

*So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.*

■ GENESIS 1:27 ESV

*Reminder of*  
MAN AND WOMAN  
are both created by  
God in His image

FEBRUARY 2015

*So God created man in His  
own image, in the image of  
God He created him; male  
and female He created them.*

GENESIS 1:27 ESV

COVENANT<sup>EFC</sup>

# 2015 Memory Focus

FROM GENESIS (ESV)

## JANUARY

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

*Genesis 1:1*

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## FEBRUARY

So God created man in His own image, in the image of God  
He created him; male and female He created them.

*Genesis 1:27*

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## MARCH

And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

*Genesis 1:28*

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## APRIL

The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

*Genesis 6:5*

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## MAY

“I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonours you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

*Genesis 12:3*

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## JUNE

“Far be it from You to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?”

*Genesis 18:25*

## JULY

He said, “Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.”

*Genesis 22:2*

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## AUGUST

“I am not worthy of the least of all the deeds of steadfast love and all the faithfulness that You have shown to Your servant, for with only my staff I crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two camps.”

*Genesis 32:10*

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## SEPTEMBER

And there he built an altar and called the place El-bethel, because there God had revealed Himself to him when he fled from his brother.

*Genesis 35:7*

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## OCTOBER

“He is not greater in this house than I am, nor has he kept back anything from me except you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?”

*Genesis 39:9*

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## NOVEMBER

The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.

*Genesis 49:10*

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## DECEMBER

As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.

*Genesis 50:20*

# Foreword

BY SENIOR  
PASTORS

# 2015

*marks our Jubilee Year as a nation. God is the ultimate reason for Singapore's 50 years of peace and prosperity, safety and security, shalom and success. Indeed God alone deserves all praise, honour and thanksgiving for all the blessings from above!*

Jubilee has been called a super-Sabbath. God is looking for devoted disciples who flee from *clamour, hurry and crowds* and cultivate the habit of abiding in God's Word, delighting in God's will and walking in God's way. Those who are intentional about a stronger foundation, a closer walk and a deeper life. Those who are tired of their hit-and-run, hide-and-see, touch-and-go relationship with Him. This Jubilee Year, will you intentionally and zealously commit yourself to be among the first fruits of this new Jubilee generation by scheduling personal time alone with God?

Psalm 1:2-3 speaks of the blessed person as one whose "delight is in the law of the LORD, and on His law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers".

The Psalmist finds great joy in relating to the Word of God...

He meditates upon the Word when day comes and when night falls...

Far beyond outward prosperity, the Psalmist desires the inward prosperity of his soul...

We invite you to take this year to grow deeper in faith and in His Word. Deal decisively with distractions in your life. Cut yourself off from habits and modern gadgets that displace communion with God. Fast from social media. Overhaul your schedule. Remove activities that desensitise you to the gentle promptings of the Spirit.

There is a dailyness in discipleship - soaking daily in His Word, applying His truth, reaping the fruits and passing them on.

Some years ago when Jerry Bridges was in Singapore, he talked about encountering God daily in the Word and especially the Gospel. When asked what it was like, Jerry said, "God always shows up."

What an assurance! This Jubilee Year 2015, draw near to Him. Linger in His presence. Allow Him to refresh you, renew you and restore you - a people prepared for the Day of His Visitation.

Jesus is Our Jubilee!

***Ps Tony Yeo and Ps Tan Kay Kiong***

God is looking for devoted disciples who flee from *clamour, hurry and crowds* and cultivate the habit of abiding in God's Word, delighting in God's will and walking in God's way.

# Guide to Using This Devotional Journal

## 1 Prepare your heart in God's presence

- Select a fixed time (preferably in the morning before you begin your day) and a quiet place where you can be alone and undisturbed.
- Observe a moment of silence as you acknowledge God's presence. Centre down.
- Begin with a song of worship. Meditate on the lyrics even if you are unfamiliar with the tune. (Refer to the list of worship songs provided.)
- Ask God to open your heart to hear Him.

*The English Standard Version (ESV) is the default Bible version unless otherwise specified.*

## 2 Allow God to S.O.A.P. you with His Word and Spirit

- **Scripture** – *Take your time to meditate on the Scripture passage for the day. Pause and mull over words and phrases that stand out to you.*

- **Observation** – *Jot down significant insights and reflections from the passage you have read. You can use the guiding questions provided.*

### What's New in 2015?

A "Deeper Reflection" section has been introduced to aid your contemplation of the Scripture. It is not to replace your own observation, for the Holy Spirit illuminates the Scripture to you as you seek Him earnestly.

- **Application** – *Note down a specific and practical commitment to God's Word for you. Is there a command to obey, a sin to avoid, an example to follow or a principle to live out? Where appropriate, share your devotional entry with someone.*
- **Prayer** – *Bring your heartfelt response to God in prayer.*

### What's New in 2015?

- Suggested prayers are included twice weekly to serve as an aid to those who may find them helpful in their prayer response.
- On Sundays, you may want to meditate on the Psalms, the Gospel or the Scripture passage of the sermon. This may be followed by reviewing and reflecting on the past week and then responding in prayer. Examining your life is essential in your faith journey as a redeemed disciple of Christ.

February  
2015  
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# Worship Songs

## BE WITH YOU

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### Verse 1

Saviour of my soul  
I confide in You  
Through all my darkest moments

In You I find my peace  
My comfort when I'm weak  
I trust in You  
Through storm and raging sea

### Verse 2

Faithful, You're my God  
You're the glory and lifter of my head  
Your light it fills my days  
It leads me in Your ways  
Forever I surrender all to You

### Chorus

And I live to worship You  
My Jesus, You're the only one for me  
Nothing will ever take Your place  
My precious saviour  
Who can stand between my Lord and me

Lord I live to honour You  
And I long to bring my life an offering  
Take me higher  
Draw me deeper  
I give all to be with You

*"Be With You" Words & Music: Sindy Stepvina  
Year & Publisher: 2013 City Harvest Cover*

## COME HOLY SPIRIT

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Come Holy Spirit fall on me now  
I need Your anointing  
Come in Your power  
I love You, Holy Spirit  
You're captivating my soul  
And every day I grow to love You more

### Chorus

I'm reaching for Your heart  
You hold my life in Your hand  
Drawing me closer to You  
I feel Your power renew

Nothing compares to this place  
Where I can see You face to face  
I worship You in spirit and in truth

*Year & Publisher: City Harvest Church*

## JUST AS I AM

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### Verse 1

Just as I am without one plea  
 But that Thy blood was shed for me  
 And that Thou bidst me come to Thee  
 O Lamb of God I come, I come

### Verse 2

Just as I am and waiting not  
 To rid my soul of one dark blot  
 To Thee whose blood can cleanse each spot  
 O Lamb of God I come, I come

### Chorus

I come broken to be mended  
 I come wounded to be healed  
 I come desperate to be rescued  
 I come empty to be filled

I come guilty to be pardoned  
 By the blood of Christ the Lamb  
 And I'm welcomed with open arms praise God  
 Just as I am

### Verse 3

Just as I am I would be lost  
 But mercy and grace my freedom bought  
 And now to glory in Your cross  
 O Lamb of God I come, I come

### Ending

Praise God just as I am  
 Just as I am

*"Just As I Am" Words & Music by: Charlotte Elliott | David Moffitt | Sue C. Smith | Travis Cottrell | William Batchelder Bradbury*  
 © 2009 CCTB Music (Admin. by Universal Music Publishing MGB Australia Pty Limited); © 2009 CCTB Music (Admin. by CopyCare Asia Ltd (Singapore Branch) First Hand Revelation Music (Admin. by CopyCare Asia Ltd (Singapore Branch) Universal Music – Brentwood Benson Publishing (Admin. by CopyCare Asia Ltd (Singapore Branch)  
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## BE THOU MY VISION

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Be Thou my vision, O Lord of my heart  
 Nought be all else to me, save that Thou art  
 Thou my best thought, by day or by night  
 Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light

Be Thou my Wisdom, and Thou my true Word  
 I ever with Thee and Thou with me, Lord  
 Thou my great Father, and I Thy true son  
 Thou in me dwelling, and I with Thee one

Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise  
 Thou mine inheritance, now and always  
 Thou and Thou only, first in my heart  
 High King of heaven, my treasure Thou art

### Chorus

Oh, God, be my everything, be my delight  
 Be Jesus, my glory My soul's satisfied  
 Oh, God, be my everything, be my delight  
 Be Jesus, my glory My soul's satisfied

High King of heaven, my victory won  
 May I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's Sun  
 Heart of my own heart, whatever befall  
 Still be my vision, O Ruler of all

*"Be Thou My Vision" Words & Music: Eleanor Henrietta Hull | Mary Elizabeth Byrne*  
 Year & Publisher: © Words: Public Domain  
 CCLI License # 324618

## AMAZING GRACE (MY CHAINS ARE GONE)

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### Verse 1

Amazing grace how sweet the sound  
That saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost, but now am found  
Was blind but now I see

### Verse 2

T'was grace that taught my heart to fear  
And grace my fears relieved;  
How precious did that grace appear  
The hour I first believed

### Chorus

My chains are gone, I've been set free  
My God my Saviour has ransomed me  
And like a flood His mercy rains  
Unending love Amazing Grace

### Verse 3

The Lord has promised good to me  
His Word my hope secures  
He will my shield and portion be  
As long as life endures

### Verse 4

The earth shall soon dissolve like snow  
The sun forbear to shine  
But God, who call'd me here below  
Will be forever mine

*"Amazing Grace My Chains Are Gone" Words & Music: Chris Tomlin | John Newton | Louie Giglio  
Year & Publisher: © 2006 sixsteps Music (Admin. by EMI Christian Music Publishing);  
Vamos Publishing (Admin. by EMI Christian Music Publishing); worshiptogether.com songs  
(Admin. by EMI Christian Music Publishing)  
CCLI License # 324618*

## PSALM 23

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The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want  
He makes me lie in pastures green  
He leads me by the still, still waters  
His goodness restores my soul

And I will trust in You alone  
And I will trust in You alone  
For Your endless mercy follows me  
Your goodness will lead me home

He guides my ways in righteousness  
And He anoints my head with oil  
And my cup, it overflows with joy  
I feast on His pure delights

And I will trust in You alone  
And I will trust in You alone  
For Your endless mercy follows me  
Your goodness will lead me home

And though I walk the darkest path  
I will not fear the evil one  
For You are with me, and Your rod and staff  
Are the comfort I need to know  
And I will trust in You alone  
And I will trust in You alone  
For Your endless mercy follows me  
Your goodness will lead me home

For Your endless mercy follows me  
Your goodness will lead me home

*"Psalm 23" Words & Music: Stuart Townend  
Year & Publisher: © 1996 Thankyou Music (Admin. by EMI Christian Music Publishing)  
CCLI License # 324618*

## TIMES OF REFRESHING

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Times of refreshing  
Here in Your presence  
No greater blessing  
Than being with You

My soul is restored  
My mind is renewed  
There's no greater joy, Lord  
Than being with You

*"Times of Refreshing" Words & Music: Don Harris | Martin Nystrom  
Year & Publisher: © 1993 Integrity's Hosanna! Music (Admin. by Crossroad Distributors Pty. Ltd.)  
CCLI License # 324618*

## AS THE DEER

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### Chorus 1

You alone are my strength my shield  
To You alone may my spirit yield  
You alone are my heart's desire  
And I long to worship Thee

### Verse 1

As the deer panteth for the water  
So my soul longeth after Thee  
You alone are my heart's desire  
And I long to worship Thee

### Verse 2

You're my friend  
And You are my brother  
Even though You are a King  
I love You more than any other  
So much more than anything

### Verse 3

I want You more than gold or silver  
Only You can satisfy  
You alone are the real joygiver  
And the apple of my eye

*"As The Deer" Words & Music: Martin Nystrom  
Year & Publisher: © 1984 Maranatha Praise, Inc. (Admin. by Maranatha! Music)  
CCLI License # 324618*

## GIVE THANKS

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### Verse 1

Give thanks with a grateful heart  
 Give thanks to the Holy One  
 Give thanks because He's given  
 Jesus Christ His Son

### Chorus 1

And now let the weak say I am strong  
 Let the poor say I am rich  
 Because of what the Lord has done for us  
 And now let the weak say I am strong  
 Let the poor say I am rich  
 Because of what the Lord has done for us

### Ending

Give thanks

*"Give Thanks" Words & Music: Henry Smith  
 Year & Publisher: © 1978 Integrity's Hosanna! Music (Admin. by Crossroad Distributors Pty. Ltd.)  
 CCLI License # 324618*

## AARONIC BENEDICTION

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### Verse 1

May the Lord, may the Lord bless and keep you  
 May His grace and His face shine upon you  
 May the Lord lift up His countenance upon you  
 And give you peace  
 And give you peace

### Verse 2

Y'varech'cha Adonai v'yishm'recha  
 Yaer panav alecha vichuneka  
 Yisa Adonai panav alecha  
 V'yaseml'cha shalom v'yaseml'cha shalom

### Bridge

This is the way  
 You shall be blessed  
 From day to day  
 He'll be your rest

### Ending

And give you peace  
 And give you peace

*"Aaronic Benediction" Words & Music by Misha Goetz  
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# The Church Beyond

■ FOCUS OF THE MONTH:  
**BUSINESS AS MISSIONS (BAM)**

## LIVING OUT OUR CHRISTIAN FAITH IN THE MARKETPLACE

**E**arly church father St. Jerome said, “A merchant can seldom if ever please God.” St. Augustine, a fifth century bishop wrote, “Business is itself evil.” While the two statements come close to describing the reality we see in the marketplace, in the fallen world we live in, the call of Scripture is entirely different. It reflects the ongoing tensions and battles between the earthly and the heavenly Kingdom which shape our worldview and influence our lives and conduct.

Work is good and God ordained (Ge 1:26-31), but after the Fall, livelihood becomes difficult. In and through our work, as business owners and professionals in the marketplace, we are to reflect our love for God and our neighbours (Mt 22:37-40). The love of our Father compels us to love our neighbours, all whom the Lord allows to cross our paths. We are reminded in Romans 13:9-10, “Love your neighbour as yourself. Love does no harm to his neighbour”. We are also called to be priests (1 Pe 2:9) and ambassadors for Christ (2 Co 5:18-20).

Our neighbours are our employees, co-workers, customers, competitors, suppliers, partners, shareholders, regulators, law enforcers, tax authorities and everyone else we interact with. Questions: Do we love our neighbours? Are our lives and conduct glorifying God, thus making it easier for our neighbours to believe in the Giver of life and Giver of salvation? Or do we become the stumbling block in their search for God?

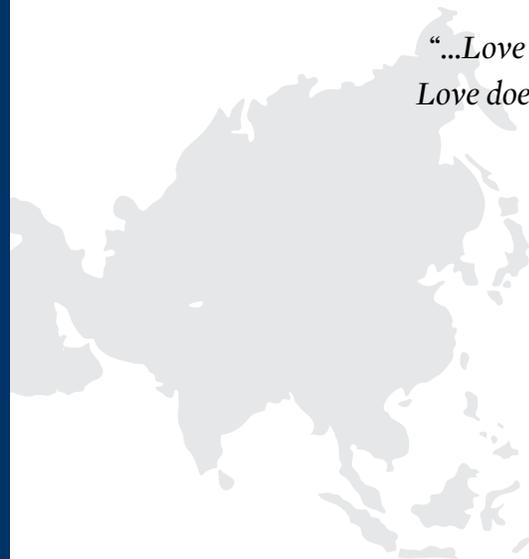
Business as Missions (BAM) teaches that our businesses, gifts and talents are God given, and we are to use them to glorify Him. They are divine tools and platforms, that through jobs and wealth creation and by living out the greatest commandments to love God and our neighbours, the Good News is lived out for all to see.

### PRAY

- For Covenanters to understand and believe that business is much more than money making and vocations much more than provision. In every business and every vocation, we are called upon to fulfil God’s calling for our lives as business owners and marketplace professionals.
- For the Holy Spirit to lead and direct where, when, what, which and how to proceed to advocate, implement and mobilise BAM in South East Asia, Indo-China and East Asia.
- For the BAM teams as they travel to Vietnam, Bandung, Davao, Manila, Baguio and China during the first quarter of 2015. Pray for journey mercy, for wisdom and discernment of the Lord’s will in each of the BAM projects being looked at, studied and implemented.

*“...Love your neighbour as yourself.  
Love does no harm to a neighbour...”*

**ROMANS 13:9-10 (NIV)**



**February 1**  
Sunday  
2015

■ **Scripture** .....

■ **Observation**

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■ **Application**

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■ **Prayer**

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**The Past Week**

**REVIEW**

*What was my high point and my low point for the week?*

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*What gave me life and what drained me?*

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*How was the Spirit of God at work?*

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February 2  
Monday  
2015

# God is All in All

## ■ Scripture

Genesis 1:1 – 2:3

### ■ Observation

What is the significance of “God” being mentioned 35 times in the creation account in Genesis 1:1 – 2:3?

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### Deeper Reflection

GOD is the subject of the first sentence of the Bible – “In the beginning, GOD created...” (Ge 1:1). The divine name dominates the whole creation account (Ge 1:1 – 2:3), repeated 35 times in 34 verses! As you read Genesis 1:1 to 2:3, does every occurrence of “God” catch your eye and stir your heart? The passage is about God first of all, and “to read it with any other primary interest (which is all too possible) is to misread it”<sup>1</sup>. God must be the most important subject in our lives; and thus, our objective in life ought to be to know God theologically and personally as He has revealed Himself in the Scriptures. Am I getting to know God more and more? As the creation account is so saturated with God, so ought to be our lives: God increasingly present, predominant and preeminent. The creation story presents 11 different divine acts: God “created” (1:1), “said” (1:3), “saw” (1:4), “separated” (1:4), “called” (1:5), “made” (1:7), “placed” (v. 17), “blessed” (1:22), “completed” (2:1), “rested” (2:2) and “sanctified” (2:3). God is the source of all things, supreme in all things, sovereign over all things and sufficient for all things.

## ■ Application

How can I have God increasingly present, predominant and preeminent in my life?

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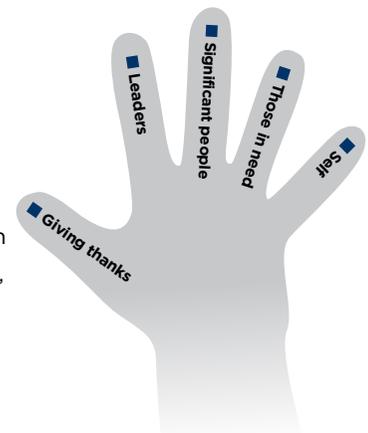
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## ■ Prayer

O Lord, my God, be Thou my All in all, in each thought of mine, in each deed, in each word, in each need, in each joy, in each sorrow, in each day, in each tomorrow, in each dark, in each light, in each moment, in each night. O God, my Lord, be with me now, closer than breath. God in Your love, protect me in death.<sup>2</sup> Amen.



<sup>1</sup> Derek Kidner, *Genesis*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (IVP, 1976), 43

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from David Adam, “God in All,” *Music of the Heart: New Psalms in the Celtic Tradition* (SPCK, 2004), 19

February 3  
Tuesday  
2015

# Hope Against Hope in Chaos

## ■ Scripture

Genesis 1:1-2

### ■ Observation

What is revealed about God in verses 1 and 2?

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### Deeper Reflection

The relation between verses 1 and 2 “is not obvious”.<sup>3</sup> Verse 1 “suggests God began with nothing”.<sup>4</sup> Verse 2 “makes clear there was an existing chaos”<sup>5</sup> – the earth in a state of formlessness, emptiness and darkness. Genesis 1:1-2 presents an “ambiguity of creation from nothing (v. 1 – cf. Heb 11:3) and creation from chaos (v. 2)”.<sup>6</sup> “We need not choose between them, even as the text does not”,<sup>7</sup> for the theological significance of both is there. When we are in a life situation where there is no reason for hope, we can still keep hoping in the God “who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist” (Ro 4:17-18), “who creates new things out of nothing” (v. 17b, NLT). God is in total sovereign control over the chaos in our lives and the world – “the Spirit of God was hovering over” “the unformed, lifeless mass of the watery earth”<sup>8</sup> (v. 2b). God can, and does, change a chaotic life into a beautiful, meaningful and purposeful one (as He did in creation), especially in the “new creation” in Christ (2 Co 5:17).

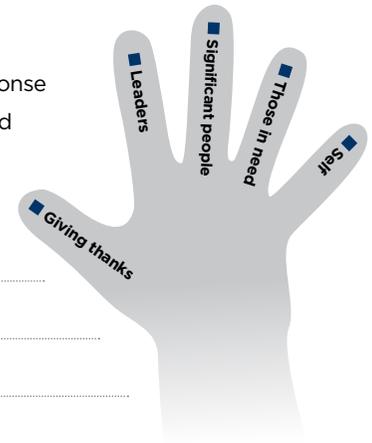
## ■ Application

What is chaotic in my life that I should trust God to be in control over and to change?

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## ■ Prayer

Write a prayer to God as your response arising from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.



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<sup>3</sup> Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis, Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (John Knox, 1982), 29  
<sup>4</sup> Walter Brueggemann, 29  
<sup>5</sup> Walter Brueggemann, 29  
<sup>6</sup> Walter Brueggemann, 29  
<sup>7</sup> Walter Brueggemann, 29  
<sup>8</sup> Allen P. Ross, *Creation & Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis* (Baker, 1996, 1998), 107

February 4  
Wednesday  
2015

# Begin with God's Word

## ■ Scripture

Genesis 1:3, 5-6, 8-9, 13-14, 19-20, and 23-24

## ■ Observation

What can you observe about a pattern in each of the six days of God's creative work (vv. 3, 5-6, 8-9, 13-14, 19-20, 23-24)?

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## Deeper Reflection

God began His creative work with His Word: "Then God said, 'Let there be light'" (v. 3). The first day of God's creative work ended with "there was evening and morning, one day" (v. 5). From this point on, we can observe a particular repeated pattern for the next five days: "there was evening and morning, one day" followed immediately by "Then God said" (vv. 5-6, 8-9, 13-14, 19-20 and 23-24). Every day of the six days of His creative work, God began with His Word. God's Word precedes His work. And God's work is produced by His Word – "Then God said" is followed by "and it was so" (vv. 3, 6-7, 9, 11, 14-15, 24, 29-30). This divine pattern reveals two truths about God. God's Word is powerful – "by the word of the LORD the heavens were made" (Ps 33:6). God is faithful in His Word – "the word of the LORD is upright, and all His work is done in faithfulness" (Ps 33:4). We ought to begin each day with God's Word, and live the day by God's Word. We ought to because we need to.

## ■ Application

How much of my life is characterised by beginning my day with and living my day by God's Word?

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## ■ Prayer

Write a prayer to God as your response arising from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

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February 5  
Thursday  
2015

# The Way God Works

## ■ Scripture

Genesis 1:3-31

## ■ Observation

What can you observe about the pattern of God's creative work on Days 1 to 3 (vv. 3-13) and Days 4 to 6 (vv. 14-31)?

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## Deeper Reflection

Genesis 1 shows four stages of creation which reflect the way God works. First, the formless stage, when the earth was totally covered by "waters" and surrounded by "darkness" (v. 2), followed by the framework stage on Days 1-3 (vv. 3-13), then the filling stage on Days 4-6 (vv. 14-30), and lastly, the finished stage, when God "saw all that He had made...was very good" (v. 31).

Framework Stage (Ge 1:3-13): Forming the unformed state of the earth. <sup>9</sup>	Filling Stage (Ge 1:14-30): Filling the unfilled state of the earth. <sup>10</sup>
DAY 1: Light (vv. 3-5) – to counter the "darkness" surrounding the earth	DAY 4: Two great lights and stars (vv. 14-19)
DAY 2: Expanse and waters (vv. 6-8) – to separate the "waters" covering the earth	DAY 5: Winged and water creatures (vv. 20-23)
DAY 3: Land (v. 11); production of plants and trees (vv. 12-13)	DAY 6: Land creatures and man (vv. 24-28); purpose of plants and trees (vv. 29-30)

As with creation, God works in our lives through a wisely designed process, fulfilling particular purposes He has for individuals, and primarily to transform our lives. To God, His process is "good" (vv. 4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25), although we are still works in progress – incomplete and imperfect, and oftentimes we wonder, "Where is the 'good'?" Learn to see as God sees.

## ■ Application

How do I look at the way God works in my life?

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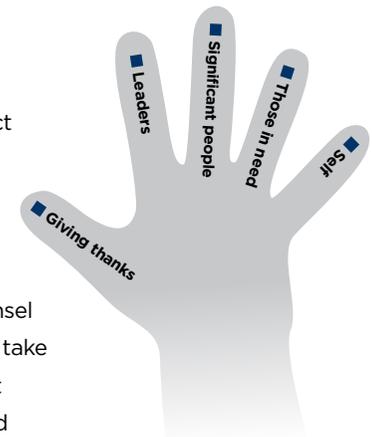
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## ■ Prayer

Sovereign Creator and Father of lights, every good thing and perfect gift comes from You,<sup>11</sup> for You are good.<sup>12</sup> You cause all things to work together for good in my life according to Your purpose,<sup>13</sup> and who works all things after the counsel of Your will.<sup>14</sup> The process that You take may be painful and perplexing; but I keep entrusting my life to You and trust in You. Amen.



<sup>9</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Zondervan, 2001), 57

<sup>10</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, 57

<sup>11</sup> James 1:17

<sup>12</sup> Psalm 100:5

<sup>13</sup> Romans 8:28

<sup>14</sup> Ephesians 1:11

February 6  
Friday  
2015

# No "Good" on Monday

## ■ Scripture

Genesis 1:6-13

### ■ Observation

Why is there no mention of God seeing His creative work as "good" on Day 2 (vv. 6-8)?

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### Deeper Reflection

There is no mention of God viewing His creative work as "good" on Day 2 (Monday). ("Even God did not say that Mondays are good!"<sup>15</sup>) However, "God saw that it was good" is mentioned twice on Day 3 (vv. 10, 12). Why? There was something incomplete in God's creative work on Day 2, but only completed on Day 3. This must be seen from the perspective of Day 3 when God created vegetation on the earth (vv. 11-12). For vegetation to sprout, there must be the three life-supportive systems of light, rain and earth, "the agent through which God mediates His genitive power".<sup>16</sup> On Day 2, God created the expanse to separate "the source of rain from the waters on earth"<sup>17</sup> (vv. 6-7), but "rain is of no use without the land to fructify".<sup>18</sup> The creative God works to fulfill His purposes in manifold ways. God is GOD. He acts in His sovereign freedom and wisdom. God also varies in His pace of work. God does not "maximise" His omnipotence. If we were omnipotent, we would have created the universe in a second!

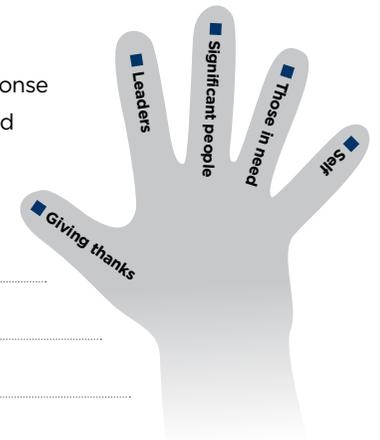
## ■ Application

How can I live by the fundamental theological truth that God is GOD in my life?

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## ■ Prayer

Write a prayer to God as your response arising from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.



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<sup>15</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, 62, footnote 31 – just tongue-in-cheek!  
<sup>16</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, 62  
<sup>17</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, 62  
<sup>18</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, 62

February 7  
Saturday  
2015

# The Great Sea Monsters

## ■ Scripture

Genesis 1:21

### ■ Observation

Why does the narrator describe God creating “great sea monsters” in verse 21?

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### Deeper Reflection

The Hebrew word for “create” in Genesis 1:1 to 2:3 is *bara*. “Although many verbs denote God’s activity of bringing creation into existence, *bara* distinguishes itself by being used exclusively of God.”<sup>19</sup> The word is repeated six times, and every one of its occurrence is theologically significant. It occurs in Genesis 1:1 to state that God is the creator of the universe. It is repeated three times in Genesis 1:27 to highlight humans as the crown of God’s creation. It is used in Genesis 2:3 to tell of God’s completion of creation. But what is the theological significance of “God created the great sea monsters” in Genesis 1:21? “Old Testament poetry alludes to the dreaded sea dragons of pagan mythology who rival the creating gods... Hebrew poets adopt pagan imagery, but not pagan theology. The primeval monsters, which symbolise rebellion in ancient Near Eastern myths, are depicted as merely a few of God’s many creatures, depending upon and ultimately serving God”.<sup>20</sup> Genesis 1:21 has a polemic function, declaring the uncontested supremacy of God, who “broke the heads of the sea monsters in the sea” (Ps 74:13), and any “great sea monsters” of today’s world.

## ■ Application

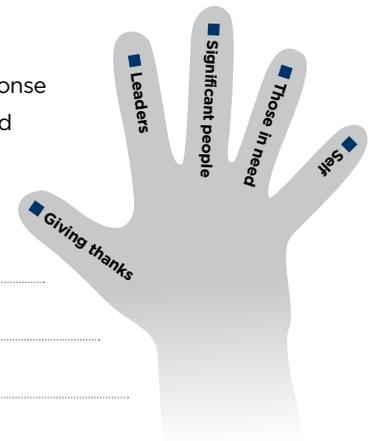
What are some “great sea monsters” of today’s world that I need to learn to face through the uncontested supremacy of God?

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## ■ Prayer

Write a prayer to God as your response arising from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

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<sup>19</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, 59  
<sup>20</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, 63

**February 8**  
Sunday  
2015

■ **Scripture** .....

■ **Observation**

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■ **Application**

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■ **Prayer**

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**The Past Week**

**REVIEW**

*What was my high point and my low point for the week?*

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*What gave me life and what drained me?*

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*How was the Spirit of God at work?*

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**REFLECT**

*What is one key thing that God said to me this week in light of what has happened?*

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**RESPOND**

*What is one thing I need to do in light of what God is saying?*

COMMIT IN PRAYER

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**FAMILY DEVOTIONAL**  
**February 2015 - Week 2**

**CREATION**

God created all things.

**Scripture - Genesis 1**

**1. Activity Bite**

**Props:** Paper and pens

In 30 seconds, write down as many animals that you think Adam had to name in Genesis 2:19-20. In the next 30 seconds, list as many objects as you can that are made by man.

**2. Chat Time**

**Q1:** Are there any living things that God could not have created?

**Q2:** For each of the objects you have listed, could you name the raw materials that were used to make them?

**Q3:** If God is the creator of all things, what is one word you would use to describe Him?

**3. Learning Point**

Genesis 1 tells us that all things in the whole universe were created by God. How He did it is really beyond our imagination. Within the universe, He created His most favourite place - the Earth, and on it, He created His most treasured possession - man and woman. He made us so that we can worship Him and enjoy all the things He created. Such is our marvellous God.

**4. Action Point**

Name your favourite animal, colour and place on earth. Give thanks to Him for creating the things that you enjoy.

**5. Prayer Power**

(Ask your children to pray after you.)

God, thank You so much for creating such a beautiful world. I am thankful that You made me to love and enjoy Your presence. Amen.

February 9  
Monday  
2015

# Condescension of the Transcendent

## ■ Scripture

Genesis 2:4-9, 15-22

## ■ Observation

Why is the divine name changed from “God” in Genesis 1:1 – 2:3 (repeated 35 times) to “the LORD God” in the narrative of God forming man and woman in Genesis 2 (vv. 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 15, 16, 18, 19, 21, 22)?

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## Deeper Reflection

Genesis 2:4-25 particularises Genesis 1:27 on how God created humans – male (vv. 5-8) and female (vv. 18-25). There is a theological movement of the condescension of the Transcendent: from God creating the universe in His transcendence to creating humans with a personal touch – stooping down to form man of “dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life” (v. 7), and to fashion a rib taken from the man into a woman (vv. 21-22). This movement is markedly signified by the change of divine names: from “God” (*Elohim*) in Genesis 1:1 to 2:3 to “the LORD God”, repeated 20 times in Genesis, and only in 2:4 to 3:23 (creation and transgression of humans). *Elohim* “represents His transcendent relationship to creation”.<sup>21</sup> “The LORD” (*Yahweh*) emphasises “the personal and covenantal nature of God”,<sup>22</sup> “used almost exclusively” in “covenant relationship”.<sup>23</sup> But the greatest condescension of the Transcendent is “the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us” (Jn 1:14) and became “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (Jn 1:29).

## ■ Application

What does the transcendence and condescension of God mean to me in my relationship with God?

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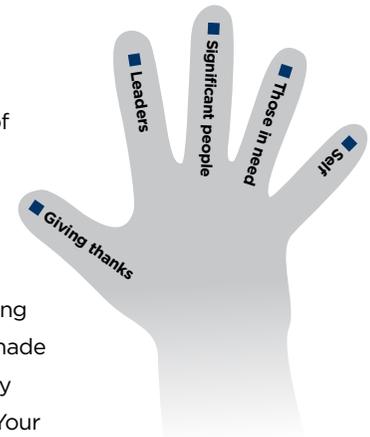
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## ■ Prayer

Father, You created us humans in Your image and likeness. But Son of God, when You sought to redeem us, although You existed in the form of God, You did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Yourself, taking the form of a bondservant, being made in the likeness of man. I am awed by Your humble condescension from Your holy transcendence!



<sup>21</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, 58

<sup>22</sup> Allen P. Ross, 122

<sup>23</sup> William Sanford La Sor, David Allan Hubbard & Frederic William Bush, *Old Testament Survey: The Message, Form, and Background of the Old Testament* (Eerdmans, 1982), 327, footnote 19

**February 10**  
 Tuesday  
 2015

# Man as God Created

■ **Scripture**

Genesis 2:5-9

■ **Observation**

What can you observe about God and man in verse 5?

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*Deeper Reflection*

There is a man-centeredness in Genesis 2. “Man is now the pivot of the story”, as “he was the climax”<sup>24</sup> in Genesis 1:26-27. “Everything is told in terms of him: even the primeval waste is shown awaiting him (v. 5b), and the narrative works outwards from man himself to man’s environment”<sup>25</sup>: garden (v. 8), trees (v. 9), rivers (vv. 10-14), beasts and birds (vv. 19-20). However, God has intended it to be a God-centered man-centeredness. God has designed a divine-human cooperation in life in His created world: God must send rain and man must cultivate the ground in order for the vegetation to grow (v. 5); but with man depending on God, for it is the Creator who “caused to grow” the vegetation (v. 9, cf. 1 Co 3:6-7). There is a divine closeness and commitment to humans when God “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life” (v. 7). “Breathed” is “warmly personal, with a face-to-face intimacy of a kiss and the significance that this was an act of giving as well as making; and self-giving at that”.<sup>26</sup> But the greatest divine self-giving is the cross – “God so loved...that He gave” (Jn 3:16).

■ **Application**

How does the manner in which God created human beings affect my view of God, myself and people?

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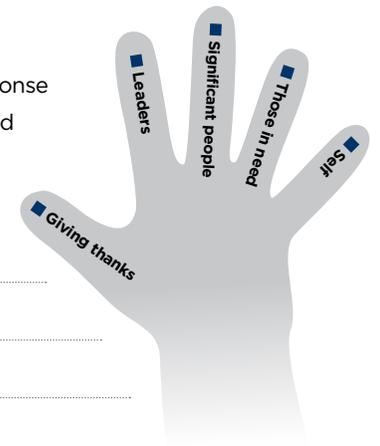
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■ **Prayer**

Write a prayer to God as your response arising from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.



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<sup>24</sup> Derek Kidner, 58  
<sup>25</sup> Derek Kidner, 58  
<sup>26</sup> Derek Kidner, 60

February 11  
Wednesday  
2015

# Work as God Created

## ■ Scripture

Genesis 2:5, 15

### ■ Observation

What do verses 5 and 15 say about the origin of work?

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### Deeper Reflection

Man was created to work – to “work” and “keep” the ground in the Garden of Eden (v. 15). “Work is a gift, not a punishment for sin. Even before the fall, humanity had duties to perform.”<sup>27</sup> Two Hebrew words in verse 15 define work theologically. *Abad* for “work” is commonly used in a religious sense of serving and worshiping God (Jos 24:14-15; Nu 3:7-8). *Shamar* for “keep” is commonly used for observing religious commands and duties (Ge 17:9; Lev 18:5).<sup>28</sup> “Man’s life in the Garden was to be characterised by worship and obedience; he was a priest, not merely a worker and keeper of the Garden.”<sup>29</sup> As such, we are to view our work and workplace as God’s placement (“He took the man and put him”) in God’s presence (“into the Garden of Eden”) where we could have fellowship with God<sup>30</sup> (Ge 3:8), for the purpose of worshiping God in obedience (“to work and to keep”). Work was originally intended to be spiritual in nature, not economic as today. And work was something that God engaged in Himself first – “His work” (Ge 2:2-3).

## ■ Application

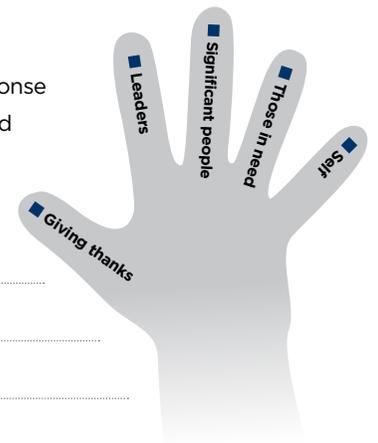
What change(s) do I need to make in my life concerning work?

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## ■ Prayer

Write a prayer to God as your response arising from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

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<sup>27</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, 87  
<sup>28</sup> Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, Word Biblical Commentary (Word Books, 1987), 67  
<sup>29</sup> John H. Sailhamer, *Genesis*, The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, (Zondervan, 1990), 45  
<sup>30</sup> John H. Sailhamer, 45

February 12  
Thursday  
2015

# Freedom Within a Fence

## ■ Scripture

Genesis 2:8-9, 15-17

## ■ Observation

What do verses 15 to 17 say about freedom of choice?

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## Deeper Reflection

Grown in the Garden of Eden were “every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food” and “the tree of life... and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil” (v. 9). Humans were given “a divine word, double-edged, to live by”<sup>31</sup>; “you may eat” (v. 16) and “you must not eat” (v. 17). They were permitted to eat from “any tree” (v. 16), except the forbidden one. Humans are given the freedom to choose, but within a boundary. For example, Scripture teaches that a widow is “free to be married to whom she wishes” – not “God wishes”, but “only in the Lord” (1 Co 7:39). The principle here is this: Human choices within divine confines. The divine fence and confines is the Word of God. And a widow can choose to remarry or not to (1 Co 7:40). This principle can be applied in many areas of our lives, like education, vocation and location. Values, perspectives and wisdom from God’s Word, together with our continual maturing walk with God, play significant roles in our making choices within the divine confines. Like someone said, “I don’t want to just marry a Christian man, but a godly one.”

## ■ Application

How would I go about using the God-given freedom to choose within the boundary of His Word in my life?

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## ■ Prayer

Lord, deepen my understanding of Your Word, and strengthen my walk with You. Fill me with the knowledge of what You want in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, so that I will be able to live my life in a manner worthy of You and give You real delight.<sup>32</sup> In this way, lead and guide me in all my decision making, such that You will be glorified in my life. Amen.



<sup>31</sup> Derek Kidner, 61

<sup>32</sup> Colossians 1:9-10

**February 13**  
 Friday  
 2015

# Woman as God Created

■ **Scripture**

Genesis 2:18-23

■ **Observation**

What does God's creation of woman say about women in verses 18 to 23?

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*Deeper Reflection*

Genesis 2:18-23 is “the crowning paragraph” of Genesis 2, “the dynamic or dramatic, counterpart of 1:27, 28”<sup>33</sup>; God’s creation of woman. Equality between man and woman was established when God created humans in His image: “male and female He created them” (Ge 1:27). The “image refers to the plurality of male and female within the unity of humanity”.<sup>34</sup> It is highly significant that this concept is “also distinct from the ancient Near East perspective”.<sup>35</sup> The necessity of woman for man is a God-created reality; because God made woman to meet man’s created state of “It is not good for the man to be alone” (vv. 18a, 21-22). Humans are created with a general social need to be met in community life, and a particular social need to be met in marriage. Woman has a God-created distinctiveness: She was made “a helper suitable and fit” for man (v. 18b), as opposite and corresponding to him,<sup>36</sup> as an “equal and adequate”<sup>37</sup> counterpart in complementation. “Helper”<sup>38</sup> “signifies the woman’s essential contribution”.<sup>39</sup> Man and woman are to view and value each other as God created them to be.

■ **Application**

What change(s) do I need to make in my view of women/myself as a woman/my wife (whichever is applicable) in light of God’s creation of woman?

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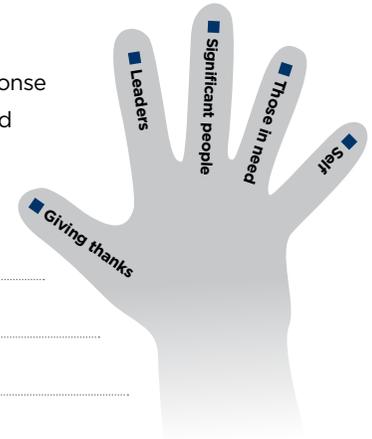
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■ **Prayer**

Write a prayer to God as your response arising from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.



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<sup>33</sup> Derek Kidner, 65  
<sup>34</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, 66  
<sup>35</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, 66  
<sup>36</sup> Derek Kidner, 65  
<sup>37</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, 88  
<sup>38</sup> The Hebrew word *ezer* is used for God 16 of the 19 times it appears in the Old Testament.  
<sup>39</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, 88

February 14  
Saturday  
2015

# Marriage as God Created

## ■ Scripture

Genesis 2:21-25

### ■ Observation

What are the fundamentals in marriage that God has intended according to verses 21 to 25?

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### Deeper Reflection

Genesis 2:21-25 presents four fundamentals for the strong and stable marriage that God intended – using LOVE as an acronym. *Lordship*: God must be the centre of marriage, for He is the creator of marriage. Note the five divine acts: “The LORD God caused... took... closed up...” (v. 21), “fashioned... and brought...” (v. 22). Devotion to God (cf. 1 Co 7:35) and dependence on Him are foundational in marriage. *Oneness*: In marriage, “God has joined together” man and woman into a “one flesh” union, and “let no man separate” that (v. 24; Mk 10:7-9). This God-sealed bond is exclusive (“leave”) and permanent (“cleave”). Marital oneness is lived out by “WE” and “OUR” in everything, for better and for worse. *Vow*: When a wedding is over, what remains is the marriage vow to the one flesh covenant commitment, testified to by the wedding rings. *Effort*: Keeping the marriage vow is an act of commitment. Love is commitment. Marriage is hard work, because love is hard work. Love is volition over emotion. Effort is the covenant commitment to keeping the Vow by living out the Oneness under the Lordship of God. That’s LOVE in marriage.

## ■ Application

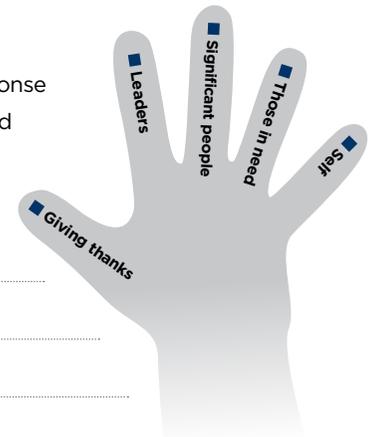
What change(s) do I need to make in my marriage concerning the fundamentals of marriage that God intended?

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## ■ Prayer

Write a prayer to God as your response arising from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

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**February 15**  
Sunday  
2015

■ **Scripture** .....

■ **Observation**

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■ **Application**

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■ **Prayer**

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**The Past Week**

**REVIEW**

*What was my high point and my low point for the week?*

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*What gave me life and what drained me?*

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*How was the Spirit of God at work?*

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**REFLECT**

*What is one key thing that God said to me this week  
in light of what has happened?*

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**RESPOND**

*What is one thing I need to do in light of what God is saying?*

COMMIT IN PRAYER

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**FAMILY DEVOTIONAL**  
**February 2015 - Week 3**
**MAN AND WOMAN IN GOD'S IMAGE**

God created man and woman – different in characteristics but both are made in the image of God.

**Scripture - Genesis 1:26**

**1. Activity Bite**

Think of your own personalities. Name those that are similar to that of your parents'.

**2. Chat Time**

**Q1:** How is a man different from a woman?

**Q2:** How are you similar to your parents?

**Q3:** What does it mean to have the image of God?

**3. Learning Point**

When man is created in the image of God, it doesn't mean that God has hands, legs, eyes or a nose. He doesn't have a body because He is Spirit. Having His image means to have some of His characteristics. Having language and creativity are two of them. Others include having emotions, a will, the ability to think and a sense of what is right or wrong. It's like we have part of God in us. God gave part of Himself to us because He considers us as His treasured possession. So we also must treat ourselves and others with love and respect.

**4. Action Point**

Consider how you would use your thoughts in the same way God would. Think of three people whom you know personally. List three good things about each of them.

**5. Prayer Power**

(Ask your children to pray after you.)

Dear God, thank You for creating me in Your image. I am glad I am not like the animals. It is good to be Your special creation. Amen.

February 16  
Monday  
2015

## Attack on God's Word

### ■ Scripture

Genesis 3:1-5

### ■ Observation

*How does the serpent attack the Word of God in verses 1 to 5?*

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### Deeper Reflection

What is most dangerous about the serpent is his craftiness (v. 1), by which he “deceives the whole world” (Rev 12:9). Not surprising then, the primary object of his attack is truth, the Word of God, as when he tempted the first humans. **Doubting God's Word:** When God had said to man that he could eat from any tree in the Garden, except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Ge 2:16-17), the serpent asked Eve, “Indeed, has God said...?” (v. 1). **Doubting God's Word** may be due to our ignorance, or uncertainty, or “the assumption that God's Word is subject to our judgment”<sup>40</sup>. **Deviating from God's Word:** In her response to the serpent, Eve added, “nor touch it” (v. 3). She “over-corrects the error, magnifying God's strictness”.<sup>41</sup> Eve “was to have many successors”<sup>42</sup> in adding to God's Word. Doing less or more than what God has said are both equally wrong. **Distorting God's Word:** When God had said that should man eat from the forbidden tree “you shall surely die” (Ge 2:17), the serpent said to Eve in direct contradiction, “You surely shall not die!” (v. 4). We need to know and live by what God has really said.

### ■ Application

*How vigilant am I in guarding myself from understanding and believing the Bible wrongly?*

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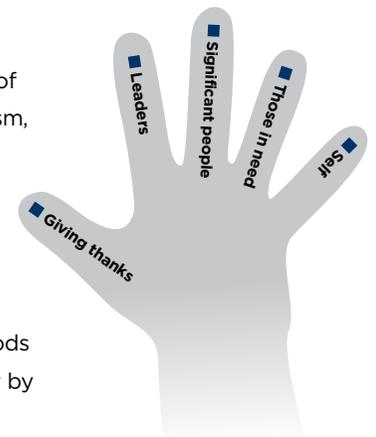
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### ■ Prayer

God, help me! I'm living in a world of pluralism, relativism and subjectivism, hearing its many loud voices speaking to influence humanity to embrace its worldview and value system. Help me to hear Your voice in Your Word loud and clear, to be able to discern falsehoods through Your truth, and to live only by Your Word. Amen.



<sup>40</sup> Derek Kidner, 67

<sup>41</sup> Derek Kidner, 68

<sup>42</sup> Derek Kidner, 68

February 17  
Tuesday  
2015

# “You Will Be Like God”

## ■ Scripture

Genesis 3:4-7

### ■ Observation

What does “you will be like God, knowing good and evil” (v. 5) mean?

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### Deeper Reflection

What caused Eve (with Adam beside her) to seriously consider eating from the forbidden tree? The serpent planted three thoughts into her mind. First, “You cannot trust what God says” – the serpent said, “You surely shall not die!” (v. 4), while God has said, “you shall surely die” (2:17). Second, “God is keeping good things from you.” The serpent said, “God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened...” (3:5a), implying that God is withholding something good from the couple. Third, “You can know what is best for yourself” – for the serpent said, “you will be like God, knowing good and evil” (3:5b). One deceptive suggestion led to another. And it was the last one that led to Eve’s fatal decision (vv. 6-7). At the heart of sin is overstepping the God-decreed limits given in His Word, to be independent from God and become the god of one’s own life. The serpent is still saying the same things to us today, starting with “Indeed, has God said?” (Ge 3:1). Whose words do I trust and live by? Our answer may be obvious: “God’s”; although the reality is often not so.

## ■ Application

How would I deal with any of the three thoughts the serpent planted into Eve’s mind in my life?

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## ■ Prayer

Write a prayer to God as your response arising from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

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February 18  
Wednesday  
2015

# Sin Breaks Down Relationships

## ■ Scripture

Genesis 3:7-13

### ■ Observation

How did sin affect the relationship of Adam and Eve, and their relationship with God (vv. 7-13)?

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### Deeper Reflection

“Naked” is a key word in the account of the fall of man in Genesis 3. Adam and Eve were originally “both naked and were not ashamed” (Ge 2:25). Nakedness without shame speaks of an intimate relationship without barriers. But when Adam and Eve sinned, “they realised that they were naked” (v. 7, NIV), and they made loin coverings to cover their nakedness. Sin brought about a breakdown in human relationship, and barriers began to form. And when God looked for Adam and Eve in the Garden, they “hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God” (v. 8). And the reason was: “I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself” (v. 10) – a breakdown in the relationship with God. In this breakdown of relationships, fallen humans tend to blame others for their wrongdoings (or for things that go wrong), instead of taking personal responsibility. Like Adam, we blame God and other people: “The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me...” (v. 12). God’s question to Adam was, “Have you eaten from the tree...?” (v. 11). And like Eve, we blame the devil, “The serpent deceived me,” when God asked her, “What is this you have done?” (v. 13).

## ■ Application

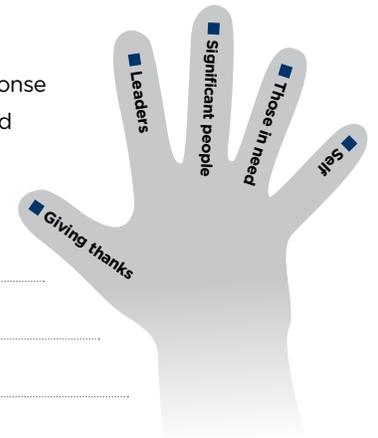
What aspect(s) of my relationship with God and/or people needs to be repaired?

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## ■ Prayer

Write a prayer to God as your response arising from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

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February 19  
Thursday  
2015

# Redemption Promise and Discipleship Paradigm

## ■ Scripture

Genesis 3:15

### ■ Observation

What is the “enmity” that God would put between the serpent’s seed and the woman’s seed in verse 15?

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### Deeper Reflection

After the fall of humankind, God gave them what is known as the protevangelium – “the first glimmer of the gospel”<sup>43</sup> in verse 15, which contains a redemption promise and a discipleship paradigm regarding the woman’s seed and the serpent’s seed. “Seed” “can infer both the single and collective senses.”<sup>44</sup> In the single sense, it points to the redemptive promise of “an individual to deliver the fatal blow [on the serpent’s head] and to be struck uniquely on his heel”<sup>45</sup>; Jesus’ death on the cross (cf. Jn 12:31-33). In the collective sense, humanity is “divided into two communities”<sup>46</sup>: “the children of God and the children of the devil” (1 Jn 3:9-10). The discipleship paradigm in Genesis 3:15 is the war (“enmity”) between God and His people, and Satan and his children, in which God will always win (“He shall bruise you on the head” – cf. Ro 8:37; 2 Co 2:14). However, God’s win often comes with wounds (“you shall bruise him on the heel”). Jesus’ suffering, death and resurrection, which is the model of discipleship (Lk 9:22-23) reflects Genesis 3:15.

## ■ Application

In what ways is the “war, win and wounds” in the discipleship paradigm of verse 15 true in my life?

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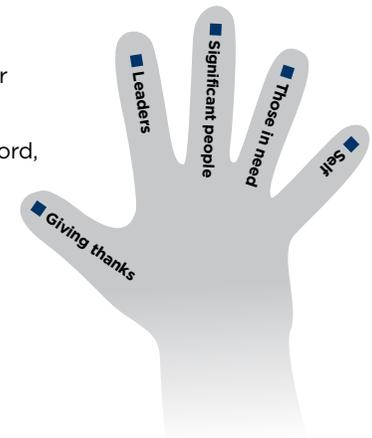
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## ■ Prayer

Good Jesus, who bore the cross for me, what cross is it that You will I should bear for You? You know, Lord, that I am all weakness; teach me to bear my cross – bear it for me, bear it in me.<sup>47</sup> Amen.



<sup>43</sup> Derek Kidner, 70

<sup>44</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, 93

<sup>45</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, 93

<sup>46</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, 93

<sup>47</sup> Edward Pusey (1800 – 1882)

**February 20**  
 Friday  
 2015

# Redemption of Fallen Humanity (1)

■ **Scripture**

Genesis 3:17-20

■ **Observation**

What is the significance of Adam naming his wife “Eve” (v. 20)?

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*Deeper Reflection*

The fall of humanity broke up the harmonious order of creation through death (Ge 2:17) and curse (vv. 17-19). But we see a two-fold mercy of God: Adam did not die physically immediately, although spiritual death – separation from God – took immediate effect (Ge 3:8, 23-24); and “the curse is on man’s realm, not on man himself”<sup>48</sup>. “Toil/Pain<sup>49</sup>... sweat...dust” caused by “thorns and thistles” (vv. 17-19) “answer the fantasy ‘you will be like God’ [Ge 3:5], and lead to the cry ‘all things are full of weariness’ (Ecc 1:8, RSV)”<sup>50</sup>. Following the divine curse (vv. 17-19) are four redemptive movements; and their order is theologically significant: hope in God (v. 20), grace of God (Ge 3:21), justice of God and mercy of God (Ge 3:22-24). Redemption begins with hope in God (v. 20) – a new beginning. Adam named his wife “Eve”, “because she is the mother of all the living”. It was an act of hope. Life is the contrast of death (Ge 2:17). There is the new hope of life in death. What gave Adam this hope? The Word of God: God promised deliverance from and defeat of evil through “the seed of the woman” (Ge 3:15) – ultimately, Jesus Christ (Lk 2:10-11 with Ge 3:23-38).

■ **Application**

*In what area(s) of my life do I need a new beginning of hope from God and with God?*

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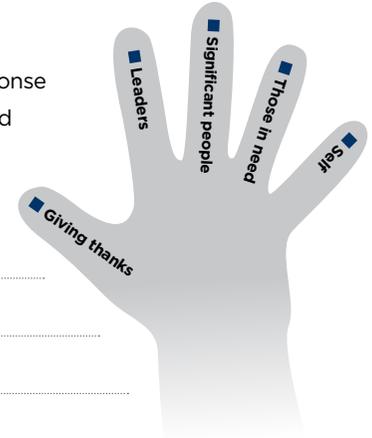
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■ **Prayer**

Write a prayer to God as your response arising from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.



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<sup>48</sup> Derek Kidner, 71  
<sup>49</sup> The Hebrew word for “toil/pain” in Genesis 3:17 is similar to “pain” in the woman’s child-bearing in Genesis 3:16.  
<sup>50</sup> Derek Kidner, 71

**February 21**  
 Saturday  
 2015

# Redemption of Fallen Humanity (2)

■ **Scripture**

Genesis 3:21-24

■ **Observation**

*How are the redemptive acts of God shown in verses 21 to 24?*

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*Deeper Reflection*

God “made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them” (v. 21). Their coverings made of fig leaves were only loincloths (Ge 3:7), inadequate to cover their shame. But God crafted for them tunics of animal skin that reached down to the knees and ankles. God “clothed them” is “an image of God’s tender care”.<sup>51</sup> The “killing of an animal necessary to make garments of skin may suggest/ imply the image of a sacrifice for sin”.<sup>52</sup> Through sacrificing an animal, God “restores the alienated couple to fellowship with Him and one another”.<sup>53</sup> This was an act of God’s grace – providing for their immediate needs in their inadequacy, and divine initiative in providing for their ultimate needs. God did for them what they could not do. After this, God drove the two sinners out of the Garden (vv. 23-24) – separation from God, which is death (Ge 2:17). It was an act of God’s justice. But God acted in grace before He acted in justice. And in justice was mercy. “Whatever” fallen humans “had become was evil”, and “God acted to prevent them from continuing perpetually in that condition”<sup>54</sup> (v. 22). “Mercy triumphs over judgment” (Jas 2:13).

■ **Application**

*How does the way in which God redeemed the first sinners (Adam and Eve) affect my life?*

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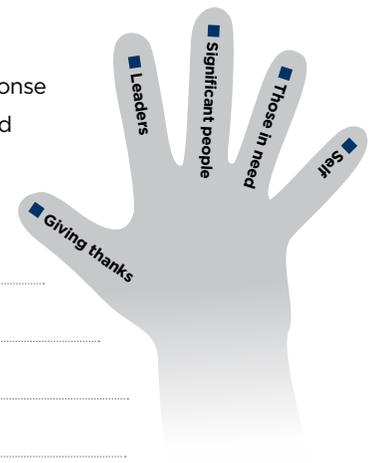
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■ **Prayer**

Write a prayer to God as your response arising from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.



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<sup>51</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, 95  
<sup>52</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, 95, fn. 56  
<sup>53</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, 95  
<sup>54</sup> Allen P. Ross, 149

**February 22**  
Sunday  
2015

■ **Scripture** .....

■ **Observation**

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■ **Application**

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■ **Prayer**

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**The Past Week**

**REVIEW**

*What was my high point and my low point for the week?*

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*What gave me life and what drained me?*

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*How was the Spirit of God at work?*

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**REFLECT**

*What is one key thing that God said to me this week in light of what has happened?*

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**RESPOND**

*What is one thing I need to do in light of what God is saying?*

COMMIT IN PRAYER

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**FAMILY DEVOTIONAL**  
**February 2015 - Week 4**

**MAN SINS AGAINST GOD**

Sadly, man chooses his own ways and disobeys God.

**Scripture - Genesis 3**

**1. Activity Bite**

Run through one of the week's newspapers. Point out as many articles as you can that contain bad news.

**2. Chat Time**

**Q1:** What is the most terrible news in the papers?

**Q2:** Why does man choose to do bad things? What are the reasons behind these actions?

**Q3:** In what ways do you and I sin against God?

**3. Learning Point**

Man and woman were created in perfect relationship with each other and God. However, they chose to follow their own ways and do their own things - they actually wanted to be like God. As a result, they were separated from God by sin. The earth was cursed and people have since become bad. But God still loves us. He provided a way so that man and woman can come back into a perfect relationship in Him.

**4. Action Point**

Reflect on the times you have disobeyed your parents or done things that hurt others. Tell God how sorry you are. Ask Him to help you to obey your parents.

**5. Prayer Power**

(Ask your children to pray after you.)

Dear God, I am sorry for doing wrong things against You. Please help me to do what is right. Help me to walk in Your ways all the time. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

February 23  
Monday  
2015

## Right Action, Wrong Attitude

### ■ Scripture

Genesis 4:1-5

### ■ Observation

Why did God reject Cain's offering but accept Abel's (vv. 1-5)?

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### Deeper Reflection

Cain and Abel worshipped God (vv. 3-4a); but God accepted Abel's offering, and rejected Cain's (vv. 4b-5a). Why? It was not due to the type of offerings offered – Abel's from the flock, and Cain's from the ground. Offerings in the Old Testament included both blood and non-blood sacrifices (Lev 2 – grain offering). It has to do with the quality of the offering. Abel offered to God “the firstlings” and “the fat portions” of his flock (v. 4) – “the best, fat from ‘firstborn’.”<sup>55</sup> The Hebrew word for “fat” is elsewhere translated as “best” (Nu 18:12) and “finest” (Ps 81:16). Cain's sin was “tokenism.”<sup>56</sup> It was religiosity without reality. It was also because of the attitude in the worship. This was reflected in Cain's reaction when God rejected his offering – he “became very angry” (v. 5). Was he angry with God or with Abel? Probably both, but he could only take it out on Abel. The appropriate response of Cain to God should have been repentance, not retaliation. Anger is incongruent with worship. We need to guard against wrong attitude in right action. Attitude is a matter of the heart.

### ■ Application

In what area(s) of my life do I need to guard against wrong attitude in right action?

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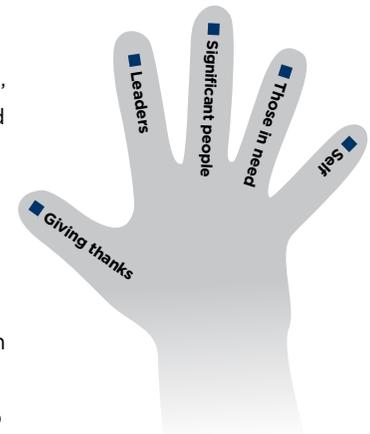
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### ■ Prayer

God who sees and knows all things, You have informed us in Your Word how it is possible to do what is right in Your sight but with the wrong heart.<sup>57</sup> Keep me from just having the form of religion without the reality of a right relationship with You. It is only when I walk with You rightly and honestly that my heart can be right before You. Help me, Lord! Amen.



<sup>55</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, 97

<sup>56</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, 97

<sup>57</sup> 2 Chronicles 25:2

February 24  
Tuesday  
2015

## What Sin Seeks to Destroy

### ■ Scripture

Genesis 4:1-11, 23-24

### ■ Observation

What is the significance of the phrase “his brother” with variants being repeated seven times in verses 1 to 11?

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### Deeper Reflection

The first sin recorded in the Bible after man’s fall is a murder: Cain murdered Abel – “his brother”. “His brother” (vv. 2, 8), “your brother” (vv. 9, 10, 11), “my brother” (v. 9), are repeated seven times altogether in the story. The next sin recorded is also a murder – and by a descendant of Cain. Lamech “killed a man for wounding [him]; and a boy for striking [him]” (v. 23). Killing as a response to “wounding” and “striking” is extremely out of proportion. Even God in His justice requires only “eye for eye, tooth for tooth” (Ex 21:23-25). Lamech’s act was one of vengeance with arrogance: “If Cain is avenged sevenfold, then Lamech seventy-sevenfold” (v. 24). Lamech’s “taunt song reveals the swift progress of sin”<sup>58</sup>. The two murder stories in one chapter pointedly show how sin seeks to destroy human life (personhood and people), the most precious creation of God – even in a close family relationship. Murder, hatred, anger and degrading someone – the opposite of valuing life, people and relationships – are of the same spirit (Mt 5:21-22). The contrast to Lamech’s “seventy-sevenfold” vengeance is Jesus’ “seventy times seven” forgiveness (Mt 18:21-22).

### ■ Application

Who are the people that I need to forgive, reconcile with or change my attitudes towards?

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### ■ Prayer

Write a prayer to God as your response arising from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

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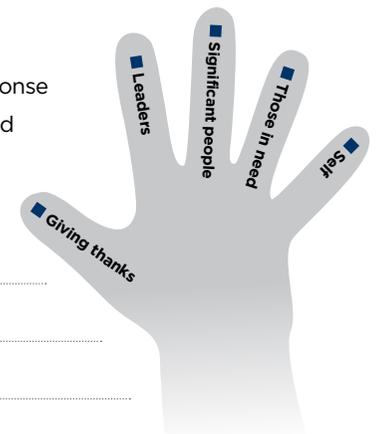
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<sup>58</sup> Derek Kidner, 78

February 25  
Wednesday  
2015

# The Subtle Progress of Sin

## ■ Scripture

Genesis 4:3-16

### ■ Observation

What can you observe in the way Cain's sin progressed in verses 3 to 16?

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### Deeper Reflection

Cain's sin began in worship to God (v. 3). Why did Cain present an offering to God? Was it Cain's initiative or God's requirement? Whatever it was, one thing was for sure: Cain's heart wasn't right before God, as reflected in his "tokenism"<sup>59</sup> and anger when God rejected his offering (v. 5). Sin begins with not having a right relationship with God. Cain could have stopped at his anger. God graciously warned him, "Watch out! Sin is crouching at the door, eager to control you" (v. 7, NLT). But Cain refused to listen. And so, anger turned into murder (v. 8). After Cain killed his brother, God confronted him, "Where is Abel your brother?" (v. 9a). It was not because God was ignorant, but rather that He wanted Cain to acknowledge his sin. There was still a God-given chance to turn back. However, Cain's response, "I do not know" (v. 9a) showed indifference while "Am I my brother's keeper?" (v. 9b) demonstrated defiance. When God punished him rightly and justly (vv. 10-12), he refused to accept it: "My punishment is too great to bear!" (v. 13). Then, with a heart so hardened, "Cain went out from the presence of the LORD" (v. 16).

## ■ Application

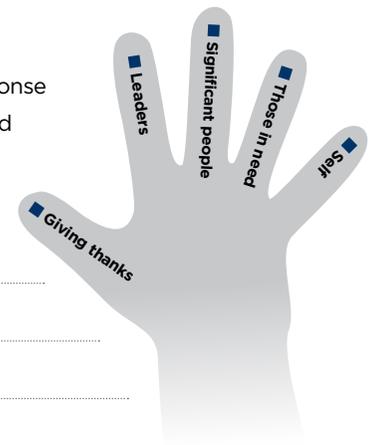
How will I guard against the subtle progress of sin in my life?

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## ■ Prayer

Write a prayer to God as your response arising from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

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<sup>59</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, 97

February 26  
Thursday  
2015

## The Incredible Mercy of God!

### ■ Scripture

Genesis 4:11-16

### ■ Observation

What do you learn about God in what He promised Cain when He pronounced His judgment on him (vv. 11-15)?

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### Deeper Reflection

When Cain went out of God's presence (v. 16), it was his choice; although God made attempts to turn him back from his spiral into sin. God's judgment on Cain was harsher than on Adam. God's curse was directly on Cain – "you are cursed from the ground" (v. 11), in contrast to His curse on the ground for Adam's sin (Ge 3:17). Despite that, Cain left God's presence with two promises of God: Divine justice – "whoever kills Cain, vengeance will be taken on him sevenfold" (v. 15a); and divine protection – "the LORD appointed a sign for Cain, so that no one finding him would slay him" (v. 15b). Cain did not make any particular request to God when he expressed his fear of the danger of being killed under divine judgment (v. 14). But God of His own initiative gave Cain His promises. God's "concern for the innocent (Ge 4:10) is matched only by His care for the sinner"<sup>60</sup> – an arrogant, defiant, indifferent, impenitent sinner at that. "God's answering pledge, together with His mark or sign" (v. 15) "is almost a covenant, making Him virtually Cain's protector... It is the utmost that mercy can do for the unrepentant."<sup>61</sup>

### ■ Application

What does God's incredible mercy on Cain mean to me personally?

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### ■ Prayer

Holy God, there are times when I have sinned against You in such a shameful and sinful manner that I wanted to say, "Depart from me, Lord, for I am so sinful!"<sup>62</sup> But it's a prayer You will not answer. Instead, what You want from me is, "God, be merciful to me, the sinner!"<sup>63</sup> For in Christ, I have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of my trespasses, according to the riches of Your grace.<sup>64</sup> Amen.



<sup>60</sup> Derek Kidner, 76

<sup>61</sup> Derek Kidner, 76

<sup>62</sup> Luke 5:8

<sup>63</sup> Luke 18:13

<sup>64</sup> Ephesians 1:7

February 27  
Friday  
2015

# Why Didn't God Protect Abel?

## ■ Scripture

Genesis 4:3-10

## ■ Observation

Why did God not protect Abel from being killed by the wicked Cain (vv. 3-8)?

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## Deeper Reflection

Genesis 4:1-10 records the first human death after man's fall into sin. It was the death of the righteous at the hands of the wicked – and in the context of worship to God. What stands out for Abel was his devotion to God, expressed in the “firstlings” and “fat portions” of his worship (v. 4a), and God’s delight in him: “the LORD had regard for Abel” – first as a worshipper, “and for his offering” (v. 4b) – then his worship. Since the beginning, God has been seeking “true worshippers” (Jn 4:23); for true worship can come only from “true worshippers”. But why didn't God protect the “righteous” Abel (Heb 11:4) from being killed by the wicked? In light of Genesis 3:15, we should not be surprised. This hard reality is part of the evil nature of sin, and part of what it means to live righteously in a fallen world. Abel's blood cried out for God's justice (v. 10); but “the sprinkled blood” of Jesus, “which speaks better than Abel's” cries out for grace (Heb 12:24). On the cross, the righteous died for the unrighteous at the hands of the unrighteous, so that the unrighteous can become righteous (1 Pe 3:18; 2 Co 5:21).

## ■ Application

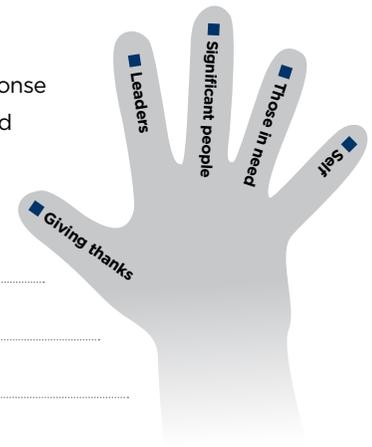
How should I look at and live with injustice done to me?

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## ■ Prayer

Write a prayer to God as your response arising from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

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**February 28**  
 Saturday  
 2015

# Human Civilisation and Divine Presence

■ **Scripture**

Genesis 4:16-26

■ **Observation**

What was the beginning of human civilisation like in verses 19 to 24?

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*Deeper Reflection*

Cain “went out from the presence of the LORD” (v. 16), having “disdained contrition and now set himself to make some success of his independence”<sup>65</sup> from God. In this spiritual state, Cain produced his descendants (vv. 17-18), and formed “a self-sufficient society”, which the New Testament calls “the world”<sup>66</sup> (Ro 12:2; 1 Jn 2:15-16). Genesis 4:19-24 is a picture of “the beginnings of civilised life”<sup>67</sup> away from the presence of God: progressing in culture – “play the lyre and pipe” (v. 21), and in technology – “the forger of all implements of bronze and iron” (v. 22). As it was then and even today, fallen humanity, while progressing culturally and technologically, regresses morally (vv. 19, 23-24). Fallen humanity has been civilised on the outside, but often uncivilised on the inside. Civilised life shows “a characteristic potentiality for good and evil, with the arts that will bless mankind flanked by abuses (vv. 19, 23, 24) that will curse it”<sup>68</sup>. Adam’s descendants through Seth (v. 25) were no less civilised than the contemporary Cainites. But, they lived a civilised life while calling “upon the name of the LORD” (v. 26). So must we today.

■ **Application**

How should I live my life in today’s world that is progressing quickly technologically and culturally?

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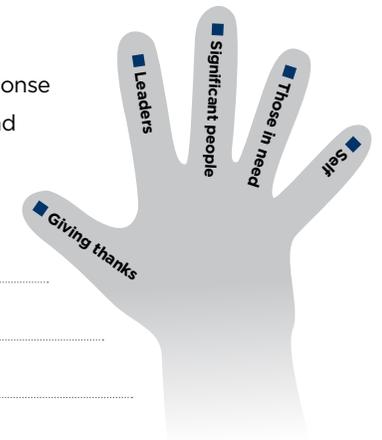
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■ **Prayer**

Write a prayer to God as your response arising from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.



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<sup>65</sup> Derek Kidner, 77  
<sup>66</sup> Derek Kidner, 77  
<sup>67</sup> Derek Kidner, 76  
<sup>68</sup> Derek Kidner, 76







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