OLD TESTAMENT CHALLENGE

32 WEEK SUMMARY

□ WEEK 1 Genesis 1-2; Job 38-39 □ WEEK 18 Psalms 33-35; 42; 58; 100; 103; 117:137 □ WEEK 2 Genesis 3-4; 6; 8-9 WEEK 19 Psalms 30; 69; 74; 83; 94; 96; WEEK 3 Genesis 12-17; 21-23; 25:1-11 119:1-112 Genesis 24-25; 28-29; 32-33; 37; WEEK 4 WEEK 20 Song of Songs 39:41 □ WEEK 21 1 Kings 1-3; Proverbs 1; 5-7; Exodus 1-7:13; 8:1-15; 12-14 WEEK 5 10-11:24-26 WEEK 6 Exodus 18-20; 23-24; Deuteronomy 5 □ WEEK 7 Exodus 15-17; 32; Numbers 11-14; 20:1-13 40:42 WEEK 8 Exodus 25; 35-36; 40; Leviticus 16: 26 **WEEK 9** Deuteronomy 1; 4; 6; 13; 15; 18; 24; 29-30 WEEK 10 Joshua 1-6: 10: 14: 23 □ WEEK 11 Deuteronomy 7–9; Numbers 25; Leviticus 18; Joshua 7; 9; Isaiah 2 WEEK 12 Judges 2-8 WEEK 13 Judges 11-16; Ruth WEEK 14 1 Samuel 1-4; 7-8 WEEK 15 1 Samuel 9-10; 13; 15-16; 18; 24; 28; 31 WEEK 16 Isaiah 9; 11; 53; Zechariah 12:10; Micah 5:1-2; Ezekiel 37; Daniel 7:1-14 Nehemiah 1-2; Malachi 4; WEEK 17 1 Samuel 17; 2 Samuel 5-6; 9;

11-15; 18; Psalms 18; 23; 51

□ WEEK 22 Numbers 33:50-56: Deuteronomy 16:21-17:20; 1 Kings 4:20-34; 8-11 □ WEEK 23 Job 1-4; 6; 8; 11; 19; 23; 38:1-7; □ WEEK 24 1 Kings 12; 14-16; 2 Chronicles 14-16 WEEK 25 1 Kings 17-19:14 WEEK 26 1 Kings 19:15-21; 2 Kings 2-6 WEEK 27 The Book of Amos WEEK 28 Isaiah 2-6; 40; 43; 56; 66 □ WEEK 29 2 Chronicles 30-32: Isaiah 7-8; 36-39 WEEK 30 Isaiah 1; Micah □ WEEK 31 Jeremiah 1-2; 18-20; 23; 31:31-34: 37-38: Lamentations 3:22-33 □ WEEK 32 2 Kings 25; Jeremiah 29:1-23; Daniel 9:1-19; Ezra 1:1-8;

Psalms 78-79: Hebrews 11

Fast Track

GOD'S GREATEST DREAM: GENESIS 1-2; JOB 38-39

FIRST READING Genesis 1: Psalm 1 SECOND READING Genesis 2; Psalm 8 THIRD READING Job 38-39; Psalm 19

Look for. . .

- God creates the universe
- God makes man and woman "in his image"
- God's creation is "good"-becomes "very good," once people arrive
- God and the man and woman enjoy a perfect relationship

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 Praver

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?"

WEEK

🔲 FIRST READING 🕴 Genesis 1; Psaim 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?
- Why do you think creation is called "very good" only after humans are on the scene?
- How would we all treat each other differently if we really believed we were made in God's image—even with all our faults?

SECOND READING Genesis 2; Psalm 8

- Are God's limitations on eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:17) proof he is stingy and has a "restrictive" bent (hint: see verse 16)?
- What clue about our need for community is contained in Genesis 2:18? Is a spouse the only solution for this need (hint: see 1 John 4:7–8, 12)?
- What is the spiritual significance of "being naked without shame" (Genesis 2:25)?

THIRD READING Job 38-39; Psalm 19

- What parallels can you make between the creation account in Job and what happened in Genesis 1–2? What are some differences?
- How would you sum up what these passages teach about God's power and creativity? What about his desires for humans?

THIS WEEK'S NOTES AND REFLECTIONS

Fast Track

COMMUNITY BUSTERS: GENESIS 3-4; 6; 8-9

FIRST READING Genesis 3; Psalm 32 SECOND READING Genesis 4; Psalm 10 THIRD READING Genesis 6; 8–9; Psalm 14

Look for...

- Satan distorts what God says
- Humans disobey and fall from innocence
- God provides a "covering" for sin, at the expense of innocent life
- Sin spreads and corrupts the earth
- The great Flood

Activity

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This Week's Prayer

□ FIRST READING Genesis 3; Psalm 32

- 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?

SECOND READING Genesis 4; Psaim 10

- 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 example of sin's deteriorating effects do you see in Genesis 4:19, 23-24?

THIRD READING Genesis 6, 8–9; Psalm 14

- What about Noah 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 in mimicking God's patience even when retribution is justified?

THIS WEEK'S NOTES AND REFLECTIONS

Fast Track

IT'S TIME TO DTR (DEFINE THE RELATIONSHIP): GENESIS 12-17; 21-23; 25:1-11

FIRST READING Genesis 12–14; Psaim 17 SECOND READING Genesis 15–17; 18:1–15; Psaim 47 THIRD READING Genesis 21–23; 25:1–11; Psaim 105

Look for...

- The call of Abraham (Abram) to begin a "new community"
- God promises an heir but takes a long time
- Sarah and Abraham laugh
- Promised son Isaac is finally born
- Isaac is "sacrificed" and returned

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

FIRST READING Genesis 12-14; Psalm 17

- Though Abram was "chosen" out of the nations, who 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 comparison does the New Testament make to Melchizedek in Hebrews 7:1-22?
- What biblical precedent of handling an increase of wealth do you see in Abraham's actions in Genesis 14:20?

SECOND READING Genesis 15-17; 18:1-15; Psalm 47

- What "saved" Abraham (Abram) according to Genesis 15:6?
- How do Romans 4 and Galatians 3:6–14 shed more light on the significance of God's dealings with Abraham?
- How does experiencing God's favor inspire us to reach others with that love? Why do we sometimes lose concern for the lost?

🔲 THIRD READING 🚪 Genesis 21-23; 25:1-11; Psalm 105

- 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)?
- Genesis 22 contains a powerful "type" (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 John 3:16; Romans 8:32; and Hebrews 11:17–19?

THIS WEEK'S NOTES AND REFLECTIONS

Fast Track

GOD IS WITH US: GENESIS 24-25; 28-29; 32-33; 37; 39; 41

FIRST READING Genesis 24-25; 28; Psalm 16 SECOND READING Genesis 29; 32-33; Psalm 22 THIRD READING Genesis 37; 39; 41; Psalm 73

Look for...

- Twins Jacob and Esau's stormy relationship
- Jacob the "Deceiver" pursued by God
- Jacob's name changed to Israel after heavenly dream
- Jacob's son Joseph (of *Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* fame) dreams of greatness
- Joseph stands strong against Potiphar's wife and rises to power in Egypt

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

🔲 FIRST READING 🚪 Genesis 24-25; 28; Psaim 16

- Malachi 1:2–5 harks back to God's kindness to Jacob over Esau as a warning not to be smug. How can we be secure and yet avoid becoming spiritually complacent in God's love?
- 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?
- 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)?

🔲 SECOND READING 🛔 Genesis 29; 32–33; Psalm 22

- What have you seen in Jacob's life that explains his mindset in Genesis 32:7?
- By contrast, what faith lessons do you learn as you read his prayer in Genesis 32:9–12?
- The "man" Jacob wrestles with is clearly a supernatural being, who reminds him that his ultimate struggle is not with Laban or Esau but with God.
- If you were to "wrestle with God," what would be the issue?

🔲 THIRD READING 🛔 Genesis 37; 39; 41; Psaim 73

- Joseph receives two "demotions," yet how does God work even in those injustices (Genesis 37:2–7, 20–23)? What does this teach you about God's power—both the extent and its limitations—in the face of evil?
- What strong warnings concerning those who interpret dreams are given in Deuteronomy 13:1–5 and 18:9–13?
- What other leadership qualities did Joseph exhibit (Genesis 41:33-40)?
- How does Acts 7:9-10 summarize the events of Joseph's life up to this point?

THIS WEEK'S NOTES AND REFLECTIONS

Fast Track

GOD THE DELIVERER: EXODUS 1-7:13; 8:1-15; 12-14

FIRST READING Exodus 1–3; Psalm 90 SECOND READING Exodus 4–7:13; Psalm 37 THIRD READING Exodus 8:1–15; 12–14; Psalm 136

Look for...

- Hebrews (Israelites) become slaves
- Midwives defy Pharaoh's edict
- Moses, a Jew, is raised as a son of Pharaoh
- Moses and the burning bush
- The first Passover
- Miraculous crossing of the Red Sea on dry land

Activity

Continue your "God-hunt" from previous weeks. 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

FIRST READING Exodus 1-3; Psalm 90

- What subtle point might the writer be making by including the names of the Hebrew midwives in the first chapter but not Pharaoh's?
- What do you think it means to "fear" God as in Exodus 1:17, 21?
- God can only define himself in terms of himself ("I AM WHO I AM," Exodus 3:14); what is the implication when Jesus defines himself as he does in John 8:56–59?

🔲 SECOND READING 🚦 Exodus 4-7:13; Psalm 37

- What similarities exist between how God used miracles in Exodus 4:1–9 (to authenticate Moses' message) and how Jesus used miracles in John 2:18–23; 10:25–26, 37–38?
- What parallel can you make to your own life concerning God's words in Exodus 4:10–12?
- In Exodus 6:1–8, the statement "I am the LORD" is repeated four times; what does God reveal to Moses about himself in response to Moses' complaints?
- What would hearing God say "I am the LORD" mean to you as you face your current challenges?

🔲 THIRD READING 🚦 Exodus 8:1-15; 12-14; Psalm 136

- How did God show his faithfulness to the Israelites in Exodus 8:23 and 9:4, 26? Does God always do this (Matthew 5:45)?
- What does the Passover represent and why was it to be remembered (Exodus 12:26–27)?
- How did God provide for the Israelites as they left Egypt (Exodus 12:35–36)? How might their years of slavery justify that provision?
- How do you think your life would change if you saw God do a miracle like the parting of the Red Sea (Exodus 14:31)? Would you ever doubt God again? (After you answer, read Exodus 16:3!)

THIS WEEK'S NOTES AND REFLECTIONS

Fast Track

GOD THE LAWGIVER: EXODUS 18-20; 23-24; DEUTERONOMY 5

FIRST READING Exodus 18-19; Psalm 29 SECOND READING Exodus 20; Deuteronomy 5; Psalm 68 THIRD READING Exodus 23-24; Psalm 46

Look for...

- Moses learns to delegate
- God thunders on Mount Sinai
- The Ten Commandments

Activity

Observe the various laws you obey—or disobey—in the course of an average day (speed limits, paying sales tax, not stealing, voting, etc.). What principles or values can you identify that lie behind the laws? What do you learn about yourself as you react to these laws?

This Week's Prayer

FIRST READING Exodus 18–19; Psalm 29

- Is there a situation in your life, work, or ministry where Jethro's advice to Moses in Exodus 18:17–23 could be applicable?
- How would the terrifying experiences described in Exodus 19 help the people understand God's holiness? Why would that be important to their spiritual development?
- How have you been too casual about God's holiness lately?

SECOND READING Exodus 20; Deuteronomy 5; Psalm 68

- As you read through the Ten Commandments, which one causes an "ouch" factor for you? What do you believe God wants you to do in response?
- The people were afraid of God's power, but Moses said they shouldn't be (see Exodus 20:18–20); how should God's power affect us today? What about times when we don't see it?

THIRD READING Exodus 23–24; Psalm 46

- What do laws like Exodus 23:1–9 teach about the nature of God?
- Compare Exodus 24:17 with Deuteronomy 4:24 and Hebrews 12:28–29. Why do you think God revealed himself like this, as well as like the image in Exodus 24:9–11?

THIS WEEK'S NOTES AND REFLECTIONS

Fast Track

LESSONS FROM THE WILDERNESS: EXODUS 15-17; 32; NUMBERS 11-14; 20:1-13

FIRST READING Exodus 15-17; Psalm 81 SECOND READING Exodus 32; Numbers 11-12; Psalm 95 TMIRD READING Numbers 13-14; 20;1-13; Psalm 106

Look for...

- Manna, quail, and water are miraculously supplied in the desert
- Golden calf idolatry
- Miriam and Aaron undermine Moses' authority
- Spies explore Canaan, but the people fail to enter
- Moses disobeys God in anger and forfeits living in Canaan

Activity

Observe the various laws you obey—or disobey—in the course of an average day (speed limits, paying sales tax, not stealing, voting, etc.). What principles or values can you identify that lie behind the laws? What do you learn about yourself as you react to these laws?

This Week's Prayer

FIRST READING Exodus 15-17; Psalm 81

- After some initial excitement about God's power (Exodus 15:3–11), the Israelites soon grumble about their adversity in the desert; do you think you'd behave the same way in such circumstances?
- Exodus 15:26 states God will heal all the Israelites' diseases. Is this always true for God's people (see Job 2:7–10; 2 Corinthians 12:7–10; Philippians 2:25–30; 1 Timothy 5:23)?
- In Exodus 17:1–2 the people's request for water seems reasonable; what light does verse 7 shed on the sinful attitude behind the request?

SECOND READING Exodus 32; Numbers 11-12; Psalm 95

- What is a contemporary situation similar to what prompted the people to want another god (Exodus 32:1; see also 2 Peter 3:3–4 and Matthew 24:4–13)?
- What lessons about the importance—and limits—of prayer might be learned from Moses' intercession in Exodus 32:11–14, 30–35?
- How are events in Numbers 11:25-29 like Acts 2:14-18 and 19:6?
- What racist bias (Numbers 12:1) was underneath Miriam and Aaron's "spiritual sounding" complaint (verse 2)?

THIRD READING Numbers 13-14; 20:1-1; Psalm 106

- What important lesson does Numbers 13:33 contain about how the spies' view of themselves affected their courage?
- Do you see yourself as a "grasshopper" in an area where God sees you differently? How can you see yourself with his eyes?
- In Numbers 20:8, God gave Moses specific instructions; in verses 10–11 he disobeyed. What attitude do you sense in Moses' words, indicating the reason for God's response (verse 12)?

THIS WEEK'S NOTES AND REFLECTIONS

Fast Track

WHAT INDIANA JONES WAS LOOKING FOR: EXODUS 25; 35-36; 40; LEVITICUS 16; 26

FIRST READING Exodus 25; 35; Psalm 27 SECOND READING Exodus 36; 40; Psalm 50 THIRD READING Leviticus 16; 26; Psalm 66

Look for. . .

- Tabernacle specifications
- Craftsmen equipped by the Holy Spirit to do their work
- Day of Atonement
- Blessings of obedience

Activity

Observe the various laws you obey—or disobey—in the course of an average day (speed limits, paying sales tax, not stealing, voting, etc.). What principles or values can you identify that lie behind the laws? What do you learn about yourself as you react to these laws?

This Week's Prayer

🖸 FIRST READING 🕴 Exodus 25; 35; Psalm 27

- Read Exodus 35:20–29. How do you think the experience of community and worship was affected by the widespread participation of individuals?
- Besides being craftsmen, what else did God's Spirit do for Bezalel and Oholiab (Exodus 35:34)?

SECOND READING Exodus 36; 40; Psalm 50

- All the elements of the tabernacle had two important features: portability and stunning beauty. What might God be teaching the Israelites about his nature through these symbols?
- What lesson did the Israelites learn from Exodus 40:36–38? Why do you suppose God stopped leading them with those sensational means after they entered Canaan? Why do you think he typically doesn't use such dramatic means in our day either?

🔲 THIRD READING 🚪 Leviticus 16; 26; Psalm 66

- God set forth one day each year for the high priest to represent the whole nation of Israel in a ceremony of atonement (called Yom Kippur). What does Hebrews 9 say about this event?
- A feast is an appointed time to remember a particular event or spiritual lesson; one of the elements of the feasts is a Sabbath, or day of rest, dedicated to the Lord. How can you incorporate "remembering" and taking Sabbaths into your rhythm of life?
- What are some examples of God's grace shown in Leviticus 26?
- What provision is made in Leviticus 26:40–45 for a person who sins?

THIS WEEK'S NOTES AND REFLECTIONS

Fast Track

CHOOSE LIFE: DEUTERONOMY 1; 4; 6; 13; 15; 18; 24; 29-30

FIRST READING Deuteronomy 1; 4; 6; Psalm 38 SECOND READING Deuteronomy 13; 15; 18; Psalm 39 THIRD READING Deuteronomy 24; 29–30; Psalm 40

Look for...

- Retelling Israel's history
- Obedience commanded
- "Hear, O Israel..."
- Idolatry condemned
- Laws encouraging compassion
- Offer of life and blessings

Activity

Observe the various laws you obey—or disobey—in the course of an average day (speed limits, paying sales tax, not stealing, voting, etc.). What principles or values can you identify that lie behind the laws? What do you learn about yourself as you react to these laws?

This Week's Prayer

FIRST READING Deuteronomy 1; 4; 6; Psalm 38

- Why do the spiritual-sounding human additions to God's law (which produce legalism) in Deuteronomy 4:2 displease God as much as setting aside commands? (Also see Matthew 15:3–9; 23:4; Revelation 22:18–19, and Eve's additions in Genesis 3:3.)
- What does Jesus say about Deuteronomy 6:4-6 in Matthew 22:37-40?
- Where are spiritual values best modeled according to Deuteronomy 6:7? What happens when they're not modeled there?

SECOND READING Deuteronomy 13; 15; 18; Psalm 39

• If a fortune-teller accurately predicts the future but doesn't honor the Bible, how should we respond, based on principles from Deuteronomy 13:1–4?

- What similarities do you see between Deuteronomy 13:6–8 and Luke 12:51–53 and 14:25–26?
- What truth helps the Israelites—and us—act generously in Deuteronomy 15:4–6, 10, 14, and 18?
- Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 15:11 in John 12:8; why will there "always" be poor Israelites if God blesses obedience (see 2 Corinthians 8:13–15 and Philippians 4:12)?

THIRD READING Deuteronomy 24; 29–30; Psalm 40

- What compassion is engendered by Deuteronomy 24:12-15 and 19-21?
- What bearing does Deuteronomy 29:29 have on unanswered questions in your life? (Also see John 21:25; Acts 1:7; 1 Corinthians 13:12; 2 Corinthians 4:18.)
- How would you translate Deuteronomy 30:19-20 into terms that apply today?

THIS WEEK'S NOTES AND REFLECTIONS

Fast Track

THE LAW OF THE FIRST STEP: JOSHUA 1-6; 10; 14; 23

FIRST READING Joshua 1-3; Psaim 114 SECOND READING Joshua 4-6; Psaim 52 THIRD READING Joshua 10; 14; 23; Psaim 135

Look for...

- Joshua assumes leadership: "be strong and courageous"
- In faith, Rahab the prostitute hides the spies
- Jordan River is miraculously crossed
- Jericho's walls fall down
- The sun stands still
- Joshua's farewell: "As for me and my house...."

Activity

Observe the way living things around you grow and mature: children, pets, plants, and so on. What parallels can you make between their growth—with fits and starts, beauty and bewilderment—and spiritual progress? What most frustrates you about the growth process? What is rewarding?

This Week's Prayer

Pray this prayer throughout the week: "Heavenly Father, use the history of your people 'growing up' as a nation to teach me how to grow up as your child."