



A FREE SELAH37 STUDY COMPANION

# One story. 66 invitations.

The complete 66-book guide

Understand the story. Reflect honestly. Take one faithful step.

Every introduction offers a big-picture summary, practical actions, and a question to carry into daily life. Read slowly. Return often. Let study become practice.

## A simple way to study

OBSERVE · What does the passage actually say?

INTERPRET · What did it mean in context?

APPLY · What faithful step can I take today?

The main library follows the 66-book Protestant arrangement. A separate Ethiopian Tewahedo bonus guide introduces additional writings and explains the differences in canon lists.

Original editorial study introductions. Not a Bible translation or a claim of denominational review. Free to share unchanged with SELAH37 attribution.



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## OLD TESTAMENT • LAW

# Genesis

Beginnings, covenant, and the faithfulness of God

AUTHORSHIP · Traditionally Moses; the book itself is anonymous

DATE & CONTEXT · Traditional setting: second millennium BC; composition debated

## The big picture

Genesis opens with God creating a good world. Humanity bears God's image and receives a vocation to care for creation. The garden story then introduces a rupture: people distrust God's word, take what is forbidden, and discover shame and estrangement. Yet judgment does not exhaust the story. God continues to clothe, address, and pursue a fractured humanity.

As violence spreads, the stories of Cain, Noah, and Babel show the consequences of sin reaching beyond a single household. The flood brings judgment and a covenant with living creatures. Babel exposes the ambition to secure a name apart from God. These opening chapters ask enduring questions about identity, responsibility, and the misuse of power.

God calls Abraham with a promise of land, descendants, and blessing that will reach all families of the earth. Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob, and their households live inside that promise with real faith and serious failures. God's faithfulness does not make their choices harmless; it keeps the story moving through them.

Joseph's brothers sell him into slavery, but his path through suffering eventually places him in a position to preserve life during famine. Reconciliation comes through truth, testing, and costly mercy. Genesis closes in Egypt with the promise still unfinished. The God of beginnings is also the God whose faithfulness extends beyond what one generation can see.

## Follow the story

Ch. 1-11 — Creation, rupture, and the nations

Ch. 12-25 — Abraham and the promise

Ch. 26-36 — Isaac, Jacob, and a growing family

Ch. 37-50 — Joseph, reconciliation, and preservation

## Words to carry

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

Genesis 1:1 · KJV



“And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:”

Genesis 12:2 · KJV

“But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good”

Genesis 50:20 · KJV · excerpt

## Live it

01 Notice one part of creation and thank God for it, without rushing past it.

02 Name a situation you cannot control and take the next honest, faithful step.

03 Choose one act of reconciliation without pretending that harm does not matter.

## Pause & reflect

Where am I being invited to trust God’s promise before I can see the outcome?

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## OLD TESTAMENT • LAW

# Exodus

Deliverance, covenant, and God's presence

AUTHORSHIP · Traditionally Moses; the book itself is anonymous

DATE & CONTEXT · Traditional setting: second millennium BC; composition debated

## The big picture

God hears Israel's suffering in Egypt and calls Moses to confront Pharaoh. Through the Passover and the sea, God delivers his people from slavery. At Sinai, freedom becomes a calling to live as a covenant community. Israel's golden calf exposes how quickly trust can turn into idolatry, yet God renews the covenant. The completed tabernacle closes the book with the presence of God among his people.

## Words to carry

"The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace."

Exodus 14:14 · KJV

## Live it

01 Listen carefully to someone whose hardship is easily overlooked.

02 Identify a false source of security and replace one habit that feeds it.

03 Make room in your day to remember God's presence, not only his gifts.

## Pause & reflect

How might freedom in God change the way I treat another person?

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## OLD TESTAMENT • LAW

# Leviticus

Holiness in worship and ordinary life

AUTHORSHIP • Traditionally Moses

DATE & CONTEXT • Laws set at Sinai; composition and editing debated

## The big picture

Leviticus asks how a holy God can dwell among an imperfect people. Sacrifices, priestly service, purity laws, and the Day of Atonement teach Israel to take both sin and restoration seriously. Holiness reaches beyond the sanctuary into work, justice, care for the vulnerable, and love of neighbor. Read these laws within Israel's covenant setting before moving to their significance for Christian life.

## Words to carry

“Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.”

Leviticus 19:18 • KJV • excerpt

## Live it

01 Read a difficult law in its surrounding chapter before applying it.

02 Practice fairness in one ordinary transaction today.

03 Love a neighbor through a specific, practical act of care.

## Pause & reflect

Where have I separated worship from the way I treat people?

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OLD TESTAMENT • LAW

# Numbers

Faithfulness through the wilderness

AUTHORSHIP • Traditionally Moses

DATE & CONTEXT • Wilderness setting; composition debated

## The big picture

Numbers follows Israel from Sinai toward the promised land. Census lists and camp arrangements sit beside accounts of complaint, fear, rebellion, and unexpected grace. The refusal to enter the land leads to years of wandering. A new generation stands at its border by the end. Israel's failures expose the cost of distrust, while God's continuing presence keeps the journey from ending in abandonment.

## Words to carry

"The LORD bless thee, and keep thee:"

Numbers 6:24 • KJV

## Live it

01 Notice when disappointment becomes a habit of complaint.

02 Encourage someone taking a difficult step of obedience.

03 Remember one past provision before deciding what fear says about tomorrow.

## Pause & reflect

What wilderness habit is keeping me from trusting God today?

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## OLD TESTAMENT • LAW

# Deuteronomy

Remembering God through wholehearted love

AUTHORSHIP · Traditionally Moses; final chapter records his death

DATE & CONTEXT · Set before Israel enters Canaan; final form debated

## The big picture

On the edge of the promised land, Moses calls Israel to remember the God who rescued them. He retells the journey, explains the covenant, and urges wholehearted love expressed through obedience. Prosperity carries its own temptation: forgetting the giver of every good thing. Blessings, warnings, and a call to choose life prepare a new generation to live faithfully after Moses' death.

## Words to carry

“And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.”

Deuteronomy 6:5 · KJV

## Live it

- 01 Tell someone a specific story of God's faithfulness.
- 02 Connect one daily routine with a short moment of Scripture reflection.
- 03 Use a gift or advantage to serve someone with fewer resources.

## Pause & reflect

What do I most need to remember when life becomes comfortable?

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Continue online: <https://selah37.com/books/deuteronomy>



OLD TESTAMENT • HISTORY

# Joshua

Promise, courage, and covenant responsibility

AUTHORSHIP · Anonymous; traditionally associated with Joshua

DATE & CONTEXT · Events set in Israel's settlement of Canaan; compilation debated

## The big picture

Joshua leads Israel across the Jordan and into Canaan. The narrative describes conquest, the division of land, and the continuing need for covenant faithfulness. Difficult accounts of warfare belong to the book's ancient setting and deserve careful reading rather than simple imitation. Joshua's final address turns the focus from military victories to a lasting choice: whom will the people serve?

## Words to carry

"But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

Joshua 24:15 · KJV · excerpt

## Live it

01 Identify a faithful responsibility that calls for courage rather than comfort.

02 Read a difficult passage alongside its historical and literary context.

03 Choose one household practice that reflects your commitment to God.

## Pause & reflect

What does serving God look like in my actual decisions this week?

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## OLD TESTAMENT • HISTORY

# Judges

The destructive cycle of forgetting God

AUTHORSHIP · Anonymous; traditionally associated with Samuel

DATE & CONTEXT · Events before Israel's monarchy; date of compilation debated

## The big picture

After Joshua, Israel repeatedly turns away from God, suffers oppression, cries out, and receives deliverance through judges. The deliverers themselves are increasingly flawed. Stories of violence and social collapse reveal the damage of self-directed life without covenant faithfulness. The book describes behavior that it does not commend; its downward spiral creates a longing for just and faithful leadership.

## Words to carry

“In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.”

Judges 21:25 · KJV

## Live it

01 Notice a recurring pattern you have been excusing.

02 Ask a trusted person to help you interrupt that pattern.

03 Measure leadership by character and care for others, not charisma alone.

## Pause & reflect

Where am I confusing what I want with what is right?

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## OLD TESTAMENT • HISTORY

# Ruth

Loyal love and unexpected belonging

AUTHORSHIP • Anonymous

DATE & CONTEXT • Set in the time of the judges; writing date uncertain

## The big picture

Widowed Ruth chooses to stay with Naomi and enters an uncertain life in Bethlehem. Her labor in the fields leads her to Boaz, who treats her with protection and generosity. Through his role as family redeemer, an apparently small story of loss becomes part of the ancestry of David. The book shows faithful love through ordinary decisions and welcomes attention to people at society's margins.

## Words to carry

“Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God:”

Ruth 1:16 • KJV • excerpt

## Live it

- 01 Offer steady companionship to someone facing loss.
- 02 Practice generosity without making a vulnerable person feel small.
- 03 Choose faithfulness in an ordinary task that no one may notice.

## Pause & reflect

Who needs my patient presence more than my quick advice?

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## OLD TESTAMENT • HISTORY

# 1 Samuel

## The heart of faithful leadership

AUTHORSHIP · Anonymous; traditions associated with Samuel, Nathan, and Gad

DATE & CONTEXT · Monarchy's beginnings, roughly eleventh century BC; compilation uncertain

## The big picture

From Hannah's prayer and Samuel's calling, the story moves to Israel's demand for a king. Saul's reign begins with promise but deteriorates through disobedience and fear. David is anointed while still young, defeats Goliath, and then lives under Saul's hostility. Alongside public power, the book examines hidden motives and the difference between impressive appearances and a heart responsive to God.

## Words to carry

"For man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart."

1 Samuel 16:7 · KJV · excerpt

## Live it

01 Bring an honest concern to God in prayer.

02 Listen before defending your reputation.

03 Practice one quiet act of integrity when there is no reward.

## Pause & reflect

What would change if I valued faithfulness more than looking impressive?

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## OLD TESTAMENT • HISTORY

# 2 Samuel

Covenant hope amid the failures of power

AUTHORSHIP · Anonymous; traditions associated with prophetic records

DATE & CONTEXT · David's reign, roughly tenth century BC; compilation uncertain

## The big picture

David becomes king over Israel and makes Jerusalem his capital. God's promise to establish his house gives the story a future horizon. Yet David's abuse of power against Bathsheba and Uriah brings devastating consequences. Nathan's confrontation, David's repentance, and turmoil within the royal family refuse to make the king an uncomplicated hero. God's covenant faithfulness does not erase human responsibility.

## Words to carry

"And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever."

2 Samuel 7:16 · KJV

## Live it

- 01 Accept correction without shifting blame.
- 02 Use influence to protect others, especially where power is unequal.
- 03 Take a concrete step toward repairing harm you have caused.

## Pause & reflect

Where do I need honest repentance rather than a better excuse?

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OLD TESTAMENT • HISTORY

# 1 Kings

Wisdom, worship, and divided loyalties

AUTHORSHIP · Anonymous; compiled from royal and prophetic records

DATE & CONTEXT · Events from Solomon to the divided kingdom; final form often linked to exile

## The big picture

Solomon's wisdom and the temple's construction open a season of splendor, but divided loyalties undermine his reign. After his death, Israel divides into northern and southern kingdoms. Royal decisions draw communities toward or away from God. Elijah's ministry confronts idolatry and exposes the limits of political power. The book asks whether outward achievement can endure without inward faithfulness.

## Words to carry

"Let your heart therefore be perfect with the LORD our God, to walk in his statutes, and to keep his commandments, as at this day."

1 Kings 8:61 · KJV

## Live it

01 Ask for wisdom before pursuing an impressive outcome.

02 Examine a loyalty that competes with your commitment to God.

03 Support truthful voices even when they make you uncomfortable.

## Pause & reflect

What success might be hiding a divided heart?

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OLD TESTAMENT • HISTORY

# 2 Kings

The consequences of unfaithfulness and a remnant of hope

AUTHORSHIP · Anonymous; compiled from royal and prophetic records

DATE & CONTEXT · Final form commonly placed during or after the sixth-century BC exile

## The big picture

Elisha's ministry continues the prophetic witness while Israel and Judah move toward catastrophe. Persistent idolatry and injustice lead to the fall of Samaria and later Jerusalem. Reforms under faithful kings offer real but temporary change. Exile strips away false security in land, monarchy, and temple. A final glimpse of kindness to the captive king leaves a narrow opening for hope beyond judgment.

## Words to carry

“Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes.”

2 Kings 17:13 · KJV · excerpt

## Live it

01 Respond to a warning before a damaging habit becomes entrenched.

02 Make faithfulness a daily practice rather than an occasional reform.

03 Offer hope to someone living with the consequences of failure.

## Pause & reflect

What warning have I heard clearly but not yet acted on?

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## OLD TESTAMENT • HISTORY

# 1 Chronicles

Remembered identity and worship-centered leadership

AUTHORSHIP · Anonymous; traditionally associated with Ezra

DATE & CONTEXT · Commonly dated to the post-exilic period, fifth–fourth centuries BC

## The big picture

Genealogies connect a returned community with its long story. The narrative then focuses on David, the ark, worship, and preparations for the temple. By retelling the past with particular attention to God’s promises and the ordered life of worship, Chronicles invites readers to see themselves as part of a continuing people rather than an isolated generation.

## Words to carry

“Seek the LORD and his strength, seek his face continually.”

1 Chronicles 16:11 · KJV

## Live it

01 Remember the faithful people who helped shape your life.

02 Make worship a shared practice rather than a private performance.

03 Prepare carefully for a good work someone else will complete.

## Pause & reflect

How can I contribute to a story larger than my own?

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## OLD TESTAMENT • HISTORY

# 2 Chronicles

Seeking God, renewal, and restoration

AUTHORSHIP · Anonymous; traditionally associated with Ezra

DATE & CONTEXT · Commonly dated to the post-exilic period, fifth–fourth centuries BC

## The big picture

Beginning with Solomon and the temple, the book traces Judah’s kings with attention to worship, reform, and covenant loyalty. Some leaders seek God; others harden themselves against correction. Jerusalem eventually falls, but the final decree of Cyrus opens the way home. These accounts invite humility and renewal, while their promises must be read first within Israel’s particular covenant and history.

## Words to carry

“Neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee.”

2 Chronicles 20:12 · KJV · excerpt

## Live it

01 Acknowledge an area where you do not know what to do.

02 Seek help through prayer and wise counsel.

03 Renew one neglected practice that turns your attention toward God.

## Pause & reflect

What would humble dependence look like in today’s uncertainty?

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## OLD TESTAMENT • HISTORY

# Ezra

Return, rebuilding, and renewed obedience

AUTHORSHIP · Traditionally associated with Ezra; includes earlier records

DATE & CONTEXT · Persian period, sixth–fifth centuries BC

## The big picture

Exiles return to Jerusalem, rebuild the altar and temple, and face resistance and discouragement. Ezra later arrives as a teacher devoted to God’s law. The community must consider what covenant faithfulness means after displacement. The book’s difficult decisions about identity and marriage need historical care; its central invitation is to let restoration include both public worship and a teachable life.

## Words to carry

“For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments.”

Ezra 7:10 · KJV

## Live it

01 Begin rebuilding one neglected spiritual habit with a small, steady step.

02 Let what you learn shape your conduct before you teach it.

03 Encourage a community doing patient work without immediate results.

## Pause & reflect

What needs rebuilding in the way I listen to God’s Word?

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## OLD TESTAMENT • HISTORY

# Nehemiah

Prayerful leadership and shared renewal

AUTHORSHIP · Traditionally associated with Nehemiah; includes memoir material

DATE & CONTEXT · Persian period, fifth century BC

## The big picture

Nehemiah hears of Jerusalem's broken walls, prays, and acts. The rebuilding effort involves ordinary families, determined leadership, and resistance from opponents. Yet repaired walls are not enough: Scripture is read, injustice is addressed, and the people renew their commitment to God. The closing failures remind readers that structural change must be joined to continuing inward renewal.

## Words to carry

“For the joy of the LORD is your strength.”

Nehemiah 8:10 · KJV · excerpt

## Live it

01 Pray specifically about a need before planning your response.

02 Share a practical burden instead of leaving it to one leader.

03 Address unfairness inside your own community.

## Pause & reflect

Am I repairing appearances while neglecting what is happening within?

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## OLD TESTAMENT • HISTORY

# Esther

Courage and providence in a threatened community

AUTHORSHIP • Anonymous

DATE & CONTEXT • Persian setting; writing date uncertain

## The big picture

Esther, a Jewish woman in the Persian court, faces a crisis when Haman plans the destruction of her people. Mordecai calls her to use her position despite the personal risk. Through reversals, courage, and carefully chosen action, the threat is overturned. Though God is not explicitly named, the story invites reflection on providence, responsibility, and the cost of remaining silent.

## Words to carry

“And who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”

Esther 4:14 • KJV • excerpt

## Live it

01 Notice whose wellbeing is affected by your position or influence.

02 Seek wise support before a courageous conversation.

03 Use a real opportunity to speak for someone at risk.

## Pause & reflect

Where might my present circumstances carry a responsibility to act?

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## OLD TESTAMENT • WISDOM

# Job

Suffering, limited understanding, and honest faith

AUTHORSHIP • Anonymous

DATE & CONTEXT • Date of composition uncertain and debated

## The big picture

Job loses family, security, and health. His friends insist that suffering must reveal hidden wrongdoing, but the book challenges their confident explanations. Job protests and longs for an encounter with God. God's response widens Job's view of creation without supplying a simple account of every loss. The story invites humility before suffering and warns against using theology to silence another person's pain.

## Words to carry

"For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:"

Job 19:25 • KJV

## Live it

01 Listen to a suffering person without explaining away their pain.

02 Bring an honest lament to God.

03 Admit the limits of your understanding rather than forcing certainty.

## Pause & reflect

Can I remain present with someone when I cannot answer why?

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## OLD TESTAMENT • WISDOM

# Psalms

Prayer for every season of life

AUTHORSHIP · Many writers, including David, Asaph, and the sons of Korah

DATE & CONTEXT · Collected over centuries; final arrangement uncertain

## The big picture

The Psalms give God's people words for praise, grief, confession, thanksgiving, and hope. Their poetry holds together honest emotion and enduring trust. Individual prayers sit within a larger movement toward worship, while royal and messianic hopes point beyond immediate circumstances. Read each psalm as poetry in context, noticing its images, repeated words, and movement rather than treating every line as a detached promise.

## Words to carry

“Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.”

Psalm 37:5 · KJV

## Live it

01 Pray a psalm slowly, using its words to name what you feel.

02 Write one sentence of gratitude and one honest request.

03 Pause before reacting and entrust your next step to God.

## Pause & reflect

Which psalm gives words to the season I am in?

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## OLD TESTAMENT • WISDOM

# Proverbs

Wisdom practiced in ordinary decisions

AUTHORSHIP · Collections associated with Solomon and other sages

DATE & CONTEXT · Material from several periods; final compilation uncertain

## The big picture

Proverbs trains readers to recognize the shape of a wise life. Speech, money, friendship, work, humility, and self-control become places of discipleship. Wisdom begins with reverence for God and grows through correction. Many proverbs describe general patterns rather than unconditional guarantees; reading them together helps readers avoid simplistic conclusions about success, suffering, or wealth.

## Words to carry

“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.”

Proverbs 3:5 · KJV

## Live it

01 Pause before speaking and ask whether your words are true and helpful.

02 Welcome one piece of correction without becoming defensive.

03 Choose a wise habit with money or time and repeat it this week.

## Pause & reflect

What small decision today would make wisdom visible?

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## OLD TESTAMENT • WISDOM

# Ecclesiastes

Receiving life within human limits

AUTHORSHIP • The Teacher, traditionally associated with Solomon

DATE & CONTEXT • Date and authorship debated

## The big picture

The Teacher examines work, pleasure, achievement, wealth, and mortality. Much that people chase cannot be secured or made permanent. Rather than offering easy optimism, Ecclesiastes confronts the limits of control and the certainty of death. It also notices ordinary gifts: food, companionship, and meaningful work. Its closing call to fear God frames a life of humility rather than frantic mastery.

## Words to carry

“To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:”

Ecclesiastes 3:1 • KJV

## Live it

- 01 Release one expectation that you cannot control.
- 02 Receive an ordinary meal or conversation with gratitude.
- 03 Consider whether your present effort serves what truly matters.

## Pause & reflect

What gift am I missing because I am trying to secure everything?

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## OLD TESTAMENT • WISDOM

# Song of Solomon

Love, desire, and faithful delight

AUTHORSHIP · Traditionally associated with Solomon

DATE & CONTEXT · Date of composition uncertain

## The big picture

This collection of love poetry celebrates desire, beauty, mutual delight, and the strength of love. Rich images from gardens, animals, and the landscape should be read as poetry rather than literal description. Jewish and Christian readers have also reflected on its spiritual significance. At its most immediate level, the book honors love that attends to the beloved rather than treating a person as a possession.

## Words to carry

“Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it.”

Song of Solomon 8:7 · KJV · excerpt

## Live it

01 Speak appreciation that honors a person’s whole character.

02 Respect another person’s boundaries and dignity.

03 Give unhurried attention to a relationship entrusted to your care.

## Pause & reflect

How can love become more attentive and less self-centered?

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## OLD TESTAMENT • MAJOR PROPHETS

# Isaiah

The Holy One who judges and saves

AUTHORSHIP · Associated with Isaiah of Jerusalem; composition debated

DATE & CONTEXT · Prophetic settings span the eighth century BC and exile/restoration

## The big picture

Isaiah confronts injustice, empty worship, and misplaced trust among God's people and the nations. Visions of holiness and judgment stand beside promises of comfort, a faithful servant, and renewed creation. Hope rests in God's character rather than military alliances or human strength. Its different historical horizons call for attentive reading, while its vision of salvation profoundly shapes the New Testament's witness to Jesus.

## Words to carry

“But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength.”

Isaiah 40:31 · KJV · excerpt

## Live it

01 Examine whether your worship is joined to justice and compassion.

02 Bring weariness to God without pretending to be strong.

03 Practice hope through one act that serves another person's restoration.

## Pause & reflect

What source of security is competing with trust in God?

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OLD TESTAMENT • MAJOR PROPHETS

# Jeremiah

A broken covenant and a promised new beginning

AUTHORSHIP · Jeremiah; Baruch appears as his scribe

DATE & CONTEXT · Late seventh–early sixth centuries BC; later editing debated

## The big picture

Jeremiah warns Judah as Babylon approaches. His difficult calling exposes false reassurance, injustice, and a covenant treated as an empty label. He grieves, argues, and remains faithful through rejection. Amid judgment comes the promise of a new covenant and a restored people. Hope is not denial of devastation; it is confidence that God can bring renewal through it.

## Words to carry

“I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts.”

Jeremiah 31:33 · KJV · excerpt

## Live it

01 Choose truth over a comforting answer that avoids responsibility.

02 Pray honestly about the cost of faithfulness.

03 Ask God to shape your motives, not only your outward behavior.

## Pause & reflect

Where do I need a changed heart rather than a temporary fix?

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## OLD TESTAMENT • MAJOR PROPHETS

# Lamentations

Grief spoken before a faithful God

AUTHORSHIP · Anonymous; traditionally associated with Jeremiah

DATE & CONTEXT · After Jerusalem's destruction in 586 BC

## The big picture

Five poems grieve the destruction of Jerusalem and the suffering of its people. They name devastation without quickly moving past it. Confession and protest stand together, and a well-known expression of hope emerges from within deep pain rather than replacing it. The ending remains unsettled. Lamentations gives space for communal grief and reminds readers that faithful prayer can include unanswered questions.

## Words to carry

“They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.”

Lamentations 3:23 · KJV

## Live it

01 Name a loss honestly before God.

02 Make room for another person's grief without demanding quick recovery.

03 Look for one small mercy without using it to deny pain.

## Pause & reflect

What grief have I been afraid to bring into prayer?

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## OLD TESTAMENT • MAJOR PROPHETS

# Ezekiel

God's glory, a new heart, and renewed life

AUTHORSHIP · Ezekiel

DATE & CONTEXT · Sixth century BC, during the Babylonian exile

## The big picture

Ezekiel speaks among exiles through striking visions, enacted signs, and prophetic words. God's glory cannot be confined to Jerusalem, and the people's failures have real consequences. Promises of a new heart, living breath for dry bones, and a restored sanctuary turn the narrative toward renewal. Read the imagery carefully as prophetic vision, attending to its purpose before building detailed predictions from it.

## Words to carry

"A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you."

Ezekiel 36:26 · KJV · excerpt

## Live it

01 Ask where your habits have made your heart unresponsive.

02 Take responsibility for your own conduct instead of only blaming the past.

03 Encourage someone who feels that renewal is impossible.

## Pause & reflect

What part of my life needs God's renewing work from within?

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OLD TESTAMENT • MAJOR PROPHETS

# Daniel

Faithful witness under changing empires

AUTHORSHIP · Traditionally Daniel; composition disputed

DATE & CONTEXT · Sixth-century BC setting; many scholars date final form to second century BC

## The big picture

Stories of Daniel and his companions show faithful life under foreign rule: wise service, refusal of idolatry, and courage under threat. Later visions portray empires as temporary before God’s enduring kingdom. Apocalyptic imagery offers hope to pressured communities, not a license for confident date-setting. The book joins everyday integrity to a larger confidence that human power is not ultimate.

## Words to carry

“Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his:”

Daniel 2:20 · KJV · excerpt

## Live it

- 01 Practice integrity in an environment that rewards compromise.
- 02 Pray consistently, especially when circumstances feel unstable.
- 03 Hold political or institutional power in perspective before God.

## Pause & reflect

What does quiet faithfulness look like where I have little control?

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OLD TESTAMENT • MINOR PROPHETS

# Hosea

Persistent love confronting unfaithfulness

AUTHORSHIP · Hosea

DATE & CONTEXT · Eighth century BC

## The big picture

Hosea portrays Israel's covenant unfaithfulness through painful family imagery and prophetic appeals. Idolatry, injustice, and shallow repentance reveal a people who have forgotten the God who loves them. Judgment is real, yet compassion persists and a return is offered. The book calls readers toward sincere knowledge of God; its metaphors must never be used to excuse abuse in human relationships.

## Words to carry

“For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.”

Hosea 6:6 · KJV

## Live it

01 Replace one outward religious performance with sincere obedience.

02 Practice mercy toward someone who needs practical care.

03 Name honestly a loyalty that is drawing you away from God.

## Pause & reflect

What would returning to God mean beyond saying the right words?

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## OLD TESTAMENT • MINOR PROPHETS

# Joel

Returning to God and hope through his Spirit

AUTHORSHIP · Joel

DATE & CONTEXT · Date uncertain and debated

## The big picture

A devastating locust plague becomes a summons to communal lament and repentance. Joel's vision of the day of the Lord joins warning with a promise of restoration. God's Spirit will be poured out widely, a passage later cited at Pentecost. The book calls for an inward return to God rather than a display of grief that leaves the heart unchanged.

## Words to carry

"And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God."

Joel 2:13 · KJV · excerpt

## Live it

01 Let a disruption prompt honest prayer rather than only frustration.

02 Examine one inward attitude behind your outward actions.

03 Pray for renewal across generations and social boundaries.

## Pause & reflect

What would wholehearted repentance look like in my present circumstances?

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## OLD TESTAMENT • MINOR PROPHETS

# Amos

Justice as an essential expression of worship

AUTHORSHIP • Amos

DATE & CONTEXT • Eighth century BC

## The big picture

Amos addresses a prosperous society that worships enthusiastically while exploiting the poor. Judgment falls on neighboring nations and on Israel itself; election is a responsibility, not immunity from accountability. The prophet exposes luxury built on another person's suffering. A final promise of restoration keeps judgment from being the last word, but hope never makes injustice unimportant.

## Words to carry

“But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.”

Amos 5:24 • KJV

## Live it

- 01 Look for who bears the hidden cost of your convenience.
- 02 Treat someone with less influence as a person of equal dignity.
- 03 Choose one concrete act of fairness alongside prayer and worship.

## Pause & reflect

Where might my comfort depend on ignoring another person's need?

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OLD TESTAMENT • MINOR PROPHETS

# Obadiah

Pride, accountability, and the danger of indifference

AUTHORSHIP · Obadiah

DATE & CONTEXT · Date debated; often connected with Jerusalem's fall

## The big picture

Obadiah confronts Edom for pride and its conduct when Judah suffered. Standing aside, gloating, and benefiting from another people's disaster are exposed as serious wrongs. The day of the Lord extends accountability beyond one nation. The short book ends with the kingdom belonging to the Lord, challenging every claim to security built on superiority or opportunism.

## Words to carry

"As thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head."

Obadiah 1:15 · KJV · excerpt

## Live it

- 01 Refuse to enjoy another person's humiliation.
- 02 Offer practical help when you could easily remain a spectator.
- 03 Examine where pride makes you dismiss someone else's vulnerability.

## Pause & reflect

When have I mistaken indifference for innocence?

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## OLD TESTAMENT • MINOR PROPHETS

# Jonah

God's compassion beyond our preferred boundaries

AUTHORSHIP · Anonymous; named for the prophet Jonah

DATE & CONTEXT · Setting in the eighth century BC; writing date debated

## The big picture

Jonah runs from a call to preach in Nineveh. A storm, a great fish, and a second commission bring him back to the task, and the city responds. Yet the prophet resents God's mercy toward people he considers enemies. The closing question leaves readers examining their own limits on compassion. The surprising center of the book is not the fish but God's generous concern.

## Words to carry

"Salvation is of the LORD."

Jonah 2:9 · KJV · excerpt

## Live it

01 Pray for someone you find difficult to wish well.

02 Respond to a clear responsibility instead of avoiding it.

03 Notice where you value personal comfort above another person's wellbeing.

## Pause & reflect

Whom have I quietly placed outside the reach of God's mercy?

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OLD TESTAMENT • MINOR PROPHETS

# Micah

Justice, mercy, humility, and promised restoration

AUTHORSHIP • Micah

DATE & CONTEXT • Eighth century BC

## The big picture

Micah confronts corrupt leaders, exploitative land practices, and religion detached from justice. Warnings against Samaria and Jerusalem sit beside hope for peace, a ruler from Bethlehem, and God's pardoning mercy. The familiar call to justice, mercy, and humility belongs within this larger covenant challenge. Faithfulness is not measured by impressive offerings while ordinary relationships remain unjust.

## Words to carry

"What doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

Micah 6:8 • KJV • excerpt

## Live it

- 01 Correct one unfair practice within your influence.
- 02 Show mercy without demanding recognition.
- 03 Approach a disagreement with humility and a willingness to listen.

## Pause & reflect

Which of justice, mercy, or humility most needs practice in my life?

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OLD TESTAMENT • MINOR PROPHETS

# Nahum

God's opposition to cruelty and oppressive power

AUTHORSHIP • Nahum

DATE & CONTEXT • Seventh century BC, before Nineveh's fall in 612 BC

## The big picture

Nahum announces judgment on Nineveh, the center of Assyrian power. Vivid poetry describes the collapse of an empire associated with violence and domination. For those crushed by such power, its downfall brings relief. The book should not feed personal vengeance; it insists that apparently secure systems of cruelty remain accountable to God.

## Words to carry

"The LORD is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him."

Nahum 1:7 • KJV

## Live it

- 01 Stand with someone who has been harmed by abuse of power.
- 02 Refuse to treat cruelty as strength.
- 03 Entrust judgment to God while pursuing truthful and responsible action.

## Pause & reflect

Where do I need hope that injustice will not have the final word?

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OLD TESTAMENT • MINOR PROPHETS

# Habakkuk

Honest questions and resilient trust

AUTHORSHIP • Habakkuk

DATE & CONTEXT • Late seventh–early sixth centuries BC

## The big picture

Habakkuk asks why God allows violence and why an even more violent empire would become an instrument of judgment. The dialogue does not minimize the difficulty. God calls the prophet to wait, exposes the arrogance of oppressors, and promises that their power will not endure. A concluding prayer chooses trust even when fields, flocks, and visible security fail.

## Words to carry

“But the just shall live by his faith.”

Habakkuk 2:4 • KJV • excerpt

## Live it

- 01 Bring a hard question to God without disguising it.
- 02 Wait before taking a fear-driven shortcut.
- 03 Name what remains true about God when circumstances are disappointing.

## Pause & reflect

What would faithfulness look like if my circumstances do not change soon?

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## OLD TESTAMENT • MINOR PROPHETS

# Zephaniah

Judgment that opens toward a humbled, restored people

AUTHORSHIP • Zephaniah

DATE & CONTEXT • Seventh century BC, during Josiah's reign

## The big picture

Zephaniah warns of the day of the Lord against complacency, idolatry, and injustice. No status or location guarantees safety from accountability. Yet the book moves toward the gathering of a humble people who trust in God. Its final songs of restoration picture divine joy replacing shame and scattered people being brought home.

## Words to carry

“The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save.”

Zephaniah 3:17 • KJV • excerpt

## Live it

- 01 Identify a place where spiritual complacency has settled in.
- 02 Practice humility by receiving help or correction.
- 03 Offer belonging to someone who feels overlooked or ashamed.

## Pause & reflect

What false security needs to give way to humble trust?

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## OLD TESTAMENT • MINOR PROPHETS

# Haggai

Reordering priorities in the work of restoration

AUTHORSHIP • Haggai

DATE & CONTEXT • 520 BC

## The big picture

After the return from exile, the temple remains unfinished while the community focuses on its own houses. Haggai calls the people to examine their priorities and resume the work. Discouragement over modest beginnings is met with the promise of God's presence. The book encourages faithful rebuilding while refusing to measure significance only by what looks impressive.

## Words to carry

"Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways."

Haggai 1:5 • KJV

## Live it

01 Review where your time actually goes.

02 Return to one important responsibility you have postponed.

03 Encourage a small beginning instead of comparing it with someone else's success.

## Pause & reflect

What priority do my daily choices reveal?

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## OLD TESTAMENT • MINOR PROPHETS

# Zechariah

Renewal, a humble king, and the hope of God's presence

AUTHORSHIP · Zechariah; later material's composition debated

DATE & CONTEXT · Begins in 520 BC; later sections debated

## The big picture

Zechariah encourages a returned community through visions, symbolic actions, and promises of restoration. Rebuilding is joined to calls for justice, mercy, and sincerity. Later chapters speak of a humble king, a pierced figure, and the Lord's reign, passages that shape Christian reflection on Jesus. Its symbolic language rewards patient reading alongside the book's original setting.

## Words to carry

"Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts."

Zechariah 4:6 · KJV · excerpt

## Live it

01 Depend on God rather than treating force as your first solution.

02 Practice mercy in a relationship connected to your work.

03 Continue a faithful task even when its progress feels small.

## Pause & reflect

Where am I trying to accomplish by pressure what calls for patient faithfulness?

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OLD TESTAMENT · MINOR PROPHETS

# Malachi

Wholehearted worship and covenant faithfulness

AUTHORSHIP · Malachi; name means my messenger

DATE & CONTEXT · Commonly dated to the fifth century BC

## The big picture

Through a series of disputes, Malachi confronts careless worship, unfaithful relationships, injustice, and skepticism about God's concern. Priests and people are called to take the covenant seriously. The promise of a coming messenger points forward, while the closing appeal turns readers back to the law and toward reconciliation. The book asks whether familiar religion has become detached from faithful love.

## Words to carry

"For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed."

Malachi 3:6 · KJV

## Live it

01 Give your best attention to worship rather than what remains after everything else.

02 Honor a commitment that has become easy to neglect.

03 Make a concrete move toward reconciliation where it is wise and safe.

## Pause & reflect

Where has familiarity made me careless with what matters to God?

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NEW TESTAMENT • GOSPELS

# Matthew

Jesus, Israel's Messiah and the world's King.

AUTHORSHIP · Traditionally Matthew; the text is anonymous.

DATE & CONTEXT · Often dated AD 70-90; earlier dates are also proposed.

## The big picture

Matthew connects the story of Jesus with Israel's Scriptures. Jesus announces God's kingdom, teaches a deeper righteousness, welcomes the overlooked, and confronts religious hypocrisy. His parables invite a response that reaches beyond outward appearances. Though rejected and crucified, he rises and sends his followers to make disciples of all nations. The promised King is also Emmanuel: God with us.

## Words to carry

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

Matthew 6:33 · KJV

## Live it

01 Read the Beatitudes and choose one posture to practice today.

02 Make a private act of generosity without seeking recognition.

03 Encourage someone taking their first steps in following Jesus.

## Pause & reflect

Where might seeking God's kingdom change the way I spend my attention?

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## NEW TESTAMENT • GOSPELS

# Mark

The serving, suffering Son of God.

AUTHORSHIP · Traditionally John Mark; the text is anonymous.

DATE & CONTEXT · Often dated AD 60–70.

## The big picture

Mark moves quickly from Jesus' baptism into his teaching, healings, and confrontations. Even his disciples struggle to understand a Messiah whose path leads to a cross. Jesus receives people others dismiss and calls his followers to costly service. His death exposes the depth of his mission; the empty tomb announces a hope that fear cannot contain. Read the final chapter with attention to your Bible's manuscript notes.

## Words to carry

“For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

Mark 10:45 · KJV

## Live it

01 Serve someone in a practical way that costs you time.

02 Name a misunderstanding about Jesus and compare it with his actions.

03 Bring an honest fear to God rather than hiding it.

## Pause & reflect

Am I willing to follow Jesus when service brings no applause?

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## NEW TESTAMENT • GOSPELS

# Luke

Good news for the overlooked.

AUTHORSHIP · Traditionally Luke, a companion of Paul.

DATE & CONTEXT · Often dated AD 70–90; dates vary.

## The big picture

Luke presents an orderly account of Jesus' life with particular attention to prayer, the Holy Spirit, and people pushed to the margins. Women, the poor, outsiders, and repentant sinners receive a place in the story. Parables such as the good Samaritan and the lost son reveal mercy that challenges familiar boundaries. Jesus journeys toward Jerusalem, dies, and rises, opening the Scriptures and preparing witnesses to carry good news outward.

## Words to carry

“For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

Luke 19:10 · KJV

## Live it

01 Notice someone regularly overlooked in your community.

02 Practice the good Samaritan's costly attention through one concrete kindness.

03 Read a Gospel passage slowly before making assumptions about another person.

## Pause & reflect

Who is outside the circle of people I naturally notice?

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## NEW TESTAMENT • GOSPELS

# John

Life through believing in Jesus.

AUTHORSHIP · Traditionally John; the Gospel speaks of the beloved disciple's witness.

DATE & CONTEXT · Often dated AD 80–100.

## The big picture

John introduces Jesus as the eternal Word who became flesh. Signs, conversations, and declarations of identity reveal his glory and invite belief. At a well, beside a grave, and around a supper table, Jesus meets people with truth and love. He lays down his life and rises again. The Gospel's purpose is personal: that readers may believe Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and have life in his name.

## Words to carry

“And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.”

John 1:5 · KJV

## Live it

01 Read one conversation with Jesus and notice what he asks.

02 Make time to listen before offering a quick spiritual answer.

03 Practice Jesus' command to love through a specific act of care.

## Pause & reflect

What would it mean for me to remain in Jesus today?

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NEW TESTAMENT • HISTORY

# Acts

The Spirit sends the church outward.

AUTHORSHIP · Traditionally Luke, continuing the account begun in his Gospel.

DATE & CONTEXT · Often dated AD 70–90; dates vary.

## The big picture

Acts follows the good news from Jerusalem toward Rome. The Holy Spirit empowers a diverse community to pray, share, endure opposition, and bear witness to the risen Jesus. Boundaries are crossed as Samaritans and Gentiles enter the church. Peter and Paul serve prominent roles, but the story belongs to God’s mission rather than a single hero. Disagreements and failures reveal a growing community learning to live the gospel together.

## Words to carry

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me”

Acts 1:8 · KJV · excerpt

## Live it

01 Pray for courage to speak about your faith with gentleness.

02 Share a resource with someone in need.

03 Listen to a believer whose cultural background differs from yours.

## Pause & reflect

Which boundary might God be inviting me to cross in love?

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NEW TESTAMENT • PAULINE LETTERS

# Romans

God's righteousness and transforming mercy.

AUTHORSHIP • Paul.

DATE & CONTEXT • About AD 56–58.

## The big picture

Paul explains the good news of God's righteousness in Jesus Christ. Jew and Gentile alike need grace; justification rests on faith rather than boasting. Christ's death and resurrection open a new life in the Spirit. Paul wrestles with Israel's place in God's purposes before turning to worship expressed through everyday conduct. Mercy takes shape in humility, hospitality, public responsibility, and patient love across differences.

## Words to carry

“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind”

Romans 12:2 • KJV • excerpt

## Live it

01 Read Romans 12 and select one instruction to practice.

02 Welcome someone whose preferences differ from your own.

03 Replace a recurring destructive thought with a truth read in context.

## Pause & reflect

How can gratitude for mercy reshape one ordinary decision?

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## NEW TESTAMENT • PAULINE LETTERS

# 1 Corinthians

A divided church learns cruciform love.

AUTHORSHIP • Paul.

DATE & CONTEXT • About AD 53–55.

## The big picture

Paul addresses a gifted but fractured church. Arguments over leaders, sexual conduct, lawsuits, worship, and spiritual gifts reveal a community forgetting the shape of the cross. Freedom must serve a neighbor rather than protect personal status. Love gives gifts their proper purpose. The resurrection of Jesus grounds Christian hope and makes faithful work meaningful even when it seems unnoticed.

## Words to carry

“Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up”

1 Corinthians 13:4 • KJV

## Live it

01 Choose the good of a neighbor over winning a minor argument.

02 Use one ability to strengthen someone else.

03 Read the whole of chapter 13 as a description of daily conduct.

## Pause & reflect

Where am I using freedom without considering another person’s good?

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## NEW TESTAMENT • PAULINE LETTERS

# 2 Corinthians

God's power in human weakness.

AUTHORSHIP • Paul.

DATE & CONTEXT • About AD 55–56.

## The big picture

Paul opens a window into the cost of ministry: grief, misunderstanding, physical suffering, and deep affection for a difficult community. He defends a ministry shaped by Christ's weakness rather than public impressiveness. Reconciliation, integrity, and generosity belong together. God's comfort is received so it can be shared, and fragile people can carry the treasure of the gospel without pretending to be strong.

## Words to carry

"My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness."

2 Corinthians 12:9 • KJV • excerpt

## Live it

01 Offer comfort without trying to explain away someone's pain.

02 Take one honest step toward reconciliation where it is safe.

03 Give generously within your means, without pressure or performance.

## Pause & reflect

Where might honest weakness make room for God's grace?

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NEW TESTAMENT • PAULINE LETTERS

# Galatians

Freedom in Christ, expressed through love.

AUTHORSHIP • Paul.

DATE & CONTEXT • About AD 48–55; chronology is debated.

## The big picture

Paul confronts teaching that makes belonging to God depend on adopting circumcision and the law as boundary markers. The promise to Abraham finds its fulfillment in Christ, and people receive the Spirit through faith. Christian freedom is neither self-justification nor permission to harm others. It takes visible form in the Spirit's fruit, mutual burden-bearing, and persistent goodness.

## Words to carry

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith”

Galatians 5:22 • KJV

## Live it

01 Practice one fruit of the Spirit in a difficult conversation.

02 Help carry a burden without making the other person feel inferior.

03 Notice when comparison tempts you to prove your worth.

## Pause & reflect

What would freedom that serves through love look like today?

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## NEW TESTAMENT • PAULINE LETTERS

# Ephesians

One new people, alive in Christ.

AUTHORSHIP · Attributed to Paul; authorship is debated by scholars.

DATE & CONTEXT · Traditionally AD 60–62; some propose a later first-century date.

## The big picture

Ephesians celebrates the generous purposes of God in Christ. People once divided are brought near and formed into one household. Salvation is a gift that creates a life of good works, not a reward earned by them. The letter moves from worshipful prayer to practical instruction about unity, speech, work, relationships, and spiritual resilience. The church is called to embody the peace it has received.

## Words to carry

“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works”

Ephesians 2:10 · KJV · excerpt

## Live it

01 Replace one careless comment with words that build someone up.

02 Pray for unity without demanding uniformity.

03 Do one good work quietly as a response to grace.

## Pause & reflect

Where can I help make belonging visible in my community?

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NEW TESTAMENT • PAULINE LETTERS

# Philippians

Joy and humility shaped by Christ.

AUTHORSHIP • Paul.

DATE & CONTEXT • Usually placed during imprisonment, around AD 60–62; location is debated.

## The big picture

Writing from imprisonment, Paul thanks a beloved church and points it toward the mind of Christ. Jesus' self-giving humility becomes the pattern for relationships. Paul's losses do not erase his hope, and hardship does not cancel the possibility of joy. Prayer, thoughtful attention, reconciliation, and learned contentment make this a deeply practical letter for circumstances that cannot be quickly changed.

## Words to carry

"Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice."

Philippians 4:4 • KJV

## Live it

01 Name a specific gift with gratitude today.

02 Take a humble first step in a strained relationship.

03 Turn one anxious concern into an honest prayer and a practical next step.

## Pause & reflect

What does contentment look like without pretending my difficulties are easy?

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NEW TESTAMENT • PAULINE LETTERS

# Colossians

The sufficiency and supremacy of Christ.

AUTHORSHIP · Attributed to Paul; some scholars dispute authorship.

DATE & CONTEXT · Traditionally AD 60–62.

## The big picture

Colossians presents Christ as the image of the invisible God and the one in whom all things hold together. The church does not need a supposedly superior spiritual system to complete what it has received in him. Union with Christ reshapes desires, speech, habits, and relationships. A life rooted in Jesus becomes recognizable through compassion, forgiveness, gratitude, and ordinary work done with integrity.

## Words to carry

“Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering”

Colossians 3:12 · KJV

## Live it

01 Choose kindness before replying to a frustrating message.

02 Approach an ordinary task as an opportunity for faithful service.

03 Let gratitude interrupt one habit of complaint.

## Pause & reflect

What am I treating as essential that distracts me from Christ?

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## NEW TESTAMENT • PAULINE LETTERS

# 1 Thessalonians

Steady hope while waiting for Christ.

AUTHORSHIP • Paul, with Silvanus and Timothy.

DATE & CONTEXT • About AD 50–51.

## The big picture

Paul encourages a young church enduring pressure. He remembers their faith, love, and hope, and urges a life that pleases God in ordinary matters. Questions about believers who have died receive the comfort of resurrection hope. Waiting for Christ does not mean abandoning daily responsibilities; it means living alertly, lovingly, and peacefully while strengthening one another.

## Words to carry

“Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.”

1 Thessalonians 5:11 • KJV

## Live it

01 Encourage a grieving person with presence before offering explanations.

02 Do your daily work with quiet integrity.

03 Thank someone whose faithful service often goes unnoticed.

## Pause & reflect

How can hope make me more attentive to today’s responsibilities?

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NEW TESTAMENT • PAULINE LETTERS

# 2 Thessalonians

Patient faithfulness amid confusion.

AUTHORSHIP · Attributed to Paul, with Silvanus and Timothy; authorship is debated.

DATE & CONTEXT · Traditionally about AD 51–52.

## The big picture

This letter addresses suffering, confusion about the day of the Lord, and disorder within the church. Readers are urged not to panic at alarming claims or abandon responsible living. God’s justice gives hope to the afflicted, while prayer and steadfast conduct remain necessary. Difficult prophetic passages call for humility; the clear practical invitation is to stand firm and keep doing good.

## Words to carry

“But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing.”

2 Thessalonians 3:13 · KJV

## Live it

01 Check an alarming spiritual claim before repeating it.

02 Continue one useful responsibility you are tempted to neglect.

03 Pray for people enduring persecution or injustice.

## Pause & reflect

Does my expectation of the future strengthen or distract from present faithfulness?

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## NEW TESTAMENT • PAULINE LETTERS

# 1 Timothy

A household of faith marked by integrity.

AUTHORSHIP · Attributed to Paul; authorship and date are debated.

DATE & CONTEXT · Traditionally AD 62–65; some scholars propose a later date.

## The big picture

Instruction to Timothy concerns teaching, public worship, leadership, generosity, and the care of vulnerable members. Faithfulness must be visible in character rather than merely asserted in words. The letter warns against speculative teaching and treating godliness as a route to wealth. Its difficult passages deserve careful historical study alongside its clear concern for a church whose life makes the gospel credible.

## Words to carry

“Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”

1 Timothy 4:12 · KJV · excerpt

## Live it

01 Examine whether your words and conduct tell the same story.

02 Support a vulnerable person through a trusted community effort.

03 Practice contentment before making a nonessential purchase.

## Pause & reflect

What kind of example am I becoming through small repeated choices?

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NEW TESTAMENT • PAULINE LETTERS

# 2 Timothy

Guard the good news with courage and endurance.

AUTHORSHIP · Attributed to Paul; authorship and date are debated.

DATE & CONTEXT · Traditionally AD 64–67; some scholars propose a later date.

## The big picture

With the tone of a final charge, this letter urges Timothy to persevere in the gospel. Faith is passed through teaching, example, and relationships, yet it must be personally lived. Scripture equips God’s people for good work. Courage need not become harshness: the Lord’s servant should correct with patience and gentleness while remaining faithful through hardship and disappointment.

## Words to carry

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness”

2 Timothy 3:16 · KJV

## Live it

01 Read a passage with the question: what good work can this equip me to do?

02 Thank someone who helped nurture your faith.

03 Practice patient correction instead of an angry response.

## Pause & reflect

What faithful practice do I want to pass on to someone else?

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NEW TESTAMENT • PAULINE LETTERS

# Titus

Grace trains a life of goodness.

AUTHORSHIP · Attributed to Paul; authorship and date are debated.

DATE & CONTEXT · Traditionally AD 62–65; some scholars propose a later date.

## The big picture

Titus is charged with strengthening churches in Crete through trustworthy leadership and sound teaching. The letter connects belief with conduct across generations and social settings. God’s grace is not merely an idea to defend: it trains people to live with self-control and hope. Good works follow mercy rather than earning it, and pointless quarrels should not consume the community’s attention.

## Words to carry

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us”

Titus 3:5 · KJV · excerpt

## Live it

01 Do one useful act of service without seeking credit.

02 Step away from a quarrel that produces no understanding.

03 Invite wisdom from someone in another generation.

## Pause & reflect

How is received mercy becoming visible in my conduct?

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## NEW TESTAMENT • PAULINE LETTERS

# Philemon

A relationship transformed by the gospel.

AUTHORSHIP • Paul.

DATE & CONTEXT • Often dated AD 60–62; imprisonment location is debated.

## The big picture

Paul appeals to Philemon concerning Onesimus, an enslaved man who has become a fellow believer. Instead of treating Onesimus as a problem to be managed, Paul identifies him as a beloved brother and offers to bear a cost himself. The brief letter challenges the social power of its setting through an appeal to love. Its reception requires honesty about slavery's harm and the dignity of every person.

## Words to carry

“Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved”

Philemon 1:16 • KJV • excerpt

## Live it

- 01 Notice how power shapes one of your relationships.
- 02 Advocate for a person whose dignity is being diminished.
- 03 Take responsibility for a cost that could help repair a wrong.

## Pause & reflect

When does reconciliation require more than kind words?

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## NEW TESTAMENT • GENERAL LETTERS

# Hebrews

Hold fast to Jesus, the faithful high priest.

AUTHORSHIP · Anonymous; proposed authors remain uncertain.

DATE & CONTEXT · Before the end of the first century; a pre-AD 70 date is debated.

## The big picture

Hebrews draws deeply on Israel's Scriptures to present Jesus as the definitive revelation of God and the high priest whose self-offering opens access to God. Readers facing weariness are urged not to drift away. Warnings and encouragement belong together: faith perseveres by looking to Jesus. The closing exhortations bring worship into hospitality, solidarity with prisoners, generosity, and mutual care.

## Words to carry

“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”

Hebrews 4:16 · KJV

## Live it

01 Approach God honestly with a need you have been hiding.

02 Encourage someone whose perseverance is under strain.

03 Practice hospitality in a realistic, welcoming way.

## Pause & reflect

What is helping me hold fast, and what is causing me to drift?

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NEW TESTAMENT • GENERAL LETTERS

# James

A living faith becomes visible.

AUTHORSHIP · Traditionally James, the brother of Jesus.

DATE & CONTEXT · Dates range from the AD 40s to the late first century.

## The big picture

James offers direct wisdom for a community whose faith must endure testing. Listening well, controlling speech, refusing favoritism, and caring for people in need reveal whether belief is taking root. Wealth and status do not earn a privileged place. The letter challenges a faith reduced to words and invites patient, prayerful action. Wisdom from above is peaceable and full of mercy.

## Words to carry

“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”

James 1:22 · KJV

## Live it

01 Listen fully before responding in one conversation.

02 Meet a concrete need instead of offering encouragement alone.

03 Examine whether status affects how warmly you welcome someone.

## Pause & reflect

Which truth I already know needs to become an action?

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## NEW TESTAMENT • GENERAL LETTERS

# 1 Peter

Living hope in a difficult world.

AUTHORSHIP · Attributed to Peter; authorship is debated.

DATE & CONTEXT · Traditionally AD 60–64; later dates are also proposed.

## The big picture

Addressing believers living as outsiders, 1 Peter grounds hope in Jesus' resurrection. Their identity is shaped by God's mercy rather than public acceptance. The letter encourages holiness, mutual love, honorable conduct, and gentle witness under pressure. Its instructions must never be used to excuse abuse or silence those seeking safety. Christ's suffering and victory sustain a community learning to do good without returning evil.

## Words to carry

"Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you."

1 Peter 5:7 · KJV

## Live it

01 Answer disagreement with gentleness and clear boundaries.

02 Bring a specific worry to God and a trusted person.

03 Offer practical support to someone who feels like an outsider.

## Pause & reflect

How can hope shape my response when I feel misunderstood?

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NEW TESTAMENT • GENERAL LETTERS

# 2 Peter

Grow in grace and resist destructive teaching.

AUTHORSHIP · Attributed to Peter; many scholars question direct Petrine authorship.

DATE & CONTEXT · Traditionally the AD 60s; many propose a later first- or early second-century date.

## The big picture

Second Peter urges growth in character and warns against teachers whose greed and conduct undermine their claims. Remembering trustworthy testimony matters in a climate of scoffing and confusion. God's patience should not be mistaken for indifference. Hope for renewal calls forth a holy life now, marked by diligence and an ongoing growth in the grace and knowledge of Jesus.

## Words to carry

“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

2 Peter 3:18 · KJV · excerpt

## Live it

01 Evaluate a teacher's conduct as well as their confidence.

02 Choose one virtue from chapter 1 to cultivate this week.

03 Let God's patience encourage repentance rather than procrastination.

## Pause & reflect

What helps me distinguish spiritual maturity from impressive speech?

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## NEW TESTAMENT • GENERAL LETTERS

# 1 John

Truth and love belong together.

AUTHORSHIP · Traditionally John; closely connected with the Johannine writings.

DATE & CONTEXT · Often dated AD 80–100.

## The big picture

First John helps a troubled community recognize life in fellowship with God. The reality of Jesus Christ, honest confession of sin, obedience, and practical love provide recurring tests. Assurance rests in God's faithfulness rather than a claim to moral perfection. Love is not vague sentiment: it meets a brother's or sister's need. God's prior love makes truthful and generous living possible.

## Words to carry

"We love him, because he first loved us."

1 John 4:19 · KJV

## Live it

01 Confess a real failure without excusing it or surrendering to shame.

02 Turn affection into practical help for someone in need.

03 Read a difficult conversation through the paired commitments of truth and love.

## Pause & reflect

Where can I respond to God's love with love that costs something?

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## NEW TESTAMENT • GENERAL LETTERS

# 2 John

Walk in truth and love with discernment.

AUTHORSHIP · The writer identifies himself as the elder; traditionally John.

DATE & CONTEXT · Often dated AD 80–100.

## The big picture

The elder writes to an elect lady and her children, possibly a way of addressing a congregation. Love and truth are inseparable, and the church should continue in the teaching of Christ. Hospitality must not become uncritical support for deceptive teaching. This short letter invites discernment without abandoning care for people, and it closes with a preference for the joy of face-to-face conversation.

## Words to carry

“And this is love, that we walk after his commandments.”

2 John 1:6 · KJV · excerpt

## Live it

01 Check a teaching against the wider witness of Scripture.

02 Set a wise boundary around what you promote.

03 Make time for a thoughtful conversation beyond quick messages.

## Pause & reflect

How can I remain loving while practicing discernment?

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NEW TESTAMENT • GENERAL LETTERS

# 3 John

Hospitality over self-importance.

AUTHORSHIP · The writer identifies himself as the elder; traditionally John.

DATE & CONTEXT · Often dated AD 80–100.

## The big picture

The elder commends Gaius for supporting faithful travelers and contrasts that welcome with Diotrephes' controlling behavior. A small local conflict exposes a lasting question: will leadership serve the truth or guard personal importance? Demetrius provides a positive example. Third John shows that ordinary hospitality and trustworthy character help sustain the shared work of the gospel.

## Words to carry

“Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good.”

3 John 1:11 · KJV · excerpt

## Live it

01 Welcome or support someone doing faithful work beyond your own circle.

02 Notice a situation where control is replacing service.

03 Thank a person whose integrity quietly strengthens a community.

## Pause & reflect

Do my choices make room for others or protect my own importance?

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## NEW TESTAMENT • GENERAL LETTERS

# Jude

Remain faithful in the mercy of God.

AUTHORSHIP · Jude, traditionally a brother of James and Jesus.

DATE & CONTEXT · Often dated within AD 60–100.

## The big picture

Jude warns against corrupt influences that turn grace into permission for harmful conduct. Drawing on familiar Jewish traditions, the letter calls readers to take moral accountability seriously. Contending for the faith includes prayer, mercy toward those who doubt, and care that does not imitate destructive behavior. The closing praise locates confidence in God's power to keep his people.

## Words to carry

“Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.”

Jude 1:21 · KJV

## Live it

- 01 Respond to an honest doubter with patient mercy.
- 02 Name one harmful pattern that needs a clear boundary.
- 03 Pray for steadiness before entering a contentious discussion.

## Pause & reflect

Can I defend what is true without losing mercy toward people?

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NEW TESTAMENT · APOCALYPSE

# Revelation

The Lamb's victory and the renewal of all things.

AUTHORSHIP · John of Patmos; his identity in relation to the apostle is debated.

DATE & CONTEXT · Often dated around AD 95–96; some propose an earlier date.

## The big picture

Revelation opens with messages to seven real churches and unfolds through visions rich in biblical imagery. It exposes the violence and deception of powers demanding allegiance, while presenting the slain and risen Lamb as worthy of worship. Christians interpret many details differently, but the call to faithful endurance is clear. The story ends with judgment, renewed creation, and God dwelling with his people: evil and death do not have the final word.

## Words to carry

“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying”

Revelation 21:4 · KJV · excerpt

## Live it

01 Identify one pressure that competes for your deepest allegiance.

02 Encourage someone suffering with patient, practical presence.

03 Let hope for renewal motivate care for your neighbor and the world.

## Pause & reflect

How does the Lamb's way of victory challenge my understanding of power?

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