



# GOD OF PROMISES

A SURVEY OF GENESIS



**THE WELL**  
COMMUNITY CHURCH

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## About This Study

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You were made for a relationship with God. You are promised a home with Him now and forever. You were given an eternal inheritance. You are His child covered in overflowing blessing.

Our God of promises is faithful to His word, faithful to His people. He redeems the brokenness, transforms our lives, and draws us close to Himself.

In our survey of Genesis, we will learn to walk closely with Him: compelled, held, and transformed by His promises. Today and tomorrow, He is our God and we are His people.

## How to Use This Guide

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Interact with God and the Scriptures for each week using the “Personal Daily Study” and “Study Questions” associated with the main Scripture for each week. Then in your 3Ds, use the discussion guide to spend time with God and each other in Life, Bible, and Prayer. We suggest doing the 3D group discussions after hearing the sermon for the given section per week.

# Personal Daily Study

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Spend the entire week on the given section, slowly reading and rereading it in order to deeply, and accurately, interact with God. Also consider the below supplemental questions per each given week (You can also check out our other simple guides online for additional Bible study resources at [thewellsilverspring.org/resources](http://thewellsilverspring.org/resources).)

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## What Does It Say?

First, we ask: *“What does this say?”*

Read the passage a few times and carefully observe the words; give full attention to what it says. The purpose is to saturate in the content of the passage.

Look for things such as: important words (what’s being talked about), conjunctions (how is one idea connected to another), admonitions (something being commanded), contrasts, comparisons, illustrations, repeated phrases/ words, mood, and grammatical construction (verb tenses, prepositional phrases, etc.).

Linger here, listening to what God is saying in the detail of His words. Write down questions that the passage raises for you, things you don’t understand, ideas you’d like to pursue further.

## What Does It Mean?

We now ask ourselves: *“What does it mean?”*

Use the observations you just gathered, the context of the section, and other passages of scripture to get at the meaning of what you have read.

Consider using [a commentary](#), the [GROW](#) or [SOAP](#) Bible study tools, the [ESV Study Bible](#) notes, or other resources to help.

Next, summarize the main truth you heard from God in His word.

Consider writing out the synthesized truth in your own words. Outline, diagram, draw, or flowchart the line of thought or main idea of the passage. What jumped out?

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## So What?

Now we must ask: *“So what?”*

After meeting God in His word, we cannot ignore, or walk away unchanged. Why does the truth you heard matter to you today?

Is there something new to believe, cling to, or a sin to confess?

Is there something for you to do (or not do) in response to what you have read?

Is there someone with whom to share this truth (believer or nonbeliever)?

Do not forget to apply the gospel for your forgiveness, and as the reason compelling your obedience:

*Christ is enough!*

He is the ultimate \_\_\_\_\_  
He has forgiven you for \_\_\_\_\_ and  
He is the reason why we \_\_\_\_\_.

# Week One

## Genesis 1-2

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### QUESTIONS

Do the above process, slowly seeking Him, deeply listening to His words, and journaling as you interact with the living God. This will take you longer than one sitting with God in His word in this passage.

*What does it say?*

*What does it mean?*

*So what?*

What do we learn about the promises and character of God in this passage?

What do we learn about ourselves in this passage?

What is the significance, and insights you glean, about the order and rhythm of creation?

Where is Christ reflected, hinted at, anticipated, or foreshadowed in this passage?

### SO WHAT?

How might your life and relationship with God be shaped by embracing His character and promises? Where are you, and are you not, doing so right now?

Why does it matter to you, today, that you are made intentionally by God for a relationship with God?

How would you describe your relationship with God and how you are reflecting Him in your work, family, friends, life?

Spend time responding to God in prayer, specifically about God's character and promises from this passage.

# Week Two

## Genesis 2-3

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### QUESTIONS

Do the above process, slowly seeking Him, deeply listening to His words, and journaling as you interact with the living God. This will take you longer than one sitting with God in His word in this passage.

*What does it say?*

*What does it mean?*

*So what?*

What do we learn about the promises and character of God in this passage?

What do we learn about ourselves in this passage?

What details reveal what went wrong in Adam and Eve's disregard of God's command? Why did they disobey God (and why do we)?

Where is Christ reflected, hinted at, anticipated, or foreshadowed in this passage?

### SO WHAT?

How might your life and relationship with God be shaped by embracing His character and promises? Where are you, and are you not, doing so right now?

Where in your life are you questioning God's character and love for you? Spend time confessing your view of who God is.

Spend time responding to God in prayer, specifically about God's character and promises from this passage.

# Week Three

## Genesis 2-3



### QUESTIONS

Do the above process, slowly seeking Him, deeply listening to His words, and journaling as you interact with the living God. This will take you longer than one sitting with God in His word in this passage.

*What does it say?*

*What does it mean?*

*So what?*

What do we learn about the promises and character of God in this passage?

What do we learn about ourselves in this passage?

As God curses and justly condemns Adam and Eve, how does he sprinkle in massive amounts of grace and redemption?

Where is Christ reflected, hinted at, anticipated, or foreshadowed in this passage?

### SO WHAT?

How might your life and relationship with God be shaped by embracing His character and promises? Where are you, and are you not, doing so right now?

Where do you see the impact of your sin in your life and relationships? How is God redeeming and restoring you by His grace?

Spend time responding to God in prayer, specifically about God's character and promises from this passage.

# Week Four

## Genesis 4

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### QUESTIONS

Do the above process, slowly seeking Him, deeply listening to His words, and journaling as you interact with the living God. This will take you longer than one sitting with God in His word in this passage.

*What does it say?*

*What does it mean?*

*So what?*

What do we learn about the promises and character of God in this passage?

What do we learn about ourselves in this passage?

Meditate on the questions asked in verse 9. What is the Spirit bringing to the surface as you do so?

Where is Christ reflected, hinted at, anticipated, or foreshadowed in this passage?

### SO WHAT?

How might your life and relationship with God be shaped by embracing His character and promises? Where are you, and are you not, doing so right now?

Where is God being just, patient, and redemptive with the sin in your life... the sin in your family... work... and the world?

Spend time responding to God in prayer, specifically about God's character and promises from this passage.

# Week Five

## Genesis 7-10

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### QUESTIONS

Do the above process, slowly seeking Him, deeply listening to His words, and journaling as you interact with the living God. This will take you longer than one sitting with God in His word in this passage.

*What does it say?*

*What does it mean?*

*So what?*

What do we learn about the promises and character of God in this passage?

What do we learn about ourselves in this passage?

Timeline the major events of the story and record your major insights from each event.

Where is Christ reflected, hinted at, anticipated, or foreshadowed in this passage?

### SO WHAT?

How might your life and relationship with God be shaped by embracing His character and promises? Where are you, and are you not, doing so right now?

Is there anything in your life of obedience to Jesus that makes you or others scratch their heads in wonder? Where might God be calling you to radical obedience and faith in following Him?

Spend time responding to God in prayer, specifically about God's character and promises from this passage.

# Week Six

## Genesis 11

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### QUESTIONS

Do the above process, slowly seeking Him, deeply listening to His words, and journaling as you interact with the living God. This will take you longer than one sitting with God in His word in this passage.

*What does it say?*

*What does it mean?*

*So what?*

What do we learn about the promises and character of God in this passage?

What do we learn about ourselves in this passage?

Describe how motivations turn to actions (both of men and of God) in this passage.

Where is Christ reflected, hinted at, anticipated, or foreshadowed in this passage?

### SO WHAT?

How might your life and relationship with God be shaped by embracing His character and promises? Where are you, and are you not, doing so right now?

What are some of your core motivations? How are your core motivations in line, or out of line, with God?

Spend time responding to God in prayer, specifically about God's character and promises from this passage.

# Week Seven

## Genesis 12, 15, 17

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### QUESTIONS

Do the above process, slowly seeking Him, deeply listening to His words, and journaling as you interact with the living God. This will take you longer than one sitting with God in His word in this passage.

*What does it say?*

*What does it mean?*

*So what?*

What do we learn about the promises and character of God in this passage?

What do we learn about ourselves in this passage?

How would you summarize the Abrahamic Covenant?  
What do each of the major chapters describing the promise highlight about it?

Where is Christ reflected, hinted at, anticipated, or foreshadowed in this passage?

### SO WHAT?

How might your life and relationship with God be shaped by embracing His character and promises?  
Where are you, and are you not, doing so right now?

Read Galatians 3.1-9. If you are a child of God by faith in Jesus, what is your eternal home, how are you fully blessed, and who is your family? Why does this matter to you today?

Spend time responding to God in prayer, specifically about God's character and promises from this passage.

# Week Eight

## Genesis 12-18



### QUESTIONS

Do the above process, slowly seeking Him, deeply listening to His words, and journaling as you interact with the living God. This will take you longer than one sitting with God in His word in this passage.

*What does it say?*

*What does it mean?*

*So what?*

What do we learn about the promises and character of God in this passage?

What do we learn about ourselves in this passage?

List Abraham and Sarah's major moments of faith, and major movements of folly. How would you describe their highs and lows following God's commands and promises?

Where is Christ reflected, hinted at, anticipated, or foreshadowed in this passage?

### SO WHAT?

How might your life and relationship with God be shaped by embracing His character and promises? Where are you, and are you not, doing so right now?

Where in your life are you trusting in, or not trusting in, God's promises? Confess and cling again to God's grace, embrace, and transformation in Jesus our Promise Keeper, Savior, and friend.

Spend time responding to God in prayer, specifically about God's character and promises from this passage.

# Week Nine

## Genesis 19

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### QUESTIONS

Do the above process, slowly seeking Him, deeply listening to His words, and journaling as you interact with the living God. This will take you longer than one sitting with God in His word in this passage.

*What does it say?*

*What does it mean?*

*So what?*

What do we learn about the promises and character of God in this passage?

What do we learn about ourselves in this passage?

Focus one by one on every person (and God) in the story. What actions, desires, inactions, motivations, stick out to you? How do God's justice and mercy shine in the story.

Where is Christ reflected, hinted at, anticipated, or foreshadowed in this passage?

### SO WHAT?

How might your life and relationship with God be shaped by embracing His character and promises? Where are you, and are you not, doing so right now?

Where do you need to change, turn back, obey God? How might His justice and His mercy compel this change in your life?

Spend time responding to God in prayer, specifically about God's character and promises from this passage.

# Week Ten

## Genesis 21-22

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### QUESTIONS

Do the above process, slowly seeking Him, deeply listening to His words, and journaling as you interact with the living God. This will take you longer than one sitting with God in His word in this passage.

*What does it say?*

*What does it mean?*

*So what?*

What do we learn about the promises and character of God in this passage?

What do we learn about ourselves in this passage?

What details of the sacrifice of Isaac make this moment deeply emotional? Why does God have Abraham (and Isaac) go through this process?

Where is Christ reflected, hinted at, anticipated, or foreshadowed in this passage?

### SO WHAT?

How might your life and relationship with God be shaped by embracing His character and promises? Where are you, and are you not, doing so right now?

What do you cherish in your life more than God Himself? What would it look like to cherish God more than this thing/person and how would that tangibly impact your relationship with this cherished thing/person?

Spend time responding to God in prayer, specifically about God's character and promises from this passage.

# Week Eleven

## Genesis 25-27

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### QUESTIONS

Do the above process, slowly seeking Him, deeply listening to His words, and journaling as you interact with the living God. This will take you longer than one sitting with God in His word in this passage.

*What does it say?*

*What does it mean?*

*So what?*

What do we learn about the promises and character of God in this passage?

What do we learn about ourselves in this passage?

List the different ways you see God's sovereignty and man's responsibility highlighted in this passage. How would you describe the relationship between the two?

Where is Christ reflected, hinted at, anticipated, or foreshadowed in this passage?

### SO WHAT?

How might your life and relationship with God be shaped by embracing His character and promises? Where are you, and are you not, doing so right now?

Where is God showing His sovereign goodness in your life despite your sinful actions or half-hearted obedience? Where and how do you need to work harder, trust more, to obey Him?

Spend time responding to God in prayer, specifically about God's character and promises from this passage.

# Week Twelve

## Genesis 28

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### QUESTIONS

Do the above process, slowly seeking Him, deeply listening to His words, and journaling as you interact with the living God. This will take you longer than one sitting with God in His word in this passage.

*What does it say?*

*What does it mean?*

*So what?*

What do we learn about the promises and character of God in this passage?

What do we learn about ourselves in this passage?

What is the main idea of Jacob's dream?

Where is Christ reflected, hinted at, anticipated, or foreshadowed in this passage?

### SO WHAT?

How might your life and relationship with God be shaped by embracing His character and promises? Where are you, and are you not, doing so right now?

Jesus opens heaven to us (Jn1.51) in relationship with the Living God. Where are you (or have you) experiencing intimacy with God? Mark them now, or ask for renewed intimacy now.

Spend time responding to God in prayer, specifically about God's character and promises from this passage.

# Week Thirteen

## Genesis 29-31

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### QUESTIONS

Do the above process, slowly seeking Him, deeply listening to His words, and journaling as you interact with the living God. This will take you longer than one sitting with God in His word in this passage.

*What does it say?*

*What does it mean?*

*So what?*

What do we learn about the promises and character of God in this passage?

What do we learn about ourselves in this passage?

List the major events of this section of Jacob's story. How do we make sense of God's sovereignty and our responsibility in these actions?

Where is Christ reflected, hinted at, anticipated, or foreshadowed in this passage?

### SO WHAT?

How might your life and relationship with God be shaped by embracing His character and promises? Where are you, and are you not, doing so right now?

Where in your life do you see God's sovereign goodness in spite of, or because of, your obedience to Him? Where do you need to trust and obey Him more fervently?

Spend time responding to God in prayer, specifically about God's character and promises from this passage.

# Week Fourteen

## Genesis 32-33

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### QUESTIONS

Do the above process, slowly seeking Him, deeply listening to His words, and journaling as you interact with the living God. This will take you longer than one sitting with God in His word in this passage.

*What does it say?*

*What does it mean?*

*So what?*

What do we learn about the promises and character of God in this passage?

What do we learn about ourselves in this passage?

What does the reuniting of Jacob and Esau (before and after wrestling with God) have to do with Jacob's wrestling with God?

Where is Christ reflected, hinted at, anticipated, or foreshadowed in this passage?

### SO WHAT?

How might your life and relationship with God be shaped by embracing His character and promises? Where are you, and are you not, doing so right now?

Where do you need to embrace your limits, humble yourself, and cling to God for His strength and provision? How would this humility and trust tangibly make you stronger, impact your emotions, and shine God more brightly in your life?

Spend time responding to God in prayer, specifically about God's character and promises from this passage.

# Week Fifteen

## Genesis 34



### QUESTIONS

Do the above process, slowly seeking Him, deeply listening to His words, and journaling as you interact with the living God. This will take you longer than one sitting with God in His word in this passage.

*What does it say?*

*What does it mean?*

*So what?*

What do we learn about the promises and character of God in this passage?

What do we learn about ourselves in this passage?

What details of each terrible story give insight into why we are capable of such disastrous sin and destruction?

Where is Christ reflected, hinted at, anticipated, or foreshadowed in this passage?

### SO WHAT?

How might your life and relationship with God be shaped by embracing His character and promises? Where are you, and are you not, doing so right now?

Where is sin bringing death and destruction in your life and around you, and in our world? Pray for Jesus to come now and specifically transform each area with His redemptive restorative grace, mercy, and might (perhaps in and through you).

Spend time responding to God in prayer, specifically about God's character and promises from this passage.

# Week Sixteen

## Genesis 35



### QUESTIONS

Do the above process, slowly seeking Him, deeply listening to His words, and journaling as you interact with the living God. This will take you longer than one sitting with God in His word in this passage.

*What does it say?*

*What does it mean?*

*So what?*

What do we learn about the promises and character of God in this passage?

What do we learn about ourselves in this passage?

What is the significance of God renaming Jacob?

Who are the three major couples of Genesis carrying the promise (starting in Gen 12) to now, and how does God reiterate the promise He makes with each one?

Where is Christ reflected, hinted at, anticipated, or foreshadowed in this passage?

### SO WHAT?

How might your life and relationship with God be shaped by embracing His character and promises? Where are you, and are you not, doing so right now?

With your new name in Christ, “son/daughter of God (Jn1.12)” comes both command and promise. Where do you need to trust in His promises, and where do you need to obey His commands and how are those connected for you in this moment?

Spend time responding to God in prayer, specifically about God’s character and promises from this passage.

# Week Seventeen

## Genesis 37

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### QUESTIONS

Do the above process, slowly seeking Him, deeply listening to His words, and journaling as you interact with the living God. This will take you longer than one sitting with God in His word in this passage.

*What does it say?*

*What does it mean?*

*So what?*

What do we learn about the promises and character of God in this passage?

What do we learn about ourselves in this passage?

Consider each person and major action of this chapter. List your observations, emotions, and insights thinking of each.

Where is Christ reflected, hinted at, anticipated, or foreshadowed in this passage?

### SO WHAT?

How might your life and relationship with God be shaped by embracing His character and promises? Where are you, and are you not, doing so right now?

Would you say that God has a calling on your life? How has that calling impacted your relationships negatively/positively?

Spend time responding to God in prayer, specifically about God's character and promises from this passage.

# Week Eighteen

## Genesis 39-41



### QUESTIONS

Do the above process, slowly seeking Him, deeply listening to His words, and journaling as you interact with the living God. This will take you longer than one sitting with God in His word in this passage.

*What does it say?*

*What does it mean?*

*So what?*

What do we learn about the promises and character of God in this passage?

What do we learn about ourselves in this passage?

List the major events of these chapters. How specifically in each event is Joseph's obedience apparently met with a lack of blessing, lack of promise keeping, from God?

Where is Christ reflected, hinted at, anticipated, or foreshadowed in this passage?

### SO WHAT?

How might your life and relationship with God be shaped by embracing His character and promises? Where are you, and are you not, doing so right now?

Where are you remaining faithful to God, and feel like He is being unfaithful to you? Talk with Him honestly now about this area of your life.

Spend time responding to God in prayer, specifically about God's character and promises from this passage.

# Week Nineteen

## Genesis 42-49



### QUESTIONS

Do the above process, slowly seeking Him, deeply listening to His words, and journaling as you interact with the living God. This will take you longer than one sitting with God in His word in this passage.

*What does it say?*

*What does it mean?*

*So what?*

What do we learn about the promises and character of God in this passage?

What do we learn about ourselves in this passage?

List the major timeline events of this section. What major moments, phrases, ideas stick out to you? Why do you think that Joseph is “testing” his brothers through this process?

Where is Christ reflected, hinted at, anticipated, or foreshadowed in this passage?

### SO WHAT?

How might your life and relationship with God be shaped by embracing His character and promises? Where are you, and are you not, doing so right now?

Focus on Ch 45. Read it and consider the emotions and embrace of Joseph as he forgives and restores his family to himself. Now, re-read this passage as though God were speaking this embrace and blessing over you. Pray and thank Him for His love and mercy in your life.

Spend time responding to God in prayer, specifically about God’s character and promises from this passage.

# Week Twenty

## Genesis 50

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### QUESTIONS

Do the above process, slowly seeking Him, deeply listening to His words, and journaling as you interact with the living God. This will take you longer than one sitting with God in His word in this passage.

*What does it say?*

*What does it mean?*

*So what?*

What do we learn about the promises and character of God in this passage?

What do we learn about ourselves in this passage?

Why would Joseph's brother's doubt his continued faithful kindness to them?

Where is Christ reflected, hinted at, anticipated, or foreshadowed in this passage?

### SO WHAT?

How might your life and relationship with God be shaped by embracing His character and promises? Where are you, and are you not, doing so right now?

Why do you doubt the love of God for you? Think deeply on this question. Hand those things honestly to God and ask Him to embrace and convince you of His love. Read Matthew 27:27-28:20- All that was planned for evil He used for good, to make you His son/daughter.

Spend time responding to God in prayer, specifically about God's character and promises from this passage.

## Together With Your 3D Group

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You'll find the specific supplementary questions for the scripture passages in the above schedule. You can also find the full details for 3D discussion in our [3D Meeting Guide](#). Here's a summary:

### Bible

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*First, discuss the Bible passage from the week:*

- 1** What does the passage say? What jumps out to you? What key ideas, commands, promises, words, ideas, etc, struck you this week?

- 2** How would you summarize the main truth from the section? How might this inform your thinking and shape the way we are to live?

- 3** Where is the gospel connected to this truth? What does this highlight about who we are, or about who God is?

### Life

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*Share about how this truth impacts your life today:*

For you today, why does this specifically matter?

Is there something God calling you to obey in response to His word?

Is there something you need to do or not do? Something to believe, promise to cling to, or a sin to confess?

Is there someone to share this truth with?

### Prayer

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*Pray throughout your time together.*

Offer praises to God when something encouraging is shared; ask for help from God as challenges are shared.

Close in prayer.

Spend time to respond to God's truth in the scriptures and from your conversation.

Praise Him.

Confess sin to Him.

Thank Him.

Ask Him for His power and provision.

## Resources

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Here are some good resources to consider when getting to know God and growing to live for Christ.

### Recommended Resources

#### [From Eden to Egypt: A Guided Tour of Genesis](#) by Alex Duke

The Bible is one story told through dozens of people over thousands of years. As Christians, we know we're supposed to believe this - and so we do. But when we pick up our Bibles, if we're honest, we sometimes lose the thread, especially with some of the strange and obscure happenings in Genesis. Alex Duke will give everyday Christians a guided tour of these wonderful stories so that they'll see - perhaps for the first time - that it's all there for a reason.

#### [How to Read Genesis](#) by Tremper Longman III

Longman provides a welcome guide to reading and studying, understanding and savoring this panorama of beginnings--of both the world and of Israel. And importantly for Christian readers, we gain insight into how Genesis points to Christ and can be read in light of the gospel.

#### [Genesis: A Commentary](#) by Bruce Waltke

Waltke explores Genesis as "theological literature" while giving attention to the flow and development of the plot and literary structure that shapes the book's message. He provides helpful exegetical notes that address key theological and social issues.

### Bibles & Commentaries

#### English Standard Version (ESV) Study Bible

The ESV Study Bible is a great resource - everyone should own one. Short commentary on each book of the Bible. You'll love this Bible for the passages above.

#### [The Gospel Coalition Commentaries](#) |

[thegospelcoalition.org/commentary/genesis](http://thegospelcoalition.org/commentary/genesis)

TGC has put together a collection of wonderful, accessible, and free digital commentaries.

Matthew Henry's Concise  
Commentary on the Whole Bible  
Online pdf is free and solid.

### Online Media

#### BibleProject | [bibleproject.com/guides/book-of-genesis/](http://bibleproject.com/guides/book-of-genesis/)

They have solid videos for every book of the Bible, themes that flow through the Scriptures, and theology in general. This guide of Genesis offers both an overview of the book and deeper dives into various topics within Genesis.

#### Precept Austin | [preceptaustin.org](http://preceptaustin.org)

Online resource pool with tons of resources, a little much to sort through, but many are helpful.

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 SOAP

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## SCRIPTURE

Begin reading a passage in the bible (if reading the bible is new for you, start in one of the gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John). Stop when something jumps out.

Take a moment to rephrase or summarize what has jumped out to you. What is God saying in this? Write it down. Consider why God brought this section/idea/word to your attention. Write these reflections down.

## OBSERVE

1. What words, themes, or phrases stick out?
2. Does the passage present a specific command or promise?
3. What questions does the passage raise for you?
4. What is the surrounding context of the passage, how does this impact what you have just read?
5. Summarize, in a sentence or two, the main idea/principle of the passage.

## APPLY

1. How does the passage connect with your life right now?
2. Does this prompt you to believe something you didn't before? Is God prompting you to do (or not do) something you weren't doing before? Is God prompting you to share something you haven't shared before?
3. Write, specifically, a way to obey God in response to what you just read.

## PRAY

Now talk to God.

1. Praise Him for who He is.
2. Confess where you fall short.
3. Ask for further clarity, guidance and understanding of the passage.
4. Talk transparently with Him about any frustrations, fears, doubt, or confusion.
5. Ask Him for the power to respond and obey.
6. Thank Him for Jesus, His forgiveness and His love, that is your motivation to obey.

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# GROW

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## GET IN IT: PRAY, REFLECT, OBSERVE

### ***Read + Observe Everything Within the Passage - What Does it Say?***

1. Before you start reading spend time being still. Ask God to show you what's on your heart and mind. Prayerfully ask Him for a desire to know and love Him more. Ask Him to meet you in this time with Him in the Bible and to change you to be more like His Son.
2. Read the passage a few times and carefully observe the words; give full attention to what it says. The purpose of *observation* is to saturate yourself completely with the content of the passage. Look for things such as: important words (what's being talked about), conjunctions (how is one idea connected to another), admonitions (something being commanded), contrasts, comparisons, illustrations, repeated phrases/words, mood, and grammatical construction (verb tenses, prepositional phrases, etc.). Linger here, listening to what God is saying in the detail of His words.
3. Ask questions. This is the bridge between *reading* the passage and *understanding* it. Don't rush this step (even if think you know the answers). Ask yourself many *questions for understanding* such as: Who is writing? Who are the characters? What's the meaning of...? I wonder why...? What's the relationship between...? What is written before and after the passage (context is everything)? What is unexpected in this passage? What rubs me wrong about this passage? How does this fit into the grand story of the scriptures (Creation, Fall, Redemption, Culmination)? What do I learn about myself from this passage? What do I learn about God in this passage? What is the definition of...? Etc.

## RESOURCES: PRAY, INTERPRET, ANSWER

### ***Tools to Help You Answer Your Questions - What Does it Mean?***

The goal here is to use resources to help unleash the meaning. You want to be careful not to bring your own assumptions, perspectives, thoughts, background, and experiences to the text. Though our experiences are helpful, presuppositions can also result in an incorrect, shallow, or unbiblical meaning. Interpreting the passage flows out of your previous questions for understanding (above). Use some of these tools below to help you. Aim to discover the author's purpose in writing.

1. Use the passage and surrounding context: Look before, after, and in your passage to answer as many questions for understanding as possible. Allow scripture to interpret scripture. Context is everything.
2. Pray. Reading the Bible is your conversation with God. Remember to keep talking with Him. Ask Him for clarity and answers; wrestle with Him over hard truths. Confess, rejoice, seek Him.
3. Define words: Look in a dictionary to discover the meaning of key words.
4. Compare translations: Read the passage in several translations to hear it afresh.
5. Study cross-references: Use the footnotes to find similar verses. We recommend the ESV Study Bible.
6. Concordances: A concordance is an alphabetical topical index of Bible passages. You may have one in the back of your Bible. Look up the topic of your passage to find parallel verses. You can find three great concordances here: <http://www.biblestudytools.com/concordances/>.
7. Discuss it with others: Share observations and questions with other believers (3D's). How do others understand this passage? What can you learn from their questions and answers?



8. Commentaries/Bible Atlas/Bible dictionary: These are very helpful in providing background to the geography, history, and culture of biblical times (particularly for harder passages)
9. Check out [www.bestcommentaries.com](http://www.bestcommentaries.com). We recommend the NIV Application Commentary Series, Matthew Henry Commentary (Free Online) and God's Word for You Series.
10. Online Study Tools: [www.blueletterbible.org](http://www.blueletterbible.org) | [www.esvbible.org](http://www.esvbible.org) | [www.bible.org](http://www.bible.org) | [www.biblestudytools.com](http://www.biblestudytools.com)
11. Sermons + Articles: [www.desiringgod.org](http://www.desiringgod.org) | [www.thegospelcoalition.org](http://www.thegospelcoalition.org) | [www.monergism.com](http://www.monergism.com)

## OUTLINE IT: PRAY, SUMMARIZE, SYNTHESIZE

### *Ways to Write Out What You Are Learning - What is the Main Idea/Truth?*

Now you're ready to clarify what you've learned about God and yourself in this passage. You've taken it apart; now put it back together. Choose from these helpful ways to synthesize what you've just read.

1. Outline the text; capture the specific flow of the argument or story.
2. Write the passage in your own words. Make sure to capture the main idea.
3. Illustrate, draw, paint, what is happening in the passage.
4. Journal about what stood out to you in the passage, and pray through it.
5. Diagram or flowchart the key concepts in the text.

## WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE? PRAY, APPLY, TRANSFORM

### *Obey God's Word in Your Life Today - How Do I Respond?*

Knowing God in His word is a core piece of your life-changing relationship with Him. It is crucial to stop and decide to respond to God in obedience. He loves you. You can trust Him, believe in Him, and obey Him.

1. *What am I to believe?* – Did I learn something new about God or myself? Is there any important teaching on which I need to build my faith? Is there truth to understand about God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, grace, mercy, sin, forgiveness, hope, eternal life, suffering etc.?

Remember the Gospel: How is this passage good news to me because of Jesus?

2. *What am I to do?* – How does my faith translate into specific action? Is there something I am compelled to do? Is there sin I must confess to God or someone in my life? To confess sin, go below surface actions to the "why" motivation. How does the gospel offer what my sinful motivation does not provide? How does Jesus motivate my faith to obey in specific action?

Remember the Gospel: How did Jesus do all I did not, forgive me, empower me to obey?

3. *Whom can I tell?* - Is there a person who knows Christ who can help me obey? Is there someone (Christian or not) who might be encouraged, challenged, or resonate with this truth? Does this passage create questions or doubts I can investigate with other believers?

Remember the Gospel: How does God's grace to me in Christ spill over to others?