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# Uncovering the Benefits of Direction: The Entire Bible in One Year

It is a great privilege to participate in Christian education and play a significant role in the spiritual formation of fellow Christians. *Direction*® is a resource designed to explore key teachings and answer important questions about our Christian faith. It helps to encourage us as seasoned disciples, introduce new believers to the truth of the Bible, and prepare all believers to share and defend the hope we have in Jesus Christ.

## WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

To take advantage of this commentary, start each week by reading the **Weekly Bible Study Guide**. This weekly guide provides the scripture in the KJV. In “The People, Places, and Times,” “Background,” and “In Depth” sections, you will find insight and understanding of the text. But these sections include more than a simple compilation of information. In each lesson, you will also see “In Focus” stories, the “Liberating Lesson,” and “Application for Activation” sections, which serve as catalysts for applying the biblical text to practical life situations.

## DAILY BIBLE READINGS

On the last page of the Weekly Study Guides, you’ll see a box titled **Daily Bible Readings**. The Daily Bible Readings help with engaging the scriptures throughout the week. If you complete all the Daily Bible Readings, you will have read the entire Bible in one year.



## QR CODES

Next to the In Focus stories each week, you will see **QR Codes**. The codes will lead you to additional content, including videos of our In Focus stories and Teaching Tips. To use the QR Code, open the camera app on your mobile device to scan the QR Code. Then click on the link to access the videos and teaching tips. Need additional help accessing these resources? Please call 1-800-860-8642 for assistance.

# Quarter At-A-Glance

## September 2025

### **Week 1 Genesis: September 7, 2025**

#### **God Creates Everything**

##### **Genesis 1:1–13**

How was everything created? How did God speak the world into being? What does it mean that God saw that it was good? This lesson explores the very beginning, the creation of all things, as recorded in Genesis 1:1–13. This passage reveals God's power and intentionality in bringing the universe into existence. We see in these verses the foundation of all creation and the start of God's ongoing relationship with His world.

### **Week 2 Exodus: September 14, 2025**

#### **God Gives Laws**

##### **Exodus 20:1–21**

What does it mean to live a moral life? How should we interact with God and with each other? What are the foundational principles for a just society? God provided the Ten Commandments as a guide for His people, outlining essential principles for worship and human relationships. These commandments serve as a basis for understanding God's expectations and living a life pleasing to Him.

### **Week 3 Leviticus: September 21, 2025**

#### **God Values Justice**

##### **Leviticus 19:9–18, 33–37**

How should we treat the marginalized in our society? What does genuine love for our neighbor look like in practice? How do we conduct ourselves with integrity in business and daily life? Leviticus 19:9–18, 33–37 delves into what it means to live as God's just people. God instructs His people to care for the poor and the stranger, to act honestly and fairly, and to love their neighbors as themselves. This chapter

emphasizes that true holiness is reflected in how we treat others, demonstrating God's heart for justice and compassion in all aspects of life.

### **Week 4 Numbers: September 28, 2025**

#### **God Plans Good**

##### **Numbers 14:1–10**

How do doubt and fear impact our ability to see God's good plans? What happens when we question God's promises? This lesson shows the consequences of unbelief and the importance of trusting in God's guidance, even when circumstances seem challenging. It reminds us that God's plans are ultimately for our good, even when we don't understand them.

### **Week 5 Deuteronomy: October 5, 2025**

#### **God Blesses Humility**

##### **Deuteronomy 8:6–20**

What are the dangers of forgetting God's provision? How does pride lead us astray? This passage warns against becoming complacent and arrogant when blessed with prosperity. It emphasizes the importance of remembering God's hand in our lives and remaining humble, lest we turn away from Him.

### **Week 6 Joshua: October 12, 2025**

#### **God Protects**

##### **Joshua 2:3–9, 15–16, 22–24**

How does God work through unexpected people to accomplish His purposes? What does it mean to trust God's protection in uncertain circumstances? This passage illustrates God's faithfulness in protecting those who trust in Him, even in the midst of danger. It highlights the importance of courage and faith in the face of adversity.

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**Week 7 Judges: October 19, 2025**

**People Choose Sin**

**Judges 2:10–19**

What are the consequences of turning away from God? How does disobedience lead to oppression and suffering? This passage reveals the recurring pattern of Israel's unfaithfulness, their punishment, and God's subsequent deliverance. It serves as a reminder of the dangers of straying from God's ways and the need for constant repentance.

**Week 8 Ruth: October 26, 2025**

**Lineage of Christ**

**Ruth 4:13–17**

How does God work through ordinary lives to fulfill His greater plan? What does loyalty and faithfulness look like in practice? This passage reveals God's providential hand in preserving the line of David, ultimately leading to the birth of Jesus. It shows the beauty of faithfulness and redemption within the context of everyday life.

**Week 9 1 Samuel: November 2, 2025**

**Misplaced Faith**

**1 Samuel 8:1–9, 19–22**

What happens when we desire things other than God's will? How does rejecting God's leadership impact us? This passage illustrates the people's desire for a king, even though God was their King. It highlights the dangers of seeking security and identity in things other than God, and the consequences of rejecting His guidance.

**Week 10 1 Kings: November 9, 2025**

**God is All-Powerful**

**1 Kings 18:20–21, 30–39**

How is God's power demonstrated? What does it mean to choose between God and false idols? This passage vividly portrays God's supremacy over false gods and His ability to answer prayer with fire. It calls for a clear decision to follow God alone and demonstrates His undeniable power.

**Week 11 2 Chronicles: November 16, 2025**

**God is Sovereign and Answers Prayer**

**2 Chronicles 6:12–21**

How does prayer connect us to God's presence? What does it mean for God to hear and answer our prayers? This passage shows Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple, recognizing God's dwelling place and His attentiveness to His people's cries. It affirms God's willingness to hear and respond to those who seek Him.

**Week 12 Nehemiah: November 23, 2025**

**God Desires Accountability**

**Nehemiah 9:32–38, 10:28–29**

What does it mean to commit to following God's law? How do we hold ourselves accountable to our promises? This passage reveals the people's confession of sin and their covenant to obey God's commands. It highlights the importance of taking responsibility for our actions and making a conscious choice to follow God.

**Week 13 Job: November 30, 2025**

**God Will Redeem Us**

**Job 19:1–7, 23–29**

How do we maintain faith in the midst of suffering? What hope do we have for future restoration? This passage shows Job's unwavering belief in his Redeemer, even in the midst of intense pain and loss. It provides hope that God will ultimately vindicate and restore those who trust in Him.

# God Creates Everything

## HOW DID THE WORLD BEGIN?

Focal Verses • GENESIS 1:1–13

### Aim for Change

By the end of the lesson, we will ACKNOWLEDGE God as the creator of the universe, APPRECIATE the created world, and ADMIRE the beauty of the heavens and the earth God created.

### In Focus

Breana had always wanted to be a scientist. As a child, she would take her telescope outside with her father and look at the stars through it with wonder. Her father, a physicist, was part of her inspiration for pursuing natural science as a major in college.

However, as she approached her senior year, she started having doubts about science after hearing a classmate say that he believed in science so he didn't believe in God.

Breana decided to talk to her dad about her dilemma. "How can you be a scientist and still believe in God, Dad?" she asked nervously.

Her father responded, "Breana, science helps us understand our world, not give it meaning. I started doing physics because of my faith in God. I wanted to understand how this amazing world we live in works. I don't think that wondering and investigating how creation works bothers God. But at the end of the day, science is about asking questions and getting an understanding of what we see. It does not try to understand the meaning of life or the things that matter most to me, like the love I have for you and your mom. I have faith in God for those things."

Breana was in awe. She decided that with her faith in God she could stay on her path to becoming a scientist and understanding God's creation.

*What do you appreciate most about God's creation?*



### Keep in Mind

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (Genesis 1:1–2, KJV).

## Focal Verses

**KJV** **Genesis 1:1** In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

4 And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.

5 And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

6 And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.

7 And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so.

8 And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.

9 And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.

10 And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good.

11 And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.

12 And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

13 And the evening and the morning were the third day.

## The People, Places, and Times

**Creation.** God's act of creation is the process by which the universe and humanity came into being. (Genesis 1:1–2:3). Genesis tells of the sole, sovereign Master of the universe directing the work of creation by verbal command. God makes the world in six days and rests on the seventh. Bible scholars differ on whether the “days” were 24-hour days or more extended periods. God's act of creation is unlike other ancient Near Eastern stories depicting gods fighting or the creation of man from the blood of a rebellious god.

## Background

Genesis is the first book in the Bible. Genesis sets the foundation for understanding the rest of the Scriptures. Genesis 1 records God calling

creation into existence. He creates from nothing all creation. In addition, God exists apart from creation as God alone. God does not sleep and wake up. He is self-existent, all-powerful, and eternal. God establishes cycles and patterns that make up nature and assigns the functions of each aspect of creation from time to growth. Through creation, God shows that He is both orderly and creative. Each day, God creates and affirms that what He has created is good. God establishes relationships for the created order. The introduction of sin challenges the goodness and order of these relationships in the created world.

*Is there a story of how something started or ended unexpectedly that has particularly interested or impacted you?*



## At-A-Glance

1. God is Creator (Genesis 1:1–2)
2. God creates light (vv. 3–5)
3. God Creates Heaven (vv. 6–8)
4. God Creates Earth (vv. 9–13)

## In Depth

### 1. God is Creator (Genesis 1:1–2)

God is eternal, limitless, and creates all that exists. (Isaiah 57:15). The book of Genesis begins with the account of God's creation. The beginning here is humanity's history, as eternity does not have a beginning or end. God is Spirit and is the source of everything. God created the world and goes through the process of bringing order to formless chaos. The earth was undifferentiated nothingness, as the Scripture says, "without form, and void" (from v. 2, KJV). God is also revealed here as Spirit. God is not a created being but the Creator of the universe by His Spirit. The Spirit of God moved over darkness before speaking light into manifestation in verse 3.

*How does knowing about God's creativity impact your understanding of creativity?*

### 2. God Creates Light (vv. 3–5)

God speaks Creation into existence. The power of God's Word is that whatever God commands must be. God speaks, and creation obeys. The first thing God speaks into the visible world is light. We know from science that nothing is visible to human eyes without light. God creates light and says it is good; God is pleased with His creation. Then God separates light from darkness and calls the light day and the darkness night. God creates the night and day cycle to define how time will be viewed on earth. Therefore, God gives purpose to the night and day cycle.

*What roles have light and darkness played in your life?*

### 3. God Creates Heaven (vv. 6–8)

God speaks heaven into existence as a firmament or barrier. The word for heaven here refers to the space between the ground and the upper atmosphere, typically called the sky, but it could also mean more than that. The sky separates the earth and its waters from waters in the earth's upper atmosphere and the vast expanse of space beyond it. This continues God's pattern of separating and establishing order, creating boundaries between things in the created world so that the world can exist in established relationships instead of chaos.

*How can natural boundaries be seen as good on the earth?*

### 4. God Creates Earth (vv. 9–13)

In earth-shaking fashion, God calls the waters on the earth together—and the land up from the waters. God gives them a purpose by naming them seas and earth and calling them good. God's creative intentionality is on full display. Then, God creates plant life; He calls it to grow from the earth and allows each plant to reproduce using its seed. Each plant is produced according to its kind; that is to say, a peach tree produces peaches instead of oranges. There is intentional diversity in God's creation. Not every plant is the same, but they all reproduce according to their kind. God again calls these creations and their relationships with the rest of the earth good.

*How does knowing that God created diversity influence what we consider differences in life?*

## Search the Scriptures

1. Why do you think the Scripture keeps repeating the phrase "God saw that it was good" after God created each part of the universe (Genesis 1:4, 10, 12)?

2. Why do you think God calls plants to grow from the earth instead of speaking them into existence (v. 11)?

### Discuss the Meaning

1. God creates by speaking everything into existence. What impact does that have on how we view the power of God's Word?

2. How do you reconcile your understanding of science with your faith as a Christian? Do you believe in any aspects of evolution? Why or why not?

### Liberating Lesson

The Bible makes it clear that God is the Creator of the universe. God not only is the source of everything created, but He gives everything purpose and function. Yet God is distinctive in making different parts of creation unique, even allowing the earth to produce plants that naturally reproduce. God is purposeful and intentional in establishing diversity and boundaries in nature. As a result of the perfect wisdom of God, the visible world has good relationships with all created things despite their differences. We can observe this and conclude that humans should also value and appreciate the purpose of all things in nature, from plants to animals, day and night, and water and land. We can also use God's example of setting boundaries, which may benefit us.

### Application for Activation

Pause a moment to take in nature. Go for a walk, look at the sky, tend to a garden. Be intentional this week about engaging the natural world and thanking God for creation. Understand that God is the source of your life;

everything that exists gives important meaning to what you can experience with your senses—sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch. Reflect on beginnings. What good is there at the beginning of something in your life? How can you work with people in your community to begin something new for everyone's benefit, such as a community garden? How can you show your appreciation for God's goodness in nature?

### Follow the Spirit

What God wants me to do:

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### Remember Your Thoughts

Special insights I have learned:

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## Say It Correctly

Firmament. **FUHR**-muh-ment.  
Genesis. **JEH**-nuh-ses.

## Daily Bible Readings

### DAY 1

Genesis 1–3

Psalms 1

### DAY 2

Genesis 4–7

Psalms 2:1–6

### DAY 3

Genesis 8–11

Psalms 2:7–12

### DAY 4

Genesis 12–15

Psalms 3:1–6

### DAY 5

Genesis 16–18

Psalms 3:7–8

### DAY 6

Genesis 19–21

Psalms 4:1–5

### DAY 7

Genesis 22–24

Psalms 4:6–8

## Notes

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# God Gives Laws

## HOW SHOULD WE LIVE AS GOD'S PEOPLE?

Focal Verses • EXODUS 20:1-21

### Aim for Change

By the end of the lesson, we will: **AFFIRM** that the Ten Commandments are God's instructions to believers; **BE ENCOURAGED** to follow God's commands; and **DEVELOP** ways of living that reflect godly obedience.

### In Focus

"Grandma Lottie, how did you and Granddad manage to stay married for 50 years? It seems like I see so many divorces or people just not getting married, and you two have done it for a lifetime. I want that for me and my husband," Monique asked.

"Well, baby, the most important thing was that we would always pray together and put God first. The other key thing was having clear boundaries after some tough years at the beginning. Your grandfather had to learn what I needed, and I had to learn what he needed. I needed him to listen to me and not yell at me. He needed me to be honest and not tell him what to do. Those are just some examples, but I guess it comes down to respecting each other and communicating," Grandma Lottie responded.

"I think that's really good advice. But I don't know if I know what I need well enough to ask for it yet," Monique admitted.

"What you need first is to rest and seek God. Did you know that is one of the Ten Commandments?"

"I hear you, Grandma. You know I'm always working and planning. But I'll give it a rest because you said it!"

*How can learning about God's laws from elders we respect make a difference in how we view God's laws?*



### Keep in Mind

"And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments"  
(Exodus 20:6, KJV).

## Focal Verses

**KJV** **Exodus 20:1** And God spake all these words, saying,

**2** I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

**3** Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

**4** Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.

**5** Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;

**6** And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

**7** Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

**8** Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

**9** Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:

**10** But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:

**11** For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and

rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

**12** Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

**13** Thou shalt not kill.

**14** Thou shalt not commit adultery.

**15** Thou shalt not steal.

**16** Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

**17** Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

**18** And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off.

**19** And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die.

**20** And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not.

**21** And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was.

## The People, Places, and Times

**Mount Sinai.** This mountain was a very important landmark for the Israelites. Mount Sinai is both the site of Moses receiving his call from God (Exodus 3:1) and the Children of Israel receiving God's Law and covenant (Exodus 19–20). After the Israelites were rescued from Egypt, they crossed the Red Sea into the wilderness; there they camped at the

foot of Mount Sinai while Moses climbed the mountain to enter God's presence. God revealed Himself to Moses and gave to him His law and covenant affirming Israel as His holy nation: they would be one nation under one God, who would be their leader (Exodus 19:3–6).

**Moses.** Moses' parents were Amram and Jochebed, who were of the tribe of Levi. In order to save him from death at Pharaoh's

order, Moses' mother made a basket, placed him in it, and set it in the Nile River (Exodus 2:1–10). Years later, God called Moses to lead His people out of slavery in Egypt (Exodus 3–4), and his older brother Aaron was made his spokesperson. After Pharaoh's refusal to listen to Moses, God sent ten plagues upon Egypt. Moses led the Hebrews out of Egypt and across the parted Red Sea, but the Egyptians who chased them drowned (12:37–15:20). God provided the Hebrews' daily needs as they traveled through the wilderness. Moses and the people arrived at Mount Sinai, where God gave the Ten Commandments to them, as well as instructions on building a tabernacle as a center of worship.

### Background

The Ten Commandments are God's first commandments given for the Children of Israel to obey in their covenant relationship with God after they had been delivered from slavery in Egypt. These commandments serve as the foundation for most of the other commandments in the Laws of God. They were inscribed on stone tablets and placed in the Ark of God's Covenant to show how they were the foundation of God's instructions for relating to God and to other people as God's covenant people.

### At-A-Glance

1. Remember God (Exodus 20:1–2)
2. How to Love God (vv. 3–11)
3. How to Love People (vv. 12–21)

### In Depth

#### 1. Remember God (Exodus 20:1–2)

God had delivered the Children of Israel from slavery in Egypt, and now they were in the wilderness of Sinai to meet God at the

mountain where he had met Moses in a burning bush. In chapter 19, we read that the Lord had told Moses to be ready because He would come down upon Mount Sinai in the sight of the people. Moses and the people prepared by consecrating and setting themselves apart and washing their clothes. They only came to the foot of the mountain, because God set boundaries that the people could not cross making the mountain holy for God's presence. Here we see God speaking to the people after Moses went down from the mountain to the people. God ties the promise of deliverance of His people from Egypt with His name. The Lord is now proclaiming His holy name again, now that the deliverance is reality for the Children of Israel. God reminds the Israelites of past blessings, of His deliverance of them from slavery in Egypt. We must continue to remember what God has done in our lives and associate His marvelous works with His name.

*Why does God command us to remember what He has done in the past?*

#### 2. How to Love God (vv. 3–11)

God's first commandment is that the Lord is God, and to have no other gods before Him. Having no other gods before Him is best translated as "You shall not prefer other gods to me." The meaning is that God is the only God the Israelites should worship and obey. Ultimately, the Lord is the Most High God, and He who expects faithfulness to the covenant made with His people. If something takes us away from honoring and obeying the God of heaven who created us, that is considered a false "god" or idol in our lives. Therefore, we must be careful not to elevate anything else above our God.

The second commandment is not to make any images of our God or other gods to worship. God is not a creature and cannot be worshipped through created statues the way other gods

can. We should worship God the Creator and never the things created, including our family, education, work, and material possessions. The third commandment is to not take God's name in vain, which means not to take it lightly or treat it casually. God is holy, and we should only say God said something, did something, supports something, or doesn't support something with the most respect, seriousness, and fear we can. We certainly shouldn't use curses or swears and involve God as people do in popular culture.

The fourth commandment in verse 8 is for God's people to have time set aside to worship God, totally dedicate themselves to Him, and rest. The word "Sabbath" is derived from the Hebrew verb *shabbat*, which means "to rest or cease from work." The command was to set aside each seventh day as belonging to the Lord. The Sabbath, in essence, was another sign of honoring the covenant which God had with His people.

*How can we prioritize God first in our daily lives?*

### **3. How to Love People (vv. 12–21)**

The fifth commandment is a fascinating hinge commandment to honor your father and mother. It is accompanied with a promise for long and abundant life in the land God promised to the Children of Israel. The meaning is that as children care for their elders and obey the commands they pass down from the Lord, God will allow them to prosper in the Promised Land. The sixth commandment is you shall not kill, meaning murder, which directs you not to take another person's life. The seventh commandment, you shall not commit adultery, is particularly directed at married people. They are to honor their exclusive marriage covenant as part of their exclusive covenant with God. You cannot take someone else's spouse. The eighth commandment, you shall not steal, is you cannot take someone else's possessions.

The ninth commandment, not to bear false witness, is a legal commandment not to lie so that another person is punished for something they did not do. You cannot take another person's innocence. The tenth commandment, not to covet, means we should not lust after anything that belongs to someone else. If you avoid wanting what is someone else's, then you won't take it and will keep the other commandments. The overall principle of these last five commandments is that you cannot take what is not yours. God will give you what you need; you should respect God's and your neighbor's boundaries.

The Children of Israel hear these commandments, see God's displays of power, and are afraid. Moses reminds them that we should also remember that fear of God should not drive us away from God but help us stay near to God and not break His commandments.

*How does understanding boundaries help us keep God's commandments?*

### **Search the Scriptures**

1. What type of love does God show to those who love Him (v. 6)?
2. What is the last of the Ten Commandments that supports the others about neighbors (v. 17)?

### **Discuss the Meaning**

1. Was there a need for God to remind the people about Egypt? How might the people, as well as Moses, have responded if God did not bring this to their remembrance (Exodus 20:2)?
2. How do the Ten Commandments apply to our lives today? Do they apply to just believers or all people? Why or why not?

### **Liberating Lesson**

Clearly, God has the power to bring us out of the things that have us bound. We need to realize that God is omnipotent (all-powerful), and He can do anything but fail. So when the challenges of life knock at our door, we need to

remember the God that we serve. When we are faced with obstacles and mountains that seem too high to climb, we also need to remember the God that we serve. We need to consider His track record and know that He still has a lot more that He can do in our lives. However, if we want God's blessings to continue to shower down upon us, we need to make sure that we are obedient to His Word. We should not constantly challenge Him as the Israelites, His chosen people, did.

### Application for Activation

This week, ask God to help you to follow His commands, His statutes, and His Word. Pray that God will aid you in successfully living in a way that reflects the commands that He has given. Remember that how we relate to others is connected to how we relate to God. Which of the commandments is most challenging for us to keep? Ask God for help to honor Him and His commandments.

### Follow the Spirit

What God wants me to do:

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### Remember Your Thoughts

Special insights I have learned:

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## Say It Correctly

Decalogue. **DEK**-uh-log.  
Hallowed. ha-lod, **HA**-lo-wed.  
Sabbath. **SAB**-uhth.

## Daily Bible Readings

### DAY 8

Genesis 25–6

Psalms 5:1–7

### DAY 9

Genesis 27–29

Psalms 5:8–12

### DAY 10

Genesis 30–31

Psalms 6:1–5

### DAY 11

Genesis 32–34

Psalms 6:6–10

### DAY 12

Genesis 35–37

Psalms 7:1–5

### DAY 13

Genesis 38–40

Psalms 7:6–13

### DAY 14

Genesis 41–42

Psalms 7:14–17

## Notes

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# God Values Justice

## DOES GOD CARE ABOUT SOCIAL JUSTICE?

Focal Verses • LEVITICUS 19:9–18, 33–37

### Aim for Change

By the end of the lesson, we will IDENTIFY what it means to love one's neighbor as one's self, REFLECT on ways to act with compassion, and PRAY to live a life of justice and compassion.

### In Focus

"Granddad, I heard that the Golden Rule, treat other people the way you want to be treated, is important in a lot of cultures. But what does that even mean? I mean, what if you don't know how to treat yourself well? And if America is such a Christian nation, why don't our laws treat people equally? I saw in a video online that immigrants are being put in jail for just trying to work like everyone else. And black folks are being shot just for walking down the wrong street. Why don't our laws reflect the golden rule if all these cultures agree on it?"

"Well, that's a lot of questions all at once; I'm glad you're so curious, Jaden. One of the important ways I learned the Golden Rule was from the Bible."

"The Bible has the Golden Rule in it?"

"Yes it does, but that doesn't mean that our country always does what the Bible teaches. People don't always act like Christians, and America certainly doesn't. But God calls us to care for the most vulnerable people in society--both as individuals and as a nation. We know America hasn't always kept all of its promises as Dr. Martin Luther King said. Most nations haven't. But that's why believers need to continue to advocate for more justice that reflects more of God's love for all people. When we care for the least of these, we are answering God's call."

"I've never heard anyone talk about that stuff in the Bible," Jaden said with surprise.

*Have you talked about God's call for justice with anyone recently? Why or why not?*



### Keep in Mind

"But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God" (Leviticus 19:34, KJV).

## Focal Verses

**KJV** **Leviticus 19:9** And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest.

**10** And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger: I am the LORD your God.

**11** Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely, neither lie one to another.

**12** And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the LORD.

**13** Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob him: the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning.

**14** Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumblingblock before the blind, but shalt fear thy God: I am the LORD.

**15** Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty: but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour.

**16** Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people: neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbour; I am the LORD.

**17** Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.

**18** Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.

**33** And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him.

**34** But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.

**35** Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment, in meteyard, in weight, or in measure.

**36** Just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin, shall ye have: I am the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt.

**37** Therefore shall ye observe all my statutes, and all my judgments, and do them: I am the LORD.

## The People, Places, and Times

**A Holy People.** God's people have always had a special relationship with Him, one that is based on God's nature and character. When Israel agreed to be God's people and to obey His covenant—following His miraculous deliverance of them from the Egyptians—they bound themselves to ethical and religious responsibilities. These were delivered to them through legal codes (i.e., the Covenant and the Holiness Code), which included both positive and negative requirements. The vertical relationship of God's people was fairly simple and straightforward—they were to have no

other gods, they were not to use the Lord's name in vain, and they were to honor the Sabbath. The horizontal relationship was more complicated and came in the form of numerous specific commands, all provided as guiding examples and principles for how they governed themselves both at home and in the world.

## Background

The Holiness Code of Leviticus 18:1–24:9 was given to the Israelites as a set of ethical and religious responsibilities, including positive and negative commands. John Rogerson and Philip Davies write, “The basis of the

regulations in 19:11–18 about fair dealing with one’s neighbors [sic] is not so much social solidarity as mutual religious responsibility” (145). A large part of Leviticus deals with priestly matters, while chapters 18 and 20 address sexual relations. Chapter 19, the focus of today’s lesson, deals primarily with Israel’s horizontal relationships with others, particularly addressing justice and fairness as examples of holiness.

### At-A-Glance

1. Social Justice: Treating Others Right (Leviticus 19:9–16)
2. Social Justice: Starts in the Heart (vv. 17–18)
3. Social Justice: Cares for Strangers (vv. 33–34)
4. Social Justice: Being Fair in Business and Law (vv. 35–37)

### In Depth

#### 1. Social Justice: Treating Others Right (Leviticus 19:9–16)

Jesus summarized the horizontal part of a proper relationship with God as “love thy neighbour as thyself” (see Matthew 22:38–39; Luke 10:27). Inherent in every aspect of God’s holy nature and His laws regarding holiness is His heart of love. Every law in the Sinai Tradition reflects God’s love heart. Treating others right, or loving one’s neighbor, is the ultimate expression of social justice. Contained within this overriding principle are the following details:

*Proper handling of the land* (vv. 9–10). Inherent in treating others right is the matter of strangers (e.g., travelers), but also includes the ubiquitous poor and those who perhaps once were better off but have fallen on hard times.

The Israelites demonstrated a godly attitude toward others by generously leaving the corners of one’s fields or vines for those less fortunate. Today, one’s surplus can be shared with others in many ways.

*Honesty with everyone* (vv. 11–13). It might seem apparent initially, but the laws against committing perjury, stealing, and lying (which parallel the third, eighth, and ninth commandments) are sometimes harder to obey when the boundaries are unclear. The choices between right and wrong are evident when the cases are obvious. However, deception, deceit, and fraud often take subtle and more easily justified forms. The godly person avoids all such acts, however minor, that dishonor God and harm others.

*Not taking advantage of others* (vv. 14–16). Much like the previous laws, these specify taking advantage of the disadvantaged. Mistreating vulnerable people, such as those with disabilities or someone in a desperate situation, is injustice defined. The opposite type of person is also included—God’s holy people are not to act dishonorably toward the privileged. An easy example would be filing unjust lawsuits against rich people. In all cases, embodying social justice excludes all forms of gossip, backstabbing, and slander, as these are harmful to others and dishonoring to God.

*How do these laws reflect or challenge our society today?*

#### 2. Social Justice: Starts in the Heart (vv. 17–18)

*Don’t hate, and don’t seek revenge.* Jesus was clear when He commanded to love even one’s enemies in Matthew 5:43–44, which would more than encompass these verses speaking primarily about “neighbors.” Jesus knew that murder started with hate and frequently originated with a grudge that morphed into vengeance. A law against this evil root would

avoid much trouble, grief, and heartache, not to mention it would spare lives. God is fully capable of exercising vengeance. Judgment belongs to God and God alone.

*Love your neighbor as yourself.* The second greatest commandment is reiterated in both Testaments and reinforced by Jesus and others. This is presented as one of several positive laws, but it captures the heart of the Holiness Code—all the law codes. Nothing better defines the child of God or social justice than loving one's neighbor as one's self.

*How does having the right heart intentions to keep God's laws help us to keep them?*

### 3. Social Justice: Cares for Strangers (vv. 33–34)

*Strangers are sojourners (travelers).* Strangers may also be immigrants or foreigners, and God's children are to treat them as they would be—again invoking the second greatest commandment. This clarifies beyond question the New Testament rhetorical question, “Who is my neighbor?” (Luke 10:29). The answer is abundantly clear—everyone! None are excluded from the law, as the various specific examples clarified. Whether they are visitors just passing through, settlers from another culture, or foreign outsiders, all are to be treated like blood relatives and loved as one's self.

*Israel once was a stranger in Egypt.* Considering that the great Exodus from Egypt had not happened very long before the time of these laws, the reminder should have been a very familiar example. Nothing drives a point home better than a personal example, especially a recent one. For Christians, the parallel is with their deliverance from the bondage of sin, which, more often than not, is remembered with great fondness, no matter how many years pass. Occasionally, however, some need to be reminded that they once had been delivered from oppression and bondage, and they

should not even consider mistreating others or inflicting them with any injustice.

### 4. Social Justice: Being Fair in Business and Law (vv. 35–37)

*Just scales, righteous dealings, and fairness toward all.* Some Old Testament laws occasionally translate perfectly into modern society without needing any cultural filter. The law about unjust scales is preceded by a general command of not doing any unrighteousness in “judgment” or weighing any matter. Still, specifically, when scales determine values, deception is difficult to detect. This could find countless modern applications, such as gas stations not setting their pumps accurately, taxi drivers “running up the meter,” expense accounts or invoices being “padded,” and accountants doing “creative” bookkeeping.

*Obedying God's just ordinances is evidence of righteousness.* Even where there is an unbridgeable cultural distance between the laws of the “Sinai Tradition” and today, God's people are still called to a standard of holiness measured against God's. Nothing demonstrates personal righteousness more than being faithful to living in a way that honors God. Nothing more explicitly defines such a life as one committed to loving others through practical expressions of social justice.

### Search the Scriptures

1. Where is the Holiness Code found in Scripture?
2. Were the laws in the Holiness Code exhaustive?

### Discuss the Meaning

1. Think about some of your personal experiences with injustice or unrighteousness. How did these experiences make you feel?
2. Now, contrast these memories and feelings with a memorable time when you witnessed holiness, justice, or righteousness. How did those make you feel?



## Liberating Lesson

Often, the idealistic matters of holiness and justice become elusive when confronted with complex, emotional, and controversial events and circumstances—such as a nation’s concern for border security or access to healthcare and how that should be translated into laws and actions. As much as one wants to obey God’s Word and love one’s neighbor, how are those realities impacted when a neighbor breaks the law? Do we want God’s justice against others but God’s mercy for ourselves? How should the thinking of Christians be balanced to reflect God’s commands while respecting the rights of non-Christians? These are not easy questions or simple issues. God’s people must be careful to weigh (judge) the issues, allow themselves to be driven by principles of biblical justice, and not let our faith be confused by the vested interests of politics.

## Application for Activation

God’s people are to be in the world but not of it. Theirs is a higher calling to the kingdom of God and holy living as defined by Scripture—which translates to a timeless command to treat others as we would be treated, to love others as we would be loved, and a determination to be just and fair in all one’s human relationships. Surely, there are enough challenges in this one paragraph to last a lifetime.

## Follow the Spirit

What God wants me to do:

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## Remember Your Thoughts

Special insights I have learned:

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## Say It Correctly

Decalogue. **DEK**-uh-log.  
Ephah. **EE**-fuh, **EE**-fah.  
Leviticus. Lih-**VI**-tih-kuhs.  
Zechariah. Zek'uh-**RI**-ah.

## Daily Bible Readings

### DAY 15

Genesis 43–45

Psalms 8

### DAY 16

Genesis 46–47

Psalms 9:1–6

### DAY 17

Genesis 48–50

Psalms 9:7–12

### DAY 18

Exodus 1–3

Psalms 9:13–20

### DAY 19

Exodus 4–6

Psalms 10:1–6

### DAY 20

Exodus 7–9

Psalms 10:7–11

### DAY 21

Exodus 10–12

Psalms 10:12–18

## Notes

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# God Plans Good

## HOW CAN WE HAVE FAITH DESPITE OPPOSITION?

Focal Verses • NUMBERS 14:1–10

### Aim for Change

EVALUATE the reasons for the Israelites' refusal to listen to Joshua and Caleb, DESIRE deeper trust in the promises of God, and CONFRONT the future in confidence of God's guidance and provision.

### In Focus

Michelle was the only one professing faith in Christ within her family. She had grown up learning to be kind, but when a friend at school invited her to youth group, she heard the true Gospel for the first time. Michelle realized just being kind was not enough; she repented of her sins and accepted salvation that night.

When she was old enough to live on her own, Michelle wanted her faith to be seen in all of her life. But her family didn't understand. Often, she came up against persecution from family members because she would not join in their parties and trips to casinos to gamble. Many of the family members encouraged her to join them and have some fun. Occasionally, two of her cousins would tease her about her faith keeping her from having a good time with the family. A few even wanted to start an argument by saying things which they thought would cause Michelle to respond in negative ways. She did not argue with them. She simply quietly lived out her faith.

However, Michelle looked forward to the gatherings at church with other Christians. She found encouragement and strength from her church family to continue to work out her salvation as she walked daily with God

*Our behavior is often a powerful witness to others. How is Michelle sharing her witness?*



### Keep in Mind

"If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it to us; a land which floweth with milk and honey" (Numbers 14:8, KJV).

## Focal Verses

**KJV Numbers 14:1** And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night.

**2** And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness!

**3** And wherefore hath the LORD brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt?

**4** And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt.

**5** Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel.

**6** And Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of them that searched the land, rent their clothes:

**7** And they spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying, The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land.

**8** If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it to us; a land which floweth with milk and honey.

**9** Only rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the LORD is with us: fear them not.

**10** But all the congregation bade stone them with stones. And the glory of the LORD appeared in the tabernacle of the congregation before all the children of Israel.

## The People, Places, and Times

**Promised Land.** The land of Canaan is a hill country east of the Mediterranean Sea and west of the Jordan River. God promised Abraham that this land would be given to his descendants (Genesis 13:14–17). The Israelites occupied the Promised Land under the leadership of Joshua, fighting such people as the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. The land was described as “flowing with milk and honey,” indicating that it would provide the Israelites with an abundant lifestyle.

**Caleb.** This spy was from the tribe of Judah, which was associated with royalty, as it produced King David and Jesus. Only he and Joshua stood as a voice of courage when the twelve spies returned from the Promised Land (v. 24), saying they could take the land. God promised to allow him to enter the Promised

Land for his faithfulness. Therefore, when it came time to take the land a generation later, Caleb led his clan to conquer the portion of land allotted to him. He defeated some of the most formidable opponents of Canaan, the giant sons of Anak (Joshua 15:13–15).

## Background

Numbers 13 and 14 record the Israelites’ journey in the wilderness after leaving Egypt. While in the wilderness, God commands Moses to send one man, the leader of their ancestral tribe, to spy on the Canaan land (Numbers 13). Shammua goes from the tribe of Reuben, Shaphat from Simeon, Caleb from Judah, Igai from Issachar, Joshua (Moses changed his name from Hoshea) from Ephraim, Palti from Benjamin, Gaddiel from Zebulun, Gaddi from Manasseh, Ammiel from Dan, Sethur from Asher, Nahbi

from Naphtali, and Geuel from Gad. The men were to determine the land's quality and the people's strength.

After the men return from spying on the land, they declare that Canaan is full of good things, but the people seem too strong to overcome. As they listed their objections to entering the land, only Caleb (13:30) and Joshua (14:6-9) disagreed with their report. Caleb and Joshua believed they could prevail over the enemies in the land of Canaan. However, the negative report persuaded the Israelites, and they lamented that they had not remained in Egypt. The Israelites decided to choose another leader who could help them return to Egypt and stone their current leaders. But the glory of the Lord appeared and interrupted their plans.

*The Israelites are tired of wandering and can now enter the land God had given them. Why are they reluctant to claim what God has promised them?*

## At-A-Glance

1. The People Speak Out in Rebellion (Numbers 14:1-4)
2. Joshua and Caleb Speak (vv. 5-10)

## In Depth

### 1. The People Speak Out in Rebellion (Numbers 14:1-4)

After the 12 spies gave their reports about Canaan, the Israelites did not want to enter the promised land. The Israelites responded with mutiny and rebellion against God. Ten spies said they should not enter, while two spies encouraged them to receive God's blessings for their nation. The people listened to the ten spies, who justified their desire to return to Egypt. Their response was a rebellion against God's instructions. The people complained and

murmured against God and Moses. They "wept all night" (Numbers 14:1).

As they imagined their desperate condition, the people fretted, which gave credit to the negative report of the ten spies instead of God's promises. Because they feared they would be dying soon, they wished they were already dead. The previous months of good living, due to God's protection, were dismissed as the Israelites wished they had died in Egypt.

The Israelites looked forward with despair, without realizing that God did not save them from Pharaoh to die at the hands of the Canaanites. The Israelites responded to God's good plans with an audacity that God led them into a snare of death and destruction.

*Why do people complain through criticizing and grumbling?*

### 2. Joshua & Caleb Speak (vv. 5-10)

Through the loud cries of the Israelites, Moses and Aaron humbly prayed to God. As the people's complaints continued to incite clamor and rebellion, Moses prayed that the people would not ruin themselves.

In response to the sins of the people and in dread of the wrath of God, which was ready to befall them, Joshua and Caleb tore their clothes (v. 6). They assured the angry Israelites of the blessings in the land they surveyed. As the majority had reported, the land would not engulf them because Israel had God on their side. But, the Israelites did not confront their fear of entering the land that awaited them. If the Israelites had confronted their fears, they would have realized that their disbelief was a sin, and they had provoked God to leave them (v.12). The Israelites needed faith to enter the Promised Land. Joshua and Caleb saw the abundance of the land. It was a "good land" (v. 8) and worth entering. However, due to the Israelite's lack of trust in God, they couldn't receive the fullness of God's promises.

Joshua and Caleb were distressed by the Israelite's lack of faith and desire to return to Egypt. The Israelites were not in danger from the Canaanites, but they were in danger from their God because they rebelled against Him. Joshua and Caleb encouraged the Israelites to trust that God would bring them into the Promised Land. The Israelites responded in anger and distrust of God's leaders, who desired to give them good counsel. The complaints led to an enraged multitude who desired to stone God's servants. The Israelites were not reasonable, and their anger was out of control.

*Consider your relationship with God. Do you complain when something terrible happens or blame someone else? Do you pray to God in response to challenges?*

### Search the Scriptures

1. Why did the Israelites cry (Numbers 14:1)?
2. What did the Israelites believe would happen to them in the unfamiliar land (v. 3)?
3. In their despair and rebellion, what do the Israelites conspire to do (v. 4)?
4. Why did Joshua and Caleb believe they should enter the land (v. 8)?

### Discuss the Meaning

1. The Israelites' experience of what happened in the past made them want to derail their future, although God already promised them victory. Most of the assembly wanted to return to Egypt, but two factors stopped them—God's presence and His chosen leadership. Describe God's presence in this Scripture. What difference does Moses' leadership make in this story?
2. The Israelites were so fearful that they longed to return to Egypt, where they labored as slaves (Numbers 14:1–2). Why were they afraid of the future even though God promised them victory?

### Liberating Lesson

God has called the church to enter our lands and be the hands and feet of Jesus in the world. Despite that call, many churches remain silent on issues like violence against women and children, the plight of refugee and migrant families, and environmental concerns. While we often justify our silence by arguing that churches are spiritual, not political spaces, Jesus taught us that the first and greatest commandment is to love the Lord with all our hearts, souls, and minds. The second commandment is to love our neighbors as ourselves. God has promised never to forsake us. The Great Commission (Matthew 28:20) records that Jesus is with us until the end of the age. God has already promised us the victory! So, why are we so afraid to speak up and help those who are suffering?

### Application for Activation

Use a poster board to display God's blessings and promises for His children or postcards to inspire you to trust God's Word. Include God's response when we complain and murmur. Refer to Philippians 2:12–18, which instructs believers to avoid murmuring and complaining. Place the board and postcards in a place you see every day to begin your day focused on God's blessings and promises.

### Follow the Spirit

What God wants me to do:

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### Remember Your Thoughts

Special insights I have learned:

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### Say It Correctly

Tabernacle. taa-BUHR-naa-kuhl.

### Daily Bible Readings

#### DAY 22

Exodus 13–15

Psalms 11

#### DAY 23

Exodus 16–18

Psalms 12:1–3

#### DAY 24

Exodus 19–21

Psalms 12:4–8

#### DAY 25

Exodus 22–24

Psalms 13

#### DAY 26

Exodus 25–26

Psalms 14

#### DAY 27

Exodus 27–29

Psalms 15

#### DAY 28

Exodus 30–31

Psalms 16

## Notes

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