

SAMPLE CONTENT



**MEN'S
DAILY
BIBLE**

CHRISTIAN
STANDARD
BIBLE®

Robert Wolgemuth

GENERAL EDITOR

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Table of Contents



2

About the Men's Daily Bible

3

**Meet Robert Wolgemuth,
GENERAL EDITOR**

4

Features

10

Available Editions

11

About the CSB

12

Sample from the Book of Genesis

About the Men's Daily Bible

The *CSB Men's Daily Bible* invites men from every walk of life into a daily conversation with God's Word. The goal is a fuller understanding of Bible truth and to become more like Jesus along the way. Guided by General Editor and bestselling author, Robert Wolgemuth, alongside the wise council of his friends, this Bible is full of encouragement and useful tools. Here are resources to help equip you to live boldly and courageously in the face of everyday challenges unique to men like you, including relevant topics like parenting, family, work, the nature of God and sin, and more.

An excellent resource for:

- ◆ Individual Study
- ◆ Study with a Friend
- ◆ Men's Small Groups
- ◆ Men's Sunday School Classes
- ◆ Men's Leadership
- ◆ Sharing the Bible with a non-believer or new believer
- ◆ Gifting to a husband, father, son, nephew, graduate, or friend



Meet Robert Wolgemuth

GENERAL EDITOR



Robert Wolgemuth is a former president of Thomas Nelson Publishers, the co-founder of a publishing company (Wolgemuth & Hyatt, 1992), and the literary agency Wolgemuth & Associates (1998). He is the author of more than twenty books. A 1969 graduate of Taylor University, he also received an honorary doctorate in 2005. Robert has two married daughters, five grandchildren, and two great-grands named Ezra and Ruby. Robert and his wife, Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth, live in Southwest Michigan. In addition to writing and taking brisk walks to the mailbox with Nancy, Robert volunteers some of his time to her ministry, Revive Our Hearts.

www.robertwolgemuth.com

“

My hope is that you'll find the notes, features, stories, and ideas my friends and I have added to these pages thought-provoking, encouraging, challenging, and even amusing for you as a child of God, a man, maybe a husband and a dad. God's remarkable grace is yours to embrace and enjoy.

It's intended for ordinary guys like you and me—to use each day on our own. Or if you have a chance, an opportunity to share truth and spark a conversation with a friend in a way that's easy to understand and actually means something helpful. And useful.

“



Features

260 “Insight for the Day” Devotionals

Prepare to embrace the day ahead with stories about everything from temptation, to work, to marriage, or to leadership to daily prayer.

1380

DAY 241 — INSIGHT FOR THE DAY

You Know What to Do

Passage for the Day: Hebrews 5:1-5

No one takes this honor on himself; instead, a person is called by God, just as Aaron was.
Hebrews 5:4

When a man was selected to be a high priest, it must have been an awesome honor. Here was a mortal given the privilege to ritually enter God's presence and represent His people to the face of the Almighty. However, before the high priest was allowed to proceed with his spellbinding duties, he was required to “make an offering for his own sins” (v. 3).

The challenge of being a good dad—the high priest of your family—is a big one. There have been times when I was a sloppy father, not deserving of any honor at all.

One Saturday morning when my daughters were young, I had the chance to watch my girls while my wife was away. I assured her I would have everything under control. *How hard can it be to babysit the girls for a few hours?* I figured.

Over the years, I've discovered that many dads think of an assignment like “keep an eye on the kids” the same way they would regard a request to “keep an eye on the smoke alarm.” If it's not wailing at plaster-cracking decibels, it must be OK.

That Saturday morning I was one of those dads. I was in the garage, sharpening the blade on my lawn mower. The girls were in the front yard with a friend. Except for an occasional happy squeal, I heard nothing. All was well.

After a while, Missy came into the garage to retrieve the stroller. Their game had lost its charm, and she and Laura were going to take little Julie for a ride. “Be careful,” I warned without even looking up from my blade-sharpening.

The next game the girls played was called “Let's take the stroller to the top-of-our-sleep-driveaway-and-see-how-fast-we-can-get-this-thing-going”—with Julie still on board, of course. Oblivious to the girls' new game, I continued to file away. My lawn mower blade was looking good. *This thing will take out small trees,* I proudly admired.

Missy stood at the top of the driveway. Laura waited at the bottom to keep Julie and the stroller from flying into the street. After a few breakneck voyages down the hill, Julie decided to get creative. She jammed her sneakers onto the asphalt, sending her cartwheeling face-first all the way to the bottom of the driveway. The smoke alarms began to wail. By the time I reached the girls, they were both out of control. Missy was there, but their friend had vanished.

Julie, still partially in the stroller, was lying on her side, her nose and lips bleeding. I knelt next to her, sheer panic sweeping over me. *I wonder if she'll head up before Bobbie gets back?* I tried to comfort Julie who was semiconscious, reassuring her that she was “all right.” (Dads are famous for saying stuff like this.)

I'm a dead man, raced through my mind. How will I ever explain this to Bobbie? The truth is, I had failed. When Bobbie got home, she let me have it. I asked her to forgive me. She was too busy tending to Julie. I felt awful.

Even the highest-ranking priest was a sinner. And before he assumed his appointed role, he had to confess his own failure and lack of qualification to do this job.

You've got a huge job ahead of you—the high priest of your home. As ready as you might think you are to lead this family, you've got some of your own failure to confess. Now you know what to do.

EVERY DAY Wisdom.
FOR EVERY MAN.

DAY 178 — INSIGHT FOR THE DAY
RSVP
Passage for the Day: Luke 14:15-24

For I tell you, not one of these people who were invited will enjoy my banquet.”
Luke 14:24

Insight for the Moment
God's in a Hurry
Luke 15:11-24

It's a fantastic story. One of the most powerful in all of the Bible. It tells of a father—in an illustration of God Himself—in a hurry.

son gathered
Not
he had spent everything
a distant
country, everything
to worry and he
When he sent him
the pigs were out
of the field.
“When he came to his senses,” he said, “I will get up and go to my father, for I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired workers.”
“So he got up and went to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion. He ran, threw his arms around his neck and kissed him.”
“The son was filled with rage because he had been treated like a hired worker. He wanted to kill his father.”
“Then the father told the slaves, ‘Bring out the best robe and put it on this son. And bring out a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet.’
“And the father said to the slaves, ‘Bring out the best robe and put it on this son. And bring out a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet.’”

Features



1346

INSIGHT FOR LIFE

Embracing God's Will

by Kevin DeYoung

For this is God's will, your sanctification: . . .
1 Thessalonians 4:1-7

The apostle Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians is remarkably clear and straightforward: "For this is God's will, your sanctification" (1Th 4:3).

If you want to know what God's will is for your life, there it is in black and white. Live a life pleasing to God (v. 1). "Keep away from sexual immorality" (v. 3). Let the man of God "control his own body in holiness and honor" (v. 4). Do not take advantage of a brother or sister (v. 6). You don't have to wonder about hitting the bull's-eye of God's will or walking some spiritual tightrope as you try to intuit special messages from the Lord. We can all know God's calling. "God has not called us to impurity but to live in holiness" (v. 7).

The will of God can be one of the most confusing concepts in the Christian life. Part of this confusion stems from the fact that the Bible talks about God's will in at least two different ways.

Some passages speak of God's will as fixed and inviolable. We can call this God's *will of decree*. God works all things after the counsel of His will (Eph 1:11). God does

Then other passages speak of God's will as something we can obey or disobey. We can call this God's *will of desire*. There aren't two wills in God, but the Bible does use the same language in two different ways. In 1 John 2:15-17, for example, the will of God is the opposite of "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride in one's possessions." Likewise, Jesus teaches that "only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven" will enter the kingdom (Mt 7:21). In passages like these, the will of God refers to the way God wants us to live.

To make matters more complicated, when Christians talk about "finding the will of God," they are usually thinking about a mysterious *will of direction*. The Bible, however, does not speak of God's will in this way. Yes, God has a specific plan for your life and mine (Ps 139:16), but there is no indication that He ordinarily means to reveal this plan to us ahead of time. Instead, He wants us to trust Him. We don't have to know the future because we belong to the God who not only knows the future but also exercises sovereign control over it.

Embracing the will of God is not about a process of . . . ve, whom e. Rather, ary—and more spir- ngdom of the while y need will

55 "Insight for Life" Articles

Read wisdom from more than 50 articles written by respected pastors and Christian leaders.

EVERY DAY Connection.
For EVERY MAN.

1332

INSIGHT FOR LIFE

Ordinary People Who Knew God

5

by Richard Blackaby

My goal is to know

of givin

Features

Contributors and Articles

David Wheaton

Embracing a Christian Worldview

John Fuller

No Longer Alone

Os Guinness

“Follow Me”: Two Words That Changed the World

Crawford Loritts

The Obedience of Faith

Joe Fant

I Forgive You

Michael Catt

Sanctified through Hardship

Robert Wolgemuth

No Place to Hide

Eugene (Gene) Habecker

Godly Leadership: The Heart of the Leader

Chris Brooks

Hope in the Face of Despair

Juan R. Sanchez

God’s Gracious Hand of Providence

Giancarlo Montemayor

The Pursuit of the Good Life

Andy McLean

In the Stars His Handiwork I See

Shane Barnard

Adjusting Your “Wanter”

John C. Driver

The Joy of the Lord Is Closer Than You Think

David Furman

Helpless on Our Own

Shane Everett

I’ll Take Some of That – a Heart Well Fed

Ray Ortlund

Integrity

Webb Simpson

My Brother on the Bag

Dan Wolgemuth

Speak Up . . . Defend

R. C. Sproul

Rotting on the Forest Floor

Martin Jones

Peaceful Work

D. Michael Lindsay

God’s Promise through Transition

David Swanson

You Want Some of This?

Byron Paulus

Praying for Revival

Bill Haslam

What Do You Do When the World Seems to Be Falling Apart?

Mark Vroegop

It Takes Faith to Grieve

Stephen Nichols

Here I Stand

Peter Greer

Go and Do

Ken Boa

Contemplation in Action

Devin Maddox

The Cost of Discipleship

Features

Tim Keese

“Go Out Quickly”

Max Anders

God’s High Plan for Your Life

James Merritt

Questions Christians Ask

Erik Wolgemuth

God’s Punishment for Sin

Daniel Darling

Step into Your Calling

Raleigh Washington

Awakening the Voice of Truth

Dan Wolgemuth

Neighbors

R. Albert Mohler Jr.

Be a Man

Bill Elliff

The Simple, Joyful Challenge of Following

Steve Brown

The Wonder of God’s Grace

Ken Tada

Love for a Lifetime

Bob Lepine

The Best Marriage Advice Ever

Richard Blackaby

Ordinary People Who Knew God

Kevin DeYoung

Embracing God’s Will

Christopher Yuan

Holy Sexuality: The Will of God

Mark Jobe

Fearless Living

Patrick Morley

The Purpose of the Bible Is to Make Disciples

George Grant

Unstring the Bow

Tim Challies

Releasing Our Spiritual Immunities to Fight the Fight

Ben Mandrell

The Most Important Ingredient of Leadership

Steven J. Lawson

A Cloud of Witnesses

Jim Daly

Breaking the Bondage of the Sins of Our Fathers

Mark DeMoss

Leaving a Godly Legacy

Dave Wilson

“I’ve Lost My Feelings for You”

Topics Include: marriage, parenting, family, work, leadership, and more.

LEARN MORE!



Features

234 “Insight for the Moment” Callouts

Even when you’re on the run, you can discover practical wisdom you can apply in your life today (and every day).

Insight for the Moment That Family Over There

Leviticus 11:1–8

This passage outlines extensive rules regarding certain animals that are not to be eaten—and those not permitted for the Israelites. In fact, many of the rules listed in the following chapters are no longer followed by

Insight for the Moment Yourself

Joshua 13:33

Every man understands the need to provide for himself. If you’re a dad, you feel appropriate pressure to provide for your family. Of course, you should. But this pressure is often intensified by our culture’s endless promotion of material things. It’s hard to consider our job complete if we simply provide the basics of food, clothing, and shelter. What about the latest electronic gadgets, cars for the kids when they turn sixteen, and a vacation home on the beach?

Don’t be fooled. Like God’s gift to the Levites, your finest gift to your friends, your colleagues, and your family is you—your time, your presence, your leadership, your affection, your love. And, of course, you’ll understand how much this means because God’s greatest gift to you is Himself.

...st what God had in mind. He gave to the Israelites only intended to set that specific time and (7:14–19; Ac 10:9–16). It means we get to pick which biblical rules still apply. It doesn’t. Christians have recognized the difference between moral and timeless laws. In the original context of our situations, God is setting His your family, and me and in this specific time and

Is being proud good or bad?

TEXT: OBADIAH 3–4

Pride can be good, and pride can be bad.

When someone “takes pride” in something, it is generally considered to be something that we do well at. We see those who have a high regard for quality work. We also hear of those who are proud of who God made you or of your name.” Again, these statements tell us that we should be proud of the work we are doing. These statements tell us that we should be embarrassed about the work we are doing.

But sinful pride is something that we should avoid. It is something that makes us happy to receive money or a better job or better people do. In the competition we become proud of, pride turned an angel into a devil (Rv 12:3–9).

Sinful pride also tells us that we are better than others and gives us a reason to be proud of our neighbor.

Pride is dangerous. We should understand that we are not better than everything we have has from our heavenly Father.

So take pleasure in doing something important to you or your son or daughter or family well. But beware of sinful pride, because of these things that those around you (see

How did the people who wrote the Bible know what to write?

TEXT: 2 PETER 1:20–21

Good question. Did the Bible’s writers have a heavenly recording device? Did they close their eyes and let God move the pen? Nothing indicates that it worked that way. The Bible says that the Holy Spirit inspired or led the writers. He guided the writers by giving them wisdom and a message, but they expressed it in their own words.

Each portion of the Bible reveals something about the person who wrote it. David, for example, wrote the psalms in a vulnerable and passionate way. We know he was sensitive and openhearted by the words he chose. Paul’s letters are forthright and systematic. From this we know that Paul was a logical thinker, one who knew how to argue, explain, and persuade. God can—and does—use different kinds of people to do His will.

Though the Bible is complete and we aren’t looking for further verbal revelation from God, the Holy Spirit continues to enlighten us in much the same way. He teaches each of us in a way that makes sense to us. As we follow God and listen carefully to His voice, we begin to discover God’s plan for our own lives.

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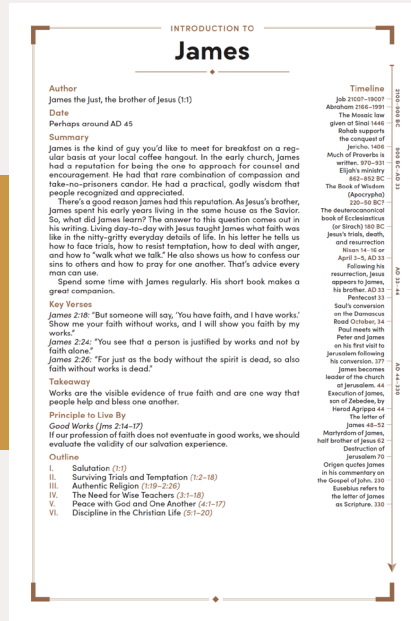
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Features

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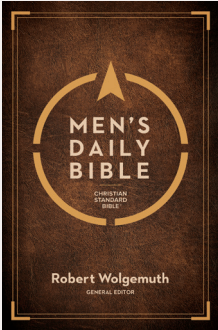


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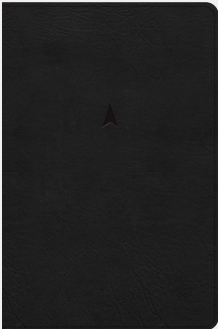
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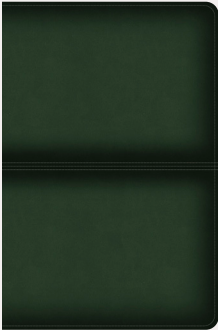
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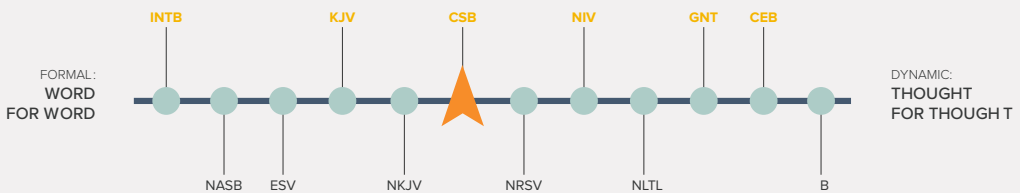
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The Christian Standard Bible presents the truth of God's Word with accuracy and clarity for today's readers, equipping them for lifelong discipleship. It's a Bible you can teach from with confidence and a Bible you can share with your neighbor who is hearing God's Word for the very first time.

OPTIMAL EQUIVALENCE

The CSB was created using Optimal Equivalence, a translation philosophy that pursues both linguistic precision to the original languages and readability in contemporary English.

In the many places throughout Scripture where a word-for-word rendering is clearly understandable, a literal translation is used. When a word-for-word rendering might obscure the meaning for a modern audience, a more dynamic translation is used. This process assures that both the words and thoughts contained in the original text are conveyed as accurately as possible for today's readers.



Bible translations shown in the top half of the chart are original translations directly from ancient languages to English. Versions shown below the line began with the English text of another Bible translation.

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Genesis

Author

Technically, the author of the book of Genesis is anonymous. It is one of the five books (Genesis–Deuteronomy, the Pentateuch) associated with Moses by both Old Testament and New Testament writers.

Date

Moses, who lived in the 1400s BC, wrote Genesis, even though the events he recorded occurred long before his time and the book itself saw later editorial updates.

Summary

This is the opening book to the world of the patriarchs—men whose names are indelibly chiseled on the marbled walls of history: Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. Two things can be said about these men: First, they were ordinary. Read on; you'll see. Second, they had no idea that people would be talking about them more than three millennia after their deaths.

These common men did what men have been doing since time began. They found work to do, most married, and many had children. And although this may be hard to comprehend, you are a patriarch, too. Many years from now, even if you're not married, your name will be familiar to a long line. These people will remember your gifts and your flaws, your successes, and your failures. This is amazing . . . and it's true. Genesis provides some clues about how to prepare for this kind of legacy.

Key Verses

Genesis 1:1: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."
Genesis 15:6: "Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness."

Takeaway

Through Genesis we understand where we came from, how we wound up in our fallen, broken state, and the beginnings of God's plan of salvation on our behalf.

Principle to Live By

God's Mercy (Gn 11:27–12:3)

Since God reached out to us before we reached out to Him (1Jn 4:19), we should always thank Him for saving us by His sovereign grace.

Outline

- I. Creation of Heaven and Earth (1:1–2:3)
- II. The Human Family In and Outside the Garden (2:4–4:26)
- III. Adam's Family Line (5:1–6:8)
- IV. Noah and His Family (6:9–9:29)
- V. The Nations and the Tower of Babylon (10:1–11:26)
- VI. Father Abraham (11:27–25:11)
- VII. Ishmael's Family Line (25:12–18)
- VIII. Isaac's Family: Jacob and Esau (25:19–35:29)
- IX. Esau's Family (36:1–8)
- X. Esau, Father of the Edomites (36:9–37:1)
- XI. Jacob's Family: Joseph and His Brothers (37:2–50:26)

Timeline

	2200 BC
Earliest pottery in South America	2200
Abraham	2166–1991
Construction of Ziggurat at Ur in Sumer	2100
Job	2100?–1900?
Abraham moves from Haran to Canaan.	2091
Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah	2085
God's covenant with Abraham	2081?
Ishmael born	2080?
Isaac	2066–1886
Jacob	2006–1859
Chinese create first zoo, Park of Intelligence.	2000
Babylonians and Egyptians divide days into hours, minutes, and seconds.	2000
Code of medical ethics, Mesopotamia	2000
Courier systems of communication are developed in both China and Egypt.	2000
Joseph	1915–1805
Benjamin is born; Rachel dies.	1900
Potter's wheel is introduced to Crete.	1900
Use of the sail in the Aegean	1900
Joseph sold into Egypt	1898
Khnumhotep II, an architect of Pharaoh Amenemhet II, develops encryption.	1900
Musical theory, Mesopotamia	1800
Multiplication tables, Mesopotamia	1800
Babylonians develop catalog of stars and planets.	1800
Horses are introduced in Egypt.	1800
	1800 BC

The Creation

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.^a

²Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness covered the surface of the watery depths, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters. ³Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. ⁴God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." There was an evening, and there was a morning: one day.

⁶Then God said, "Let there be an expanse between the waters, separating water from water." ⁷So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above the expanse. And it was so. ⁸God called the expanse "sky."^b Evening came and then morning: the second day.

⁹Then God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. ¹⁰God called the dry land "earth," and the gathering of the water he called "seas." And God saw that it was good. ¹¹Then God said, "Let the earth produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and fruit trees on the earth bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds." And it was so. ¹²The earth produced vegetation: seed-bearing plants according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. ¹³Evening came and then morning: the third day.

¹⁴Then God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night. They will serve as signs for seasons^c and for days and years. ¹⁵They will be lights in the expanse of the sky to provide light on the earth." And it was so. ¹⁶God made the two great lights — the greater light to rule over the day and the lesser light to rule over the night — as well as the stars. ¹⁷God placed them in the expanse of the sky to provide light on the earth, ¹⁸to rule the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹Evening came and then morning: the fourth day.

²⁰Then God said, "Let the water swarm with^d living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky." ²¹So God created the large sea-creatures and every living creature that moves and swarms in the water, according to their kinds. He also created every winged creature according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ²²God

blessed them: "Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the waters of the seas, and let the birds multiply on the earth."^e ²³Evening came and then morning: the fifth day.

²⁴Then God said, "Let the earth produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that crawl, and the wildlife of the earth according to their kinds." And it was so. ²⁵So God made the wildlife of the earth according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that crawl on the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

²⁶Then God said, "Let us make man^f in^f our image, according to our likeness. They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, the whole earth, and the creatures that crawl^g on the earth."

²⁷ So God created man in his own image; he created him in the image of God; he created them male and female.

²⁸God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. Rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that crawls on the earth."

²⁹God also said, "Look, I have given you every seed-bearing plant on the surface of the entire earth and every tree whose fruit contains seed. This will be food for you, ³⁰for all the wildlife of the earth, for every bird of the sky, and for every creature that crawls on the earth — everything having the breath of life in it — I have given^h every green plant for food." And it was so. ³¹God saw all that he had made, and it was very good indeed. Evening came and then morning: the sixth day.

2 So the heavens and the earth and everything in them were completed. ²On the seventhⁱ day God had completed his work that he had done, and he rested^j on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. ³God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, for on it he rested from all his work of creation.

Man and Woman in the Garden

⁴These are the records of the heavens and the earth, concerning their creation. At the time^k that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, ⁵no shrub of the field had yet grown on the land,^l and no plant of the field had yet sprouted, for the LORD God had not made it rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground. ⁶But mist would come up from the earth and water all the ground. ⁷Then the LORD God formed the man out of the dust

^a1:1 Or *created the universe* ^b1:8 Or "heavens." ^c1:14 Or *for the appointed times* ^d1:20 Lit *with swarms of*

^e1:26 Or *human beings*; Hb *'adam*, also in v. 27 ^f1:26 Or *as* ^g1:26 Or *scurry* ^h1:30 I *have given* added for clarity

ⁱ2:2 Sam, LXX, Syr read *sixth* ^j2:2 Or *ceased*, also in v. 3 ^k2:4 Lit *creation on the day* ^l2:5 Or *earth*

INSIGHT FOR LIFE

Embracing a Christian Worldview

by David Wheaton

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
Genesis 1

The most consequential assertion in all of history is found in the opening lines of the Bible: an eternal God exists, creates, and speaks.

This instantly demolishes all notions of randomness, purposeless, and autonomy. The Creator is there, and we—the created—are called to find out who He is, listen to what He has spoken, and learn how we are to worship Him.

That God exists, creates, and speaks are the foundation of the Christian worldview. The rest of Scripture builds on this foundation, presenting a fourfold framework that explains the arc of history—past, present, and future.

1. God created perfection (that which is “good”—“very good indeed”), establishing His will and ways;
2. Man rebelled, wreaking corruption, death, and alienation from God;
3. God graciously provided the only way of redemption through His Son Jesus Christ; and
4. God will reward the righteous, punish the rebels, and create new heavens and a new earth.

Worldview can be defined as one’s perspective on all matters of life, based on a collection of beliefs and convictions that drives the way a person thinks and lives.

Our worldview is formed by our influences and experiences. Parents, teachers, coaches, mentors, friends, and leaders impact our worldview. So does what you and I read, watch, and hear. Our life experiences—where we grew up, our triumphs and trials—also shape our worldview.

In discerning which worldview a man should embrace, the key question is: Which worldview aligns with reality—the way things really are?

While non-Christian worldviews may contain shades of truth, they are all based on the flawed reasonings of fallible men. The Christian worldview, however, is entirely true because it is based on the infallible God who reveals His flawless wisdom in His awesome creation, perfect Son, and inspired Word.

Scripture’s historical accuracy, thematic consistency, fulfilled prophecies, and miraculous events—like the resurrection of Christ—demonstrate this claim of divine inspiration, which is why Jesus said to His Father, “Your word is truth” (Jn 17:17).

To embrace a Christian worldview is more than assenting to the claims of Scripture. This would lead only to increased knowledge but not necessarily to a promise to love, obey, and worship God—the purpose for which we have been created.

Embracing a Christian worldview is ultimately about embracing Christ, “the one and only Son, who is himself God and is at the Father’s side” (Jn 1:18).

When you believe in Christ—His sinless life, substitutionary death on the cross, and supernatural resurrection as fully satisfying God’s wrath and justice for your sin—God will rescue you “from the domain of darkness and [transfer you] into the kingdom of the Son he loves” (Col 1:13).

And then, as you draw near to Christ—through talking to Him in prayer, hearing from Him through the reading and the faithful preaching of His Word, and engaging in a local church—your worldview will “be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God” (Rm 12:2).

What a thing to embrace and then share with others, all to the praise of His name!

DAY 1 — INSIGHT FOR THE DAY

Paying Attention

Passage for the Day: Genesis 1

God saw all that he had made, and it was very good indeed.

Evening came and then morning: the sixth day.

Genesis 1:31

“Daddy, watch this.”

“Honey, are you listening to me?”

Almost every dad on Earth has heard these words. They often come from the young members of his family who can see him but who suspect he’s somewhere else in his thoughts. And if you’re not watching, you’re probably not listening. As hearing-impaired people know, you listen with your eyes, not your ears.

The first chapter of Genesis contains the story of creation. It’s the written account of an almighty God who took nothingness and made something of it with the sound of His voice. God spoke, and everything appeared. From the Grand Teton mountains all the way down to mouse whiskers—really incredible when you think about it.

As you read this account, you’ll notice that after each day of creation, God stepped back and took a look at what He had done. And when He had seen it all, He declared it “good.”

If you’re a dad, what follows here is probably the most important thing you’ll read in the **INSIGHT FOR THE DAY** articles in this Bible.

It may be a stretch to say you “created” your family, but you surely had a lot to do with putting it together. None of this would have happened without you. That’s why these are your kids. And if you have step-kids, you’re still a huge part of their story.

The way life is, new things happen every day—new challenges at work, new technology to deal with, new aches and pains as your body gets older. It’s only natural to get distracted and forget to pay close attention to this thing you’ve had a part in building—your family.

The story of God’s creation is the story of God surveying what He had done. He did what He did, He took a good look—a careful look, and He was pleased. The rest of the Bible confirms that God kept watching, day after day. He paid close attention. He still does.

If you’re a dad as I am, you and I readily admit that we have a lot to learn. This was a whole new experience for us—something our formal education didn’t include. So we learn as we go. Through some trial and error, we discover what works and what doesn’t. But given God’s example, we should rarely catch ourselves saying, “You know, I never saw it coming,” “When did she start doing that?” or “I guess I just wasn’t paying attention.”

Our challenge is not just to live with our families but to really *be* there. To survey carefully. To understand that our job as the dad is to really see what’s going on and not succumb to the temptation of having our families, then getting on to the next thing without continuing to watch.

God’s pattern was to create, to pay close attention, and to celebrate every day. A pretty good model to follow, don’t you think?

Insight for the Moment

Good Work

Genesis 2:15

From the beginning, Adam was created to work. That's right; work was God's idea. It wasn't the result of sin or the consequence of God's punishing curse—although when Adam disobeyed, it did make things much harder. (See Genesis 3:17 for more on this idea.)

Work is a part of who we are as men. And, of course, the tasks we're faced with aren't always easy, but working—fathering, tending, leading, marketing, administrating, programming, lifting, creating, resolving, driving, implementing, house painting, or whatever you do—was a part of God's original design.

from the ground and breathed the breath of life into his nostrils, and the man became a living being.

⁸The LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he placed the man he had formed. ⁹The LORD God caused to grow out of the ground every tree pleasing in appearance and good for food, including the tree of life in the middle of the garden, as well as the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

¹⁰A river went^a out from Eden to water the garden. From there it divided and became the source of four rivers. ^b¹¹The name of the first is Pishon, which flows through the entire land of Havilah,^c where there is gold. ¹²Gold from that land is pure;^d bdellium^e and onyx^f are also there. ¹³The name of the second river is Gihon, which flows through the entire land of Cush. ¹⁴The name of the third river is Tigris, which runs east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

➤ ¹⁵The LORD God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden to work it and watch over it. ¹⁶And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree of the garden,¹⁷ but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for on the day you eat from it, you will certainly die." ¹⁸Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper corresponding to him." ¹⁹The LORD God formed out of the ground every wild animal and every bird of the sky, and brought each to the

man to see what he would call it. And whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. ²⁰The man gave names to all the livestock, to the birds of the sky, and to every wild animal; but for the man⁶ no helper was found corresponding to him. ²¹So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to come over the man, and he slept. God took one of his ribs and closed the flesh at that place. ²²Then the LORD God made the rib he had taken from the man into a woman and brought her to the man. ²³And the man said:

This one, at last, is bone of my bone
and flesh of my flesh;
this one will be called "woman,"
for she was taken from man.

²⁴This is why a man leaves his father and mother and bonds with his wife, and they become one flesh. ²⁵Both the man and his wife were naked, yet felt no shame.

The Temptation and the Fall

3 Now the serpent was the most cunning of all the wild animals that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You can't eat from any tree in the garden'?"

²The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit from the trees in the garden. ³But about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden, God said, 'You must not eat it or touch it, or you will die.'"

⁴"No! You will certainly not die," the serpent said to the woman. ⁵"In fact, God knows that when⁴ you eat it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." ⁶The woman saw that the tree was good for food and delightful to look at, and that it was desirable for obtaining wisdom. So she took some of its fruit and ate it; she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. ⁷Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

Sin's Consequences

⁸Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze,¹ and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹So the LORD God called out to the man and said to him, "Where are you?"

¹⁰And he said, "I heard you¹ in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid."

^a2:10 Or goes ^b2:10 Lit became four heads ^c2:11 Or of the Havilah ^d2:12 Lit good ^e2:12 A yellowish, transparent gum resin ^f2:12 Identity of this precious stone uncertain ¹2:20 Or for Adam ²3:5 Lit on the day ³3:8 Lit at the wind of the day ⁴3:10 Lit the sound of you

INSIGHT FOR LIFE

No Longer Alone

by John Fuller

Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone.
I will make a helper corresponding to him."
Genesis 2:18

When He fashioned Eve from Adam's rib (2:21–22), God intended for a relationship between them to also be created. Marriage. Scripture suggests that this union has three key purposes: lifelong companionship, sexual oneness, and procreation. You and I understand—and can perhaps more easily navigate—the sexual dimension of the relationship. It's that companionship—friendship—purpose that often challenges us.

Like many men, I don't naturally "do" companionship well. I'm really more of a loner. And so, to help me move away from my comfort zone and grow, God gave me a wife.

Since I met her on a camping trip almost four decades ago, Dena and I have been on a lifelong adventure. During our dating relationship, we enjoyed backpacking, time with friends, and late-night discussions. Our initial relationship felt natural. Then we got married, and that easygoing time together became a little challenging. OK, a lot more challenging!

The difficulties popped up almost immediately. Our honeymoon was wonderful except for an argument. And it was my fault. At a gift shop in northwest Arkansas, my selfishness was exposed. Unwilling to spend money on a memento she wanted, I provoked our first fight. My harsh words and argumentative spirit fractured the closeness we could—and should—have felt.

Maybe you can relate?

Despite our rocky honeymoon start, as our marriage has grown, my wife and I have experienced both security and significance. Our loyalty to a sovereign

God and to each other strengthens the relationship, and so we enjoy security. I long to be the one person in her life who will faithfully walk alongside her in any and all circumstances. As I demonstrate a Christlike heart and exhibit the fruit of the Spirit (Gl 5), I'm giving Dena a sense of safety and permanence. I try to verbalize that commitment frequently, sometimes with a playful jest: "You're stuck with me!"

So, what does it look like to have a deep, intimate companionship with your wife? And what's the reason? Having observed marital relationships for many years, Christian psychologist Dr. Larry Crabb offers two purposes for marriage. One for yourself and the other for her: "The security of being truly loved and accepted, and the significance of making a substantial, lasting, positive impact on the other person."¹

As to significance, it seems evident that God intends to use my mate in a good way, as "sandpaper" to smooth off the rough edges in my life. Certainly, God does the work, but Dena gets an "associate producer" credit for the way He works through her to cultivate a greater good in me. I think I've contributed to her growth as a believer, too. In our differences we complement and call out the best in each other. Marriage affords a unique opportunity to experience "iron sharpening iron" (see Pr 27:17).

If you're having a marital issue or feeling disconnected, consider how God might want to accomplish something significant through you and your mate as companions and partners. He knows it's not good to be alone, so I pray He will work through your marriage for His glory.

¹Lawrence J. Crabb Jr., *The Marriage Builder* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1982).

¹¹Then he asked, “Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?”

¹²The man replied, “The woman you gave to be with me — she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate.”

¹³So the LORD God asked the woman, “What have you done?”

The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

¹⁴So the LORD God said to the serpent:
Because you have done this,
you are cursed more than any livestock
and more than any wild animal.
You will move on your belly
and eat dust all the days of your life.

¹⁵ I will put hostility between you
and the woman,
and between your offspring
and her offspring.^a
He will strike your head,
and you will strike his heel.

¹⁶He said to the woman:
I will intensify your labor pains;
you will bear children
with painful effort.
Your desire will be for your husband,
yet he will rule over you.

➤ ¹⁷And he said to the man, “Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘Do not eat from it’:

The ground is cursed because of you.
You will eat from it by means of
painful labor^b
all the days of your life.

¹⁸ It will produce thorns
and thistles for you,
and you will eat the plants of the field.

¹⁹ You will eat bread^c by the sweat
of your brow
until you return to the ground,
since you were taken from it.
For you are dust,
and you will return to dust.”

²⁰The man named his wife Eve^d because she was the mother of all the living. ²¹The LORD God made clothing from skins for the man and his wife, and he clothed them.

²²The LORD God said, “Since the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil, he must not reach out, take from the tree of life, eat, and live forever.” ²³So the LORD God sent him away from the garden of Eden to work

Insight for the Moment

Backbreaking Stuff

Genesis 3:17–19

One of God’s punishments for Adam’s sin was to make work hard. It’s tough to imagine the ease of Adam’s work before sin, but you and I can easily picture the difficulty of work after sin. As a matter of fact, we’re still dealing with the consequences today.

Recognize what *didn’t* happen in this punishment: God didn’t make work shameful or bad. It was now going to require sweat and result in stress and soreness, but the fact that you and I have to work isn’t something we should ever resent.

the ground from which he was taken. ²⁴He drove the man out and stationed the cherubim and the flaming, whirling sword east of the garden of Eden to guard the way to the tree of life.

Cain Murders Abel

4 The man was intimate with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain. She said, “I have had a male child with the LORD’s help.”^e ²She also gave birth to his brother Abel. Now Abel became a shepherd of flocks, but Cain worked the ground. ³In the course of time Cain presented some of the land’s produce as an offering to the LORD. ⁴And Abel also presented an offering — some of the firstborn of his flock and their fat portions. The LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, ⁵but he did not have regard for Cain and his offering. Cain was furious, and he looked despondent.

⁶Then the LORD said to Cain, “Why are you furious? And why do you look despondent? ⁷If you do what is right, won’t you be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it.”

⁸Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let’s go out to the field.”^f And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

⁹Then the LORD said to Cain, “Where is your brother Abel?”

“I don’t know,” he replied. “Am I my brother’s guardian?”

¹⁰Then he said, “What have you done? Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground!

^a3:15 Lit your seed and her seed ^b3:17 Lit it through pain ^c3:19 Or food ^d3:20 Lit Living, or Life ^e4:1 Lit the LORD

^f4:8 Sam, LXX, Syr, Vg; MT omits “Let’s go out to the field.”

DAY 2 — INSIGHT FOR THE DAY

Perfection Includes Some Nos

Passage for the Day: Genesis 2:4–8, 15–17

The LORD God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden
to work it and watch over it.

Genesis 2:15

At this moment I'm looking out on a mid-May Michigan afternoon. The sky includes fluffy white cotton-candy clouds against an azure sky. I'm looking over the Saint Joseph River that at the moment features two pure-white wild swans floating in the gentle current. The flowers in the pots on the deck right in front of me feature brilliant blossoms. Bird feeders are covered with incredible-looking red-headed creatures and little wrens. The freshly mown grass frames the picture.

But as hard as it may be for me to imagine, the garden of Eden makes my vista look like a smoldering city dump.

Not only was Eden pretty, but it was also perfect in every other way, too. Man's relationship to woman was exquisite. Flawless. Woman's relationship to man included respect and affection. It was without shame or conflict or fear. And their relationship with their Creator was impeccable. Adam and Eve were delighted at all of this.

But amazingly, right in the middle of this beauty there was a no. A centrally located fruit-bearing tree that could not be eaten. Isn't that incredible? The perfect garden of Eden included a no.

Most of the time, you and I think of pure enjoyment having no boundaries. No inhibitions. No nos, if you will. All yeses. We want it; we get it, and no one stops us. Sounds great, doesn't it?

But God, knowing us better than we know ourselves, created us to need discipline—to be happier when certain restrictions and guidelines are firmly in place.

Now that I think about it, the view outside my window, the lush grass I mentioned, has been enhanced by some nasty chemical stuff to feed the turf and to keep weeds out. Occasionally this nice guy spreads smelly fertilizer on the grass. Several times a week, a young friend waters the pots and pinches off ugly, drooping petunia blossoms.

Sometimes being human requires a lot of maintenance. Regardless of your age, the ol' body is beginning to show serious signs of wear and tear. Not enough exercising and too many indulgences, right? Relationally, at times you feel like your household's policeman, prosecuting attorney, and judge. It seems like you're saying no all the time, you're charging your children with "crimes" you didn't witness, and you're trying to determine a fair punishment. Not exactly the stuff to award you with your county's Dad of the Year.

Take heart. Even Eden, as perfect as it was, included some discipline—a no tree. Sometimes healthy food isn't the most delicious, but your body is grateful that you often say no to junk food. And even though they may never celebrate this, your family is happier—and more pleasant—with the discipline you're imposing than they would be without it.

The garden of Eden was a perfect home that God, the Creator of the universe, built Himself. When He put our ancestor Adam there, He called the man "very good" (1:31). And yes, the garden included the discipline of forbidden fruit, but it also included a heavenly Father's tender love for His children that was unshakable and everlasting. What a great example of divine alignment this is for us to follow!

¹¹So now you are cursed, alienated from the ground that opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood you have shed.^a ¹²If you work the ground, it will never again give you its yield. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth."

¹³But Cain answered the LORD, "My punishment^b is too great to bear! ¹⁴Since you are banishing me today from the face of the earth, and I must hide from your presence and become a restless wanderer on the earth, who ever finds me will kill me."

¹⁵Then the LORD replied to him, "In that case,^c whoever kills Cain will suffer vengeance seven times over." And he placed a mark on Cain so that whoever found him would not kill him. ¹⁶Then Cain went out from the LORD's presence and lived in the land of Nod,^d east of Eden.

The Line of Cain

¹⁷Cain was intimate with his wife, and she conceived and gave birth to Enoch. Then Cain became the builder of a city, and he named the city Enoch after his son. ¹⁸Irada was born to Enoch, Irada fathered Mehujael, Mehujael fathered Methushael, and Methushael fathered Lamech. ¹⁹Lamech took two wives for himself, one named Adah and the other named Zillah. ²⁰Adah bore Jabal; he was the first^e of the nomadic herdsmen. ²¹His brother was named Jubal; he was the first^f of all who play the lyre and the flute. ²²Zillah bore Tubal-cain, who made all kinds of bronze and iron tools. Tubal-cain's sister was Naamah.

²³Lamech said to his wives:
Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;
wives of Lamech, pay attention
to my words.

For I killed a man for wounding me,
a young man for striking me.

²⁴ If Cain is to be avenged seven times over,
then for Lamech it will be
seventy-seven times!

²⁵Adam was intimate with his wife again, and she gave birth to a son and named him Seth, for she said, "God has given^g me another offspring^g in place of Abel, since Cain killed him." ²⁶A son was born to Seth also, and he named him Enosh. At that time people began to call on the name of the LORD.

The Line of Seth

5 This is the document containing the family^h records of Adam.ⁱ On the day that God created man,^j he made him in the likeness of

God;² he created them male and female. When they were created, he blessed them and called them mankind.^k

³Adam was 130 years old when he fathered a son in his likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth. ⁴Adam lived 800 years after he fathered Seth, and he fathered other sons and daughters. ⁵So Adam's life lasted 930 years; then he died.

⁶Seth was 105 years old when he fathered Enosh. ⁷Seth lived 807 years after he fathered Enosh, and he fathered other sons and daughters. ⁸So Seth's life lasted 912 years; then he died.

⁹Enosh was 90 years old when he fathered Kenan. ¹⁰Enosh lived 815 years after he fathered Kenan, and he fathered other sons and daughters. ¹¹So Enosh's life lasted 905 years; then he died.

¹²Kenan was 70 years old when he fathered Mahalalel. ¹³Kenan lived 840 years after he fathered Mahalalel, and he fathered other sons and daughters. ¹⁴So Kenan's life lasted 910 years; then he died.

¹⁵Mahalalel was 65 years old when he fathered Jared. ¹⁶Mahalalel lived 830 years after he fathered Jared, and he fathered other sons and daughters. ¹⁷So Mahalalel's life lasted 895 years; then he died.

¹⁸Jared was 162 years old when he fathered Enoch. ¹⁹Jared lived 800 years after he fathered Enoch, and he fathered other sons and daughters. ²⁰So Jared's life lasted 962 years; then he died.

²¹Enoch was 65 years old when he fathered Methuselah. ²²And after he fathered Methuselah, Enoch walked with God 300 years and fathered other sons and daughters. ²³So Enoch's life lasted 365 years. ²⁴Enoch walked with God; then he was not there because God took him.

²⁵Methuselah was 187 years old when he fathered Lamech. ²⁶Methuselah lived 782 years after he fathered Lamech, and he fathered other sons and daughters. ²⁷So Methuselah's life lasted 969 years; then he died.

²⁸Lamech was 182 years old when he fathered a son. ²⁹And he named him Noah,^l saying, "This one will bring us relief from the agonizing labor of our hands, caused by the ground the LORD has cursed." ³⁰Lamech lived 595 years after he fathered Noah, and he fathered other sons and daughters. ³¹So Lamech's life lasted 777 years; then he died.

³²Noah was 500 years old, and he fathered Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

^a4:11 Lit *blood from your hand* ^b4:13 Or *sin* ^c4:15 LXX, Syr, Vg read "Not so!" ^d4:16 Lit *Wandering* ^e4:20,21 Lit *father*

^f4:25 The Hb word for *given* sounds like the name "Seth." ^g4:25 Lit *seed* ^h5:1 Lit *written family* ⁱ5:1 Or *mankind*

^j5:1 Or *Adam, human beings* ^k5:2 Hb *'adam* ^l5:29 In Hb, the name *Noah* sounds like "bring us relief."

DAY 3 — INSIGHT FOR THE DAY

Stepping Up

Passage for the Day: Genesis 3:1–19

And he said, "I heard you in the garden,
and I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid."

Genesis 3:10

The meeting was getting hot. What had started as a session to clear the air of some misunderstandings was quickly deteriorating. People stood to express their anger. Fingers were pointed at one another, and voices were raised to hurtful decibels. "You lied!" one man finally charged, his eyes bearing down on me.

My heart raced. I'm sure my face flushed with embarrassment as I recalled the incident in question. Had I lied? I didn't think so. Had I been deceptive? Yes. My accuser wasn't satisfied. He wanted a full confession of a "lie"; simply calling it "deception" wouldn't do. Then, in a quiet moment of unexpected tenderness, he softened his tone. "I'm not calling you a liar," he said.

For the next hour, I sat there stunned. Even though the meeting continued with pointed exchanges, I hardly spoke a word. In retrospect, I know God was speaking to me. And what I heard Him whisper to me was incredibly helpful.

I had sincerely held my ground over the difference between a *lie* and a *deception*, but the concession that "I wasn't a liar" had pierced my conscience. The guy was wrong. I *am* a sinful man—a liar, a thief, a selfish and lustful man. I can rightly justify certain actions, parsing words and clarifying my position, but the Bible makes the truth about me abundantly clear: "There is no one righteous, not even one" (Rm 3:10). This includes Adam. And me. And you.

Adam got caught, so to deflect God's charge, he blamed Eve. Adam knew better. When you read the whole conversation between Eve and the serpent carefully, it's clear that Adam was right there for the whole thing. Instead of interrupting the exchange and protecting his wife from the sneaky words of the evil one, he stood quietly. Passively. He watched while Eve did what God specifically had told them not to do. And then when challenged by his Friend—a holy God—Adam transferred the blame to his wife. Instead of stepping up and confessing, Adam chickened out.

Like many other men that you and I read about in the Bible, Adam did a foolish thing. He tried to escape, to hide from God.

When my meeting was finished, I invited my challenger to follow me into an empty office. Through tears of confession and remorse, I acknowledged that, even though we disagreed on the semantics of this particular deed, I was a sinful man, capable of lying, deceiving, cheating, and failing to step up to defend what was right and true. I asked his forgiveness. My former adversary accepted my confession, forgave me, and then embraced me with a few tears of his own.

God's grace is the only chance we have to be fit as men. Our friends, our family must witness our courage to do the right thing. They need to hear words of confession coming from our lips. Their forgiveness must be sought when we fail—notice that I said *when not if*.

When we sincerely confess, they'll forgive. If we stand silent or try to hide, we'll lose.

Sons of God and Daughters of Mankind

6 When mankind began to multiply on the earth and daughters were born to them, ²the sons of God saw that the daughters of mankind were beautiful, and they took any they chose as wives for themselves. ³And the LORD said, “My Spirit will not remain^a with^b mankind forever, because they are corrupt.^c Their days will be 120 years.” ⁴The Nephilim^d were on the earth both in those days and afterward, when the sons of God came to the daughters of mankind, who bore children to them. They were the powerful men of old, the famous men.

Judgment Decreed

⁵When the LORD saw that human wickedness was widespread on the earth and that every inclination of the human mind was nothing but evil all the time, ⁶the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and he was deeply grieved. ⁷Then the LORD said, “I will wipe mankind, whom I created, off the face of the earth, together with the animals, creatures that crawl, and birds of the sky — for I regret that I made them.” ⁸Noah, however, found favor with the LORD.

God Warns Noah

⁹These are the family records of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among his contemporaries; Noah walked with God. ¹⁰And Noah fathered three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

¹¹Now the earth was corrupt in God’s sight, and the earth was filled with wickedness.^e ¹²God saw how corrupt the earth was, for every creature had corrupted its way on the earth. ¹³Then God said to Noah, “I have decided to put an end to every creature, for the earth is filled with wickedness because of them; therefore I am going to destroy them along with the earth.

¹⁴“Make yourself an ark of gopher^f wood. Make rooms in the ark, and cover it with pitch inside and outside. ¹⁵This is how you are to make it: The ark will be 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high.^g ¹⁶You are to make a roof,^h finishing the sides of the ark to within eighteen inchesⁱ of the roof. You are to put a door in the side of the ark. Make it with lower, middle, and upper decks.

¹⁷“Understand that I am bringing a flood — floodwaters on the earth to destroy every creature under heaven with the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish. ¹⁸But I

will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark with your sons, your wife, and your sons’ wives. ¹⁹You are also to bring into the ark two of all the living creatures, male and female, to keep them alive with you. ²⁰Two of everything — from the birds according to their kinds, from the livestock according to their kinds, and from the animals that crawl on the ground according to their kinds — will come to you so that you can keep them alive. ²¹Take with you every kind of food that is eaten; gather it as food for you and for them.” ²²And Noah did this. He did everything that God had commanded him.

Entering the Ark

7 Then the LORD said to Noah, “Enter the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen that you alone are righteous before me in this generation. ²You are to take with you seven pairs, a male and its female, of all the clean animals, and two of the animals that are not clean, a male and its female, ³and seven pairs, male and female, of the birds of the sky — in order to keep offspring alive throughout the earth. ⁴Seven days from now I will make it rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and every living thing I have made I will wipe off the face of the earth.” ⁵And Noah did everything that the LORD commanded him.

⁶Noah was six hundred years old when the flood came and water covered the earth. ⁷So Noah, his sons, his wife, and his sons’ wives entered the ark because of the floodwaters. ⁸From the animals that are clean, and from the animals that are not clean, and from the birds and every creature that crawls on the ground, ⁹two of each, male and female, came to Noah and entered the ark, just as God had commanded him. ¹⁰Seven days later the floodwaters came on the earth.

The Flood

¹¹In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the sources of the vast watery depths burst open, the floodgates of the sky were opened, ¹²and the rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights. ¹³On that same day Noah and his three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, entered the ark, along with Noah’s wife and his three sons’ wives. ¹⁴They entered it with all the wildlife according to their kinds, all livestock according to their kinds, all the creatures that crawl on the earth according to their kinds, every flying creature

^a6:3 Or *strive* ^b6:3 Or *in* ^c6:3 Lit *flesh* ^d6:4 Possibly means “fallen ones”; traditionally, “giants”; Nm 13:31–33

^e6:11 Or *injustice*, also in v. 13 ^f6:14 Unknown species of tree; perhaps pine or cypress ^g6:15 Or *300 cubits long, 50 cubits wide, and 30 cubits high* ^h6:16 Or *window, or hatch*; Hb uncertain ⁱ6:16 Lit *to a cubit*

DAY 4 — INSIGHT FOR THE DAY

God's Waiting Room

Passage for the Day: Genesis 8

So Noah, along with his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives, came out. All the animals, all the creatures that crawl, and all the flying creatures—everything that moves on the earth—came out of the ark by their families.
Genesis 8:18–19

Why is this so important to you?" My late wife was fascinated with the unusual intensity of the way I was watching the final game of the 1984 National League Championship. I groaned with every strike and hollered with every ground ball that snaked its way through the infield. Until then this was the most important baseball game I had ever watched.

I have always been a Cubs fan. Having grown up in the Windy City, it was almost inevitable—little boys in Chicago followed the Cubbies. We made believe we were playing in Wrigley Field, we wore Cubs baseball caps, and we were Ron Santo, Don Kessinger, Glenn Beckert, and Ernie Banks, third to first. And one day, we promised ourselves that we were going to win the World Series.¹

The Bible is full of two-part stories. The first part is the account of God's spoken promise. The second part is the fulfillment of that promise. The problem is that between the first part and the second part, there is usually a gap . . . sometimes a large gap—a space of time where the people who received the verbal promise had to wait to see it come to pass. Kind of like being a Cubs fan my whole life.

From a purely practical standpoint, Noah had to wait it out in the middle of some miserable circumstances. He, his family, and all those animals had been cooped up for more than two hundred days. We can only imagine what the place must have looked and smelled like. The animals must have been restless. Noah's sons certainly had taken their dad aside and asked him if he thought this would ever end. And Mrs. Noah must have been right on the edge of total insanity. And who could have blamed her? What an awful situation. Poor Noah.

God's promises fill the pages of the Bible. These promises give us hope. They assure us of God's trustworthiness and abiding presence. Like the wilderness between Egypt and Canaan. Unfortunately, some of our lives are lived in the gap between the hearing of those promises and the fulfillment of them.

Have you been there? Have you done something radical—moved your family to a new town or changed jobs—sincerely believing it was what God wanted you to do, only to find yourself waiting and completely miserable? I've been there, too.

Well, we're in good company—Noah, Abraham, Jacob, David, Job. Men who heard God's voice, believed the promise, and then had to wait. And wait. And wait some more.

Are you waiting for something you thought God would have delivered by now—satisfaction at work, healing from an illness, reconciliation with an old friend?

The assurance we have is that, in every case, in His own way, God meant what He said. His promise was good. Those who had to wait did not wait in vain. Take *that* promise with you.

By the way, the Cubs, after taking an early lead, lost that championship game to the Padres 6 to 4. The Padres!

Then thirty-two years later, I would be glued to another game. Believe it or not, it's game 7 of the World Series. The Cubs—my Cubs—are in a virtual fistfight in the ninth

¹In 2016, exactly thirty-two years later, when I was a much older man, the Cubs brought home the big trophy.

inning against a mighty Cleveland franchise. This time these guys pulled it out. After 108 years, the Northsiders were able to hoist the trophy, which they did a week later in front of 5 million people.

Maybe not as thrilling as the Jews landing in the promised land. But close.

— all the birds and every winged creature — according to their kinds. ¹⁵Two of every creature that has the breath of life in it came to Noah and entered the ark. ¹⁶Those that entered, male and female of every creature, entered just as God had commanded him. Then the LORD shut him in.

¹⁷The flood continued for forty days on the earth; the water increased and lifted up the ark so that it rose above the earth. ¹⁸The water surged and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the surface of the water. ¹⁹Then the water surged even higher on the earth, and all the high mountains under the whole sky were covered. ²⁰The mountains were covered as the water surged above them more than twenty feet.^A ²¹Every creature perished — those that crawl on the earth, birds, livestock, wildlife, and those that swarm on the earth, as well as all mankind. ²²Everything with the breath of the spirit of life in its nostrils — everything on dry land died. ²³He wiped out every living thing that was on the face of the earth, from mankind to livestock, to creatures that crawl, to the birds of the sky, and they were wiped off the earth. Only Noah was left, and those that were with him in the ark. ²⁴And the water surged on the earth 150 days.

The Flood Recedes

8 God remembered Noah, as well as all the wildlife and all the livestock that were with him in the ark. God caused a wind to pass over the earth, and the water began to subside. ²The sources of the watery depths and the floodgates of the sky were closed, and the rain from the sky stopped. ³The water steadily receded from the earth, and by the end of 150 days the water had decreased significantly. ⁴The ark came to rest in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on the mountains of Ararat.

⁵The water continued to recede until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were visible. ⁶After forty days Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made, ⁷and he sent out a raven. It went back and forth

until the water had dried up from the earth. ⁸Then he sent out a dove to see whether the water on the earth's surface had gone down, ⁹but the dove found no resting place for its foot. It returned to him in the ark because water covered the surface of the whole earth. He reached out and brought it into the ark to himself. ¹⁰So Noah waited seven more days and sent out the dove from the ark again. ¹¹When the dove came to him at evening, there was a plucked olive leaf in its beak. So Noah knew that the water on the earth's surface had gone down. ¹²After he had waited another seven days, he sent out the dove, but it did not return to him again. ¹³In the six hundred first year,^B in the first month, on the first day of the month, the water that had covered the earth was dried up. Then Noah removed the ark's cover and saw that the surface of the ground was drying. ¹⁴By the twenty-seventh day of the second month, the earth was dry.

The LORD's Promise

¹⁵Then God spoke to Noah, ¹⁶"Come out of the ark, you, your wife, your sons, and your sons' wives with you. ¹⁷Bring out all the living creatures that are with you — birds, livestock, those that crawl on the earth — and they will spread over the earth and be fruitful and multiply on the earth." ¹⁸So Noah, along with his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives, came out. ¹⁹All the animals, all the creatures that crawl, and all the flying creatures — everything that moves on the earth — came out of the ark by their families.

²⁰Then Noah built an altar to the LORD. He took some of every kind of clean animal and every kind of clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. ²¹When the LORD smelled the pleasing aroma, he said to himself, "I will never again curse the ground because of human beings, even though the inclination of the human heart is evil from youth onward. And I will never again strike down every living thing as I have done.

²² As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, and day and night will not cease."

^A7:20 Lit *surged 15 cubits* ^B8:13 = of Noah's life

God's Covenant with Noah

9 God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. ²The fear and terror of you will be in every living creature on the earth, every bird of the sky, every creature that crawls on the ground, and all the fish of the sea. They are placed under your authority. ³Every creature that lives and moves will be food for you; as I gave the green plants, I have given you everything. ⁴However, you must not eat meat with its lifeblood in it. ⁵And I will require a penalty for your lifeblood; ^aI will require it from any animal and from any human; if someone murders a fellow human, I will require that person's life.

⁶ Whoever sheds human blood, by humans his blood will be shed, for God made humans in his image.

⁷But you, be fruitful and multiply; spread out over the earth and multiply on it.”

⁸Then God said to Noah and his sons with him, ⁹“Understand that I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, ¹⁰and with every living creature that is with you — birds, livestock, and all wild-life of the earth that are with you — all the animals of the earth that came out of the ark. ¹¹I establish my covenant with you that never again will every creature be wiped out by floodwaters; there will never again be a flood to destroy the earth.”

¹²And God said, “This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all future generations: ¹³I have placed my bow in the clouds, and it will be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. ¹⁴Whenever I form clouds over the earth and the bow appears in the clouds, ¹⁵I will remember my covenant between me and you and all the living creatures: water will never again become a flood to destroy every creature. ¹⁶The bow will be in the clouds, and I will look at it and remember the permanent covenant between God and all the living creatures on earth.” ¹⁷God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and every creature on earth.”

Prophecies about Noah's Family

¹⁸Noah's sons who came out of the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Ham was the father of Canaan. ¹⁹These three were Noah's sons, and from them the whole earth was populated.

²⁰Noah, as a man of the soil, began by planting ^ba vineyard. ²¹He drank some of the wine, became drunk, and uncovered himself inside his tent. ²²Ham, the father of Canaan, saw his father naked and told his two brothers outside. ²³Then Shem and Japheth took a cloak and placed it over both their shoulders, and walking backward, they covered their father's nakedness. Their faces were turned away, and they did not see their father naked.

²⁴When Noah awoke from his drinking and learned what his youngest son had done to him, ²⁵he said:

Canaan is cursed.
He will be the lowest of slaves
to his brothers.

²⁶He also said:

Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem;
Let Canaan be ^cShem's slave.

²⁷ Let God extend Japheth,^d
let Japheth dwell in the tents of Shem;
let Canaan be Shem's slave.

²⁸Now Noah lived 350 years after the flood.

²⁹So Noah's life lasted 950 years; then he died.

The Table of Nations

10 These are the family records of Noah's sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. They also had sons after the flood.

²Japheth's sons: Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras. ³Gomer's sons: Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah. ⁴And Javan's sons: Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim. ⁵From these descendants, the peoples of the coasts and islands spread out into their lands according to their clans in their nations, each with its own language.

⁶Ham's sons: Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan. ⁷Cush's sons: Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Ramah, and Sabteca. And Raamah's sons: Sheba and Dedan.

⁸Cush fathered Nimrod, who began to be powerful in the land. ⁹He was a powerful hunter in the sight of the LORD. That is why it is said, “Like Nimrod, a powerful hunter in the sight of the LORD.” ¹⁰His kingdom started with Babylon, Erech,^f Accad,^g and Calneh,^h in the land of Shinar. ¹¹From that land he went to Assyria and built Nineveh, Rehoboth-ir, Calah, ¹²and Resen, between Nineveh and the great city Calah.

¹³Mizraimⁱ fathered the people of Lud, Anam, Lehab, Naphtuh, ¹⁴Pathrus, Casluh (the Philistines came from them), and Caphtor.

^a9:5 Lit *And your blood belonging to your life I will seek* ^b9:20 Or *Noah began to be a farmer and planted* ^c9:26 As a wish or prayer; others interpret the verbs in vv. 26–27 as prophecy: *Canaan will be . . .* ^d9:27 In Hb, the name *Japheth* sounds like the word “extend.” ^e10:4 Some Hb mss, LXX read *Rodanim*; 1Ch 1:7 ^f10:10 Or *Uruk* ^g10:10 Or *Akkad* ^h10:10 Or *and all of them* ⁱ10:10 Or *in Babylonia* ^j10:13 = Egypt

¹⁵ Canaan fathered Sidon his firstborn and Heth, ¹⁶ as well as the Jebusites, the Amorites, the Girgashites, ¹⁷ the Hivites, the Arkites, the Sinites, ¹⁸ the Arvadites, the Zemarites, and the Hamathites. Afterward the Canaanite clans scattered. ¹⁹ The Canaanite border went from Sidon going toward Gerar as far as Gaza, and going toward Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim as far as Lasha.

²⁰ These are Ham's sons by their clans, according to their languages, in their lands and their nations.

²¹ And Shem, Japheth's older brother, also had sons. Shem was the father of all the sons of Eber. ²² Shem's sons were Elam, Asshur, Arpachshad, Lud, and Aram.

²³ Aram's sons: Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash.

²⁴ Arpachshad fathered^a Shelah, and Shelah fathered Eber. ²⁵ Eber had two sons. One was named Peleg,^b for during his days the earth was divided; his brother was named Joktan. ²⁶ And Joktan fathered Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, ²⁷ Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, ²⁸ Obal, Abimael, Sheba, ²⁹ Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab. All these were Joktan's sons. ³⁰ Their settlements extended from Mesha to Sephar, the eastern hill country.

³¹ These are Shem's sons by their clans, according to their languages, in their lands and their nations.

³² These are the clans of Noah's sons, according to their family records, in their nations. The nations on earth spread out from these after the flood.

The Tower of Babylon

11 The whole earth had the same language and vocabulary. ² As people migrated from the east,^c they found a valley in the land of Shinar and settled there. ³ They said to each other, "Come, let's make oven-fired bricks." (They used brick for stone and asphalt for mortar.) ⁴ And they said, "Come, let's build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the sky. Let's make a name for ourselves; otherwise, we will be scattered throughout the earth."

⁵ Then the LORD came down to look over the city and the tower that the humans^d were building. ⁶ The LORD said, "If they have begun to do this as one people all having the same language, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. ⁷ Come, let's go down there and confuse their language so that they

will not understand one another's speech."^e ⁸ So from there the LORD scattered them throughout the earth, and they stopped building the city. ⁹ Therefore it is called Babylon,^{e,f} for there the LORD confused the language of the whole earth, and from there the LORD scattered them throughout the earth.

From Shem to Abram

¹⁰ These are the family records of Shem. Shem lived 100 years and fathered Arpachshad two years after the flood. ¹¹ After he fathered Arpachshad, Shem lived 500 years and fathered other sons and daughters. ¹² Arpachshad lived 35 years^g and fathered Shelah. ¹³ After he fathered Shelah, Arpachshad lived 403 years and fathered other sons and daughters. ¹⁴ Shelah lived 30 years and fathered Eber. ¹⁵ After he fathered Eber, Shelah lived 403 years and fathered other sons and daughters. ¹⁶ Eber lived 34 years and fathered Peleg. ¹⁷ After he fathered Peleg, Eber lived 430 years and fathered other sons and daughters. ¹⁸ Peleg lived 30 years and fathered Reu. ¹⁹ After he fathered Reu, Peleg lived 209 years and fathered other sons and daughters. ²⁰ Reu lived 32 years and fathered Serug. ²¹ After he fathered Serug, Reu lived 207 years and fathered other sons and daughters. ²² Serug lived 30 years and fathered Nahor. ²³ After he fathered Nahor, Serug lived 200 years and fathered other sons and daughters. ²⁴ Nahor lived 29 years and fathered Terah. ²⁵ After he fathered Terah, Nahor lived 119 years and fathered other sons and daughters. ²⁶ Terah lived 70 years and fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

²⁷ These are the family records of Terah. Terah fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran, and Haran fathered Lot. ²⁸ Haran died in his native land, in Ur of the Chaldeans, during his father Terah's lifetime. ²⁹ Abram and Nahor took wives: Abram's wife was named Sarai, and Nahor's wife was named Milcah. She was the daughter of Haran, the father of both Milcah and Iscah. ³⁰ Sarai was unable to conceive; she did not have a child.

³¹ Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot (Haran's son), and his daughter-in-law Sarai, his son Abram's wife, and they set out together from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to the land of Canaan. But when they came to Haran, they settled there. ³² Terah lived 205 years and died in Haran.

^a10:24 LXX reads *fathered Cainan, and Cainan fathered*; Gn 11:12–13; Lk 3:35–36 ^b10:25 = Division ^c11:2 Or *migrated eastward* ^d11:5 Or *the descendants of Adam* ^e11:9 Hb *Babel* ^f11:9 In Hb, the name for "Babylon," *babel* sounds like the word for "confuse," *balal*. ^g11:12–13 LXX reads *years and fathered Cainan*. ^h11:12–13 LXX reads *years and fathered Cainan, Arpachshad lived 430 years and fathered other sons and daughters, and he died. Cainan lived 130 years and fathered Shelah. After he fathered Shelah, Cainan lived 330 years and fathered other sons and daughters, and he died*; Gn 10:24; Lk 3:35–36

DAY 5 — INSIGHT FOR THE DAY

Making a Name for Yourself

Passage for the Day: Genesis 11:1–9

And they said, “Come, let’s build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the sky. Let’s make a name for ourselves; otherwise, we will be scattered throughout the earth.”

Genesis 11:4

Wouldn’t it be great to be famous? I mean, *really* famous—to regularly have your photograph on the internet or on TV and to have folks recognize you when you travel? Wouldn’t it be fun to drive into a big city and see your name on a billboard or at the top of a skyscraper?

And the money! You’d get paid lots of money just to show up to events. Your local Ferrari dealer would give you one of those lightning-quick Enzos just to stand around the showroom a couple of times a year. I’m getting fired up just thinking about it.

Life was getting a little mundane and ordinary for Noah’s descendants—up every morning, off to the fields, home for lunch, off to the fields again, back for dinner, a few hours with the family, a good night’s rest, and back at it again. Not a lot of status here. No bright lights. No pizzazz.

So a group of men got together and decided it was time to make a name for themselves. “Enough of the straight life,” they must have grumbled. “Forget this faithful employee, man, husband, and father stuff. Let’s go do something epic so that everyone knows who we are. Then we’ll really be something.”

And because most men like to build things, they started constructing a tower. They wanted people to see their superstructure for miles around and be impressed, realizing what significant, creative, and daring entrepreneurs they really were.

Think about what it may have been like on the first day of construction. All the blueprints had been approved, the materials were in place, and the proud workers were ready to go. But no one suggested that, before they began to build, perhaps they ought to ask for God’s permission or blessing. It’s probably safe to say that they ignored God while they were drawing up their plans. No invocation to start building. “God will understand,” they may have said to one another in their strategic planning meetings. “After all, this project isn’t about Him; it’s about us. We’ll get back to Him when we’re ready to build something religious.”

But God stopped the project. He created incredible confusion by giving these arrogant men different languages to speak. No longer could they work together. Cooperation became confusion. They couldn’t even ask one another to pass a tool or go fetch a box of nails. What had begun as a project to make these men famous turned into an everlasting monument to conflict, failure, and shame—Babel or, Babylon. (A perfect name for this fiasco, right?)

Genesis 28 tells us about Jacob, who traveled on an overnight trip to meet his wife. He spent the night under the stars, and God visited him in a profound and life-altering way. The next morning, Jacob carefully took the rock he had been using as his pillow and stood it on end as a memorial to God’s glory and faithfulness. And this simple tower—Bethel—became an everlasting monument to God’s presence and leadership in the life of men who are willing to humble themselves in His presence. Bethel was a building project to honor God. A place, if you will, to make *Him* famous.

What are you and I building today: a Babel or a Bethel? Who will be honored? And what should we expect the outcome to be?

The Call of Abram

- **12** The LORD said to Abram:
 Go from your land,
 your relatives,
 and your father's house
 to the land that I will show you.
- ² I will make you into a great nation,
 I will bless you,
 I will make your name great,
 and you will be a blessing.
- ³ I will bless those who bless you,
 I will curse anyone who treats you
 with contempt,
 and all the peoples on earth
 will be blessed^a through you.^b

⁴ So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran. ⁵He took his wife, Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated, and the people they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan. When they came to the land of Canaan, ⁶Abram passed through the land to the site of Shechem, at the oak of Moreh. (At that time the Canaanites were in the land.) ⁷The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring^c I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him. ⁸From there he moved on to the hill country east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. He built an altar to the LORD there, and he called on the name of the LORD. ⁹Then Abram journeyed by stages to the Negev.

Abram in Egypt

¹⁰ There was a famine in the land, so Abram went down to Egypt to stay there for a while because the famine in the land was severe. ¹¹When he was about to enter Egypt, he said to his wife, Sarai, "Look, I know what a beautiful woman you are. ¹²When the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife.' They will kill me but let you live. ¹³Please say you're my sister so it will go well for me because of you, and my life will be spared on your account." ¹⁴When Abram entered Egypt, the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful. ¹⁵Pharaoh's officials saw her and praised her to Pharaoh, so the woman was taken to Pharaoh's household. ¹⁶He treated Abram well because of her, and Abram acquired flocks and herds, male and female donkeys, male and female slaves, and camels.

¹⁷ But the LORD struck Pharaoh and his household with severe plagues because of Abram's

Insight for the Moment

Moving Day

Genesis 12:1–8

Moving is hard enough on adults. But, if you're married, what about your family? Packing everything up, saying goodbye to friends, and striking out to an unfamiliar place can be an intimidating and difficult thing for them, too.

If you feel God directing you to something that requires relocating family headquarters, make sure you have open communication with your wife and your children. Give them a chance to voice their fears about the unknown and their sadness about leaving their current circumstances, and let them know you're right there with them.

Remind them of Abram. Even though he didn't pack his family's things on an eighteen-wheeler like we do, God has been guiding and guarding His people through moves for a long time.

wife, Sarai. ¹⁸So Pharaoh sent for Abram and said, "What have you done to me? Why didn't you tell me she was your wife?" ¹⁹Why did you say, 'She's my sister,' so that I took her as my wife? Now, here is your wife. Take her and go!" ²⁰Then Pharaoh gave his men orders about him, and they sent him away with his wife and all he had.

Abram and Lot Separate

13 Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev — he, his wife, and all he had, and Lot with him. ²Abram was very rich in livestock, silver, and gold. ³He went by stages from the Negev to Bethel, to the place between Bethel and Ai where his tent had formerly been, ⁴to the site where he had built the altar. And Abram called on the name of the LORD there.

⁵Now Lot, who was traveling with Abram, also had flocks, herds, and tents. ⁶But the land was unable to support them as long as they stayed together, for they had so many possessions that they could not stay together, ⁷and there was quarreling between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. (At that time the Canaanites and the Perizzites were living in the land.)

^a12:3 Or will find blessing ^b12:3 Or will bless themselves by you ^c12:7 Lit seed

INSIGHT FOR LIFE

“Follow Me”: Two Words that Changed the World

by Os Guinness

The LORD said to Abram: Go from your land, your relatives, and your father's house to the land that I will show you.

Genesis 12:1

The good news of the Bible is God's great master story, the grand narrative of His project in restoring humanity and repairing the world in order to make the world anew. At its heart is God's call to human beings to come to know Him and to be His partners. From individuals to families, to nations, and then in Jesus the Messiah to the whole world, two words ring out in a hundred ways, “Follow Me.” The first responder was Abraham, and the call of Abraham shows us a pattern that can be seen in all later calls—supremely in the call of Jesus to His followers. Seven features stand out in Abraham's call.

First, God called Abraham in words. The creation of the world was effected through a word, and God's call comes as a word. Without words, there are no deep relationships. In a day when the visual dominates the audio and social media cheapen words, the Bible's high view of words is vital and challenging.

Second, God's call to Abraham is countercultural. The first word is “go.” Abraham was to leave his country, his culture, and his kin, the three main forces that shape our lives. To follow God's call is to break with the worship and the way of life of those around us. We are to be *in* the world but not *of* it. We are members of the City of God, even as we live in the City of Man.

Third, God's call is to a lifetime of radical trust. God made promises to Abraham about his descendants, a promised land,

and about his family blessing the world. None was fulfilled immediately and not many by the end of his life, but as Hebrews 11 says, Abraham trusted God and lived by faith that looked beyond the horizon of his own life.

Fourth, God's call is to a way of life. Abraham was told to “live in [God's] presence” (17:1). Far more than a creed or a ritual, his faith was a way of life.

Fifth, God's call is to a life of purpose. Little is said about why God called Abraham except that he was to “keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just” (18:19).

Sixth, God's call is to a global destiny. God told Abraham that his family would be a blessing to the world, and from then on Jews and Christians have had a global destiny. “Think globally, act locally” has its biblical equivalent.

Seventh, God's call is to a normal human life. Compared with classical heroes such as Achilles and heroic religious leaders such as Mohammed, Abraham, the “father of the faithful,” is strikingly nonheroic and normal, which is encouraging for you and me, isn't it?

In sum, to answer God's call as Abraham did is to come to know Him and to discover the meaning and purpose of life at its deepest. As we follow God's call, all that we are, all that we have, and all that we do receive a direction and dynamic that no other religion or philosophy offers.

⁸ So Abram said to Lot, “Please, let’s not have quarreling between you and me, or between your herdsmen and my herdsmen, since we are relatives. ⁹ Isn’t the whole land before you? Separate from me: if you go to the left, I will go to the right; if you go to the right, I will go to the left.”

¹⁰ Lot looked out and saw that the entire plain^a of the Jordan as far as Zoar was well watered everywhere like the LORD’s garden and the land of Egypt. (This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) ¹¹ So Lot chose the entire plain of the Jordan for himself. Then Lot journeyed eastward, and they separated from each other. ¹² Abram lived in the land of Canaan, but Lot lived in the cities on the plain and set up his tent near Sodom. ¹³ (Now the men of Sodom were evil, sinning immensely^b against the LORD.)

¹⁴ After Lot had separated from him, the LORD said to Abram, “Look from the place where you are. Look north and south, east and west, ¹⁵ for I will give you and your offspring^c forever all the land that you see. ¹⁶ I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust of the earth, then your offspring could be counted. ¹⁷ Get up and walk around the land, through its length and width, for I will give it to you.”

¹⁸ So Abram moved his tent and went to live near the oaks of Mamre at Hebron, where he built an altar to the LORD.

Abram Rescues Lot

14 In those days King Amraphel of Shinar, King Arioch of Ellasar, King Chedorlaomer of Elam, and King Tidal of Goiim^d ² waged war against King Bera of Sodom, King Birsha of Gomorrah, King Shinab of Admah, and King Shemeber of Zebaiim, as well as the king of Bela (that is, Zoar). ³ All of these came as allies to the Siddim Valley (that is, the Dead Sea). ⁴ They were subject to Chedorlaomer for twelve years, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled. ⁵ In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him came and defeated the Rephaim in Ashteroth-karnaim, the Zuzim in Ham, the Emim in Shaveh-kiriat-haim, ⁶ and the Horites in the mountains of Seir, as far as El-paran by the wilderness. ⁷ Then they came back to invade En-mishpat (that is, Kadesh), and they defeated the whole territory of the Amalekites, as well as the Amorites who lived in Hazazon-tamar.

⁸ Then the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zebaiim,

and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar) went out and lined up for battle in the Siddim Valley^e against King Chedorlaomer of Elam, King Tidal of Goiim, King Amraphel of Shinar, and King Arioch of Ellasar — four kings against five. ¹⁰ Now the Siddim Valley contained many asphalt pits, and as the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, some fell into them,^f but the rest fled to the mountains. ¹¹ The four kings took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their food and went on. ¹² They also took Abram’s nephew Lot and his possessions, for he was living in Sodom, and they went on.

¹³ One of the survivors came and told Abram the Hebrew, who lived near the oaks belonging to Mamre the Amorite, the brother of Eshcol and the brother of Aner. They were bound by a treaty with Abram. ¹⁴ When Abram heard that his relative had been taken prisoner, he assembled^g his 318 trained men, born in his household, and they went in pursuit as far as Dan. ¹⁵ And he and his servants deployed against them by night, defeated them, and pursued them as far as Hobah to the north of Damascus. ¹⁶ He brought back all the goods and also his relative Lot and his goods, as well as the women and the other people.

Melchizedek’s Blessing

¹⁷ After Abram returned from defeating Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him in the Shaveh Valley (that is, the King’s Valley). ¹⁸ Melchizedek, king of Salem,^g brought out bread and wine; he was a priest to God Most High. ¹⁹ He blessed him and said:

Abram is blessed by God Most High,
Creator^h of heaven and earth,

²⁰ and blessed be God Most High
who has handed over
your enemies to you.

And Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

²¹ Then the king of Sodom said to Abram, “Give me the people, but take the possessions for yourself.”

²² But Abram said to the king of Sodom, “I have raised my hand in an oath to the LORD, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, ²³ that I will not take a thread or sandal strap or anything that belongs to you, so you can never say, ‘I made Abram rich.’ ²⁴ I will take nothing except what the servants have eaten. But as for the share of the men who came with me — Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre — they can take their share.”

^a13:10 Lit *circle*; i.e., probably the large round plain where the Jordan River empties into the Dead Sea, also in v. 11

^b13:13 Lit *evil and sinful* ^c13:15 Lit *seed* ^d14:1 Or *nations* ^e14:10 Sam, LXX; MT reads *fell there* ^f14:14 Sam; MT reads *poured out* ^g14:18 = Jerusalem ^h14:19 Or *Possessor*

The Abrahamic Covenant

15 After these events, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield; your reward will be very great.

²But Abram said, “Lord GOD, what can you give me, since I am childless and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?”^a ³Abram continued, “Look, you have given me no offspring, so a slave born in^b my house will be my heir.”

⁴Now the word of the LORD came to him: “This one will not be your heir; instead, one who comes from your own body^c will be your heir.”⁵ He took him outside and said, “Look at the sky and count the stars, if you are able to count them.” Then he said to him, “Your offspring will be that numerous.”

⁶Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

⁷He also said to him, “I am the LORD who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess.”

⁸But he said, “Lord GOD, how can I know that I will possess it?”

⁹He said to him, “Bring me a three-year-old cow, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.”

¹⁰So he brought all these to him, cut them in half, and laid the pieces opposite each other, but he did not cut the birds in half. ¹¹Birds of prey came down on the carcasses, but Abram drove them away. ¹²As the sun was setting, a deep sleep came over Abram, and suddenly great terror and darkness descended on him.

¹³Then the LORD said to Abram, “Know this for certain: Your offspring will be resident aliens for four hundred years in a land that does not belong to them and will be enslaved and oppressed.^d ¹⁴However, I will judge the nation they serve, and afterward they will go out with many possessions. ¹⁵But you will go to your ancestors in peace and be buried at a good old age. ¹⁶In the fourth generation they will return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure.”^e

¹⁷When the sun had set and it was dark, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch appeared and passed between the divided animals. ¹⁸On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, “I give this land to your offspring, from the Brook of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates River: ¹⁹the land of

the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites,²⁰ Hethites, Perizzites, Rephaim,²¹ Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites, and Jebusites.”

Hagar and Ishmael

16 Abram’s wife, Sarai, had not borne any children for him, but she owned an Egyptian slave named Hagar. ²Sarai said to Abram, “Since the LORD has prevented me from bearing children, go to my slave; perhaps through her I can build a family.” And Abram agreed to what Sarai said. ³So Abram’s wife, Sarai, took Hagar, her Egyptian slave, and gave her to her husband, Abram, as a wife for him. This happened after Abram had lived in the land of Canaan ten years. ⁴He slept with^f Hagar, and she became pregnant. When she saw that she was pregnant, her mistress became contemptible to her. ⁵Then Sarai said to Abram, “You are responsible for my suffering!^g I put my slave in your arms,^h and when she saw that she was pregnant, I became contemptible to her. May the LORD judge between me and you.”

⁶Abram replied to Sarai, “Here, your slave is in your power; do whatever you want with her.” Then Sarai mistreated her so much that she ran away from her.

⁷The angel of the LORD found her by a spring in the wilderness, the spring on the way to Shur. ⁸He said, “Hagar, slave of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?”

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

⁹The angel of the LORD said to her, “Go back to your mistress and submit to her authority.” ¹⁰The angel of the LORD said to her, “I will greatly multiply your offspring, and they will be too many to count.”

¹¹The angel of the LORD said to her, “You have conceived and will have a son. You will name him Ishmael,ⁱ for the LORD has heard your cry of affliction. ¹²This man will be like a wild donkey. His hand will be against everyone, and everyone’s hand will be against him; he will settle near all his relatives.”

¹³So she named the LORD who spoke to her: “You are El-roi,^j for she said, “In this place, have I actually seen the one who sees me?”^a ¹⁴That is why the well is called Beer-lahai-roi.^k It is between Kadesh and Bered.

¹⁵So Hagar gave birth to Abram’s son, and Abram named his son (whom Hagar bore) Ishmael. ¹⁶Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to him.

^a15:2; ^b16:13 Hb obscure ^c15:3 Lit a son of ^d15:4 Lit loins ^e15:13 Lit will serve them and they will oppress them

^f15:16 Lit Amorites is not yet complete ^g16:4 Lit He came to ^h16:5 Or “May my suffering be on you!” ⁱ16:5 Lit bosom

^j16:11 = God Hears ^k16:13 = God Sees Me ^l16:14 = Well of the Living One Who Sees Me

Insight for the Moment
Running Away from Home
 Genesis 16:6–10

Understandably tired of receiving unjust abuse from her frustrated mistress, Hagar hit the road. But in a little while, the angel of the Lord encountered the fleeing servant and asked her where she had come from and where she was going: “I’m running away” (16:8).

She knew where she came from, but she had no idea where she was headed.

Difficult circumstances are sure to arise in your life and mine. People will treat us unfairly, and resolution may well seem impossible. Opportunities to run from the problem will present themselves. But remember Hagar’s story.

God knows where you’re coming from. Let Him show you where you should go. Ask Him.

Covenant Circumcision

17 When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him, saying, “I am God Almighty. Live^a in my presence and be blameless. ²I will set up my covenant between me and you, and I will multiply you greatly.”

³Then Abram fell facedown and God spoke with him: ⁴“As for me, here is my covenant with you: You will become the father of many nations. ⁵Your name will no longer be Abram;^b your name will be Abraham,^c for I will make you the father of many nations. ⁶I will make you extremely fruitful and will make nations and kings come from you. ⁷I will confirm my covenant that is between me and you and your future offspring throughout their generations. It is a permanent covenant to be your God and the God of your offspring after you. ⁸And to you and your future offspring^d I will give the land where you are residing — all the land of Canaan — as a permanent possession, and I will be their God.”

⁹God also said to Abraham, “As for you, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations are to keep my covenant. ¹⁰This is my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you, which you are to keep: Every one of your males must be circumcised.

¹¹You must circumcise the flesh of your foreskin to serve as a sign of the covenant between me and you. ¹²Throughout your generations, every male among you is to be circumcised at eight days old — every male born in your household or purchased from any foreigner and not your offspring. ¹³Whether born in your household or purchased, he must be circumcised. My covenant will be marked in your flesh as a permanent covenant. ¹⁴If any male is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that man will be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.”

¹⁵God said to Abraham, “As for your wife Sarai, do not call her Sarai, for Sarah^e will be her name. ¹⁶I will bless her; indeed, I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she will produce nations; kings of peoples will come from her.”

¹⁷Abraham fell facedown. Then he laughed and said to himself, “Can a child be born to a hundred-year-old man? Can Sarah, a ninety-year-old woman, give birth?” ¹⁸So Abraham said to God, “If only Ishmael were acceptable^f to you!”

¹⁹But God said, “No. Your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will name him Isaac.^h I will confirm my covenant with him as a permanent covenant for his future offspring. ²⁰As for Ishmael, I have heard you. I will certainly bless him; I will make him fruitful and will multiply him greatly. He will father twelve tribal leaders, and I will make him into a great nation. ²¹But I will confirm my covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at this time next year.” ²²When he finished talking with him, God withdrewⁱ from Abraham.

²³So Abraham took his son Ishmael and those born in his household or purchased — every male among the members of Abraham’s household — and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskin on that very day, just as God had said to him. ²⁴Abraham was ninety-nine years old when the flesh of his foreskin was circumcised, ²⁵and his son Ishmael was thirteen years old when the flesh of his foreskin was circumcised. ²⁶On that very day Abraham and his son Ishmael were circumcised. ²⁷And all the men of his household — whether born in his household or purchased from a foreigner — were circumcised with him.

Abraham’s Three Visitors

18 The LORD appeared to Abraham at the oaks of Mamre while he was sitting at the entrance of his tent during the heat of the day. ²He looked up, and he saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran

^a17:1 Or Walk ^b17:5 = The Father Is Exalted ^c17:5 = Father of a Multitude ^d17:8 Lit seed ^e17:11 You in v. 11 is pl.

^f17:15 = Princess ^g17:18 Lit alive ^h17:19 = He Laughs ⁱ17:22 Lit went up, or ascended

DAY 6 — INSIGHT FOR THE DAY

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and You

Passage for the Day: Genesis 17:1–8

I will confirm my covenant that is between me and you and your future offspring throughout their generations. It is a permanent covenant to be your God and the God of your offspring after you.

Genesis 17:7

For many years, two large portraits hung in my parents' home—one was of my paternal grandfather, and one was of my maternal grandfather. Both of these were godly men—full-time farmers, in order to keep bread on the table, and also full-time parish ministers.

No two men could have been more dissimilar. Grandpa Wolgemuth was an immaculate, focused, intense man. One of the most prominent rooms in his home was his study. The walls in this familiar room were lined with books—Bible commentaries and reference books, biographies of great missionaries, and other inspirational volumes. His car was never dirty. I can still see him headed toward the barn with a single bucket of water to wash it. Thick, black eyebrows and furrowed crevasses across his forehead let us know that he was on a mission. He embodied hard work and the serious business of life. Not a lot of levity swirled around the life of this man.

Grandpa Dourte, my maternal granddaddy, was in love with life. His laughter filled every room of their home. Music from his harmonica cheered us for part of the day; his humming and silly rhymes took care of the rest. The two most memorable places in his home were the parlor with the player piano—he loved music—and his workshop in the shed—he loved building things.

And like Grandpa Wolgemuth, this man loved God. His crystal blue eyes would fill with tears as he quoted something from the Psalms by heart.

How well I remember these two men. As a young boy, I studied their every move, I listened to their voices, and I believed what they believed. And why shouldn't I have? They were for me what the Bible calls "patriarchs." Men who started a whole generation of offspring. Men who set the pace for dozens of others who would follow—including me.

In today's passage, we read that God promised Abram that someday his descendants would be greatly multiplied; from him would come kings and entire nations. Then God sealed his promise by changing Abram's name (meaning "exalted father") to Abraham (meaning "father of nations"). Imagine how the news, coupled with God's promise, must have affected Abraham.

If you and I are dads, someday our children will have children. Then *they* will have children who will have children. And every one of these people will know us, either because they remember us or because they hear stories about us from others. In a word, we're *patriarchs* to a whole generation.

Who we are, the words we speak, how we treat others, and what is important to us will become common knowledge to many people. Some of those people will even say they inherited certain character traits from us. What an awesome thing this is.

This might be a good day for you and me to begin to see ourselves in the light of those who are to follow in our footsteps. Who we are today will become a legacy for others to follow tomorrow.

from the entrance of the tent to meet them, bowed to the ground, ³and said, “My lord, if I have found favor with you, please do not go on past your servant. ⁴Let a little water be brought, that you may wash your feet and rest yourselves under the tree. ⁵I will bring a bit of bread so that you may strengthen yourselves. This is why you have passed your servant’s way. Later, you can continue on.”

“Yes,” they replied, “do as you have said.”

⁶So Abraham hurried into the tent and said to Sarah, “Quick! Knead three measures^A of fine flour and make bread.”^B Abraham ran to the herd and got a tender, choice calf. He gave it to a young man, who hurried to prepare it. ⁸Then Abraham took curds^C and milk, as well as the calf that he had prepared, and set them before the men. He served^D them as they ate under the tree.

Sarah Laughs

⁹“Where is your wife Sarah?” they asked him.

“There, in the tent,” he answered.

¹⁰The LORD said, “I will certainly come back to you in about a year’s time, and your wife Sarah will have a son!” Now Sarah was listening at the entrance of the tent behind him.

¹¹Abraham and Sarah were old and getting on in years.^E Sarah had passed the age of childbearing. ¹²So she laughed to herself: “After I am worn out and my lord is old, will I have delight?”

¹³But the LORD asked Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh, saying, ‘Can I really have a baby when I’m old?’ ¹⁴Is anything impossible for the LORD? At the appointed time I will come back to you, and in about a year she will have a son.”

¹⁵Sarah denied it. “I did not laugh,” she said, because she was afraid.

But he replied, “No, you did laugh.”

Abraham’s Plea for Sodom

¹⁶The men got up from there and looked out over Sodom, and Abraham was walking with them to see them off. ¹⁷Then the LORD said, “Should I hide what I am about to do from Abraham? ¹⁸Abraham is to become a great and powerful nation, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed through him. ¹⁹For I have chosen^F him so that he will command his children and his house after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just. This is how the LORD will fulfill to Abraham what he promised him.” ²⁰Then the LORD said, “The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is immense, and their sin is extremely serious. ²¹I will go down to see if what they have

done justifies the cry that has come up to me. If not, I will find out.”

²²The men turned from there and went toward Sodom while Abraham remained standing before the LORD.^G ²³Abraham stepped forward and said, “Will you really sweep away the righteous with the wicked? ²⁴What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? Will you really sweep it away instead of sparing the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people who are in it? ²⁵You could not possibly do such a thing: to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. You could not possibly do that! Won’t the Judge of the whole earth do what is just?”

²⁶The LORD said, “If I find fifty righteous people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake.”

²⁷Then Abraham answered, “Since I have ventured to speak to my lord — even though I am dust and ashes — ²⁸suppose the fifty righteous lack five. Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five?”

He replied, “I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there.”

²⁹Then he spoke to him again, “Suppose forty are found there?”

He answered, “I will not do it on account of forty.”

³⁰Then he said, “Let my lord not be angry, and I will speak further. Suppose thirty are found there?”

He answered, “I will not do it if I find thirty there.”

³¹Then he said, “Since I have ventured to speak to my lord, suppose twenty are found there?”

He replied, “I will not destroy it on account of twenty.”

³²Then he said, “Let my lord not be angry, and I will speak one more time. Suppose ten are found there?”

He answered, “I will not destroy it on account of ten.” ³³When the LORD had finished speaking with Abraham, he departed, and Abraham returned to his place.

The Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah

19 The two angels entered Sodom in the evening as Lot was sitting in Sodom’s gateway. When Lot saw them, he got up to meet them. He bowed with his face to the ground ²and said, “My lords, turn aside to your servant’s house, wash your feet, and spend the night. Then you can get up early and go on your way.”

^A18:6 Lit *three seahs*; about 21 quarts ^B18:6 A round, thin, unleavened bread ^C18:8 Or *butter* ^D18:8 Lit *was standing by*

^E18:11 Lit *days* ^F18:19 Lit *known* ^G18:22 Alt Hb tradition reads *while the LORD remained standing before Abraham*

"No," they said. "We would rather spend the night in the square."³ But he urged them so strongly that they followed him and went into his house. He prepared a feast and baked unleavened bread for them, and they ate.

⁴Before they went to bed, the men of the city of Sodom, both young and old, the whole population, surrounded the house. ⁵They called out to Lot and said, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Send them out to us so we can have sex with them!"

⁶Lot went out to them at the entrance and shut the door behind him. ⁷He said, "Don't do this evil, my brothers. ⁸Look, I've got two daughters who haven't been intimate with a man. I'll bring them out to you, and you can do whatever you want^a to them. However, don't do anything to these men, because they have come under the protection of my roof."

⁹"Get out of the way!" they said, adding, "This one came here as an alien, but he's acting like a judge! Now we'll do more harm to you than to them." They put pressure on Lot and came up to break down the door. ¹⁰But the angels^b reached out, brought Lot into the house with them, and shut the door. ¹¹They struck the men who were at the entrance of the house, both young and old, with blindness^c so that they were unable to find the entrance.

¹²Then the angels said to Lot, "Do you have anyone else here: a son-in-law, your sons and daughters, or anyone else in the city who belongs to you? Get them out of this place, ¹³for we are about to destroy this place because the outcry against its people is so great before the LORD, that the LORD has sent us to destroy it."

¹⁴So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who were going to marry his daughters. "Get up," he said. "Get out of this place, for the LORD is about to destroy the city!" But his sons-in-law thought he was joking.

¹⁵At daybreak the angels urged Lot on: "Get up! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or you will be swept away in the punishment^d of the city." ¹⁶But he hesitated. Because of the LORD's compassion for him, the men grabbed his hand, his wife's hand, and the hands of his two daughters. They brought him out and left him outside the city.

¹⁷As soon as the angels got them outside, one of them^e said, "Run for your lives! Don't look back and don't stop anywhere on the plain! Run to the mountains, or you will be swept away!"

¹⁸But Lot said to them, "No, my lords^f — please. ¹⁹Your servant has indeed found favor

with you, and you have shown me great kindness by saving my life. But I can't run to the mountains; the disaster will overtake me, and I will die. ²⁰Look, this town is close enough for me to flee to. It is a small place. Please let me run to it — it's only a small place, isn't it? — so that I can survive."

²¹And he said to him, "All right, ⁶I'll grant your request" about this matter too and will not demolish the town you mentioned. ²²Hurry up! Run to it, for I cannot do anything until you get there." Therefore the name of the city is Zoar.¹

²³The sun had risen over the land when Lot reached Zoar. ²⁴Then out of the sky the LORD rained on Sodom and Gomorrah burning sulfur from the LORD. ²⁵He demolished these cities, the entire plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and whatever grew on the ground. ²⁶But Lot's wife looked back and became a pillar of salt.

²⁷Early in the morning Abraham went to the place where he had stood before the LORD. ²⁸He looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah and all the land of the plain, and he saw that smoke was going up from the land like the smoke of a furnace. ²⁹So it was, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, he remembered Abraham and brought Lot out of the middle of the upheaval when he demolished the cities where Lot had lived.

The Origin of Moab and Ammon

³⁰Lot departed from Zoar and lived in the mountains along with his two daughters, because he was afraid to live in Zoar. Instead, he and his two daughters lived in a cave. ³¹Then the firstborn said to the younger, "Our father is old, and there is no man in the land to sleep with us as is the custom of all the land. ³²Come, let's get our father to drink wine so that we can sleep with him and preserve our father's line." ³³So they got their father to drink wine that night, and the firstborn came and slept with her father; he did not know when she lay down or when she got up.

³⁴The next day the firstborn said to the younger, "Look, I slept with my father last night. Let's get him to drink wine again tonight so you can go sleep with him and we can preserve our father's line." ³⁵That night they again got their father to drink wine, and the younger went and slept with him; he did not know when she lay down or when she got up.

³⁶So both of Lot's daughters became pregnant by their father. ³⁷The firstborn gave birth

^a19:8 Lit *do what is good in your eyes* ^b19:10 Lit *men*, also in v. 12 ^c19:11 Or *a blinding light* ^d19:15 Or *iniquity, or guilt* ^e19:17 LXX, Syr, Vg read *outside, they* ^f19:18 Or *my Lord, or my lord* ^g19:21 Or "Look!" ^h19:21 Lit *I will lift up your face* ⁱ19:22 In Hb, the name *Zoar* is related to "small" in v. 20; its previous name was "Bela"; Gn 14:2.

to a son and named him Moab.^a He is the father of the Moabites of today.³⁸ The younger also gave birth to a son, and she named him Ben-ammi.^b He is the father of the Ammonites of today.

Sarah Rescued from Abimelech

20 From there Abraham traveled to the region of the Negev and settled between Kadesh and Shur. While he was staying in Gerar,² Abraham said about his wife Sarah, “She is my sister.” So King Abimelech of Gerar had Sarah brought to him.

³But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night and said to him, “You are about to die because of the woman you have taken, for she is a married woman.”^c

⁴Now Abimelech had not approached her, so he said, “Lord, would you destroy a nation even though it is innocent? ⁵Didn’t he himself say to me, ‘She is my sister’? And she herself said, ‘He is my brother.’ I did this with a clear conscience^d and clean^e hands.”

⁶Then God said to him in the dream, “Yes, I know that you did this with a clear conscience.^f I have also kept you from sinning against me. Therefore I have not let you touch her. ⁷Now return the man’s wife, for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you will live. But if you do not return her, know that you will certainly die, you and all who are yours.”

⁸Early in the morning Abimelech got up, called all his servants together, and personally^g told them all these things, and the men were terrified.

⁹Then Abimelech called Abraham in and said to him, “What have you done to us? How did I sin against you that you have brought such enormous guilt on me and on my kingdom? You have done things to me that should never be done.” ¹⁰Abimelech also asked Abraham, “What made you do this?”

¹¹Abraham replied, “I thought, ‘There is absolutely no fear of God in this place. They will kill me because of my wife.’ ¹²Besides, she really is my sister, the daughter of my father though not the daughter of my mother, and she became my wife. ¹³So when God had me wander from my father’s house, I said to her: Show your loyalty to me wherever we go and say about me, ‘He’s my brother.’”

¹⁴Then Abimelech took flocks and herds and male and female slaves, gave them to Abraham, and returned his wife Sarah to him. ¹⁵Abimelech said, “Look, my land is before

you. Settle wherever you want.”^h ¹⁶And he said to Sarah, “Look, I am giving your brother one thousand pieces of silver. It is a verification of your honorⁱ to all who are with you. You are fully vindicated.”

¹⁷Then Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, his wife, and his female slaves so that they could bear children,¹⁸ for the LORD had completely closed all the wombs in Abimelech’s household on account of Sarah, Abraham’s wife.

The Birth of Isaac

21 The LORD came to Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did for Sarah what he had promised. ²Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the appointed time God had told him. ³Abraham named his son who was born to him — the one Sarah bore to him — Isaac. ⁴When his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, as God had commanded him. ⁵Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him.

⁶Sarah said, “God has made me laugh, and everyone who hears will laugh with me.”^j ⁷She also said, “Who would have told Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne a son for him^k in his old age.”

Hagar and Ishmael Sent Away

⁸The child grew and was weaned, and Abraham held a great feast on the day Isaac was weaned. ⁹But Sarah saw the son mocking — the one Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham. ¹⁰So she said to Abraham, “Drive out this slave with her son, for the son of this slave will not be a coheir with my son Isaac!”

¹¹This was very distressing to^l Abraham because of his son. ¹²But God said to Abraham, “Do not be distressed^m about the boy and about your slave. Whatever Sarah says to you, listen to her, because your offspring will be traced through Isaac, ¹³and I will also make a nation of the slave’s son because he is your offspring.”

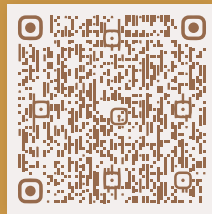
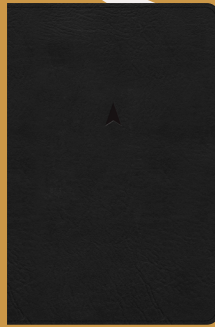
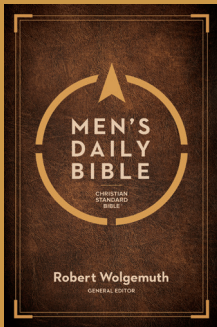
¹⁴Early in the morning Abraham got up, took bread and a waterskin, put them on Hagar’s shoulders, and sent her and the boy away. She left and wandered in the Wilderness of Beer-sheba. ¹⁵When the water in the skin was gone, she left the boy under one of the bushes ¹⁶and went and sat at a distance, about a bowshot away, for she said, “I can’t bear to watch the boy die!” While she sat at a distance, sheⁿ wept loudly.

^a19:37 = From My Father ^b19:38 = Son of My People ^c20:3 Lit is possessed by a husband ^d20:5 Lit with integrity of my heart ^e20:5 Lit cleanness of my ^f20:6 Lit with integrity of your heart ^g20:8 Lit in their ears ^h20:15 Lit Settle in the good in your eyes ⁱ20:16 Lit a covering of the eyes ^j21:6 Isaac = He Laughs; Gn 17:19 ^k21:7 Sam, Tg Jonathan; MT omits him ^l21:11 Lit was very bad in the eyes of ^m21:12 Lit “Let it not be bad in your eyes” ⁿ21:16 LXX reads the boy



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