

Genesis

Genesis chronicles the beginning of both secular and sacred history, and introduces key events and people God uses to shape those beginnings. It is the story of the one true God whose word creates a world, and whose watchful care determines humanity's destiny. Roughly one-fifth of the book (chapters 1–11) traces primeval history from creation to about 2000 B.C. The remaining four-fifths (chapters 12–50) details the family history of Abraham and covers about 350 years.

FOCUS	SIN				SALVATION											
DIVISIONS	Beginning of the Human Race	Beginning of Sin and Death	Judgment of the Flood	Judgment at the Tower of Babel	Abraham, Friend of God	Isaac, Servant of God	Jacob, Prince of God	Joseph, Exalted of God								
	1	2	3	5	6	9	10	11	12	24	25	26	27	36	37	50
TOPICS	History of All Humanity				History of One Man's Descendants											
	Key Events				Key People											
PLACE	From Eden to Ur				From Canaan to Egypt											
TIME	Over 2,000 Years				About 350 Years											

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Beginning of the Human Race

Key Passage: Genesis 2:4–25

CHAPTER 1	CHAPTER 2
Six Days of Creation Summarized	Sixth Day of Creation Scrutinized
Realm of Creation (Universe)	Rulers of Creation (Man and Woman)

OVERVIEW The opening chapters of Genesis focus on God's creative activity in forming the heavens and the earth. Chapter 1 provides a diary of the six days of God's work as He speaks the universe into existence and arranges its parts into a unified whole. The chapter closes with the creation of Adam and Eve, who are commanded to subdue the earth and rule it. Chapter 2 takes the brief account of their creation and enlarges it into a full-length portrait. The emphasis throughout is on God's unique relationship to Adam and Eve as the ones who bear His image and exercise dominion over the rest of His creation.

YOUR DAILY WALK What do you think of when you hear, "The LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground" (2:7)? Does that reminder encourage you or discourage you?

It should encourage you, as long as you remember that God has not forgotten the material He used to design your body. Because God created you, He knows exactly what you can handle physically and emotionally. The psalmist said: "He knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust" (Psalm 103:14). God knows your abilities and liabilities, and He has given you all the time and strength you need to accomplish His will for you.

Look at your calendar; notice the activities you have for the first week of the new year. Does the list look impossible? Write these words at the top of the page: "I have all the time I need to do all that God intends for me to do in 2020." Make it your New Year's resolution to use your time and strength to His glory.

INSIGHT *Genesis: The Book of Beginnings*

Genesis is the indispensable introduction to the entire Bible. The name *Genesis* is taken from the title given to it by the Greek version (Septuagint) and is derived from the heading of its 10 parts, *ho biblos geneleos*. In the Hebrew Bible the title is *B'reshit* ("In the beginning").

*That God
created us
from dust
is no reason
to treat
another
person
like dirt.*

Beginning of Sin and Death

Key Passage: Genesis 3

CHAPTER 3		CHAPTER 4	CHAPTER 5
1	First Sin 7, 8	First Judgment 24	Heritage of Rebellion Heritage of Hope
Beginning of Sin		Spread of Sin	

OVERVIEW Deception, disobedience, death, destruction. The beginning of sin and its shattering effects on the first human beings, their world, and all their offspring are charted in chapters 3 and 4. Sin gives birth to death in a continuous downward spiral as seen in the rebellious family tree of Cain and in the repeated refrain throughout the line of Seth, “. . . then he died.” But shining through in the midst of this dismal picture is a ray of hope—the promise of the coming Head-Striker (3:15).

YOUR DAILY WALK An official-looking individual approaches you on the street and asks, “In your opinion, what are the five most common pressures of daily life in your city?” How would you respond?

Deadlines. Expectations. Workload. Grades. Productivity. Chores. Sales. Bills. They’re all synonyms for pressure.

Pressure can have many effects on you—some good, some bad. But if it remains strong enough long enough, pressure can weaken your resistance to temptation. It can even cause you to consider some “solutions” to the temptation problem that normally would be out of the question, such as: “Just once can’t hurt . . . Other Christians are doing it, so why can’t I? . . . There’s nothing wrong in just experimenting . . . How will I know what it’s like if I never try it? . . . If God loved me, He wouldn’t limit my freedom.”

The question, “Did God really say . . . ?” (3:1) is the grandfather of all lies. The fire is worse than the frying pan. Where is your pressure point today? Once you’ve identified it, count on two things to be true: (1) Satan knows your weak point and will trip you up, if you let him; (2) God knows your weak point, and will fortify you against Satan’s attacks, if you’ll let Him.

We easily yield to that which is about us.

INSIGHT Name That Tune

The oldest recorded song in the Bible is found in Genesis 4:23–24. Its composer, Lamech, has the distinction of being the “father of polygamy.” The lyrics boast of man’s lust for violence and his disregard for human life.

Judgment of the Flood

Key Passage: Genesis 6

CHAPTER 6	CHAPTER 7	CHAPTER 8	CHAPTER 9
Warning of Judgment	Execution of Judgment	Ending of Judgment	Promise After Judgment
Rain Clouds in the Sky		Rainbow in the Sky	

OVERVIEW The sinfulness of human beings has become so great that God prepares to sweep away the human race in a judgment of water. He selects Noah, a righteous man with an unwavering faith in God, and commands him to build a ship in which he and his family will escape the flood. Obediently, Noah begins the 100-year task of constructing the ark. When the flood arrives on schedule, Noah and his family are preserved, while the rest of the human race perishes in its unbelief. Once again, humanity enjoys a fresh start on the earth.

YOUR DAILY WALK Doesn't it make you feel good when someone remembers you on a special occasion, or for no particular reason at all? It's a great encouragement to get a phone call or an email from a friend that says, "Thinking of you today." Perhaps your only regret is that such warm reminders are too few and far between.

Genesis 8:1 makes a crucial observation concerning Noah. It says simply, "God remembered Noah." That is significant because God's memory isn't like that of humans. He hadn't lost track of Noah in the midst of the flood, or misplaced His timetable for Noah's rescue. God never forgot Noah, and when the time was right He ended the flood and brought Noah safely to dry land. To say that God remembers is to say that He never forgets.

Just as God did not forget Noah in the flood, so He has not brought you to this point in your life merely to abandon you in the midst of your circumstances. God remembers you. Read thoughtfully Psalm 139:7–10. Then with that confidence in mind, complete this phrase: "Because God remembers me, today I will remember Him by . . ."

INSIGHT *Eight Souls Were Saved (Count Them)*

Only the believing Noah and his family were saved from the flood. Three times they are mentioned as a specific group (6:18; 7:13; 8:16) to show that not one faithful person is overlooked in God's provision of safety.

We are never out of God's sight, never away from His loving care.

Judgment at the Tower

Key Passage: Genesis 11:1–9, 27–32

CHAPTER 10	CHAPTER 11
Sons of Noah	Scattering of the Nations
A Family Tree	A Fateful Tower

OVERVIEW After the flood, Noah's descendants multiply and begin to repopulate the earth. But in defiance of God's command to disperse throughout the world (9:7), they decide to settle in one central locality. God judges their rebellion by garbling their language and forcing them to scatter over the earth as He had originally commanded. Clearly the effects of sin have survived the purging waters of the flood. From this point on, the narrative focuses on one man (Abram) and his descendants (the Hebrew people) through whom God would provide a Redeemer from humanity's sinful condition.

YOUR DAILY WALK So far in your reading of Genesis you have encountered three illustrations of the same factor at work in the relationship of men and women to God.

1. Adam and Eve were given the garden of Eden to enjoy with only one prohibition, yet they sinned and lost their Paradise.
2. The generations that followed them continued in their rebellion and were swept away in the flood.
3. Noah's descendants refused to spread out as God had commanded, and so they suffered the confusion of their language.

Have you discovered the principle illustrated by these three case studies in human stubbornness? Obedience to God brings blessing; disobedience results in judgment. God is serious about His commands. They are not given simply to be studied or debated, copied or cataloged. Rather, they are in your Bible to be obeyed—instantly, completely, unquestioningly. Pick an area of your walk with God where you have been halfhearted or negligent in your obedience. Then tell God what you have learned from the examples of Adam, Noah, and Babylon.

Nothing is more fatal to us than to refuse to give ourselves in obedience to God.

INSIGHT Those Confusing Lingua Francas

The effects of God's confusion of language are being felt right up to the present time. The Chippewa Indians of North America have more than 6,000 different verb forms, while the Eskimo language uses 63 forms of the present tense alone!

Abram’s Calling and Lot’s Compromise

Key Passage: Genesis 12:1–9

CHAPTER 12		CHAPTER 13	CHAPTER 14
Called in Ur 1	Compromising in Egypt 9, 10, 20	Choosing in Canaan	Conquering in the King’s Valley
Abram and God		Abram and Lot	

OVERVIEW The life of Abram is a study in walking by faith. Called to leave his home in Ur (near the Persian Gulf), Abram receives exciting promises from God involving a new home, a great name, and a large family (12:1–3). Abram takes God at His word and begins the long journey to his new place of blessing. Along the way he experiences detours where his faith wavers, engages in disputes with his worldly nephew Lot, and faces discouragements in his attempts to have a family. But through it all, Abram’s faith shines brightly, showing that in him God has found a man truly deserving of the title, “God’s friend” (James 2:23).

YOUR DAILY WALK It has been well said, “Every great person has first learned how to obey, whom to obey, and when to obey.” Abram was truly great, both by human and divine estimations (12:2–3). But his greatness as a servant of God began with God’s command, “Leave your country” (12:1), and Abram’s obedient response, “So Abram left” (12:4). It was a call to forsake all and strike out on a venture of faith, with nothing to hold onto but the promises of God.

Consider what that meant to Abram. In Ur he left behind material wealth, an advanced civilization, good farming land, friends and family, and all that he had learned to call home. For what? A 1,000-mile journey through a hostile environment to an unknown land with nothing but a promise awaiting him at the end of the trip.

Abram exercised faith in God by moving; Noah did so by building a boat; Abel by offering a lamb. How about you? Read Hebrews 11:4–8 twice. In the margin write a step of obedience God is calling you to take today—and then by faith take it!

What is faith but obedience to the commands of God?

INSIGHT *The True Test of Values*

Lot’s choice of the entire Jordan valley was the beginning of his downfall, for it caused him to pitch his tent near the wicked city of Sodom. By contrast, Abram built his life on the promises of God. Lot chose for himself (13:11); Abram allowed God to choose for him (13:14–15).

Faith and the Failure of Abram

Key Passage: Genesis 15:1–16:6

CHAPTER 15	CHAPTER 16	CHAPTER 17
Ratifying God's Covenant	Running Ahead of God's Timing	Renewing God's Covenant
Faith of Abram	Failure of Abram	Fatherhood of Abraham

OVERVIEW God's promises to Abram are now reaffirmed in the covenant which God makes with His faithful servant. The provisions include the promise that Abram's own son would be his heir, even though he and Sarai are childless and beyond child-bearing years. Abram weakens under the pressure of passing time and yields to Sarai's suggestion. The result is the birth of Ishmael, a son whom God also promises to bless but who is clearly not the son of God's promise. Despite his act of presumption, Abram receives a new sign of God's faithfulness (circumcision) and a new name (Abraham, "father of many nations").

YOUR DAILY WALK Obedience can take many forms. Sometimes the obedient thing is to sit still, as when Jesus told His disciples to wait in Jerusalem (Acts 1:4). More often, obedience demands action. Noah picked up a hammer and saw (Genesis 6:14, 22); Moses climbed a mountain to bring back God's words on two stone tablets (Exodus 24:12); Joshua led the nation on a seven-day hike around Jericho (Joshua 6:1–21), all in obedience to the word of the Lord.

The same was true in the life of Abraham. In chapter 15, he obediently arranges the pieces of the sacrifice by which God ratified His covenant; in chapter 17, he carries out the responsibility of circumcising his entire household according to God's command. While these acts of faith may not seem very spectacular, they become highly significant when performed in obedience to the Lord's direction.

What is God calling you to do today? It may be something as simple as writing a letter or visiting a shut-in, sharing a kind word or preparing a favorite dessert. Be obedient in the ordinary details of life, for that is the path of blessing.

To God, the useful man or woman is not simply the first to act, but the first to listen.

INSIGHT Abraham, the First "Hebrew" in the Bible (14:13)

The origin of the word *Hebrew* is unclear. Perhaps it means "a descendant of Eber" or "one from the other side (of the river)." In Abram's case, it might refer to his migration from Mesopotamia.

Sodom's Doom and Sarah's Deliverance

Key Passage: Genesis 18

CHAPTER 18	CHAPTER 19	CHAPTER 20
Sodom's Doom		Abraham's Deception
Decreed	Delivered	Described Discovered
Intercession for Lot		Intercession for Abimlech

OVERVIEW Three angelic visitors arrive bearing bittersweet news for Abraham. Within a year Sarah would give birth to a son (Isaac); within a matter of days Sodom would be destroyed. Abraham, knowing his nephew Lot resides there, pleads for God's mercy and receives assurances that the city would not be destroyed if even a handful of righteous people remained there. But the situation is even worse than Abraham imagines, and Sodom is reduced to ashes. Lot and his two daughters narrowly escape, though their grudging departure is mirrored in the longing backward glance of Lot's wife.

YOUR DAILY WALK Chapters 14 and 18 have much in common. In both chapters Abraham's nephew, Lot, is in trouble, and Abraham expresses a godly concern for the welfare of Lot. But can you find the one striking difference?

People who don't know whether they are coming or going are usually in the biggest haste to get there.

In chapter 14, when Abraham heard the news about Lot's capture, he immediately went to war. Arming his 318-man militia, he headed out to do battle with the enemy. And God blessed his rescue attempt.

In chapter 18, when Abraham heard the news about Sodom's imminent destruction, he immediately went to prayer. Wrestling with God for the safety of Lot's family, Abraham received assurances that the city would not be destroyed if a handful of righteous people remained. And God blessed his intercession.

What if Abraham had prayed when he should have done battle, and had battled when he should have been interceding? Examine your own battles and prayers to be sure you haven't rushed ahead of God . . . or lagged behind!

INSIGHT *A Postscript on Sodom (19:24–25)*

Two early historians, Strabo (first century B.C.) and Tacitus (first century A.D.), both testify to severe odors, asphalt seepages, and a general burned complexion in the terrain south of the Dead Sea. According to Tacitus, this area was "once fertile and the site of great cities, but . . . the very ground looks burned and has lost its fertility."

Isaac’s Birth and Sarah’s Death

Key Passage: Genesis 21:1–8; 22:1–19

CHAPTER 21	CHAPTER 22	CHAPTER 23	CHAPTER 24
Birth of Isaac	Burnt Offering of Isaac	Burial of Sarah	Bride for Isaac
Proving Abraham’s Faith		Passing on Abraham’s Faith	

OVERVIEW After more than 20 years of watching and waiting, the faith of Abraham and Sarah is rewarded in the birth of an heir. Isaac (“laughter”), whose prophesied birth was greeted with a laugh (18:12), now brings laughter and joy to the hearts of his elderly parents. That joy is later threatened by Abraham’s severest test—the command to sacrifice Isaac as a burnt offering to God. Abraham obeys, thereby learning yet another lesson about God’s faithfulness. Sarah, who has seen her son rise to manhood, does not live to see his joyous marriage to Rebekah.

YOUR DAILY WALK You know you’re growing older when . . .
 . . . you know all the answers but nobody asks you the questions.
 . . . you sink your teeth into a steak and they stay there.
 . . . all the names in your contacts list end in M.D.

When you get to chapter 21 after reading about the many adventures of Abraham, you may be surprised to learn that he is already 100 years old. Yet the most important and productive years of his life are still ahead. Before he dies at the age of 175 (25:7–8), Abraham will father at least eight children, face his severest test on Mount Moriah (22:2), and arrange for a godly wife for Isaac. Clearly, being a senior citizen didn’t alter Abraham’s zeal for God. Neither should it for you.

No matter our age, God still has a plan for our lives. He can still use us for His glory, for His kingdom. Ask Him what you can do for Him today.

“Teach us to number our days aright” (Psalm 90:12).

INSIGHT A Costly Exchange for Ishmael

In Abraham’s day a son by a slave woman could legally exchange his inheritance for his freedom. Sarah’s statement in 21:10 shows that she was trying to force Ishmael to exercise that right. “The matter distressed Abraham greatly because it concerned his son” (21:11). Which son? The answer is not given, for Abraham loved them both.

Isaac's Family and Career

Key Passage: Genesis 25:19–26:5

CHAPTER 25		CHAPTER 26	
Abraham's Death	Jacob's Birth	Isaac's Deception	Isaac's Deeds
Isaac's Clan		Isaac's Career	

OVERVIEW God's blessing on Isaac's life is clearly visible in the brief two-chapter narrative you will read today. Isaac, like his father Abraham, is the husband of a barren wife, but in response to Isaac's prayer God gives him twin sons. Like Abraham, Isaac walks in faith and obedience to God. And, unfortunately, like Abraham, Isaac demonstrates in his dispute with Abimelech that a father's example can be bad as well as good.

YOUR DAILY WALK If you've ever questioned whether the life of the parent influences the conduct of the child, today's passage should put those doubts to rest. God makes it clear in 26:3, 5, and 24 that Abraham left a legacy of faith and obedience for his son Isaac and for future generations. But the Book of Genesis paints a realistic picture of Abraham: his life and walk with God, while exemplary, were far from ideal. However, God used Abraham's life, in spite of failure, to make a spiritual mark upon countless generations to come.

*If being
born did not
bring much
satisfaction,
try being
born again.*

Wouldn't it be wonderful to leave behind such an example of godliness for your descendants? Sounds like a tall order, doesn't it? But the good news is that you can start building that legacy today. It's as true today as it was in the days of Abraham: A life of faith and obedience is fashioned from the building blocks of daily decisions. Choice, not chance, determines your destiny—and also influences the destiny of those who follow.

In the next 24 hours, you will make decisions that affect many lives: your own, those you love, and those unborn. Ask God for wisdom and strength to make each choice in light of eternal values.

INSIGHT A Crowded Burial Cave

Abraham was buried in the cave of Machpelah near Mamre, which he had bought as the burial place for his wife, Sarah (23:9). And, although Jacob died in Egypt, his body was embalmed and he was buried in the same cave (Genesis 50:13). Isaac is also believed to have been buried there.

Schemes and Labors of Jacob

Key Passage: Genesis 27, 31

CHAPTER 27	CHAPTER 28	CHAPTER 29	CHAPTER 30	CHAPTER 31
Jacob's Scheme	Jacob's Dream	Jacob's Wives	Jacob's Wealth	Jacob's Withdrawal
Deceiver	Dreamer	Defrauder		

OVERVIEW A conflict between twins that began in the womb carries over into the adult lives of Esau and Jacob. After following Rebekah's plan to trick Isaac into giving the patriarchal blessing to him rather than to Esau, Jacob flees to Haran for safety. In route, he receives assurance from God in a dream that he is indeed the heir of the covenant promises. In Haran he is out-tricked by his own uncle, Laban, and after 20 frustrating years, returns to Canaan with four wives, eleven sons, one daughter, and considerable wealth.

YOUR DAILY WALK An unsaved spouse, a rebellious teenager, a stubborn friend. If only you could open their eyes to the truth. If only you could get them to respond the way they should. Perhaps you've even said to yourself, "I'd give anything to have that person change his ways." Did you ever stop to think that there's a wrong way to accomplish the right thing?

Jacob always got what he went after: birthright, blessing, wife, herds. But he paid a high price: alienation from father and brother, dissension in his own home, bitterness toward his in-laws, and continual anxiety. Sadly, he could have possessed everything he connived to get and could have enjoyed fellowship with God—if he had just been willing to take God at His word (25:23; 28:12–15).

Manipulation has no place in God's program. Where are you tempted to pull strings and push buttons? Do your assigned part instead: love, pray, wait, trust. And let God do His part. Put a button or a piece of string in your Bible as a "bookmark" to remind you again tomorrow just whose job is whose.

"Wait for the Lord" (Psalm 27:14).

INSIGHT *The Children of Israel*

Throughout Scripture, God's chosen people are called "the sons of Israel" and "the house of Jacob." They could not bear the name of Jacob's father or grandfather, for the Ishmaelites lay equal claim to descent from Abraham, and the Edomites were sons of Isaac. But the 12 tribes that identified themselves as "Israel" were the only descendants of Jacob.

INTRODUCTION TO THE Pentateuch

The Old Testament chronicles the creation of humanity and the emergence of Israel as a nation of God. Although human beings were created perfect, they disobeyed God's will and rebelled. The rest of Scripture records God's ceaseless efforts to restore and reconcile the human race to Himself.

The story of God's relationship with humanity begins in the first five books of the Old Testament, called the Torah in Hebrew or the Pentateuch, from the Greek, *penta*, "five," and *teuchos*, "scroll."

These five books fit together into an integrated whole. Genesis pictures the inception of the nation Israel. Exodus portrays the redemption of that nation from bondage in Egypt. Leviticus describes the fellowship God desires to enjoy with Israel. Numbers records God's testing of the nation. And Deuteronomy is a repetition of the Law of God to the new generation of Israelites.

PENTATEUCH (5)	Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy	POETRY (5)	Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Ezekiel Daniel	MAJOR PROPH. (5)
	Joshua Judges Ruth 1 Samuel 2 Samuel 1 Kings 2 Kings 1 Chronicles 2 Chronicles Ezra Nehemiah Esther		Job Psalms Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Songs	

Jacob’s Encounters and Esau’s Descendants

Key Passage: Genesis 32

CHAPTER 32	CHAPTER 33	CHAPTER 34	CHAPTER 35	CHAPTER 36
An Angel	Jacob’s Encounter with . . .		God	Esau’s Descendants
	Esau	Shechem		
Israel, Prince of God				Edomites

OVERVIEW Before Jacob can be reconciled to Esau, he first must be reconciled to God. After sending his family and possessions across the ford of Jabbok, Jacob wrestles with the angel of God. At last he receives the blessing for which he has struggled, along with two permanent reminders of the encounter: a new name, Israel (“he struggled with God”), and a permanent limp. An emotional reunion with Esau is followed by a divine confirmation of promises previously made to Abraham and Isaac regarding a large posterity and an eternal inheritance.

YOUR DAILY WALK Put yourself in Jacob’s sandals for a moment.

Years before, you parted company with your brother because he threatened to kill you. Now you hear he is headed your way, accompanied by 400 men. What do you conclude? (a) “My brother is coming to pay a social call.” (b) “My brother is coming to make things right.” (c) “My brother is coming to kill me!”

At last, after perhaps 60 years of scheming and conniving, Jacob had come to the end of himself. For the first time in his life he realized that he desperately needed God. His prayer life showed it (32:9–12); his wrestling with God showed it (32:24–26). In response to Jacob’s earnest searching and struggling, God broke his self-will, transformed his deceitful heart, and provided the birthright blessing Jacob had tried so long to buy or steal.

Are you wrestling with God over control of an area of your life that has yet to come under His lordship? Your thought life? Television viewing habits? Internet use? Social life? Finances? Don’t wait until God has to bring you to the end of yourself before you yield that area to His loving control.

INSIGHT *Three Spiritual Milestones in Jacob’s Life*

Three times Jacob encountered the God of his forefathers. At Haran he was redirected by God (31:1–16); at Peniel he was restored by God (32:24–32); at Bethel he was reassured by God (35:1–15).

It is not in human nature to deceive others for any long time, without in a measure deceiving ourselves too.

Joseph's Trials and Triumph in Egypt

Key Passage: Genesis 37, 39–40

CHAPTER 37	CHAPTER 38	CHAPTER 39	CHAPTER 40
Joseph's Injustice	Judah's Immorality	Joseph's Imprisonment	Joseph's Interpretation
Joseph's Trials in Canaan		Joseph's Triumph in Egypt	

OVERVIEW Today you will read about the fourth patriarch in the Genesis account—Joseph, the most-favored son of Jacob. His popularity with his father and frankness with his brothers result in estrangement and adversity. In a fit of jealousy his brothers sell him to a passing caravan. But God's hand is evident in Joseph's life; and despite his unjust imprisonment in Egypt, God prepares him to save the emerging nation of Israel. His faith and integrity stand in stark contrast to the shameful behavior of his brother Judah (chapter 38).

YOUR DAILY WALK “Lord, get me out of this mess!”

If you have ever prayed that frantic prayer, then you'll enjoy the story of Joseph's life. When you, like Joseph, find yourself tangled in the web of adversity, chances are your first reaction is to look for an escape route. Joseph must have been tempted to pray that one-line prayer on many occasions after he found himself in Egypt, enslaved and alone. He could have used his circumstances as an excuse for bitterness, depression, and revenge. But through it all, “The LORD was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did” (39:23). Joseph's steadfastness under pressure uniquely molded him for future usefulness as Egypt's prime minister.

Build a legacy of faith with your life.

Where are you experiencing the molding force of pressure today, and how are you reacting to it? Are you looking for the nearest exit? Or are you asking God to shape you into a vessel for greater service? Think about a faith-stretching ordeal you are presently experiencing. What is one positive change God is making in your life as a result of your trial? Write it in the margin, along with the words of Genesis 39:23. Then relax in the knowledge that God is at work.

INSIGHT Good and Getting Better All the Time

Many a eulogy begins with the words, “He was a good man.” But Joseph is one of the few characters in the pages of Scripture about whom nothing negative or evil is ever said. Can you find a quality from his life that is also true of yours today?

JOSEPH IN THE OLD, Jesus in the New

In many ways, Joseph foreshadows the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. Notice the many similarities between the two.

JOSEPH	JESUS
The well-beloved son of his father (Genesis 37:3)	The well-beloved Son of His Father (Matthew 3:17)
Testified against his brothers' sin, and they hated him for it (Genesis 37:2, 4–5)	Testified against men's sin, and they hated Him for it (John 15:18)
Was tempted and did not yield (Genesis 39:7–12)	Was tempted by Satan and did not yield (Matthew 4:1–11)
Judah sold him for 20 pieces of silver (Genesis 37:26–28)	Judas sold him for 30 pieces of silver (Matthew 26:15)
Was put in the dungeon (the place of death) with two other criminals (Genesis 40:1–3)	Was put on the cross (the place of death) with two other criminals (Mark 15:27–28)
One of the criminals died and the other lived (Genesis 40:21–22)	One of the criminals died and the other lived (spiritually) (Luke 23:39–43)
Was raised from the place of death by the king of the land (Genesis 41:14)	Was raised from the place of death by the King of the universe (Colossians 2:12)
Became the deliverer of his people (Genesis 47:25)	Became the Savior of His people (1 Timothy 4:10)

Pharaoh's Dreams and Joseph's Promotion

Key Passage: Genesis 41

CHAPTER 41	CHAPTERS 42–44
Joseph Interprets Pharaoh's Dreams	Joseph Interrogates His Own Brother
Reward	Retribution

OVERVIEW Joseph, who has been faithful to God while an obscure prisoner, now experiences an incredible rise to power in Egypt. A difficult dream sent by God to Pharaoh jars the memory of the chief butler, and Joseph is promoted from prisoner to prime minister because of his God-given insight. God's revelation of a worldwide famine prompts Pharaoh to give Joseph oversight of all the affairs of Egypt. When the famine reaches Canaan, Joseph's brothers begin a series of trips to Egypt to buy food. There they are confronted with the truth of their carefully concealed crime.

YOUR DAILY WALK It is one thing to have convictions. It is something else again to be convicted for your convictions! And yet the Bible is filled with stories of men and women who took their faith in God so seriously that they were willing to be imprisoned—and even martyred—for what they believed. Joseph, Jeremiah, Daniel, Peter, John, Paul, and a host of unnamed saints in the Believers' Hall of Faith (Hebrews 11:36) spent time behind bars because of their uncompromising stand for God. Add to that the persecuted Christians of the rest of history, and you have an impressive army of "Convicts for Christ."

*"I will not forget you"
(Isaiah
49:15).*

When was the last time you prayed for your brothers and sisters in Christ who are experiencing imprisonment, torture, and even martyrdom for their faith?

Close your quiet time by praying for a modern-day Joseph. Only eternity will tell what great things God has done through the lives of imprisoned saints and impassioned intercessors.

INSIGHT *The Brother Who Was Not (42:13)*

When Joseph's brothers were questioned about themselves, they replied, "Your servants were twelve brothers . . . one is no more." They were evidently conscious of their guilt. Though it had been many years since they had sold Joseph into slavery, it seems that the memory of the wrong they had done had continued to haunt them.

Joseph’s Family and His Famine Plan

Key Passage: Genesis 45

CHAPTER 45	CHAPTER 46	CHAPTER 47
Joseph’s New Identity	Jacob’s New Home	Joseph’s New Administration
Family United		Famine Plan Unveiled

OVERVIEW Joseph, no longer able to maintain the masquerade, reveals his true identity to his terrified brothers. Though they fear revenge, Joseph understands God’s purpose behind the earlier events in his life and rejoices that he is the one to reunite and sustain the family. And so the entire Jewish nation (70 in number) moves to Goshen, which will be their home for the next 400 years.

YOUR DAILY WALK Ask Christians for their favorite Bible personality, and chances are many will say Joseph. Perhaps it’s because Joseph had experiences that nearly everyone identifies with: misunderstanding, mistreatment, unexplainable circumstances, seemingly unanswered prayers, examples of doing the right thing that turns out all wrong.

When reading the life of Joseph, it is hard to escape the truth that God never wastes energy in the lives of His children. What He allowed to come into your life yesterday has helped to prepare you for today, and what today brings will better equip you for tomorrow.

Joseph’s life might easily have been labeled a sustained tragedy, except for one fact: “It was not you [brothers] who sent me here, but God” (45:8). Fortified with that knowledge, Joseph could face each new day with expectation instead of exasperation. Is that your attitude? Take a recent “accident” you or a loved one may have suffered, and acknowledge before God that you know He will use it as a stretching, maturing incident in His sovereign plan for you.

INSIGHT *Famine and Flight—They Seem to Go Together* Three times in the Book of Genesis, God uses a famine to teach His children a lesson, and twice the nation of Egypt is involved. Who was affected by each famine? Where did they go to avoid it?

A life watered by the tears of tragedy and suffering often becomes the most fertile soil for spiritual growth.

	Who?	Went Where?
12:10	_____	_____
26:1–2, 6	_____	_____
41:54–42:3	_____	_____

Final Days of Jacob and Joseph

Key Passage: Genesis 50

CHAPTER 48	CHAPTER 49	CHAPTER 50	
Jacob Blesses Joseph's Sons	Jacob Blesses His Own Sons	Death of Jacob	Death of Joseph
Jacob's Last Days		Joseph's Last Days	

OVERVIEW In contrast to his hectic early years, the last 17 years of Jacob's life in Egypt are peaceful ones. Prior to his death, he gives special blessing to the sons of Joseph. And on his deathbed, Jacob prophesies the destinies of his own sons and their descendants, specifying Judah as the next link in the Messianic line of promise (49:10). The embalmed remains of Jacob are buried, in accordance with his wishes, at Machpelah. Genesis closes with the death of Joseph who charges, in faith, that his bones be returned to the land of promise when God sees fit once again to visit His chosen people.

YOUR DAILY WALK "I know what you are going to say. You are going to tell me I must forgive him. Well, I just don't think I can."

Words can't do justice to the pain experienced by one who has been betrayed. But the blow that does the greatest damage is one that comes from a brother. It's so unfair. Worse yet, it's unchristian. Still it happens. And you need to be able to cope with it and emerge stronger because of it.

*Bitterness
hurts us
more than
the person
we're bitter
toward.*

How many Christians do you know who are poisoned by bitterness? Are you one of them? Take a careful look at Joseph and his experiences. Injustice? Repeatedly. Opportunity for revenge? Certainly. Bitterness? None. Why? Because Joseph was convinced that God's hand directed his life. He had an inner assurance that God would bring good out of his circumstances—if he remained faithful and patient.

Genesis 50:20 is the key to turning bitterness into blessing in your own walk with God. Don't end your devotional time today until you, like Joseph, can say from the heart, "God intended it for good." If there is someone you are harboring bitterness against, don't let the sun go down before you have asked for forgiveness.

INSIGHT *The First Shall Be Last*

Though Joseph occupies the place of prominence in the latter chapters of Genesis, the prophecy of 49:10 is a reminder that the tribe of Judah (not Joseph) stands in the Messianic line.

Exodus

As Genesis closes, the Jews are living in the favor of the Pharaoh of Egypt. But following the death of Joseph, "A new king, who did not know about Joseph, came to power in Egypt" (Exodus 1:8), and the nation of Israel becomes a nation of slaves. Exodus is the story of their deliverance. In the first half (chapters 1–18), God calls Moses to declare judgment upon Pharaoh and to lead Israel's long trek to the promised land. In chapters 19–40, God educates His people in the responsibilities of holy living.

FOCUS	SLAVERY				SOJOURN				SACRAMENT															
DIVISIONS	Israel's Bondage	Moses' Credentials	First Nine Plagues	Tenth Plague	Red Sea Crossing	Israel's Complaints	God's Ten Commands	Ceremonial Laws	Tabernacle Blueprint	Priestly Instructions	Golden Calf	Tabernacle Finished												
	1	2	3	6	7	10	11	12	13	15	16	18	19	20	21	24	25	27	28	31	32	34	35	40
TOPICS	Crying				Complaining				Consecrating															
	Release				Revelation																			
PLACE	In Egypt				Out of Egypt				At Sinai															
TIME	About 430 Years				About One Year																			

Israel's Bondage and Moses' Birth

Key Passage: Exodus 1:8–2:10

CHAPTER 1		CHAPTER 2	
Israel's Growth in Egypt	Israel's Groaning in Egypt	Moses' Birth in Egypt	Moses' Training in Midian
Egypt the Oppressor		Moses the Deliverer	

OVERVIEW As Jacob's descendants continue to multiply and prosper in Goshen, they pose a growing threat to the new Egyptian ruler. His plan to kill all the newborn Hebrew boys is thwarted by the courageous midwives, and the child Moses is saved. Destined to become the deliverer of God's people, Moses enjoys the finest education in Pharaoh's court. But when he seeks to deliver Israel in his own time and way, Moses finds himself fleeing for his life to the desert of Midian. There he spends the next 40 years tending sheep and awaiting God's instructions for freeing His people.

YOUR DAILY WALK Where are you currently enrolled in God's "School of Patience"? Put a check mark next to the classroom where you are learning the most right now about bearing up under difficult circumstances:

- ___ Home
- ___ School
- ___ Work
- ___ Church
- ___ Marriage
- ___ Health

Patience is a virtue that carries a lot of wait!

Moses learned patience in the desert as he tended sheep. Unknown to him, God was using those years as part of a tailor-made program to prepare Moses for shepherding a much larger flock—the emerging nation of Israel. Only when Moses was truly ready did God appear to him in the burning bush and send him back to Egypt.

God's patience-building process may seem slow to you; but remember, your response is all-important. How fast are you learning the lessons you need to master in order to be ready for greater service when He calls? Complete this prayer: "Dear Lord, because I know You want to use me in a significant way, please help me to learn the lesson in patience You have set before me today as I _____."

INSIGHT A Deadly Plot to Destroy God's People
Pharaoh's plot to kill all newborn Hebrew males not only would have curtailed the rapid growth of the Israelites, but would have later encouraged intermarriage between Hebrew women and Egyptian men, thereby causing the people of Israel to lose their national identity.

Moses' Call and Credentials

Key Passage: Exodus 3; 5:1–6:13

CHAPTER 3		CHAPTER 4	CHAPTER 5	CHAPTER 6
Moses' Call 1	Moses' Commission 8 9	Moses' Companion 22	Moses' Confrontation with Pharaoh with God	
God's Man for Deliverance			God's Plan for Deliverance	

OVERVIEW With his long period of desert exile drawing to a close, Moses receives God's call to lead the people out of bondage. When confronted by God in the burning bush, Moses is far from convinced he is the right man for the job. But once his objections have been answered, Moses goes to confront Pharaoh, armed with supernatural signs. True to God's prediction, Pharaoh not only refuses to let the people go, but increases their labors as well. As the people react with anger, God responds with assurance that His nation will indeed be redeemed.

YOUR DAILY WALK Put yourself in Moses' sandals. You have been sent by God to deliver a people who have groaned under the burden of slavery for centuries. Upon your arrival, you encounter their oppressor, Pharaoh, and deliver the message God gave you. But instead of making things better, you only make them worse! You watch helplessly as Pharaoh increases the burden on your countrymen. What is your response?

Probably you'd do the same as Moses did: cry out to God in frustration. Perhaps you have been in Moses' sandals before, if you experienced the failure of a project you attempted for God. If so, God's fresh revelation of Himself—who He is, what He has done in the past, and what He promises to do in the future—should be as much of an encouragement to you as it was to Moses. God's promises are grounded in God's character. That's all Moses needed to know.

The same never-changing God who sustained a discouraged shepherd can do the same for you in difficult times. Search the Internet for some faith-building missionary stories or listen to some praise music composed by those who learned firsthand that God is faithful. Their God is your God—and He never changes!

*It is God's
resounding
"I AM" that
drowns out
our weak
"I can't."*

INSIGHT **Take Away the Stubble and You've Got Trouble**
Bricks made with straw are very strong, because chemicals released by the decomposing straw make the clay more pliable and homogeneous.

First Nine Plagues in Egypt

Key Passage: Exodus 7

CH. 7	CHAPTER 8				CHAPTER 9				CHAPTER 10	
	Nine Good Reasons to "Let My People Go"									
Blood	Frogs	Lice	Flies	Cattle	Boils	Hail	Locusts	Darkness		
	1	15 16	19 20	32 1	7 8	12 13	35 1	20 21	29	
The gods of Egypt vs. the God of Israel										

OVERVIEW When a person will not obey God willingly, God will often bring to bear circumstances that force him to obey God unwillingly. Such is the case with the reluctant Pharaoh of Egypt. God sends a series of nine national calamities involving insects, disease, and the forces of nature in order to impress His power and identity upon Pharaoh. Rebelliously, Pharaoh repeatedly refuses to honor his promises to release the people. The stage is set for the tenth and climactic plague.

YOUR DAILY WALK Darkness and hail, locusts and flies, frogs and blood—what possible connection could there be between these plagues? Did God have a reason for selecting those particular calamities? Why didn't He use high taxes, air pollution, inflation, "chariot recalls"—you know, the kinds of things we wrestle with today?

The key is found in 12:12: "I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt." Every plague represented an attack on an object of worship in Egypt: the Nile River, the sun god Re, the frog-goddess Haqt, the fly-god Uatchit, the protector-god Seth (who supposedly kept away locusts), the Pharaoh himself. The Egyptians had forsaken the Creator and in His place substituted the creation. So God used 10 "visual aids" to turn their eyes (and their worship) back to Him.

That raises a question: If God brought 10 plagues upon objects of worship in our land today, what might He use? Is there any evidence that He is doing precisely that? If so, what should our response be in the light of Pharaoh's sad experience?

Those who say "No!" to God should not be surprised when the locusts come calling.

INSIGHT *If You Thought Yesterday's Plague Was Bad . . .* Each succeeding plague was more intense and severe than its predecessor. The first four plagues produced only discomfort. The fifth brought death to the cattle; the sixth produced physical pain; the seventh and eighth brought economic chaos; the ninth induced mental and emotional panic; and the tenth brought death to every Egyptian household.

Tenth Plague, Passover, and Exodus

Key Passage: Exodus 12:1–28

CHAPTER 11		CHAPTER 12		
Final Plague	1	First Passover	28 29	Firstborn Destroyed
				36 37
				Final Goodbye
				51
"Go, worship the Lord as you have requested" (12:31).				

OVERVIEW Nine devastating plagues, and still Pharaoh will not budge. But the tenth and last plague, the slaying of the firstborn (both of man and animal) in every Egyptian household brings about the long-awaited deliverance of Israel. To escape the terrible judgment on the firstborn male, each Israelite household observes the Passover by substituting the death of a lamb for the death of a person. With no further resistance from Pharaoh, all Israel begins its exodus from Egypt.

YOUR DAILY WALK Death is never pleasant. Multiple deaths are considered disasters. So imagine the national impact when at least one member of each family in Egypt died overnight. But it was all necessary to prove to a stubborn Pharaoh that there is one true God. Deliverance for the Israelites came through faith in the blood applied to their doorposts.

Centuries later, Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, gave His life to free humanity from bondage to sin. The question remains: Has His blood been applied to the doorposts of your heart? If so, thank God again for the suffering Jesus endured for you. If not, what better time than right now to pray: "Jesus, thank You for Your death on the cross. I receive You as my Redeemer from sin and as my Passover Lamb."

INSIGHT Christ, Our Passover Lamb

Notice how the details of the Passover parallel the events surrounding the death of Christ.

The blood of Christ is the seal of the promise.

PASSOVER	CHRIST
The sacrifice must be a lamb (Exodus 12:5).	Christ was the Lamb of God (1 Corinthians 5:7).
The lamb must be without spot or blemish (Exodus 12:5).	Christ was without spot or blemish (1 Peter 1:18–19).
The lamb must be in the prime of life when offered (Exodus 12:5).	Christ was in the prime of His manhood when He died (John 8:57).
Lamb's blood was shed that Israel might have life (Exodus 12:23).	Christ's blood was shed that the world might have life (John 3:16).

Crossing the Red Sea

Key Passage: Exodus 13:17–14:31

CHAPTER 13	CHAPTER 14	CHAPTER 15
A Pillar of Cloud and Fire	A Path Through the Red Sea	A Psalm of Moses
Provision	Protection	Praise

OVERVIEW Delivering the people from Egyptian bondage is only the first step in God’s plan to bring the Israelites to the promised land of Canaan. Many obstacles lie ahead. Pharaoh, whose heart is again hardened, sends his armies in pursuit of Moses and the people. Trapped between the Red Sea and the rapidly approaching chariots of Egypt, the people cry out in desperation—and God answers in a miraculous fashion. The Red Sea parts, the nation crosses over on dry ground, and shouts of panic turn to songs of praise as the Egyptian army disappears in a watery grave.

*I need never
distrust
my God
for cloth or
bread while
the lilies
flourish and
the ravens
are fed.*

YOUR DAILY WALK Little children don’t always know what’s best for them. If you don’t believe that, just turn a child loose in an unfenced yard near a busy intersection or leave your medicine cabinet unlocked. No, children don’t have the wisdom of adults. That’s why God provides parents: to help children survive to adulthood.

When the Israelites left Egypt, they were like a large band of children, not knowing what was best for them. But, like a loving father, God provided guidance, protection, food, water, and instruction to teach them how to enjoy a “grown-up” relationship with Him. Patiently and thoroughly God showed them what it meant to rely on Him in every facet of life, to depend upon His daily provision.

Has God placed you in a wilderness situation? Remember, you are there to learn a lesson in trusting God. Attach a safety pin to your lapel or collar today as a reminder of your dependence upon the Father. (It might even give you an opportunity to witness!)

INSIGHT *What Color Is the Red Sea?*

The Red Sea is a narrow body of water that stretches in a southeasterly direction from Suez to the Gulf of Aden for about 1,300 miles. Surprisingly enough, the Red Sea is usually bright turquoise in color. However, algae grow in the water periodically. When they die, the sea becomes reddish-brown, thus giving it the name Red Sea.

Israel's Journey to Mount Sinai

Key Passage: Exodus 16:1–17:7

CHAPTER 16	CHAPTER 17		CHAPTER 18
Hunger in the Wilderness	Thirst in Rephidim	Victory Over Amalek	Victory Over Exhaustion
1	7; 8	16	
Grumbling		Fighting	Delegating

OVERVIEW When Israel left Egypt, there were two things the people could do well: make bricks and complain. They now develop the latter ability to a fine art. As supplies decrease, complaints increase. When their resources run out, God supplies manna, quail, and water in abundance to demonstrate that He is now their reliable source of supply. Israel fights (and wins) its first military battle. And Moses, following the advice of his father-in-law, delegates some of his responsibilities to 70 capable assistants.

YOUR DAILY WALK Start with a basic, two-door car loaded with luggage. Add a father, mother, and three children under the age of 10. Aim the car at a destination 500 miles down the road. After 350 miles have passed, examine the scene. What shape is the “traveling circus” in now?

Magnify that basic situation 600,000 times over, move it back some 3,500 years, and you begin to understand Moses’ predicament in Exodus 16. The thrill of freedom and the excitement of the exodus were soon erased by the discomforts of travel. Gratitude gave way to grumbling during the long desert trek.

Are you inclined to complain when things don’t go as you think they should? Moses’ words to Israel are timeless: “You are not grumbling against us, but against the LORD” (16:8).

One of the best indicators of your love for God is a contented spirit that expresses itself in thanksgiving. Write a thank-you note to God for some of the blessings you may take for granted: health, peace, family, friends, employment, personal freedoms. Then mail it to yourself. In a day or two, you’ll be twice blessed to read it again.

Complaining is the art of collecting petty annoyances.

INSIGHT *What’s on the Menu?*

Though God faithfully provided manna for 40 years, it should not be assumed that manna was the sum total of Israel’s diet. They took numerous herds and flocks out of Egypt (12:38; 17:3), and they were able to buy other food and water along the way (Deuteronomy 2:6–7).

Receiving the Ten Commandments

Key Passage: Exodus 20:1–17

CHAPTER 19				CHAPTER 20			
Cleansing the People		Cautioning the People		Commanding the People		Comforting the People	
1	15	16	25	1	17	18	26
Thunder Clouds				Ten Commandments			

OVERVIEW For the first time in four centuries, the Israelites are free to worship and walk with their holy God. But how do they approach God? What are His righteous demands? At Mount Sinai, Moses prepares the people to receive the Commandments, a body of law which they promise to obey—even before it is delivered! After two days of purification, the nation witnesses an awesome display of God's majesty as He descends in a thick cloud to deliver the Ten Commandments, the broad moral principles that will guide the new nation and set it apart from its pagan neighbors.

YOUR DAILY WALK What is missing in the following story?

A brain surgeon is at home planting a garden when he receives word that an emergency case needs his immediate attention. He jumps in his car, drives to the hospital, strides into the operating room, and immediately begins to operate.

Two items are clearly missing: (1) the all-important step of scrubbing up before the surgery, and (2) the name of a good lawyer to handle the almost certain malpractice suit.

Just as a doctor must scrub up before surgery, so must the Christian “scrub up” before entering the presence of a holy God in worship and prayer. The Israelites participated in symbolic acts of cleansing (19:10) in preparation for God’s descent on Mount Sinai. The same God who desired purity from the Israelites requires pure hearts from those who approach Him today (Psalm 66:18; 1 John 1:9).

Is any unconfessed sin soiling your relationship with God and keeping you from close fellowship with Him? Talk to Him about that right now. Then put a small bar of soap by your Bible to remind you of the importance of scrubbing up regularly in your walk with God.

If God had wanted a permissive society, He would have given us the Ten Suggestions.

INSIGHT *When It Comes to God’s Law, Take It Personally!*

Though the law was designed to govern the conduct of a nation, Exodus 20 uses *you* (singular) showing that the character of a nation depends upon the proper conduct of its citizens.

Israel's Civil and Ceremonial Laws

Key Passage: Exodus 24

CHAPTER 21	CHAPTER 22	CHAPTER 23	CHAPTER 24
Law of Relationships	Law of Restitution	Law of Priests and Feasts	Law on Tablets of Stone
Civil		Ceremonial	Certain

OVERVIEW At Mount Sinai God delivers to Israel's leader not just the Ten Commandments, but also an extensive body of civil and ceremonial laws designed to regulate all aspects of Israel's life. The section you will read today contains the civil and social regulations that comprise "the Book of the Covenant" (24:7). Levites and priests, offerings and feasts, services and sacrifices—all are dealt with in meticulous detail. After receiving assurances from the people, "We will do everything the LORD has said; we will obey" (24:7), Moses returns to the mountain, where for 40 more days he receives additional instructions from the Lord.

YOUR DAILY WALK What does the Bible have to say about television? How about Sunday football? Where would you turn in your Bible to find day-care centers discussed? Or movies? Or smoking? Or rock music? Or recreation vehicles? Or where to move?

If you go to your Bible expecting a detailed answer for every situation you encounter today, you will come away disappointed and discouraged. Even the seemingly exhaustive regulations of chapters 20–23 leave as much unsaid as they say. But where God has seen fit not to provide particulars (either in Moses' day or in ours), He has supplied principles that help us to determine His mind in every situation. His Word, though ancient, is always relevant!

Prove it to yourself. Build on the list of today's activities from today's opening paragraph of "Your Daily Walk." Can you suggest a principle from your reading of chapters 20–23 that will help you determine your level of participation in each of those activities? (Caution: Sunday football might be addressed more than once!)

*Expedients
are for
the hour;
principles,
for the ages.*

INSIGHT The Mosaic Law, Expanded Version

In Exodus 20:1–17 God gives the law in summary fashion, and in 20:22–23:19 He provides a detailed amplification. In the first section, God lays down broad moral principles; in the second, He gives specific applications of those principles to everyday life.

Blueprint for the Tabernacle

Key Passage: Exodus 26

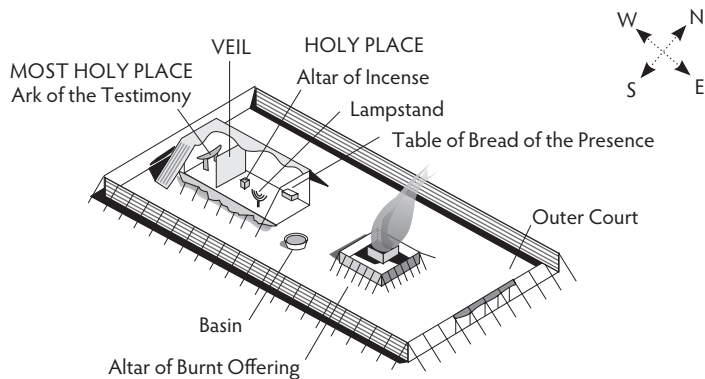
CHAPTER 25	CHAPTER 26	CHAPTER 27
	Blueprint for the Tabernacle . . .	
Furnishings	Coverings	Courtyard
Pattern of Worship	Place of Worship	

OVERVIEW What exactly was it that took Moses 40 days to write down while on Mount Sinai? As you read today’s section (and the chapters that follow), you will discover the answer. Moses is receiving from God the detailed blueprint for the “church in the wilderness”—the tabernacle which would be Israel’s place of worship. In minute detail Moses learns about the furnishings, coverings, curtains, and courtyard. Everything is to be built “according to the plan shown you on the mountain” (26:30). The description moves from the inside out, reflecting not the perspective of man looking in, but of God looking out. True religion originates with a holy God.

YOUR DAILY WALK Put down this devotional guide. Close your eyes. Visualize the living room in your house, and make a mental list of every piece of furniture and decorative item in it. Now can you do the same with the furniture in the tabernacle? (Hint: There are four pieces inside and two outside.) Can you recall the function of each? More important, can you identify one picture that each piece suggests regarding the person and work of Jesus Christ, who came to “tabernacle” with men and women forever? (If you have time, reading Hebrews 8–10 will make the tabernacle unforgettable!)

Life ought not merely to contain acts of worship; it should be an act of worship.

INSIGHT Arrangement of the Tabernacle



Instructions for the Priests

Key Passage: Exodus 28

CHAPTER 28	CHAPTER 29	CHAPTER 30	CHAPTER 31
Priestly Clothing	Priestly Consecration	Priestly Conduct	Tabernacle Craftsmen
Preparation for the Minister		Preparation for the Ministry	

OVERVIEW After describing the place of worship (the tabernacle), Moses goes on to detail the people of worship (the priests, Israel's representatives before God). Everything about them is special, from the clothing they wear to the elaborate rituals they perform in leading the worship of the nation. Both they and the implements of worship they use require special purification, as befitting those in the service of a holy God. Even the builders who are selected to follow the divine blueprint for the tabernacle are hand-picked by God for their skill and Spirit-filled craftsmanship.

YOUR DAILY WALK Apart from the symbolism found in the tabernacle, its foremost significance was this: The tabernacle represented God come to dwell among men and women, the beacon of God's presence among His people. In addition, the priest's role was to act as a go-between, a bridge-builder, someone who could stand on behalf of sinful humanity before a holy God.

In the New Testament there is a beautiful blending of these two themes. Where does God dwell today? He continues to dwell among people. How has He seen fit to do this? By indwelling those who have turned their lives over to Him (1 Corinthians 6:19). And whom has He called to be priests today, bringing sinful people back to their holy God? The very ones He indwells (1 Peter 2:9). You are both the tabernacle God indwells and the priest God empowers to call men and women back to Himself.

If God were to give you the privilege of building a "gospel bridge" into someone's life today, would you be willing?

INSIGHT *And Don't Forget the Sabbath Day*

The commandment concerning the Sabbath had already been given in the Law. Yet this fourth commandment is mentioned again in conjunction with instructions for the workmen (31:12–17). God had commissioned the people to a sacred work. How easy it would have been for them to imagine that in doing this work they might dispense with the Sabbath observance. God's work must be done in His way.

Does God seem far away? Guess who moved.

Israel's Idolatry and Moses' Intercession

Key Passage: Exodus 32

CHAPTER 32	CHAPTER 33	CHAPTER 34
Worshiping the Golden Calf	Moving the Tabernacle	Renewing the Ten Commandments
Idolatry and Intercession		Recommitment and Renewal

OVERVIEW While Moses receives God's laws on the mountain, the Israelites are busy on the plains below. Concluding that their leader has died in the presence of God, they fashion their gold jewelry into a replica of an Egyptian god and turn the camp into a grotesque pagan party. Moses returns and in righteous anger shatters the two stone tablets, destroys the golden calf, and orders the Levites to purge the camp of the guilty Israelites. But though the newly adopted covenant between God and His people has been shattered (as illustrated in the two broken tablets), repentance and restoration are only a prayer away.

YOUR DAILY WALK Could it be the golden calf episode (chapter 32) is also a 15th-century B.C. parable of a 21st-century A.D. phenomenon?

With assurances of the nation's obedience and love (24:7), Moses left to be with God on the mountain. Almost as soon as he left, false worship and gross wickedness replaced the flimsy promises that the people had made. Though their lips vowed allegiance, their hearts were far from God. And as soon as their leader departed, the people's true character emerged.

In the same way, the church's Leader has gone to be with God for a time, leaving His church behind to carry out His commands. But worldliness, sin, idolatry, and preoccupation have dimmed His final words to "go . . . preach the good news" (Mark 16:15). Prayerfully ask the Lord to show you any idolatry in your life.

INSIGHT *Reflecting God to the Nation (34:29–35)*

Moses remained on Mount Sinai 40 days longer (34:28), receiving additional instructions from the Lord, and again God carved the Ten Commandments onto tablets of stone. When Moses returned to the camp, it was impossible for him to conceal the fact that he had been in the presence of the Lord. His face made that clear. Today your task is the same: to reflect the glory of Jesus Christ to others around you.

*If your face
reflected
your God,
what would
you see
when you
looked in
the mirror?*

Tabernacle Erected and Occupied by God

Key Passage: Exodus 36, 40

CHAPTER 35	CHS. 36–38	CHAPTER 39	CHAPTER 40	
Contributions by the People	Construction by the Craftsmen	Consecration by Moses	Finishing the Tabernacle ¹	Filling the Tabernacle ^{33 34 38}
Tabernacle Organized			Tabernacle Occupied	

OVERVIEW The Book of Exodus closes with the record of how the tabernacle and priestly garments are completed exactly as God instructed. The people donate the materials and the chosen artisans do the work. Moses inspects the finished product, the furnishings are set in place, and Aaron and his sons are anointed for God's service. Finally, God declares His satisfaction by filling the tent with His glory. For the next 480 years, the tabernacle will remain the focal point of the nation's worship.

YOUR DAILY WALK Today you will complete your first month of this year's journey through the Bible. But today's reading will require extra discipline. You have already read much of this material before—in chapters 25–28. There Moses set forth the plan for constructing the tabernacle. Now in chapters 36–39 you'll study the execution of that plan as Moses' instructions are carried out to the letter, making the tabernacle a reality.

But don't miss the point. The requirement was 100 percent compliance. It's like baking a cake. Follow the recipe and you get a delicious dessert; omit some ingredients or instructions, and you get a culinary catastrophe. When it comes to holiness or obedience, half-way measures will not do. You are not to love the Lord with most of your heart or a portion of your soul.

As you carefully read through these last chapters of Exodus, ask God to reveal any areas in your life where you have become half-hearted or sloppy. The ongoing construction of your life as God's temple demands no less care than the building of Israel's tabernacle, if your life is to radiate His glory and bear witness of His name to the community around you.

Revival is nothing more, or less, than a fresh commitment to obey God.

INSIGHT *What Do You Do with Too Much Gold?*

In view of the fact that the weight of the precious metals used in building the tabernacle ran into the tons (38:24–29), it is an even greater marvel that the budget for this building project was exceeded by the donations (36:3–7).

TAKE THE First Step

Congratulations! You've started the new year the right way by beginning a journey through the Bible with this devotional guide.

But every walk demands a first step. Have you taken the crucial first step in the Christian life . . . the step of faith unto salvation? Unless you take that step, your so-called relationship with God will meander aimlessly, and your path will lead only to frustration and defeat. But take this mandatory step, and your walk with Jesus will be vibrant and fulfilling—for all eternity.

Consider these stepping stones on the salvation path:

1 All people are sinners.
"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

2 The penalty for sin is death.
"For the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23).

3 Deliverance from eternal death—salvation—comes by personal trust in God's Son, Jesus.

"By grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8).

Jesus paid the price on the cross for all of your sins so that you might have eternal life. By believing in His death, burial, and resurrection on your behalf, you enter into an eternal relationship with God. "God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

Free salvation awaits you!

*If you want to speak
to someone about a
relationship with Jesus,
call 1-888-NeedHim.*