



The Old Testament



Genesis

Introduction

Circumstances of Writing

Since pre-Christian times authorship of the Torah, the first five books of the Bible, has been attributed to Moses, an enormously influential Israelite leader from the second millennium BC with an aristocratic Egyptian background. Even though Genesis is technically anonymous, both the Old and New Testaments unanimously recognize Moses as the Torah's author (Jos 8:35; 2Ch 23:18; Neh 8:1; Mk 12:19,26; Lk 2:22; Rm 10:5; Heb 10:28). At the same time, evidence in Genesis suggests that minor editorial changes dating to ancient times have been inserted into the text. Examples include the mention of "Dan" (Gn 14:14), a city that was not named until the days of the judges (Jdg 18:29), and the use of a phrase that assumed the existence of Israelite kings (Gn 36:31).

The Torah (a Hebrew term for "law" or "instruction") was seen as one unit until at least the second century BC. Sometime prior to the birth of Christ, the Torah was divided into five separate books, later referred to as the Pentateuch (lit "five vessels"). Genesis, the first book of the Torah, provides both the universal history of humankind and the patriarchal history of the nation of Israel. The first section (chaps. 1–11) is a general history commonly called the "primeval history," showing how all humanity descended from one couple and became sinners. The second section (chaps. 12–50) is a more specific history commonly referred to as the "patriarchal history," focusing on the covenant God made with Abraham and his descendants: Isaac, Jacob, and Jacob's twelve sons. Genesis unfolds God's plan to redeem and bless humanity through Abraham's descendants.

The book concludes with the events that led to the Israelites being in the land of Egypt.

Contribution to the Bible

Genesis lays the groundwork for everything else we read and experience in Scripture. Through Genesis we understand where we came from, how we got in the fallen state we are in, and the beginnings of God's gracious work on our behalf. Genesis unfolds God's original purpose for humanity.

Genesis provides the foundation from which we understand God's covenant with Israel that was established with the giving of the law. For the Israelite community, the stories of the origins of humanity, sin, and the covenant relationship with God helped them understand why God gave them the law.

Structure

Genesis is chiefly a narrative. From a narrative standpoint, God is the only true hero of the Bible, and the book of Genesis has the distinct privilege of introducing him. God is the first subject of a verb in the book and is mentioned more frequently than any other character in the Bible. The content of the first eleven chapters is distinct from the patriarchal stories in chapters 12–50. The primary literary device is the catchphrase "these are the family records." The phrase is broader in meaning than simply "generation," and refers more to a narrative account. This phrase also serves as a link between the key person in the previous narrative and the one anticipated in the next section. Genesis could be described as historical genealogy, which ties together creation and human history in one continuum.

Truth for Healing

in Genesis

As we face the painful issues of life in this world, the question we most often hear and utter ourselves is "Why?" The best place to go to begin answering those questions is Genesis. It tells us that pain and trouble were not originally part of our natural human condition but resulted from humanity's chosen separation from God. Genesis recounts how this separation manifested itself in the lives of people from Adam and Eve to the children of Judah in ways that are echoed in people's lives today. They exhibited behaviors and experiences of fear, shame, anger, violence, frustration, greed, deceit, arrogance, hatred, lust, and injustice that we know too well. But rather

than leaving us in fatalistic despair, Genesis tells us of God's redemptive plan to heal and restore through a descendant of Adam, Abraham, and Judah.

In Genesis we also find God speaking grace and mercy into the lives of broken and struggling people like Cain, Abram/Abraham, Hagar, Jacob/Israel and Joseph. Hagar's words of gratitude and wonder have brought encouragement to countless people suffering from neglect or mistreatment by others: "So she named the LORD who spoke to her: 'You are El-roi,' for she said, 'In this place, have I actually seen the one who sees me?'" (16:13).

The Creation

1 In the beginning^a God created the heavens and the earth.^{A,b}

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

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

⁹ Then God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered into one place,^h and let the dry land appear." And it was so. ¹⁰ God called the dry land "earth," and the gathering of the water he called "seas." And God saw that it was good. ¹¹ Then 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."ⁱ And it was so. ¹² The 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. ¹³ Evening came and then morning: the third day.

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

²⁰ Then God said, "Let the water swarm with^d living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky."

²¹ So God created the large sea-creatures

"Because Jesus rests, you can rest."



and every living creature that moves and swarms in the water,ⁿ according to their kinds. He also created every winged creature according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ²² God blessed them: "Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the waters of the seas, and let the birds multiply on the earth."^o ²³ Evening came and then morning: the fifth day.

²⁴ Then 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. ²⁵ So 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.

²⁶ Then God said, "Let us^p make man^E in^F our image, according to our likeness.^q They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, the whole earth, and the creatures that crawl⁶ on the earth."^r

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

²⁸ God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth,^t and subdue it. Rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that crawls on the earth."^u ²⁹ God 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,^v ³⁰ for 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."^v And it was so. ³¹ God saw all that he had made, and it was very good indeed.^w Evening came and then morning: the sixth day.

^a1:1 Ps 90:2; 102:12; Is 40:21; Jn 1:1-3; Eph 3:21 ^b9h Gn 9:6; Is 40:12-14; 43:7; Jr 10:12-16; Am 4:13; Rm 1:25; 1Co 11:9; Col 1:16; Rv 4:11
¹2 Jr 4:23 ^qJb 26:13; 33:4; Ps 33:6; 104:30 ^r1:3 2Co 4:6
¹6 Is 44:24; Jr 10:12 ^q1:7 Ps 148:4 ¹9 Jb 38:8-11; Ps 33:7; 136:6; Jr 5:22; 2Pt 3:5 ¹11 Ps 65:9-13; 104:14 ¹14 Jr 10:2 ⁴Ps 104:19
¹16 Dt 4:19; Ps 136:7-9; Is 40:26 ¹18 Jr 31:35 ¹21 Ps 104:25-28
¹22 Gn 8:17; 9:1 ¹26 Gn 3:22; 11:7 ⁹Gn 5:1,3; 9:6; Rm 8:29; 1Co 11:7; 15:49; 2Co 3:18; 4:4; Eph 4:24; Col 1:15; Jms 3:9 ¹Gn 9:2; Ps 8:6-8; Jms 3:7 ¹27 Gn 5:2; Mt 19:4; Mk 10:6 ¹28 Gn 9:17
¹29 Gn 9:3; Ps 104:14-15; 136:25; 145:15-16 ¹30 Ps 147:9
¹31 1Tm 4:4

^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

Sabbath Rest

Trusting God with Your “To-Do” List



Winston T. Smith

There is one very important reason to slow down and rest. God commands it. In fact, resting is so important that it is one of the Ten Commandments. The fourth commandment reads, “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy: You are to labor six days and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God” (Ex 20:8–10). The word *Sabbath* comes from the Hebrew word for “ceasing” or “stopping.” You may already be familiar with the idea of “Sabbath” from Sunday school or from hearing your parents or grandparents mention it, but have you ever wondered why God thinks that having a day of “stopping” is important enough to be one of the Ten Commandments?

The first instance of Sabbath in the Bible features God himself resting. In the opening chapter of Genesis, God creates everything that exists in six days: light and darkness, moon, sun, stars, land and sea, plants, animals, and human-kind. Chapter 2 begins, “So the heavens and the earth and everything in them were completed. On the seventh day God had completed his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, for on it he rested from all his work of creation” (Gn 2:1–3).

Every act of creation required nothing more of God than a spoken word: “Then God said.” God isn’t toiling in sweat and anguish—just the opposite. Every creative act began with a word and ended with the pronouncement, “And God saw that it was good.”¹

You may be so familiar with the story of creation that it no longer astounds you, but you can be sure that the original audience would have been amazed at the God of Genesis 1. The ancient world was completely unfamiliar with the notion of one God who created and ruled over all things. They were preoccupied with how *many* gods existed, who they were, and what their roles were. So the creation stories of other cultures were strikingly different from the one in Genesis.² God’s day of rest is a demonstration of his absolute mastery and the happy obedience of his creation. His rest isn’t a picture of tiredness, but a display of his absolute sovereignty.

I Can’t Manage My Checkbook in Six Days, Much Less the Universe

So what’s the connection between God’s day of rest and the rest we are commanded to observe? The Bible explains that God’s people are to observe this rest in imitation of him (Ex 20:11). To hear this as a call to imitate God, you need to remember that God made humankind in his “image” (Gn 1:27), that is, as his representatives on earth. As his image bearers we must serve God and live in a way that represents him well. In part, our Sabbath rest serves as a symbol of *his* Sabbath rest, an ongoing image of his power and glory.

God’s command to rest forces us to acknowledge that God isn’t just in perfect control of *his* world, but *ours* as well. Resting means acknowledging that our world really belongs to him, and we must entrust our well-being into his hands. If you rest for a day, will God keep your life from falling apart? In this sense, we can see how rest is an exercise in faith. Resting should be a way of living out the truth that our world belongs to God. We must trust that he is in loving control of it.

Take the Whole Year Off!

God’s command to rest goes far beyond a command to set aside one day a week. In addition to a Sabbath day, God required Israel to set aside entire *years* as

Sabbaths. Every seventh year was to be a Sabbath year in which no crops were to be planted or harvested (see Lv 25:1–7). According to law of Moses, food may be taken directly from the fields, but not planted or harvested in any systematic way. The Sabbath year is a time for the land to rest. No doubt it benefits the soil to lie fallow so agricultural nutrients can be restored, but if that were all God had in mind, he certainly could have explained it that way. The fact that this is considered a Sabbath “to the LORD” alerts us to a deeper significance, which becomes clearer a few verses later when God anticipates Israel’s reaction: “If you wonder, ‘What will we eat in the seventh year if we don’t sow or gather our produce?’ ” (Lv 25:20). It’s easy to understand Israel’s concern, isn’t it? Is God asking us to starve?

Again, the Sabbath reveals our hearts. You have enough faith to rest for one day a week. Now rest for an entire year. Do you really trust God to care for you or, when push comes to shove, do you only trust God with life’s incidentals? God graciously answers our questions before they come to our lips: “I will appoint my blessing for you in the sixth year, so that it will produce a crop sufficient for three years. When you sow in the eighth year, you will be eating from the previous harvest. You will be eating this until the ninth year when its harvest comes in” (Lv 25:21–22).

The Promises of Rest

But these Sabbaths were intended to do more than stretch our faith. They are also laced with sweet and comforting promises. In addition to weekly Sabbaths and Sabbath years, God commanded Israel to observe a “Jubilee” year every fiftieth year.³ The Jubilee year points to even deeper truths embedded in “resting.” The year would begin with the sound of a special trumpet sounded on the Day of Atonement, the day when the high priest would make sacrifices for the sins of all the people. God explains, “You are to consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim freedom in the land for all its inhabitants” (Lv 25:10a). As in a normal Sabbath year, the land was to lie fallow. Crops could not be planted or harvested; only what was taken directly from the fields could be eaten (Lv 25:12).

In addition, the Israelites were to perform certain acts of “redemption.” First, in the year of Jubilee, any land that had been sold was to go back to its original owner. Second, as a servant to another Israelite or a slave to an alien, in the year of Jubilee servant and slave were to be freed to go back to their own land (Lv 25:54–55). Sabbath as freedom from slavery doesn’t just apply to the year of Jubilee. It was also part of the weekly Sabbath as well (Dt 5:15).

Don’t let language about land, servants, and slaves distract you from the spiritual truths that apply to us as God’s people today, no matter our cultural distance from Israel. What should these practices communicate to us? Simply put, God intends for us to be free. The focus and purpose of all of our labor, ultimately, is to serve him. God has a place for us and he will always lead us there. God takes the enslaved and restores the created order of things by settling *his* people in *his* land.

Jesus, Our Sabbath Rest

Like Adam and Eve, we want to hide from our deep sense of inadequacy. How much of *our* busyness is really an effort to prove our worth and escape the sense that there is something very wrong with us? Complicating matters further, when God confronted Adam and Eve, he cursed the very things in which men and women would seek to find their worth (Gn 3:16–19). The very things we would hope to give us meaning and worth have been cursed so that to be “fruitful” in them will require extreme effort. You may try to take pride in your work; you may try to find life and meaning in your children, but God isn’t going to make it easy for you.

What’s going on here? How can God argue for Sabbath rest on the one hand but promise to frustrate our work on the other? The answer is that God wants us to find our rest in him, not in our own proud efforts. He won’t allow us to successfully cover ourselves. He faithfully and lovingly steers us away from trusting in our own efforts so that we can find true rest in the work *he* has done.

The problem of being morally corrupt and sinful can't be solved by working harder. Who can do the work that won't just cover up the symptoms but really fix *who we are*? Jesus has done the work required to clean up the filth in our hearts, to purify us and make us acceptable before God. To use the imagery of Sabbath, he has set us free from the slavery of sin. He has allowed us to return home.

Jesus really did do our work for us in living a life perfect in every regard, keeping the whole of God's law, and paying the penalty for our countless violations. God has truly credited us with Jesus's perfection and success. By trusting in Jesus, we are spiritually joined to him so that not only his credit, but also his very nature begins to take over ours. This is the amazing Sabbath we are to rest in. Not simply rest *from* our own efforts, but rest *in* Jesus's finished work for us.

Conclusion: Practical Strategies for Change

Thoughtful and sincere Christians may disagree on what day and how Sabbath should be observed. But it is clear that God's people should be characterized by an attitude of Sabbath. Here are a few ways to build Sabbath into your life:

- *Become a devoted admirer of Christ.* The more deeply you appreciate and worship Christ in his perfection, the more confidence you will have in him. You will become less likely to trust in yourself. Rest must be rooted in faith. Don't try to simply plug rest into the problem. Be worshipful.
- *Repent of the pride that says, "If I don't do it, who will?"* We are a strange mixture of fear, pride, and rebellion. Fear and inadequacy are not the opposites of pride, but its fruit. Pride drives our attempts to fix problems ourselves rather than accepting what God has done. Pride tells us to trust in ourselves rather than God.
- *Don't get in Jesus's way by being overly responsible.* Allow others to experience their need for Christ. Know the difference between mercifully helping someone with his responsibility versus taking it on as your own.
- *Be a student of your own heart.* Countless motivations can drive us. What desires or fears keep you from resting? Do you live for the approval of others? Believing that your worth comes from others' approval is slavery. Do you fear their disapproval, bask in their praise, or both?
- *Instead of being guilt-ridden about not having regular quiet times, carve out daily times to "rest in the Lord."* Don't think of prayer simply as presenting God with a list of requests, but as a time to be quiet before him and thank him for his work. Don't read the Bible as a task, but as a time to be quiet and let God speak. Think about what it would look like to rest before him as an act of worship.

Because Jesus rests, you can rest. Jesus's resurrection is one reason many Christians choose to observe a Sabbath on Sundays, the first day of the week, rather than Saturdays, the last day of the week. Jesus's death and resurrection embody the promises of Sabbath. His resurrection is the promise of new life, a new start—a picture and promise of the new life we have now and will have forever when Jesus returns and we are resurrected as well.

*Adapted from "Burned Out? Trusting God with Your 'To-Do' List" by Winston T. Smith (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2010)

See endnotes page 1800.



“We are to respond to our spouse as a mirror of and expression of gratitude for how Christ loves us. The marriage covenant is a picture of the salvation covenant. Our spouse should be a primary beneficiary of our worshipful response . . . to the gospel.”

2 So the heavens and the earth and everything in them were completed.^{a 2} On the seventh^A day God had completed his work that he had done, and he rested^B on the seventh day from all his work that he had done.^{b 3} God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, for on it he rested^C from all his work of creation.^d

Man and Woman in the Garden

⁴ These are the records^e of the heavens and the earth, concerning their creation. At the time^C that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens,⁵ no shrub of the field^f had yet grown on the land,^D 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.⁶ But mist would come up from the earth and water all the ground.⁷ Then the LORD God formed the man out of the dust from the ground^g and breathed the breath of life into his nostrils,^h and the man became a living being.ⁱ

⁸ The LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east,^j and there he placed the man he had formed.⁹ The 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,^k as well as the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.^l

¹⁰ A river went^E out from Eden to water the garden. From there it divided and became the source of four rivers.^{f 11} The name of the first is Pishon, which flows through the entire land of Havilah,^{G,m} where there is gold.¹² Gold from that land is pure;ⁿ bdellium^l and onyx^l are also there.¹³ The name of the second river is Gihon, which flows through the entire land of Cush.¹⁴ The name of the third river is Tigris,^o which runs east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.^o

¹⁵ The LORD God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden to work it and watch over it.¹⁶ And the LORD God

commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree of the garden,^{p 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.”^{q 18} Then the LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper corresponding^r to him.”¹⁹ The 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.^s And whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name.²⁰ The man gave names to all the livestock, to the birds of the sky, and to every wild animal; but for the man^k no helper was found corresponding to him.²¹ So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to come over the man,^t and he slept. God took one of his ribs and closed the flesh at that place.²² Then the LORD God made the rib he had taken from the man into a woman and brought her to the man.^{u 23} And 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.^v

²⁴ This is why a man leaves his father and mother and bonds with his wife, and they become one flesh.^{w 25} Both 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?’^x

² The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat the fruit from the trees in the garden.³ But 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.’^y

⁴ “No! You will certainly not die,” the serpent said to the woman.^{z 5} “In fact, God knows that when^l you eat it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God,

^{a 2:1} Neh 9:6; Ps 33:6; Is 34:4; 45:12 ^{b 2:2} Ex 20:8–11; 31:17; Dt 5:12–14; Heb 4:4 ^{c 2:3} Ex 31:17 ^d Ex 20:11; 31:17; Ps 121:2 ^{e 2:4} Gn 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10,27; 25:12,19; 36:1,9; 37:2 ^{f 2:5} Gn 1:11–12 ^{g 2:7} Gn 3:19,23; 18:27; Ps 103:14; Ec 12:7; 1Co 15:47 ^h Gn 7:22; Jb 33:4; Is 2:22 ⁱ Co 15:45 ^{j 2:8} Gn 13:10; Is 51:3; Ezk 28:13; 31:8; Jl 2:3 ^{k 2:9} Gn 3:22; Rv 2:7; 22:2,14 ^l Pr 3:18 ^{m 2:11} Gn 10:7,29; 25:18; 1Sm 15:7 ^{n 2:14} Dn 10:4 ^o Gn 15:18 ^{p 2:16} Gn 3:1–2 ^{q 2:17} Gn 3:5; Dt 30:15,19–20; Rm 6:23; 1Tm 5:6; Jms 1:15 ^{r 2:18} Pr 31:11–12; 1Co 11:9; 1Tm 2:13 ^{s 2:19} Ps 8:6 ^{t 2:21} Gn 15:12 ^{u 2:22} 1Co 11:8,12 ^{v 2:23} Eph 5:28–30 ^{w 2:24} Mal 2:15; Mt 19:5; Mk 10:7–8; 1Co 6:16; Eph 5:31 ^{x 3:1} Mt 10:16; 2Co 11:3; Rv 12:9; 20:2 ^{y 3:3} Gn 2:17 ^{z 3:4} Jn 8:44

^{A 2:2} Sam, LXX, Syr read *sixth* ^{B 2:2} Or *ceased*, also in v. 3 ^{C 2:4} Lit *creation on the day* ^{D 2:5} Or *earth* ^{E 2:10} Or *goes*
^{F 2:10} Lit *became four heads* ^{G 2:11} Or *of the Havilah* ^{H 2:12} Lit *good* ^{I 2:12} A yellowish, transparent gum resin
^{J 2:12} Identity of this precious stone uncertain ^{K 2:20} Or *for Adam* ^{L 3:5} Lit *on the day*

Building a Marriage to Last

Five Essential Habits for Couples



Brad Hambrick

Regardless of your situation, it's never too early—or too late—to build habits that will strengthen and grow your marriage. The reality is that you are going to forge habits in your marriage, whether you intend to or not. Habits happen as we do life. In the months ahead you are either going to *intentionally cultivate habits* that foster a healthier, more God-honoring marriage, or hope you don't *drift into habits* that result in imbalanced priorities and subsequent conflicts.

Habit-forming is inevitable, but intentionality can make it beneficial. Whatever your season of life or condition of your marriage, one thing is guaranteed: if you neglect the principles here, it will be difficult for your marriage to thrive.

Five Essential Practices for Couples

In this article, we're going to consider five basic categories of healthy marriage habits, covering a wide range of personal, relational, and spiritual needs: (1) Stewarding the Basics, (2) Thriving Personally, (3) Honoring Relationally, (4) Knowing Deeply, and (5) Worshiping Truly.

The idea of **stewarding** comes first because it reveals that all of life, including marriage, is a gift given to us by God for a purpose. Our goal with "stewarding the basics" is to discern how God would have us care for our marriages to accomplish his purpose *in each member of our family, in each season of life*.

Thriving prompts us to remember that, unlike God, we are finite creatures who require certain essential elements in order to be healthy. Even before humanity was sinful (Gn 3), we were finite (Gn 1–2). People needed sleep and food even before there was a reason to repent. Here we will challenge each other to care for ourselves physically and emotionally so that our shortcomings in marriage do not stem from a lack of basic personal care.

Honoring calls us to be mindful that we are not just finite, but also sinful people who do not naturally think of others first (Rm 3:23). We want our way and are too often willing to mistreat those we love to get our way (Jms 4:1–6). That's not a pretty picture of the human heart, but it's an accurate one. Any discussion of a God-honoring marriage must be rooted in this kind of gospel-dependent self-awareness.

The idea of **knowing** points out that marriage requires us to be lifelong students of an ever-changing spouse. You may have heard it said, "You will be married to dozens of people over the course of your marriage." Life changes both of you. Loving your spouse entails *perpetually learning* what is more important, most challenging, and most satisfying for him or her.

Worshiping opens our eyes to see that life is not a meaningless game where the people who have the most fun and experience the least pain win. Our lives were designed to glorify God. When we lose sight of this, godly habits begin to feel like a competitive disadvantage or an arbitrary theological list of rules.

Now that we understand the purpose and order behind these essential practices, let's explore how we can build the habits of stewarding, thriving, honoring, knowing, and worshiping.

Stewarding the Basics

Marriage is not so much complicated as it is difficult. We know the destructive factors that will put a strain on our marriage, and tell other people to avoid those pitfalls. But we often dismiss important, basic marriage principles as cliché. Knowing you should work out is not the same thing as actually sweating for

thirty minutes three times a week. Let's talk about three basic commodities you need to manage well in your marriage: time, money, and community.

Time. Let's start with this simple fact: you can't cram 200 hours' worth of activity into a 168-hour week and have a healthy marriage. *Think monthly instead of daily or weekly.* At the beginning of every month, look at your calendars together and make sure all five habit areas are present in your schedule. Make sure the things you say "yes" to are the primary things that force you to say "no" to secondary priorities. Not every healthy practice will be represented in every week of your schedule. But, if every healthy habit isn't represented in every month, you don't actually have habits; you have good intentions. Using a family meal calendar is a great way to begin to think monthly.

Money. This idea is pretty straightforward. *Have a budget.* If, according to most surveys, the leading cause of divorce is financial problems, it would be naïve to avoid this topic. If you think of a budget as good intentions scribbled on a steno pad, learn what it means to have a working financial plan that takes less than thirty minutes a week to maintain.

Community. *Seek out friends who model and spur you toward a healthy marriage.* Your spouse should be your best friend, but not your only friend. Your spouse can't replace your church. But because God created marriage after saying, "It is not good for the man to be alone" (Gn 2:18), we often think of marriage as God's cure for loneliness. But God has made it clear that we are a part of the body of Christ and that we need to be in relationships with fellow believers for mutual encouragement and growth (Heb 10:24–25).

Thriving Personally

Marriage is a marathon. It is a relationship that spans decades. Good self-care is a wise component of any endurance endeavor. Your marriage will not be healthier than you are . . . at least not for long. We all know we can push the limits for a "busy season," but if we overextend as a lifestyle, we crash.

Establish healthy physical and emotional care habits. Look over your sleeping, eating, and exercising patterns. Are you caring for your body in a way that sets you up to care for your spouse? What one or two changes would make the biggest difference?

Now consider the unique challenges of your current season of life. Are you in graduate school, raising kids, or in a demanding job? Ask yourself, "Is there anything I need to change to have the energy and focus to engage with my spouse?" No one sees your spouse's day-in-day-out routine and how it impacts him or her like you do.

Honoring Relationally

We will consider four put-off habits (Eph 4:22) for honoring one another relationally: **criticism**, **contempt**, **defensiveness**, and **stonewalling**. These four communication patterns have been identified by marriage researcher John Gottman as the most accurate predictors of divorce.¹

- *Avoid criticism*—This doesn't mean you never express dissatisfaction or disappointment to your spouse. It means you articulate your frustration with a focus on the action or situation rather than the person. Instead of saying, "You never think of me," you might say, "It's frustrating when we're consistently late. It makes me wonder what is most important to you. Can we talk about this?"
- *Avoid contempt*—We can express contempt by mocking, name-calling, disrespectful body language (e.g., eye-rolling), or talking down to our spouses. At its best, contempt displays high levels of immaturity. At its worst, contempt reveals the early stages of an emotionally abusive relationship.²
- *Avoid defensiveness*—The more one spouse is critical, the more the other spouse is likely to gravitate toward defensiveness. But criticism does not excuse defensiveness. Common defensive strategies include playing

the martyr and shifting the blame. Christians, more than anyone else, should be able to accept responsibility where appropriate and admit our faults. After all, acknowledging our sinful condition was a prerequisite of salvation.

- *Avoid stonewalling*—This is when we shut down and stop talking to our spouse about what is upsetting. The longer we stonewall, the more emotionally difficult stuff there is to face and the less capable we feel of facing it. *A good marriage requires the willingness to talk maturely about hard things.*

A summary term for the alternative to destructive patterns is **honor**. When we are disappointed, hurt, or offended in marriage, the mature Christlike response is to move toward our husband or wife in humility, express our concern in a way that builds him or her up, and maintain a posture that prioritizes “us” over “it” (meaning, the marriage as more important than the subject). *When we lack the ability to discuss with honor what offends us, then our lack of self-control should be a greater concern than our spouse’s offense.*

A way to define honor during conflict is to *accurately represent your spouse’s words and actions in both tone and content*. We don’t like it when people assign motives to our actions, claim to know what we were thinking, mock our statements, or misrepresent our words. These things are forms of dishonor. Honor during conflict requires dying to self (Lk 9:23–24) to avoid these tendencies when you disagree with your spouse. We begin to realize why *listening is most difficult when it is most needed*.

Knowing Deeply

This is where we start to get romantic. In a healthy marriage we should be *fully known and fully loved*. We will split this habit into two sections: everyday knowing and special-occasion knowing. **Everyday knowing** includes practices you incorporate into your normal rhythms of life so that you are regularly investing in the things that are important to your spouse. **Special-occasion knowing** describes occasions where you pour more time and energy into the things that are important to your spouse (i.e., birthdays, anniversaries, Valentine’s Day, marriage getaway trips, etc.). Take some time during a date night to discuss personal “knowing” questions with your spouse.

Worshipping Truly

Marriage is about something bigger than ourselves. We are to respond to our spouse as a mirror of and expression of gratitude for how Christ loves us (see Eph 5:21–33). The marriage covenant is a picture of the salvation covenant. Our spouse should be a primary beneficiary of our worshipful response (i.e., awe, gratitude, and obedience) to the gospel. Accordingly, we will look at two ways worship-based motivation can become habit.

The first practice is *expressing gratitude for the opportunity to grow*. Whenever something worthwhile is hard, let your first response be a simple “thank you” prayer. Allow honesty about the challenge to be part of the “thank you.” Allow gratitude to take you back to worship. Thank God for the character-formation work he is doing in your life through marriage. That’s sanctification.

The second practice is *having enthusiasm in the moments of growth*. Hopefully, the gratitude habit (i.e., responding to hardship without grumbling) makes this enthusiasm habit (i.e., excitement for what God can do in that hard time) seem more natural. After a thank-you prayer, you should be able to more naturally shift your mindset from, “Here we go again” (i.e., dread) to “Here’s our chance” (i.e., opportunity). People get married because they can do good times well (i.e., laugh, tell stories, and go on dates). People stay married and flourish in marriage when they do hard times well (i.e., respond with honor in conflict and navigate unpleasant emotions). Marriages that flourish respond to the difficult moments of life as opportunities to honor God and each other.

Conclusion

Are you asking your marriage to fulfill you in a way that only God can? When marriage has taken on a weight it cannot bear, we honor our marriage best by depending on it less. This is the principle that C. S. Lewis so succinctly stated, "Put first things first and we get second things thrown in: put second things first and we lose both first and second things."³

Allow the first thing, a thriving relationship with God, to be first and then second things, such as a thriving relationship with your spouse, will have every opportunity to flourish. Ask your marriage to fulfill you like only God can and both relationships will crumble. Never replace the Giver with the gift. Instead, honor the Giver by cultivating all the joy he wanted you and your spouse to have when the gift was given.

^{*}Adapted from "Building a Marriage to Last: Five Essential Habits for Couples" by Brad Hambrick (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2020).

See endnotes page 1800.

knowing good and evil." ⁶ The 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. ⁷ Then 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

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

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

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

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

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

And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."^d

¹⁴ So 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.^e

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

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

¹⁷ And 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.ⁱ

You will eat from it by means of
painful labor^d
all the days of your life.

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

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

^a3:6 1Tm 2:14; Jms 1:14–15; 1Jn 2:16 ^b3:8 Jb 34:22–23

^c3:12 Jb 31:33; Pr 28:13 ^d3:13 Rm 7:11; 2Co 11:3; 1Tm 2:14

^e3:14 Is 65:25; Mc 7:17 ^f3:15 Heb 2:14; 1Jn 3:8 ^g3:16 Jn 16:21;

1Tm 2:15 ^hGn 4:7 ⁱ3:17 Gn 5:29; Rm 8:20–22; Heb 6:8 ^j3:18 Gn 2:5

^k3:19 Ps 90:3; 104:29; Ec 12:7

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

²² The 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.”^a ²³ So the LORD God sent him away from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. ²⁴ He 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.^b

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.”^b ² She also gave birth to his brother Abel. Now Abel became a shepherd of flocks, but Cain worked the ground. ³ In the course of time Cain presented some of the land’s produce as an offering to the LORD.^c ⁴ And Abel also presented an offering — some of the firstborn of his flock and their fat portions.^d The LORD had regard for Abel and his offering,^e ⁵ but he did not have regard for Cain and his offering. Cain was furious, and he looked despondent.

⁶ Then the LORD said to Cain, “Why are you furious?^f And why do you look despondent? ⁷ If 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.”^g

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

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

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

¹⁰ Then he said, “What have you done? Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground!”¹¹ So now you are cursed, alienated from the ground that opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood you have shed.¹² If you work the ground, it will never again give you its yield. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth.”^j

¹³ But Cain answered the LORD, “My punishment^k is too great to bear! ¹⁴ Since 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, whoever finds me will kill me.”^k

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

The Line of Cain

¹⁷ Cain 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. ¹⁸ Irad was born to Enoch, Irad fathered Mehujael, Mehujael fathered Methushael, and Methushael fathered Lamech. ¹⁹ Lamech took two wives for himself, one named Adah and the other named Zillah. ²⁰ Adah bore Jabal; he was the first^h of the nomadic herdsmen. ²¹ His brother was named Jubal; he was the first^h of all who play the lyre and the flute. ²² Zillah bore Tubal-cain, who made all kinds of bronze and iron tools. Tubal-cain’s sister was Naamah.

²³ Lamech 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!

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

The Line of Seth

5 This is the document containing the family^k records^o of Adam.^l On the day that God created man,^m he made him in the likeness of God;² he created them male and

^a3:22 Gn 2:9; Rv 2:7 ^b3:24 Ex 25:18–22; Ps 104:4; Ezk 10:1–20; Heb 1:7 ^c4:3 Ex 23:19; 34:26; Neh 10:35 ^d4:4 Ex 13:12; Nm 18:17; Pr 3:9 ^eHeb 11:4 ^f4:6 Jnh 4:4 ^g4:7 Gn 3:16 ^h4:8 Mt 23:35; Lk 11:51; 1Jn 3:12–15; Jd 11 ⁱ4:10 Nm 35:33; Dt 21:1–9; Heb 12:24; Rv 6:9–10 ^j4:12 Dt 28:16–18; Is 26:21 ^k4:14 Nm 35:26–27 ^l4:15 Ex 9:4; Ezk 9:4,6; Rv 13:16–17 ^m4:26 Lk 3:38 ⁿGn 12:8; 26:25; 1Kg 18:24; Ps 116:17; Jl 2:32; Zph 3:9; 1Co 1:2 ^o5:1 Gn 2:4

^a3:20 Lit *Living*, or *Life* ^b4:1 Lit *the LORD* ^c4:8 Sam, LXX, Syr, Vg; MT omits “Let’s go out to the field.” ^d4:11 Lit *blood from your hand* ^e4:13 Or *sin* ^f4:15 LXX, Syr, Vg read “Not so!” ^g4:16 Lit *Wandering* ^h4:20, 21 Lit *father* ⁱ4:25 The Hb word for *given* sounds like the name “Seth.” ^j4:25 Lit *seed* ^k5:1 Lit *written family* ^l5:1 Or *mankind* ^m5:1 Or *Adam, human beings*

female. When they were created, he blessed them and called them mankind.^a

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

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

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

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

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

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

²¹ Enoch was 65 years old when he fathered Methuselah. ²² And after he fathered Methuselah, Enoch walked with God² 300 years and fathered other sons and daughters. ²³ So Enoch's life lasted 365 years. ²⁴ Enoch walked with God; then he was not there because God took him.^b

²⁵ Methuselah was 187 years old when he fathered Lamech. ²⁶ Methuselah lived 782

years after he fathered Lamech, and he fathered other sons and daughters. ²⁷ So Methuselah's life lasted 969 years; then he died.

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

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

Sons of God and Daughters of Mankind

6 When mankind began to multiply on the earth and daughters were born to them,² the sons of God^d saw that the daughters of mankind were beautiful, and they took any they chose as wives for themselves.^e ³ And the LORD said, "My Spirit will not remain^c with^d mankind forever;^f because they are corrupt.^g Their days will be 120 years."⁴ The Nephilim^f 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

⁵ When 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,^h ⁶ the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth,ⁱ and he was deeply grieved. ⁷ Then the LORD said, "I will wipe mankind, whom

^a5:22 Gn 6:9; 17:1; 24:40; 48:15; Mc 6:8; Mal 2:6; 1Th 2:12

^b5:24 2Kg 2:11; Heb 11:5 ^c5:29 Gn 3:17–19; 4:11 ^d6:2 Jb 1:6; 2:1; 38:7

^e1Pt 3:19–20; Jd 6 ^f6:3 G1 5:16–17; 1Pt 3:20 ^gPs 78:39 ^h6:5 Gn 8:21;

Ps 14:1–3; Pr 6:18; Mt 15:19; Rm 1:28–32 ⁱ6:6 Nm 23:19; 15m 15:11,29;

25m 24:16; Jl 2:13

^A5:2 Hb 'adam ^B5:29 In Hb, the name Noah sounds like "bring us relief." ^C6:3 Or strive ^D6:3 Or in ^E6:3 Lit flesh
^F6:4 Possibly means "fallen ones"; traditionally, "giants"; Nm 13:31–33

'atsab

Hebrew pronunciation	[ah TSAV]
CSB translation	<i>grieve</i>
Uses in Genesis	3
Uses in the OT	15
Focus passage	Genesis 6:6

'Atsab is in a word family concerned with emotional and physical pain. The active regular verb means *infuriate* (1Kg 1:6) and *experience pain* (1Ch 4:10); the passive connotes *wounded* (Is 54:6). Reflexive-passive forms indicate *be grieved* (Gn 6:6; 45:5) or *grieve* (Neh 8:10). *'Eteb* (6x) is

Word Study

painful effort (Gn 3:16; Pr 10:22), *hard work* (Ps 127:2), *hard-earned pay* (Pr 5:10), and *harsh* (Pr 15:1). *'Atstebet* (5x) denotes *sorrows* (Ps 16:4), *wounds* (Ps 147:3), *pains* (Jb 9:28), *grief* (Pr 10:10), and *sad* (Pr 15:13). *'Oteb* (3x) suggests *offensive* (Ps 139:24). It is *pain* (1Ch 4:9), and the name *Jabez* is derived from it. *'Itstsabon* (3x) implies *painful effort* (Gn 3:16), *painful labor* (Gn 3:17), or *agonizing* (Gn 5:29). *'Atseb* refers to *oppressed workers* (Is 58:3). *Ma'atsebah* signifies *place of torment* (Is 50:11). The word family shows that labor involves pain.

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.”⁸ Noah, however, found favor with the LORD.^a

God Warns Noah

⁹ These are the family records^b of Noah. Noah was a righteous man,^c blameless among his contemporaries;^d Noah walked with God.^e¹⁰ And Noah fathered three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

¹¹ Now the earth was corrupt in God’s sight, and the earth was filled with wickedness.^a ¹² God saw how corrupt the earth was, for every creature had corrupted its way on the earth.^f ¹³ Then 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^b wood. Make rooms in the ark, and cover it with pitch inside and outside.¹⁵ This is how you are to make it: The ark will be 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high.^c ¹⁶ You are to make a roof,^d finishing the sides of the ark to within eighteen inches^e 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^g to destroy every creature under heaven with the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish.¹⁸ But I will establish my covenant with you,^h and you will enter the ark with your sons, your wife, and your sons’ wives.¹⁹ You are also to bring into the ark two of all the living creatures, male and female, to keep them alive with you.²⁰ Two 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.²¹ Take with you every kind of food that is eaten; gather it as food for you and for them.”²² And Noah did this. He did everything that God had commanded him.ⁱ

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.^j ² You are to take with you seven pairs, a male and its female, of all the clean animals,^k and two of the animals that are not clean, a male and its female,³ and seven pairs, male and female, of the birds of the sky — in order to keep offspring alive throughout the earth.⁴ Seven 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.”⁵ And Noah did everything that the LORD commanded him.^l

⁶ Noah was six hundred years old when the flood came and water covered the earth.⁷ So Noah, his sons, his wife, and his sons’ wives entered the ark because of the floodwaters.⁸ From 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,⁹ two of each, male and female, came to Noah and entered the ark, just as God had commanded him.¹⁰ Seven days later the floodwaters came on the earth.

The Flood

¹¹ In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day

^a 6:8 Gn 19:19; Ex 33:17; Lk 1:30 ^b 6:9 Gn 2:4 ^c Ps 37:39; 2Pt 2:5
^d Gn 17:3; Dt 18:13; Jb 1:1 ^e Gn 5:22 ^f 6:12 Jb 22:15–17; Ps 14:2–3; 53:2–3
^g 6:17 Gn 7:4; 2Pt 2:5 ^h 6:18 Gn 9:9–16; 17:7 ⁱ 6:22 Gn 7:5
^j 7:1 Mt 24:38–39; Lk 17:26–27; Heb 11:7 ^k 7:2 Gn 8:20; Lv 11:1–31;
Dt 14:3–20 ^l 7:5 Gn 6:22

^a 6:11 Or *injustice*, also in v. 13 ^b 6:14 Unknown species of tree; perhaps pine or cypress ^c 6:15 Or *300 cubits long, 50 cubits wide, and 30 cubits high* ^d 6:16 Or *window, or hatch*; Hb uncertain ^e 6:16 Lit *to a cubit*

tamiym

Hebrew pronunciation	[tah MEEM]
CSB translation	<i>blameless, mature, perfect</i>
Uses in Genesis	2
Uses in the OT	91
Focus passage	Genesis 6:9

Tamiym, an adjective from *tamam*, “be complete,” has both physical and spiritual significance. Fifty-one occurrences describe animals as *unblemished* (Ex 12:5) or *without blemish*, thus qualified to be sacrificial victims. Related ideas are

Word Study

entire (Lv 3:9), *complete* (Lv 23:15), *whole* (Pr 1:12; Ezk 15:5), and *full* (Lv 25:30). A frequent spiritual meaning is *blameless, devout, or upright* (Gn 6:9; 17:1; Jb 12:4). A synonym is *yashar* (“upright”; Pr 2:21). This is God’s standard for human behavior (Dt 18:13) echoed in the NT by the word translated “perfect” (*teleios*) in Mt 5:48. *Tamiym* means *perfect* when describing God’s ways, knowledge, or word (Dt 32:4; 2Sm 22:31; Jb 37:16). He can make our way *perfect* (2Sm 22:33). *Tamiym* can function nominatively as *integrity* or *sincerity* (Jos 24:14; Am 5:10), and adverbially as *honestly* (Jdg 9:16).

of the month, on that day all the sources of the vast watery depths burst open,^a the floodgates of the sky were opened,^b 12 and the rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights. 13 On 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. 14 They 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 — all the birds and every winged creature — according to their kinds. 15 Two of every creature that has the breath of life in it came to Noah and entered the ark. 16 Those that entered, male and female of every creature, entered just as God had commanded him. Then the LORD shut him in.

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

The Flood Recedes

8 God remembered Noah,^e 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,^f and the water began to subside. 2 The sources of the watery depths and the floodgates of the sky were closed, and the rain from the sky stopped.^g 3 The water steadily receded from the earth, and by the end of 150 days the water had decreased significantly.^h 4 The ark came to rest in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on the mountains of Ararat.ⁱ

5 The 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. 6 After forty days Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made,⁷ and he sent out a raven. It went back and forth until the water had dried up from the earth. 8 Then he sent out a dove to see whether the water on the earth's surface had gone down,⁹ but 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. 10 So Noah waited seven more days and sent out the dove from the ark again. 11 When 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. 12 After he had waited another seven days, he sent out the dove, but it did not return to him again. 13 In the six hundred first year,⁸ 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. 14 By the twenty-seventh day of the second month, the earth was dry.

The LORD's Promise

15 Then God spoke to Noah, 16 "Come out of the ark, you, your wife, your sons, and your sons' wives with you. 17 Bring 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."^j 18 So Noah, along with his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives, came out. 19 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.

20 Then 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. 21 When the LORD smelled the pleasing aroma,^k he said to himself, "I will never again curse the ground^l because of human beings, even though the inclination of the human heart

^a7:11 Gn 8:2; Pr 8:28; Am 9:6 ^b2Kg 7:19; Ps 78:23; Is 24:18; Mal 3:10
^c7:22 Gn 2:7 ^d7:23 1Pt 3:20; 2Pt 2:5 ^e8:1 Gn 19:29; Ex 2:24; 15m 1:19;
 Ps 105:42 ^fEx 14:21; 15:10; Jb 12:15; Ps 29:10; Is 44:27; Nah 1:4
^g8:2 Gn 7:11 ^h8:3 Gn 7:24 ⁱ8:4 2Kg 19:37; Is 37:38; Jr 51:27
^j8:17 Gn 1:22,28; 9:1 ^k8:21 Ex 29:18; Lv 1:9; Ezk 16:19; 20:41; 2Co 2:15;
 Eph 5:2; Php 4:18 ^lGn 3:17; 5:29; 6:7; Is 54:9

is evil from youth onward.^a And I will never again strike down every living thing as I have done.^b

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

God's Covenant with Noah

9 God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth."^d The 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.^e Every creature that lives and moves will be food for you;^e as I gave the green plants, I have given you everything.^f

⁴ However, you must not eat meat with its lifeblood in it.^g ⁵ And I will require a penalty for your lifeblood;^h I will require it from any animal^h and from any human; if someone murders a fellow human, I will require that person's life.ⁱ

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

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

⁸ Then God said to Noah and his sons with him, ⁹ "Understand that I am establishing my covenant^m with you and your descendants after you, ¹⁰ and with every living creature that is with you — birds, livestock, and all wildlife of the earth that are with you — all the animals of the earth that came out of the ark. ¹¹ I 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."ⁿ

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

and all the living creatures on earth."¹⁷ God 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

¹⁸ Noah's sons who came out of the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Ham was the father of Canaan. ¹⁹ These three were Noah's sons, and from them the whole earth was populated.⁵

²⁰ Noah, as a man of the soil, began by planting^b a vineyard. ²¹ He drank some of the wine, became drunk, and uncovered himself inside his tent. ²² Ham, the father of Canaan, saw his father naked and told his two brothers outside.^t ²³ Then 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.

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

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

²⁶ He also said:
Blessed be the LORD, the God
of Shem;

Let Canaan be^c Shem's slave.

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

²⁸ Now Noah lived 350 years after the flood. ²⁹ So Noah's life lasted 950 years; then he died.

The Table of Nations

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

² Japheth's sons:^x Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras. ³ Gomer's

^a8:21 Gn 6:5; Ps 51:5; Jr 17:9; Rm 1:21; 3:23; Eph 2:1–3 ^bGn 9:11,15

^c8:22 Jr 33:20,25 ^d9:1 Gn 1:28; 8:17; 9:7; 35:11 ^e9:3 Dt 12:15;

1Tm 4:3–4 ^f9:1–3 Gn 1:28–30 ^g9:4 Lv 3:17; 7:20; 17:10–16; 19:26;

Dt 12:16,23; 15:23; 15m 14:34; Ac 15:20,29 ^h9:5 Ex 21:28 ⁱGn 4:2,8

^j9:6 Ex 21:12–14; Lv 24:17; Nm 35:33; Mt 26:52 ^kGn 1:26–27

^l9:7 Gn 1:28 ^m9:9 Gn 6:18; 8:22; 17:2; Ex 6:4; 19:5; Lv 26:9

ⁿ9:11 Is 54:9–10 ^o9:12 Gn 17:11 ^p9:13 Ezk 1:28; Rv 4:3; 10:1

^q9:15 Lv 26:42,45; Dt 7:9; 1Kg 8:23; Ezk 16:60 ^r9:16 Gn 17:13; 2Sm 23:5;

1Ch 16:17; Is 24:5 ^s9:19 Gn 9:17; 10:32; 1Ch 1:4 ^t9:22 Lm 4:21;

Hab 2:15 ^u9:25 Dt 27:16 ^vJos 9:23; Jdg 1:28; 1Kg 9:20–21

^w10:1 Gn 2:4 ^x10:2–5 1Ch 1:5–7; Ezk 38:1–6

^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."

sons: Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah.⁴ And Javan's sons: Elishah, Tarshish,^a Kitim, and Dodanim.^a ⁵ From 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.

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

⁸ Cush fathered Nimrod, who began to be powerful in the land. ⁹ He 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."¹⁰ His kingdom started with Babylon,^c Erech,^b Accad,^c and Calneh,^d in the land of Shinar.^{e,d} ¹¹ From that land he went to Assyria^e and built Nineveh, Rehoboth-ir, Calah,¹² and Resen, between Nineveh and the great city Calah.

¹³ Mizraim^{f,f} fathered the people of Lud, Anam, Lehab, Naphtuh,¹⁴ Pathrus, Casluh (the Philistines came from them), and Caphthor.^g

¹⁵ Canaan fathered Sidon his firstborn and Heth,¹⁶ as well as the Jebusites, the Amorites, the Girgashites,^h 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.ⁱ ²² Shem's sons^j were Elam, Asshur, Arpachshad, Lud, and Aram.

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

²⁴ Arpachshad fathered^g Shelah,^k and Shelah fathered Eber. ²⁵ Eber had two sons. One was named Peleg,^h for during his days the earth was divided;^l 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.^m

The Tower of Babylon

11 The whole earth had the same language and vocabulary. ² As people migrated from the east,¹ they found a valley in the land of Shinar and settled there.ⁿ ³ They said to each other, "Come, let's make oven-fired bricks." (They used brick for stone and asphalt^o for mortar.) ⁴ And they said, "Come, let's build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the sky.^p Let's make a name for ourselves; otherwise, we will be scattered throughout the earth."

⁵ Then the LORD came down^q to look over the city and the tower that the humans^l 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."⁸ So from there the LORD scattered them throughout the earth,^r and they stopped building the city. ⁹ Therefore it is called Babylon,^{k,l,s} 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^t 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^m and fathered Shelah. ¹³ After he fathered Shelah, Arpachshad lived 403 years and fathered

^a10:4 1Kg 10:22; Is 2:16 ^b10:6-7 1Ch 1:8-10 ^c10:10 Gn 11:9

^dGn 11:2; 14:1 ^e10:11 Mc 5:6 ^f10:13-18 1Ch 1:11-16

^g10:14 Jr 47:4; Am 9:7 ^h10:16 Gn 15:19-21 ⁱ10:21 Gn 11:13-14

^j10:22-29 1Ch 1:17-23 ^k10:24 Gn 11:12; Lk 3:35 ^l10:25 Gn 11:8;

Ps 55:9 ^m10:32 Gn 9:19 ⁿ11:2 Gn 10:10; 14:1; Dn 1:2 ^o11:3 Gn 14:10;

Ex 2:3 ^p11:4 Dt 1:28; 9:1; Ps 107:26 ^q11:5 Gn 18:21; Ex 3:8; 19:11,18,20

^r11:8 Gn 11:4; Ps 92:9; Lk 1:51 ^s11:9 Gn 10:10 ^t11:10 Gn 2:4; 11:27

^a10:4 Some Hb mss, LXX read *Rodanim*; 1Ch 1:7 ^b10:10 Or *Uruk* ^c10:10 Or *Akkad* ^d10:10 Or and all of them

^e10:10 Or in *Babylonia* ^f10:13 = *Egypt* ^g10:24 LXX reads *fathered Cainan, and Cainan fathered*; Gn 11:12-13; Lk 3:35-36

^h10:25 = *Division* ⁱ11:2 Or *migrated eastward* ^j11:5 Or *the descendants of Adam* ^k11:9 Hb *Babel* ^l11:9 In Hb, the name

for "Babylon," *babel* sounds like the word for "confuse," *balal*. ^m11:12-13 LXX reads *years and fathered Cainan*. ⁿAfter he

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

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. ^a 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, ^b and Nahor's wife was named Milcah. ^c She was the daughter of Haran, the father of both Milcah and Iscah. ³⁰ Sarai was unable to conceive; ^d 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 ^e 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.

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. ^f
² I will make you into a great nation, ^g
I will bless you, ^h
I will make your name great,
and you will be a blessing. ⁱ
³ I will bless those who bless you,
I will curse anyone who treats you
with contempt, ^j
and all the peoples on earth
will be blessed ^A through you. ^{B,k}

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. ⁵ He 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, ⁶ Abram passed through the land to the site of Shechem, ^m at the oak of Moreh. (At that time the Canaanites were in the land.) ⁷ The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring ^{C,n} I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him. ⁸ From 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. ^o ⁹ Then Abram journeyed by stages to the Negev.

Abram in Egypt

¹⁰ There was a famine in the land, ^p so Abram went down to Egypt to stay there for a while because the famine in the land was severe.

¹¹ When he was about to enter Egypt, he said to his wife, Sarai, "Look, I know what a beautiful woman you are. ¹² When the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife.' They will kill me but let you live. ^q ¹³ Please say you're my sister so it will go well for me because of you, and my life will be spared on your account." ¹⁴ When Abram entered Egypt, the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful. ¹⁵ Pharaoh's officials saw her and praised her to Pharaoh, so the woman was taken to Pharaoh's household. ¹⁶ He 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 wife, Sarai. ^r ¹⁸ So Pharaoh sent for Abram and said, "What have you done to me? Why didn't you tell me she was your wife? ¹⁹ Why did you say, 'She's my sister,' so that I took her as my wife? Now, here is your wife. Take her and go!" ²⁰ Then Pharaoh gave his men orders about him, and they sent him away with his wife and all he had.

^a11:24 Jos 24:2; ^b11:29 Gn 17:15; 20:12; ^cGn 22:20,23; 24:15; ^d11:30 Gn 25:21; 29:31; Ex 23:26; Jdg 13:2-3; 15m 2:5; Jb 24:21; Is 54:1; Lk 1:36; 23:29; Gl 4:27; Heb 11:11; ^e11:31 Gn 15:7; Neh 9:7; Ac 7:4; ^f12:1 Gn 15:7; Ac 7:3; Heb 11:8; ^g12:2 Gn 17:4-6; 18:18; 46:3; Dt 26:5; ^hGn 22:17; ⁱZch 8:13; ^j12:3 Gn 27:29; Nm 24:9; ^kGn 18:18; 26:4; 28:14; Ac 3:25; Gl 3:8; ^l12:4 Gn 11:27,31; ^m12:6 Gn 35:4; Dt 11:30; Heb 11:9; ⁿ12:7 Gn 13:15; Ex 33:1; Ps 105:9-12; Ac 7:5; Gl 3:16; ^o12:8 Gn 4:26; 21:33; ^p12:10 Gn 26:1; 43:1; ^q12:12 Gn 20:1-18; 26:6-11; ^r12:17 Gn 20:18; 1Ch 16:21; Ps 105:14

Abram and Lot Separate

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

⁵ Now Lot, who was traveling with Abram, also had flocks, herds, and tents. ⁶ But 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,^{c7} and there was quarreling between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. ⁸ (At that time the Canaanites and the Perizzites were living in the land.)^e

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^f as far as Zoar^g was well watered everywhere like the LORD's garden^h and the land of Egypt. (This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.)ⁱ¹¹ 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.)^j

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,^{k15} for I will give you and your offspring^c forever all the land that you see.^{l16} I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth,^m 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,ⁿ where he built an altar to the LORD.

Abram Rescues Lot

14 In those days King Amraphel of Shinar,^o King Arioch of Ellasar, King Chedorlaomer of Elam,^p and King Tidal of

Goiim^d waged war against King Bera of Sodom, King Birsha of Gomorrah, King Shinar of Admah, and King Shemeber of Zebaiim,^q 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^t in Ashteroth-karnaim, the Zuzim in Ham,^u the Emim in Shaveh-kiriat-haim,^v and the Horites^v in the mountains of Seir, as far as El-paran^w 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.^y

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 ⁹ 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.^{z11} 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,^{aa} and they went on.

¹³ One of the survivors came and told Abram the Hebrew,^{ab} 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^f his 318 trained men, born in his household,^{ac} and they went in pursuit as far as Dan.^{ad15} 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.

^a13:1 Gn 12:9 ^b13:4 Gn 12:7,8 ^c13:6 Gn 36:7 ^d13:7 Gn 26:20

^eGn 12:6; 15:20–21 ^f13:10 Gn 19:17–29 ^gGn 14:2,8; Dt 34:3

^hGn 2:8–10 ⁱGn 19:24–25 ^j13:13 Gn 18:20; Ezk 16:49; 2Pt 2:7–8

^k13:14 Gn 28:14 ^l13:15 Gn 12:7; 15:18; 17:8; 24:7; 26:4; 28:13; 35:12;

Dt 34:4; 2Ch 20:7; Ac 7:5 ^m13:16 Gn 16:10; 28:14; Nm 23:10

ⁿ13:18 Gn 14:13; 18:1; 23:17–19 ^o14:1 Gn 10:10; 11:2 ^pGn 10:22; Is 11:11;

Dn 8:2 ^q14:2 Hs 11:8 ^rGn 19:22–23 ^s14:3 Nm 34:12; Dt 3:17; Jos 3:16

^t14:5 Gn 15:20; Dt 2:11,20–21; 3:11,13; Jos 12:4 ^uDt 1:4; Jos 9:10

^v14:6 Gn 36:20; Dt 2:12,22 ^wGn 21:21; Nm 10:12 ^x14:7 Nm 13:26

^y2Ch 20:2 ^z14:10 Gn 19:17 ^{aa}14:12 Gn 13:12 ^{ab}14:13 Gn 39:14; 40:15

^{ac}14:14 Gn 12:5; 15:3; 17:2; Ec 7:2 ^{ad}Dt 34:1; Jdg 18:29; 1Kg 15:20

^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*

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^a). ¹⁸ Melchizedek, king of Salem,^{a,b} 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^b 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.^d

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."

The Abrahamic Covenant

15 After these events, the word of the LORD came^e to Abram in a vision:

Do not be afraid,^f Abram.

I am your shield;^g

your reward will be very great.

² But Abram said, "Lord God, what can you give me, since I am childless and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?"^c

³ Abram continued, "Look, you have given me no offspring, so a slave born in^d my house will be my heir."

⁴ Now the word of the LORD came to him: "This one will not be your heir; instead, one who comes from your own body^e 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."^h

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

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

⁸ But he said, "Lord God, how can I know^k that I will possess it?"

"Your King already faced danger and willingly laid down his life to rescue you from your fears, both legitimate and otherwise."



⁹ He 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."

¹⁰ So he brought all these to him, cut them in half, and laid the pieces opposite each other, but he did not cut the birds^l in half.

¹¹ Birds of prey came down on the carcasses, but Abram drove them away. ¹² As the sun was setting, a deep sleep^m came over Abram, and suddenly great terror and darkness descended on him.

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

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

² Sarai 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

^a14:17 2Sm 18:18 ^b14:18 Ps 110:4; Heb 5:6; 7:1 ^cPs 57:2

^d14:20 Heb 7:4 ^e15:1 1Sm 15:10; 2Sm 7:4; 1Kg 6:11; Is 38:4; Jr 1:2

^fGn 26:24; Is 41:10; Jr 30:10; Lk 1:13,30 ^gDt 33:29; 2Sm 22:3,31; Ps 3:3;

7:10 ^h15:5 Gn 22:17; 26:4; Ex 32:13; Dt 1:10; 10:22; 1Ch 27:23; Rm 4:18;

Heb 11:12 ⁱ15:6 Rm 4:3,9,22; Gl 3:6; Jms 2:23 ^j15:7 Gn 11:31; 12:1;

Neh 9:7–8; Ac 7:2–4 ^k15:8 Jdg 6:17; 2Kg 20:8; Ps 86:17; Is 7:11–13;

Lk 1:18 ^l15:10 Lv 1:17 ^m15:12 Gn 2:21 ⁿ15:13–14 Ac 7:6–7

^o15:13 Ex 22:21; 23:9 ^pEx 12:40; Gl 3:17 ^q15:14 Ex 6:6; 7:4; 12:12

^rEx 3:22 ^s15:15 Gn 25:8; 47:30 ^t15:16 Lv 18:24–28; Dn 8:23;

Mt 23:32; 1Th 2:16 ^u15:18 Gn 12:7; 13:15; 17:8; 24:7; 26:4; Nm 34:2;

Dt 34:4; Jos 21:43; Neh 9:8; Ac 7:5 ^vEx 23:31; Nm 34:1–15;

Dt 1:7–8; 2Kg 24:7

^a14:18 = Jerusalem ^b14:19 Or Possessor ^c15:2 Hb obscure ^d15:3 Lit a son of ^e15:4 Lit loins ^f15:13 Lit will serve them and they will oppress them ^g15:16 Lit Amorites is not yet complete



Moving from Fear to Faith

William P. Smith

Everyone wrestles with fear. Individual fears arise from your unique personality and life experiences. Other fears, such as death, are more universal. Such fears touch us all in some way as part of the human experience of living in a broken world.

Fear is healthy when it leads to the avoidance of unnecessary danger. Knowledge of such dangers, then, can result in healthy fear. But rampant fear can absorb too much of your attention and can end up controlling your life. God never intended you to be imprisoned by fear, and faith in his love can free you from it.

Sadly, many of us have tried to deal with our fears in ways that have not worked and have even worsened it.

A Few Inadequate Ways to Handle Fear

One popular way of dealing with fear is to hide behind a barrier. We hire security agencies; we police our borders; we buy software filters, etc. Unfortunately, barriers are never 100 percent effective. In a frightening world with wicked people in it, merely trying to insulate yourself from danger is never sufficient.

Another approach is to prepare for as many eventualities as possible, perhaps by stockpiling food, water, fuel, camping gear, batteries, weapons, etc. But after Y2K, there was still 9/11. Unfortunately, preparedness has no objective limit. How much is enough? Can it be too much? When does prudence become paranoid?

A third approach is to rely on information for rescue, depending on Google, YouTube, or your brilliant friend. But again, is information always enough? The stock market could plunge dramatically in a few short hours and virtually wipe out your retirement account, even though you just checked it that morning. If your solution to danger is to be informed, you will spend every waking moment wondering if you have enough information.

Even worse than being ineffective, these strategies gradually weaken your relationship with God. Where does he fit in a world where you think you can protect yourself by being diligent or careful? You won't seek him for wisdom—you already have information. You won't pray for his provision—you have cases of canned food and bottled water. You won't seek his mercy—you'll watch The Weather Channel.

Only when other devices fail will you turn to him. But trust depends on relationship, and you were too busy protecting yourself to build one with him. You will become a functional and practical atheist, trusting more in your 401(k) than in the God who promises daily bread.

Real Faith Affects Your Strategies

You must relearn that no human strategy is effective unless God is your refuge. He regularly begins biblical conversations with words like "Don't fear/be afraid" (Gn 15:1; 2Kg 19:6; Is 35:3-4; Hg 2:5; Rv 1:17) or "Be strong and courageous" (Dt 31:6-7; Jos 1:6-7; 1Ch 28:20; Ps 27:14; 1Co 16:13; 2Tm 2:1). He says those things to encourage and embolden people who are weakened by their fears. Not only does he recognize that frightened people need special care (1Th 5:14; 1Pt 3:14), he makes sure he's first in line to give it to them.

There's a special place in his heart for you when you're scared. He doesn't threaten or intimidate (1Kg 19:11-13). He moves toward you, longing to lessen your fear (1Jn 4:16-18). And he invites you to move toward him for the same purpose. "The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are protected" (Pr 18:10).

When you find your greatest safety in your relationship with the Lord, you are free to live without being controlled by fear. Sometimes that means you will flee danger with a clear mind (Lk 4:28–30; Ac 9:23–25; 12:5–11). At other times you may surprise yourself by moving *toward* danger because you're convinced that is where God wants you. Other people might think you're foolish, but you'll know there is no safer place on earth than where God's call takes you.

Does Paul's decision in Acts 21:10–13 to trust God make sense to you? If your goal in life is to live as safely as possible, then it won't. It won't seem reasonable to put yourself in danger for the sake of what God is doing on earth. Instead, you will shrink his kingdom down to the size that your fears find comfortable. Paul understood that although dangers and threats in this life are real, the ultimate triumph of Christ's kingdom is even more real. As Jesus said earlier, "I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. You will have suffering in this world. Be courageous! I have conquered the world" (Jn 16:33). Jesus knew you can have both peace and courage while facing real threats.

When Jesus knew it was the time set for him by his Father, he marched resolutely to Jerusalem, knowing what was waiting for him there. In so doing he embodied 1Pt 4:19: "So then, let those who suffer according to God's will entrust themselves to a faithful Creator while doing what is good."

Thank God Jesus kept his focus on the Father and on others. Because Jesus did not live by fear, we get a glimpse of what God is like through his life. More than that, through his death Jesus set us free from what *should* terrify each of us: sin, death, and being kept apart from God forever. Because he paid the price for our sin, he removed the only thing that could separate us from God and his power in our lives to overcome our fears.

Now you are free to embrace the same life calling that captured Jesus—to love God and his image bearers with reckless abandon. It's a wonderful calling, yet it shrivels up when you live in fear. Thankfully, like the fearful disciples, you also can take heart and be encouraged. Your King already faced danger and willingly laid down his life to rescue you from your fears, both legitimate and otherwise.

Remind Yourself that God Runs His World

The ultimate antidote to fear is realizing that God rules the world. You will need to work extra hard to remember that reality because you live in a world that works overtime to draw your attention to its many dangers.

First, list all the Bible passages you can remember or find that focus on God's good involvement in this world in general and in your life specifically. Remind yourself that your life will not end one day too early because every day of it was already ordained "before a single one of them began" (Ps 139:16). Remind yourself that the one who keeps an active census of your hair follicles is deeply involved in the more important areas of your life (Lk 12:7).

Second, songs like "This Is My Father's World" are a great way to restore balance to our lives when fear seems overwhelming. Others may speak to you about God's extra kindness and goodness when you face dangers, such as "It Is Well" or "Blessed Be Your Name." Sing them to yourself, and let their truths renew your shaken confidence.

Third, Christian creeds and catechisms can provide short, power-packed reminders of God's sovereignty for your quick review when faced with danger. For instance, the answer to the first question of the Heidelberg Catechism, "What is your only comfort in life and in death?" is given, "That I am not my own but belong—body and soul, in life and in death—to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ. . . . He also watches over me in such a way that not a hair can fall from my head without the will of my Father in heaven: in fact, all things must work together for my salvation. Because I belong to him, Christ, by his Holy Spirit, assures me of eternal life and makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready from now on to live for him."

The apostle Paul and his friends faced something in Asia that was so overwhelming they were convinced they were going to die. Paul's response was, This happened "so that we would not trust in ourselves but in God who raises

the dead" (2Co 1:8–9). Those scary events took place for a reason. He doesn't say he trusted God to keep them from dying. Instead, he grew even more confident in a God who brings people back to life *after* they've died.

Think Clearly and Move Outward

Here are a few questions to help you sort out your fears and point you to your next step.

1. In this scary situation that you're facing, what are you afraid might happen?
2. If it actually did happen, what might you lose that you value—health? possessions? relationships? a feeling of security? reputation? peacefulness? time? success?
3. The things in question 2 are all good and important, but ask yourself "Is it possible that this thing has become too important to me?"

If you value something more than you value God and his presence, you will feel frightened any time it's threatened. Jesus says that treasuring anything or anyone above him makes you unworthy of him (Mt 10:37–39). It also keeps you locked in a world of fear.

*Adapted from "Living in a Dangerous World: Moving from Fear to Faith" by William P. Smith (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2011).

said.^a ³ So 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. ⁴ He slept with^A Hagar, and she became pregnant. When she saw that she was pregnant, her mistress became contemptible to her. ⁵ Then Sarai said to Abram, "You are responsible for my suffering!^B I put my slave in your arms,^C and when she saw that she was pregnant, I became contemptible to her. May the LORD judge between me and you."^b

⁶ Abram 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.

⁷ The angel of the LORD^C found her by a spring in the wilderness, the spring on the way to Shur. ⁸ He 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."

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

¹¹ The angel of the LORD said to her, "You have conceived and will have a son. You will

name him Ishmael,^D for the LORD has heard your cry of affliction.¹² This 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."^e

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

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

Covenant Circumcision

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

³ Then 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. ⁵ Your name will no longer be Abram; your name will be Abraham,^I for I will make

^a16:2 Gn 3:17 ^b16:5 Gn 31:49; Jos 22:25; 1Sm 24:12 ^c16:7 Gn 22:11; Ex 3:2; Nm 22:22; Jdg 2:1; 2Sm 24:16; 1Kg 19:7; 2Kg 19:35; Ps 34:7

^d16:10 Gn 15:5; 17:2; 26:24; Lv 26:9; Dt 7:13; 30:5; Ps 107:38

^e16:12 Gn 25:18 ^f16:13 Gn 32:30; Ex 33:23; Ps 139:1–12 ^g17:1 Gn 28:3; 35:11; Ex 6:3 ^hGn 6:9; Ps 15:2; Lk 1:6

^A16:4 Lit *He came to* ^B16:5 Or "May my suffering be on you!" ^C16:13 Hb obscure ^d16:14 = Well of the Living One Who Sees Me a Multitude

^C16:5 Lit *bosom* ^D16:11 = God Hears ^E16:13 = God Sees Me ^H17:1 Or *Walk* ^I17:5 = The Father Is Exalted ^J17:5 = Father of