

# daily walk

*Getting God's Word into Your Heart*

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WALK THRU THE BIBLE

GENESIS &  
EXODUS  
*In the Beginning God*

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## What People Are Saying . . . Testimonials:

"When I read the Psalms, I'm confronted with my need to be honest with God when times are tough and I have a negative outlook on what's going on in my life. That's what David was—he was honest." —*Brian*

"When I read the Psalms, I see real people wrestling with real life in a really honest way and God lets them and honors that." —*Chris*

"Two things come to mind about the Psalms. Because it's sometimes difficult for me to express emotions, when I read and pray through the Psalms, I have a way to get on an emotional level with my heavenly Father. Also, I love identifying with what the Psalms reveal about God's love and His character." —*Paula*

"I love to read the Psalms because they encourage me and give me wisdom and practical knowledge I wouldn't otherwise have." —*Maggie*

## How to Use Daily Walk Instructions:

**W**ith this devotional guide, you can read through the **entire Bible in one year**. Read the daily Scripture portion in one sitting or divide it to start and end your day with God's Word. If pressed for time, read the "Key Passage" for the main theme.

Overviews, charts, insights, and special features will help you grasp what God's Word is saying to you. Personal applications will enable you to draw on His truth when you need it.

So why not get started right now on your journey through God's Word? Keep track of what you read by checking the box beside the Scripture reference on each page.

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# GENESIS

**G**enesis begins "In the beginning . . ." Its fifty chapters sketch human history from Creation to Babel (chapters 1–11) and from Abraham to Joseph (chapters 12–50). The first eleven chapters introduce the Creator God and the beginning of life, sin, judgment, family, worship, and salvation. The remainder of the book focuses on the lives of the four patriarchs of the faith—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph—from whom will come the nation Israel . . . and ultimately the Savior, Jesus Christ.

FOCUS	FOUR GREAT EVENTS				FOUR GREAT PEOPLE					
DIVISIONS	Creation	Fall	Flood	Nations	Abraham	Isaac	Jacob	Joseph		
	1	2   3	5   6	9   10	11	12	24   25	26   27	36   37	50
TOPICS	Primeval History				Patriarchal History					
	Beginning of the Human Race				Beginning of the Hebrew Family					
PLACE	East (Eden to Ur)				West (Canaan to Egypt)					
TIME	Over 2,000 Years (20% of Genesis)				About 350 Years (80% of Genesis)					

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# “In the Beginning . . .”

*Key Passage: Genesis 2:4-25*

CHAPTER 1	CHAPTER 2
Six Days of Creation Summarized	Sixth Day of Creation Scrutinized
Chronological	Topical

**OVERVIEW** Genesis opens with two accounts of creation. The first (1:1-2:3) describes the events chronologically; the second (2:4-25) considers the events topically, in order to focus on one aspect of creation. The first provides a wide-angle view of the creation of the universe; the second takes a zoom-lens look at man and woman, the climax of creation—for they are the ones who will bear God’s image and enjoy His fellowship in the garden prepared especially for them.

### YOUR DAILY WALK

- What’s the longest book you ever read?
- What’s the greatest distance you ever walked?
- What’s the biggest meal you ever ate?
- And what could those three curious questions possibly have in common?

In case you haven’t guessed, they are all examples of big projects completed in small stages. You read that book one page at a time, covered that distance one step at a time, ate that meal one bite at a time. One page, one step, one bite might not seem like much when compared to the whole, but each brings you closer to your goal.

This year with the help of this devotional guide, you’ll be fulfilling what for many people has been a lifelong dream: to read through the Bible—all 1,189 chapters of it! Like thousands of others, you’ll discover you can reach your goal—one day at a time. Are you ready to launch this exciting expedition? It starts with the first words of Genesis: “In the beginning God created . . .”

### INSIGHT THE DAYS OF CREATION

If the days of creation are arranged in two columns of three days each, you’ll discover an interesting fact!

*Happy is he who makes daily progress and who considers not what he did yesterday but what advance he can make today.*

# From Paradise to Pain

*Key Passage: Genesis 3*

CHAPTER 3	CHAPTER 4	CHAPTER 5
The First Sin	The First Murder	The First Family Tree
Adam and Eve	Cain and Abel	Seth

**OVERVIEW** What began as Paradise is soon spoiled by sin. Satan, disguised as a serpent, tempts the woman by turning her gaze from God’s bountiful provision (the many trees) to God’s one prohibition (the single tree of the knowledge of good and evil). Adam and Eve’s disobedience results in their expulsion from the garden. The seeds of their sin quickly grow as the first son (Cain) commits the first murder. For generation after generation the sinful spiral continues, setting the stage for God’s judgment.

**YOUR DAILY WALK** Satan is a master at taking the blessings of God and twisting them into something that brings a curse instead. If given the chance, he’ll convince you to seek the blessings of marriage outside the bonds of marriage, to exchange the worship of the Creator for worship of the creation, to substitute what is convenient for what is obedient. The temptation will be cunning; the promise, inviting. But as Adam and Eve discovered, the painful consequences far outweigh the temporary pleasures.

For many Christians, resisting temptation is difficult because they don’t want to discourage it completely. God has promised to provide an avenue of escape (1 Corinthians 10:13)—but that doesn’t help if you keep leaving a forwarding address! Write the references of James 4:7 and 2 Timothy 2:22 in the margin of your Bible next to Genesis 3. Look them up; read them twice; take them to heart!

### INSIGHT CATALOGING A CURSE

Chapter 3 introduces more than the beginning of sin. There you’ll also find some of its consequences: crabgrass, labor pains, slithering snakes, and perspiration! After reading chapter 3, try to summarize each part of the curse as it relates to . . .

- the serpent (3:14);
- Satan (3:15);
- the woman (3:16);
- the man (3:17-19).

*Satan, like a fisherman, baits his hook according to the appetite of the fish.*

# Noah's Ark and God's Judgment

*Key Passage: Genesis 6*

CHAPTER 6	CHAPTER 7	CHAPTER 8	CHAPTER 9
Mankind's Corruption	God's Condemnation Executed	Ended	God's Covenant
Building the Ark	Riding in the Ark		Rainbow in the Sky

**OVERVIEW** As the generations begin to multiply on the face of the earth, the world's population greatly increases—and so does the world's wickedness (6:5). At last, God prepares to destroy mankind with a judgment of water. But one man and his family receive God's commendation, while the rest of humanity face God's condemnation. Noah obediently undertakes a century-long shipbuilding project in preparation for saving his believing family. As the floodwaters rise, Noah's eight-member family rides high in God's loving protection.

**YOUR DAILY WALK** When a man repeats a promise over and over, you can be pretty sure that he must have a problem keeping it. When God repeats a promise over and over, you can be absolutely sure that He will keep it!

Is God trustworthy? The ancient shipbuilder named Noah must have wrestled with this question, for his very life and the lives of his family were totally bound up in the promises of God. Spend a few minutes evaluating God's "scorecard" on how well He kept His promises to Noah.

- "I will send rain on the earth" (7:4). Yes or No?
- "I will wipe mankind . . . from the . . . earth" (6:7). Yes or No?
- "Never again will I curse the ground" (8:21). Yes or No?
- "I will remember my covenant" (9:15). Yes or No?

The rainbow in the sky (9:12-16) is God's eternal reminder that He will never repeat the watery horror of Noah's day. Keep an eye out today for rainbows in photographs and drawings—or even real ones! Let each one remind you (as it did Noah) that when you're resting on a promise from God, you need not worry how deep the water gets!

**INSIGHT** WATER EVERYWHERE . . . AND VERY LITTLE ELSE! Three times in the space of three verses (7:18-20) it is said, "The waters rose." God made it clear that this was no ordinary flood, and that His promise that "I will wipe from the face of the earth every living creature I have made" (7:4) was no idle threat.

*God may not promise a comfortable journey, but He does guarantee a safe landing.*

*The best way to put an idea across is to wrap it up in a person.*

# Building Confusion

*Key Passage: Genesis 11:1-9, 27-32*

CHAPTER 10			CHAPTER 11	
Japheth	Table of Nations Ham	Shem	God's Judgment	Tower of Babel Shem's Genealogy
Origin of the Nations			Dispersion of the Nations	

**OVERVIEW** Starting with Noah and his three sons, God begins to repopulate the world. But since the root of sin has not been removed, the fruit of sin soon becomes apparent again in proud, disobedient actions. As Noah's descendants seek to build "a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens" (11:4), God halts the project by confusing their speech, causing them to disperse over the face of the earth, precisely as God had originally commanded (9:1).

**YOUR DAILY WALK** Even on TV the sight is impressive. Delegates from around the world meet in the General Assembly of the United Nations to discuss world problems and seek solutions to international tensions. Most wear headsets—an eloquent reminder of the barriers that divide humanity—as they labor to make the nations united in more than name alone.

Centuries ago, mankind rebelled against God. The result was confusion. Genesis 11 paints a pathetic picture of disoriented people separating from one another in distrust and bewilderment.

And yet, that scene is not so far removed from today's world. The Babel of antiquity foreshadows the babble of today. Languages still divide; people are still perplexed. And God's solution for humanity's chaos is still the same: divine truth communicated through individuals who have experienced that truth. It's a message that is timeless: the good news of sins forgiven in Jesus Christ. No doubt you've shared this with someone in your own language. But have you ever shared it with someone who speaks a different language? Your local Christian bookstore should be a good source of gospel tracts and Scripture portions in other languages. Today would be a great day to look for someone who needs to know that God speaks his or her language as well.

**INSIGHT** LOOKING DOWN FROM ABOVE The Babel-builders were proud of the mighty tower they thought reached up to heaven (11:4). But from God's viewpoint, He had to stoop down to view their puny pinnacle far below!

# Abram's Call and God's Promises

*Key Passage: Genesis 12:1-9; 13:14-18*

CHAPTER 12		CHAPTER 13	CHAPTER 14
Abram in Ur	Abram in Egypt	Abram in Canaan	Lot in Danger
Calling	Compromising	Choosing	Conquering

**OVERVIEW** Having dealt with rebellious mankind for generations, God now begins to unfold His great plan of redemption—a plan beginning with one man, Abram. God calls Abram to leave his home in Ur of the Chaldees and travel to a distant, but unspecified, new land. Responding in faith, Abram obeys with nothing to cling to but the promises of God. The journey is not without its moments of danger and decision, as seen in the life of Lot. But through it all, Abram dares to believe God for the impossible, in spite of his childless condition.

**YOUR DAILY WALK** How long have you lived in your present home? If your answer is less than three years, you are typical. The average American family moves about once every three years.

Genesis 12:1-4 describes a similar “moving experience”—a God-fearing family obeying the voice of God, pulling up stakes in Ur, and heading for a new home more than a thousand miles away. Hebrews 11:8 explains why this was no ordinary move. “Abraham . . . obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going.” The command of God was clear, but the destination was not! That’s faith—the kind that pleases God (Hebrews 11:6) and the kind God wants you to exercise today as you face situations in which His will may be clear . . . but the way He wants you to accomplish it is not. Abraham found that you don’t always need to know where you’re going, provided you know whom you’re following.

Call a family council this evening to discuss a decision you are facing involving career, home, or finances—and the way Abram’s example can make the decision easier.

**INSIGHT** **THE LAND OF THE RED PURPLE** Canaan literally means “belonging to the land of the red purple.” The locals were well known for trading red-purple dyes that came from murex shells on the Mediterranean coast. The term used to describe the territory in later years, Palestine, is derived from Israel’s archenemies, the Philistines.

*The man who insists upon seeing with perfect clarity before he decides, never decides.*

# God's Covenant with Abram

*Key Passage: Genesis 15:1-6; 16:1-10; 17:1-8*

CHAPTER 15	CHAPTER 16	CHAPTER 17
Abram's Covenant of Faith	Abram's Child of Impatience	Abram's Covenant Confirmed
Promise	Presumption	Prescribed Rite

**OVERVIEW** It is one thing to walk with God; it is something else to run ahead of God. God’s promise to Abram of many descendants is amply repeated (12:2; 13:16; 15:4-5). But as the years pass with no evidence of fulfillment, Abram acts in foolish impatience. The result is a son, Ishmael, who becomes the heartbreak of his father and a constant reminder of the high price of unbelief. But God’s promise stands sure! Though biologically impossible, Abram and Sarai will yet give birth to a son—a promise confirmed by new names for the parents-to-be: Abraham (“father of a multitude”) and Sarah (“princess”).

**YOUR DAILY WALK** Hindsight may be a harsh teacher, but its clarity of vision is always 20/20. The book of Genesis does not seek to cover up the frailties of Abraham and Sarah but includes them right along with the moments of shining faith and obedience. Why? So that you might learn from their example, whether good or bad!

Here are two lessons hindsight can teach from Abraham’s life about the danger of running ahead of God: (1) Abraham’s God was too small. Abraham assumed that Sarah’s barrenness was a permanent obstacle to God’s promise, forgetting that “nothing is impossible with God” (Luke 1:37). (2) Abraham’s patience was too short. He was in a hurry. He decided to fulfill a promise that was God’s responsibility.

Write out one of God’s timeless promises to you and attach it to a clock you glance at regularly. This is a great way to remind yourself throughout the day that there’s no time like the present to take God at His Word!

**INSIGHT** **WHO GETS THE ESTATE?** In the ancient Middle East, the heir of a man’s property at his death was determined in this order: (1) the son of his first wife; (2) the son of another wife; (3) the son of a slave girl; (4) the ranking servant in his house. Using this guide, who would have received the estate in 15:2-3? In 16:1? In 16:15?

*Many a man has turned and left the dock just before his ship came in.*

# God’s Judgment on Sodom

*Key Passage: Genesis 18*

CHAPTER 18	CHAPTER 19	CHAPTER 20
Sodom’s Doom Declared	Sodom and Gomorrah Destroyed	Abraham’s Deceit Discovered
Saving Lot		Saving Sarah

**OVERVIEW** Three heavenly messengers arrive with both good news and bad news for Abraham’s family. The good news: Abraham and Sarah’s long-awaited dream is about to come true! They will soon experience the joys of parenthood. The bad news: Sodom and Gomorrah will soon experience the full fury of God’s judgment for their grievous sins. In response to Abraham’s intercession, God spares Lot’s family during Sodom’s destruction, though their grudging departure reflects their lukewarm spiritual condition.

**YOUR DAILY WALK** It didn’t happen this way, but it might as well have. One day a man sat down at his desk, pulled out a sheet of paper, and wrote across the top: “Goals for My Life.” Then he began to list the goals that would shape the direction of his life:

1. To live in a lawless, immoral environment
2. To forfeit all spiritual authority in my home
3. To exert no influence for good in my community
4. To lose everything and everyone dear to me

Ridiculous, you say? Then consider this: Lot made no such goals, yet he accomplished everything on that list. Those disastrous results were the natural consequences of his worldly choices.

Lot may not have had spiritual goals in his life, but you should. Written goals help prevent the kind of purposeless drift that set Lot up for disaster. What do you want to accomplish specifically this year in the area of Scripture memorization . . . time in God’s Word . . . reading good Christian books . . . sharing your faith? Write your goals down; hang them up; pray them through; and with God’s help, watch them happen!

**INSIGHT** WHERE ARE THEY TODAY?

From the offspring of Lot’s incest with his daughters (19:37–38) came the forerunners of the Moabites and Ammonites, who, though related to them, were the Israelite’s constant enemies. For their gross idolatry, both Moab (Amos 2:1–3) and Ammon (Ezekiel 25:1–7) would later be destroyed.

*We never see the target a man aims at in life; we see only the target he hits.*

# Isaac—God’s Promise in Flesh and Blood

*Key Passage: Genesis 21:1–22:19*

CHAPTER 21	CHAPTER 22	CHAPTER 23	CHAPTER 24
Birth of Isaac	Offering of Isaac	Death of Sarah	Marriage of Isaac
Isaac’s Childhood		Isaac’s Early Adulthood	

**OVERVIEW** Chapters 21–24 describe the birth and early years of Isaac, the long-awaited son God had promised to Abraham. After many years of learning to walk by faith, Abraham and Sarah experience the greatest joy of their lives: the miraculous birth of a son—an heir and the one through whom God would form a great nation! The stage is set for Abraham’s severest test—the command to sacrifice his treasured son as an offering to God. Drawing upon a faith in God that has grown with the years, Abraham offers Isaac to God, thereby learning another lesson in God’s faithfulness. Sarah, who has seen her son reach manhood, does not live to see his marriage.

**YOUR DAILY WALK** “There is no such thing as an accident, only incidents in the perfect will of God.” That’s not just a glib maxim. It was spoken by a father whose teenage daughter had just undergone brain surgery after a car and bus collision. He meant that both the type and the timing of “accidents” are under God’s wise control.

It is no coincidence that chapter 22 begins with these words: “And it came to pass after these things” (KJV). What things? The faith-stretching experiences of chapters 12–21. Only then did God put Abraham through the supreme test with Isaac.

Are you learning the lessons today that will help you handle the tests God has for you tomorrow? Think of one faith-stretching situation you are facing today. How might God use it to prepare you for tomorrow? Pause right now and ask Him to make you teachable in today’s little tests so you’ll be prepared for tomorrow’s big ones.

**INSIGHT** EPHRON’S GENEROSITY . . . OR WAS IT?

As a burial place for Sarah, Abraham purchased the cave of Machpelah at Hebron from Ephron, a Hittite (23:3–16). In Hittite law a property owner was subject to military duty. Abraham only wanted to buy the cave; Ephron urged him to take the whole field. In this way Ephron freed himself of his military obligation.

*The best measure of a spiritual life is not its ecstasies but its obedience.*

# Isaac's Family and Fortunes

*Key Passage: Genesis 25:19-34*

CHAPTER 25				CHAPTER 26				
1	Birth of Twins	28   29	Battle for a Birthright	34   1	Deception in Gerar	16   17	Dispute in Gerar	35
Isaac's Family				Isaac's Faith and Failures				

**OVERVIEW** Isaac's family, though presented only briefly in the book of Genesis, is immensely significant. Born to Isaac are twin sons who would later be the fathers of twin nations: Jacob (Israel) and Esau (Edom). Though Isaac lives longer than his father, Abraham, he nevertheless repeats some of his father's most memorable mistakes (26:6-16). In spite of his failures, Isaac hears the reassuring promise from God: "I . . . will confirm the oath I swore to your father Abraham" (26:3).

**YOUR DAILY WALK** List everything you know about the life of Isaac. Then compare your list with the following paragraph:

Isaac was Abraham's son, Rebekah's husband, and Jacob's father. He imitated his father and got tricked by his son. He dug a few wells and fathered a set of twins. In short, he generally did, without much fanfare, what God told him to do.

How would you like your epitaph to read: "He pretty much did what God told him to do"? There's not a lot of glamour in quiet faithfulness, but as far as God is concerned, it's more important than just about anything else. Maybe that's one reason Isaac gets equal billing with his father and son every time God identifies Himself as "the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

Has the Lord assigned you a supporting role that escapes the notice of the crowd? Not everyone can function without applause, but apparently God knows that by His grace you can. Thank God right now for the privilege of serving in the "Isaac Brigade." And ask Him for that same steadfastness of spirit that produced God's commendation for Isaac!

**INSIGHT** ABRAHAM'S LIFE—FILLED TO THE BRIM The original Hebrew text of Genesis 25:8 reads: "Then Abraham breathed his last and died at a good old age, an old man and full of years." When Abraham breathed his last, he was full not only of years but also of trials and temptations, victories and failures, and reminders and reassurances that God's promises to his posterity would surely come to pass.

*Faithfulness in little things is a big thing.*

# Jacob's Dream and Flight from Esau

*Key Passage: Genesis 27; 28:10-22*

CHAPTER 27		CHAPTER 28		CHAPTERS 29–30		CHAPTER 31	
Jacob's Stolen Blessing	Jacob's Dream at Bethel	Jacob's Family	Jacob's Flight	Leaving Home		Longing for Home	

**OVERVIEW** The conflict that began in their mother's womb carries over into the adult lives of the twins, Esau and Jacob. After following Rebekah's plan to trick Isaac into giving him the patriarchal blessing, 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. After 20 years in Haran learning painful lessons from his uncle Laban, Jacob returns to Canaan with his livestock, servants, and family—the nucleus from which God will fashion a new nation: Israel.

**INSIGHT** YOU CAN'T TELL THE PATRIARCHS WITHOUT A PROGRAM

Order	Name	Meaning	Mother (Son)
1	Reuben	"behold, a son"	Leah (1)
2	Simeon	"heard"	Leah (2)
3	Levi	"joined"	Leah (3)
4	Judah	"praised"	Leah (4)
5	Dan	"judge"	Bilhah (1)
6	Naphtali	"my wrestling"	Bilhah (2)
7	Gad	"good fortune"	Zilpah (1)
8	Asher	"happy"	Zilpah (2)
9	Issachar	"man for hire"	Leah (5)
10	Zebulun	"dwelling"	Leah (6)
11	Joseph	"may Jehovah add"	Rachel (1)
12	Benjamin	"son of the right hand"	Rachel (2)

*Satan's primary tool is not an active sinner, but an inactive saint.*

**YOUR DAILY WALK** The first important experience of a new Hebrew baby was receiving a name. Often the name given would describe the parents' hopes for the child or picture the child's personality, so an infant would tend to live up to his name.

As a child of God, you bear a new name, a name you will carry throughout eternity (Revelation 3:12; 22:4). That concept raises a penetrating question: Are you living up to your name? Talk to your heavenly Father about it right now. If you are willing to be a Christian today in more than name alone, tell Him so.

# Jacob's Encounter with Esau

*Key Passage: Genesis 32*

CHAPTER 32	CHAPTER 33	CHAPTER 34	CHAPTER 35	CHAPTER 36
Meeting God	Meeting Esau	Avenging Dinah	Returning to Bethel	Recounting Esau's Line
Jacob's Reconciliation		Jacob's Rededication		

**OVERVIEW** Having survived the pursuit of his jealous uncle Laban, Jacob now faces an even greater danger from his estranged brother, Esau. After sending his family across the Jabbok River, Jacob wrestles with the angel of Jehovah until day-break. The angel assures him of God's continued presence and leaves Jacob with both a new name—Israel ("God strives")—and a permanent limp as reminders of the encounter. Once reconciled to God, Jacob is ready to be reconciled to Esau and to return to Canaan as the vital link in God's continuing promises.

**YOUR DAILY WALK** David, Jabez, and Jacob—a more unlikely trio you will never meet! David, the mighty king of Israel . . . Jabez, an obscure figure from the pages of 1 Chronicles . . . Jacob, the schemer-turned-servant. Yet they shared a common experience. Do you know what it was?

David prayed: "May God be gracious to us and bless us" (Psalm 67:1). Jabez "cried out to the God of Israel, 'Oh, that you would bless me'" (1 Chronicles 4:10). Jacob wrestled with the angel of God, not willing to let go "unless you bless me" (Genesis 32:26). And in each case, God did precisely that. David's kingdom enjoyed "salvation among all nations" (Psalm 67:2); "God granted [Jabez's] request" (1 Chronicles 4:10); and in response to Jacob's petition, the angel of God "blessed him there" (Genesis 32:29).

Is it possible God has a blessing in store for you but that "You do not have, because you do not ask God" (James 4:2)? Use the prayer of David, Jabez, or Jacob to express the desire of your heart. Don't be surprised when God answers! He's in the business of blessing.

**INSIGHT** **RUN, FIGHT, OR GET MARRIED** After Hamor's son had defiled Dinah, Jacob's sons were ready for war. Realizing the impending danger, Hamor tried to offer his daughters in marriage to promote peace. The tactic failed this time, but it would plague Jacob's descendants.

*All blessings carry responsibility, so don't pray for the first, if you're not ready for the second.*

# Joseph's Bondage in Egypt

*Key Passage: Genesis 37, 39*

CHAPTER 37	CHAPTER 38	CHAPTER 39	CHAPTER 40
Joseph's Slavery	Judah's Shame	Joseph's Integrity	Joseph's Imprisonment
Life in Jacob's Family		Life in Pharaoh's Dungeon	

**OVERVIEW** Abraham . . . Isaac . . . Jacob . . . and now comes Joseph, the fourth major character in the Genesis account of the patriarchs (fathers of the faith). Favored by his father but alienated from his brothers, Joseph is sold into Egyptian slavery. Imprisoned for a crime he did not commit and ignored by the forgetful chief butler, Joseph finds his faith—and his integrity—sorely tested. Though Joseph doesn't realize it, through it all God is preparing him for an important role that will bring fruition to his childhood dreams.

**YOUR DAILY WALK** "God, why did You let this happen to me?" Have you ever felt the urge to ask that question?

"Why?" is a question Christians frequently ask—and one that God often leaves unanswered. Joseph must have been tempted often to ask for a heavenly explanation for his earthly troubles. Though God did not answer all of Joseph's questions, He did meet all of Joseph's needs (Genesis 39:21)—and He has promised to do the same for you (Philippians 4:13, 19). That means He will give you power over discouragement when you're down in the pits (37:24) . . . power over temptation from lustful thoughts (39:11-12) . . . purpose for living even when you're mistreated or ignored (39:20-21).

Joseph's faith in God fortified him to face the pit of Canaan, the dungeon of Egypt, and everything in between. You can develop a faith like that too! Read about it in James 1:2-4. Then make a little sign that reads, "Another Joseph Under Construction," and put it by your telephone. Then every ring can provide a comforting reminder.

**INSIGHT** **BROTHERS IN THE BUSINESS** The members of the Ishmaelite caravan who bought Joseph from his brothers and sold him in Egypt were called Midianites (Genesis 37:28, 36). Midian and Medan were two sons of Abraham by his second wife Keturah (Genesis 25:2). From them developed a nomadic people who, though blood brothers of the Jews, became their constant enemies (Judges 6:1).

*It is better to go straight than to move in the best of circles.*

# Joseph's Brothers in Egypt

*Key Passage: Genesis 41*

CHAPTER 41	CHAPTER 42	CHAPTER 43	CHAPTER 44
Joseph's Promotion	Jacob's Problem	Benjamin's Visit	Joseph's Vengeance
Faithfulness	Famine	Fear	Confession

**OVERVIEW** During his two-year imprisonment, Joseph gains a reputation as an accurate interpreter of dreams. His God-given ability is now called upon to interpret the disturbing dreams of Pharaoh. Though the interpretation is ominous, Pharaoh's response is overwhelming: Joseph becomes prime minister of the land, with power second only to Pharaoh himself. With a worldwide famine approaching, Joseph becomes Pharaoh's choice to administer a relief program to meet the challenge. His new position allows Joseph to confront his brothers with their carefully concealed crime.

**INSIGHT** FROM PRISON TO PALACE IN ONE DAY  
At age seventeen, Joseph was sold into Egyptian slavery (37:2). Thirteen years later he was still in the dungeon (41:46), but when the time was right, God promoted him from the prison to the palace overnight. That's a much-needed reminder that God's "Graduate School of Growing" is seldom a one-year curriculum!

*It is possible to learn from an enemy things we can't learn from a friend.*

**YOUR DAILY WALK** There are many skills you can learn in an afternoon: how to ride a bicycle, change the oil in your car, bake a batch of cookies. Other skills take weeks to master: how to read 1,000 words a minute, sing four-part harmony, drive a car. Then there are skills you will hone and develop for the rest of your life: how to work with people, study God's Word, draw upon God's promises even when the circumstances aren't too promising.

Thirteen years of Joseph's life were spent in obscurity in Egypt. But they were not wasted years. God in His infinite wisdom knew that the man who emerged in chapter 41 had to be different from the man who submerged in chapter 37.

It takes a world with trouble in it to train men and women for their high calling as God's children. Faced with trouble, some people grow wings; others buy crutches. Which kind are you? Read Isaiah 40:31, but everywhere you encounter the word "they," substitute your own name. It's a promise aimed at you.

# Joseph's Family United in Egypt

*Key Passage: Genesis 45*

CHAPTER 45	CHAPTER 46	CHAPTER 47
Joseph's Surprise Announcement	Jacob's Move to Egypt	Jacob's Exaltation in Egypt
Joseph's Family Reunited	Joseph's Family Treated Kindly	

**OVERVIEW** Chapters 45-47 contain the exciting conclusion to the story of Joseph and his unsuspecting brothers. After twice planting evidence on his brothers that would ensure their return to Egypt, Joseph finally can contain his secret no longer. In an emotion-packed scene, he reveals that he is the brother they sold into slavery. At last in a position to avenge his ill treatment, Joseph instead shows kindness, acknowledging that God was behind it all to bring much good out of his difficult circumstances. Jacob moves to Egypt to spend his remaining years with his reunited family.

**YOUR DAILY WALK** *Sovereignty* is a big word, but it is also a biblical concept that touches your life every day. God is sovereign. It means that nothing takes Him by surprise. Every experience in life, from the most pleasant to the most painful, has been allowed by God for a special purpose. Joseph learned this important truth, though it took years of mistreatment to drive the point home. Addressing his brothers who sold him, he declared: "It was not you who sent me here, but God" (45:8).

Think back over your life and select one event that stands out as a time when it appeared that God had lost control of the situation. Perhaps it was a death in the family, or the loss of a job, or an extended illness. Now across that painful memory, write the words, "God was there." Write out a definition of sovereignty in your own words and make it speak to your own situation. (For example: "Sovereignty means that God has a purpose in my losing my job. He hasn't forgotten about me; He just has something better in store!")

*We should be thankful that God always turns out to be bigger than we thought.*

**INSIGHT** WHY GOD MOVED THE JEWS TO EGYPT  
It is not difficult to see the divine wisdom in moving Jacob's family to Egypt. In Egypt the Jews would remain a separate, distinct people. Because Jacob and his sons were shepherds, an abominable occupation to Egyptians, their occupation was a natural barrier to intermarriage. For four hundred years the Jews would multiply under these ideal conditions.

# The Last Days of Jacob and Joseph

*Key Passage: Genesis 48:8-49:33*

CHAPTER 48	CHAPTER 49	CHAPTER 50
Blessing the Sons of Joseph	Jacob	Death and Burial of Jacob Joseph
1		21   22
Last Words		Last Resting Place
		26

**OVERVIEW** As Jacob’s life in Egypt draws to a close, he summons Joseph’s two sons and blesses them, exalting the younger Ephraim over the older Manasseh. As his final act, Jacob prophetically outlines the future of his twelve sons. His desire for burial in Canaan testifies that the destiny of the nation still lies in the Promised Land. Joseph also dies after a faithful and prosperous life, and adds his testimony that God will one day liberate His people.

**YOUR DAILY WALK** On a scale of one to ten (one is low and ten is high), rate yourself on the following two statements:

- I am a forgiving person.
- I am quick to forget offenses against me.

You’ve probably heard the statement, “I’ll forgive . . . but I won’t forget!” It’s really just another way of saying, “I won’t forgive,” for true forgiveness involves totally putting away the wrong suffered. That’s the way God forgives (Ephesians 4:32), and His brand of forgiveness is the model He expects you to follow as well.

*For most of us, forgiveness comes easily . . . after we’ve gotten even.*

Joseph exhibited the quality of full forgiveness with his brothers. After Jacob’s death, the brothers feared revenge even though Joseph had already forgiven them (Genesis 50:15). Their pleas for mercy moved him to tears as he reassured his brothers that he had totally forgiven them.

If you have experienced God’s forgiveness in Christ, you have the greatest motivation possible for forgiving others. In what relationships have you withheld forgiveness for an offense against you? Talk to God about it right now. Thank Him for the peace that only total forgiveness can bring. Then phone, write, or visit the offending party, and share your newfound victory.

**INSIGHT** A “MOVING EPITAPH” FOR JACOB AND JOSEPH Joseph’s care in honoring his father’s dying request to be buried in Canaan (49:29-30) was duplicated by Moses hundreds of years later. Moses carried out Joseph’s last wish by transporting his remains back to Canaan (Exodus 13:19).

# EXODUS

**D**uring the four hundred years between Genesis and Exodus, Israel grows into a nation of two to three million people. But Egypt becomes for them an inescapable prison of suffering and bondage. Exodus (which means “departure”) introduces Moses—gifted leader, military genius, statesman, shepherd, and man of God. Under his direction the people leave Egypt and travel to Mt. Sinai, where they receive their charter and instructions as a nation and their new worship center, the tabernacle.

FOCUS	BONDAGE	DELIVERANCE	REVELATION
<b>DIVISIONS</b>	Bondage in Egypt Call of Moses	Ten Plagues Passover Red Sea Crossing Journey to Sinai	Ten Commandments Tabernacle Plans Golden Calf Tabernacle Glory
<b>TOPICS</b>	Incubation of the Nation Preparation	Inception of the Nation Redemption	Infancy of the Nation Instruction
<b>PLACE</b>	Egypt	Wilderness	Mt. Sinai
<b>TIME</b>	430 Years (15% of Exodus)	2 Months (30% of Exodus)	10 Months (55% of Exodus)

# Israel's Bondage in Egypt

*Key Passage: Exodus 1:8-2:10*

CHAPTER 1	CHAPTER 2	
Israel's Groaning in Egypt	Moses' Birth in Egypt	Moses' Marriage in Midian
Pharaoh	Moses the Deliverer	

**OVERVIEW** In the years since the close of Genesis, the Jews have multiplied rapidly in the land of Egypt. Viewed as a growing threat by an unsympathetic Egyptian king, the Egyptians “worked [the Israelites] ruthlessly” (1:13). The cries of God’s people for a deliverer are finally answered in the person of Moses. Even from his earliest days Moses’ destiny is clear, as seen in God’s providential care for the infant. But at the age of forty, Moses attempts to do the right thing (deliverance) in the wrong way (murder), and as a result he flees for his life. For the next forty years he will tend flocks in the deserts of Midian as God prepares him to tend a much bigger flock in the deserts of Egypt!

**YOUR DAILY WALK** If you’ve ever forgotten an important appointment, anniversary, or promise you’ve made, you know how miserable you can feel. But that’s not as miserable as the one who’s been forgotten feels!

For four hundred years the people of God had suffered abuse at the hands of their Egyptian taskmasters. Surely God had forgotten His promises to their forefathers—promises that rang hollow in the sandy prisons of Egypt. And yet, “God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob” (2:24). Unknown to them, God was preparing for their deliverance even as they made bricks in the hot desert sun!

God never forgets His promises, but how often do you forget that fact? Tie a string around your finger to remind yourself (and others who might be curious enough to ask) of that wonderful truth.

**INSIGHT** GENESIS AND EXODUS—A STUDY IN CONTRASTS

**Genesis speaks of:**

- human effort and failure
- preparing a people
- travel to Egypt
- a family of seventy
- judgment by water (Noah)

**Exodus speaks of:**

- divine power and triumph
- redeeming a people
- travel from Egypt
- a nation of millions
- salvation by blood (Passover)

*The promises of God are certain, but they don't all mature in ninety days.*

# Moses' Call and Conflict with Pharaoh

*Key Passage: Exodus 3; 6:1-13*

CHAPTER 3	CHAPTER 4	CHAPTER 5	CHAPTER 6
Moses' Call	Moses' Companion	Moses' Confrontation	Moses' Consolation
A Reluctant Redeemer		A Resistant Pharaoh	

**OVERVIEW** At last, God is ready to commission Moses for the task of delivering His people from bondage. But Moses is reluctant to accept the commission. Confronted by God in a burning bush, Moses responds with four excuses that focus on his inadequacy for the assignment. But neither Moses’ weakness nor Pharaoh’s stubbornness can stand in the way of God’s sovereign plan to release His people. Finally convinced of God’s strength, Moses confronts Pharaoh with the ringing declaration, “Let my people go” (5:1).

**INSIGHT** THE GOD WHO IS THE GREAT “I AM”

Moses asked what name he should use for the God who had sent him on his strategic mission (3:13). God replied, “I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you’” (3:14). What other person in the pages of Scripture dared to use that same name? (Hint: Read John 8:58.) Can you understand why He received the response He did (John 8:59)?

**YOUR DAILY WALK** Pretend for a moment that you are Moses. You are tending your sheep on a quiet mountainside when suddenly a bush bursts into flame but is not consumed. Naturally curious, you move closer to study this remarkable sight and come face to face with the God of Israel, who declares: “I am sending you to Pharaoh” (Exodus 3:10). How would you respond? Probably you’d do exactly what Moses did: feel inadequate. Inadequate to represent God before the mightiest ruler of your day. Inadequate to deliver God’s words through your faltering lips. And you know, you’d be right! God already knows you’re inadequate. That’s why He selected you—so that His strength might shine through your weakness.

Make a list of three excuses you could give God—and perhaps already have—for not serving Him today. Then turn each into a prayer project: “God, You know my physical condition. Show Your strength through my weakness. Use my meager I.Q. to demonstrate to others that You are the incomparable ‘I AM.’”

*A master artist sometimes uses the smallest brush to achieve the best effect.*

# Nine Plagues on Egypt

*Key Passage: Exodus 7*

CH. 7	CHAPTER 8		CHAPTER 9		CHAPTER 10	
Blood	Frogs	Lice	Flies	Livestock	Boils	Hail
1	15, 16	19, 21	32, 1	Dies 7, 8	12, 13	35, 1
						20, 21
The gods of Egypt vs. the God of Israel						

**OVERVIEW** Since the words of God delivered through His servant Moses have had no effect on Pharaoh’s stony heart, Moses now begins to demonstrate the works of God—nine national calamities involving insects, disease, and changes in nature. The plagues gradually become more intense, selective, and difficult to ignore. In spite of his frequent promises, Pharaoh stubbornly refuses to release the people, setting the stage for the tenth and climactic plague.

**YOUR DAILY WALK** Hardening of the arteries is a serious disease that affects thousands. But its consequences are mild when compared to the eternal consequences of another malady that affects mankind: hardening of the heart.

Pharaoh knew what God wanted him to do. The command “let my people go” was repeated no fewer than six times.

Pharaoh knew how God wanted him to do it. The people were to go on a three-day journey into the wilderness, and nothing was to be left behind in the land of Egypt (8:26-27; 10:8-11).

Pharaoh knew the consequences if he did not obey. He was warned of each plague in advance.

Pharaoh’s problem was not information, but motivation. God’s will was clear; Pharaoh’s heart was hard. And in the end he would lose his army and his firstborn son—as well as his captives.

Pharaoh’s sordid example was not overlooked by authors of other Old Testament writings. Look up Deuteronomy 6:20-22; 1 Samuel 6:6; Nehemiah 9:7-10. Pick one passage and make it the topic of discussion around the dinner table tonight. It’s a good way to detour around, rather than duplicate, Pharaoh’s heart problem.

**INSIGHT** NATURAL OR SUPERNATURAL?

Some people believe that since all of the plagues (except the death of the firstborn) could be explained naturally, they weren’t miracles. Although the plagues may or may not have broken God’s natural laws, the timing and Moses’ foretelling make them miraculous.

*Hardening of the heart ages people more quickly than hardening of the arteries.*

# Death and Departure

*Key Passage: Exodus 12:29-42*

CHAPTER 11		CHAPTER 12	
Announcing a Plague	Preparing the Passover	Administering a Plague	Exiting Egypt
Tenth Plague Is Near		Tenth Plague Is Here	

**OVERVIEW** Each of the preceding nine plagues has represented an attack on an object of worship in Egypt (the Nile, sun, frogs, flies, etc.). But now God attacks Pharaoh himself by warning that the firstborn of each Egyptian household (including Pharaoh’s) will die unless the people are released. To escape the terrible judgment, each Israelite household observes the Passover by substituting the death of a lamb for the death of their firstborn. After a night of horror and death, Pharaoh commands the Hebrews to leave, and the long-awaited Exodus begins. Passover henceforth becomes an annual memorial of the redemption of God’s people from their Egyptian bondage.

**YOUR DAILY WALK** Franklin P. Adams humorously observed that “Nothing is more responsible for the good old days than a bad memory.” Likewise, memory is what tells a man his wife’s birthday was yesterday. God knew that His people would quickly forget great moments in their history unless their memories were refreshed. So He commanded the nation to circle the important date of the Passover on their calendars and observe it yearly in order to keep the memory of God’s great deliverance fresh and vital to them.

Do you have an annual date on which you review all of God’s dealings in your life over the past twelve months? If not, circle a day (your birthday is an excellent time). Make it a time of reflecting, remembering, and rejoicing for what God has done, and is doing, in your life day by day.

**INSIGHT** PICTURES IN THE PASSOVER FOR ISRAEL AND FOR YOU

As the Lord passed through Egypt, bringing death to the firstborn in every family that did not have the bloodstained doorposts, the Israelites were also active. Rather than sleeping, they were awake, alert, and obedient, feeding on the Passover lamb—with their shoes on their feet and their staffs in their hands—ready to move at God’s command.

*What would happen if God remembered us only as often as we remembered Him?*

# *Astounding Facts About the* EXODUS

## How many people were there?

According to Numbers 1:45-46, there were more than 600,000 fighting men. Add to that an equal number of women, plus an average of four children per family. Remember, the Egyptians were afraid because the Israelites were multiplying so rapidly (Exodus 1:7-10). The population looks something like this:

Men	600,000
Women	600,000
Children	2,400,000
<u>Total</u>	<u>3,600,000</u>

## How long a column would that make?

Marching fifty abreast, they would stretch for forty miles into the desert. At a modest pace of two and a half miles per hour, the people would require more than sixteen hours to pass the same point.

## How much food and water did the people require?

Just to provide the minimum ration of food and water for the people (not including the animals) would take the equivalent of thirty boxcars of food and three hundred tank cars of water every day of the journey!

# Red Sea Crossing and Song of Moses

*Key Passage: Exodus 13; 14:21-31*

CHAPTER 13	CHAPTER 14	CHAPTER 15
Consecrating the Firstborn	Crossing the Red Sea	Caroling God's Greatness
"Remember!"	"Relax!"	"Rejoice!"

**OVERVIEW** The Exodus from Egypt is only the first in a series of miracles God performs to bring His chosen people to the Promised Land of Canaan. Guided by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, Moses leads the people to the edge of the Red Sea—a seemingly impassable dead end. Cries of mutiny and despair give way to songs of jubilation and praise as God opens a path through the waters, saves His people, and drowns the Egyptian army in its hopeless pursuit.

**YOUR DAILY WALK** How many passages of Scripture can you “sing” from memory? Here are three to get you started:

“Savior, like a Shepherd lead us . . .” (Psalm 23:1-2).

“Praise God from whom all blessings flow . . .” (Psalm 148:1-3).

“Our Father which art in heaven . . .” (Matthew 6:9-13).

There is something about a verse put to melody that makes it particularly memorable. Perhaps you have great difficulty memorizing Scripture passages. But have you learned a new hymn or praise song lately? Moses knew that singing was a pleasant way to plant God’s truth in the hearts of people (Exodus 15:1-18).

Drop by a Christian bookstore and pick up one of the many excellent praise CDs or hymnbooks available today. Don’t allow singing to be just a public part of your Christian experience.

**INSIGHT** FORECAST FOR PHARAOH: DENSE FOG AND DEFEAT

According to Exodus 14:19-20, the pillar of cloud that formerly had led the Israelites as they marched now came “between the armies of Egypt and Israel. Throughout the night the cloud brought darkness to the one side and light to the other side” (v. 20). This accomplished two things: (1) It stopped the Egyptians by settling down on them like a fog so they could not see; (2) It provided light for the Israelites. Fog is an almost unknown phenomenon in the land of Egypt, a fact that must have contributed to the Egyptians’ bewilderment and frustration.

*There is plenty of heavenly music for those who are tuned in.*

# Journey to Mount Sinai

*Key Passage: Exodus 16:1-17:7*

CHAPTER 16	CHAPTER 17	CHAPTER 18
Manna in the Morning	Water in the Wilderness	Wise Words from a Father-in-Law
Israel's Grumbling		Moses' Governing

**OVERVIEW** Only three days after their dramatic deliverance at the Red Sea, the people begin to complain. As the water supply dwindles, the grumbling increases as the people forget that God is the Source of their supply. God miraculously provides manna, quail, and water in abundance to teach the nation a lesson in faith. Then an overworked Moses learns a valuable lesson in administration from his father-in-law as he selects capable men to assist him in governing the people.

**YOUR DAILY WALK** Have you ever had a morning like this? You bound out of bed, confident that today will be a great day. But there's no soap in the shower, and you've run out of clean clothes. On the way to breakfast you trip over a misplaced chair. The toast burns, and the newspaper doesn't arrive. A traffic jam makes you late for an appointment, and you lose your important "things to do" list. Before your day has hardly begun, you feel like crawling back in bed and starting over again!

The Israelites had their share of bad days too. They quickly discovered that desert travel can be difficult . . . even dangerous. The glory of the Red Sea crossing faded as soon as their stomachs began to rumble from hunger. They actually accused Moses of leading them into the wilderness to kill them (17:3).

Have you lost sight of God's purpose for bringing along bad days as well as good ones? Make a list of all the difficult situations found in today's reading and ask yourself these questions: "What was God trying to teach His people through adversity that they never would have learned through prosperity? And what is He trying to teach me?"

**INSIGHT** I'LL NEVER FORGET OLD WHAT'S-ITS-NAME When the people first saw manna on the ground (16:15), they asked one another, "What is it?" (in biblical Hebrew, *man hu?*). The name stuck, and for forty years the they went out each morning (except on the Sabbath) to collect "what's-its-name" (manna) as their daily bread.

*Adversity causes some people to break down and others to break records.*

# Ten Commands for God's People

*Key Passage: Exodus 20:1-17*

CHAPTER 19			CHAPTER 20		
Positioning the People	Preparing the People		Four Commands Godward	Six Commands Manward	
1	2   3	25	1	11   12	26
Consecration			Declaration		

**OVERVIEW** At Mount Sinai, a setting designed to focus on the majesty and holiness of God, the people receive their charter as God's chosen nation. After declaring their willingness to abide by the commands they are about to receive, the Israelites spend two days preparing themselves to hear God's voice. On the third day, accompanied by an awesome display of God's power, Moses receives the Ten Commandments—the broad, moral principles and instruction on which the nation's conduct will be based.

**YOUR DAILY WALK** Scene One: You are suspended by a chain over a deep abyss when a companion says, "Don't worry; all but one of the links will hold your weight."

Scene Two: You are in a furniture store looking for a mirror with which to adorn your living room when you see a display that reads: "Nearly Perfect Mirrors for Sale—Only One Crack in Each."

What do these two tales have in common? They both illustrate the folly of trying to be saved by keeping the Law.

Only one broken link in an otherwise perfect chain plunges you to your death. Only one crack ruins the entire mirror. And "whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it" (James 2:10).

In order to be saved by keeping the Law, you would have to keep it absolutely in every point throughout your lifetime. No one but Jesus could ever do that! According to Galatians 3:24, the purpose of the Law is not to save you, but to show you what sin is, and to point you to Christ, who alone can take it away.

Scene Three: Jesus waits for you to admit you cannot save yourself, and to turn to Him as the Answer. Will you do it? Today?

**INSIGHT** THE TEN COMMANDMENTS—IN TRIPPLICATE The "Ten Words" were actually given three times: (1) orally by God (Exodus 20:1-17); (2) on stone tablets (Exodus 24:12-18); and (3) on duplicate tablets prepared by Moses to replace the set he broke (Exodus 34:1, 28-29).

*Law says "Do."*  
*Grace says "Done."*

# Civil Laws for God's People

*Key Passage: Exodus 24*

CHAPTER 21	CHAPTER 22	CHAPTER 23	CHAPTER 24
Laws for Relationships	Laws for Responsibility	Laws for Spiritual Life	Ratification of the Law
People and Property		Sabbaths and Celebrations	

**OVERVIEW** In addition to the Ten Commandments, Moses receives a body of laws and instruction designed to regulate all aspects of Israel's national life. The civil laws show God's concern for the administration of justice, property rights, caring for the poor, punishing criminals, and maintaining purity in interpersonal relationships. The ceremonial laws deal with the tabernacle and the priests, sacrifices, offerings, and annual feasts involved with it. After a stern reminder of the importance of obedience, God calls Moses back up the mountain for forty more days of instruction.

**YOUR DAILY WALK** Passages such as Galatians 2:16 make it clear that no one is justified by keeping the Law. What then should be your attitude toward today's Scripture reading?

Jesus taught from the Old Testament Scriptures, and many of the laws are repeated in the New Testament. Nine of the Ten Commandments are specifically reiterated, declaring the kind of conduct that glorifies God today.

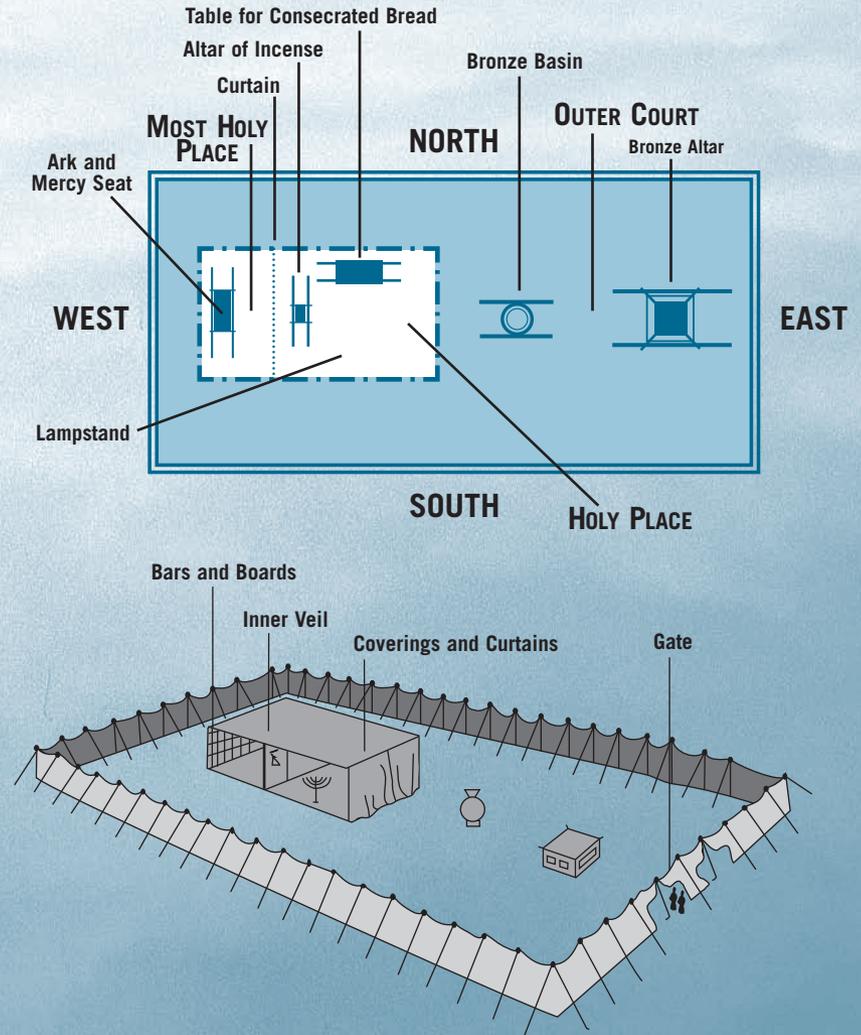
Remember that love is the fulfillment of the Law (Matthew 22:37-40). If you truly love the Lord with all your heart, soul, and mind, and love your neighbor as yourself, you will find yourself keeping the commandments not because you have to, but because you want to.

Biblical law is the revelation of the character of the unchanging, eternal God. God is concerned about the details of your life, even things as mundane as the death of an animal or the loss of a tooth (Exodus 21:27-28). He desires justice in business transactions, punishment for the guilty, and protection for the innocent.

**INSIGHT** HOW MANY LAWS ARE IN "THE LAW"? Mention the phrase "Old Testament law" and many people think of the Ten Commandments. Actually, there are more than 600 regulations contained in the legal sections of Exodus through Deuteronomy. Over the years these laws were interpreted by many rabbis, whose comments were compiled into a book (the Talmud), which has sixty-three major headings and 518 chapters.

*What a scarcity of news there would be if everybody obeyed the Ten Commandments.*

# Arrangement of the TABERNACLE



# A House of Worship for God's People

*Key Passage: Exodus 26*

CHAPTER 25	CHAPTER 26	CHAPTER 27
Tabernacle Interior	Tabernacle Building	Tabernacle Courtyard
How to Worship	Where to Worship	

**OVERVIEW** For forty days Moses records God's words regarding Israel's place of worship and pattern of worship. The blueprint includes the furniture, coverings, curtains, and courtyard of the tabernacle that must be built "according to the plan shown you on the mountain" (26:30). The description moves from the inside to the outside, reflecting not the perspective of man looking in, but of God looking out—the God who wants to dwell with His people.

**YOUR DAILY WALK** Today's reading may seem like a long list of unimportant details. You may feel lost in a forest of acacia wood, candlesticks, and rams' skins. But don't miss the point. These are instructions for building God's house, thus every detail is significant. It is to be a beautiful, symbolic house that causes each worshiper to praise God's majesty, mercy, and holiness.

Many centuries later King David would declare: "Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness" (Psalm 29:2). David, too, realized that God deserved a special house that mirrored His greatness.

Where is God dwelling today? He is living in the hearts of those who have put their trust in Him (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). You are God's tabernacle today. And that means some spring-cleaning may be in order. Is there a habit that needs to change or a corner of your life that needs attention? Take a few minutes to sweep your "tabernacle" clean. Then as a reminder, flip your calendar ahead to February, pick a day, and write: "Have you swept lately?"

**INSIGHT** MORE THAN WOOD AND CLOTH  
The tabernacle tells a story about its successor, Jesus Christ. Here is a partial list of parallels. Can you think of others?

Tabernacle	Jesus
bread of presence	"I am the bread of life"
golden candlestick	"I am the light of the world"
high priest, once a year	Christ, once for all

*God has two dwelling places: one in heaven, and the other in a meek and thankful heart.*

# Special Instructions for Priests

*Key Passage: Exodus 30-31*

CHAPTER 28	CHAPTER 29	CHAPTER 30	CHAPTER 31	
Priest's Clothing	Priest's Commissioning	Priest's Commands	Tabernacle Craftsman	Sabbath Commemoration
Instructions for Worship			1	11   12   18
			Provisions for Worship	

**OVERVIEW** In addition to the tabernacle plans, Moses receives detailed instructions concerning those who will serve in the tabernacle: the priests. Chapters 28-30 describe the ones set apart to represent Israel before God and to lead the nation in worship. Everything about them is different: the clothing they wear, the elaborate rituals required to purify them for ministry, even the utensils and supplies they use in tabernacle worship. In addition, God provides handpicked artists and craftsmen for the tabernacle and sets apart one day each week for rest and worship.

**YOUR DAILY WALK** Did you enjoy yesterday's tour of the tabernacle? Today you examine more of God's intricate blueprint for worship, mostly involving the priests. If it seems to take a long time to read, just remember—it took Moses forty days to copy all of this down.

Today's reading should give you a new appreciation for the lengths to which God went to dwell with and commune with His people. Because God is utterly holy, these elaborate procedures were necessary if sinful people were to have fellowship with their God. Not a single detail was insignificant.

Notice the importance of worship in the daily life of the nation. Worship was not limited to a single day or time; all of life revolved around the one central function of worshipping God.

With today's reading in mind, carefully consider this question: when the pressures of life force you to cut something out of your busy schedule, why is it that the most expendable daily activity is usually personal or family devotions, and that the most vulnerable weekly function is corporate worship with the church?

Does God consider worship worthwhile? Do you?

**INSIGHT** THE DYNAMIC, DIVINE DIGIT  
The "finger of God" is credited with engraving the stone tablets (Exodus 31:18), bringing Egypt's plagues (Exodus 8:19), casting out demons (Luke 11:20), and creating the heavens (Psalm 8:3).

*Worship is giving to God what He already owns — ourselves.*

# Golden Idol and Glorious Lord

*Key Passage: Exodus 32*

CHAPTER 32	CHAPTER 33	CHAPTER 34
Golden Calf	Glorious Lord	Glorious Leader
Idolatry	Intercession	Instruction

**OVERVIEW** In Moses' absence, the people have been busy. Ignoring their pledge of obedience to God and assuming Moses had died on the mountain, they return to the pagan ways of Egypt. In righteous anger, Moses shatters the two stone tablets, destroys the golden calf, and orders the Levites to slay the guilty offenders. His selfless intercession brings about a renewal of the covenant between God and His chosen people. And when Moses returns from yet another trip to Sinai—this time to replace the shattered tablets—his face radiates the glory of Israel's forgiving God.

**YOUR DAILY WALK** Freedom has been defined as “the opportunity to make decisions,” and character as “the ability to make right decisions.” If that is true, then one of the quickest ways to reveal the true character of a person is to give him the freedom to choose his own path.

Israel's leader, Moses, was away, and in his absence the people had to make certain choices. The majority chose to worship a god of gold, ignoring their pledge of obedience. The minority—Moses' relatives from the tribe of Levi—stood firm against public opinion and refused to worship the golden calf, even when the elders, leaders, and Aaron himself sanctioned it. “Whoever is for the LORD, come to me,” Moses challenged (Exodus 32:26). That's a ringing call to commitment you'll find frequently in the Bible. Look up Joshua 24:15 and 1 Kings 18:21. Then ask yourself, “Have I answered the call yet? Does the way I live daily show that I have?”

**INSIGHT** DEATH ON SINAI, LIFE IN CHRIST  
 “The law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ” (John 1:17). When Moses came down from Sinai to deliver the Law and discovered the people worshipping the golden calf, 3,000 lost their lives in the ensuing judgment (Exodus 32:28). By contrast, when the apostle Peter stood up on the Day of Pentecost to declare salvation through faith in a risen Savior, 3,000 found new life (Acts 2:41).

*The two great tests of character are wealth and poverty.*

# Finishing and Filling the Tabernacle

*Key Passage: Exodus 35:1-36:7*

CHAPTER 35	CHS. 36-38	CHAPTER 39	CHAPTER 40
Sacrificial Alms	Skillful Artisans	Completed	Sacred Tabernacle Erected
			Filled
Tabernacle Organized		Tabernacle Occupied	

**OVERVIEW** Exodus closes with the record of the actual construction of the tabernacle, the building in which God will meet His people as they journey to Canaan. The vast project requires the cooperation of many individuals. When the tabernacle is completed at last, God gives His approval by filling the structure with the cloud of His glory. Israel is now prepared to worship God while on the march.

**YOUR DAILY WALK** Imagine this scene taking place in your church: While the offering is being collected, the pastor is handed a note. He rushes to the microphone and announces “Please, stop the offering. The plates are overflowing, and all our needs have been met. You've already given too much!”

Sound far-fetched? That is precisely what happened when the Israelites willingly and wholeheartedly contributed to the tabernacle as God had commanded (35:20-29; 36:5-7). It may seem as though they impoverished themselves by giving to God's work, but that wasn't the case. God was already supplying all their needs, as He would continue to do for the next forty years.

When you realize that everything you have is a gift from God's hand (1 Corinthians 4:7), your giving will take on a fresh, new meaning. Try it! Set aside five dollars or more each day this week, and send it to your church or a missionary family (your pastor knows several) as a special “thank offering” in recognition of God's goodness to you. And if God has blessed you in a special way financially, why not make a substantial gift to a specific project in your church? Perhaps you, too, will hear the words, “Sorry, we don't need that much!”

**INSIGHT** IT WAS A VERY GOOD YEAR  
 Though it may seem like years since the Israelites left Egypt (12:37), actually only one year has elapsed since the Exodus. The first three months were spent journeying to Mt. Sinai. There the people camped for an additional nine months while they received the Law and erected the tabernacle.

*First give yourself to God; then giving your possessions will be easy and joyful.*

# TAKE THE FIRST STEP

**C**ongratulations! You've started your 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 in the path of salvation:

**Step 1:** All people are sinners. "The Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin" (Galatians 3:22).

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

**Step 3:** Deliverance from death—salvation—comes by personal trust in God's Son, Jesus

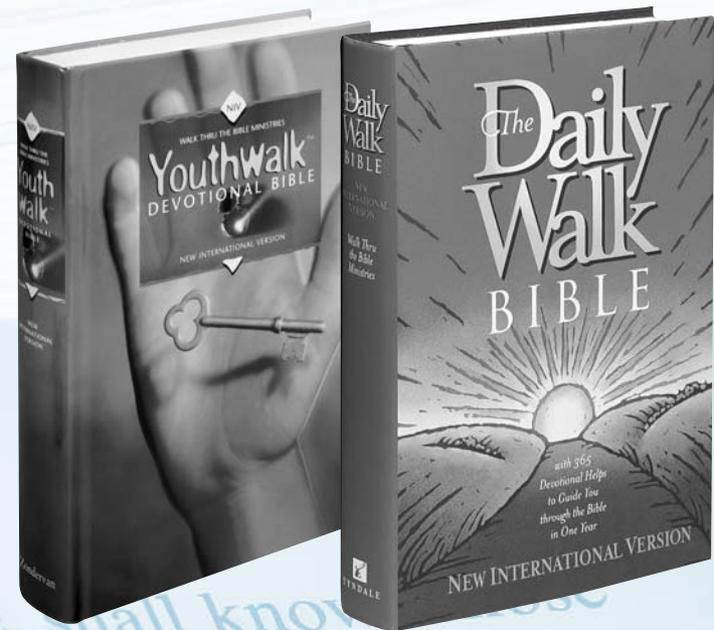
Christ. "It is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8).

Christ paid the price on the cross for every one of your sins so that you might have eternal life. By believing in His expiatory death, burial, and resurrection on your behalf, you enter into an eternal relationship with God.

"For 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. Take the first step now, and watch your pathway unfold!

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



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