

a B U N D a n T L I F E
a B U N D a n T L I F E
aBUNDANT

L I F E LIFE

B I B L E



New Living
Translation®

SECOND EDITION

Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.
Wheaton, Illinois

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

Abundant Life Bible copyright © 2004 by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, IL 60189. All rights reserved.

Cover design by Rule29.

The Bible text in the *Abundant Life Bible* is the *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004 by Tyndale Charitable Trust. 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 25 percent 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 marked NLT are taken from the *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois 60189. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations are taken from the *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois 60189. All rights reserved.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois 60189. 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 25 percent 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 or call 630-668-8300, ext. 8817.

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.

New Living Translation, *NLT*, and the New Living Translation logo are registered trademarks of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.

ISBN 0-8423-8491-X Hardcover

ISBN 0-8423-8492-8 Softcover

Printed in the United States of America

10 09 08 07 06 05 04
10 9 8 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. 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.



C O N T E N T S

Alphabetical Listing of Bible Books . . .	A7
Abundant Life Index . . .	A9
The Life You've Always Wanted . . .	A9
From Religion to Relationship . . .	A13
Prayer—the Great Conversation . . .	A19
Choosing Joy and Finding Peace . . .	A23
Tackling Tough Issues . . .	A27
Abundant Living . . .	A33
Overview of the Bible Books . . .	A43
A Note to Readers . . .	A57
Introduction to the New Living Translation . . .	A59
NLT Bible Translation Team . . .	A67
How to know Jesus Personally . . .	963
Where Can I Find It? . . .	966
Great Chapters of the Bible . . .	966
Great Stories of the Bible . . .	967
Great Verses of the Bible to Memorize . . .	969
NLT Dictionary/Concordance . . .	979

T H E O L D T E S T A M E N T

<i>Genesis</i> . . . 3	<i>2 Chronicles</i> . . . 333	<i>Daniel</i> . . . 667
<i>Exodus</i> . . . 44	<i>Ezra</i> . . . 362	<i>Hosea</i> . . . 679
<i>Leviticus</i> . . . 79	<i>Nehemiah</i> . . . 371	<i>Joel</i> . . . 688
<i>Numbers</i> . . . 104	<i>Esther</i> . . . 384	<i>Amos</i> . . . 692
<i>Deuteronomy</i> . . . 139	<i>Job</i> . . . 390	<i>Obadiah</i> . . . 699
<i>Joshua</i> . . . 168	<i>Psalms</i> . . . 415	<i>Jonah</i> . . . 701
<i>Judges</i> . . . 188	<i>Proverbs</i> . . . 481	<i>Micah</i> . . . 703
<i>Ruth</i> . . . 208	<i>Ecclesiastes</i> . . . 505	<i>Nahum</i> . . . 709
<i>1 Samuel</i> . . . 211	<i>Song of Songs</i> . . . 512	<i>Habakkuk</i> . . . 712
<i>2 Samuel</i> . . . 235	<i>Isaiah</i> . . . 517	<i>Zephaniah</i> . . . 715
<i>1 Kings</i> . . . 257	<i>Jeremiah</i> . . . 570	<i>Haggai</i> . . . 718
<i>2 Kings</i> . . . 282	<i>Lamentations</i> . . . 621	<i>Zechariah</i> . . . 720
<i>1 Chronicles</i> . . . 307	<i>Ezekiel</i> . . . 627	<i>Malachi</i> . . . 728

T H E N E W T E S T A M E N T

<i>Matthew</i> . . . 733	<i>Ephesians</i> . . . 895	<i>Hebrews</i> . . . 920
<i>Mark</i> . . . 761	<i>Philippians</i> . . . 899	<i>James</i> . . . 930
<i>Luke</i> . . . 779	<i>Colossians</i> . . . 902	<i>1 Peter</i> . . . 934
<i>John</i> . . . 809	<i>1 Thessalonians</i> . . . 905	<i>2 Peter</i> . . . 938
<i>Acts</i> . . . 830	<i>2 Thessalonians</i> . . . 908	<i>1 John</i> . . . 941
<i>Romans</i> . . . 857	<i>1 Timothy</i> . . . 910	<i>2 John</i> . . . 945
<i>1 Corinthians</i> . . . 870	<i>2 Timothy</i> . . . 914	<i>3 John</i> . . . 946
<i>2 Corinthians</i> . . . 882	<i>Titus</i> . . . 917	<i>Jude</i> . . . 947
<i>Galatians</i> . . . 890	<i>Philemon</i> . . . 919	<i>Revelation</i> . . . 949

ALPHABETICAL LISTING OF BIBLE BOOKS

<i>Acts</i> . . . 830	<i>James</i> . . . 930	<i>Nehemiah</i> . . . 371
<i>Amos</i> . . . 692	<i>Jeremiah</i> . . . 570	<i>Numbers</i> . . . 104
<i>1 Chronicles</i> . . . 307	<i>Job</i> . . . 390	<i>Obadiah</i> . . . 699
<i>2 Chronicles</i> . . . 333	<i>Joel</i> . . . 688	<i>1 Peter</i> . . . 934
<i>Colossians</i> . . . 902	<i>John</i> . . . 809	<i>2 Peter</i> . . . 938
<i>1 Corinthians</i> . . . 870	<i>1 John</i> . . . 941	<i>Philemon</i> . . . 919
<i>2 Corinthians</i> . . . 882	<i>2 John</i> . . . 945	<i>Philippians</i> . . . 899
<i>Daniel</i> . . . 667	<i>3 John</i> . . . 946	<i>Proverbs</i> . . . 481
<i>Deuteronomy</i> . . . 139	<i>Jonah</i> . . . 701	<i>Psalms</i> . . . 415
<i>Ecclesiastes</i> . . . 505	<i>Joshua</i> . . . 168	<i>Revelation</i> . . . 949
<i>Ephesians</i> . . . 895	<i>Jude</i> . . . 947	<i>Romans</i> . . . 857
<i>Esther</i> . . . 384	<i>Judges</i> . . . 188	<i>Ruth</i> . . . 208
<i>Exodus</i> . . . 44	<i>1 Kings</i> . . . 257	<i>1 Samuel</i> . . . 211
<i>Ezekiel</i> . . . 627	<i>2 Kings</i> . . . 282	<i>2 Samuel</i> . . . 235
<i>Ezra</i> . . . 362	<i>Lamentations</i> . . . 621	<i>Song of Songs</i> . . . 512
<i>Galatians</i> . . . 890	<i>Leviticus</i> . . . 79	<i>1 Thessalonians</i> . . . 905
<i>Genesis</i> . . . 3	<i>Luke</i> . . . 779	<i>2 Thessalonians</i> . . . 908
<i>Habakkuk</i> . . . 712	<i>Malachi</i> . . . 728	<i>1 Timothy</i> . . . 910
<i>Haggai</i> . . . 718	<i>Mark</i> . . . 761	<i>2 Timothy</i> . . . 914
<i>Hebrews</i> . . . 920	<i>Matthew</i> . . . 733	<i>Titus</i> . . . 917
<i>Hosea</i> . . . 679	<i>Micah</i> . . . 703	<i>Zechariah</i> . . . 720
<i>Isaiah</i> . . . 517	<i>Nahum</i> . . . 709	<i>Zephaniah</i> . . . 715



I N D E X

THE LIFE YOU'VE ALWAYS WANTED

STORIES surrounding the life of multi-millionaire Hetty Green, who lived in the early 1900s, describe her as a wealthy woman who lived like a pauper. She wore the same shabby clothes over and over and lined her threadbare coat with newspapers to keep warm. She frequently traveled a considerable distance to a grocery store that sold broken cookies because they were cheaper.

Hetty's stinginess is reputed even to have cost her son, Ned, his leg. At the age of fourteen, he dislocated his knee in a sledding accident, but Hetty refused to take him to a hospital. Instead she tried to treat the injury herself and by taking him to free medical clinics. In the end, his leg had to be amputated.

When she died in 1916, her estate was worth \$100 million, the equivalent of many billions in today's dollars. But she had refused

to use her money, instead hoarding it obsessively. She had the resources to live well, but she didn't use them.

When you know God, you have all the resources you need to live the abundant life. But at times, Christians simply do not access all that God has made available in Christ. Like Hetty and her money, we are spiritually wealthy but we sometimes live like spiritual paupers. God promises us the abundant life, but we live like we're homeless and starving in a spiritual sense.

WHAT IS THE ABUNDANT LIFE?

The dictionary defines the word *abundant* as meaning *more than adequate, richly supplied, plentiful*. Jesus said, "My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life." (John 10:10). So the abundant life is one that is richly supplied with what we need, a life that is available because Jesus came to provide it.

But perhaps we should talk about what the abundant life is *not*. It isn't necessarily a life of wealth, comfort, leisure, or freedom from pain. It's not the "good life" we hear about on TV.

But it is a life of access to untold divine resources, the provision God has made for us to live whole, healthy, and hopeful lives. We have everything we need to live the abundant life, the life we were created by God to enjoy. The secret to the abundant life is a close relationship with God as we follow the truths of Scripture.

But unless we know and understand how God means for us to live, unless we dig deeply into his Word, we could wind up like Hetty, starving while the untouched banquet God has laid out for us goes to waste.

HOW DO YOU LIVE THE ABUNDANT LIFE?

Life requires certain elements to sustain it and provide for growth—nourishment, air, and water. If any of these ingredients is in short supply, the living organism will shrivel, weaken, and even die.

The Bible is the nourishment you need to live the abundant life. Jesus is the Bread of Life and Living Water necessary for living as a Christian, and he is made known to you through this book.

Although the Bible was written hundreds of years ago, its message is timeless, personal, and practical because it is from God. As the number one bestseller of all time, the Bible is the most read book in history!

Millions of people have discovered in it answers for their deepest needs—and words of comfort, encouragement, hope, inspiration, and guidance.

The Bible contains the recipe for that which leads to the abundant life: a firm and fulfilling connection to Christ. In 2 Timothy 3:16-17, the apostle Paul reminds Timothy, “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. . . . God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.”

But the Bible is more than an answer book. It is really a library of books filled with inspiring stories, majestic poetry and songs, direct messages and prophecies, and most important of all, the account of God visiting our earth in the person of Jesus Christ.

WHERE DO YOU BEGIN?

If the Bible is fairly new to you, start your reading in the New Testament with the book of Mark (page 761). This book will give you a dramatic introduction to the events that changed the world and can open the door to the abundant life. It is a short, fast-moving biography of Jesus Christ, written by a young man who probably witnessed most of Jesus’ three-year ministry. In addition, Mark probably knew Jesus’ disciples well and drew on their memories to help write this book.

Then follow the growth of Christianity by reading the book of Acts (page 830). This picks up where Mark ends and continues the dynamic story of the first Christians and how they spread the Good News of Jesus Christ all over the world.

Next read the book of Romans (page 857). This is one of the many letters written by the apostle Paul. It was sent to a group of first-century Christians in Rome. In it Paul clearly tells how selfish, arrogant, sinful humans can find acceptance with God. After you finish Romans, read some of the shorter books in the New Testament before turning to the Old Testament.

In the Old Testament, read the people stories in the book of Genesis. Then continue with some of the other books named after the main characters—Joshua, Ruth, Ezra, Job, Jonah, and others. Be sure to read complete stories instead of stopping at the end of a chapter. For instance, the story of Gideon is covered in Judges 6–8 (pages 192-195). The story

of Jonah is covered throughout the whole book (pages 701-702), but it is only four chapters long and can easily be read in one sitting.

Then turn to the Psalms (page 415) and read enough of them to get a sense of what it means to worship God and pour out your feelings to him. Save the longer prophetic books (Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel) and the books of God's law (Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy) until last. You may want to set up a pattern of daily reading that includes several Psalms along with a section from either the Old or New Testament.

HOW TO UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU READ

Three important steps will help you understand your Bible as you read.

Observation. The first step is to observe carefully what the author actually wrote. What is he saying? What is the obvious point? It might help if you stop and restate what the passage says in your own words. Or you can underline the key phrase that sums up what the author is saying. You can then try to understand what he means.

Interpretation. The second step is to try to interpret what the author meant when he wrote the passage. Why did he write what he did? What did it mean to him when he wrote it? For instance, in the book of John, the author says there were a lot of other things he could have written, "But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life by the power of his name" (John 20:31). As you read John 5, you might wonder why John included the story of the healing of the man at the pool of Bethesda. This requires the use of your imagination.

A Bible commentary and Bible dictionary will also be helpful as you try to imagine what was going through the author's mind as he wrote the passage. You will find a short summary for each Bible book at the end of this Abundant Life Index. These book summaries will provide helpful perspective about the author and context for each book. You will also find a Dictionary/Concordance at the back of this Bible, where you can look up unfamiliar words and also locate Bible passages that address the topics that concern you. Don't hesitate to use this resource often. If this

step of interpretation is difficult for you, be patient. Take your time and reread the passage until its meaning becomes clear.

Application. The third step involves applying the meaning of the passage to your life. Ask the questions, *So what?* and *What difference does this passage make in my life?* When you apply the meaning of the Bible to your life, you will find that the Bible’s purpose is 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” (2 Timothy 3:16).

Don’t be afraid to underline key statements in your Bible or to make notes. This will help you locate passages that hold special meaning for you. To further your understanding, join a Bible study and share with others interested in knowing more about the Bible.

At the back of this Bible, you’ll find a step-by-step plan to begin a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Next is a list of *Great Chapters of the Bible*. Try to read and understand one of these chapters at least every month. Read it repeatedly, and really work on understanding how it applies to your life. This will help you to get a good grasp on God’s truth. Following that are lists of *Great Stories of the Bible* that will help you see how God relates to people, and *Great Verses of the Bible to Memorize*. One of the best ways to grow in your faith is to learn God’s word by heart: “I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you” (Psalm 119:11). It’s not that hard to do. Choose a verse from this list, and then work on learning that verse every day. It won’t be long until you know it!

FROM RELIGION TO RELATIONSHIP

The word *religion* can sound cold and stifling, like a bunch of rules that stop us from enjoying life. But God wants much more with you than stiff adherence to a long list of laws and regulations. He wants you to have

an abundant life found not in *religion*, but in a *relationship* with him through his son Jesus Christ and the power of his Spirit. Here are some Bible verses that will show you how much God wants to know and be known by you.

GOD'S LOVE FOR YOU

God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. Genesis 1:27

When God created human beings, he made them to be like himself. He created them male and female, and he blessed them and called them "human." Genesis 5:1-2

I am with you, and I will protect you wherever you go. . . . I will not leave you until I have finished giving you everything I have promised you.
Genesis 28:15

When I look at the night sky and see the work of your fingers—the moon and the stars you set in place—what are people that you should think about them, mere mortals that you should care for them? Yet you made them only a little lower than God and crowned them with glory and honor. Psalm 8:3-5

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.
Psalm 139:13-14

How precious are your thoughts about me, O God. They cannot be numbered! I can't even count them; they outnumber the grains of sand! And when I wake up, you are still with me! Psalm 139:17-18

For I hold you by your right hand—I, the LORD your God. And I say to you, "Don't be afraid. I am here to help you." Isaiah 41:13

The LORD gave me this message: "I knew you before I formed you in your mother's womb. Before you were born I set you apart."
Jeremiah 1:4-5

What is the price of five sparrows—two copper coins? Yet God does not forget a single one of them. And the very hairs on your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are more valuable to God than a whole flock of sparrows. Luke 12:6-7

God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.
John 3:16

Now you are no longer a slave but God's own child. And since you are his child, God has made you his heir. Galatians 4:7

This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins. Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. 1 John 4:10-11

GOD'S FORGIVENESS

If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and restore their land.

2 Chronicles 7:14

Don't keep looking at my sins. Remove the stain of my guilt. Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a loyal spirit within me. Psalm 51:9-10
People who conceal their sins will not prosper, but if they confess and turn from them, they will receive mercy. Proverbs 28:13

I have swept away your sins like a cloud. I have scattered your offenses like the morning mist. Oh, return to me, for I have paid the price to set you free. Isaiah 44:22

My love will know no bounds, for my anger will be gone forever.

Hosea 14:4

Listen! We are here to proclaim that through this man Jesus there is forgiveness for your sins. Everyone who believes in him is declared right with God. Acts 13:38-39

Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us. . . . And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's condemnation.

Romans 5:1, 9

Because of his grace he declared us righteous and gave us confidence that we will inherit eternal life. Titus 3:7

But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness. 1 John 1:9

Now all glory to God, who is able to keep you from stumbling and will bring you with great joy into his glorious presence without a single fault. Jude 1:24

GOD'S DIRECTION

May he grant your heart's desires and make all your plans succeed.

Psalm 20:4

He leads the humble in doing right, teaching them his way. The LORD leads with unfailing love and faithfulness all who keep his covenant and obey his demands. Psalm 25:9-10

Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take. Proverbs 3:5-6

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. In those days when you pray, I will listen. If you look for me wholeheartedly, you will find me. I will be found by you,” says the LORD.

Jeremiah 29:11-14

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. He will bring me glory by telling you whatever he receives from me. John 16:13-14

His purpose was for the nations to seek after God and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him—though he is not far from any one of us. For in him we live and move and exist. As some of your own poets have said, “We are his offspring.” Acts 17:27-28

I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the confident hope he has given to those he called, his people who are his rich and glorious inheritance. Ephesians 1:18

I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength. Philippians 4:12-13

But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it. James 1:22-25

GOD'S PROMISE OF HEAVEN

Jesus called a little child to him and put the child among them. Then he said, “I tell you the truth, unless you turn from your sins and become like little children, you will never get into the Kingdom of Heaven. So anyone who becomes as humble as this little child is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.” Matthew 18:2-4

They will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous will go into eternal life. Matthew 25:46

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. And you know the way to where I am going. John 14:2-4

He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever.
Revelation 21:4

GOD'S STRENGTH AND POWER

Your throne, O God, endures forever and ever. You rule with a scepter of justice. Psalm 45:6

The LORD says, "I will rescue those who love me. I will protect those who trust in my name. When they call on me, I will answer; I will be with them in trouble. I will rescue and honor them. I will reward them with a long life and give them my salvation." Psalm 91:14-16

"To whom will you compare me? Who is my equal?" asks the Holy One. Look up into the heavens. Who created all the stars? He brings them out like an army, one after another, calling each by its name. Because of his great power and incomparable strength, not a single one is missing. Isaiah 40:25-26

LORD, you are my strength and fortress, my refuge in the day of trouble! Nations from around the world will come to you and say, "Our ancestors left us a foolish heritage, for they worshiped worthless idols. Can people make their own gods? These are not real gods at all!" The LORD says, "Now I will show them my power; now I will show them my might. At last they will know and understand that I am the LORD."
Jeremiah 16:19-21

The LORD your God is living among you. He is a mighty savior. He will take delight in you with gladness. With his love, he will calm all your fears. He will rejoice over you with joyful songs. . . . I will deal severely with all who have oppressed you. I will save the weak and helpless ones. Zephaniah 3:17, 19

No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him. 1 Corinthians 2:9

GOD'S SON, JESUS CHRIST

In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and

the Word was God. He existed in the beginning with God. God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him. The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it. John 1:1-5

He came into the very world he created, but the world didn't recognize him. He came to his own people, and even they rejected him. But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God. So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unending love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son. John 1:10-14

Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see—such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through him and for him. He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together. Colossians 1:15-17

You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins. He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross. Colossians 2:13-14

The Son radiates God's own glory and expresses the very character of God, and he sustains everything by the mighty power of his command. When he had cleansed us from our sins, he sat down in the place of honor at the right hand of the majestic God in heaven. Hebrews 1:3

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Hebrews 13:8

GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT

If you love me, obey my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn't looking for him and doesn't recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you.

John 14:15-17

But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is,

the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you. John 14:26

But you are not controlled by your sinful nature. You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the Spirit of God living in you. (And remember that those who do not have the Spirit of Christ living in them do not belong to him at all.) And Christ lives within you, so even though your body will die because of sin, the Spirit gives you life because you have been made right with God. The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you. Romans 8:9-11

He has enabled us to be ministers of his new covenant. This is a covenant not of written laws, but of the Spirit. The old written covenant ends in death; but under the new covenant, the Spirit gives life.

2 Corinthians 3:6

The Spirit is God’s guarantee that he will give us the inheritance he promised and that he has purchased us to be his own people. He did this so we would praise and glorify him. Ephesians 1:14

PRAYER—THE GREAT CONVERSATION

A conversation is a two-way event. You speak and you listen. That’s how prayer works as well. We tell God our thoughts, our needs, our hopes, and then we listen to him speak to us through his Word and his spirit. One way to pray is to say Scripture to God, inserting your name in the verse. For example, you might say, “For God loved *Julie* so much that he gave his one and only son, so that if *Julie* believes in him *she* will not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16, personalized). The following verses will help you understand something of what it means to communicate with God, along with some of the benefits.

RESPONDING TO GOD

As the deer longs for streams of water, so I long for you, O God. Psalm 42:1
But the LORD is in his holy Temple. Let all the earth be silent before him.

Habakkuk 2:20

I will give them hearts that recognize me as the LORD. They will be

my people, and I will be their God, for they will return to me wholeheartedly. Jeremiah 24:7

The LORD has told you what is good, and this is what he requires of you: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.

Micah 6:8

It is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by confessing with your mouth that you are saved. Romans 10:10

Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends.

Revelation 3:20

TALKING WITH GOD

The LORD is close to all who call on him, yes, to all who call on him in truth. He grants the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cries for help and rescues them. Psalm 145:18-19

I will answer them before they even call to me. While they are still talking about their needs, I will go ahead and answer their prayers!

Isaiah 65:24

In those days when you pray, I will listen. If you look for me wholeheartedly, you will find me. Jeremiah 29:12-13

Ask me and I will tell you remarkable secrets you do not know about things to come. Jeremiah 33:3

But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you. When you pray, don't babble on and on as people of other religions do. They think their prayers are answered merely by repeating their words again and again. Don't be like them, for your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him!

Matthew 6:6-8

Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.

Matthew 7:7-8

Then Jesus said to the disciples, "Have faith in God. I tell you the truth, you can say to this mountain, 'May you be lifted up and thrown into the sea,' and it will happen. But you must really believe it will happen and have no doubt in your heart. I tell you, you can pray for anything, and if you believe that you've received it, it will be yours." Mark 11:22-24

Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who hurt you. Luke 6:28

But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! John 15:7

I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them. 1 Timothy 2:1

Let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most. Hebrews 4:16

Confess your sins to each other, and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results. James 5:16

The eyes of the Lord watch over those who do right, and his ears are open to their prayers. But the Lord turns his face against those who do evil.

1 Peter 3:12

THANKING GOD

Sing praises to God and to his name! Sing loud praises to him who rides the clouds. His name is the LORD—rejoice in his presence! Father to the fatherless, defender of widows—this is God, whose dwelling is holy. God places the lonely in families; he sets the prisoners free and gives them joy. But he makes the rebellious live in a sun-scorched land.

Psalms 68:4-6

I will sing of the LORD's unfailing love forever! Young and old will hear of your faithfulness. Your unfailing love will last forever. Your faithfulness is as enduring as the heavens. Psalm 89:1-2

It is good to give thanks to the LORD, to sing praises to the Most High. It is good to proclaim your unfailing love in the morning, your faithfulness in the evening. Psalm 92:1-2

Let everything that breathes sing praises to the LORD! Psalm 150:6

All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us. 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

And give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Ephesians 5:20

Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again—rejoice! Philippians 4:4

But when you ask him, be sure that your faith is in God alone. Do not waver, for a person with divided loyalty is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by the wind. James 1:6

LISTENING TO GOD

I have not departed from his commands, but have treasured his words more than daily food. Job 23:12

“Be still, and know that I am God! I will be honored by every nation.

I will be honored throughout the world.” The LORD of Heaven’s Armies is here among us; the God of Israel is our fortress. Psalm 46:10-11

Fear of the LORD is the foundation of true wisdom. All who obey his commandments will grow in wisdom. Praise him forever! Psalm 111:10

I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

Psalm 119:11

Your commands make me wiser than my enemies, for they are my constant guide. Yes, I have more insight than my teachers, for I am always thinking of your laws. Psalm 119:98-99

Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path. Psalm 119:105

For the LORD grants wisdom! From his mouth come knowledge and understanding. He grants a treasure of common sense to the honest. He is a shield to those who walk with integrity. Proverbs 2:6-7

Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take. Proverbs 3:5-6

Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock. Matthew 7:24

Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand. Mark 4:9

And we have received God’s Spirit (not the world’s spirit), so we can know the wonderful things God has freely given us. When we tell you these things, we do not use words that come from human wisdom.

Instead, we speak words given to us by the Spirit, using the Spirit’s words to explain spiritual truths. But people who aren’t spiritual can’t receive these truths from God’s Spirit. It all sounds foolish to them and they can’t understand it, for only those who are spiritual can understand what the Spirit means. 1 Corinthians 2:12-14

Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts. Colossians 3:16

If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you.

He will not rebuke you for asking. James 1:5

By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and

excellence. And because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world's corruption caused by human desires. In view of all this, make every effort to respond to God's promises. Supplement your faith with a generous provision of moral excellence, and moral excellence with knowledge. 2 Peter 1:3-5

TELLING OTHERS

I will tell everyone about your righteousness. All day long I will proclaim your saving power, though I am not skilled with words. I will praise your mighty deeds, O Sovereign LORD. I will tell everyone that you alone are just. Psalm 71:15-16

Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.
Matthew 28:19-20

Then he told them, "Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone. Anyone who believes and is baptized will be saved. But anyone who refuses to believe will be condemned."
Mark 16:15-16

So never be ashamed to tell others about our Lord. And don't be ashamed of me, either, even though I'm in prison for him. With the strength God gives you, be ready to suffer with me for the sake of the Good News.
2 Timothy 1:8

Your godly lives will speak to them without any words. They will be won over by observing your pure and reverent lives. 1 Peter 3:1-2

If someone asks about your Christian hope, always be ready to explain it. But do this in a gentle and respectful way. Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak evil against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ.
1 Peter 3:15-16

CHOOSING JOY AND FINDING PEACE

The abundant life is a life of joy and peace, no matter what your circumstances. It's not a life that's problem-free, but even in the midst

of trouble, God is still there for us. He makes joy and peace available, but we must access them through right thinking, right attitudes, and right actions. These Bible verses will help you find the pathway to joy and peace.

REMEMBERING GOD'S PROMISES

I will bless the LORD who guides me; even at night my heart instructs me.

I know the LORD is always with me. I will not be shaken, for he is right beside me. Psalm 16:7-8

The eyes of the LORD watch over those who do right; his ears are open to their cries for help. . . . The LORD hears his people when they call to him for help. He rescues them from all their troubles.

Psalm 34:15, 17

I waited patiently for the LORD to help me, and he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the pit of despair, out of the mud and the mire. He set my feet on solid ground and steadied me as I walked along. He has given me a new song to sing, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see what he has done and be amazed. They will put their trust in the LORD. Psalm 40:1-3

God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble.

So we will not fear when earthquakes come and the mountains crumble into the sea. Psalm 46:1-2

The LORD is good, a strong refuge when trouble comes. He is close to those who trust in him. Nahum 1:7

And now, dear brothers and sisters, we want you to know what will happen to the believers who have died so you will not grieve like people who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and was raised to life again, we also believe that when Jesus returns, God will bring back with him the believers who have died. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14

RIGHT ATTITUDES

Be still in the presence of the LORD, and wait patiently for him to act.

Don't worry about evil people who prosper or fret about their wicked schemes. Psalm 37:7

God blesses those who are humble, for they will inherit the whole earth. . . . God blesses those who are merciful, for they will be shown mercy. God blesses those whose hearts are pure, for they will see God.

Matthew 5:5, 7-8

We are pressed on every side by troubles, but we are not crushed. We are perplexed, but not driven to despair. 2 Corinthians 4:8

Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you. Ephesians 4:31-32

Dear brothers and sisters, be patient as you wait for the Lord's return. Consider the farmers who patiently wait for the rains in the fall and in the spring. They eagerly look for the valuable harvest to ripen. You, too, must be patient. Take courage, for the coming of the Lord is near.
James 5:7-8

HEALTHY THINKING

So be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid and do not panic before them. For the LORD your God will personally go ahead of you. He will neither fail you nor abandon you. Deuteronomy 31:6

In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, O LORD, will keep me safe. Psalm 4:8

For you are my hiding place; you protect me from trouble. You surround me with songs of victory. Psalm 32:7

Look at those who are honest and good, for a wonderful future awaits those who love peace. Psalm 37:37

They do not fear bad news; they confidently trust the LORD to care for them. They are confident and fearless and can face their foes triumphantly. Psalm 112:7-8

You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you! Isaiah 26:3

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. Isaiah 41:10

"But there is no peace for the wicked," says the LORD. Isaiah 48:22

God blesses those who work for peace, for they will be called the children of God. Matthew 5:9

It is what comes from inside that defiles you. For from within, out of a person's heart, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, wickedness, deceit, lustful desires, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness. All these vile things come from within; they are what defile you. Mark 7:20-23

Then, turning to his disciples, Jesus said, "That is why I tell you not to

worry about everyday life—whether you have enough food to eat or enough clothes to wear. For life is more than food, and your body more than clothing. Look at the ravens. They don't plant or harvest or store food in barns, for God feeds them. And you are far more valuable to him than any birds! Can all your worries add a single moment to your life? And if worry can't accomplish a little thing like that, what's the use of worrying over bigger things? Luke 12:22-26

Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me.

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. John 14:1-3

I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid. John 14:27

I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13

The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. May the grace of our Lord Jesus be with you. Romans 16:20

Let love be your highest goal! But you should also desire the special abilities the Spirit gives—especially the ability to prophesy. 1 Corinthians 14:1

But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things! Galatians 5:22-23

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus. Philipians 4:6-7

Patient endurance is what you need now, so that you will continue to do God's will. Then you will receive all that he has promised. Hebrews 10:36

You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires. James 1:19-20

Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you. 1 Peter 5:7

TACKLING TOUGH ISSUES

Sometimes real life isn't pretty, whether you're a Christian or not. The Bible has help for even the hard questions and the worst of life's circumstances, help that will allow you to live the abundant life even in the midst of difficulty. Here are some verses that give guidance for those challenging times and situations.

INJUSTICE

You must not mistreat or oppress foreigners in any way. Remember, you yourselves were once foreigners in the land of Egypt. You must not exploit a widow or an orphan. If you exploit them in any way and they cry out to me, then I will certainly hear their cry. Exodus 22:21-23

Never take advantage of poor and destitute laborers, whether they are fellow Israelites or foreigners living in your towns. You must pay them their wages each day before sunset because they are poor and are counting on it. If you don't, they might cry out to the LORD against you, and it would be counted against you as sin.

Deuteronomy 24:14-15

The LORD is a shelter for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.

Psalms 9:9

LORD, you know the hopes of the helpless. Surely you will hear their cries and comfort them. You will bring justice to the orphans and the oppressed, so mere people can no longer terrify them. Psalm 10:17-18

The LORD replies, "I have seen violence done to the helpless, and I have heard the groans of the poor. Now I will rise up to rescue them, as they have longed for me to do." Psalm 12:5

It is better to be godly and have little than to be evil and rich. Psalm 37:16

A person who gets ahead by oppressing the poor or by showering gifts on the rich will end in poverty. Proverbs 22:16

Enjoy prosperity while you can, but when hard times strike, realize that both come from God. Remember that nothing is certain in this life. I have seen everything in this meaningless life, including the death of good young people and the long life of wicked people.

Ecclesiastes 7:14-15

Human pride will be brought down, and human arrogance will be humbled. Only the LORD will be exalted on that day of judgment. For the

LORD of Heaven's Armies has a day of reckoning. He will punish the proud and mighty and bring down everything that is exalted.

Isaiah 2:11-12

Those who are honest and fair, who refuse to profit by fraud, who stay far away from bribes, who refuse to listen to those who plot murder, who shut their eyes to all enticement to do wrong—these are the ones who will dwell on high. The rocks of the mountains will be their fortress. Food will be supplied to them, and they will have water in abundance. Isaiah 33:15-16

What sorrow awaits you who build big houses with money gained dishonestly! You believe your wealth will buy security, putting your family's nest beyond the reach of danger. . . . What sorrow awaits you who build cities with money gained through murder and corruption! Has not the LORD of Heaven's Armies promised that the wealth of nations will turn to ashes? Habakkuk 2:9, 12-13

"At that time I will put you on trial. I am eager to witness against all sorcerers and adulterers and liars. I will speak against those who cheat employees of their wages, who oppress widows and orphans, or who deprive the foreigners living among you of justice, for these people do not fear me," says the LORD of Heaven's Armies. "I am the LORD, and I do not change. That is why you descendants of Jacob are not already destroyed. Ever since the days of your ancestors, you have scorned my decrees and failed to obey them. Now return to me, and I will return to you," says the LORD of Heaven's Armies. Malachi 3:5-7

But because you are stubborn and refuse to turn from your sin, you are storing up terrible punishment for yourself. For a day of anger is coming, when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. He will judge everyone according to what they have done. He will give eternal life to those who keep on doing good, seeking after the glory and honor and immortality that God offers. Romans 2:5-7

What shall we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us? Since he did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won't he also give us everything else? Romans 8:31-32

And I saw a great white throne and the one sitting on it. The earth and sky fled from his presence, but they found no place to hide. I saw the dead, both great and small, standing before God's throne. And the books were opened, including the Book of Life. And the dead were

judged according to the things written in the books, which recorded what they had done. Revelation 20:11-12

LONELINESS

Even if my father and mother abandon me, the LORD will hold me close.

Psalm 27:10

But you are a tower of refuge to the poor, O LORD, a tower of refuge to the needy in distress. You are a refuge from the storm and a shelter from the heat. Isaiah 25:4

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. Isaiah 41:10

"For the mountains may move and the hills disappear, but even then my faithful love for you will remain. My covenant of blessing will never be broken," says the LORD, who has mercy on you. Isaiah 54:10

No, I will not abandon you as orphans—I will come to you. John 14:18

The first time I was brought before the judge, no one came with me.

Everyone abandoned me. May it not be counted against them. But the Lord stood with me and gave me strength so that I might preach the Good News in its entirety for all the Gentiles to hear. And he rescued me from certain death. 2 Timothy 4:16-17

PREJUDICE

Be perfectly fair in your decisions and impartial in your judgments. Hear the cases of those who are poor as well as those who are rich.

Deuteronomy 1:16-17

Then Peter replied, "I see very clearly that God shows no favoritism. In every nation he accepts those who fear him and do what is right."

Acts 10:34-35

There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:28

My dear brothers and sisters, how can you claim to have faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ if you favor some people over others? For example, suppose someone comes into your meeting dressed in fancy clothes and gold jewelry, and another comes in who is poor and dressed in dirty clothes. If you give special attention and a good seat to the rich person, but you say to the poor one, "You can stand over there, or sit there on the floor"—well, doesn't this discrimination show that your judgments are guided by evil motives? James 2:1-4.

SICKNESS

The LORD nurses them when they are sick and restores them to health.

Psalm 41:3

Remember your promise to me; it is my only hope. Your promise revives me; it comforts me in all my troubles. Psalm 119:49-50

O LORD, if you heal me, I will be truly healed; if you save me, I will be truly saved. My praises are for you alone! Jeremiah 17:14

“I will give you back your health and heal your wounds,” says the LORD.

Jeremiah 30:17

Jesus called his twelve disciples together and gave them authority to cast out evil spirits and to heal every kind of disease and illness.

Matthew 10:1

“Abba, Father,” he cried out, “everything is possible for you. Please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.” Mark 14:36

God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us. A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other. To one person the Spirit gives the ability to give wise advice; to another the same Spirit gives a message of special knowledge. The same Spirit gives great faith to another, and to someone else the one Spirit gives the gift of healing. 1 Corinthians 12:6-9

I have received wonderful revelations from God. So to keep me from becoming proud, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger from Satan to torment me and keep me from becoming proud. Three different times I begged the Lord to take it away. Each time he said, “My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.” So now 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. 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

We know that when this earthly tent we live in is taken down (that is, when we die and leave this earthly body), we will have a house in heaven, an eternal body made for us by God himself and not by human hands. We grow weary in our present bodies, and we long to put on our heavenly bodies like new clothing. For we will put on heavenly bodies; we will not be spirits without bodies. While we live in these earthly bodies, we groan and sigh, but it’s not that we want to die and get rid of these bodies that clothe us. Rather, we want to put

on our new bodies so that these dying bodies will be swallowed up by life. 2 Corinthians 5:1-4

Are any of you suffering hardships? You should pray. Are any of you happy? You should sing praises. Are any of you sick? You should call for the elders of the church to come and pray over you, anointing you with oil in the name of the Lord. Such a prayer offered in faith will heal the sick, and the Lord will make you well. And if you have committed any sins, you will be forgiven. Confess your sins to each other, and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results. Elijah was as human as we are, and yet when he prayed earnestly that no rain would fall, none fell for three and a half years! Then, when he prayed again, the sky sent down rain and the earth began to yield its crops. James 5:13-18

SUFFERING AND DEATH

I have cried until the tears no longer come; my heart is broken. My spirit is poured out in agony as I see the desperate plight of my people. Little children and tiny babies are fainting and dying in the streets. . . . The faithful love of the LORD never ends! His mercies never cease. Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each morning. I say to myself, "The LORD is my inheritance; therefore, I will hope in him!" The LORD is good to those who depend on him, to those who search for him. So it is good to wait quietly for salvation from the LORD.

Lamentations 2:11; 3:22-26

"God blesses those who are persecuted for doing right, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs. God blesses you when people mock you and persecute you and lie about you and say all sorts of evil things against you because you are my followers. Be happy about it! Be very glad! For a great reward awaits you in heaven. And remember, the ancient prophets were persecuted in the same way. . . . But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven. For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the just and the unjust alike." Matthew 5:10-12, 44-45

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross, and follow me. If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it. And what do you benefit if

you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? Is anything worth more than your soul?" Matthew 16:24-26

Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying. Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die." John 11:25-26

Then Jesus wept. The people who were standing nearby said, "See how much he [Jesus] loved him!" John 11:35-36

What we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will reveal to us later. Romans 8:18

All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us. For the more we suffer for Christ, the more God will shower us with his comfort through Christ. Even when we are weighed down with troubles, it is for your comfort and salvation! For when we ourselves are comforted, we will certainly comfort you. Then you can patiently endure the same things we suffer. We are confident that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in the comfort God gives us. 2 Corinthians 1:3-7

We are pressed on every side by troubles, but we are not crushed. We are perplexed, but not driven to despair. We are hunted down, but never abandoned by God. We get knocked down, but we are not destroyed. Through suffering, our bodies continue to share in the death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus may also be seen in our bodies. Yes, we live under constant danger of death because we serve Jesus, so that the life of Jesus will be evident in our dying bodies. So we live in the face of death, but this has resulted in eternal life for you.

2 Corinthians 4:8-12

We have been beaten, been put in prison, faced angry mobs, worked to exhaustion, endured sleepless nights, and gone without food. . . . We serve God whether people honor us or despise us, whether they slander us or praise us. We are honest, but they call us impostors. We are ignored, even though we are well known. We live close to death, but we are still alive. We have been beaten, but we have not been killed. Our hearts ache, but we always have joy. We are poor, but we give spiritual riches to others. We own nothing, and yet we have everything.

2 Corinthians 6:5, 8-10

These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire

tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. 1 Peter 1:7

TEMPTATION

But those who trust in the LORD will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint. Isaiah 40:31

Then Jesus said, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.” Matthew 11:28-30

The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure. 1 Corinthians 10:13

Don’t lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds. Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him. Colossians 3:9-10

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

God blesses those who patiently endure testing and temptation. Afterward they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. And remember, when you are being tempted, do not say, “God is tempting me.” God is never tempted to do wrong, and he never tempts anyone else. . . . So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. James 1:12-13; 4:7

ABUNDANT LIVING

The abundant life is life as God meant it to be. Of course, this side of heaven, we won’t experience perfection or an end to difficulty. But by drawing on the endless supply of God’s resources made available to us in Christ, we can have what we need for any and every situation. We can live life to its fullest by living it with God. These verses will guide you in accessing God’s plentiful resources.

A LIFE OF PURPOSE

“I will bless you . . . and you will be a blessing to others.” Genesis 12:2

“Who knows if perhaps you were made queen for just such a time as this?” Esther 4:14

“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. In those days when you pray, I will listen. If you look for me wholeheartedly, you will find me.” Jeremiah 29:11-13

Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and he will give you everything you need. Luke 12:31

And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. Romans 12:1-2

In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly. Don’t just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other. Romans 12:6-10

Work with enthusiasm, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. Remember that the Lord will reward each one of us for the good we do, whether we are slaves or free. Ephesians 6:7-8

Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. Remember that the Lord will give you an inheritance as your reward, and that the Master you are serving is Christ. Colossians 3:23-24

Dear friend, you are being faithful to God when you care for the traveling teachers who pass through, even though they are strangers to you.

They have told the church here of your loving friendship. Please continue providing for such teachers in a manner that pleases God.

3 John 1:5-6

A LIFE OF FAITH AND WISDOM

Your commands make me wiser than my enemies, for they are my constant guide. Yes, I have more insight than my teachers, for I am always thinking of your laws. Psalm 119:98-99

Don't turn your back on wisdom, for she will protect you. Love her, and she will guard you. Getting wisdom is the wisest thing you can do! And whatever else you do, develop good judgment. If you prize wisdom, she will make you great. Embrace her, and she will honor you. She will place a lovely wreath on your head; she will present you with a beautiful crown. Proverbs 4:6-9

Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock. Though the rain comes in torrents and the floodwaters rise and the winds beat against that house, it won't collapse because it is built on bedrock. But anyone who hears my teaching and ignores it is foolish, like a person who builds a house on sand. When the rains and floods come and the winds beat against that house, it will collapse with a mighty crash. Matthew 7:24-27

Then Jesus told them, "I tell you the truth, if you have faith and don't doubt, you can do things like this and much more. You can even say to this mountain, 'May you be lifted up and thrown into the sea,' and it will happen. You can pray for anything, and if you have faith, you will receive it." Matthew 21:21-22

God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago. Ephesians 2:8-10

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. Ephesians 5:15-16

Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness. Colossians 2:7

For if we are faithful to the end, trusting God just as firmly as when we first believed, we will share in all that belongs to Christ. Hebrews 3:14

So do not throw away this confident trust in the Lord. Remember the great reward it brings you! Patient endurance is what you need now, so that you will continue to do God's will. Then you will receive all that he has promised. "For in just a little while, the Coming One will

come and not delay. And my righteous ones will live by faith. But I will take no pleasure in anyone who turns away.” Hebrews 10:35-38

If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you.

He will not rebuke you for asking. But when you ask him, be sure that your faith is in God alone. Do not waver, for a person with divided loyalty is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by the wind. Such people should not expect to receive anything from the Lord.

James 1:5-7

If you are wise and understand God’s ways, prove it by living an honorable life, doing good works with the humility that comes from wisdom. But if you are bitterly jealous and there is selfish ambition in your heart, don’t cover up the truth with boasting and lying. For jealousy and selfishness are not God’s kind of wisdom. Such things are earthly, unspiritual, and demonic. For wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there you will find disorder and evil of every kind. But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere. James 3:13-17

LIFE WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS

But Ruth replied, “Don’t ask me to leave you and turn back. Wherever you go, I will go; wherever you live, I will live. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God.” Ruth 1:16

Does anyone want to live a life that is long and prosperous? Then keep your tongue from speaking evil and your lips from telling lies! Turn away from evil and do good. Search for peace, and work to maintain it. The eyes of the LORD watch over those who do right; his ears are open to their cries for help. Psalm 34:12-15

Walk with the wise and become wise; associate with fools and get in trouble. Proverbs 13:20

A friend is always loyal, and a brother is born to help in time of need. Proverbs 17:17

There are “friends” who destroy each other, but a real friend sticks closer than a brother. Proverbs 18:24

Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other’s faults because of your love. Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future. Ephesians 4:2-4

And further, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives should submit to their husbands as to the Lord. . . . Husbands should love their wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God's word. He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault. In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as they love their own bodies. For a man who loves his wife actually shows love for himself. . . . Children, obey your parents because you belong to the Lord, for this is the right thing to do. "Honor your father and mother." This is the first commandment with a promise: If you honor your father and mother, "things will go well for you, and you will have a long life on the earth." Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord.

Ephesians 5:21-22, 25-28; 6:1-4

Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. Philippians 2:3-5

But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language. Don't lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds. Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him. Colossians 3:8-10

But we don't need to write to you about the importance of loving each other, for God himself has taught you to love one another.

1 Thessalonians 4:9

But those who won't care for their relatives, especially those in their own household, have denied the true faith. Such people are worse than unbelievers. 1 Timothy 5:8

Keep on loving each other as brothers and sisters. Don't forget to show hospitality to strangers, for some who have done this have entertained angels without realizing it! Remember those in prison, as if you were there yourself. Remember also those being mistreated, as if you felt their pain in your own bodies. Hebrews 13:1-3

In the same way, the tongue is a small thing that makes grand speeches.

But a tiny spark can set a great forest on fire. James 3:5

For wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there you will find

disorder and evil of every kind. But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere. And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of righteousness. James 3:16-18

In the same way, you wives must accept the authority of your husbands. Then, even if some refuse to obey the Good News, your godly lives will speak to them without any words. They will be won over by observing your pure and reverent lives. . . . In the same way, you husbands must give honor to your wives. Treat your wife with understanding as you live together. She may be weaker than you are, but she is your equal partner in God's gift of new life. Treat her as you should so your prayers will not be hindered. 1 Peter 3:1-2, 7

Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak evil against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ. Remember, it is better to suffer for doing good, if that is what God wants, than to suffer for doing wrong! Christ suffered for our sins once for all time. He never sinned, but he died for sinners to bring you safely home to God. He suffered physical death, but he was raised to life in the Spirit. 1 Peter 3:16-18

If someone says, "I love God," but hates a Christian brother or sister, that person is a liar; for if we don't love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see? And he has given us this command: Those who love God must also love their Christian brothers and sisters. 1 John 4:20-21

A LIFE WITH RIGHT PRIORITIES

Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you your heart's desires.

Psalm 37:4

Teach us to realize the brevity of life, so that we may grow in wisdom.

Psalm 90:12

Teach me your decrees, O LORD; I will keep them to the end. Give me understanding and I will obey your instructions; I will put them into practice with all my heart. Make me walk along the path of your commands, for that is where my happiness is found. Psalm 119:33-35

Take a lesson from the ants, you lazybones. Learn from their ways and become wise! . . . But you, lazybones, how long will you sleep? When will you wake up? A little extra sleep, a little more slumber, a little

folding of the hands to rest—then poverty will pounce on you like a bandit; scarcity will attack you like an armed robber. Proverbs 6:6, 9-11
Lazy people don't even cook the game they catch, but the diligent make use of everything they find. Proverbs 12:27

For everything there is a season, a time for every activity under heaven. Ecclesiastes 3:1

Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need. Matthew 6:33

Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days. Don't act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do. Ephesians 5:16-17

Make it your goal to live a quiet life, minding your own business and working with your hands, just as we instructed you before. Then people who are not Christians will respect the way you live, and you will not need to depend on others. 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12

Await the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will bring you eternal life. In this way, you will keep yourselves safe in God's love. Jude 1:21

A LIFE OF SERVING OTHERS

It is a sin to belittle one's neighbor; blessed are those who help the poor. Proverbs 14:21

Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves; ensure justice for those being crushed. Yes, speak up for the poor and helpless, and see that they get justice. Proverbs 31:8-9

Give to those who ask, and don't turn away from those who want to borrow. Matthew 5:42

Then the King will say to those on his right, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world. For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me." Matthew 25:34-36

Do to others as you would like them to do to you. If you love only those who love you, why should you get credit for that? Even sinners love those who love them! And if you do good only to those who do good to you, why should you get credit? Even sinners do that much! And if you lend money only to those who can repay you, why should you get credit? Even sinners will lend to other sinners for a full return. Love your enemies! Do good to them. Lend to them without expecting to be repaid. Then your reward from heaven will be very great, and you will

truly be acting as children of the Most High, for he is kind to those who are unthankful and wicked. You must be compassionate, just as your Father is compassionate. Luke 6:31-36

Invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. Then at the resurrection of the righteous, God will reward you for inviting those who could not repay you. Luke 14:13-14

If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly. Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other. Romans 12:8-10

So, my dear brothers and sisters, be strong and immovable. Always work enthusiastically for the Lord, for you know that nothing you do for the Lord is ever wasted. 1 Corinthians 15:58

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. Therefore, whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone—especially to those in the family of faith. Galatians 6:9-10

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

I have learned how to be content with whatever I have. I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. Philippians 4:11-12

Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful. Colossians 3:12-15

I am praying that you will put into action the generosity that comes from your faith as you understand and experience all the good things we have in Christ. Your love has given me much joy and comfort, my brother, for your kindness has often refreshed the hearts of God's people. Philemon 1:6-7

And don't forget to do good and to share with those in need. These are the sacrifices that please God. Hebrews 13:16

Finally, all of you should be of one mind. Sympathize with each other. Love each other as brothers and sisters. Be tenderhearted, and keep a humble attitude. 1 Peter 3:8

If someone has enough money to live well and sees a brother or sister in need but shows no compassion—how can God's love be in that person?

1 John 3:17



OVERVIEW OF THE BIBLE BOOKS

OLD TESTAMENT

GENESIS

Author: Moses

Date: Uncertain, perhaps 1450–1410 B.C.

Genre: Narrative

Summary: Genesis is the first book of the Bible. The word *genesis* means “origins” or “beginnings,” describing the coming into being of something. Recorded here are such important beginnings as the Creation, the fall of man, and the early years of the nation of Israel.

EXODUS

Author: Moses

Date: Uncertain, perhaps 1450–1410 B.C.

Genre: Narrative, Law

Summary: Exodus is about deliverance. The Israelites had moved to Egypt during a famine. While there, they had been made slaves. Because the Israelites were God’s people, he appointed Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt and to the Promised Land, Canaan. On the way there, the Israelites stop at Mount Sinai, where God gives his people the Ten Commandments.

LEVITICUS

Author: Moses

Date: Uncertain, perhaps 1445–1444 B.C.

Genre: Law

Summary: Leviticus deals with the worship of a holy God. Here God gives the priests and people rules to live by to present themselves holy before him.

NUMBERS

Author: Moses

Date: Uncertain, perhaps 1450–1410 B.C.

Genre: Narrative

Summary: Numbers takes its name from the two censuses (or “numberings”) of the people recorded in this book. Yet, Numbers is actually a sequel to Exodus. It follows the wanderings of the Israelites through the wilderness of Sinai for the next forty years, until they camp just east of the Promised Land.

DEUTERONOMY

Author: Moses, except for the final summary

Date: Uncertain, perhaps 1407–1406 B.C.

Genre: Law

Summary: Deuteronomy is a farewell speech given to the people of Israel by Moses just before his death. Moses knew that the people would face many new temptations as they moved into the Promised Land. It was critical that they be reminded of God’s promises to them and their responsibility to God and his laws.

JOSHUA

Author: Joshua (the ending possibly written by Phinehas the high priest)

Date: Uncertain, perhaps around 1380 B.C.

Genre: Narrative

Summary: Joshua is the book of conquest. Here, the Israelites finally take possession of the Promised Land. The conquest is not immediate, though. It is a process of faith and action, through which God displays his miraculous power.

JUDGES

Author: Samuel

Date: Uncertain, perhaps around 1000 B.C.

Genre: Narrative

Summary: This is a book about backsliding, defeat, and God’s gracious deliverance. When the Israelites forgot God, he would allow them to be oppressed by a neighboring country. Then they would cry out to God, who would raise up judges to deliver his people.

RUTH

Author: Possibly Samuel

Date: Uncertain, perhaps 1375–1050 B.C.

Genre: Narrative

Summary: The events of Ruth take place during some of the darkest days in the history of Israel. It was a time when the nation lapsed again and again into the worship of false gods. In sharp contrast to this is the shining testimony of one Gentile woman from Moab who remains faithful to God.

1 SAMUEL

Authors: Uncertain, perhaps Samuel and the prophets Nathan and Gad

Date: Uncertain, perhaps around 1000 B.C.

Genre: Narrative

Summary: This book records a crucial time in Israel's history. Here the people of Israel reject God's chosen leader Samuel—a judge—and demand a king. Despite Samuel's warnings that a king would oppress them, the people insist that he anoint someone as king. The leadership of Israel passes from Samuel to Saul, their first king.

2 SAMUEL

Author: Uncertain, perhaps Nathan's son Zabud and the prophets Nathan and Gad

Date: Uncertain, perhaps around 930 B.C.

Genre: Narrative

Summary: Second Samuel focuses on the life and career of Israel's greatest king—David. Under David, the kingdom of Israel doubles in size and its enemies are subdued. Though he was a good leader and popular with the people, David was not perfect. This book also records David's sin with Bathsheba and tragic failure as a father.

1 KINGS

Author: Uncertain, but possibly Jeremiah or a group of prophets

Date: Uncertain, perhaps around 562 B.C.

Genre: Narrative

Summary: In 1 Kings, David's reign comes to an end and his son Solomon becomes king. God gives Solomon the gift of wisdom and the blessing of building the Temple. By the end his reign, the kingdom was in an agitated state of unrest due to the excessive taxes for all of his building projects. The book ends as Solomon's son Rehoboam takes the throne, which leads to the division of the kingdom.

2 KINGS

Author: Uncertain, but possibly Jeremiah or a group of prophets

Date: Uncertain, perhaps around 562 B.C.

Genre: Narrative

Summary: Second Kings shows man's inability to rule himself and the world. The kings of Israel and Judah had turned their backs on God and led their citizens astray. God sends many prophets to warn his people, but they refuse to listen. In the end, the kingdoms of Israel and Judah collapse, and their citizens are taken away into captivity.

1 CHRONICLES

Author: Possibly Ezra

Date: Around 430 B.C., recording events between 1000 and 960 B.C.

Genre: Narrative

Summary: This book emphasizes the spiritual significance of David's righteous reign. Through David's offspring would come the Messiah, Jesus Christ, whose throne and kingdom would be established forever.

2 CHRONICLES

Author: Possibly Ezra

Date: Around 430 B.C., recording events between 970 and 586 B.C.

Genre: Narrative

Summary: The emphasis in 2 Chronicles is on the southern kingdom, Judah, and on David's descendants. Here five outstanding kings were used by God to bring periods of revival, renewal, and reformation to the land.

EZRA

Author: Ezra

Date: Around 430 B.C., recording events between 538 and 430 B.C.

Genre: Narrative

Summary: Ezra relates the account of the two returns from Babylon. It picks up where 2 Chronicles leaves off by showing how God fulfills his promise to bring back his people after seventy years of exile and captivity.

NEHEMIAH

Author: Possibly Ezra, with contributions from Nehemiah

Date: Around 430 B.C.

Genre: Narrative

Summary: The book of Nehemiah is a wonderful story of how to handle opposition and discouragement when you are seeking to serve the LORD. Nehemiah was a cupbearer for the king of Persia. After hearing about the danger the city of Jerusalem was in, he returned there and, despite local opposition, completed reconstruction of the walls and gates of the city in fifty-two days.

ESTHER

Author: Possibly Mordecai, though some have suggested Ezra or Nehemiah

Date: Around 470 B.C.

Genre: Narrative

Summary: Esther shows God's providence at work in a profound way. As one Persian noble close to the king plots to kill the Jews, Esther, a Jew and queen, intercedes on behalf of her people at great personal risk to herself.

JOB

Author: Uncertain, perhaps Moses (Jewish tradition) or Job himself

Date: Uncertain, though events alluded to and vocabulary used suggest it was written during the time of the patriarchs, between 2000 and 1800 B.C.

Genre: Wisdom Literature

Summary: The book of Job addresses one of life's most-asked questions: Why does God allow suffering? Despite the fact that Job loses everything, suffers greatly, and has doubts about God, he remains faithful to God. In the end, God blesses him greatly.

PSALMS

Authors: David, Asaph, the sons of Korah, Solomon, Heman, Ethan, and Moses



HOW TO KNOW JESUS PERSONALLY

God wants each of us to experience an abundant life filled with meaning, direction, love, and peace. God makes this kind of life possible through a personal relationship with his Son, Jesus Christ. You can start this relationship by accepting Jesus as your Savior and inviting him into your life. But before doing that, here are five truths that will help you understand God's desire for you:

1. God has a plan for your life. “No one can receive anything unless God gives it from heaven” (John 3:27). God created you and has good plans for your life. To know those plans, you must know God personally.

2. God's plan gives meaning. “Jesus replied, ‘I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.’” (John 6:35). Many people seek meaning and purpose for their life. But they never find it because they look for meaning in the wrong things and the wrong people. When you follow God's plans for your life, the most important of which is to know Jesus as your Lord and Savior, you will find meaning and purpose in all that you do.

3. God's plan gives direction. “Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, ‘I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't

have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life' ” (John 8:12). Without God’s direction, you may not know what to do with your life. You may try a lot of things, hoping to find meaning in each one. But if you have God in your life, he will lead you and show you how to make your life count for him and his Kingdom.

4. *God’s plan brings peace.* “I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don’t be troubled or afraid” (John 14:27). When you follow Jesus as your Lord and Savior, you will be at peace with God. You will also be filled with God’s peace. So when troubles come, you will be able to have peace as you endure hardships.

5. *God’s plan is for you to live with him in heaven.* “For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). Before Adam and Eve sinned (Genesis 3), they had a good relationship with God. Therefore, they were not ashamed to come into God’s presence. But after they sinned, their relationship with God changed, and they were ashamed to come into God’s physical presence. Sin had separated them and the entire human race—including you—from God. But God did not want sin to keep people from having a relationship with him. So he provided a way in which people could be cleansed of their sins and live with him in heaven forever. He gave his only Son, Jesus, as the perfect payment for everyone’s sins.

Here are three things you must do in order to know Jesus personally as your Lord and Savior:

1. *Recognize that you are a sinner.* “For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard” (Romans 3:23). “As the Scriptures say, ‘No one is righteous—not even one’ ” (Romans 3:10).

Because everyone is a sinner, no one deserves eternal life with God in heaven. In addition, no one can work hard enough to *earn* this life. Instead, God gives eternal life to everyone who believes that Jesus Christ is his Son. Before you can appreciate what Jesus has done for you, you need to recognize that you are a sinner in need of God’s for-

giveness. If you never acknowledge this, you will never receive God's forgiveness for your sins. And you will never enter into heaven.

2. *Ask Jesus to forgive you.* "Yet now he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical body. As a result, he has brought you into his own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault" (Colossians 1:22). If you recognize that you are sinner, then you may be ready to ask Jesus to forgive you. Do you believe that Jesus is the eternal Son of God, who died to pay for your sins? If you do and you have never thanked Christ for dying for you, thank him right now in a simple prayer. Pray, "Lord, I thank you for paying for the sins I have committed. I give my life to you. Teach me the right way to live. Amen."

If you have believed in Christ now for the first time, write your name and today's date on the blank lines as a record of the time of your salvation.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Time: _____

3. *Turn away from your sins.* "Those who have been born into God's family do not sin, because God's life is in them. So they can't keep on sinning, because they are children of God" (1 John 3:9). As a Christian, you may sin from time to time. But you should not continue to live a sinful lifestyle. Putting your faith in Jesus means that you are willingly turning away from your old sinful nature. It also means that you are living to please God. You can live to please God by obeying the commands he has given everyone in the Bible. If you obey God, you can be sure that you are a Christian and will one day have eternal life in heaven.

WHERE CAN I FIND IT?

- The Creation Account . . . *Genesis 1:1-2:7* . . . page 3
- The Great Flood . . . *Genesis 6:1-9:17* . . . page 6
- The Ten Commandments . . . *Exodus 20:1-17* . . . page 59
- The Shepherd's Psalm . . . *Psalms 23* . . . page 416
- The Sermon on the Mount . . . *Matthew 5-7* . . . page 736
- The Beatitudes . . . *Matthew 5:3-11* . . . page 734
- The Golden Rule . . . *Luke 6:31* . . . page 786
- The Lord's Prayer . . . *Matthew 6:9-13* . . . page 737
- The Good Samaritan . . . *Luke 10:29-37* . . . page 792
- The Prodigal Son . . . *Luke 15:11-32* . . . page 798
- The Last Supper . . . *Matthew 26:20-25* . . . page 757
- The Love Chapter . . . *1 Corinthians 13* . . . page 879
- The Faith Chapter . . . *Hebrews 11* . . . page 927

GREAT CHAPTERS OF THE BIBLE

- Genesis 1 . . . *Creation* . . . page 3
- Exodus 12 . . . *Passover* . . . page 52
- Exodus 20 . . . *Ten Commandments* . . . page 59
- Deuteronomy 6 . . . *Commitment* . . . page 144
- Psalms 23 . . . *God's Love* . . . page 423
- Psalms 51 . . . *Repentance* . . . page 436
- Psalms 119 . . . *God's Laws* . . . page 468
- Psalms 139 . . . *God's Knowledge* . . . page 476
- Proverbs 1 . . . *Wisdom* . . . page 1481
- Proverbs 31 . . . *A Godly Woman* . . . page 503
- Ecclesiastes 3 . . . *Timing* . . . page 506
- Isaiah 6 . . . *Isaiah's Vision* . . . page 521
- Isaiah 7 . . . *Sign of Immanuel* . . . page 522
- Isaiah 52:13-53:12 . . . *The Suffering Servant* . . . page 559
- Jeremiah 18 . . . *God's Power* . . . page 587
- Ezekiel 33 . . . *Israel's Watchman* . . . page 652
- Hosea 14 . . . *Healing of Sins* . . . page 687
- Matthew 5-7 . . . *Sermon on the Mount* . . . page 436

Mark 12 . . . *Greatest Commandment* . . . page 773
Luke 15 . . . *Parables of the Lost* . . . page 798
John 1 . . . *The Eternal Word* . . . page 809
John 14–16 . . . *The Holy Spirit* . . . page 823
Acts 2 . . . *Peter’s Sermon* . . . page 831
Romans 3 . . . *Salvation* . . . page 859
1 Corinthians 13 . . . *Love* . . . page 879
2 Corinthians 12 . . . *Dependence* . . . page 889
Ephesians 6 . . . *Spiritual Armor* . . . page 899
Philippians 2 . . . *Christ’s Humility* . . . page 901
Colossians 3 . . . *Righteous Living* . . . page 904
1 Timothy 3 . . . *Leadership* . . . page 912
Hebrews 11 . . . *Faith* . . . page 927
James 1 . . . *Temptation* . . . page 931
1 Peter 4 . . . *Suffering* . . . page 937
1 John 1 . . . *Fellowship* . . . page 942
Revelation 21–22 . . . *Heaven* . . . page 962

GREAT STORIES OF THE BIBLE

The Bible is full of exciting stories which you can read. Flood, fire, war, love, hate, deceit, passion, courage, honor, loyalty, treachery—it’s all here. Most of all, you will meet an amazing God and learn about everything he has done—for you.

Cain and Abel . . . Genesis 4:1-16 . . . page 5
The Flood . . . Genesis 6:1-9:17 . . . page 6
The Tower of Babel . . . Genesis 11:1-9 . . . page 9
Abraham’s Call . . . Genesis 12:1-9 . . . page 10
Abraham’s Obedience . . . Genesis 22:1-19 . . . page 17
Joseph as a Slave . . . Genesis 37:18-36 . . . page 31
Moses Is Born . . . Exodus 2:1-10 . . . page 44
The Burning Bush . . . Exodus 3:1-22 . . . page 45
The Ten Plagues . . . Exodus 7:14-12:30 . . . page 48

- The Exodus . . . *Exodus 12:31-51* . . . page 53
The Red Sea . . . *Exodus 14:21-31* . . . page 55
The Gold Calf . . . *Exodus 32:1-29* . . . page 69
The 12 Scouts . . . *Numbers 13:1-33* . . . page 116
The Bronze Snake . . . *Numbers 21:4-9* . . . page 123
Jericho Falls . . . *Joshua 6:1-27* . . . page 171
Gideon as Judge . . . *Judges 6:1-7:25* . . . page 192
Samson as Judge . . . *Judges 13:1-16:31* . . . page 199
God Provides for Ruth . . . *Ruth 1:1-4:22* . . . page 208
Samuel Is Born . . . *1 Samuel 1:1-28* . . . page 211
David Kills Goliath . . . *1 Samuel 17:1-51* . . . page 223
David and Jonathan . . . *1 Samuel 18:1-4; 20:1-42* . . . pages 225;
226
David and Bathsheba . . . *2 Samuel 11:1-27* . . . page 242
Solomon Judges Wisely . . . *1 Kings 3:16-28* . . . page 260
Elijah's Challenge . . . *1 Kings 18:1-40* . . . page 275
God Speaks to Elijah . . . *1 Kings 19:1-18* . . . page 277
Elisha Heals Naaman . . . *2 Kings 5:1-19* . . . page 286
David's Mighty Men . . . *1 Chronicles 11:10-25* . . . page 317
Esther Saves the Jews . . . *Esther 1:1-10:3* . . . page 384
Job Is Tested . . . *Job 1:1-22* . . . page 390
Ezekiel's Vision . . . *Ezekiel 37:1-14* . . . page 655
The Firey Furnace . . . *Daniel 3:1-30* . . . page 669
The Lions' Den . . . *Daniel 6:1-28* . . . page 672
Jonah and the Fish . . . *Jonah 1:1-2:10* . . . page 701
Jesus Is Born . . . *Matthew 1:18-25* . . . page 733
. . . *Luke 2:1-20* . . . page 782
Wise Men Visit Jesus . . . *Matthew 2:1-12* . . . page 735
Jesus Is Tempted . . . *Matthew 4:1-11* . . . page 736
Jesus Walks on Water . . . *Matthew 14:22-36* . . . page 747
Jesus Feeds 5,000 . . . *Matthew 14:13-21* . . . page 746
. . . *Mark 6:30-44* . . . page 767
The Good Samaritan . . . *Luke 10:25-37* . . . page 793
The Lost Son . . . *Luke 15:11-32* . . . page 799
Jesus and Zacchaeus . . . *Luke 19:1-10* . . . page 802
Jesus Raises Lazarus . . . *John 11:1-44* . . . page 821

- The Triumphal Entry . . . *Matthew 21:1-11* . . . page 752
- The Last Supper . . . *Matthew 26:17-30* . . . page 758
 . . . *John 13:1-30* . . . page 823
- Jesus' Crucifixion . . . *Matthew 27:32-56* . . . page 760
 . . . *John 19:16-42* . . . page 828
- Jesus' Resurrection . . . *Matthew 28:1-15* . . . page 761
 . . . *Luke 24:1-34* . . . page 808
- Jesus' Ascension . . . *Luke 24:50-53* . . . page 809
 . . . *Acts 1:6-11* . . . page 831
- The Holy Spirit Comes . . . *Acts 2:1-13* . . . page 831
- Ananias and Sapphira . . . *Acts 5:1-11* . . . page 834
- Saul Encounters Jesus . . . *Acts 9:1-19* . . . page 838
- Paul Is Shipwrecked . . . *Acts 27:1-28:10* . . . page 855

GREAT VERSES OF THE BIBLE TO MEMORIZE

- Genesis 1:1 . . . *God the Creator* . . . page 3
- Genesis 1:26-27 . . . *Image of God* . . . page 3
- Genesis 2:18 . . . *Marriage* . . . page 4
- Genesis 3:14-19 . . . *Curse of Sin* . . . page 5
- Genesis 15:6 . . . *Righteousness by Faith* . . . page 12
- Exodus 14:14 . . . *God's Protection* . . . page 54
- Exodus 20:2-4 . . . *God Alone* . . . page 59
- Exodus 20:7 . . . *God's Name* . . . page 59
- Exodus 20:8-11 . . . *Sabbath* . . . page 59
- Exodus 20:12-17 . . . *Commandments* . . . page 59
- Exodus 34:14 . . . *God Alone* . . . page 72
- Leviticus 17:11 . . . *Blood Atonement* . . . page 93
- Leviticus 19:18 . . . *Love for Neighbors* . . . page 95
- Leviticus 20:7 . . . *Holiness* . . . page 95
- Deuteronomy 4:1-2 . . . *Obeying God* . . . page 142
- Deuteronomy 6:4-9 . . . *Love for God* . . . page 144
- Deuteronomy 7:9 . . . *God's Faithfulness* . . . page 145
- Deuteronomy 10:12-13 . . . *Serving God* . . . page 148