oriented language as applying only to males. Often the original text, though using masculine nouns and pronouns, clearly intends that the message be applied to both men and women. A typical example is found in the New Testament letters, where the believers are called “brothers” (*adelphoi*). Yet it is clear from the content of these letters that they were addressed to all the

believers—male and female. Thus, we have usually translated this Greek word as “brothers and sisters” in order to represent the historical situation more accurately.

We have also been sensitive to passages where the text applies generally to human beings or to the human condition. In some instances we have used plural pronouns (they, them) in place of the masculine singular (he, him). For example, a traditional rendering of Proverbs 22:6 is: “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.” We have rendered it: “Direct your children onto the right path, and when they are older, they will not leave it.” At times, we have also replaced third person pronouns with the second person to ensure clarity. A traditional rendering of Proverbs 26:27 is: “He who digs a pit will fall into it, and he who rolls a stone, it will come back on him.” We have rendered it: “If you set a trap for others, you will get caught in it yourself. If you roll a boulder down on others, it will crush you instead.”

We should emphasize, however, that all masculine nouns and pronouns used to represent God (for example, “Father”) have been maintained without exception. All decisions of this kind have been driven by the concern to reflect accurately the intended meaning of the original texts of Scripture.

#### *Lexical Consistency in Terminology*

For the sake of clarity, we have translated certain original-language terms consistently, especially within synoptic passages and for commonly repeated rhetorical phrases, and within certain word categories such as divine names and non-theological technical terminology (e.g., liturgical, legal, cultural, zoological, and botanical terms). For theological terms, we have allowed a greater semantic range of acceptable English words or phrases for a single Hebrew or Greek word. We have avoided some theological terms that are not readily understood by many modern readers. For example, we avoided using words such as “justification,” “sanctification,” and “regeneration,” which are carryovers from Latin translations. In place of these words, we have provided renderings such as “we are made right with God,” “we are made holy,” and “we are born anew.”

#### *The Spelling of Proper Names*

Many individuals in the Bible, especially the Old Testament, are known by more than one name (e.g., Uzziah/Azariah). For the sake of clarity, we have tried to use a single spelling for any one individual, footnoting the literal spelling whenever we differ from it. This is especially helpful in delineating the kings of Israel and Judah. King Joash/Jehoash of Israel has been consistently called Jehoash, while King Joash/Jehoash of Judah is called Joash. A similar distinction has been used to distinguish between Joram/Jehoram of Israel and Joram/Jehoram of Judah. All such

decisions were made with the goal of clarifying the text for the reader. When the ancient biblical writers clearly had a theological purpose in their choice of a variant name (e.g., Eshbaal/Ishbosheth), the different names have been maintained with an explanatory footnote.

For the names Jacob and Israel, which are used interchangeably for both the individual patriarch and the nation, we generally render it “Israel” when it refers to the nation and “Jacob” when it refers to the individual. When our rendering of the name differs from the underlying Hebrew text, we provide a textual footnote, which includes this explanation: “The names ‘Jacob’ and ‘Israel’ are often interchanged throughout the Old Testament, referring sometimes to the individual patriarch and sometimes to the nation.”

#### *The Rendering of Divine Names*

All appearances of ‘el, ‘elohim, or ‘eloah have been translated “God,” except where the context demands the translation “god(s).” We have generally rendered the tetragrammaton (YHWH) consistently as “the LORD,” utilizing a form with small capitals that is common among English translations. This will distinguish it from the name ‘adonai, which we render “Lord.” When ‘adonai and YHWH appear together, we have rendered it “Sovereign LORD.” This also distinguishes ‘adonai YHWH from cases where YHWH appears with ‘elohim, which is rendered “LORD God.” When YH (the short form of YHWH) and YHWH appear together, we have rendered it “LORD GOD.” When YHWH appears with the term *tseba’oth*, we have rendered it “LORD of Heaven’s Armies” to translate the meaning of the name. In a few cases, we have utilized the transliteration, *Yahweh*, when the personal character of the name is being invoked in contrast to another divine name or the name of some other god (for example, see Exod 3:15; 6:2-3).

In the New Testament, the Greek word *christos* has been translated as “Messiah” when the context assumes a Jewish audience. When a Gentile audience can be assumed, *christos* has been translated as “Christ.” The Greek word *kurios* is consistently translated “Lord,” except that it is translated “LORD” wherever the New Testament text explicitly quotes from the Old Testament, and the text there has it in small capitals.

#### *Textual Footnotes*

The New Living Translation provides several kinds of textual footnotes, all designated in the text with an asterisk:

- When for the sake of clarity the NLT renders a difficult or potentially confusing phrase dynamically, we generally give the literal rendering in a textual footnote. This allows the reader to see the literal source of our dynamic rendering and how our translation relates to other more literal translations. These notes are

prefaced with “Hebrew,” “Aramaic,” or “Greek,” identifying the language of the underlying source text. For example, in Acts 2:42 we translated the literal “breaking of bread” (from the Greek) as “the Lord’s Supper” to clarify that this verse refers to the ceremonial practice of the church rather than just an ordinary meal. Then we attached a footnote to “the Lord’s Supper,” which reads: “Greek *the breaking of bread*.”

- Textual footnotes are also used to show alternative renderings, prefaced with the word “Or.” These normally occur for passages where an aspect of the meaning is debated. On occasion, we also provide notes on words or phrases that represent a departure from long-standing tradition. These notes are prefaced with “Traditionally rendered.” For example, the footnote to the translation “serious skin disease” at Leviticus 13:2 says: “Traditionally rendered *leprosy*. The Hebrew word used throughout this passage is used to describe various skin diseases.”
- When our translators follow a textual variant that differs significantly from our standard Hebrew or Greek texts (listed earlier), we document that difference with a footnote. We also footnote cases when the NLT excludes a passage that is included in the Greek text known as the *Textus Receptus* (and familiar to readers through its translation in the King James Version). In such cases, we offer a translation of the excluded text in a footnote, even though it is generally recognized as a later addition to the Greek text and not part of the original Greek New Testament.
- All Old Testament passages that are quoted in the New Testament are identified by a textual footnote at the New Testament location. When the New Testament clearly quotes from the Greek translation of the Old Testament, and when it differs significantly in wording from the Hebrew text, we also place a textual footnote at the Old Testament location. This note includes a rendering of the Greek version, along with a cross-reference to the New Testament passage(s) where it is cited (for example, see notes on Proverbs 3:12; Psalms 8:2; 53:3).
- Some textual footnotes provide cultural and historical information on places, things, and people in the Bible that are probably obscure to modern readers. Such notes should aid the reader in understanding the message of the text. For example, in Acts 12:1, “King Herod” is named in this translation as “King Herod Agrippa” and is identified in a footnote as being “the nephew of Herod Antipas and a grandson of Herod the Great.”
- When the meaning of a proper name (or a wordplay inherent in a proper name) is relevant to the meaning of the text, it is either illuminated with a textual footnote or included within parentheses in the text itself. For example, the footnote concerning the name “Eve” at Genesis 3:20 reads: “Eve sounds like a Hebrew term that means ‘to give life.’ ” This wordplay in the Hebrew illuminates the meaning of the text, which goes on to say that Eve “would be the mother of all who live.”

AS WE SUBMIT this translation for publication, we recognize that any translation of the Scriptures is subject to limitations and imperfections. Anyone who has attempted to communicate the richness of God’s Word into another language will realize it is impossible to make a perfect translation. Recognizing these limitations, we sought God’s guidance and wisdom throughout this project. Now we pray that he will accept our efforts and use this translation for the benefit of the church and of all people.

We pray that the New Living Translation will overcome some of the barriers of history, culture, and language that have kept people from reading and understanding God’s Word. We hope that readers unfamiliar with the Bible will find the words clear and easy to understand and that readers well versed in the Scriptures will gain a fresh perspective. We pray that readers will gain insight and wisdom for living, but most of all that they will meet the God of the Bible and be forever changed by knowing him.

*The Bible Translation Committee*  
July 2004



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# USER'S GUIDE

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

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

## DEVOTIONAL READING PLANS

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

- The **Twelve Step Devotional Reading Plan** includes eighty-four Bible-based devotionals built around the Twelve Steps.

*To begin this reading plan, turn to page 25.*

- The **Recovery Principle Devotional Reading Plan** is composed of fifty-six Bible-based devotionals shaped around principles important in the recovery process.

*To begin this reading plan, turn to page 5.*

- The **Serenity Prayer Devotional Reading Plan** is made up of twenty-nine Bible-based devotionals related to the Serenity Prayer.

*To begin this reading plan, turn to page 27.*

## RECOVERY PROFILES

In this feature sixty individuals and relationships are profiled, and important recovery lessons are drawn from their lives. For a quick view of the profiles included, see the Index to Recovery Profiles on page 1726.

## INTRODUCTORY MATERIAL FOR BIBLE BOOKS

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

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

## RECOVERY COMMENTARY NOTES

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

- Additional commentary material is provided in the **Recovery Reflections** that follow many of the Bible books. The notes are arranged topically. The topics discussed in this feature are indexed in the Index to Recovery Reflections on page 1731.

## INDEXES

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

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

## PREFACE

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

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

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

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



THE **OLD** TESTAMENT

# Genesis

## THE BIG PICTURE

### A. GOD SETS THE STAGE

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

### B. GOD CHOOSES THE PLAYERS

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

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

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

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

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

## THE BOTTOM LINE

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

## RECOVERY THEMES

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

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

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

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

---

## CHAPTER 1

### The Account of Creation

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

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

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

<sup>6</sup>Then God said, "Let there be a space between the waters, to separate the waters of the heavens from the waters of the earth." <sup>7</sup>And that is what happened. God made this space to separate the waters of the earth from the waters of the heavens. <sup>8</sup>God called the space "sky."

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

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

---

1:1 Or *In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, . . . Or When God began to create the heavens and the earth, . . .*

---

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

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



God saw that it was good. <sup>11</sup>Then God said, "Let the land sprout with vegetation— every sort of seed-bearing plant, and trees that grow seed-bearing fruit. These seeds will then produce the kinds of plants and trees from which they came." And that is what happened. <sup>12</sup>The land produced vegetation—all sorts of seed-bearing plants, and trees with seed-bearing fruit. Their seeds produced plants and trees of the same kind. And God saw that it was good.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

► **The recovery principle  
devotional reading plan  
begins here.**



## Self-Perception

### READ GENESIS 1:26-31

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

At the end of the fifth day of creation God had made everything except the first people. The Bible tells us that when he looked at what he had made so far, "God saw that it was good." Then God created the first man and woman. "So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; . . . Then God blessed them and said, 'Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground.' . . . Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good!" (Genesis 1:25, 27-31).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## CHAPTER 2

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

<sup>4</sup>This is the account of the creation of the heavens and the earth.

### The Man and Woman in Eden

When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, <sup>5</sup>neither wild plants nor grains were

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

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

<sup>8</sup>Then the LORD God planted a garden in Eden in the east, and there he placed the man he had made. <sup>9</sup>The LORD God made all sorts of trees grow up from the ground—trees that were beautiful and that produced delicious fruit. In the middle of the garden he placed the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

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

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

<sup>18</sup>Then the LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him.” <sup>19</sup>So the LORD God formed from the ground all the wild animals and all the birds of the sky. He brought them to the man\* to see what he would call them, and the man chose a name for each one. <sup>20</sup>He gave names to all the livestock, all the birds

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

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

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



# ADAM & EVE

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

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

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

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

## STRENGTHS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

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

## WEAKNESSES AND MISTAKES:

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

## LESSONS FROM THEIR LIVES:

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

## KEY VERSES:

"Then God said, 'Let us make human beings in our image, to be like ourselves. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground.' So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." (Genesis 1:26-27).

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

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

<sup>23</sup>"At last!" the man exclaimed.

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

<sup>2:21</sup> Or *took a part of the man's side.*

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

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

## CHAPTER 3

### The Man and Woman Sin

The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the LORD God had made. One day he asked the woman, "Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?"

<sup>24</sup>Of course we may eat fruit from the

trees in the garden," the woman replied. <sup>3</sup>"It's only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God said, 'You must not eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die.'"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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*.

<sup>14</sup>Then the LORD God said to the serpent,

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

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

<sup>15</sup>And I will cause hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring.

He will strike\* your head, and you will strike his heel."

<sup>16</sup>Then he said to the woman,

"I will sharpen the pain of your pregnancy, and in pain you will give birth.

And you will desire to control your husband, but he will rule over you.\*"

<sup>17</sup>And to the man he said,

"Since you listened to your wife and ate from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat,

the ground is cursed because of you. All your life you will struggle to scratch a living from it.

<sup>18</sup>It will grow thorns and thistles for you,

though you will eat of its grains.

<sup>19</sup>By the sweat of your brow will you have food to eat

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

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

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

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

### Paradise Lost: God’s Judgment

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

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

### CHAPTER 4 Cain and Abel

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

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

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

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

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.”*



## STEP 4

### Coming Out of Hiding

BIBLE READING: Genesis 3:6-13

#### We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### The Descendants of Cain

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

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

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

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

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

ter named Naamah. <sup>23</sup>One day Lamech said to his wives,

"Adah and Zillah, hear my voice; listen to me, you wives of Lamech.

I have killed a man who attacked me, a young man who wounded me.

<sup>24</sup>If someone who kills Cain is punished seven times, then the one who kills me will be punished seventy-seven times!"

### The Birth of Seth

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

## CHAPTER 5

### The Descendants of Adam

This is the written account of the descendants of Adam. When God created human beings,\* he made them to be like himself. <sup>2</sup>He created them male and female, and he blessed them and called them "human."

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

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

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



# CAIN & ABEL

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

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

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

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

## STRENGTHS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

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

## WEAKNESSES AND MISTAKES:

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

## LESSONS FROM THEIR LIVES:

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

## KEY VERSE:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

daughters. <sup>20</sup>Jared lived 962 years, and then he died.

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

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

<sup>28</sup>When Lamech was 182 years old, he became the father of a son. <sup>29</sup>Lamech named his son Noah, for he said, "May he bring us relief\* from our work and the painful labor of farming this ground that the LORD has cursed." <sup>30</sup>After the birth of Noah, Lamech lived another 595 years, and he had other sons and daughters. <sup>31</sup>Lamech lived 777 years, and then he died.

<sup>32</sup>By the time Noah was 500 years old, he was the father of Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

## CHAPTER 6

### A World Gone Wrong

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

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

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

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

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

### The Story of Noah

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

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

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

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

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

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



Then construct decks and stalls throughout its interior. <sup>13</sup>Make the boat 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high.\* <sup>16</sup>Leave an 18-inch opening\* below the roof all the way around the boat. Put the door on the side, and build three decks inside the boat—lower, middle, and upper.

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

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

## CHAPTER 7

### The Flood Covers the Earth

When everything was ready, the LORD said to Noah, “Go into the boat with all your family, for among all the people of the earth, I can see that you alone are righteous. <sup>2</sup>Take with you seven pairs—male and female—of each animal I have approved for eating and for sacrifice,\* and take one pair of each of the others. <sup>3</sup>Also take seven pairs of every kind of bird. There must be a male and a female in each pair to ensure that all life will survive on the earth after the flood. <sup>4</sup>Seven days from now I will make the rains pour down on the earth. And it will rain for forty days and forty nights, until I have wiped from the earth all the living things I have created.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## CHAPTER 8

**The Flood Recedes**

But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and livestock with him in the boat. He sent a wind to blow across the earth, and the floodwaters began to recede. <sup>2</sup>The underground waters stopped flowing, and the torrential rains from the sky were stopped. <sup>3</sup>So the floodwaters gradually receded from the earth. After 150 days, <sup>4</sup>exactly five months from the time the flood began,\* the boat came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. <sup>5</sup>Two and a half months later,\* as the waters continued to go down, other mountain peaks became visible.

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

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

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

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

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

<sup>20</sup>Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and there he sacrificed as burnt offerings the animals and birds that had been approved for that purpose.\* <sup>21</sup>And the LORD was pleased with the aroma of the sacrifice and said to himself, “I will never again curse the ground because of the human race, even though everything they think or imagine is bent toward evil from childhood. I will never again destroy all living things. <sup>22</sup>As long as the earth remains, there will be planting and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night.”

## CHAPTER 9

**God Confirms His Covenant**

Then God blessed Noah and his sons and told them, “Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth. <sup>2</sup>All the animals of the earth, all the birds of the sky, all the small animals that scurry along the ground, and all the fish in the sea will look on you with fear and terror. I have placed them in your power. <sup>3</sup>I have given them to you for food, just as I have given you grain and vegetables. <sup>4</sup>But you must never eat any meat that still has the lifeblood in it.

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

8:4 Hebrew on the seventeenth day of the seventh month; see 7:11. 8:5 Hebrew On the first day of the tenth month; see 7:11 and note on 8:4. 8:13 Hebrew On the first day of the first month; see 7:11. 8:14 Hebrew The twenty-seventh day of the second month arrived; see note on 8:13. 8:20 Hebrew every clean animal and every clean bird.

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

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

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



# NOAH & SONS

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

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

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

## STRENGTHS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

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

## WEAKNESSES AND MISTAKES:

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

## LESSONS FROM THEIR LIVES:

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

## KEY VERSE:

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

The story of Noah and his sons is told in Genesis 5:29–10:32. Noah is referred to in 1 Chronicles 1:4; Isaiah 54:9; Ezekiel 14:14, 20; Matthew 24:37–38; Luke 3:36; 17:26–27; Hebrews 11:7; 1 Peter 3:20; and 2 Peter 2:5.

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

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

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

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

## Noah’s Sons

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

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

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

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

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

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

<sup>24</sup>When Noah woke up from his stupor, he learned what Ham, his youngest son, had done.

<sup>25</sup>Then he cursed Canaan, the son of Ham:

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

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

“May the LORD, the God of Shem, be  
blessed,  
and may Canaan be his servant!

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

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

## CHAPTER 10

This is the account of the families of Shem, Ham, and Japheth, the three sons of Noah. Many children were born to them after the great flood.

### Descendants of Japheth

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

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

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

### Descendants of Ham

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

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

<sup>8</sup>Cush was also the ancestor of Nimrod, who was the first heroic warrior on earth.

<sup>9</sup>Since he was the greatest hunter in the

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

<sup>11</sup>From there he expanded his territory to Assyria,\* <sup>12</sup>building the cities of Nineveh, Rehoboth-ir, Calah, <sup>13</sup>and Resen (the great city located between Nineveh and Calah).

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

<sup>15</sup>Canaan’s oldest son was Sidon, the ancestor of the Sidonians. Canaan was also the ancestor of the Hittites, <sup>16</sup>Jebusites, Amorites, Girgashites, <sup>17</sup>Hivites, Arkites, Sinites, <sup>18</sup>Arvadites, Zemarites, and Hamathites. The Canaanite clans eventually spread out, <sup>19</sup>and the territory of Canaan extended from Sidon in the north to Gerar and Gaza in the south, and east as far as Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, near Lasha.

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

### Descendants of Shem

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

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

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

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

<sup>25</sup>Eber had two sons. The first was named Peleg (which means “division”), for during his lifetime the people of the world were divided into different language groups. His brother’s name was Joktan.

<sup>26</sup>Joktan was the ancestor of Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, <sup>27</sup>Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, <sup>28</sup>Obal, Abimael, Sheba,

<sup>29</sup>Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab. All these

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

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



# ABRAHAM & SARAH

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

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

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

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

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

## STRENGTHS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

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

## WEAKNESSES AND MISTAKES:

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

## LESSONS FROM THEIR LIVES:

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

## KEY VERSES:

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

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

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

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

## Conclusion

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

11:2 Hebrew *Shinar*.

earth descended from these clans after the great flood.

## CHAPTER 11

### The Tower of Babel

At one time all the people of the world spoke the same language and used the same words.

<sup>2</sup>As the people migrated to the east, they found a plain in the land of Babylonia\* and settled there.

<sup>3</sup>They began saying to each other, "Let's

make bricks and harden them with fire." (In this region bricks were used instead of stone, and tar was used for mortar.) <sup>4</sup>Then they said, "Come, let's build a great city for ourselves with a tower that reaches into the sky. This will make us famous and keep us from being scattered all over the world."

<sup>5</sup>But the LORD came down to look at the city and the tower the people were building. <sup>6</sup>"Look!" he said. "The people are united, and they all speak the same language. After this, nothing they set out to do will be impossible for them! <sup>7</sup>Come, let's go down and confuse the people with different languages. Then they won't be able to understand each other."

<sup>8</sup>In that way, the LORD scattered them all over the world, and they stopped building the city. <sup>9</sup>That is why the city was called Babel,\* because that is where the LORD confused the people with different languages. In this way he scattered them all over the world.

### The Line of Descent from Shem to Abram

<sup>10</sup>This is the account of Shem's family.

Two years after the great flood, when Shem was 100 years old, he became the father of\* Arphaxad. <sup>11</sup>After the birth of\* Arphaxad, Shem lived another 500 years and had other sons and daughters.

<sup>12</sup>When Arphaxad was 35 years old, he became the father of Shelah. <sup>13</sup>After the birth of Shelah, Arphaxad lived another

403 years and had other sons and daughters.\*

<sup>14</sup>When Shelah was 30 years old, he became the father of Eber. <sup>15</sup>After the birth of Eber, Shelah lived another 403 years and had other sons and daughters.

<sup>16</sup>When Eber was 34 years old, he became the father of Peleg. <sup>17</sup>After the birth of Peleg, Eber lived another 430 years and had other sons and daughters.

<sup>18</sup>When Peleg was 30 years old, he became the father of Reu. <sup>19</sup>After the birth of Reu, Peleg lived another 209 years and had other sons and daughters.

<sup>20</sup>When Reu was 32 years old, he became the father of Serug. <sup>21</sup>After the birth of Serug, Reu lived another 207 years and had other sons and daughters.

<sup>22</sup>When Serug was 30 years old, he became the father of Nahor. <sup>23</sup>After the birth of Nahor, Serug lived another 200 years and had other sons and daughters.

<sup>24</sup>When Nahor was 29 years old, he became the father of Terah. <sup>25</sup>After the birth of Terah, Nahor lived another 119 years and had other sons and daughters.

<sup>26</sup>When Terah was 70 years old, he had become the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

### The Family of Terah

<sup>27</sup>This is the account of Terah's family. Terah was the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran;

11:9 Or *Babylon*. *Babel* sounds like a Hebrew term that means "confusion." 11:10 Or *the ancestor of*; also in 11:12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24. 11:11 Or *the birth of this ancestor of*; also in 11:13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25. 11:12-13 Greek version reads <sup>12</sup>When Arphaxad was 135 years old, he became the father of Cainan. <sup>13</sup>After the birth of Cainan, Arphaxad lived another 430 years and had other sons and daughters, and then he died. When Cainan was 130 years old, he became the father of Shelah. After the birth of Shelah, Cainan lived another 330 years and had other sons and daughters, and then he died. Compare Luke 3:35-36.

**11:3-4** Whatever else the Tower of Babel might have represented, it was a mighty monument to human pride. It was a symbol of man's rebellion against the revealed will of God. This type of pride is always destructive to human community and to the process of recovery.

**11:5-9** The Tower of Babel incident records the progression of broken communication that began back in the Garden of Eden. After sin entered the world, Adam and Eve began to hide the truth. They tried to blame each other and God for their mistakes, which resulted in separation from God and barriers between that first couple. The sinful pride of the people of Babel caused another great rift in human communication. Numerous languages now divided them into various groups, making their cooperation difficult if not impossible. But the story doesn't end there. God is in the business of restoring broken communication. He chose the people of Israel and spoke to them, giving them his laws. His Son was born through this nation, so he could speak to us and walk among us. And when the Holy Spirit came, the diversity of language was no longer a barrier to communication (Acts 2:5-12). God's program is designed to enhance our communication with him and with the people around us.

**12:1** A relationship with God is a two-way street. He is there to help us, but he expects us to follow his plan. When God called Abram to leave his country and his people and go to a land that God would show him, God promised to guide him. But Abram had to step out in faith. God has promised to be with us as we seek his help in recovery, but he may also ask something of us. As with Abram, God may call us away from the familiar world that drags us down. And if we want to progress, we will need to follow his plan.



# LOT & FAMILY

Many people in this world live for wealth, comfort, and the easy life. And they want to get it as quickly as possible! To make this happen, they often sacrifice the really important things in life. This was true in the life of Abraham's nephew Lot. Looking for the easy road to wealth and comfort, he made decisions that ended up destroying everything he had lived for.

Lot always thought of himself first. He demonstrated this when he chose the rich pastureland of the valleys, leaving Abraham with the rugged hill country. Embracing the easy comforts of the valley's cities and the physical prosperity they offered, he grew blind to the legacy he was leaving his descendants. When the men of Sodom demanded that Lot send his angelic guests out to take part in their sexual practices, Lot offered his daughters as an alternative. His desire to be accepted by the sinful people of his adopted homeland led him to fail to treat his daughters with the respect and protection they deserved.

The result of Lot's selfishness and greed was the loss of his fortune and the ruin of his family. He sacrificed his family and all he had worked for to the gods of comfort and wealth. He witnessed his wife's death as a result of her disobedience to God—something he had modeled for her. His daughters followed Lot's example, too. They used the quickest and easiest means available to overcome their lonely and childless state—drunkenness, seduction, and incest.

Our society places great value on wealth, comfort, and success, calling us all to join the mad rush to get them. This focus is so pervasive that it may be hard for us to see it as bad. Even though living for wealth may not seem such a terrible sin, its destructive effects upon people in our world are widespread. We must learn to put God first. If we put wealth first, we are setting ourselves up to lose all the really important things in life—our family and our relationship with God.

## STRENGTHS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Lot was successful at generating wealth.
- The apostle Peter referred to him as a just and righteous man.

## WEAKNESSES AND MISTAKES:

- Lot often chose the easiest course of action, usually at the expense of doing what was right.
- When faced with making a decision, Lot thought of himself first.
- Lot's daughters used sinful means to meet their needs, instead of seeking God's provision.

## LESSONS FROM THEIR LIVES:

- If we live for comfort and wealth, they can come between us and our families.
- We need to take care of our responsibilities to God and people first if we want our lives to be successful.
- Mistakes made by parents usually lead to mistakes made by their children.
- When we put wealth and comfort before obedience to God, the result will be destructive.

## KEY VERSE:

"Come, let's get [Lot] drunk with wine, and then we will have sex with him. That way we will preserve our family line through our father" (Genesis 19:32).

The story of Lot and his family is told in Genesis 13 and 19. Lot is also mentioned in Deuteronomy 2:9; Luke 17:28-32; and 2 Peter 2:7-8.

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and Haran was the father of Lot. <sup>28</sup>But Haran died in Ur of the Chaldeans, the land of his birth, while his father, Terah, was still living. <sup>29</sup>Meanwhile, Abram and Nahor both married. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife was Milcah. (Milcah and her sister Iscah were daughters of Nahor's brother Haran.) <sup>30</sup>But Sarai was unable to become pregnant and had no children.

<sup>31</sup>One day Terah took his son Abram, his daughter-in-law Sarai (his son Abram's wife), and his grandson Lot (his son Haran's child)

and moved away from Ur of the Chaldeans. He was headed for the land of Canaan, but they stopped at Haran and settled there. <sup>32</sup>Terah lived for 205 years\* and died while still in Haran.

## CHAPTER 12

### The Call of Abram

The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father's family, and go to the land that I will show you. <sup>1</sup>I will make you into a great

11:32 Some ancient versions read *145 years*; compare 11:26 and 12:4.

nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. <sup>3</sup>I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you.”

<sup>4</sup>So Abram departed as the LORD had instructed, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran. <sup>5</sup>He took his wife, Sarai, his nephew Lot, and all his wealth—his livestock and all the people he had taken into his household at Haran—and headed for the land of Canaan. When they arrived in Canaan, <sup>6</sup>Abram traveled through the land as far as Shechem. There he set up camp beside the oak of Moreh. At that time, the area was inhabited by Canaanites.

<sup>7</sup>Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, “I will give this land to your descendants.” And Abram built an altar there and dedicated it to the LORD, who had appeared to him. <sup>8</sup>After that, Abram traveled south and set up camp in the hill country, with Bethel to the west and Ai to the east. There he built another altar and dedicated it to the LORD, and he worshiped the LORD. <sup>9</sup>Then Abram continued traveling south by stages toward the Negev.

### Abram and Sarai in Egypt

<sup>10</sup>At that time a severe famine struck the land of Canaan, forcing Abram to go down to Egypt, where he lived as a foreigner. <sup>11</sup>As he was approaching the border of Egypt, Abram said to his wife, Sarai, “Look, you are a very beautiful woman. <sup>12</sup>When the Egyptians see you, they will say, ‘This is his wife. Let’s kill him; then we can have her!’ <sup>13</sup>So please tell them you are my sister. Then they will spare my life and treat me well because of their interest in you.”

<sup>14</sup>And sure enough, when Abram arrived in Egypt, everyone spoke of Sarai’s beauty.

12:7 Hebrew *seed*.

<sup>15</sup>When the palace officials saw her, they sang her praises to Pharaoh, their king, and Sarai was taken into his palace. <sup>16</sup>Then Pharaoh gave Abram many gifts because of her—sheep, goats, cattle, male and female donkeys, male and female servants, and camels.

<sup>17</sup>But the LORD sent terrible plagues upon Pharaoh and his household because of Sarai, Abram’s wife. <sup>18</sup>So Pharaoh summoned Abram and accused him sharply. “What have you done to me?” he demanded. “Why didn’t you tell me she was your wife? <sup>19</sup>Why did you say, ‘She is my sister,’ and allow me to take her as my wife? Now then, here is your wife. Take her and get out of here!” <sup>20</sup>Pharaoh ordered some of his men to escort them, and he sent Abram out of the country, along with his wife and all his possessions.

## CHAPTER 13

### Abram and Lot Separate

So Abram left Egypt and traveled north into the Negev, along with his wife and Lot and all that they owned. <sup>2</sup>(Abram was very rich in livestock, silver, and gold.) <sup>3</sup>From the Negev, they continued traveling by stages toward Bethel, and they pitched their tents between Bethel and Ai, where they had camped before. <sup>4</sup>This was the same place where Abram had built the altar, and there he worshiped the LORD again.

<sup>5</sup>Lot, who was traveling with Abram, had also become very wealthy with flocks of sheep and goats, herds of cattle, and many tents. <sup>6</sup>But the land could not support both Abram and Lot with all their flocks and herds living so close together. <sup>7</sup>So disputes broke out between the herdsmen of Abram and Lot. (At that time Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the land.)

<sup>8</sup>Finally Abram said to Lot, “Let’s not allow this conflict to come between us or our

**12:11-20** As Abram and Sarai approached Egypt, Abram began to fear that the Egyptians would kill him so they could take his beautiful wife. So Abram and Sarai spun a lie to “protect” their relationship; they said that they were brother and sister. This was a half-truth—they actually were half siblings. But it should be recognized that a half-truth is a whole lie. And like most lies, this one backfired, almost destroying Abram and Sarai’s marriage. Total honesty is an essential part of recovery. We need to be careful to avoid doing what Abram and Sarai did, even though they did it with the best of intentions. Dishonesty never pays—we should never try to rationalize it.

**13:5-11** A conflict developed between the families of Abram and Lot over pastureland for their flocks. To ease the strained family relationship, Abram offered Lot first choice of the land. Abram realized that people were more important than possessions, so he sacrificed his own right to the best land to maintain harmony between their families. In recovery, we need to learn this important lesson: Our relationships are more important than the things we own.



herdsmen. After all, we are close relatives!<sup>9</sup>The whole countryside is open to you. Take your choice of any section of the land you want, and we will separate. If you want the land to the left, then I'll take the land on the right. If you prefer the land on the right, then I'll go to the left."

<sup>10</sup>Lot took a long look at the fertile plains of the Jordan Valley in the direction of Zoar. The whole area was well watered everywhere, like the garden of the LORD or the beautiful land of Egypt. (This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.)<sup>11</sup>Lot chose for himself the whole Jordan Valley to the east of them. He went there with his flocks and servants and parted company with his uncle Abram.<sup>12</sup>So Abram settled in the land of Canaan, and Lot moved his tents to a place near Sodom and settled among the cities of the plain.<sup>13</sup>But the people of this area were extremely wicked and constantly sinned against the LORD.

<sup>14</sup>After Lot had gone, the LORD said to Abram, "Look as far as you can see in every direction—north and south, east and west.<sup>15</sup>I am giving all this land, as far as you can see, to you and your descendants\* as a permanent possession.<sup>16</sup>And I will give you so many descendants that, like the dust of the earth, they cannot be counted!<sup>17</sup>Go and walk through the land in every direction, for I am giving it to you."

<sup>18</sup>So Abram moved his camp to Hebron and settled near the oak grove belonging to Mamre. There he built another altar to the LORD.

## CHAPTER 14

### Abram Rescues Lot

About this time war broke out in the region. King Amraphel of Babylonia,\* King Arioch of Ellasar, King Kedorlaomer of Elam, and King Tidal of Goiim<sup>2</sup>fought against King Bera of Sodom, King Birsha of Gomorrah,

King Shinab of Admah, King Shemeber of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (also called Zoar).

<sup>3</sup>This second group of kings joined forces in Siddim Valley (that is, the valley of the Dead Sea\*).<sup>4</sup>For twelve years they had been subject to King Kedorlaomer, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled against him.

<sup>5</sup>One year later Kedorlaomer and his allies arrived and defeated the Rephaites at Ashteroth-karnaim, the Zuzites at Ham, the Emites at Shaveh-kiriathaim,<sup>6</sup>and the Horites at Mount Seir, as far as El-paran at the edge of the wilderness.<sup>7</sup>Then they turned back and came to En-mishpat (now called Kadesh) and conquered all the territory of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites living in Hazazon-tamar.

<sup>8</sup>Then the rebel kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Bela (also called Zoar) prepared for battle in the valley of the Dead Sea.\*<sup>9</sup>They fought against King Kedorlaomer of Elam, King Tidal of Goiim, King Amraphel of Babylonia, and King Arioch of Ellasar—four kings against five.<sup>10</sup>As it happened, the valley of the Dead Sea was filled with tar pits. And as the army of the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, some fell into the tar pits, while the rest escaped into the mountains.<sup>11</sup>The victorious invaders then plundered Sodom and Gomorrah and headed for home, taking with them all the spoils of war and the food supplies.<sup>12</sup>They also captured Lot—Abram's nephew who lived in Sodom—and carried off everything he owned.

<sup>13</sup>But one of Lot's men escaped and reported everything to Abram the Hebrew, who was living near the oak grove belonging to Mamre the Amorite. Mamre and his relatives, Eshkol and Aner, were Abram's allies.

<sup>14</sup>When Abram heard that his nephew Lot had been captured, he mobilized the 318 trained men who had been born into his household. Then he pursued Kedorlaomer's army until he caught up with them at Dan.

13:15 Hebrew *seed*; also in 13:16. 14:1 Hebrew *Shinar*; also in 14:9. 14:3 Hebrew *Salt Sea*. 14:8 Hebrew *Siddim Valley* (see 14:3); also in 14:10.

**13:11-13** One bad choice often leads to another. The choices Lot made here and in the following chapters led him toward his eventual fall. Here, he selfishly chose the best land and the easy lifestyle that would come with it. In 13:12-13, he chose to move closer to the wicked city of Sodom. In 19:1-18, he chose to become an important man in a wicked place. In 19:30-38, Lot's descent reached its final depths as he had incestuous relations with his daughters. We need to think ahead, reflecting upon the probable consequences of our present decisions.

**14:14-16** A number of important character traits emerge as we examine Abram's prompt military action. He proved himself to be a man of courage, always ready to act when the situation demanded it. He was willing to give up certain luxuries in order to follow the program God had laid out for him. These are important characteristics for us to emulate as we continue in the recovery process.

<sup>15</sup>There he divided his men and attacked during the night. Kedorlaomer's army fled, but Abram chased them as far as Hobah, north of Damascus. <sup>16</sup>Abram recovered all the goods that had been taken, and he brought back his nephew Lot with his possessions and all the women and other captives.

### Melchizedek Blesses Abram

<sup>17</sup>After Abram returned from his victory over Kedorlaomer and all his allies, the king of Sodom went out to meet him in the valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley).

<sup>18</sup>And Melchizedek, the king of Salem and a priest of God Most High,\* brought Abram some bread and wine. <sup>19</sup>Melchizedek blessed Abram with this blessing:

"Blessed be Abram by God Most High,  
Creator of heaven and earth.

<sup>20</sup>And blessed be God Most High,  
who has defeated your enemies for you."

Then Abram gave Melchizedek a tenth of all the goods he had recovered.

<sup>21</sup>The king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give back my people who were captured. But you may keep for yourself all the goods you have recovered."

<sup>22</sup>Abram replied to the king of Sodom, "I solemnly swear to the LORD, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, <sup>23</sup>that I will not take so much as a single thread or sandal thong from what belongs to you. Otherwise you might say, 'I am the one who made Abram rich.' <sup>24</sup>I will accept only what my young warriors have already eaten, and I request that you give a fair share of the goods to my allies—Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre."

14:18 Hebrew *El-Elyon*; also in 14:19, 20, 22.

## CHAPTER 15

### The LORD's Covenant Promise to Abram

Some time later, the LORD spoke to Abram in a vision and said to him, "Do not be afraid, Abram, for I will protect you, and your reward will be great."

<sup>2</sup>But Abram replied, "O Sovereign LORD, what good are all your blessings when I don't even have a son? Since you've given me no children, Eliezer of Damascus, a servant in my household, will inherit all my wealth. <sup>3</sup>You have given me no descendants of my own, so one of my servants will be my heir."

<sup>4</sup>Then the LORD said to him, "No, your servant will not be your heir, for you will have a son of your own who will be your heir."

<sup>5</sup>Then the LORD took Abram outside and said to him, "Look up into the sky and count the stars if you can. That's how many descendants you will have!"

<sup>6</sup>And Abram believed the LORD, and the LORD counted him as righteous because of his faith.

<sup>7</sup>Then the LORD told him, "I am the LORD who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land as your possession."

<sup>8</sup>But Abram replied, "O Sovereign LORD, how can I be sure that I will actually possess it?"

<sup>9</sup>The LORD told him, "Bring me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." <sup>10</sup>So Abram presented all these to him and killed them. Then he cut each animal down the middle and laid the halves side by side; he did not, however, cut the birds in half. <sup>11</sup>Some vultures swooped down to eat the carcasses, but Abram chased them away.

**15:4-5** Because of the disappointment and frustration of seventy-five childless years, God's promise of numerous children must have stretched Abram's faith to the very limit. God's plan for Abram seemed an impossibility—thousands of descendants from an old man and a barren woman! But God's promise did actually come about. God's plans for us may seem beyond belief—even impossible. We may think we are beyond hope. But with God, nothing is impossible!

**15:6** This is one of the most important verses in the Old Testament. Abram believed God, and God declared him righteous. In other words, it was Abram's faith, not his works, that made him righteous before God. For us to continue in recovery, we need to trust God more and trust our works less. We are powerless over the pressures of sin, but God will help us through the toughest temptations if we trust him. He will count us righteous because of our trust in him, not because we are perfect.

**16:1-4** Since God's promise of a child had been given, about two years had passed without anything happening. Sometimes the hardest part of recovery is the waiting. Here Abram and Sarai show us what *not* to do when things don't progress as quickly as we might hope. Rather than accept God's timing, they took matters into their own hands. They assigned a servant girl, Hagar, to be a surrogate mother for Abram's son. This "solution" has been a source of conflict to this day. Abram's descendants through Hagar are the Arab nations whose conflicts with the Jews keep the Middle East in constant turmoil.



# HAGAR & ISHMAEL

Hagar is often overshadowed by the two prominent people in her life—Abraham and Sarah. Her story is woven into the fabric of great events that make up Abraham's life. Yet God chose this "insignificant" woman to bear the son who was destined to be the father of the Arab nations.

When Hagar became pregnant, she gave in to pride and looked down on her mistress, Sarai, who had been unable to bear children. This prompted a great deal of strife in Abraham's family and much suffering for Hagar. The pain and alienation she suffered because of the baby and her wrong attitude could have put considerable strain on the mother-child relationship from the beginning. But Hagar showed no regrets about having her son. She joyfully received him and accepted him despite the complicated and emotionally charged circumstances surrounding his birth.

Hagar and her son, Ishmael, had much in common. They were both rejected by Abraham's household. Together they experienced the torture of the hot, barren desert after Sarai demanded that Abraham send them away. They became nameless outcasts, discarded by those who had once valued them. Under such circumstances, it must have been difficult to maintain a positive self-assessment.

Yet this mother and son persevered through these trials because they had faith in God, who had appeared to them in the wilderness. They knew that they were of great worth in his sight, and they rebuilt their identity upon his promises. To this day their story is used to illustrate God's deep concern for all who have been discarded and rejected. It also shows us that God's assessment of our life is far more important than what other people think.

## STRENGTHS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Hagar was willing to humbly return to Sarai even though she had been badly mistreated.
- Hagar stood by her son even though he was the source of many of her trials.

## WEAKNESSES AND MISTAKES:

- When Hagar became pregnant, she looked down on Sarai with contempt, prompting much of the strife that followed.
- Hagar momentarily abandoned her son in the shade of a bush at the time of his greatest need.

## LESSONS FROM THEIR LIVES:

- A loving mother/child relationship is a precious gift from God.
- God is deeply concerned about those who have been abused and rejected.
- God is able to restore a sense of self-worth even in the most trying times.

## KEY VERSES:

"The angel of the LORD said to her, 'Return to your mistress and submit to her authority.' Then he added, 'I will give you more descendants than you can count.' And the angel also said, 'You are now pregnant and will give birth to a son. You are to name him Ishmael (which means "God hears"), for the LORD has heard your cry of distress'" (Genesis 16:9-11).

The story of Hagar and Ishmael is told in Genesis 16–21. The apostle Paul briefly discusses them in Galatians 4:21–31.

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<sup>12</sup>As the sun was going down, Abram fell into a deep sleep, and a terrifying darkness came down over him. <sup>13</sup>Then the LORD said to Abram, "You can be sure that your descendants will be strangers in a foreign land, where they will be oppressed as slaves for 400 years. <sup>14</sup>But I will punish the nation that enslaves them, and in the end they will come away with great wealth. <sup>15</sup>(As for you, you will die in peace and be buried at a ripe old age.) <sup>16</sup>After four generations your descendants will return here to this land, for the sins of the Amorites do not yet warrant their destruction."

<sup>17</sup>After the sun went down and darkness fell,

Abram saw a smoking firepot and a flaming torch pass between the halves of the carcasses. <sup>18</sup>So the LORD made a covenant with Abram that day and said, "I have given this land to your descendants, all the way from the border of Egypt\* to the great Euphrates River—<sup>19</sup>the land now occupied by the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, <sup>20</sup>Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, <sup>21</sup>Amorites, Canaanites, Girdashites, and Jebusites."

## CHAPTER 16

### The Birth of Ishmael

Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had not been able to bear children for him. But she had an

15:18 Hebrew *the river of Egypt*, referring either to an eastern branch of the Nile River or to the Brook of Egypt in the Sinai (see Num 34:5).

Egyptian servant named Hagar. <sup>2</sup>So Sarai said to Abram, “The LORD has prevented me from having children. Go and sleep with my servant. Perhaps I can have children through her.” And Abram agreed with Sarai’s proposal. <sup>3</sup>So Sarai, Abram’s wife, took Hagar the Egyptian servant and gave her to Abram as a wife. (This happened ten years after Abram had settled in the land of Canaan.)

<sup>4</sup>So Abram had sexual relations with Hagar, and she became pregnant. But when Hagar knew she was pregnant, she began to treat her mistress, Sarai, with contempt. <sup>5</sup>Then Sarai said to Abram, “This is all your fault! I put my servant into your arms, but now that she’s pregnant she treats me with contempt. The LORD will show who’s wrong—you or me!”

<sup>6</sup>Abram replied, “Look, she is your servant, so deal with her as you see fit.” Then Sarai treated Hagar so harshly that she finally ran away.

<sup>7</sup>The angel of the LORD found Hagar beside a spring of water in the wilderness, along the road to Shur. <sup>8</sup>The angel said to her, “Hagar, Sarai’s servant, where have you come from, and where are you going?”

“I’m running away from my mistress, Sarai,” she replied.

<sup>9</sup>The angel of the LORD said to her, “Return to your mistress, and submit to her authority.” <sup>10</sup>Then he added, “I will give you more descendants than you can count.”

<sup>11</sup>And the angel also said, “You are now pregnant and will give birth to a son. You are to name him Ishmael (which means ‘God hears’), for the LORD has heard your cry of distress. <sup>12</sup>This son of yours will be a wild man, as untamed as a wild donkey! He will raise his fist against everyone, and everyone

will be against him. Yes, he will live in open hostility against all his relatives.”

<sup>13</sup>Thereafter, Hagar used another name to refer to the LORD, who had spoken to her. She said, “You are the God who sees me.”\* She also said, “Have I truly seen the One who sees me?” <sup>14</sup>So that well was named Beer-lahai-roi (which means “well of the Living One who sees me”). It can still be found between Kadesh and Bered.

<sup>15</sup>So Hagar gave Abram a son, and Abram named him Ishmael. <sup>16</sup>Abram was eighty-six years old when Ishmael was born.

## CHAPTER 17

### Abram Is Named Abraham

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, “I am El-Shaddai—‘God Almighty.’ Serve me faithfully and live a blameless life. <sup>2</sup>I will make a covenant with you, by which I will guarantee to give you countless descendants.”

<sup>3</sup>At this, Abram fell face down on the ground. Then God said to him, <sup>4</sup>“This is my covenant with you: I will make you the father of a multitude of nations! <sup>5</sup>What’s more, I am changing your name. It will no longer be Abram. Instead, you will be called Abraham,\* for you will be the father of many nations. <sup>6</sup>I will make you extremely fruitful. Your descendants will become many nations, and kings will be among them!

<sup>7</sup>“I will confirm my covenant with you and your descendants\* after you, from generation to generation. This is the everlasting covenant: I will always be your God and the God of your descendants after you. <sup>8</sup>And I will give the entire land of Canaan, where you now live as a foreigner, to you and your descendants. It will be their possession forever, and I will be their God.”

16:13 Hebrew *El-roi*. 17:5 *Abram* means “exalted father”; *Abraham* sounds like a Hebrew term that means “father of many.” 17:7 Hebrew *seed*; also in 17:7b, 8, 9, 10, 19.

**16:7-13** When Hagar could not help herself and recognized her powerlessness over her situation, the angel of the Lord came and ministered to her. Until we recognize that our situation is hopeless without outside help, God waits and does not help us. But when we are ready to admit our need and cry out to him, he is ready to step in.

**17:5-6** Since Abram was childless, his name (meaning “exalted father”) must have been a source of embarrassment to him. Here it is changed to “Abraham,” which means “father of many.” Abraham’s name, in a real sense, became his promise from God. It would have been a continual reminder and source of hope that God would come through for him in the end.

**17:9-10, 24-27** Most of our significant relationships are symbolized by an outward sign. For example, married people wear rings as a sign of their marriage commitment. Circumcision was a sign of the agreement or covenant between God and Abraham. It was a mark by which Abraham’s descendants were set apart as God’s special people. Inner changes need to be accompanied by outer signs; beliefs need to be proven by actions. In recovery, as changes begin to take place inside, we need to express these changes outwardly in our actions and lifestyle.

to the age of 110. <sup>23</sup>He lived to see three generations of descendants of his son Ephraim, and he lived to see the birth of the children of Manasseh's son Makir, whom he claimed as his own.\*

<sup>24</sup>"Soon I will die," Joseph told his brothers, "but God will surely come to help you and lead you out of this land of Egypt. He will bring you back to the land he solemnly

50:23 Hebrew *who were born on Joseph's knees*.

promised to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob."

<sup>25</sup>Then Joseph made the sons of Israel swear an oath, and he said, "When God comes to help you and lead you back, you must take my bones with you." <sup>26</sup>So Joseph died at the age of 110. The Egyptians embalmed him, and his body was placed in a coffin in Egypt.



## REFLECTIONS ON *Genesis*

### **\*insights** FROM THE NAMES OF GOD

The Hebrew name for God used in **Genesis 1:1** (*Elohim*) demonstrates the enormity of God's power to transform lives. This name for God is in the plural form, signifying his strength and might. It also hints that God is in some sense plural—a community unto himself (see also 1:26; 3:22; 11:7). But though this name is plural, it is treated grammatically as singular, revealing God's unified and personal nature. He is omnipotent in power but personal in his touch. He is able and willing to provide the help we need.

In **Genesis 2:4** a new Hebrew name for God is introduced: "LORD" (*Yahweh* or *Jehovah*). This is the personal name for God; it is his relationship name. It describes the God who chose Abraham and established a covenant with him. It describes the God who chose to relate to the Israelites and make them his people. It is the name that reminds us that God wants to have a relationship with us.

### **\*insights** FROM GOD'S CREATION

As the source of all things, God is always able to meet our needs. The Hebrew verb translated "create" in **Genesis 1:1** describes an act that only God can do. It is used to describe three things that science cannot explain: the creation of something from nothing (1:1), the creation of living things from inanimate matter (1:21-22), and the creation of man (1:27). A God who can create people and the world we live in can certainly empower a person in the process of recovery.

**Genesis 1:2** describes the earth before it was shaped by God's creative hand. It was empty, formless, and dark. These three characteristics forebode nothing but trouble. But then we are told that "the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters." This fourth characteristic is a source of hope and promises recovery. The presence of the Holy Spirit was a necessary element in the events of all six days of Creation. In the same way, his presence in our life is necessary before any rebuilding and recovery can take place.

In **Genesis 1:3** God said, "Let there be light." The word *let* in this verse is used to introduce one of God's purposes for his creation—that there should be light in the world. This word is used repeatedly in this chapter to introduce the various things that God intended for his creation (see 1:6, 9, 11, 14-15, 20, 24, 26). He had a purpose and a plan for everything. He also has a plan for each of us. And his plan is designed to bring about the best for his creation. As we go through recovery, we need only be willing to turn the process over to his design and plan.

In **Genesis 1:26-27** we see that the first people were created to be like God. Oceans of ink have been spilled attempting to explain what this means. One characteristic that all the writers agree upon is the ability of people to make moral decisions. We have the power of choice, and we are accountable to God and to

others for the choices we make. To continue in recovery we must take responsibility for this aspect of God's nature in each of us—our ability to choose.

### **\*insights** ABOUT TEMPTATION

In **Genesis 2:16-17** God forbade Adam and Eve to eat from one certain tree. Why did he do this? Why didn't God create a world where people couldn't sin? Or why didn't he make people so they couldn't disobey his commands? The answer lies in the very nature of God. God is love and desires to have a loving relationship with his creatures. He wants us to respond to him with love in return. But a loving response is only possible when we have the choice to do otherwise. He wants us to obey because we love him, not because we have no other choice.

In **Genesis 3:1-3** Satan began his temptation of Eve by planting doubt in her mind concerning what God had said. Notice that Eve wasn't very clear on the details of God's command. God had told them not to *eat* fruit from a certain tree (2:17). Eve claimed that God had said they were not to even *touch* the tree. She was making God's requirements more difficult than God himself had done! Her own confusion about what God had said made her even more susceptible to the serpent's wiles. We need a proper understanding of God's truth if we hope to stand against Satan's temptations.

In **Genesis 3:6** notice that Eve quickly succumbed to a visual temptation. Until Eve really *saw* the tree, she was not influenced by the three common elements of all temptation. She saw that the fruit of the tree would be good to eat ("a craving for physical pleasure"), that it looked lovely and fresh ("a craving for everything we see"), and that it was a tree that would make her wise ("pride in our achievements and possessions"). These are still important weapons in Satan's arsenal of temptation (see 1 John 2:16).

### **\*insights** ABOUT SIN AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

In **Genesis 3:7** Adam and Eve became aware of their nakedness. With their act of disobedience came embarrassment and shame. They did their best to cover themselves; they didn't like what they saw when they looked at themselves. This happens to all of us when we sin and become dependent on cruel addictions. We don't like what we see, so we cover it up with lies and half-truths. We do it to preserve our relationships. But in the end, our intimacy with others is destroyed. We need to be honest with ourself and with others and work at reestablishing our relationships. This is a significant part of our recovery.

In **Genesis 3:10** Adam admitted that he was hiding from God. One of the terrible consequences of sin is the isolation that results. We want to hide from other people; we want to hide from God. Our failures will always make us want to hide. But recovery means that we must bring our sins out into the open; this will then bring us back into our relationships—with others and with God.

In **Genesis 3:15** it becomes obvious that Adam and Eve were powerless to resist sin by themselves. Alone, they could not overwhelm Satan and escape the temptations he offered. In his grace, however, God promised that the offspring of the woman would defeat Satan. He promised that he would take charge of the recovery process and overcome the enemy. This is good news—the first mention of the gospel of grace that would eventually be fulfilled by the coming of Jesus the Messiah.

In **Genesis 3:18-19** we see that after the Fall, even the earth responded differently to its human masters. In the beginning the earth was their constant ally, yielding its fruits easily to their hands. But now, it brought forth thorns and thistles and weeds. Work became an arduous task, frustrating and unfulfilling.

There was no reason for Adam and Eve to expect to live on after their failure. God had clearly stated that the consequences of their sin would be death (see 2:17). Yet in **Genesis 3:20** Adam displayed his faith in our gracious God by naming his wife Eve, which means "to give life." He believed that she would live to be the mother of the human race. Adam's faith in God gave him hope for the future, even when his past gave him little to hope for.

### **\*insights** FROM CAIN AND ABEL

In **Genesis 4:4** Abel slew an innocent substitute as his offering, and God accepted him. Abel was obedient to God's instructions. Our relationship with God can be established by accepting God's gracious forgiveness and allowing the innocent sacrifice of his Son to stand in our place. Abel's sacrifice of one of his lambs was the second death mentioned in the Bible.

In **Genesis 4:5** we see that God rejected Cain's offering. We may wonder why. We don't have

all the details, but we do know that his offering was given in rebellion (see Jude 1:11). Apparently Cain wanted to do things his way; he didn't want to follow the program that God had mapped out for this first human family. Cain responded to the rejection with anger and dejection. He wanted to be accepted by God, but he wanted to earn divine approval by his hard work in the fields. God could not accept his gift of farm produce. Acceptance by God cannot be bought with hard work; we need to admit our need and humbly allow a sacrifice to stand in our place. God has provided us with the perfect sacrifice in the person of Jesus Christ. He stands in our place, paying for all our failures and sins and freeing us to start again.

### **\*insights** FROM NOAH'S LIFE

After years of waiting, God saw that the human race still refused to live according to his plan. In **Genesis 6:5-6** we see that things were getting worse, not better. This broke God's heart because of the great love he had for his creation. It should encourage us to know that God doesn't punish us in anger. He does it for our good because he loves us.

In **Genesis 6:7** God promises to judge his fallen and sinful creation. Even though God is patient with us and gives us many chances to change our ways, we cannot act with impunity. Because he is righteous, God must act to protect innocent people who are hurt by sin.

God had assigned Noah the monumental task of rebuilding human society on earth. But God didn't just hand Noah the task and walk away. In **Genesis 9:9-13** God promises not to destroy Noah's work with another flood and sets a rainbow in the sky as a seal of his promise. Many of us are rebuilding, too. We can be sure that God will support our recovery with his presence and promises. And we should keep an eye out for the "rainbows" along the way. God often leaves us signs to remind us of his loving presence and care.

### **\*insights** FROM ABRAHAM'S LIFE

In **Genesis 12:2-3** God gave Abram some special promises. He would make Abram the father of a great nation, he would bless him and make him famous, and he would make Abram a blessing to others. God promised to bless those who blessed Abram and to curse those who cursed him. Notice that God's promises to Abram illustrate Step 12 in recovery. After receiving God's blessing, Abram was to turn around and share it with others.

We may wonder what Abram expected the Promised Land to be like. In **Genesis 12:10** we see that he arrived to find the land ravaged by famine. It probably wasn't what he had expected or hoped for, but it was the place that God had intended for him and his descendants. There will be times in recovery when things are difficult. Sometimes we may need to do things that we are not comfortable doing. But we need to follow God—even when his program doesn't lead us down the paths we had expected or hoped for.

The lie that Abram decided to tell the Egyptians in **Genesis 12:11-13** showed that he lacked faith in God. He didn't believe that God would protect him, so he took things into his own hands. We may feel that a little lie is justified if it is intended to protect something important to us. We may even succeed in getting away with it for a while, but all lies reap long-term consequences. It is best to trust God to protect us as we tell the truth. The God of truth will stand with us as we step out in faith.

In **Genesis 22:8-13** we find Abraham about to sacrifice his son Isaac. Much to the relief of Abraham and Isaac, however, God provided a substitute. We do not know what Abraham had in mind when he told his son that God would provide a sacrifice, but we do know that God has provided a sacrifice for us—not simply a ram caught in a bush but his only Son. Any one who believes in him will have the means for discovering a new life now and through eternity as well.

### **\*insights** FROM JOSEPH'S LIFE

Many commentators have noted that nothing bad is ever said about Joseph. That may be true of his adult life, but as a boy he was irritatingly overconfident. In **Genesis 37:2** we see that he was also a tattletale. Joseph's arrogant behavior as a youth, along with his father's favoritism, planted seeds of hatred in his brothers' hearts. Consequently, Joseph suffered years of slavery in Egypt. Joseph was certainly more worthy of praise than his brothers, but he can hardly be given perfect marks.

In **Genesis 39:19-23** we see that God was with Joseph even in prison. We are told that Joseph prospered in everything he did. And through all his trials, Joseph remained faithful to God. It would have been easy for him to start playing the victim and just give up. When we play the victim, we start to blame others and lose our ability to act. We need to stop blaming and start acting, doing our best in the situations in which God places us.

In **Genesis 50:15-21** a clear message emerges: Man proposes, but God disposes. Joseph's brothers intended their actions toward Joseph for evil, but God used those actions for good. It is wonderful that God can veto our foolish plans, transforming our mistakes and failures into the means for his gracious purposes.

# Life Recovery

## TOPICAL INDEX

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

### ABUSE (see also Incest, Oppression)

#### NOTES

2 Kings 19:35-37 . . . . .	493
Psalm 8:3-9 . . . . .	684
Psalm 109:1-5 . . . . .	758
Proverbs 23:10-11 . . . . .	811
Song of Songs 1:6 . . . . .	838
Song of Songs 5:1 . . . . .	842
Isaiah 10:1-19 . . . . .	859
Isaiah 11:1-10 . . . . .	861
Isaiah 18:7 . . . . .	868
Isaiah 26:3 . . . . .	874
Isaiah 42:1-4 . . . . .	894
Isaiah 62:1-5 . . . . .	918
Daniel 8:9-14, 25 . . . . .	1087
Hosea 9:7 . . . . .	1104
Joel 3:1-14 . . . . .	1117
Matthew 6:12, 14-15 . . . . .	1204
Matthew 18:2-6 . . . . .	1224
Matthew 27:26-54 . . . . .	1241
Mark 14:53-65 . . . . .	1277
Luke 14:12-24 . . . . .	1316
Luke 18:15-17 . . . . .	1322
John 2:13-16 . . . . .	1343
John 10:27-29 . . . . .	1358
John 13:20 . . . . .	1364
Romans 1:16-17 . . . . .	1430
Romans 13:1-7 . . . . .	1448
1 Corinthians 5:1-5 . . . . .	1461
2 Corinthians 8:9 . . . . .	1488

James 1:2-4 . . . . .	1600
Revelation 6:9-11 . . . . .	1655

#### PROFILES

Hagar & Ishmael . . . . .	23
Amnon & Tamar . . . . .	405

#### TWELVE STEP DEVOTIONAL

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

#### RECOVERY PRINCIPLE DEVOTIONALS

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

#### SERENITY PRAYER DEVOTIONAL

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

#### RECOVERY THEMES IN . . .

Daniel . . . . .	1074
Philemon . . . . .	1574

### ACCOUNTABILITY (see also Responsibility)

#### NOTES

Exodus 22:1-15 . . . . .	105
Exodus 22:16-28 . . . . .	105
Exodus 23:1-8 . . . . .	106
Exodus 28:29-32 . . . . .	113
Leviticus 10:1-3 . . . . .	144
Numbers 3:1-4:49 . . . . .	174
Numbers 6:3-4 . . . . .	179
Joshua 23:14-16 . . . . .	295
Judges 19:11-29 . . . . .	329
1 Samuel 6:19 . . . . .	352



1 Samuel 11:13-15 . . . . .	357
1 Samuel 18:1-4 . . . . .	368
1 Kings 13:33-34 . . . . .	447
2 Kings 11:4-21 . . . . .	481
2 Kings 12:4-16 . . . . .	481
1 Chronicles 27:1-34 . . . . .	536
Ezra 8:24-30 . . . . .	597
Nehemiah 9:38 . . . . .	614
Esther 8:7-14 . . . . .	632
Psalms 82:1-4 . . . . .	738
Proverbs 12:15 . . . . .	799
Proverbs 15:31-32 . . . . .	802
Proverbs 29:15, 17 . . . . .	818
Ezekiel 18:2-4 . . . . .	1031
Ezekiel 34:2-10 . . . . .	1052
Amos 1:3-2:3 . . . . .	1120
Mark 14:32-42 . . . . .	1276
Luke 8:4-15 . . . . .	1302
Luke 19:11-27 . . . . .	1324
John 12:42-43 . . . . .	1363
John 18:28-38 . . . . .	1370
Acts 5:9-11 . . . . .	1386
Acts 20:1-6 . . . . .	1414
1 Corinthians 4:17 . . . . .	1460
1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 . . . . .	1541
2 John 1:10-11 . . . . .	1638
<b>PROFILES</b>	
Ahab & Jezebel . . . . .	451
Timothy . . . . .	1551
<b>TWELVE STEP DEVOTIONALS</b>	
Step 2—Persistent Seeking . . . . .	651
Step 2—Grandiose Thinking . . . . .	1081
Step 5—Escaping Self-Deception . . . . .	1503
<b>RECOVERY PRINCIPLE DEVOTIONALS</b>	
Accountability . . . . .	1105, 1645
<b>SERENITY PRAYER DEVOTIONAL</b>	
1 Samuel 15:10-23 . . . . .	363
<b>RECOVERY THEMES IN . . . . .</b>	
Numbers . . . . .	172
1 Kings . . . . .	426
Proverbs . . . . .	786
Colossians . . . . .	1530
Titus . . . . .	1568
1 Peter . . . . .	1610

**ADDICTIONS** (see Dependencies)

**AFRAID** (see Fear)

**ALCOHOL ABUSE** (see Dependencies)

**AMENDS** (see Restitution)

**ANCESTORS** (see Family, Inheritance)

**ANGER** (see also Hatred, Revenge)

**NOTES**

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

**PROFILES**

Cain & Abel . . . . .	11
Esau & Jacob . . . . .	37
Job, His Family & Friends . . . . .	637
James & John . . . . .	1255

**TWELVE STEP DEVOTIONALS**

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

**RECOVERY PRINCIPLE DEVOTIONAL**

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

**RECOVERY THEMES IN . . . . .**

Esther . . . . .	624
------------------	-----

**ARROGANCE** (see Pride)

# INDEX TO RECOVERY PROFILES

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

# INDEX TO TWELVE STEP DEVOTIONALS

## STEP ONE

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

## STEP TWO

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

## STEP THREE

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

## STEP FOUR

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

## STEP FIVE

- Overcoming Denial . . . Genesis 38:1-30 . . . 59  
 Unending Love . . . Hosea 11:8-11 . . . 1107  
 The Plumb Line . . . Amos 7:7-8 . . . 1125  
 Feelings of Shame . . . John 8:3-11 . . . 1353

- Receiving Forgiveness . . . Acts 26:12-18 . . . 1421  
 Freedom through  
     Confession . . . Romans 2:14-15 . . . 1433  
 Escaping Self-Deception Galatians 6:7-10 . . . 1503

## STEP SIX

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

## STEP SEVEN

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

## STEP EIGHT

- Making Restitution . . . Exodus 22:10-15 . . . 107  
 Unintentional Sins . . . Leviticus 4:1-28 . . . 139  
 Scapegoats . . . Leviticus 16:20-22 . . . 153  
 Overcoming  
     Loneliness . . . Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 . . . 829  
 Forgiven to Forgive . . . Matthew 18:23-35 . . . 1225  
 The Fruit  
     of Forgiveness . . . 2 Corinthians 2:5-8 . . . 1481  
 Reaping Goodness . . . Galatians 6:7-10 . . . 1505

## STEP NINE

- Long-Awaited Healing . . . Genesis 33:1-11 . . . 49  
 Keeping Promises . . . 2 Samuel 9:1-9 . . . 399  
 Covering the Past . . . Ezekiel 33:10-16 . . . 1051  
 Making Peace . . . Matthew 5:23-25 . . . 1201  
 From Taker to Giver . . . Luke 19:1-10 . . . 1325

Unfinished Business . . . Philemon 1:13-16 . . . 1575  
A Servant's Heart . . . . . 1 Peter 2:18-25 . . . . 1613

**STEP TEN**

Personal Boundaries . . . Genesis 31:45-55 . . . . 45  
Repeated Forgiveness . . Romans 5:3-5 . . . . 1441  
Dealing with Anger . . . Ephesians 4:26-27 . . . 1517  
Spiritual Exercises . . . . 1 Timothy 4:7-8 . . . 1553  
Perseverance . . . . . 2 Timothy 2:1-8 . . . 1561  
Looking in the Mirror . . James 1:21-25 . . . . 1601  
Recurrent Sins . . . . . 1 John 1:8-10 . . . . 1629

**STEP ELEVEN**

A New Hiding Place . . . 2 Samuel 22:1-33 . . . 419  
Thirst for God . . . . . Psalm 27:1-6 . . . . . 697

Joy in God's Presence. . . Psalm 65:1-4 . . . . . 723  
Finding God . . . . . Psalm 105:1-9 . . . . . 753  
Powerful Secrets . . . . . Psalm 119:1-11 . . . . 765  
Patient Waiting . . . . . Isaiah 40:28-31 . . . . 891  
Friends of the Light. . . John 3:18-21 . . . . 1345

**STEP TWELVE**

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

# INDEX TO RECOVERY PRINCIPLE DEVOTIONALS

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

# INDEX TO SERENITY PRAYER DEVOTIONALS

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

# INDEX TO RECOVERY REFLECTIONS

Reflections on GENESIS . . . . .	74	Reflections on RUTH . . . . .	342
Insights from the Names of God		Insights from the Story of Ruth	
Insights from God's Creation		Reflections on 1 SAMUEL . . . . .	384
Insights about Temptation		Insights from Hannah's Life	
Insights about Sin and Its Consequences		Insights from Eli's Life	
Insights from Cain and Abel		Insights from Samuel's Life	
Insights from Noah's Life		Insights from Saul's Life	
Insights from Abraham's Life		Insights from David's Life	
Insights from Joseph's Life		Reflections on 2 SAMUEL . . . . .	422
Reflections on EXODUS . . . . .	129	Insights from David's Life	
Insights from Moses' Life		Insights from Amnon's Rape of Tamar	
Insights from Pharaoh's Life		Reflections on 2 KINGS . . . . .	502
Insights from Israel's Exodus		Insights from the Ministry of Elisha	
Insights Discovered at Mount Sinai		Insights from the Lives of Judah's Kings	
Insights from God's Laws		Reflections on 2 CHRONICLES . . . . .	585
Reflections on LEVITICUS . . . . .	169	Insights from God's Priests and Prophets	
Insights from the Offerings		Insights from the Victories of Judah's Kings	
Insights from the Atonement Ceremony		Insights from the Failures of Judah's Kings	
Insights from God's Laws		Insights from the Perspective of Genesis	
Reflections on NUMBERS . . . . .	220	Reflections on NEHEMIAH . . . . .	621
Insights from the Tabernacle		Insights from the Ministry of Nehemiah	
Insights from the Nazirite Vow		Insights from the Ministry of Ezra	
Insights from the Wilderness		Insights from the People's Experiences of Worship	
Reflections on DEUTERONOMY . . . . .	262	Reflections on JOB . . . . .	676
Insights from the Past		Insights into Satan's Activity	
Insights for the Present		Insights about Job's Relationship with God	
Insights from the Ten Commandments		Insights about Giving and Receiving Comfort	
Insights for the Future		Insights about Grief and Suffering	
Reflections on JOSHUA . . . . .	297	Reflections on PSALMS . . . . .	782
Insights from Rahab's Life		Insights into God's Protection	
Insights from Israel's Ceremonies of Remembrance		Insights into God's Deliverance	
Insights from Joshua's Life		Insights into God's Forgiveness	
Reflections on JUDGES . . . . .	333	Insights into the Value of Confession	
Insights from Gideon's Life		Insights into the Value of Praise	
Insights from Jephthah's Life		Reflections on PROVERBS . . . . .	821
Insights from Samson's Life		Insights into Our Relationships with God and Others	
Insights from the Tribe of Dan		Insights for Everyday Life and Recovery	

Reflections on ECCLESIASTES. . . . .	835	Insights concerning Obstacles to Recovery
Insights about Work and Success		Insights about Honesty and Denial
Insights into Our Identity As Human Beings		Insights about God's Priorities
Insights about God		Insights into Sharing the Good News
Insights for Real Life		Insights about Prayer
Reflections on ISAIAH . . . . .	924	Insights concerning True Faith
Insights about Our Responsibility		Reflections on MARK . . . . .
Insights about the Person of God		1281
Insights about the Dangers of Idolatry		Insights concerning True Faith
Insights about God's Grace		Insights about God's Power to Save
Insights about the Messiah and his Kingdom		Insights about God's Priorities
Reflections on JEREMIAH . . . . .	1000	Insights concerning Obstacles to Recovery
Insights about the Danger of Idolatry		Insights about the Person of Jesus
Insights about Denial and Hypocrisy		Insights about Honesty and Denial
Insights about the Person of God		Reflections on LUKE. . . . .
Insights into the Process of Recovery		1336
Insights from Israel's History		Insights about the Person of Jesus
Insights into the Value of God's Discipline		Insights about God's Power to Save
Insights into the Value of God's Laws		Insights about Prayer
Insights concerning False Teachers		Insights concerning True Faith
Reflections on EZEKIEL . . . . .	1070	Insights concerning Obstacles to Recovery
Insights about the Person of God		Insights about Honesty and Denial
Insights into the Responsibilities of Recovery		Reflections on JOHN . . . . .
Insights about Denial		1377
Reflections on DANIEL . . . . .	1093	Insights from Jesus' Words and Deeds
Insights from Daniel's Life		Insights from the Disciples' Lives
Insights from the Lives of the Three Friends		Insights about Our Relationship with God
Reflections on HOSEA. . . . .	1110	Insights concerning the Holy Spirit
Insights about God's Compassion		Reflections on ACTS. . . . .
Insights into the Importance of a Relationship with God		1426
Reflections on AMOS . . . . .	1130	Insights concerning the Holy Spirit
Insights into God's Person and Will		Insights from the Early Christian Community
Reflections on JONAH. . . . .	1140	Insights from Philip's Life
Insights from Jonah's Life		Insights from Paul's Life
Reflections on MICAH. . . . .	1150	Reflections on ROMANS . . . . .
Insights about God's Discipline		1453
Insights about God's Justice		Insights about the Power of Christ's Resurrection
Reflections on ZECHARIAH . . . . .	1186	Insights about Our Helplessness
Insights about God's Discipline		Insights about Faith
Insights into the Hope God Offers		Insights about Prayer
Reflections on MATTHEW . . . . .	1244	Insights about the Benefits of Submission to God
Insights about the Person of Jesus		Reflections on 1 CORINTHIANS. . . . .
		1477
		Insights about Our Powerlessness and God's Power
		Insights into Finding God's Will
		Insights into Healthy Relationships
		Insights about Love
		Reflections on 2 CORINTHIANS. . . . .
		1495
		Insights about Prayer



Insights about Restoring Relationships	Reflections on JAMES . . . . .	1598
Insights for Survival During Tough Times	Insights about True Faith	
Insights about Sharing the Good News	Insights about Honest Confession	
Insights about Confrontation	Reflections on 1 PETER . . . . .	1618
Reflections on GALATIANS . . . . .	Insights about the Person of God	1507
Insights into God's Will	Insights about the Danger of Relapse	
Insights about Consequences	Insights about Our New Life in Christ	
Reflections on 1 TIMOTHY . . . . .	Insights about Persevering through Trials	1558
Insights about God's Law	Reflections on 2 PETER . . . . .	1626
Insights about God's Transforming Power	Insights about Our Role in Recovery	
Reflections on HEBREWS . . . . .	Insights about God's Truth	1596
Insights about the Person of Christ	Reflections on 1 JOHN . . . . .	1635
Insights about Angels	Insights into Confession and Forgiveness	
Insights about God's Transforming Power	Insights about the Danger of Worldly Values	
Insights about Accountability and Responsibility	Insights about the Importance of Right Beliefs	
Insights about True Faith	Insights about Assurance in Salvation	
Insights about God's Discipline	and Recovery	