

FOR RETIRED ADULTS

# **BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE**

## **LifeVENTURES**



# God's Story

**PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE**  
**SUMMER 2013**

LifeWay | Adults

# How to Become a Christian

## HIGHWAY TO HEAVEN

You won't find it on a map, but a highway to heaven does exist. "The Roman Road" is explained in the Book of Romans in the Bible, and it tells how to go to heaven.

The road begins at Romans 1:16: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is God's power for salvation to everyone who believes." God is the source for our journey to heaven. He gives power for salvation to all who believe.

We need God's power because we have a problem with sin. "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). "Sin" means missing the mark or missing God's intended destination for us. None of us can reach that destination on his or her own because everyone is a sinner.

When we work, we earn money. Sin earns wages as well—wages of death. Because God loves all sinners, He has provided another route: "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

The highway to heaven is found in Romans 10:9: "If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." We need to confess our sin and ask God for forgiveness. To confess Jesus as Lord involves agreeing with God about your sin and your need for salvation. You must repent of your sin, turning away from the direction in life in which you are going. To "believe in your heart" is to place your faith in Jesus, trusting that He died on the cross to pay for your sins. "But God proves His own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us!" (Romans 5:8).

If you would like to have salvation in Jesus Christ, sincerely pray a prayer like this one: "Dear God, I confess to You my sin and need for salvation. I turn away from my sin and place my faith in Jesus as my Savior and Lord. Amen."

Share your faith in Jesus with a Christian friend or pastor. Becoming a Christian is your first step on the lifelong road of spiritual growth and service God desires for you. Follow Christ in believer's baptism by immersion and join a local church.

# Meet the WRITERS

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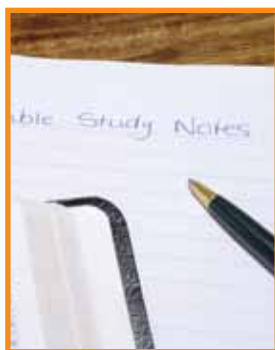
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# C O N T E N T S

This periodical is designed for vocationally retired adults ages 65 and up using the Bible Studies for Life series. We believe that the Bible has God for its author; salvation for its end; and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter and that all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. The 2000 statement of *The Baptist Faith and Message* is our doctrinal guideline.



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These symbols designate interactive items for your response. You may want to use a separate notebook journal to register your responses.



GOD

JESUS

HOLY SPIRIT

REVELATION &  
AUTHORITY (BIBLE)

CREATION,  
SOVEREIGNTY, &  
PROVIDENCE

FAMILY

COMMUNITY &  
WORLD

CHURCH &  
KINGDOM

HUMANITY (SELF)

SALVATION

DISCIPLESHIP &  
THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

ETHICS & MORALITY

REASON & FAITH

REBELLION & SIN

TIME & ETERNITY

# Bible Studies for Life

## *Where Life Connects to God's Word*

God has revealed in the Bible all we need in order to understand His answers to our needs. Bible Studies for Life addresses adult life needs as they relate to 15 biblical concepts (see list).

### **God's Story**

**God**—God the Father acts out of love, grace, and compassion and desires the best for His creation.

**Creation, Sovereignty, & Providence**—God established natural laws to cause His creation to function with order, predictability, and splendor.

**Humanity (Self)**—All people are created in the image of God to love and worship Him, possessing personality, intellect, creativity, self-consciousness, and self-determination.

**Rebellion & Sin**—Because all have sinned, everyone is fallen and lost; thus sin has resulted in alienation, condemnation, enslavement, depravity, and death.

**Jesus**—Jesus was born of a virgin, died on a cross, was raised from the dead, and ascended to heaven so that we can be saved.

**Salvation**—God offers forgiveness of sin to those who trust in Christ, who suffered and died in our place to atone for sin.

**Church & Kingdom**—God's reign over His creation is made visible through the church, expressed in the lives of believers as they join together in faith and fellowship.

**Time & Eternity**—God works within time to accomplish His purposes. Someday Jesus will return to raise the dead, judge the world, punish the lost, reward the redeemed, and establish the Eternal Kingdom.



# Blessings of a New Group

By Bruce and Donna Raley

Donna and I were actively involved in a Sunday School class for Baby Boomers after we joined our church months earlier. As we talked and prayed, we felt led to start a young adult group. We remembered that we were blessed through the ministry of “older” friends early in our marriage and believed we could do the same for the next generation.

However, we had a problem. We really did not know young adults in our community. We did not have a prospect list or a ready group to go after. So we simply decided we would be proactive in inviting young adults to the class as they crossed our daily paths. The Lord quickly showed us a mission field within our own church.

Week after week, Donna and I search out young couples in the worship service. It has been fun to introduce ourselves and ask if they are in Bible study. In addition, we have tried to be aware of young adults we meet in the course of life. It is amazing how the Lord has connected us with others while out on a walk, in a restaurant, standing in line, and numerous other occasions. The key is simply to engage them in conversation and invite them.

The past year and a half has been interesting. We have group members who were raised in church and have a solid

foundation of Bible knowledge. We also have added members who did not even have a Bible, much less know anything about it. This has made for interesting discussions and opportunities for ministry.

Since the class began, two class members have professed Christ and been baptized. Others have joined the church.

I hope our group members have been blessed through this new group. I know Donna and I have. We are blessed to see them attend Sunday mornings ready to discuss the truth of God’s Word. We are blessed to hear them pray for one another, to watch them work together on mission projects, to see them laugh and enjoy fellowship one with another at times outside of Sunday morning. We are more than blessed to watch people come to Christ and grow in Him.

Every church can and should consistently be launching new groups. New groups reach new people! It is that simple. There must be intentionality and work. But the blessings are more than incredible.

Be a catalyst. Launch a new group.

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***Bruce and Donna Raley are members of First Baptist Church, Hendersonville, Tennessee.***

# How to Read and Study the Bible

By George H. Guthrie

*This article excerpt courtesy of B&H Publishing Group.*

The Bible is unique among the books of the world. Its “release date” is centuries old, yet it still dominates the best-seller lists, confronting moderns with messages as fresh as today’s news headlines. At times the Bible is so crystal clear that a child can understand it, yet its difficulties can humble the most learned of scholars. Diverse in theme and literary genres, it conveys a unified story, a message that climaxes in the person and work of Jesus Christ. It was delivered through human writers, yet it truly is God’s Word. The Bible can seem as familiar as a walk next door, or as foreign as a distant country.

This article aims to help you hear from God through daily interaction with the Bible. Hearing God in the pages of the Bible takes time and effort; spiritual listening is a skill that we continue to develop all of our lives. Hearing someone well can be challenging when we move across cultural lines, and, in fact, reading the Bible is very much a cross-cultural conversation, since God gave His Word in places, times, and circumstances very much removed from our own.

## **Why spend time in the Bible?**

Perhaps your past has been marked by starts and stops in reading the Bible, and you are wondering whether you have the discipline to engage the Bible consistently. Well, join the club. Most of us have struggled with the discipline of Bible reading and study. So is it worth giving consistent Bible reading and study another try, or a first try? Most believers know intuitively that it is.

This is God’s Word. The God who spoke the world into being has spoken His truth about life through the Bible, so that we might know





what He intends for this world and how we might live for His fame. He calls us to be “Word people”—people who are countercultural in the ways we approach life. Thus the Bible serves as the foundation for understanding who we are and what we should be doing in this world.

Here are some suggestions you can start applying daily in less time than it takes you to watch a TV show.

### **Begin with the heart.**

In the parable of the seeds and soils (Mark 4:3-20), Jesus used a word picture to describe the different levels of receptivity people have toward God’s Word. He tells of a farmer broadcasting seed along the edge of a field. Some seeds fall on the hard-packed path beside the field; some fall on rocky ground that has little topsoil; some fall in the weeds; and some fall in fertile soil that offers a good environment for growth. The various places they fall provide images of the human heart as it is confronted with God’s Word.

Some people have hearts that are hard-packed, like a frequented footpath. God’s Word does not get through to these hearts. Others have shallow hearts that seem open to God’s Word. The Word comes and they respond, but the moment things get tough, the pressures of life override the principles of God’s Word, and the spiritual life withers. A third type of person engages God’s Word at a deeper level, but worries and desire for worldly things squeeze out the Word, choking it from the person’s life. Finally, there are those who receive the Word with a heart like a well-tilled field. This is the picture of a person fully receptive to God’s Word, and God’s Word brings exponential growth to their spiritual life.

*(Continued on p. 68.)*



I had been a Christian for two years when I enrolled in a Baptist college. Church leaders had instructed me in basic biblical teachings about morality, and I learned scattered verses about salvation and such. While I was acquainted with some of the Bible's main characters and what they had done, how the Old Testament fit in with the New Testament was rather foggy. Two required college courses were surveys of the Old and the New Testaments. Those studies helped blow away much of the fog by giving me a chronological and sequential picture of God's story of redemption. The common thread that ties the Scriptures together is God's ongoing activity to bring people into a relationship with Him. This unit's lessons begin to track God's redemption story.

**June 2: God Begins the Story** While science puzzles over how creation came to be, Scripture focuses more on Who brought it into existence. This part of God's story reminds us older adults of God's original design for creation, what went wrong, and what He intended to do about it.

**June 9: God Chooses a People** We who have known the Lord for many years must never forget He is the Author of our salvation. He chose to save us out of His love, not our merit. He had us in mind when He selected Abraham to found a nation through whom He would bring the Savior.

**June 16: God Delivers His People** This lesson can remind us that over the decades God has helped us through many tight places, sometimes using other people. He used Moses to lead His people out of Egyptian bondage and to the promised land where Christ would be born.

**June 23: God Instructs His People** Without God's commandments, we would know neither what He expects of us nor of our failure to measure up. This review of the Ten Commandments can help us take a fresh look at how well we know and keep them, changes we may need to make, and the grace in Christ we so sorely need.

**June 30: God Dwells Among His People** The tabernacle's primary function in God's story was to show He is not merely "the great Someone in the great somewhere." He is here with us every day, and He wants us to recognize His glorious presence.

One quarter's lessons cannot survey the entire Bible, but each of its lessons is a dip into the stream of God's story at a key point. Focus on God's story during the coming months, recognize your place in it, and act on its implications for you.

# Learning and Living the Bible Lesson

May 27–June 2

**Monday:** Read the study theme introduction (pp. 10-11) and Genesis 1–3. Identify (1) God’s provisions for humans, (2) His expectations of them, (3) factors involved in their rebellion, and (4) their sin’s consequences.

**Tuesday:** Read “God Creates” (pp. 14-16 ). Contrast your childhood understanding of creation with your understanding today. What do you grasp now that you were unable to grasp then? What makes human beings a special part of creation?

**Wednesday:** Work your way through “Humanity Rebels” (pp. 16-19). List ways people today rebel against the Creator. In what way do you see a desire to be like God being involved in people’s sins? How are the qualities of trust, respect, and love related?

**Thursday:** Study “Sin Has Consequences” (pp. 19-21 ). How do we try to avoid sin’s consequences? How do you see the first couple’s consequences for sin being played out today? How do unconfessed sins impact your desire to worship with others?

**Friday:** Read about the roles of a believing husband and wife in Ephesians 5:21-33. In light of these verses, how would you respond to a husband who said to his wife, “My job is to love you; your job is to do what I say”?

**Saturday:** Review the focal passages. Jot in the margin questions you would like to hear discussed or particular truths that speak to you. Be ready to mention these at an appropriate time during the class session.

**Sunday:** Before attending class today, pray for both the leader and the learners. Ask God to help all of you search your hearts for evidences of unresolved rebellion against God. Pray for a growing appreciation of God’s love and for a willingness to repent.



# God Begins the Story

## BACKGROUND PASSAGE

Genesis 1–3

## FOCAL PASSAGES

Genesis 1:1,26-27; 2:15-17;  
3:6-7,14-19,23-24

## WHAT THIS LESSON IS ABOUT

The biblical story begins with the eternal God's creating the world and the first human beings. God created people with the capacity for fellowship with Him, but they chose to rebel against Him and suffered the consequences.

## HOW THIS LESSON CAN IMPACT YOUR LIFE

Understand that you were made for a relationship with God and how sin severed that relationship.



This quarter's lessons form a tapestry of "God's Story," which is told in the Bible's 66, God-inspired books. This is a story in the sense that actual history is "His Story." The biblical story is the factual account of God's relationship to the universe in general and to people in particular.

Why at our age and stage of life should we look again at the quite familiar report of God's creating the universe and human beings? Two good reasons are: (1) These early chapters in Genesis remind us of God's original design for creation. (2) They also reveal the root cause of all that's wrong in the world

today, namely, rebellion against God. These two facts form the essential foundation for the rest of God’s story, for they establish the reference point of the divine plan of redemption through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, that follows. As we think through this unit’s Scriptures, let’s keep an eye out for what they tell us about God and about ourselves.

God Creates		
KJV	Genesis 1:1,26-27	HCSB
<b><sup>1</sup>In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.</b>		
.....		
<b><sup>26</sup>And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.</b>		
<b><sup>27</sup>So God created man in his <i>own</i> image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.</b>		
<b><sup>1</sup> In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.</b>		
.....		
<b><sup>26</sup>Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness. They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, all the earth, and the creatures that crawl on the earth.”</b>		
<b><sup>27</sup> So God created man in His own image; He created him in the image of God; He created them male and female.</b>		

Those of us in latter adulthood can view God’s act of creation with a greater appreciation than in childhood. For example, as science continues to explore God’s handiwork of creation on both macro and micro scales, we are astonished at the scope and complexity of the created order. How can we wrap our minds around the size of the universe? Likewise, how can we ever understand the intricate structures, relationships, and functions that amazing microtechnology is revealing to students of the human body? What a Creator!

Genesis 1:1 tells us two essential facts about God. (1) Since none of the material universe existed until God created it, we can affirm He made all that is from nothing at all. The Hebrew verb

translated “created” means to bring into existence. It appears in Scripture only with God as the subject and always refers to whatever is created without referring to any substance used in the process. (2) God the Creator shows He is separate from His creation, above and beyond it. Even so, chapters 1–2 signify He is closely involved with His creation and concerned about it.

Genesis 1:1–2:3 focuses on God’s creative actions in broad strokes, including the creation of humans. We are created in God’s “image” and “likeness” (1:26). The text does not explain the meanings of those two terms, which elsewhere are used as virtual synonyms. However, the text and context make clear these terms mean at least that we have the capacity to relate to God and communicate with Him. In short, He created us to live in relationship with Him. How special is that!

Genesis 2:4-25 presents a more detailed record of God’s creation of man and woman and His provisions for them. Forming the first man from dust and breathing into him the breath of life signals the Creator’s intimate relationship to humanity.



### **What About Me?**

In your own experience, how does your Creator usually communicate with you? How often do you communicate with Him? How meaningful is this communication to you?

**D I G G I N G**

**D E E P E R**

**How These Events Fit Into God’s Grand Story** This lesson centers on God as Creator and people as His prime creation. As we begin our look at the “big story” of God’s redemptive love, we must begin by establishing the proper relationship between Creator and created. Since God alone creates, He alone stands in a position far superior to any of His creations, including people.

Yet God seeks a personal relationship with people. The advent of sin leaves people estranged from God. God graciously intervenes to restore the relationship. In doing so, His great story of redemptive love begins.

God also assigned humans the responsibility of managing the world He made for us. We are earth’s dominant life form, and as such we are to “rule” the earth’s creatures (1:26). Science has demonstrated that the plant and animal life of land, sea, and air are interdependent. We know also that natural resources, both living and mineral, are not unlimited; thus personally and corporately we are responsible for being careful managers and faithful stewards of God’s creation.



**Think It Through**

What hinders collective good stewardship of the world?

What are we to make of those plural pronouns for God in verse 26: “Let Us”; “Our image ... Our likeness”; and then the singular “His own image” (v. 27)? Based on the text alone, we can declare the Godhead is both plural and at the same time is one. This supports the full revelation of the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) in the New Testament.

After God’s great creative acts, He pronounced His work to be “very good” (1:31). The first couple’s life in Eden overflowed with peace and contentment. As we know, this didn’t last.

Humanity Rebels		
KJV	Genesis 2:15-17; 3:6-7	HCSB
<b>2:15</b> And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.		
<b>16</b> And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:		
<b>17</b> But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.		
<b>2:15</b> The LORD God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden to work it and watch over it. <b>16</b> And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree of the garden, <b>17</b> 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.”		



<sup>3:6</sup> And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make *one* wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

<sup>7</sup> And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they *were* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

<sup>3:6</sup> Then 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. <sup>7</sup> Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made loin-cloths for themselves.

These Scriptures describe three striking facts about God's intentions for us humans.

(1) From the beginning, God planned that able-bodied humans would perform work. Do you get the impression that work in the garden of Eden was forbiddingly difficult? I don't. I think the first couple had an ideal working environment and loved their work of caring for the garden.

God gave the man one prohibition: "You must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for the day you eat from it, you will certainly die" (2:17). This tells us two more of God's intentions for us.

(2) God made us with the capacity to choose whether to love, trust, and thus to obey Him (see 1 John 5:3). He did not want a race of puppets to manipulate by pulling their strings. Jesus declared God's greatest commandment is to love Him. That's what He wants from all of us, and love by its very nature cannot be forced; it only can be given willingly.

(3) God also wants what is best for us. His commands are designed to fulfill His purposes, but they also are for our benefit. Our Designer knows what will give us lasting fulfillment, satisfaction, and joy. God's greatest blessings to us now and in eternity flow from our fulfilling His purposes for us in Christ. He seeks to guide us in doing that, but He doesn't force us.

Genesis 3:1-5 tells how the woman was intrigued by the serpent's bogus inference that God's jealous pride was behind His forbidding them fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He claimed God didn't want the couple to know what He knew, for that would make them like God.

The woman took the plunge, and the man willingly joined her. In so doing they showed a lack of trust, respect, and love for God. And they learned something new by experience—disobeying God brings guilt, shame, regret, and death.

For the first time, the couple had something to hide from one another. Their open, innocent, and loving relationship with each other was tarnished; extremely self-conscious, they covered their nakedness for shame. They also desperately wanted to hide their rebellion from God. Instead of welcoming His presence, they fearfully hid from Him.

Each of us has inherited a rebel nature from our ancestors. This is what lies behind all the moral evil in our world. Like the first couple, deep down we want to be in charge, that is, to be “like God” (3:5). We, therefore, prefer to define good and evil for ourselves, to make our own list of thou-shalts and thou-shalt-nots. Even we long-term believers tend to pick and choose which of God's commandments to keep and simply ignore those that inconvenience us.



### **What About Me?**

Consider which of the Lord's instructions you might conveniently be ignoring? How will you correct this?

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Through the decades we have observed what self-centered and self-serving attitudes and actions produce—oppression, wars, corruption, immorality, politics-based famines, crime, immorality, and so forth. On a personal level, we have experienced the negative impact other's sins have had on us. Even worse, most of us know all too much about the fallout of

guilt, shame, and regret from our own acts of rebellion against God. Since God's way is always the best way, let's determine to obey Him. Let's not miss out on the best the Lord has prepared for our latter years.

## Sin Has Consequences

KJV

Genesis 3:14-19,23-24

HCSB

<sup>14</sup>And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou *art* cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:

<sup>15</sup>And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

<sup>16</sup>Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire *shall* be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

<sup>17</sup>And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed *is* the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;

<sup>18</sup>Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;

<sup>14</sup> Then 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.

<sup>15</sup> I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.

<sup>16</sup> He said to the woman:

I will intensify your labor pains; you will bear children in anguish. Your desire will be for your husband, yet he will rule over you.

<sup>17</sup> And He said to Adam, "Because you listened to your wife's voice and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'Do not eat from it':

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

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

<sup>19</sup>In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou *art*, and unto dust shalt thou return.

.....  
<sup>23</sup>Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.

<sup>24</sup>So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

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

.....  
<sup>23</sup> So the LORD God sent him away from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken.

<sup>24</sup> He drove 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.

Each of us has followed the first couple’s example both of disobeying God and of trying to excuse our disobedience. The woman blamed the serpent, and the man blamed the woman and even implied it was God’s fault for giving her to him. Haven’t we heard ourselves say, “It’s not my fault”? We also may have insisted “I couldn’t help it.” Let’s admit also that after living a long time we also can become less sensitive to sin. We may tend to shrug off our disobedience by thinking, “Everybody does it; it’s no big deal.” Nevertheless, all sinful actions and attitudes inevitably bring distressing consequences.



### What About Me?

Do you ever dismiss some sins as too insignificant to confess? How do you think God views what we may call “minor sins”?

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God pronounced judgment on all who were involved in the humans’ first sin. God cursed the serpent, Satan’s agent of deception, with perpetual humility (crawling on the ground) and ongoing hostility with humankind. Many evangelical Bible



scholars see in verse 15 the first shadowy glimpse of God's plan to defeat Satan, sin, and death by sending His Son, who would die for our sins and be raised victorious over death. Satan's effort to destroy Christ would be as a wound to His heel, but Christ's redemptive work would destroy Satan (see Luke 22:3; Rev. 20:2,10). Even in God's pronouncement of judgment on the serpent, He was unfolding His plan to provide redemption for sinful humans.

The woman's consequences would be twofold: (1) increased pain in childbirth; and (2) "Your desire will be for your husband, yet he will rule over you" (v. 16). She earlier was assigned the roles of helper, mother, and companion. "Your desire" and "he will rule" suggests a struggle for leadership.

The man's consequences would include difficulty and frustration in providing for himself and his family. Growing food would become a demanding and iffy task. "Painful labor" (v. 17) indicates lifelong arduous and vexing work, not work itself.

Death was to be the final consequence of sin. The Lord had warned that disobedience would result in death. The couple ate, but clearly they did not drop dead on the spot. Spiritual separation from God, however, is spiritual death. Adam and Eve were expelled from the garden, and its entrance was guarded. Thus they no longer had access to the tree of life, and eventually, they would die.

**Reflection:** God's story begins with His creative acts and continues with His redemptive plan, which we will trace in coming lessons. God created a special place for human beings with whom He desired a personal relationship. Their rebellion against Him broke fellowship with Him and brought struggle and death into their existence. God's plan of redemption, however, already was in place. Meditate on the significance of these biblical truths for your latter years:

**1.** God created us to live in a loving, obedient relationship with Him and with one another.

**2.** God's commands and purposes are designed with our well-being in mind.

**3.** Choosing our own way over God's way (sinning) inevitably brings destructive results.

**4.** For unbelievers, sin's worst consequence is eternal separation from God.

**5.** For believers, sin's most tragic consequence is breaking our fellowship with God.

**6.** Sin damages our relationships with other people in ways we may not see.

**7.** God's redemptive plan through Christ offers forgiveness and a renewed relationship with Him.

*"Speak... Your servant is listening."*

1 Samuel 3:10

Prayerfully consider what God is saying to you through this lesson, and write it here.

## APPLYING THE WORD



Think of times in the past when you felt especially close to the Lord. What accounted for that closeness? Are you currently as close to Him as you were then? If not, set aside time to ask Him to show you the reasons and what to do about them.