

taking the **OLD TESTAMENT
CHALLENGE**

**A DAILY
READING
GUIDE**

JUDSON POLING



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Sample

ZONDERVAN

Taking the Old Testament Challenge

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ISBN 0-310-24913-9

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Interior design by Sharon VanLozenoord

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Sample



GENESIS 1-11; PSALMS 1-4

MONDAY Genesis 1; Psalm 1

TUESDAY Genesis 2-3

WEDNESDAY Genesis 4; Psalm 2

THURSDAY Genesis 5-6

FRIDAY Genesis 7-8; Psalm 3

WEEKEND Genesis 9-11; Psalm 4

Look for . . .

- God's creation of the universe
- Humanity's rebellion against God
- God's provision for his wayward children
- The ark built and Noah rescued from the Flood
- The Tower of Babel built and a prideful "pseudo-community" dispersed

Activity

This week, you're on a "God-hunt." Imagine you know very little about God. What do these early chapters of the Bible teach you about him? What are his likes and dislikes? How powerful is he? What is his nature? Also, pay attention to what you see of God in your everyday life through such things as answered prayer, experiences of beauty, or a prompting to reach out to someone.

This Week's Prayer

Pray this prayer throughout the week: *"Heavenly Father, I want to know you through your Word and meet you in my life. What do you want to teach me about yourself today?"*

MONDAY **God's Good Creation**
Genesis 1; Psalm 1

- What hint about the “community-nature” of God (the Trinity) can you see in Genesis 1:2 and 26–27?
- If God is invisible, what do you think “created in the image of God” means?
- How would we all treat each other differently if we really believed we were made in God’s image—even *with* all our faults?

TUESDAY **God's Breath of Life and the Fall of Humanity**
Genesis 2–3

- What clue about our need for community is contained in Genesis 2:18? Is a spouse the only solution for this need (hint: 1 John 4:7–8, 12)?
- How did the serpent twist God’s words in Genesis 3:1 and 4 (compare Genesis 2:16–17)?
- In spite of the curses, how did God show grace after the Fall? What does this tell you about him?
- What New Testament event does Genesis 3:15 foreshadow?

WEDNESDAY **Sin Spreads to Family**
Genesis 4; Psalm 2

- In Genesis 4, sin spreads from the individual to the family. How are families you know still experiencing the fallout from sin today?
- In addition to the offering itself, what (or rather, who) was “out of favor” (Genesis 4:4–5)?
- What details from the story of Cain and Abel does Hebrews 11:4 stress?
- What insights about sin’s effects do you get from Genesis 4:7?

THURSDAY **Sin Spreads Worldwide**
Genesis 5–6

- In Genesis 5, the pattern is “. . . and he died” after each person’s name—except for what exception in verse 24?
- What does Hebrews 11:5 say about Enoch’s special status?
- What was true about Noah that made him the exception to the rest of the world?
- Why do you suppose God waited so long (120 years) to begin the Flood after telling Noah it was coming?
- What does it tell you about God’s character that so many years went by before he judged sin? How are you doing these days mimicking God’s patience even when retribution is justified?

GENESIS 12-31; PSALMS 5-8

MONDAY	Genesis 12-15; Psalm 5
TUESDAY	Genesis 16-18
WEDNESDAY	Genesis 19-21; Psalm 6
THURSDAY	Genesis 22-24
FRIDAY	Genesis 25-26; Psalm 7
WEEKEND	Genesis 27-31; Psalm 8

Look for . . .

- The call of Abram (Abraham) to begin a “new community”
- Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed
- Promised son Isaac born
- Isaac “sacrificed” and returned
- Rivalry between twin grandsons Jacob and Esau
- Jacob’s “stairway to heaven” dream

Activity

This week, continue your “God-hunt” from last week. What are these early chapters of the Bible teaching you about God’s nature? Where do you see God in your everyday life through such things as answered prayer, experiences of beauty, or a prompting to reach out to someone?

This Week’s Prayer

Pray this prayer throughout the week: *“Heavenly Father, I want to know you through your Word and meet you in my life. What do you want to teach me about yourself today?”*

MONDAY **God's Covenant with Abraham**
Genesis 12–15; Psalm 5

- Though Abram was “chosen” out of the nations, whom else did God want to bless through his offspring (Genesis 12:2–3)? Compare this “Old Testament Great Commission” to the New Testament version in Matthew 28:18–20.
- What “saved” Abram according to Genesis 15:6? (Romans 4 and Galatians 3:6–14 are Paul’s inspired commentary on this passage.)
- How does experiencing God’s favor inspire us to reach others with that love? Why do we sometimes lose concern for the lost?

TUESDAY **Ishmael Born, Sarai Languishes—and Laughs**
Genesis 16–18

- Archaeology shows that Sarai’s suggestion in Genesis 16:2 was a common practice in that era; in other words, she was taking her cue from secular culture—with disastrous results. How do we also sometimes miss God’s best, rationalizing that “everybody’s doing it”?
- What parallels can you make between Sarai’s attempt to “help” God and our attempts to force God’s will?
- What spiritual parallel to this story is made in Galatians 4:21–31?

WEDNESDAY **Destruction and Birth**
Genesis 19–21, Psalm 6

- What does Genesis 19:6–8, 16, 26 and 31–38 tell you about the corrupting influence of this culture on Lot and his family?
- Based on what you’ve seen of Abraham and Sarah’s maturity and faithfulness, what is the significance of the word “gracious” in Genesis 21:1? What do you learn about God from this passage?
- What wordplay is made on Isaac’s name (which means “laughter”) in Genesis 21:6 going back to 18:10–15?

THURSDAY **Isaac Gets Life—and Later a Wife**
Genesis 22–24

- Genesis 22 contains a powerful *type* or metaphor for the future sacrifice and resurrection of God’s other “miracle” son, Jesus.
- What parallels in language and imagery do you see between the sacrifice of Isaac and the sacrifice of Jesus in Hebrews 11:17–19; John 3:16; and Romans 8:32?
- Most scholars believe Mount Moriah (Genesis 22:2) is where the temple in Jerusalem was later built (see 2 Chronicles 3:1); today, Islam’s beautiful “Dome of the Rock” stands there.

- What kind of conflicting feelings do you suppose Abraham struggled with? What would it take for you to have such confidence in God?
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FRIDAY **Esau Sells His Birthright**
Genesis 25–26; Psalm 7

- Malachi 1:2–5 harks back to God’s kindness to Jacob over Esau as a warning not to be smug. Have you ever felt spiritually complacent because you know God loves you? How can that be avoided?
 - Paul notes in Romans 9:6–16 how the scheming Jacob was blessed in spite of his character defects. What lesson about God—and grace—do you take to heart from that fact?
 - What additional comments on Esau’s foolishness do you find in Hebrews 12:16–17?
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WEEKEND **Jacob’s Dream and Doublecross; Jacob Flees**
Genesis 27–31; Psalm 8

- How did Jesus use the story of Jacob’s dream (Genesis 28:10–19) to describe his own role as a “bridge” between God and humans (John 1:50–51)?
 - What insight does Genesis 29:20 give about the power of romantic love?
 - Notice that Jacob, the deceiver, almost loses his wife because of her deception of him (Genesis 31:32). How does this illustrate Galatians 6:7?
 - What is the purpose of the stones and the pledge made in Genesis 31:48–50? (This verse is sometimes taken out of context and used on jewelry—hardly appropriate when you learn the meaning!)
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THIS WEEK’S NOTES AND REFLECTIONS

