



# HelpFinder™

## BIBLE

---

*God's Word at your  
point of need*



*presented to*

---

*by*

---

*on the occasion of*

---

*date*

---



*“Your word is a lamp to guide my feet  
and a light for my path.”*

PSALM 119:105

---

*All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.*

2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17

---



# HelpFinder™

## BIBLE

---

*God's Word at your  
point of need*



Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.  
Carol Stream, Illinois

Visit Tyndale online at [www.newlivingtranslation.com](http://www.newlivingtranslation.com) and [www.tyndale.com](http://www.tyndale.com).

*HelpFinder Bible* copyright © 2018 by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

Notes and special features copyright © 1996, 2018 by V. Gilbert Beers and Ronald A. Beers. All rights reserved.

Cover illustration of cross by Dan Farrell. Copyright © Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. All rights reserved.

The *HelpFinder Bible* is an edition of the *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation.

*Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. All rights reserved.

The text of the *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, may be quoted in any form (written, visual, electronic, or audio) up to and inclusive of five hundred (500) verses without express written permission of the publisher, provided that the verses quoted do not account for more than twenty-five percent (25%) of the work in which they are quoted, and provided that a complete book of the Bible is not quoted.

When the *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, is quoted, one of the following credit lines must appear on the copyright page or title page of the work:

Scripture quotations are taken from the *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked NLT are taken from the *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

When quotations from the NLT text are used in nonsalable media, such as church bulletins, orders of service, newsletters, transparencies, or similar media, a complete copyright notice is not required, but the initials *NLT* must appear at the end of each quotation.

Quotations in excess of five hundred (500) verses or twenty-five percent (25%) of the work, or other permission requests, must be approved in writing by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. Send requests by e-mail to: [permission@tyndale.com](mailto:permission@tyndale.com) or call 630-668-8300, ext. 5023.

Publication of any commentary or other Bible reference work produced for commercial sale that uses the New Living Translation requires written permission for use of the NLT text.

*TYNDALE*, *New Living Translation*, *NLT*, the New Living Translation logo, and *LeatherLike* are registered trademarks of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. *HelpFinder* is a trademark of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.

For information about special discounts for bulk purchases, please contact Tyndale House Publishers at [csresponse@tyndale.com](mailto:csresponse@tyndale.com), or call 1-800-323-9400.

ISBN 978-1-4964-2293-4	Softcover
ISBN 978-1-4964-2292-7	Hardcover
ISBN 978-1-4964-2294-1	LeatherLike Pink
ISBN 978-1-4964-2295-8	LeatherLike Black

Printed in China

24	23	22	21	20	19	18
7	6	5	4	3	2	1

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

# Contents

<i>Alphabetical Listing of Bible Books</i> . . . . .	A6
<i>Contributors</i> . . . . .	A6
<i>Read This First</i> . . . . .	A7
<i>HelpFinder Index</i> . . . . .	A11

## Old Testament

---

Genesis . . . . .	3	2 Chronicles . . . . .	383	Daniel . . . . .	771
Exodus . . . . .	51	Ezra . . . . .	415	Hosea . . . . .	786
Leviticus . . . . .	91	Nehemiah . . . . .	426	Joel . . . . .	797
Numbers . . . . .	120	Esther . . . . .	442	Amos . . . . .	802
Deuteronomy . . . . .	158	Job . . . . .	451	Obadiah . . . . .	811
Joshua . . . . .	193	Psalms . . . . .	479	Jonah . . . . .	814
Judges . . . . .	216	Proverbs . . . . .	558	Micah . . . . .	818
Ruth . . . . .	239	Ecclesiastes . . . . .	587	Nahum . . . . .	826
1 Samuel . . . . .	244	Song of Songs . . . . .	596	Habakkuk . . . . .	830
2 Samuel . . . . .	272	Isaiah . . . . .	603	Zephaniah . . . . .	835
1 Kings . . . . .	298	Jeremiah . . . . .	663	Haggai . . . . .	840
2 Kings . . . . .	326	Lamentations . . . . .	720	Zechariah . . . . .	843
1 Chronicles . . . . .	354	Ezekiel . . . . .	728	Malachi . . . . .	853

## New Testament

---

Matthew . . . . .	859	Ephesians . . . . .	1064	Hebrews . . . . .	1108
Mark . . . . .	894	Philippians . . . . .	1071	James . . . . .	1121
Luke . . . . .	916	Colossians . . . . .	1077	1 Peter . . . . .	1127
John . . . . .	951	1 Thessalonians . . . . .	1082	2 Peter . . . . .	1133
Acts . . . . .	979	2 Thessalonians . . . . .	1087	1 John . . . . .	1137
Romans . . . . .	1011	1 Timothy . . . . .	1090	2 John . . . . .	1143
1 Corinthians . . . . .	1028	2 Timothy . . . . .	1096	3 John . . . . .	1145
2 Corinthians . . . . .	1045	Titus . . . . .	1101	Jude . . . . .	1147
Galatians . . . . .	1057	Philemon . . . . .	1105	Revelation . . . . .	1150

<i>Quick Topic Finder</i> . . . . .	1169
<i>Great Bible Passages to Study and Memorize</i> . . . . .	1179
<i>Great Bible Stories for Discovering God's Truth</i> . . . . .	1181
<i>A Note to Readers</i> . . . . .	1185
<i>Introduction to the New Living Translation</i> . . . . .	1187
<i>NLT Bible Translation Team</i> . . . . .	1193

## Alphabetical Listing of Bible Books

---

Acts . . . . .	979	James . . . . .	1121	Nehemiah . . . . .	426
Amos . . . . .	802	Jeremiah . . . . .	663	Numbers . . . . .	120
1 Chronicles . . . . .	354	Job . . . . .	451	Obadiah . . . . .	811
2 Chronicles . . . . .	383	Joel . . . . .	797	1 Peter . . . . .	1127
Colossians . . . . .	1077	John . . . . .	951	2 Peter . . . . .	1133
1 Corinthians . . . . .	1028	1 John . . . . .	1137	Philemon . . . . .	1105
2 Corinthians . . . . .	1045	2 John . . . . .	1143	Philippians . . . . .	1071
Daniel . . . . .	771	3 John . . . . .	1145	Proverbs . . . . .	558
Deuteronomy . . . . .	158	Jonah . . . . .	814	Psalms . . . . .	479
Ecclesiastes . . . . .	587	Joshua . . . . .	193	Revelation . . . . .	1150
Ephesians . . . . .	1064	Jude . . . . .	1147	Romans . . . . .	1011
Esther . . . . .	442	Judges . . . . .	216	Ruth . . . . .	239
Exodus . . . . .	51	1 Kings . . . . .	298	1 Samuel . . . . .	244
Ezekiel . . . . .	728	2 Kings . . . . .	326	2 Samuel . . . . .	272
Ezra . . . . .	415	Lamentations . . . . .	720	Song of Songs . . . . .	596
Galatians . . . . .	1057	Leviticus . . . . .	91	1 Thessalonians . . . . .	1082
Genesis . . . . .	3	Luke . . . . .	916	2 Thessalonians . . . . .	1087
Habakkuk . . . . .	830	Malachi . . . . .	853	1 Timothy . . . . .	1090
Haggai . . . . .	840	Mark . . . . .	894	2 Timothy . . . . .	1096
Hebrews . . . . .	1108	Matthew . . . . .	859	Titus . . . . .	1101
Hosea . . . . .	786	Micah . . . . .	818	Zechariah . . . . .	843
Isaiah . . . . .	603	Nahum . . . . .	826	Zephaniah . . . . .	835

## Contributors

---

### GENERAL EDITORS

Dr. V. Gilbert Beers  
Ronald A. Beers

### CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Dr. Brian R. Coffey

### EDITORIAL STAFF

Timothy Belcher  
Deb Lew  
Mark Norton  
Kathryn S. Olson  
Vinita Hampton Wright

### GRAPHIC DESIGN

Dan Farrell

### PRODUCTION COORDINATOR

Kay Tooze

### TYPESETTER

Brooke Lorenz

### BRAND DIRECTOR

James S. Gager

### ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER

Blaine A. Smith

### PUBLISHER

Douglas R. Knox

# Read This First

## Welcome to the *HelpFinder Bible!*

Think back to yesterday. Can you recall the range of emotions you experienced? Did you feel angry, happy, discouraged, tired? Were you frustrated? lonely? excited? worried? scared? embarrassed? bitter? Did you feel inadequate? Were you grieving? Did someone hurt your feelings? Were you criticized or ignored? Did you end the day with regrets? Did you long to rekindle a relationship with a friend or spouse? Did you long to feel the presence of God? Were you wondering how to pray more effectively?

These questions point to just a few of the many life-needs that are identified in the *HelpFinder Bible*. Now you have a place to look up those needs and instantly see where you can find help from the Bible for each one. When you are wrestling with a need, issue, or emotion, simply look it up in the HelpFinder Index at the front of the Bible. Under each topic you will find questions that help you focus on the kind of help you are looking for, many Scripture passages that show how the Bible offers help and encouragement, and application comments that will help you apply the Bible to your specific situation.

Our lives are filled with real human needs and issues. These needs, issues, and the emotions that come with them are what make up everyday life. No one is exempt from them! On some days, one need will leap to the front page of our lives to challenge us. On another day, another will surface—or perhaps several! The exciting news is that God’s Word holds answers and guidance for all the needs you are facing. Before you



were ever born, God knew about you and the particular needs you would have. And because he created you, he fully understands each of those needs. That's one of the reasons God's Word offers help and hope for you.

Turn to the HelpFinder Index now and begin an exciting journey through the Bible that will offer answers to your deepest needs and questions. Use the *HelpFinder Bible* as a resource guide, a devotional Bible, or a topical tool kit, directing you to places where God's Word can touch you, heal you, and guide you. A lifetime of learning and adventure awaits as you search this Bible and discover how wonderfully our loving God meets your daily needs.

## Features of the *HelpFinder Bible*

### HELPFINDER INDEX

This is the most important feature in this Bible. Found here at the front immediately after this user's guide, the HelpFinder Index makes it easy to discover what the Bible says about well over a hundred life-needs topics. Each topic is listed alphabetically and dealt with thoroughly, offering a biblical summary, several questions that help put your needs into words, and a list of Bible passages to explore. The index also tells you which Bible passages have expanded notes in the Bible text and shows you a series of Bible promises related to each topic. In all, the HelpFinder Index thoroughly covers more than one hundred life-needs topics, gives links for many other related topics, and puts thousands of connected Bible verses and application notes at your fingertips.

### IN-TEXT FEATURES

#### *Application Notes*

Hundreds of notes are placed at appropriate places in the Bible text and offer application, insights, inspiration, and encouragement. Each note focuses on one of the topics covered in the HelpFinder Index, and quite a few topics are dealt with in several notes. The page numbers for these in-text notes are listed in the HelpFinder Index (at the front of the Bible) and in the Quick Topic Finder (at the back of the Bible).

#### *Book Introductions*

Complete Bible book introductions include the following helpful features:

- An overview of the book, emphasizing its core message and key themes
- An outline of the book that lists the main topics and where they can be found
- A list of key verses in the book

### ***Promises from God***

Knowing God's promises to us can deepen our faith, and the *HelpFinder Bible* highlights nearly two hundred of them. As you are reading, these promises draw your attention to important faith-building truths from God's Word. These and additional Bible promise texts are identified under each topic in the HelpFinder Index and the Quick Topic Finder.

## **OTHER HELPS AT THE BACK OF THE BIBLE**

### ***Quick Topic Finder***

This smaller index at the back of the Bible offers a bird's-eye view of all the topics covered in the HelpFinder Index and gives the page numbers in the HelpFinder Index where each topic is handled in much greater depth. The Quick Topic Finder also gives page numbers for the in-text application notes and offers additional Bible promise texts.

### ***Great Bible Passages to Study and Memorize***

This list points to some of the Bible's greatest passages and reflects on the importance of studying and memorizing longer Scripture texts to ensure that we keep the passages we read in their larger context.

### ***Great Bible Stories for Discovering God's Truth***

This list gives easy access to the great stories of the Bible and offers reflection on how God uses stories to reveal his truth and help us to connect it to our lives.

# HelpFinder Index

**WHEN GOD INSPIRED THE BIBLE**, he was thinking of you and your needs. And because God made you, he knows you and what you need to make your life all it should be. He put the answers to meet your needs in the Bible. But wouldn't you like an easy way to find God's answers? You have found it here, in this HelpFinder index. This is a place to find Bible help for daily needs, arranged alphabetically by topics. Each topic includes (1) a summary, (2) several questions that help put your need into words, (3) a list of Bible verses to look up that will speak directly to your particular issue, and (4) often a short comment to help apply those verses to your life. In addition, some of the Bible verses are paired with a corresponding application note on the page indicated. We hope that this HelpFinder index gives you a lifetime of joy as you search God's Word and see how wonderfully he wants to meet your daily needs.

## Abilities *See also Habits; Planning; Strengths & Weaknesses*

Deep within the human spirit is a desire, and a capability, to do wonderful things. Because we were made in the image of God, we inherited from him the desire to create, to accomplish, to make things happen. But why would God give us these desires unless he also gave us the way to fulfill them? Abilities are God's gifts to enable us to carry out whatever he created us to do. As we use and sharpen these abilities, we find great joy in living out our God-given purposes. How we use or misuse these abilities ultimately determines our quality of life—quality defined, not as comfort or the accumulation of things, but as character, joy, and lasting satisfaction. Our goal is first to discover our abilities, then exercise them, and finally channel them toward good rather than evil. God has given all of us certain abilities. Life is more fulfilling when we exercise them for his Kingdom glory and purposes.

### What if I don't feel like I have many abilities?

- **EPHESIANS 4:11-13** | *Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church . . . to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church . . . until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord.*

God has empowered each of us with special abilities; no one is left empty-handed. But how we use these abilities is up to us.

### Will God ever ask me to do something outside of my abilities?

- **EXODUS 4:10-12** | *But Moses pleaded . . . "O Lord, I'm not very good with words. I never have been, and I'm not now, even though you have spoken to me. I get tongue-tied, and my words get tangled." Then the LORD asked Moses, "Who makes a person's mouth? Who decides whether people speak or do not speak, hear or do not hear, see or do not see? Is it not I, the LORD? Now go! I will be with you as you speak, and I will instruct you in what to say."* (See note on page 55.)

God will help us in important areas where we lack ability. If God is asking you to do something, he will give you the ability or extra resources to get the job done.

- **EPHESIANS 3:18** | *And may you . . . understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is.*

The number of abilities you have is not related to the degree of love God has for you. God loves all believers wholly and unconditionally, so much so that he sent his own Son, Jesus, to die in our place so that we could live forever with him.

### How should I use my abilities?

- **1 TIMOTHY 4:7-8** | *Train yourself to be godly. "Physical training is good, but training for godliness is much better."*

Properly exercising our abilities will help us grow spiritually.

- **MATTHEW 25:21** | *"Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities."*

You can exercise your God-given abilities and become highly skilled at using them. But they will be truly impactful only if you use them to serve God and others.

### Can God use my abilities even if they aren't "spiritual"?

- **1 KINGS 7:14, 40** | *Hiram was extremely skillful and talented in any work in bronze. . . . So at last Hiram completed everything King Solomon had assigned him to make for the Temple of the LORD.* (See note on page 307.)

Talents and abilities, though personal, become spiritual in purpose when used to honor God.

### It's easy for me to be jealous when others seem to have more abilities than me. How do I deal with that?

- **2 CORINTHIANS 12:9-10** | *I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me. That's why I take pleasure in my weaknesses, and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*

We really don't know why God hands out talents and abilities the way he does. But the Bible makes it clear that what God has given to each of us, if used faithfully, will accomplish great things. God often takes joy in using people the world thinks are lacking in ability or talent to accomplish his plans.

### **I am very good at what I do. Is it wrong to feel that way?**

- **2 CORINTHIANS 3:5** | *It is not that we think we are qualified to do anything on our own. Our qualification comes from God.*

Rejoice in your God-given abilities, but let that rejoicing be poured out as a thank offering to the God who gave them. Without God, our abilities are dreams without power, cups without water, engines without fuel.

### **I want to be a great musician. Why didn't God give me the ability to do that?**

- **ROMANS 12:6** | *God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. (See note on page 1023.)*

Our talents and abilities are gifts from God. It is better to be thankful for the gifts we have and to maximize them rather than to dream of gifts we do not have and to feel that God shortchanged us.

### **What if I never get to use my abilities?**

- **HEBREWS 11:26** | *[Moses] thought it was better to suffer for the sake of Christ than to own the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking ahead to his great reward.*

What is keeping you from using your abilities? Is it your own lack of discipline or circumstances beyond your control? If you are truly prevented by circumstances beyond your control, then take comfort in the fact that God still loves you, and the suffering that is keeping you from reaching your potential will bring you a great reward in heaven.

#### **PROMISE FROM GOD**

- **MATTHEW 25:29** | *“To those who use well what they are given, even more will be given, and they will have an abundance.”*

## **Abortion**

What if you had never been born? How would the world be different? What would never have happened? If you are a parent, your children would never have been born . . . nor would their future children and grandchildren. Pregnancies may occur naturally or accidentally . . . or deliberately. Interrupting a pregnancy deliberately is called abortion, and it ranges from destruction of the fertilized egg to the dismemberment and forced ejection of a nearly full-term baby. A great controversy rages today concerning abortion, focusing on whether the unborn baby is truly a person and not just a developing physical body.

Does human life begin at conception, at birth, or at some point between the two? Who would argue that at birth the baby isn't fully a human being? But is the unborn child fully a human being? And are there any justifiable reasons for abortion? Most Christians would argue against abortion as a means of birth control. Some would argue that abortion is acceptable if it will save the life of the mother, in the case of rape or incest, or if the unborn child is thought to be brain damaged or deformed. Ultimately the core issue centers on the sacredness and value of human life because not a single person would deny that an unborn baby, if left to grow and develop in the womb, would eventually be born as a human being. Never in history has a human fetus been born as anything other than a human baby. So the real question is not whether the fetus is human or not, but what value we should place on human life, because an fetus is indeed destined to become a human life.

### **Does the Bible say anything about human qualities in the unborn child?**

- **PSALM 51:5** | *I was born a sinner—yes, from the moment my mother conceived me.*

(See note on page 507.)

## Abortion *continued*

Sinfulness—perhaps the most unmistakable human quality—is present not only at birth but even as far back as conception.

### Is God actively involved in our development before birth?

- **PSALM 139:13-16** | *You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it. You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion. . . . You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book.* (See note on page 553.)

God is present continuously during the nine months of pregnancy—forming, watching, creating, and even scheduling each day of the unborn baby's life.

### Does God have any personal relationship with the unborn child?

- **JEREMIAH 1:5** | *"I knew you before I formed you in your mother's womb. Before you were born I set you apart and appointed you as my prophet to the nations."* (See note on page 665.)
- God knew each of us before we developed in our mothers' wombs. He establishes a purpose for us before we are even born.

### Why is abortion such an important matter for all people to consider?

- **GENESIS 9:6** | *God made human beings in his own image.* (See note on page 11.)

If the unborn child, at any stage of pregnancy, is a person, then terminating that pregnancy is ending the life of that child. God sees all human beings, regardless of age, as special creations with eternal value. God also makes it clear that killing another human being (i.e., intentionally ending that person's life) is one of the greatest sins against him.

### Can God forgive me if I've had an abortion?

- **PSALM 51:3, 10, 12** | *I recognize my rebellion; it haunts me day and night. . . . Create in me a clean heart, O God. . . . Restore to me the joy of your salvation.*

Just as King David experienced the joy of total forgiveness after committing adultery and murder, so we can know God's forgiveness—for any sin—if we confess our sin to him.

- **ISAIAH 1:18** | *"Come now . . ." says the LORD. "Though your sins are like scarlet, I will make them as white as snow. Though they are red like crimson, I will make them as white as wool."*
- **PSALM 103:3** | *He forgives all my sins.*
- **1 JOHN 1:9** | *If we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.*
- **EPHESIANS 3:18** | *May you have the power to understand . . . how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is.*

No sin is beyond God's forgiveness. No matter what you may have done in the past, let God restore you to wholeness.

## Absence *See also Grief; Loneliness; Regrets*

We all experience absence in some way. Our friends or family members may leave us for a period of time, or maybe they were always absent from our lives. Sometimes our own absence causes us to miss important opportunities. And in difficult situations we can feel as though God is absent or has moved away from us. Whatever the cause, it is important to know that God is never absent. He sent his Holy Spirit to be present with us always.

### Why do I sometimes feel that God is absent?

- **PSALM 10:1** | *O LORD, why do you stand so far away? Why do you hide when I am in trouble?*

- **PSALM 13:1** | *O LORD, how long will you forget me? Forever? How long will you look the other way?*
- **MATTHEW 28:20** | *“And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”*  
The greater your troubles, the farther away God can seem. In your darkest hour, you may feel that God has left you. In times like this, when it seems like God is absent, don't trust your feelings; trust God's promise that he will never leave you.
- **ISAIAH 59:1-2** | *Listen! The LORD's arm is not too weak to save you, nor is his ear too deaf to hear you call. It's your sins that have cut you off from God.*  
Sin is a wall that separates you from God. Sometimes it is our own persistent, willful sin that causes us to feel cut off from the Lord and to miss the joy of fellowship with him. Is God making you aware of sin in your life? If you persist in that sin, you may indeed feel that God is absent. Tear down the wall of sin by humble confession, and you will find God on the other side. Then through prayer and time with him, you will begin to sense his presence again, and you will see evidence of his work in your life.
- **JAMES 4:7-8** | *So humble yourselves before God. . . . Come close to God, and God will come close to you.*  
If you want to have restored fellowship with God, you need to have a humble attitude, confess your sins, and draw near to God. Humility puts you in sync with God.

### **Why is it important for us not to be absent in our relationships (from our families, from our jobs, from the church, etc.)?**

- **ECCLESIASTES 4:9-10** | *Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble.*  
Your presence provides physical and emotional support to others. Two or more can form a team and accomplish much more together than separately. When you need “a lift” emotionally, an inanimate object may not do much; sometimes it takes a smile, a kind word, a hug, or a touch from someone who cares.
- **JOB 42:11** | *Then all his brothers, sisters, and former friends came and feasted with him in his home. And they consoled him and comforted him because of all the trials.*
- **GENESIS 45:15** | *Then Joseph kissed each of his brothers and wept over them, and after that they began talking freely with him.*
- **2 CORINTHIANS 7:6** | *But God, who encourages those who are discouraged, encouraged us by the arrival of Titus.*  
Your presence provides emotional support to others. When you need “a lift” emotionally, an inanimate object doesn't do much. It takes a smile, a kind word, a hug, a touch from someone who cares.
- **PSALM 34:3** | *Come, let us tell of the LORD's greatness; let us exalt his name together.*
- **ACTS 1:14** | *They all met together and were constantly united in prayer.*  
Your presence provides spiritual support to others. God's people should meet together in God's presence for worship, prayer, and to encourage each other.
- **GENESIS 37:18-29** | *When Joseph's brothers saw him coming, they recognized him in the distance [and] made plans to kill him. . . . But when Reuben heard of their scheme, he came to Joseph's rescue. . . . Reuben was secretly planning to rescue Joseph. . . . Some time later, Reuben returned to get Joseph out of the cistern. When he discovered that Joseph was missing, he tore his clothes in grief.*  
When you are absent, you miss crucial opportunities to help others. Much good can be done by just being there.
- **MATTHEW 25:10** | *“While they were gone to buy oil, the bridegroom came. Then those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was locked.”*  
When you are absent, you miss important opportunities that can change your life.
- **HEBREWS 10:25** | *And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another.*  
Neglecting church may cause you to neglect God and his people.

**Absence** *continued***How can I compensate for those times when my physical presence is not possible?**

- **1 CORINTHIANS 5:3-4** | *Even though I am not with you in person, I am with you in the Spirit. . . . I will be present with you in spirit, and so will the power of our Lord Jesus.*  
When you are not physically present, you can still exercise your commitment to your relationship. Two caring people can provide emotional and spiritual support for each other at a distance.
- **2 JOHN 1:12** | *I hope to visit you soon and talk with you face to face. Then our joy will be complete.*
- **1 THESSALONIANS 2:17** | *Dear brothers and sisters, after we were separated from you for a little while (though our hearts never left you), we tried very hard to come back because of our intense longing to see you again.*
- **2 TIMOTHY 1:4** | *I long to see you again, for I remember your tears as we parted. And I will be filled with joy when we are together again.*

When you are away from your family—or your dearest friends—keep in touch with them as much as possible, praying for them along the way and looking forward to your reunion. There are many ways to connect with others from a distance.

**PROMISES FROM GOD**

- **ECCLESIASTES 4:9-10** | *Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble.*
- **MATTHEW 28:20** | *“And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”*

**Absolutes** *See Convictions; Truth***Abuse** *See also Addiction; Anger; Bitterness; Healing; Pain; Self-Esteem; Suffering*

How wide is the circle of your influence and power? How many people, talents, possessions, or opportunities are in that circle? What we do with what we have is a reflection of who we are and how much we deserve to be entrusted with more. We can be good stewards of what is within our control, or we can abuse what has been entrusted to us. In its simplest form, abuse is poor stewardship of what has been entrusted to us. But it can be far more dangerous and damaging. Abuse may be violent or it may be as quiet as neglect or abandonment. Abuse can be aggressive, but it may also be regressive—a steady depreciation of human worth, like dripping water wearing down a rock.

Abuse may inflict pain or rob personhood; it may leave scars on the skin or lacerations on the heart. Its result may be superficial, the response to a careless comment, or it may be a lifetime wound resulting from a neglected or mismanaged trust. Abuse requires an abuser and a person who has been abused. But God grants healing—both physical and spiritual—through forgiveness and a new way to live. The abuser can change, becoming truly transformed by God’s Spirit. The person who has been abused, through Christ, can forgive the abuser and find true healing. This allows the cycle of abuse, which can become multigenerational, to halt.

**Will God forgive a person who is guilty of abuse?**

- **ACTS 2:21** | *“But everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.”*
- **LUKE 23:34** | *“Father, forgive them, for they don’t know what they are doing.”*  
God forgives all sins, not selected ones. His mercy is to anyone, regardless of that person’s past.



- **2 CHRONICLES 33:6, 13** | *Manasseh also sacrificed his own sons in the fire in the valley of the Ben-Hinnom. . . . when he prayed, the LORD listened to him and was moved by his request.*

Manasseh was the most wicked king in Judah's history, abusive to the point that he burned his own sons on an altar. But later in life he sought God's forgiveness, and God did forgive him, transforming him into a man who did great things for his nation.

### Is physical discipline of my child considered abuse?

- **PROVERBS 29:15, 17** | *To discipline a child produces wisdom, but a mother is disgraced by an undisciplined child. Discipline your children, and they will give you peace of mind. (See note on page 584.)*
- **PROVERBS 13:24** | *Those who spare the rod of discipline hate their children. Those who love their children care enough to discipline them.*

The Bible clearly advocates discipline of children, even physical discipline. But it must be measured and done with restraint and in love, in a manner that in never borders on abuse or physical harm. "Discipline" that comes from anger can often lead to abuse and violence.

### What is the best way to prevent abuse?

- **ROMANS 13:10** | *Love does no wrong to others. (See note on page 1024.)*

Love restrains us from abusing a loved one—physically or in any other way. This is not a roller-coaster love based on feelings, but a rock-solid commitment to protect and nurture regardless of the way you feel at a particular moment. Violence or abuse against a loved one is a clear signal that our love for that person is not genuine.

### How do I begin to heal the wounds of abuse?

- **MATTHEW 15:30** | *And [Jesus] healed them all. (See note on page 877.)*  
Only Jesus can truly heal broken lives.
- **PROVERBS 11:14** | *Without wise leadership, a nation falls; there is safety in having many advisers.*
- **PROVERBS 20:18** | *Plans succeed through good counsel.*  
Seek help from godly counselors.
- **MATTHEW 5:44** | *"Love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you!"*  
Forgiveness means praying for those who hate and hurt you. This releases you from the destructive emotions of anger, bitterness, and revenge.
- **EPHESIANS 4:31** | *Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words.*  
An unforgiving attitude not only ruins your relationships, but it also poisons your soul. The person most hurt by unforgiveness is you.
- **ROMANS 12:19** | *Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say, "I will take revenge; I will pay them back," says the LORD.*  
Punishing evildoers is God's job, not yours, and God can be trusted to administer justice. Therefore you can remove yourself from the endless cycle of revenge and retaliation by forgiving.
- **PHILIPPIANS 4:8** | *Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.*

As we fill our minds with thoughts about God, there is less room, and less time, to dwell on the past.

### PROMISES FROM GOD

- **PSALM 9:12** | *He does not ignore the cries of those who suffer.*
- **PSALM 23:4** | *Even when I walk through the darkest valley, I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me. Your rod and your staff protect and comfort me.*

## Accountability *See also Boundaries; Commitment; Convictions; Discipline; Honesty & Integrity; Priorities; Self-Control*

Accountability is giving an account of yourself to someone—where you’ve been, what you’ve been doing, who you’ve been with, how you will perform a certain task, or what your motives are. The one who is holding you accountable has the freedom, perhaps the right, to ask for a report. But don’t most of us resent it when we are fully accountable? We may feel that it restricts us and forces us to expose dark corners of our lives we’d prefer to keep hidden.

Although genuine accountability may be uncomfortable, it’s necessary, for it keeps us honest, moral, and on the right path. It urges us to do what we should do, even if we prefer not to. If we answer to no one, aren’t we free to go where our desires lead rather than where God leads—a dangerous game? Bosses may or may not do a good job of holding their employees accountable. Parents may or may not always do such a good job of holding their children accountable. How well do you hold yourself accountable to someone else? When we think no one is watching or no one will ask us tough questions, it’s easy to do whatever we want. We are more prone to take the wrong path. But God is watching and he does hold us accountable. Fortunately, his motives are always pure. He wants to help us do what is good and what is best for us. If what we should do is not what we want to do, it is time to discover what God wants us to do.

### What kinds of things am I accountable for?

- **JOHN 3:18-19** | *“There is no judgment against anyone who believes in him. But anyone who does not believe in him has already been judged for not believing in God’s one and only Son. And the judgment is based on this fact: God’s light came into the world, but people loved the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil.”*
- **JOHN 3:36** | *“And anyone who believes in God’s Son has eternal life. Anyone who doesn’t obey the Son will never experience eternal life but remains under God’s angry judgment.”*
- **MATTHEW 3:8** | *“Prove by the way you live that you have repented of your sins and turned to God.”*  
You are accountable for your own disobedience to God.
- **2 KINGS 12:15** | *No accounting of this money was required from the construction supervisors, because they were honest and trustworthy men.*
- **2 KINGS 22:7** | *“But don’t require the construction supervisors to keep account of the money they receive, for they are honest and trustworthy men.”*  
You are accountable for your own character.
- **PROVERBS 5:13** | *Oh, why didn’t I listen to my teachers? Why didn’t I pay attention to my instructors?*  
You are accountable for your own spiritual growth.
- **MATTHEW 12:36** | *“And I tell you this, you must give an account on judgment day for every idle word you speak.”*  
You are accountable for the words you speak.
- **LUKE 12:43-47** | *If the master returns and finds that the servant has done a good job, there will be a reward. . . . But what if the servant thinks, ‘My master won’t be back for a while,’ and he begins beating the other servants, partying, and getting drunk? . . . A servant who knows what the master wants, but isn’t prepared and doesn’t carry out those instructions, will be severely punished.*  
You are accountable for the work you are given to do.
- **1 TIMOTHY 6:17** | *Teach those who are rich in this world not to be proud and not to trust in their money, which is so unreliable. Their trust should be in God, who richly gives us all we need for our enjoyment.*

- **LUKE 16:11** | *“And if you are untrustworthy about worldly wealth, who will trust you with the true riches of heaven?”*
- **PSALM 90:12** | *Teach us to realize the brevity of life, so that we may grow in wisdom.*
- **EPHESIANS 5:15-16** | *So be careful how you live. Don’t live like fools, but like those who are wise. Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days.*

You are accountable for your resources: how you spend your money, time, energy, and talents.

### How do I become more accountable?

- **PSALM 119:9, 66** | *How can a young person stay pure? By obeying your word. . . . Now teach me good judgment and knowledge.* (See note on page 542.)
- **PSALM 1:1** | *Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked.*
- **PROVERBS 27:6** | *Wounds from a sincere friend are better than many kisses from an enemy.*

To become more accountable, commit yourself to follow God’s commands as outlined in his Word, the Bible. And choose wise friends who you can freely and safely give an account of yourself to.

### What happens when there is no accountability?

- **JUDGES 17:6** | *The people did whatever seemed right in their own eyes.*
- **1 SAMUEL 13:11-12** | *Saul replied, “I saw . . . you didn’t arrive when you said you would. . . . I felt compelled to offer the burnt offering myself.”* (See note on page 255.)

Left unaccountable, we will almost always lean toward sin. The consequences of those sins will hurt not only us but many others, including God.

### How can I choose people to hold me more accountable?

- **1 KINGS 12:8-11** | *But Rehoboam rejected the advice of the older men and instead asked the opinion of the young men who had grown up with him. . . . The young men replied, “[Tell them] ‘. . . My father laid heavy burdens on you, but I’m going to make them even heavier!’”*
- **EXODUS 18:21-22** | *“But select from all the people some capable, honest men who fear God and hate bribes. . . . They will help you carry the load, making the task easier for you.”*

Friends are not always the best advisers, especially if their counsel is not consistent with God’s Word, or if they tell you only what you want to hear.

### How can I effectively hold someone else accountable?

- **TITUS 1:7-8** | *He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered. . . . He must live wisely and be just. He must live a devout and disciplined life.*

If you are going to minister to others by holding them accountable, you must be wise, honest, godly, and trustworthy.

### Is it really important for others to hold us accountable?

- **PROVERBS 12:15** | *Fools think their own way is right, but the wise listen to others.*

Good advisers keep us from actions that can hurt us.

### What if I don’t want anyone to know certain things about me?

- **JEREMIAH 23:24** | *“Can anyone hide from me in a secret place? Am I not everywhere in all the heavens and earth?” says the LORD.* (See note on page 688.)

What you withhold now is likely to be exposed at a later time. So why not seek advice now? Besides, God knows all the secrets in our hearts. If you’re going to take accountability seriously, you cannot hide anything from the one who you are accountable to.

### Does God really hold us accountable for all our actions?

- **ECCLESIASTES 11:9** | *Young people, it’s wonderful to be young! Enjoy every minute of it. Do everything you want to do; take it all in. But remember that you must give an account to God for everything you do.*

Enjoy life, but stay within God’s guidelines. God will hold us accountable for everything we do. Who wants to explain ungodliness to a holy God on the Day of Judgment?

## Addiction *See also Desires; Guilt; Lust; Temptation*

Who in his right mind would volunteer to become a slave, chained to a life of bondage? Yet that's just what addiction is: self-imposed slavery, selling oneself into bondage to habit or a substance. While we typically think of addiction as a problem related to drugs or alcohol, there are other addictions that can also be destructive. We may become addicted to work, addicted to gambling, or addicted to pornography. We all have our addictions, whether they are "minor" bad habits or dangerous dependencies. One thing we are all dangerously addicted to is sin. When it comes to rejecting God's way of living and doing what seems best to us—well, we are hooked.

So how do we break the chains of our sin addiction? Ironically, it is by submitting to the control of God and his Holy Spirit. We are still controlled, but his control is always for our benefit and health, not our destruction. God's transforming power is the only thing that can ultimately heal us from all addictions.

### Can addiction involve more than substance abuse?

- **2 PETER 2:19** | *[These false teachers] promise freedom, but they themselves are slaves of sin and corruption. For you are a slave to whatever controls you. (See note on page 1136.)*

The key to addiction is control. What controls you? Whenever we have a master, we are slaves. Addiction is relinquishing ourselves to the control of something or someone else.

- **ROMANS 3:23** | *For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard.*
- **COLOSSIANS 1:22** | *You are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault.*
- **1 CORINTHIANS 6:11** | *But you were cleansed; you were made holy; you were made right with God.*

Sin is the most deeply ingrained addiction of every human being. You can't go to a clinic to overcome sin once and for all. But you can go to a person—Jesus Christ, the Son of God—to help you resist the sin in your life and to completely forgive what's left. When he forgives you, he looks at you as though you have never sinned, and when your life on earth is over, he will give you eternal life where you will be forever free from sin.

- **ROMANS 8:5, 7** | *Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things. . . . For the sinful nature is always hostile to God. It never did obey God's laws, and it never will.*

You can be addicted to your own sinful nature, which can dominate your thoughts and actions.

- **MATTHEW 19:21-22** | *Jesus told him, "If you want to be perfect, go and sell all your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." But when the young man heard this, he went away sad, for he had many possessions.*

Possessions can be addictive.

- **ROMANS 1:26-27** | *That is why God abandoned them to their shameful desires. Even the women turned against the natural way to have sex and instead indulged in sex with each other. And the men, instead of having normal sexual relations with women, burned with lust for each other.*

Sexual perversions can be addictive.

- **PROVERBS 21:17** | *Those who love pleasure become poor; those who love wine and luxury will never be rich.*

Pleasure, a luxurious lifestyle, and wealth can be addictive.

- **PSALM 39:6** | *All our busy rushing ends in nothing.*
- **MARK 6:31** | *Then Jesus said, "Let's go off by ourselves to a quiet place and rest awhile."*

Work can be addictive. Make sure you find time to rest and refresh your body and spirit.

## Does the Bible say anything about drugs?

- **1 CORINTHIANS 6:12-13** | *You say, “I am allowed to do anything”—but not everything is good for you. And even though “I am allowed to do anything,” I must not become a slave to anything. . . . [Our bodies] were made for the Lord, and the Lord cares about our bodies.*
- **1 CORINTHIANS 6:19-20** | *Don’t you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body.*
- **1 CORINTHIANS 10:31** | *So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.*

The Bible doesn’t specifically mention the kind of drug addiction common among many people today, but it does address putting things into your body that are harmful and that impair your ability to function. Taking drugs to get a high produces an artificial happiness or escape that is a cheap substitute for the true joy of being filled by the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit controls your life, your joy is authentic and contagious.

## Can I be devoted to God and other things too? Is that addiction?

- **MATTHEW 6:24** | *“No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other.”*  
Devotion and addiction are different, but devotion can lead to addiction. You can be devoted to family and friends and to helping other people. You can be devoted to a worthy cause. This shows you care. But devotion becomes addiction when it so absorbs you that God is no longer your first priority and distracts you from spending time with him. You must evaluate who or what is most important to you. A clue to determining this is to see where you spend most of your time.

## What is the best way to be free from my addictions and bad habits?

- **ROMANS 6:16** | *Don’t you realize that you become the slave of whatever you choose to obey? You can be a slave to sin, which leads to death, or you can choose to obey God, which leads to righteous living.*  
Submission is a choice. We daily stand at the crossroads, choosing sinful ways or God’s way. Choose wisely.
- **ROMANS 12:2** | *Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.*
- **1 JOHN 4:4** | *You belong to God, my dear children. You have already won a victory . . . because the Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world.*
- **1 JOHN 5:4-5** | *Every child of God defeats this evil world, and we achieve this victory through our faith. And who can win this battle against the world? Only those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God.*

Freedom from addiction comes as you change your focus and the way you think. You do this by trusting Christ to transform you and empower you to resist temptation. While it is healthy and important to seek the help of others, with God’s help, you have the ultimate power to overcome addiction. It’s hard to focus on Christ when your eyes are fixed on this world. It’s hard to focus on worldliness when your eyes are fixed on Christ.

## If we shouldn’t let anything control us, why do we submit to the Holy Spirit’s control?

- **GALATIANS 5:22-23** | *But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. (See note on page 1063.)*
- **ROMANS 8:6** | *Letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace.*

God’s control is the only kind of control that produces completely positive results.

**Addiction** *continued***PROMISE FROM GOD**

- **JOHN 8:36** | *So if the Son sets you free, you are truly free.*

**Adoption** *See also Family*

Adoption is a beautiful expression of God's love for mankind. Adoption gives children a new life that they could not achieve on their own. In the same way, Jesus provided the way for us to have eternal life in heaven, a new life we could never achieve on our own. Just as parents lovingly teach and nurture an adopted child, God teaches and nurtures his children through the Holy Spirit. Just as adoptive parents welcome a boy or girl to become their own child, God welcomes us all to be adopted into his own family and to enjoy his blessings in this life and eternity. This hope in our spiritual adoption can sustain those of us who are experiencing the frustrations and joys of earthly adoption.

**Is adopting a child right for me and my family? How can I know for sure?**

- **MATTHEW 18:5** | *“And anyone who welcomes a little child like this on my behalf is welcoming me.”*
- **PSALM 138:8** | *The LORD will work out his plans for my life—for your faithful love, O LORD, endures forever.*
- **JEREMIAH 1:5** | *I knew you before I formed you in your mother's womb. Before you were born I set you apart.*

There are some things in life you can't know for sure, but the Bible is clear on this: God puts a high priority on loving children. If you adopt a child and welcome him or her into your heart and life, you are demonstrating the kind of love Christ showed for you.

**I'm wading through all the paperwork to adopt a child. How can I deal with these months of anxious waiting?**

- **PSALM 37:4-5** | *Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you your heart's desires. Commit everything you do to the LORD. Trust him, and he will help you.*
- **ISAIAH 60:1, 4-5** | *“Arise, Jerusalem! Let your light shine for all to see. For the glory of the LORD rises to shine on you. . . . Look and see, for everyone is coming home! Your sons are coming from distant lands; your little daughters will be carried home. Your eyes will shine, and your heart will thrill with joy.”*

Waiting is never any fun, especially when the heart is involved. That's why it's important to imagine the end result: a child who your heart will “thrill with joy” over

**How can I explain my decision to adopt?**

- **PSALM 127:3** | *Children are a gift from the LORD; they are a reward from him.*
- **MATTHEW 18:5** | *“And anyone who welcomes a little child like this on my behalf is welcoming me.”*

If you choose to adopt, some people may not understand that decision. And this is especially true if the child is of different ethnicity than the adoptive parents. In such situations, the best thing you can do is lovingly explain that you made your decision carefully, that God loves all children equally, and that you believe God brought this child to your family for a particular purpose.

**How has God adopted me?**

- **JOHN 1:12** | *But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God.*
- **GALATIANS 4:4-5** | *But when the right time came, God sent his Son. . . . to buy freedom for us who were slaves to the law, so that he could adopt us as his very own children.*

When you accept Jesus Christ as your Savior, God adopts you into his family.

## Why would God want to adopt me?

- **1 JOHN 3:1** | *See how very much our Father loves us, for he calls us his children, and that is what we are!*
- **1 THESSALONIANS 1:4** | *We know, dear brothers and sisters, that God loves you and has chosen you to be his own people.*  
God chose you to be his adopted child because he loves you.
- **EPHESIANS 1:5** | *God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure.*  
Adopting you as his child has always been part of God's plan since the beginning of time.
- **1 PETER 2:9** | *But you are not like that, for you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light.*  
God has adopted you to radiate his goodness to others.

## What are some of my privileges as God's adopted child?

- **2 CORINTHIANS 6:18** | *"And I will be your Father, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty."*
- **EPHESIANS 2:18** | *Now all of us can come to the Father through the same Holy Spirit because of what Christ has done for us.*  
You have a relationship with God the Father.
- **EPHESIANS 2:19** | *So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God's holy people. You are members of God's family.*
- **HEBREWS 2:11** | *So now Jesus and the ones he makes holy have the same Father. That is why Jesus is not ashamed to call them his brothers and sisters.*  
You belong to God's family.
- **EPHESIANS 1:6-8** | *So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son. . . . He has showered his kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding.*  
You are a beneficiary of God's kindness.
- **EPHESIANS 3:6** | *And this is God's plan: Both Gentiles and Jews who believe the Good News share equally in the riches inherited by God's children.*
- **MATTHEW 7:11** | *"If you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him."*  
You are a recipient of God's blessings and good gifts.
- **1 THESSALONIANS 2:12** | *We pleaded with you, encouraged you, and urged you to live your lives in a way that God would consider worthy. For he called you to share in his Kingdom and glory.*
- **ROMANS 8:17** | *And since we are his children, we are his heirs. In fact, together with Christ we are heirs of God's glory. But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering.*  
You have the privilege to share in Christ's glory and suffering.
- **JOHN 14:2-3** | *"There is more than enough room in my Father's home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am."*
- **1 PETER 1:4** | *And we have a priceless inheritance—an inheritance that is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay.*  
The privilege of being a child of God does not stop on earth but continues through eternity. You will always have a relationship with God. Even your inheritance is eternal, for you will live in his heavenly home with him forever!

## Adoption *continued*

### PROMISE FROM GOD

- **EPHESIANS 1:4-5** | *Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure.*

## Adversity *See also Conflict; Enemies; Grief; Pain; Persecution; Racism & Prejudice; Spiritual Warfare; Stress; Suffering; Temptation; Worry*

Troubles come with a multitude of names—accidents, afflictions, bereavement, calamities, difficulties, disappointments, disasters, failures, hard times, hurts, miseries, misfortunes, reversals, ruin, sufferings, tragedies, trials, tribulations, troubles, or woes. They can come unexpectedly or after repeated warnings. Adversities may be temporarily discomforting or permanently disabling, even life-threatening or life-taking. Some adversities merely take more effort to work through, while others permanently wound. *Adversity* literally means “something acting against you.” Nowhere is this concept more clearly presented than in the Bible, which makes it clear that God himself sometimes sends adversity either as a punishment for sin or simply as a way to test and strengthen our character. Other times Satan sends adversity to tempt us to sin. And God allows it. And sometimes we bring adversity on ourselves by acting foolishly or sinfully. And finally, there is the adversity that comes out of nowhere through no fault of our own. The one thing you can count on about adversity is that it will come. We all will have troubles, so it is not a matter of will we or won’t we—the issue is what we will do with adversity when it comes.

### Does God actually send adversity into my life? Don’t troubles just happen?

- **DEUTERONOMY 28:20** | *“The LORD himself will send on you curses, confusion, and frustration . . . for doing evil and abandoning me.”*
- **JEREMIAH 21:14** | *“I myself will punish you for your sinfulness, says the LORD.” (See note on page 686.)*

- **HOSEA 4:9** | *“So now I will punish both priests and people for their wicked deeds.”*

Troubles do often “just happen” because we live in a sinful world, and God usually allows the cycle of sin to play itself out (for now). But just as a loving parent brings adversity into the life of a child through discipline, God may also bring adversity into our lives to correct us when we do wrong. This is for our benefit, not harm. God may also bring difficulties into our lives to strengthen and prepare us for life ahead.

- **LAMENTATIONS 3:33** | *He does not enjoy hurting people or causing them sorrow. (See note on page 725.)*
- **ROMANS 5:8** | *But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.*

God does not enjoy sending adversity into your life. His love for us is pure and intense; he does not want to see us suffer! But our suffering would be worse if he did not sometimes correct us.

### Is there any way I can avoid trouble and adversity?

- **JAMES 1:2-3** | *When troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow.*
- **2 CORINTHIANS 4:8** | *We are pressed on every side by troubles, but we are not crushed. (See note on page 1049.)*

Avoiding adversity may not be best for you. Though it may bruise you, adversity builds you up and strengthens your faith.



- **EXODUS 5:6-8** | *Pharaoh sent this order to the Egyptian slave drivers . . . : “Do not supply any more straw for making bricks. Make the people get it themselves! . . . They are lazy. That’s why they are crying out, ‘Let us go and offer sacrifices to our God.’”* (See note on page 56.)
- **1 PETER 2:21** | *God called you to do good, even if it means suffering, just as Christ suffered for you. He is your example.*  
 Being faithful to God may actually bring adversity. Satan is our enemy, and he will try to stop us from following God. There are also people who oppose what is good and right. Adversity may be a sign that you are being faithful to God.
- **PROVERBS 13:21** | *Trouble chases sinners, while blessings reward the righteous.*
- **GALATIANS 6:8** | *Those who live only to satisfy their own sinful nature will harvest decay and death from that sinful nature. But those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit.*  
 Avoiding sin helps you avoid a great deal of adversity.

### What causes adversity in my life?

- **ECCLESIASTES 2:22-23** | *So what do people get in this life for all their hard work and anxiety? Their days of labor are filled with pain and grief.*  
 Trouble is an inevitable by-product of fallen human life.
- **EZEKIEL 22:14** | *“How strong and courageous will you be in my day of reckoning?”*
- **PROVERBS 12:13** | *The wicked are trapped by their own words, but the godly escape such trouble.*  
 Trouble is often the result of our own poor decisions and sin.
- **JONAH 1:3-4** | *But Jonah got up and went in the opposite direction to get away from the LORD. . . . He found a ship leaving for Tarshish. . . . But the LORD hurled a powerful wind over the sea.* (See note on page 815.)  
 We can expect to find ourselves in deep trouble if we insist on running away from God.
- **PSALM 62:3-4** | *So many enemies against one man—all of them trying to kill me. . . . They delight in telling lies about me.*  
 Trouble is sometimes undeserved or caused by others.

### Are there other benefits to adversity?

- **2 CHRONICLES 33:12** | *But while in deep distress, Manasseh sought the LORD his God and sincerely humbled himself.*  
 Adversity can humble us and lead us to God.
- **1 PETER 4:12-13** | *Don’t be surprised at the fiery trials you are going through. . . . for these trials make you partners with Christ in his suffering.*  
 Adversity helps us understand Christ better because he suffered for us. This deepens our relationship with him.

### Is God listening when I cry out because of my afflictions or troubles? Does he really hear and does he care?

- **JONAH 2:2** | *“I cried out to the LORD in my great trouble, and he answered me. I called to you from the land of the dead, and LORD, you heard me!”* (See note on page 816.)  
 God’s hotline is always open. Your call will never be rejected. God is never too busy with anything—even managing the world—to listen. He has both a listening ear and a caring heart.

#### PROMISES FROM GOD

- **PSALM 46:1** | *God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble.*
- **PSALM 9:12** | *He does not ignore the cries of those who suffer.*

## Adversity *continued*

- **MATTHEW 11:28** | *“Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.”*
- **1 PETER 5:7** | *Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you.*

## Advice *See also Decisions; Will of God; Wisdom*

What should I do? This is a commonly asked question. In an age of conflicting claims and confusing directions, many search for wise counsel. Maybe that’s why counselors are in such great demand and advice columnists are in every newspaper. There is a critical difference, however, between wise counsel and misleading advice that leads to destruction. Of all wisdom, God’s wisdom is the best, for his is given with a perspective of ultimate truth and eternity. Who among us would not like to talk with someone who knows everything that will happen tomorrow and every tomorrow to come? We would do well to seek advice more often from the sources of divine wisdom: God and his Word.

### Where do I look for good advice?

- **1 SAMUEL 8:6** | *Samuel was displeased with their request and went to the LORD for guidance.*
- **JOB 12:13** | *“But true wisdom and power are found in God; counsel and understanding are his.”*
- **PSALM 32:8** | *The LORD says, “I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you.”*
- **JAMES 1:5** | *If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking.*
- **PSALM 119:105** | *Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path.*
- **COLOSSIANS 3:16** | *Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives.*

Seek advice from God through prayer and reading his Word, the Bible.

- **JOHN 16:13** | *“When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future.”*  
God gave us his Son as our Counselor; both Jesus’ life and words counsel us. God also gave us the Holy Spirit, who is called “the Counselor.” He will stay with you at all times to give you wisdom and guide you in any circumstance.
- **GENESIS 6:9** | *Noah was a righteous man, the only blameless person living on earth at the time, and he walked in close fellowship with God.*
- **1 KINGS 12:8-9** | *But Rehoboam rejected the advice of the older men and instead asked the opinion of the young men who had grown up with him and were now his advisers. “What is your advice?” he asked them.*

Family and friends have the potential to be excellent sources of advice as they often know us and our circumstances. However, be wary that kinship and association are not the basic criteria for good advice nor are they a guarantee for godly advice.

- **TITUS 1:15** | *Everything is pure to those whose hearts are pure.*  
Seek advice from those who are faithful, godly, honest, and trustworthy. They can be counted on to give you counsel that comes from God’s Word.

### Why do I need advice from others? Why can’t I just rely on my own wisdom?

- **PROVERBS 12:15** | *Fools think their own way is right, but the wise listen to others. (See note on page 568.)*  
Wisdom is the recognition of our own inadequacies. Foolishness is thinking we have none. It is wise to recognize our limitations rather than to discover them at the wrong time.
- **PROVERBS 25:11** | *Timely advice is lovely, like golden apples in a silver basket.*

There are few things as valuable as wise and timely advice.

## How do I evaluate the advice of others?

- **2 CHRONICLES 22:4** | *[Members of Ahab's family] became [Ahaziah's] advisers . . . and they led him to ruin.*
- **MATTHEW 7:16** | *“You can identify them by their fruit, that is, by the way they act.”*
- **2 JOHN 1:9-10** | *Anyone who wanders away from this teaching has no relationship with God. But anyone who remains in the teaching of Christ has a relationship with both the Father and the Son.*

It is important to seek advice from those who love God and have a good knowledge of the Bible. When evaluating their advice, check it against the truth of God's Word. If it contradicts the Bible, avoid it at all costs.

## How do I give good advice to others?

- **1 SAMUEL 3:19** | *As Samuel grew up, the LORD was with him, and everything Samuel said proved to be reliable.* (See note on page 248.)

People listened to Samuel because Samuel had something important to say. But Samuel had something important to say because he had a good adviser—the Lord God himself.

- **PHILIPPIANS 4:8** | *Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.*

In giving advice to others, have pure motives, point to God's Word, and don't use advice as an excuse to lecture. Pray about what you want to say, and have the other person's best interests in mind. Words are like medicine; they should be measured with care, for an overdose may do more harm than good.

- **PSALM 1:1** | *Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or stand around with sinners, or join in with mockers.*

Following evil advice leads to sorrow and disaster, robbing us of joy and satisfaction. Godly advice leads to good results, enriching our joy.

### PROMISES FROM GOD

- **PSALM 32:8** | *“I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you.”*
- **PROVERBS 18:4** | *Wise words are like deep waters; wisdom flows from the wise like a bubbling brook.*

## Affirmation *See Encouragement*

## Afraid *See Fear*

## Anger *See also Betrayal; Bitterness; Happiness; Jealousy; Racism & Prejudice; Self-Control*

Anger is a fire that burns and consumes—smoldering, flaming, at times white hot. Anger is passion. Of all emotions, it may well be the most passionate, for it has the power to fuel hatred and smother love. Anger itself is not necessarily bad; it is not necessarily wrong. God himself gets angry. What we need to consider is the object of our anger, the motive for our anger, and the outcome of our anger. Anger that is self-righteous, protects our pride, is self-centered, or demands its own way is dangerous. If allowed to continue unchecked, it will consume us. This kind of anger seeks harm and revenge; it seeks to destroy. Thus it can lead to bitterness and hatred, emotions that can cause violent behavior and obliterate compassion and forgiveness.

God's anger, however, is directed against sin and unrighteousness. He blazes hot against evil. His anger, like ours, becomes a consuming fire, but its focus is to eradicate the sin so that the sinner can be restored. Our anger often consumes others and even

## Anger *continued*

ourselves; God's anger burns against evil and becomes a cleansing fire. The fires of our anger may aggravate our sinfulness and self-righteousness. His anger burns away sinfulness and allows the "gold" to emerge and make us fit for the Master's use.

### Why do we usually get angry?

- **NUMBERS 22:29** | *"You have made me look like a fool!" Balaam shouted. (See note on page 144.)*  
We get angry when our pride is hurt.
- **GENESIS 4:4-5** | *The LORD accepted Abel and his gift, but he did not accept Cain and his gift. This made Cain very angry.*  
We get angry when someone else is preferred or acknowledged over us.
- **2 CHRONICLES 26:18-19** | *"Get out of the sanctuary, for you have sinned. . . ." Uzziah, who was holding an incense burner, became furious. (See note on page 404.)*
- **ESTHER 3:2-5** | *But Mordecai refused to bow down or show [Haman] respect. . . [Haman] was filled with rage.*  
We get angry when we don't get our way.
- **1 SAMUEL 18:8** | *This made Saul very angry. "What's this?" he said. "They credit David with ten thousands and me with only thousands. Next they'll be making him their king!"*  
We get angry when we become jealous of what others have or have done.
- **2 CHRONICLES 16:7-10** | *"Because you have put your trust in the king of Aram instead of in the LORD your God, you missed your chance to destroy the army of the king of Aram." . . . Asa became so angry with Hanani for saying this that he threw him into prison. (See note on page 396.)*  
We get angry when we are confronted about our sinful actions and are exposed.

### What are the effects of anger?

- **GENESIS 27:41-43** | *Esau hated Jacob because their father had given Jacob the blessing. And Esau began to scheme: . . . "I will kill my brother, Jacob." But Rebekah heard about Esau's plans. So she sent for Jacob and told him, ". . . Flee."*  
Anger isolates us from others.
- **PSALM 37:8** | *Stop being angry! . . . Do not lose your temper—it only leads to harm.*
- **JAMES 1:20** | *Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires.*  
Anger produces ungodly actions and evil motives in us.
- **1 SAMUEL 20:30-31** | *Saul boiled with rage at Jonathan. . . "As long as that son of Jesse is alive, you'll never be king. Now go and get him so I can kill him!"*  
Anger blinds us to what is really good and right. Saul's jealous anger blinded him to the fact that God had already chosen David to be the next king because of his godly character. Anger in its strongest form can lead to murder.
- **PROVERBS 15:1** | *A gentle answer deflects anger, but harsh words make tempers flare.*  
Anger leads to conflict and arguments.

### When I am angry, what should I avoid?

- **EPHESIANS 6:4** | *Do not provoke your children to anger by the way you treat them.*  
Avoid discipline in the heat of anger.
- **JAMES 3:5** | *The tongue is a small thing that makes grand speeches. But a tiny spark can set a great forest on fire.*  
Avoid speaking your mind when you are angry. You are likely to say something you will regret.
- **1 SAMUEL 19:9-10** | *As David played his harp, Saul hurled his spear at David.*  
Avoid acting on impulse in the heat of anger. You are likely to do something you will regret.

## When is it okay to be angry?

- **JOHN 2:15-16** | *[Jesus] drove out the sheep and cattle, scattered the money changers' coins . . . and . . . told them, "Get these things out of here. Stop turning my Father's house into a marketplace!"*
- **NUMBERS 25:11** | *"Phinehas . . . has turned my anger away from the Israelites by being as zealous among them as I was."*

Anger at sin is not only appropriate but also necessary. It is a sign that our priorities are in line with God's, that we understand the destructive force of sin, and will confront it with the same passion that God does.

## We all get angry at times, so what should we do about it?

- **EPHESIANS 4:26-27** | *And "don't sin by letting anger control you." Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil.* (See note on page 1068.)  
Anger is like a skunk in the house. Don't feed it to encourage it to stay. And carefully try to get rid of it as soon as possible.
- **MATTHEW 5:21-23** | *"You have heard that our ancestors were told, 'You must not murder.' . . . But I say, if you are even angry with someone, you are subject to judgment! . . . Go and be reconciled to that person."*

Confront those you are angry with in order to restore your relationship.

- **1 CORINTHIANS 13:5** | *[Love] is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged.*  
Love is the mightiest weapon in overcoming anger.
- **PROVERBS 11:29** | *Those who bring trouble on their families inherit the wind.* (See note on page 568.)
- **EPHESIANS 6:4** | *Do not provoke your children to anger by the way you treat them.*  
To knowingly provoke your family to anger weakens the binding force—love—that bonds your family together. The control you seek actually enslaves you.

## What causes God to get angry?

- **ROMANS 1:18** | *But God shows his anger from heaven against all sinful, wicked people who suppress the truth by their wickedness.*
- **DEUTERONOMY 4:25** | *"Do not corrupt yourselves by making idols of any kind. This is evil in the sight of the LORD your God and will arouse his anger."* (See note on page 163.)  
God cannot wink at or tolerate sin, for sin is a violation of his righteousness and his demands for holy living.
- **JUDGES 2:12-14** | *They abandoned the LORD. . . . This made the LORD burn with anger against Israel.*

God's anger at our sin may result in discipline. The discipline is not designed to destroy, but to correct, redirect, and restore our relationship with him.

## How can I stop God's anger against me?

- **2 CHRONICLES 12:12** | *Because Rehoboam humbled himself, the LORD's anger was turned away.* (See note on Humility on page 393.)  
Humility before God quenches his anger.
- **PSALM 30:5** | *For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime!*  
Recognize God's discipline, stop your sinful actions, and enjoy a restored relationship with him.
- **COLOSSIANS 3:12-15** | *Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. . . . Forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. Above all, clothe yourselves with love. . . . And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts.*

Confess your sins, commit to following God with all your heart, and clothe yourself with the character traits of God.

**Anger** *continued***PROMISE FROM GOD**

- **PSALM 103:8** | *The LORD is compassionate and merciful, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love.*

**Anxiety** *See also Grief; Hope; Pain; Stress; Worry*

Pressures in our lives can build and pull us in different directions. These pressures pull against our sense of well-being, and anxiety begins to overwhelm us. Trying to do too much work with too little time or too few resources can stretch us beyond our capacity. Trying to cope with the financial demands of life without adequate income can make us begin to feel desperate. Difficulties in marital relationships, in parent-child relationships, or in work relationships can lead to deep anxiety and a sense of hopelessness. What is the answer? We need a perspective that comes from God. And we also need the help of wise counselors and friends who God can use to bring us his presence, wisdom, and hope.

**Should I be surprised by the anxiety I am experiencing in my life?**

- **JOHN 16:33** | *“I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.”*  
Jesus warned us to expect stress and trouble in this life. This world is filled with trials and sorrows that generate deep seated anxiety. The key to dealing with anxiety is to not be surprised when it comes, but to learn how to respond when it comes. While there are many healthy and positive ways to handle anxiety, never neglect the spiritual help the Holy Spirit promises to provide if you ask.

**What are some causes of anxiety?**

- **GENESIS 3:6, 23** | *So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband . . . and he ate it, too. . . . So the LORD God banished them from the Garden of Eden.*
- **GENESIS 44:18** | *Then Judah stepped forward and said, “Please, my lord, let your servant say just one word to you. Please, do not be angry with me, even though you are as powerful as Pharaoh himself.”* (See note on Stress on page 44.)
- **2 SAMUEL 11:4; 12:13-14** | *Then David sent messengers to get her; and when she came to the palace, he slept with her. . . . Nathan replied, “. . . the LORD has forgiven you, and you won’t die for this sin. Nevertheless . . . your child will die.”*
- **LUKE 22:56-62** | *Finally she said, “This man was one of Jesus’ followers!” But Peter denied it. “Woman,” he said, “I don’t even know him!” . . . At that moment the Lord turned and looked at Peter. . . . And Peter left the courtyard, weeping bitterly.*  
Anxiety can have roots in things we have done in the past. When we sin, we can bring anxiety along with sin’s painful consequences into our lives.
- **EXODUS 16:2-3** | *The whole community of Israel complained about Moses and Aaron. “If only the LORD had killed us back in Egypt,” they moaned.* (See note on Stress on page 67.)  
Anxiety can build when we fail to trust God for help.
- **MATTHEW 1:18-19** | *Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. Joseph, to whom she was engaged, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly.*  
Change often produces anxiety in our lives.
- **JAMES 1:2-4** | *Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.*

Adversity and the normal problems of life cause anxiety. Sometimes anxiety is the result of wounds from the past that were not your fault.

- **PROVERBS 21:17** | *Those who love pleasure become poor; those who love wine and luxury will never be rich.*

Laziness and poor planning can lead to anxiety.

- **COLOSSIANS 3:13** | *Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.*

Making mistakes can lead to anxiety in our lives and in the lives of our friends.

- **1 SAMUEL 25:17-20** | *"You need to know this and figure out what to do, for there is going to be trouble for our master and his whole family. He's so ill-tempered that no one can even talk to him!" Abigail wasted no time. She quickly gathered 200 loaves of bread . . . 100 clusters of raisins, and 200 fig cakes. She packed them on donkeys and said to her servants, "Go on ahead. I will follow you shortly." But she didn't tell her husband Nabal what she was doing. As she was riding her donkey into a mountain ravine, she saw David and his men coming toward her.*

Working against the clock, especially on an ongoing basis, can cause deep anxiety.

### What are some of the dangers of anxiety?

- **NUMBERS 11:10-14** | *Moses heard all the families standing in the doorways of their tents whining, and the LORD became extremely angry. Moses was also very aggravated. And Moses said to the LORD, "Why are you treating me, your servant, so harshly? Have mercy on me! What did I do to deserve the burden of all these people? . . . I can't carry all these people by myself! The load is far too heavy!"*

- **2 CORINTHIANS 1:8** | *We think you ought to know, dear brothers and sisters, about the trouble we went through in the province of Asia. We were crushed and overwhelmed beyond our ability to endure, and we thought we would never live through it.*

The intense demands of life have the potential to overwhelm you. The expectations, the criticism, and the scope of needs and responsibilities can threaten to crush even the strongest person.

- **LUKE 10:40-41** | *But Martha was distracted by the big dinner she was preparing. She came to Jesus and said, "Lord, doesn't it seem unfair to you that my sister just sits here while I do all the work? Tell her to come and help me." But the Lord said to her, "My dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details!"*
- **MATTHEW 13:22** | *"The seed that fell among the thorns represents those who hear God's word, but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the worries of this life and the lure of wealth, so no fruit is produced."*

Anxiety can cause you to focus on the trivial and miss the important. As pressure squeezes your perspective inward, you lose the big picture. Preoccupation with the issues of the moment can sometimes blind you to what's really important.

### What can I do when I'm overwhelmed by anxiety?

- **2 CORINTHIANS 4:9** | *We are hunted down, but never abandoned by God. We get knocked down, but we are not destroyed.*

Keep going! Knowing that God is by your side during times of anxiety can help you to keep from giving up.

- **PSALM 55:22** | *Give your burdens to the LORD, and he will take care of you. He will not permit the godly to slip and fall. (See note on Stress on page 508.)*
- **ISAIAH 41:10** | *"Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand."*
- **PSALM 62:2** | *He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress where I will never be shaken.*
- **JOHN 14:1** | *"Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me."*

## Anxiety continued

- **HEBREWS 2:18** | *Since he himself has gone through suffering and testing, he is able to help us when we are being tested.*

- **PHILIPPIANS 2:4** | *Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too.*

The first step in dealing with your anxiety is to bring it to the Lord. Only he brings true peace of heart and mind. God's availability and promises provide effective stress reducers.

- **2 SAMUEL 22:7** | *But in my distress I cried out to the LORD. . . . He heard me from his sanctuary; my cry reached his ears.*

- **PSALM 86:7** | *I will call to you whenever I'm in trouble, and you will answer me.*  
Be persistent in prayer.

- **MARK 6:31** | *Then Jesus said, "Let's go off by ourselves to a quiet place and rest awhile." He said this because there were so many people coming and going that Jesus and his apostles didn't even have time to eat.*

Take time to slow down and take a break from pressure-packed situations.

- **1 CORINTHIANS 6:19-20** | *Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body.*

Take care of your body. Adequate rest, regular exercise, and proper nutrition are essential to dealing effectively with stress and anxiety.

- **GALATIANS 6:9** | *So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up.*

Don't let stress and anxiety defeat you. When you are tired of doing good, it may be because you are just too tired.

### Why do I need help from others? Why can't I just rely on my own strength?

- **PROVERBS 12:15** | *Fools think their own way is right, but the wise listen to others.* (See note on Advice on page 568.)

Wisdom is the recognition of our own inadequacies. Foolishness is thinking we can handle all our problems on our own. It is wise to be aware of our tendency to become overcome by anxiety and to be prepared to deal with it. This involves building supportive relationships that can bring us help when we become overwhelmed.

- **PROVERBS 25:11** | *Timely advice is lovely, like golden apples in a silver basket.*

There are few things as valuable as wise and timely counsel. Sometimes the presence and help of a friend or counselor is just what we need to get through a time of deep anxiety.

### How can I keep hoping when God doesn't seem to act?

- **PSALM 71:5** | *O Lord, you alone are my hope.*

Who but God controls the future? Who but God has a home for us that is eternal? Who but God forgives our sins? Who but God can give us a life that lasts forever? No wonder he is our hope!

- **HEBREWS 11:1** | *Faith shows the reality of what we hope for; it is the evidence of things we cannot see.*

We have faith in God to do what he has promised, and we can be absolutely sure that he will. Unlike idle hopes, our hopes are built on the solid foundation of his trustworthiness.

### PROMISES FROM GOD

- **JEREMIAH 29:11** | *"For I know the plans I have for you," says the LORD. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope."*

- **JOHN 16:33** | *"I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world."*

- **1 PETER 5:7** | *Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you.*



**Appreciation** See *Thankfulness*

**Arguments** See *Conflict*

**Arrogance** See *Pride*

**Assumptions** See *Judging Others*

**Atheism** See also *Faith; Salvation*

Atheism is the belief system that says there is no God. Atheists spend much time and energy trying to prove God doesn't exist. What we decide about the existence of God is literally a choice between life and death. And it is not enough to decide that he exists; we must then decide how we will respond to his clear message in the Bible.

### What is atheism?

- **PSALM 14:1** | *Only fools say in their hearts, "There is no God."*
- **ROMANS 1:20** | *Ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God.*
- **EPHESIANS 2:12** | *In those days you were living apart from Christ. . . . You lived in this world without God and without hope.*  
Atheism says "There is no God." But all of creation speaks against that.

### What are the characteristics of atheism?

- **JEREMIAH 5:4** | *"They don't know the ways of the LORD. They don't understand God's laws."*  
Living in ignorance of God. Intellectual atheism is a mind without the knowledge of God. Practicing atheism is a life without a relationship with God.
- **JUDE 1:4** | *I say this because some ungodly people have wormed their way into your churches, saying that God's marvelous grace allows us to live immoral lives. The condemnation of such people was recorded long ago, for they have denied our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.*
- **1 JOHN 4:3** | *But if someone claims to be a prophet and does not acknowledge the truth about Jesus, that person is not from God.*  
Denying Jesus Christ. Those who deny Jesus now will be denied access to heaven by Jesus at the time of judgment.
- **JOHN 18:37** | *Jesus responded, ". . . I was born and came into the world to testify to the truth. All who love the truth recognize that what I say is true."*
- **ROMANS 1:18** | *But God shows his anger from heaven against all sinful, wicked people who suppress the truth by their wickedness.*
- **JEREMIAH 14:14** | *Then the LORD said, "These prophets are telling lies in my name. I did not send them or tell them to speak. I did not give them any messages. . . . They speak foolishness made up in their own lying hearts."*  
Denying God's truth. There is a sharp line between what is true and what is not. To deny truth is, by default, to be living a lie, to be living by principles that have no purpose, no clear direction, no foundation that lasts, and no future.
- **EXODUS 5:2** | *"Is that so?" retorted Pharaoh. "And who is the LORD? Why should I listen to him and let Israel go? I don't know the LORD."*
- **2 KINGS 18:32-35** | *"Don't listen to Hezekiah when he tries to mislead you by saying, 'The LORD will rescue us!' Have the gods of any other nations ever saved their people*



# **OLD TESTAMENT**

# Genesis

**IN THE BEGINNING** — *the beginning of all beginnings—everything was fresher than the earliest morning and newer than a baby’s next breath. God spoke, and new worlds emerged. God breathed, and new life began. God created, and a new garden grew with pristine purity. A new dynamic called love and marriage blossomed in that garden, and it would lead to a new wonder called children and family. A new utopia had begun. The whole wide universe, and the tiny corner called Eden, was bathed in honeymoon freshness. It was the dawn of all things wonderful, the dawn of everything bright and beautiful.*

Genesis is the book of new beginnings—new, wonderful beginnings. But it is also the book of new beginnings that were far less than wonderful because of another new dynamic called choice. God gave his creatures the ability to choose the course their lives would take, and they did not choose wisely. And so began the dark presence of the evil one, the dark shadow called temptation, and the dark woundedness called sin.

Many today are tired of the same old thing—the same job, the same routines, the same responsibilities, the same load of debt, the same limitations, the same sickness or injury, perhaps even the sameness in marriage or family life. If only we could choose a new course in life. If only we could get away from it all, perhaps even get away from everyone and everything familiar—out of debt, out of the neighborhood, out of the chains of sameness. If only we could jump-start a new tomorrow today.

In our quest for newness, many jump ship, leaving home and family behind, just to find that the new beginning is only the other side of the same old coin. Old oppression is exchanged for new oppression. Old problems are bartered for new ones until it seems that the new is worse than the old.

When we embark on a new beginning, how do we know which way it will take us? Genesis is the book to study for answers. It lays out the principles for new beginnings (new relationships, new rules, new jobs, new directions) within the boundaries of God’s timeless and unchanging truths for successful

## **What you will be reading about**

### **1:1–2:25**

How God created the world

### **3:1–5:32**

How sin entered the world

### **6:1–11:32**

The story of Noah and the ark

### **12:1–25:18**

The story of Abraham

### **25:19–28:9**

The story of Isaac

### **28:10–36:43**

The story of Jacob

### **37:1–50:26**

The story of Joseph

living. Newness will always be exciting, and ultimately satisfying, if we stay within the guidelines for living that are laid down by God in this book and in the rest of the Bible. You will then find your beginnings as fresh and bright as the dawn of creation. But new beginnings without God—outside his guidelines for living—will be as dark and devastating as the expulsion from Eden, which led to a new world of pain, work, sweat, and sin.

Read the book of Genesis to gain a new perspective on what appear to be the same old things. Let the tyranny of the ordinary become fresh and vital. When you do chart a new beginning in your life, use the guidelines for new beginnings presented in Genesis. Then you will have renewed hope and zest with each new morning by running with God, not from him.

**Key verses in Genesis**

**1:1** *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*

**1:27** *So God created human beings in his own image . . . male and female he created them.*

**9:12-17** *Then God said, “I am giving you a sign of my covenant with you and with all living*

*creatures, for all generations to come. I have placed my rainbow in the clouds. . . . Never again will the floodwaters destroy all life. . . . Yes, this rainbow is the sign of the covenant I am confirming with all the creatures on earth.”*

**15:6** *And Abram believed the LORD, and the LORD counted*

*him as righteous because of his faith.*

**18:14** *“Is anything too hard for the LORD?”*

**26:24** *“Do not be afraid, for I am with you and will bless you.”*

**50:20** *“You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good.”*

**The Account of Creation**

**1** 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 God saw that it was good. <sup>11</sup>Then God said, “Let the land sprout with vegetation—every sort of seed-bearing plant, and trees that grow seed-bearing fruit.

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

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

<sup>14</sup>Then God said, “Let lights appear in the sky to separate the day from the night. Let them be signs to mark the seasons, days, and years.

<sup>15</sup>Let these lights in the sky shine down on the earth.” And that is what happened.

<sup>16</sup>God made two great lights—the larger one to govern the day, and the smaller one to govern the night. He also made the stars.

<sup>17</sup>God set these lights in the sky to light the earth, <sup>18</sup>to govern the day and night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good.

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

<sup>20</sup>Then God said, “Let the waters swarm with fish and other life. Let the skies be filled with birds of every kind.” <sup>21</sup>So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that scurries and swarms in the water, and

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, . . .*

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 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.

**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.

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

### *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 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

## • Rest

GENESIS 2:1-3

Why would the omnipotent God of the universe rest following his work of creation? Surely it wasn’t because the Almighty was physically tired! Our clue is that God, in ceasing from his work, called his rest “holy.” God also knew that we would need to cease from our work to care for our spiritual needs. Work is good, but it must be balanced by regular attention to worship and the health of our souls. Do you observe regular times for worship and spiritual refreshment?

## • Sexuality

GENESIS 2:24

When the unity candle is lit at a wedding, it symbolizes a unique relationship—leaving father and mother and joining as bride and groom in such a way that the two become one. We don't fully understand sexual union, but we do know that God intended it to bond married people together in a way different from any other relationship. This physical intimacy is designed to be experienced exclusively and uniquely within marriage, and it is a model of the vulnerability and unity that should be experienced in all other aspects of marriage.

Our fallen world has come to view sex simply as an act of pleasure rather than a doorway to deepest vulnerability and sharing. That is why sex outside of marriage is so wrong: It destroys the proper view and function of sex as the ultimate act of intimacy that two people can experience together. A casual view of sex devalues it and takes away one of the most powerful channels of communication between a husband and wife. When sex is seen simply as a physical act, it loses its power to bond two people together. Lack of intimacy is one of the great destroyers of a marriage. Use all of the resources God has given you to keep sex alive in your marriage, functioning as it was designed to function.

## • Temptation

GENESIS 3:1-6

The first key to understanding temptation is recognizing the power and cunning of the tempter. Notice that the serpent does not approach Eve with something obviously evil but with a lovely piece of fruit. He then twists God's command just enough to make it seem to Eve as if God didn't really mean what he had commanded. Hidden behind these obvious "benefits" was the lie that Eve could become like God by violating God's specific command. How often Satan uses this deceptive strategy with us! How does Satan most often employ temptation in your life? Pray that God will help you cling to his will and recognize the lies of the one who would destroy your soul.

chose a name for each one. <sup>20</sup>He gave names to all the livestock, all the birds of the sky, and all the wild animals. But still there was no helper just right for him.

<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>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.

### *The Man and Woman Sin*

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

<sup>2</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?"

2:21 Or took a part of the man's side. 3:8 Or Adam, and so throughout the chapter.

“The serpent deceived me,” she replied.  
“That’s why I ate it.”

<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  
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.

3:15 Or bruise; also in 3:15b. 3:16 Or And though you will have desire for your husband, / he will rule over you. 3:20 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.”

### **Cain and Abel**

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

## • Family

GENESIS 4:1

The last chapter of the creation story is still going on. God isn’t through yet with his creative process, for in each conception and birth, he teams up with man and woman to create new life. There is something in the sexual act that goes far beyond the pleasure of the act itself, something that is a blending and bonding of not only husband and wife but God also, for his divine creative process makes conception and birth possible. In creating a child together, a couple has joined God in bringing a living soul into the world. This is proof enough that sex in marriage should be celebrated as holy, not as shameful or merely something to be endured.

## • Motives

GENESIS 4:3-5

Your motives are everything to God. The condition of your heart is essential to the condition of your relationship with him. Coming to God out of obligation, or just to keep him from getting angry at you, or to placate him to get something you really want shows that you want a relationship with God for the wrong reasons. Coming to God with a humble desire to know him and what he wants for you is more about loving and pleasing him than yourself. It is quite likely that God rejected Cain’s sacrifice because Cain’s motives were self-centered. When your motives are selfish, even seemingly right behavior can become inappropriate. Don’t let right actions be wasted by wrong motives. You will soon find your actions to be futile. But right motives always produce meaningful action, even in the smallest things. More important, when you pursue spiritual life with self-serving motives, you rob yourself of the joy God intends.

# Quick Topic Finder

This is a quick reference guide to the main topics studied more in-depth in the HelpFinder Index at the front. This list gives you a quick bird's-eye view of the topics, the appropriate page number for finding the comprehensive study in the HelpFinder Index, a list of page numbers to locate in-text application notes on the topic, and direction for finding related promise verses.

## Abilities

See HelpFinder Index, page A12

See notes on pages 55, 307, 1023

*God's promises:* Matthew 25:29, page 888;  
Mark 9:23, page 905

## Abortion

See HelpFinder Index, page A13

See notes on pages 11, 507, 553, 665

## Absence

See HelpFinder Index, page A14

*God's promises:* Ecclesiastes 4:9-10, page 590;  
Matthew 28:20, page 893

## Absolutes *See Convictions; Truth*

## Abuse

See HelpFinder Index, page A16

See notes on pages 584, 877, 1024

*God's promises:* Psalm 9:12, page 484;  
Psalm 23:4, page 491

## Accountability

See HelpFinder Index, page A18

See notes on pages 255, 542, 688

## Addiction

See HelpFinder Index, page A20

See notes on pages 1063, 1136

*God's promise:* John 8:36, page 962

## Adoption

See HelpFinder Index, page A22

*God's promise:* Ephesians 1:4-5, page 1065

## Adversity

See HelpFinder Index, page A24

See notes on pages 56, 686, 725, 815, 816, 1049

*God's promises:* Psalm 9:12, page 484;  
Psalm 46:1, page 503; Matthew 11:28,  
page 871; 1 Peter 5:7, page 1132

## Advice

See HelpFinder Index, page A26

See notes on pages 248, 568

*God's promises:* Psalm 32:8, page 495;  
Proverbs 18:4, page 574

## Affirmation *See Encouragement*

## Afraid *See Fear*

## Anger

See HelpFinder Index, page A27

See notes on pages 144, 163, 393, 396, 404,  
568, 1068

*God's promise:* Psalm 103:8, page 533

## Anxiety

See HelpFinder Index, page A30

See notes on pages 44, 65, 67, 508, 568,  
866, 871

*God's promises:* Jeremiah 29:11, page 693;  
John 16:33, page 972; 1 Peter 5:7,  
page 1132

## Appreciation *See Thankfulness*

## Arguments *See Conflict*

## Arrogance *See Pride*

## Atheism

See HelpFinder Index, page A33

*God's promise:* Luke 19:10, page 943

## Authenticity *See Pretending*

## Betrayal

See HelpFinder Index, page A35

*God's promises:* Isaiah 54:10, page 651;  
Romans 3:3, page 1014

## Bible

See HelpFinder Index, page A37

See notes on pages 488, 561, 611, 681, 963,  
968

*God's promises:* Psalm 119:89, page 544;  
Luke 11:28, page 933; 2 Timothy 3:16,  
page 1099; Hebrews 8:10, page 1114



**Bitterness**

See HelpFinder Index, page A39  
 See notes on pages 290, 447, 807, 823, 939  
*God's promises:* Isaiah 26:3, page 624;  
 Titus 1:15, page 1102

**Blessings**

See HelpFinder Index, page A41  
 See notes on pages 175, 183, 340, 683  
*God's promises:* Psalm 84:11, page 524;  
 Galatians 6:9, page 1063; Revelation 21:7,  
 page 1166

**Boasting** *See Pride*

**Boldness** *See Courage*

**Boundaries**

See HelpFinder Index, page A43

**Brokenhearted** *See Encouragement; Grief*

**Burnout**

See HelpFinder Index, page A45  
*God's promise:* Isaiah 40:28-31, page 637

**Call of God** *See Purpose; Will of God*

**Celebration**

See HelpFinder Index, page A48  
 See notes on pages 63, 113, 161, 434  
*God's promise:* Psalm 5:11, page 482

**Change**

See HelpFinder Index, page A49  
 See notes on pages 40, 983  
*God's promises:* Numbers 23:19, page 145;  
 2 Corinthians 5:17, page 1050

**Character**

See HelpFinder Index, page A51  
 See notes on pages 153, 575, 732, 874, 1112  
*God's promises:* James 1:4, page 1122;  
 1 Timothy 4:12, 16, page 1093

**Choices** *See Decisions*

**Church**

See HelpFinder Index, page A54  
*God's promise:* Matthew 16:18, page 878

**Comfort**

See HelpFinder Index, page A57  
 See notes on pages 18, 453, 828, 902, 1047,  
 1089  
*God's promises:* Psalm 34:18, page 496;  
 2 Corinthians 1:5, page 1046

**Commitment**

See HelpFinder Index, page A59  
 See notes on pages 431, 498, 602, 863, 938  
*God's promises:* Isaiah 40:31, page 637;  
 Hebrews 3:14, page 1111

**Communication**

See HelpFinder Index, page A61  
 See notes on pages 321, 574, 796, 997, 1123  
*God's promises:* Proverbs 10:20, page 566;  
 Ephesians 4:29, page 1068

**Compassion**

See HelpFinder Index, page A68  
 See notes on pages 440, 455, 896, 927  
*God's promise:* Psalm 72:12, page 517

**Compromise**

See HelpFinder Index, page A70  
 See notes on pages 232, 251, 341, 785, 1051,  
 1144  
*God's promise:* Ephesians 6:11, page 1069

**Confession** *See Forgiveness; Mercy & Grace;  
 Repentance*

**Conflict**

See HelpFinder Index, page A72  
 See notes on pages 133, 275, 285, 865, 873,  
 1018, 1027, 1033, 1062  
*God's promise:* Matthew 5:9, page 864

**Conscience**

See HelpFinder Index, page A75  
 See notes on pages 41, 282, 424, 1006  
*God's promise:* Psalm 119:105, page 545

**Convictions**

See HelpFinder Index, page A76  
*God's promises:* Romans 2:7, page 1013;  
 1 Peter 4:19, page 1132

**Counselors** *See Advice*

**Courage**

See HelpFinder Index, page A80  
 See notes on pages 177, 445, 493, 639, 935, 948  
*God's promise:* Joshua 1:9, page 194

**Creativity**

See HelpFinder Index, page A82  
 See notes on pages 503, 553, 642, 1117  
*God's promises:* Ephesians 2:10, page 1066;  
 Ephesians 3:20, page 1067

**Crisis** *See Adversity*

**Criticism**

See HelpFinder Index, page A83  
 See note on page 1025  
*God's promises:* Proverbs 12:18, page 569;  
 Proverbs 15:31, page 572; 1 Peter 4:14,  
 page 1132

**Death**

See HelpFinder Index, page A85  
 See notes on pages 505, 1043, 1085, 1161

# Great Bible Passages to Study and Memorize

Spending time reading and studying God's Word can be life changing. When we decide to study or memorize Scripture, many of us choose something short and sweet—one verse or maybe two. When we do this, we often fail to discover the deeper meaning of the individual verses because we haven't read them in context—the greater meaning is often tied to the surrounding passage. One way to gain a larger perspective is to learn great verses in the context of the passages they come from. Some passages are filled with great individual verses, and these verses become even more meaningful when we memorize them together, putting them in context. The verses that surround the great individual verses add perspective, support, and meaning to each verse in the passage.

The following list of great passages is filled with great individual verses made even more meaningful by the verses around them. Take the time to read and study these passages. Then choose some to memorize and make a point to recite them for others. Both you and your listeners will likely be surprised by the power of God's Word being spoken out loud. You may find the Psalms, with their very personal perspectives, to be a great place to start.

Exodus 20:1-17	<i>The Ten Commandments</i>	page 70
Deuteronomy 6:4-9	<i>Called to Wholehearted Commitment</i>	page 166
Psalms 1:1-6	<i>Called to Godliness</i>	page 481
Psalms 8:1-9	<i>God's Greatness</i>	page 483
Psalms 19:1-14	<i>God Reveals Himself</i>	page 489
Psalms 23:1-6	<i>God, Our Shepherd</i>	page 491
Psalms 24:1-10	<i>God Rules over All</i>	page 491
Psalms 51:1-19	<i>Called to Confession</i>	page 506
Psalms 90:1-17	<i>God, the Eternal One</i>	page 527
Psalms 100:1-5	<i>God, Our Maker</i>	page 531
Psalms 103:1-22	<i>God's Loving Kindness</i>	page 533
Psalms 104:1-35	<i>God's Greatness in Creation</i>	page 533
Psalms 121:1-8	<i>God's Help</i>	page 547
Psalms 139:1-24	<i>God's Knowledge and Love</i>	page 552
Proverbs 2:1-11	<i>Wisdom's Value</i>	page 560
Proverbs 31:10-31	<i>Woman of Virtue</i>	page 585
Ecclesiastes 3:1-8	<i>A Time for Everything</i>	page 589
Ecclesiastes 12:1-7	<i>Called to Remember God</i>	page 595
Isaiah 40:25-31	<i>Renewed Strength</i>	page 637

Isaiah 52:13–53:12	<i>The Suffering Servant</i>	page 650
Isaiah 55:6-13	<i>God's Word Bears Fruit</i>	page 652
Lamentations 3:19-33	<i>Hope in Trouble</i>	page 724
Matthew 5:3-12	<i>The Beatitudes</i>	page 863
Matthew 6:9-13	<i>The Lord's Prayer</i>	page 865
Matthew 6:25-34	<i>Teaching about Worry</i>	page 866
Luke 12:22-32	<i>Teaching about Worry</i>	page 935
John 1:1-18	<i>Teachings on the Word</i>	page 952
John 14:1-7	<i>Teachings about Heaven</i>	page 970
John 15:1-17	<i>Jesus, the Vine</i>	page 970
Romans 8:18-30	<i>Future Glory in Christ</i>	page 1019
Romans 8:31-39	<i>God's Unfailing Love</i>	page 1020
Romans 12:1-21	<i>Living Sacrifices</i>	page 1023
1 Corinthians 13:1-13	<i>Real Love</i>	page 1040
1 Corinthians 15:35-57	<i>Resurrection Hope</i>	page 1042
2 Corinthians 5:14-21	<i>Lives Made New</i>	page 1050
Galatians 5:16-26	<i>Life in the Spirit</i>	page 1062
Ephesians 2:1-10	<i>Made Alive with Christ</i>	page 1065
Ephesians 3:14-21	<i>God's Great Love</i>	page 1067
Ephesians 6:10-18	<i>God's Armor</i>	page 1069
Philippians 2:3-11	<i>The Humility of Christ</i>	page 1073
Colossians 1:15-22	<i>The Supremacy of Christ</i>	page 1078
Colossians 3:1-17	<i>Righteous Living</i>	page 1080
1 Thessalonians 4:13-18	<i>Christ's Return</i>	page 1085
1 Thessalonians 5:12-22	<i>Advice for Godly Living</i>	page 1086
James 1:2-18	<i>Faith and Endurance</i>	page 1122
1 Peter 4:12-19	<i>Gladness in Suffering</i>	page 1131
1 John 1:1–2:2	<i>Sin and Forgiveness</i>	page 1138
1 John 4:7-21	<i>Transforming Love</i>	page 1141

# Great Bible Stories for Discovering God's Truth

God chose to convey his truth in many different ways when he inspired Scripture. He gave us songs in the book of Psalms, short and pithy wisdom sayings in the book of Proverbs, powerful visions in the prophets, and heavy theological discussions in the New Testament letters. But a large part of Scripture is told in the form of stories. In both the Old and New Testaments, there are hundreds of stories that show us who God is, how he relates to us, and how he wants us to live. These stories also show us what happens when we decide to reject God and go our own way.

We usually remember details of stories really well, whether we read the story or listened to it. Stories call us to do more than just think about truth. They help us to engage with the truth in the context of real life. They help us to feel and instinctively know the truth. That's probably why Jesus did much of his teaching through telling stories and using everyday illustrations. And the Gospel writers seem to have really enjoyed showing who Jesus is by recounting what he did, rather than just recording what he said. Take some time to step into these stories that God has given us.

Genesis 1:1–2:3	<i>The Creation</i>	page 4
Genesis 2:4-9	<i>The Man Created</i>	page 5
Genesis 2:15-25	<i>The Woman Created</i>	page 5
Genesis 3:1-13	<i>The Fall</i>	page 6
Genesis 3:14-19	<i>The Curse</i>	page 7
Genesis 4:1-16	<i>Cain and Abel</i>	page 7
Genesis 6:1–9:17	<i>The Flood</i>	page 9
Genesis 11:1-9	<i>The Tower of Babel</i>	page 12
Genesis 12:1-9	<i>Abram's Call</i>	page 13
Genesis 18:1-15	<i>A Son Promised to Sarah</i>	page 17
Genesis 18:16-33	<i>Abraham Intercedes for Sodom</i>	page 17
Genesis 22:1-19	<i>Abraham Offers Isaac</i>	page 20
Genesis 28:10-22	<i>Jacob's Dream</i>	page 27
Genesis 32:22-32	<i>Jacob Wrestles with God</i>	page 32
Genesis 37:1–45:28	<i>Joseph and His Brothers</i>	page 36
Exodus 2:1-10	<i>The Birth of Moses</i>	page 52
Exodus 3:1-22	<i>The Burning Bush</i>	page 53
Exodus 4:10-17	<i>Moses' Reluctance</i>	page 54
Exodus 7:14–12:30	<i>The Ten Plagues</i>	page 58

Exodus 12:1-33	<i>The Passover</i>	page 62
Exodus 12:31-51	<i>The Exodus</i>	page 63
Exodus 14:21-31	<i>The Red Sea Crossing</i>	page 65
Exodus 18:13-26	<i>Jethro Advises Moses</i>	page 69
Exodus 32:1-29	<i>The Golden Calf</i>	page 81
Numbers 13:1-33	<i>The Twelve Scouts</i>	page 134
Numbers 21:4-9	<i>The Bronze Snake</i>	page 142
Deuteronomy 4:32-40	<i>Moses Recounts God's Greatness</i>	page 164
Joshua 1:1-9	<i>Joshua's Commission</i>	page 194
Joshua 5:10-15	<i>The Lord's Commander</i>	page 197
Joshua 6:1-27	<i>Conquest of Jericho</i>	page 197
Judges 6:1-7:25	<i>Gideon Defeats the Midianites</i>	page 222
Judges 16:1-31	<i>Samson and Delilah</i>	page 232
Ruth 1:1-4:22	<i>God Redeems Ruth</i>	page 240
1 Samuel 1:1-28	<i>The Birth of Samuel</i>	page 245
1 Samuel 3:1-21	<i>Samuel Hears God's Voice</i>	page 247
1 Samuel 15:1-31	<i>Saul Rejected as King</i>	page 257
1 Samuel 17:1-51	<i>David Defeats Goliath</i>	page 260
2 Samuel 11:1-27	<i>David and Bathsheba</i>	page 281
1 Kings 3:16-28	<i>Solomon Judges Wisely</i>	page 303
1 Kings 17:1-24	<i>God Provides for Elijah</i>	page 318
1 Kings 18:1-40	<i>Elijah on Mount Carmel</i>	page 319
1 Kings 19:1-18	<i>God Speaks to Elijah</i>	page 320
2 Kings 4:1-7	<i>Elisha and the Widow's Oil</i>	page 329
2 Kings 5:1-19	<i>Elisha Heals Naaman</i>	page 331
2 Kings 6:8-23	<i>Elisha's Spiritual Vision</i>	page 332
Nehemiah 1:1-2:8	<i>Nehemiah Fasts and Prays</i>	page 427
Esther 1:1-10:3	<i>Esther Saves Her People</i>	page 443
Job 1:1-22	<i>Job Tested</i>	page 452
Job 38:1-42:6	<i>God Confronts Job</i>	page 475
Isaiah 6:1-10	<i>Isaiah's Vision</i>	page 609
Ezekiel 37:1-14	<i>Vision of Dry Bones</i>	page 760
Daniel 3:1-30	<i>The Fiery Furnace</i>	page 774
Daniel 6:1-28	<i>The Lions' Den</i>	page 778

Jonah 1:1-4:11	<i>Jonah and the Fish</i>	page 815
Matthew 1:18-25	<i>The Birth of Jesus (first telling)</i>	page 861
Matthew 2:1-12	<i>Wise Men Visit Jesus</i>	page 861
Matthew 3:13-17	<i>Jesus' Baptism</i>	page 862
Matthew 4:1-11	<i>Jesus' Temptation</i>	page 862
Matthew 7:24-27	<i>Parable of Wise Builders</i>	page 867
Matthew 8:23-27	<i>Jesus Calms a Storm</i>	page 868
Matthew 9:9-13	<i>Jesus Calls Matthew</i>	page 868
Matthew 13:3-8	<i>Parable of the Soils</i>	page 873
Matthew 13:24-30	<i>Parable of the Weeds</i>	page 874
Matthew 13:31-32	<i>Parable of the Mustard Seed</i>	page 874
Matthew 13:33	<i>Parable of the Yeast</i>	page 874
Matthew 14:22-36	<i>Jesus Walks on Water</i>	page 875
Matthew 18:23-35	<i>Parable of the Unforgiving Servant</i>	page 880
Matthew 19:16-30	<i>Jesus and the Rich Young Man</i>	page 881
Matthew 20:1-16	<i>Parable of Vineyard Workers</i>	page 881
Matthew 21:1-11	<i>Jesus' Triumphal Entry</i>	page 882
Matthew 21:28-32	<i>Parable of Two Sons</i>	page 883
Matthew 21:33-41	<i>Parable of Wicked Farmers</i>	page 883
Matthew 22:1-14	<i>Parable of the Wedding Feast</i>	page 884
Matthew 22:15-46	<i>Religious Leaders Test Jesus</i>	page 884
Matthew 25:1-13	<i>Parable of Ten Bridesmaids</i>	page 887
Matthew 25:14-30	<i>Parable of Three Servants</i>	page 887
Matthew 25:31-46	<i>Teachings on the Final Judgment</i>	page 888
Matthew 26:17-30	<i>Jesus' Last Supper</i>	page 889
Matthew 27:32-56	<i>Jesus' Crucifixion</i>	page 892
Mark 2:1-12	<i>Jesus Heals a Paralyzed Man</i>	page 897
Mark 3:1-6	<i>Jesus Heals on the Sabbath</i>	page 897
Mark 6:30-44	<i>Jesus Feeds Five Thousand</i>	page 902
Mark 7:24-30	<i>Jesus and the Gentile Woman</i>	page 903
Mark 10:46-52	<i>Jesus Heals Blind Bartimaeus</i>	page 908
Luke 2:1-20	<i>The Birth of Jesus (second telling)</i>	page 919
Luke 7:1-10	<i>Jesus and the Roman Officer</i>	page 926
Luke 7:11-16	<i>Jesus Raises a Widow's Son</i>	page 926

Luke 7:36-50	<i>A Sinful Woman Anoints Jesus</i>	page 927
Luke 8:26-39	<i>A Demon-Possessed Man Freed</i>	page 929
Luke 8:40-56	<i>A Woman Healed, a Girl Raised</i>	page 929
Luke 10:25-37	<i>Parable of the Good Samaritan</i>	page 932
Luke 12:16-21	<i>Parable of the Rich Fool</i>	page 935
Luke 15:3-7	<i>Parable of the Lost Sheep</i>	page 938
Luke 15:8-10	<i>Parable of the Lost Coin</i>	page 939
Luke 15:11-32	<i>Parable of the Lost Son</i>	page 939
Luke 17:11-19	<i>Jesus Heals Ten Lepers</i>	page 941
Luke 18:9-14	<i>Parable of the Pharisee and Tax Collector</i>	page 942
Luke 19:1-10	<i>Jesus and Zacchaeus</i>	page 943
Luke 19:45-46	<i>Jesus Clears the Temple</i>	page 944
Luke 24:1-34	<i>Jesus' Resurrection</i>	page 949
John 3:1-21	<i>Jesus and Nicodemus</i>	page 954
John 4:1-30	<i>Jesus and the Samaritan Woman</i>	page 956
John 5:1-15	<i>Jesus Heals a Lame Man</i>	page 957
John 8:1-11	<i>Jesus and the Adulterous Woman</i>	page 961
John 9:1-41	<i>Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind</i>	page 963
John 11:1-44	<i>Jesus Raises Lazarus</i>	page 965
John 13:1-20	<i>Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet</i>	page 968
John 20:24-31	<i>Jesus and Thomas</i>	page 977
John 21:15-19	<i>Jesus and Peter</i>	page 977
Acts 1:6-11	<i>Jesus' Ascension</i>	page 980
Acts 2:1-13	<i>The Holy Spirit Comes</i>	page 981
Acts 6:5-7:60	<i>The Stoning of Stephen</i>	page 986
Acts 9:1-19	<i>Saul Encounters Jesus</i>	page 989
Acts 10:1-40	<i>Peter's Vision</i>	page 990
Acts 17:16-33	<i>Paul in Athens</i>	page 998
Revelation 19:11-20:15	<i>Christ's Ultimate Conquest</i>	page 1165
Revelation 21:1-22:21	<i>God Makes All Things New</i>	page 1166