

**OLD TESTAMENT EDITION**

*go deeper*

**BIBLE READING CHALLENGE**

**MARCH 1 THRU NOVEMBER 29, 2009**

**OLD TESTAMENT  
READING PLAN &  
DEVOTIONALS**

**Based on THE DAILY WALK BIBLE from WALK THRU THE BIBLE**

**PART 1 OF 2  
WALKS 1 THRU 135**

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# Take the Challenge!

We invite you to accept the *go deeper* Old Testament Bible Reading Challenge, where you will complete the Old Testament by Thanksgiving Weekend, completing 39 weeks of reading 6 passages of scripture and one devotion a week.

For this 2009 Bible Reading Challenge, we've decided to continue to use the reading plan created by *Walk Thru the Bible* available as *the Daily Walk Bible* which can be purchased in several versions from Tyndale publishing or directly from Walk Thru the Bible at [www.walkthru.org](http://www.walkthru.org). There is a New Testament Guide of Walks available as well.

**You don't have to use a special Bible to participate in this challenge!** Use your favorite version. Make a change and try a new translation. Read online. Keep a journal devotional guide, or even a blog.

Thanks to the folks at Walk Thru the Bible, they've given us permission to duplicate the devotional readings that are part of the Old Testament reading plan, and those devotionals are included in this booklet, which is also available on our church website, [www.CiceroChristianChurch.org](http://www.CiceroChristianChurch.org). Navigate through News&Notes→ Resources→ Forms&Policies.

**This is booklet one of two, containing walks for the first 135 days of the challenge. Days 136-274 are in booklet two.**

This booklet of devotionals is taken from *the Daily Walk Bible*, New International Version, published by Tyndale and Walk Thru the Bible, Inc. and is recreated with permission.










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 <b>Walk 1</b> <i>Genesis 1-2</i>	3/1/2009	go deeper day 1 <i>“In the Beginning...”</i>
 <b>Walk 2</b> <i>Genesis 3-5</i>	3/2/2009	go deeper day 2 <i>From Paradise to Pain</i>
 <b>Walk 3</b> <i>Genesis 6-9</i>	3/3/2009	go deeper day 3 <i>Noah’s Ark and God’s Judgment</i>
 <b>Walk 4</b> <i>Genesis 10-11</i>	3/4/2009	go deeper day 4 <i>Construction and Confusion</i>
 <b>Walk 5</b> <i>Genesis 12-14</i>	3/5/2009	go deeper day 5 <i>Abram’s Call and God’s Promises</i>
 <b>Walk 6</b> <i>Genesis 15-17</i>	3/6/2009	go deeper day 6 <i>God’s Covenant with Abram</i>
 <b>Walk 7</b> <i>Devotional</i>	3/7/2009	go deeper day 7 <i>The God You Can Know</i>

**LOOK BACK** Congratulations! You’ve taken an exciting step in your spiritual walk through God’s Word. Already you’ve read about God’s masterful creation of the universe, the first sin and its spread throughout humanity, Noah and his ark, the tower of Babel and the scattering of the nations, and God’s promise to Abraham to make him a father of a nation special to God.

But now let’s pause and refresh ourselves as we walk through the pages of Scripture. About every seventh day you’ll have the opportunity to catch up on your reading from the week if you need to. But more than that, you’ll have a chance to *look back* at what you’ve been reading, *look up* at God and consider what he wants to say to you through his Word, and look ahead at what’s to come.

Don’t hurry through these seventh-day devotionals. Instead, take the opportunity to rest in God’s presence, because you’re not just reading through the Bible this year—you’re walking with God himself.

**LOOK UP** If you believe what popular culture says about God, you might conclude that he is watching us from a distance. But if you believe what you read in the book of Genesis, you’ll conclude that God is nearby and that he takes a personal interest in your life. And you’ll be right.

After all, look at the divine fingerprints clearly visible on the lives of Adam (who walked with God in the cool of the evening), Noah (who rode high above the flood waters in an ark built with the aid of a blueprint from heaven—and notice in Genesis 7:16 who shut the door), and Abram (selected by God to be the father of nations and the channel of blessing to the entire world). That’s not the picture of a distant, detached deity, but of a powerful yet personal God of Creation who not only made you but also wants to guide and provide for you each day of your life.

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THE BEST WAY TO FACE  
LIFE’S CHANGES IS TO FACE  
THE UNCHANGING GOD.  
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**LOOK AHEAD** Even though you have only just begun to read through the Old Testament, pause for a moment to read an important verse from the New Testament. In it you will find one of the most compelling reasons to keep reading each and every day.

In Hebrews 11 you’ll find enshrined the names of many of the heroes of faith you will be meeting “up close and personal” over the next few months. But notice the last half of verse 6: “Anyone who comes to him must believe that (God) exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.”

The God of Creation is not an impersonal cosmic force but a personal, promise-keeping Friend and Guide. When God seems far away and it feels as if he is watching you from a distance, you can be confident it was you, not he, who moved. The one who put the galaxies in space and is big enough to rule the universe is looking for people who earnestly desire to seek and find him.

The God who showed himself strong to Adam, Noah, and Abram thousands of years ago is still alive and well today, and he is the same God you will meet each day in the pages of His Word as you journey through *The Daily Walk Bible*. If you’re not in the habit of doing so, why not begin keeping a journal to record your observations, insights, and action points? By the end of the year, you’ll have a treasure chest of memories about your daily time with God—whether in the cool of the evening or the quiet of the morning, or sometime in between.


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 **Walk 8** 3/8/2009 go deeper day 8

*Genesis 18-20*






*“God’s Judgment on Sodom*

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 **Walk 9** 3/9/2009 go deeper day 9

*Genesis 21-24*

*Isaac—God’s Promise in Flesh and Blood*

 <b>Walk 10</b>	3/10/2009	go deeper day 10
<i>Genesis 25-26</i>	<i>Isaac's Family and Fortune</i>	
 <b>Walk 11</b>	3/11/2009	go deeper day 11
<i>Genesis 27-31</i>	<i>Jacob's Dream and Flight from Esau</i>	
 <b>Walk 12</b>	3/12/2009	go deeper day 12
<i>Genesis 32-36</i>	<i>Jacob's Encounter with Esau</i>	
 <b>Walk 13</b>	3/13/2009	go deeper day 13
<i>Genesis 37-40</i>	<i>Joseph's Slavery in Egypt</i>	
 <b>Walk 14</b>	3/14/2009	go deeper day 14
<i>Devotional</i>	<i>A Faith That Stands the Test of Time</i>	

**LOOK BACK** Buy a new appliance, and you'll be lucky to get a warranty with it that protects your purchase for ninety days. Buy a new car, and you might do a little better: a few years or a few thousand miles. But get ahold of the faith of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, and you'll discover the genuine item that will endure for generations.

Over the past week you have read about the courageous faith of Abraham, who clung to the promises of God against all odds; the quiet faith of Isaac, who built altars, dug wells, and proclaimed the name of the Lord wherever he went; the struggling faith of Jacob, who wasn't content until he experienced God's blessing first-hand; and the patient faith of Joseph, whose confidence in God carried him literally from the pit to the palace. Four different men, four different sets of circumstances, but one thing in common: a faith in God that grew with the years.

**LOOK UP** Definitions of faith are plentiful and at times helpful. Here are just a few. Faith is:

- Forsaking All, I Trust Him
- Taking God at his word
- Seeing the promises of God as present realities
- Living life in such a way that it makes sense only because God exists

Genesis does more than define the faith of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph—it paints a portrait of faith in brush strokes of everyday living. Did you find yourself identifying with the struggles of Jacob? yearning to know the God of Isaac? wishing your faith were as strong as Abraham's? Then wait until you read the rest of Joseph's amazing story. His faith in God will carry him through more than a decade in prison.

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 A FAITH THAT FAILS BEFORE  
 THE FINISH WAS FAULTY  
 FROM THE FIRST.  
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Faith is like a muscle that grows stronger through exercise. And the stress of facing daily circumstances with confidence in God is an exercise that builds a vibrant faith.

Learning patience and persistence (like ninety-nine year old Abraham waiting for God to keep his promise): leaning on God to resolve a bitter family feud (like Jacob seeking to be reunited with his estranged brother, Esau): following God and doing what's right regardless of the consequences (like Joseph, who ended up in the pit and in prison through no fault of his own)—that's how to build a faith that stands the test of time.

**LOOK AHEAD** Perhaps you have been blessed with other models of faith in your lifetime: a parent or family member who walked with God for decades, a spiritual leader who practiced what he or she preached, a friend or coworker who prayed as if God were in the same room. Have you ever shared with that person what his or her model of faith has meant to you? A note or phone call today would be an excellent way to do so.

Models of faith are in short supply today, just as they were in the days of the patriarchs. You can't get physically fit in a day, nor can you develop the faith of a Jacob or a Joseph overnight. But you can see your faith grow and deepen each day as you face life's challenges in the strength of the Lord. Take one of those faith-stretching circumstances or decisions you're facing right now, and talk to your ever-faithful God about it.

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 <b>Walk 15</b>	3/15/2009	go deeper	day 15
<i>Genesis 41-44</i>			<i>Joseph's Brothers in Egypt</i>
 <b>Walk 16</b>	3/16/2009	go deeper	day 16
<i>Genesis 45-47</i>			<i>Joseph's Family United in Egypt</i>
 <b>Walk 17</b>	3/17/2009	go deeper	day 17
<i>Genesis 48-50</i>			<i>The Last Days of Jacob and Joseph</i>
 <b>Walk 18</b>	3/18/2009	go deeper	day 18
<i>Exodus 1-2</i>			<i>Birth of Moses</i>
 <b>Walk 19</b>	3/19/2009	go deeper	day 19
<i>Exodus 3-6</i>			<i>Confrontation with Pharaoh</i>

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**Walk 20**

3/20/2009

go deeper day 20

*Exodus 7-10**First Nine Plagues in Egypt*

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**Walk 21**

3/21/2009

go deeper day 21

*Devotional**Choices That Affect Your Destiny*

**LOOK BACK** Joseph and Moses, a study in contrasts. Joseph grew up in a typical Hebrew household; Moses was raised with an Egyptian silver spoon in his mouth. Joseph spent his early years in prison; Moses spent his early years in the palace. Joseph was nearly a murder victim; Moses fled as a fugitive because of a murder he had committed. Joseph was promoted to the position of prime minister in Egypt; Moses was demoted from a similar position.

And yet in many ways these two men were similar. Both encountered God under miraculous circumstances (Joseph in visions, Moses at the burning bush). Both were used by God in remarkable ways: Joseph to administer famine relief in Egypt, Moses to lead God's people out of Egyptian slavery. And both were faced with crucial decisions at pivotal moments in their lives—decisions that affected their destinies.

**LOOK UP** Life is a series of choices and consequences. Decide today to step in front of a speeding car, and you will face the consequences of that choice for the rest of your life (as brief as that life may be). Decide to harbor bitterness in your heart for something someone said or did to you, and you will experience the by-product of that bitterness. Decide to leave God out of your plans, and you will soon discover that life without God is foolish and unfulfilling (Psalm 14:1).

Consider for a moment some of the “could haves” from the lives of Joseph and Moses. Joseph could have been bitter and unforgiving for what his brothers had done to him—and with good reason. He could have shaken his fist at God for the injustice he experienced in the pit and in prison. He could have been angry with God for the years that were wasted because of other people's cruelty and lies. He could have ignored the plight of his countrymen. He could have settled down in Midian and nurtured a grudge against God for the rest of his life. Moses could have ignored the burning bush and the commission he received from God. He could have allowed his past mistakes and present feelings of inadequacy to keep him from obeying God. But in each case he chose to do something else.

Joseph and Moses were each faced with a choice. And the paths they chose determined the destinations they reached.








**LOOK AHEAD** Life is a matter of choices, not chances. And the choices you face today may be remarkably similar to those that confronted Joseph and Moses:

- Bitterness or forgiveness
- Anger or acceptance
- Self-promotion or seeking God's Kingdom
- Self-pity over the past or putting the past behind you
- Comfortable compromise or painful obedience

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THE PERSON WHO PROVIDES  
FOR THIS LIFE BUT TAKES  
NO CARE FOR THE NEXT IS  
WISE FOR A MOMENT BUT  
A FOOL FOREVER  
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You may not find yourself standing before the world's most powerful leader. But then again, when you dare to choose wisely like Joseph or Moses, you never know.

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 <b>Walk 22</b>	3/22/2009	go deeper	day 22
<i>Exodus 11-12</i>	<i>Tenth Plague, Passover, and Exodus</i>		
 <b>Walk 23</b>	3/23/2009	go deeper	day 23
<i>Exodus 13-15</i>	<i>Crossing the Red Sea</i>		
 <b>Walk 24</b>	3/24/2009	go deeper	day 24
<i>Exodus 16-18</i>	<i>Israel's Journey to Mount Sinai</i>		
 <b>Walk 25</b>	3/25/2009	go deeper	day 25
<i>Exodus 19-20</i>	<i>The Ten Commandments</i>		
 <b>Walk 26</b>	3/26/2009	go deeper	day 26
<i>Exodus 21-24</i>	<i>Civil and Ceremonial Laws</i>		
 <b>Walk 27</b>	3/27/2009	go deeper	day 27
<i>Exodus 25-27</i>	<i>Design of the Tabernacle</i>		
 <b>Walk 28</b>	3/28/2009	go deeper	day 28
<i>Devotional</i>	<i>Father Knows Best</i>		

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**LOOK BACK** On center stage for this entire week of reading has been Moses, the humble servant leader of the Hebrew people. Whether calling down plagues upon hard-hearted Pharaoh, leading God's people through the Red Sea and the wilderness, or receiving God's law at Mount Sinai, Moses demonstrates the attitudes of humility and authority. Entrusted with a high-visibility role, Moses never flaunts his position or exploits his countrymen for personal gain. Rather, he leads

them in the fear of the Lord. That's not to say Moses' patience isn't severely tried by God's stiff-necked people. (You have already read about six encounters between Moses and his rebellious countrymen, and four more confrontations lie just ahead.) But Moses' leadership is consistently marked by 20/20 vision—Exodus 20:20 vision, that is: “Do not be afraid. God has come to test you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning.”

**LOOK UP** Words communicate thoughts. If you want to know what someone is thinking, listen carefully to what he or she is saying. And if you want to know the most important thought on a person's heart, ask that person to express his or her thoughts in just ten words. Try it yourself. In the space provided, take ten words (or less) to capture the most important thought on your mind right now.

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MORE THAN 35,000 LAWS  
HAVE BEEN WRITTEN  
TRYING TO IMPROVE UPON  
WHAT GOD SAID IN THE TEN  
COMMANDMENTS.  
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The Ten Commandments that Moses received on Mount Sinai contain more than ten words. But in them you will find ten thoughts that are near and dear to the heart of God. Think back over what you read this past week (or turn to Exodus 20 if you need a quick review), and summarize what God said about each of the following:

Other gods (20:3)	Idols (20:4-6)	Sabbath (20:8-11)
Parents (20:12)	Murder (20:13)	Adultery (20:14)
Stealing (20:15)	Lying (20:16)	Coveting (20:17)
Misusing the name of God (20:7)		











And lest you conclude that the Ten Commandments are only found in the Old Testament, notice what Jesus said to the rich young ruler in Mark 10:19.

**LOOK AHEAD** It might be easy to conclude that God as described in the pages of the Old Testament is a God of dos and don'ts. After all, look at all the rules and regulations that the people of God were required to observe. But God often goes beyond telling his people what to do and tells them why they should do it: he wants what is best for them. Watch for the telltale words *for*, *because*, or *that*, which signal that God is about to include the *why* along with the *what*.

As you continue your reading in the books of Exodus and Leviticus, don't get lost in the maze of statutes and ordinances. Remember to use “Exodus 20:20 vision” as you read. And if you're curious to know

which of the hundreds of commandments is nearest and dearest to the heart of God, take a look at Matthew 22:34-40 and Mark 12:28-34.

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 <b>Walk 29</b>	3/29/2009	go deeper	day 29
<i>Exodus 28-31</i>			<i>Special Instructions for Priests</i>
 <b>Walk 30</b>	3/30/2009	go deeper	day 30
<i>Exodus 32-34</i>			<i>Incident of the Gold Calf</i>
 <b>Walk 31</b>	3/31/2009	go deeper	day 31
<i>Exodus 35-40</i>			<i>Tabernacle Erected and Occupied</i>
 <b>Walk 32</b>	4/1/2009	go deeper	day 32
<i>Leviticus 1-3</i>			<i>Three Voluntary Offerings</i>
 <b>Walk 33</b>	4/2/2009	go deeper	day 33
<i>Leviticus 4-7</i>			<i>Two Compulsory Offerings</i>
 <b>Walk 34</b>	4/3/2009	go deeper	day 34
<i>Leviticus 8-10</i>			<i>Priestly Orders and Offense</i>
 <b>Walk 35</b>	4/4/2009	go deeper	day 35
<i>Leviticus 11-15</i>			<i>Personal Purity in Daily Life</i>
 <b>Walk 36</b>	4/5/2009	go deeper	day 36
<i>Leviticus 16-17</i>			<i>The Holiest Day of the Year</i>
 <b>Walk 37</b>	4/6/2009	go deeper	day 37
<i>Leviticus 18-20</i>			<i>A Holy People Uniquely His</i>
 <b>Walk 38</b>	4/7/2009	go deeper	day 38
<i>Devotional</i>			<i>A Blueprint for Worship</i>

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**LOOK BACK** If you have safely navigated through the Scripture readings for this past week, congratulations! Many who begin with great enthusiasm to read all the way through the Bible wonder if they are going to fall by the wayside when they get to the book of Leviticus. It needn't be that way if you understand the intention of the Author.

In Exodus 25 through 30 you read about the divine blueprint for the Tabernacle, the ornate traveling tent that would be Israel's place of worship on the march to the Promised Land. In exquisite detail God set forth the plan, and Moses—assisted by skillful, Spirit-filled

workmen—followed the plan to the last detail. Only when the job was done “just as the LORD had commanded” did the glory of God fill the Tabernacle.

But who would assist those who came to the Tabernacle to worship? And how would they know how to offer acceptable sacrifices on behalf of the people? Leviticus provides a handbook for the Levites and priests who carried the awesome responsibility of leading the nation in corporate and private worship.

**LOOK UP** What would you think of a restaurant chef who decided that the weights and measures in a recipe were a needless bother and ignored them in preparing your dinner?

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YOU CANNOT  
WALK WITH GOD  
AND RUN WITH  
THE DEVIL.  
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What would you think of an auto mechanic who decided that a sledgehammer and machete were just as good as wrenches and screwdrivers when it came to servicing your car?








What would you think of a surgeon who used hedge clippers because “I never was much good with a scalpel”?

Probably you would use someone else’s services. Why? Because *how* you do something is as important as *what* you do. Well-meaning but inept chefs, mechanics, and surgeons don’t get the job done.

Think of worship today in the same way. It’s not enough to *want* to worship God—you must consider carefully *how* you worship God. Just as the Israelites could not come before a holy God without being ceremonially clean, they could not approach a holy God with an unclean heart—and neither can you. You cannot call something insignificant when God has called it indispensable.

**LOOK AHEAD** Charles Swindoll has commented that we in America are guilty of playing at our worship, worshipping our work, and working at our play. Worship, done properly, is hard work. It involves the entire person in an attitude of humility and dependence upon God, acknowledging the “worth-ship” of our Creator and Sustainer. Begin now to prepare for the next visit you will make to your local house of worship. Here are some verses to look up and meditate upon as you prepare to give God the honor and adoration he so richly deserves: 1 Chronicles 16:29; Psalm 95:6; John 4:24; Revelation 15:4.

And feel free to worship him for a few minutes right now. You might want to read the words of Psalm 100 out loud as the expression of your heart.

 <b>Walk 39</b>	4/8/2009	go deeper day 39
<i>Leviticus 21-23</i>		<i>Priestly Purity</i>
 <b>Walk 40</b>	4/9/2009	go deeper day 40
<i>Leviticus 24-27</i>		<i>Future Purity in the Promised Land</i>
 <b>Walk 41</b>	4/10/2009	go deeper day 41
<i>Numbers 1-4</i>		<i>The Nation Counted and Camped</i>
 <b>Walk 42</b>	4/11/2009	go deeper day 42
<i>Numbers 5-8</i>		<i>The Nation Cleansed for Worship</i>
 <b>Walk 43</b>	4/12/2009	go deeper day 43
<i>Numbers 9-12</i>		<i>The Nation Commences the Journey</i>
 <b>Walk 44</b>	4/13/2009	go deeper day 44
<i>Numbers 13-16</i>		<i>Rebellion and Death in the Wilderness</i>
 <b>Walk 45</b>	4/14/2009	go deeper day 45
<i>Devotional</i>		<i>Holy Habits for a Holy People</i>

**LOOK BACK** Repetition is the key to retention. (Let's have that again.) Repetition is the key to retention. If you feel comfortable making notations in your Bible, the portions of Leviticus and Numbers you have read this past week have given you plenty of opportunity to mark words and phrases that are frequently repeated:

"clean...unclean. . .atonement. . .I am the LORD your God. . .holy."

They serve as reminders that a holy God demanded nothing less than holy people in a holy camp. And when that holiness was interrupted by defilement or disobedience, God had already provided a way for the priest to make atonement (covering) for the sin. The sounds of animals being slaughtered, the smell of spilled blood and roasting flesh, the sight of smoke rising constantly from the altar—these were all too familiar to the nation. Without the shedding of blood there could be no forgiveness of sin or fellowship with God.

**LOOK UP** Imagine taking a handful of mud and coating your hands thoroughly. Now answer a series of questions.

- What would it take to get your hands clean enough to do work in the garage? (No problem. Just wipe them on your overalls, and that should do the trick.)
- What would it take to get your hands clean enough to be allowed at the dinner table? (Soap and water might be needed there!)

- What would it take to get your hands clean enough to put on your best white shirt or blouse without soiling it? (Lots of soap and hot water!)
- What would it take to get your hands clean enough to do abdominal surgery? (Soap, water, a strong disinfectant, and lots of scrubbing time.)

But here's one more question to ponder.

- What would it take to get your hands clean enough for God to allow you into heaven? (As one little boy was heard to exclaim: "You mean only people with clean hands get into heaven? Then I'm a goner!") Turn to Psalm 24:3-4, and see what God's Word says about clean hands.


**LOOK AHEAD** Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people. Jesus prayed, "Father, hallowed be your name" (Luke 11:2). He knew that God, who is holy, cannot tolerate the presence of that which is unholy or defiled. So how is it possible for imperfect people to get to heaven? If no soap on earth can rid the stain of sin, what hope is there for any of us?

Answer: none at all... apart from the cleansing work of Jesus Christ, God's Son. "And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Hebrews 10:10). What no soap, disinfectant, or miracle detergent could do for our sinful condition, Jesus accomplished by his death, burial, and resurrection. "The blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

"Have you washed your hands?"  
 Mother's tend to ask questions like that a lot.

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 WHITEWASHING THE PUMP  
 WILL NOT PURIFY THE WATER.  
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Do you have clean hands and a pure heart?" The Father in heaven will one day ask you. If you're not sure what answer you would give, make Hebrews 10 your meditation today.

 <b>Walk 46</b>	4/15/2009	go deeper	day 46
<i>Numbers 17-20</i>	<i>The Staff, Red Heifer, and Rebellion</i>		
 <b>Walk 47</b>	4/16/2009	go deeper	day 47
<i>Numbers 21-25</i>	<i>The Bronze Snake and Brash Seer</i>		
 <b>Walk 48</b>	4/17/2009	go deeper	day 48
<i>Numbers 26-30</i>	<i>Recounting and Reviewing</i>		
 <b>Walk 49</b>	4/18/2009	go deeper	day 49
<i>Numbers 31-33</i>	<i>The Last Days of a Great Leader</i>		

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**Walk 50** 4/19/2009 go deeper day 50  
*Numbers 34-36* *Laws of the Promised Land*

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**Walk 51** 4/20/2009 go deeper day 51  
*Deuteronomy 1-4* *Reviewing the Wanderings*

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**Walk 52** 4/21/2009 go deeper day 52  
*Devotional* *Lessons in the Wilderness*

**LOOK BACK** In a book titled Numbers, you'd expect to find statistics and figures, and this past week's reading does not disappoint. After an initial census to determine the strength of the fighting force, God instructed Moses to cleanse and consecrate the nation for worship and warfare. After a special celebration of the Passover at Mount Sinai, the people began the journey with great expectations. But rejoicing soon turned to rebellion, leading to a fateful decision at the desert of Paran and forty years of wandering in the wilderness. Even in the midst of death and discouragement, God's grace was evident in the form of daily provisions of manna and water. The bronze snake was God's lifesaving antidote for poisonous snakes, and a talking donkey showed Balaam the folly of trying to curse God's people. A second census (nearly forty years after the first) showed that the loss of a generation through unbelief had not decimated the nation. It would now remain for the new generation to learn from the errors of its elders.

**LOOK UP** You cannot get from Mount Sinai to the Promised Land without passing through the wilderness. The issue was not whether the children of Israel would pass through the wilderness (they would), but rather how long they would camp there.

What should have been an eleven-day experience became a forty-year nightmare. What should have been a brief inconvenience became instead a "terminal illness" for an entire generation. What should have produced a few blisters and first-degree burns ended up costing 1.2 million people their lives.

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MOST PEOPLE  
DON'T MIND  
OBSTACLES, AS  
LONG AS THEY  
DON'T GET IN  
THEIR WAY  
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A wilderness is never pleasant. It tends to be dry, barren, lifeless, and uncomfortable. You tend to get thirsty there and find yourself yearning to be in a place of rest and refreshment.

But as you continue your Daily Walk through the Bible, you will discover something intriguing: many of God's choicest servants spent time in this kind of an environment. Moses did (forty years, to be exact). David did. John the Baptist did. The apostle Paul did. And even

our Lord was tempted for forty days in a barren wilderness region near the Dead Sea.








**LOOK AHEAD** A dry season in the wilderness does something interesting for a tree: it causes the roots to go down deeper in search of life-giving moisture. And usually the result is a stronger tree that is better able to weather the storms of life.

The same is true of the man or woman of God who faces the hot blast of desert-like conditions. What may at first glance appear to be barren, fruitless days on the “backside of God’s blessing” may, in fact, be preparing you for days of great fruit-bearing just ahead. Wilderness times will come—expect them. But don’t allow the heat to make you bitter or disobedient toward God. “Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything” (James 1:4).

The tragedy of the book of Numbers is not that the nation went through the wilderness, but that through disobedience they camped there so long.

By the way, where are you camped these days?

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 <b>Walk 53</b>	4/22/2009	go deeper	day 53
<i>Deuteronomy 5-7</i>			<i>Reviewing God’s Demands</i>
 <b>Walk 54</b>	4/23/2009	go deeper	day 54
<i>Deuteronomy 8-11</i>			<i>Remembering Lessons in Obedience</i>
 <b>Walk 55</b>	4/24/2009	go deeper	day 55
<i>Deuteronomy 12-16</i>			<i>Religious Laws for Canaan</i>
 <b>Walk 56</b>	4/25/2009	go deeper	day 56
<i>Deuteronomy 17-20</i>			<i>Civil Laws for Canaan</i>
 <b>Walk 57</b>	4/26/2009	go deeper	day 57
<i>Deuteronomy 21-26</i>			<i>Societal Laws for Canaan</i>
 <b>Walk 58</b>	4/27/2009	go deeper	day 58
<i>Deuteronomy 27-30</i>			<i>Commitment to the Covenant</i>
 <b>Walk 59</b>	4/28/2009	go deeper	day 59
<i>Deuteronomy 31-34</i>			<i>Farewell and Death of Moses</i>

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*Devotional**All God Requires*

**LOOK BACK** “Take two,” says your doctor, instructing you to take two tablets of medicine every day until you feel better.

“Take two,” says the director, instructing the actors to repeat a part of the drama that didn’t come off right the first time.

Both would be accurate summaries of the chapters you have read this past week. “Take two tablets of the law,” says Moses, and not as your daily medication but your daily *meditation*. In so doing, the new generation would avoid the folly and heartache of their parents, who died in the desert rather than in the land of milk and honey. The nation is given a second chance to discover that the law is designed not to restrict and shackle but to align the nation with God’s holy purposes, resulting in provision, protection and prolonged life (5:32-33).

It’s a lesson God wants parents to teach their children, and Israel to teach the nations around them: “And now, O Israel, what does the LORD your God ask of you but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to observe the LORD’S commands and decrees that I am giving you today *for your own good?*” (10:12-13, emphasis added).

**LOOK UP** What does the highway patrol in your state require of motorists? Stay within the speed limit; don’t endanger others; keep your car under control; don’t drive without a license—simple things designed for the well-being of all. Would you say that the highway patrol is heavy-handed and unfair to make such demands of motorists, or that their intent is to ensure that everyone is able to use and enjoy the highways to the fullest?

The latter, of course.

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A PERSON WHO  
“KNOWS EVERYTHING”  
HAS A LOT TO LEARN.  
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In the same way, the Author of Life, who ought to know how life was meant to be lived, desires you to discover how to live life to the fullest. After all, it was Jesus who said, “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full” (John 10:10). God is no cosmic killjoy, out to make you miserable with needless rules and regulations. His commands and warnings are for our ultimate good, and those who ignore them will face consequences.








You can be sure if God says something more than once (such as the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5), we must pay attention!

**LOOK AHEAD** Perhaps the prophet Micah said it best. Read his words out loud twice, looking for the answer to the question: What is God expecting me to do?

“He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8).

Now close your eyes, and tell God what you read and what you intend to do about it.

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 <b>Walk 61</b>	4/30/2009	go deeper	day 61
<i>Joshua 1-5</i>	<i>Preparation of the People for War</i>		
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 <b>Walk 62</b>	5/1/2009	go deeper	day 62
<i>Joshua 6-8</i>	<i>Central Campaign</i>		
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 <b>Walk 63</b>	5/2/2009	go deeper	day 63
<i>Joshua 9-12</i>	<i>Moving South and North</i>		
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 <b>Walk 64</b>	5/3/2009	go deeper	day 64
<i>Joshua 13-17</i>	<i>Portions for Five Tribes</i>		
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 <b>Walk 65</b>	5/4/2009	go deeper	day 65
<i>Joshua 18-21</i>	<i>Portions for Seven Tribes</i>		
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 <b>Walk 66</b>	5/5/2009	go deeper	day 66
<i>Joshua 22-24</i>	<i>Joshua's Last Words</i>		
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 <b>Walk 67</b>	5/6/2009	go deeper	day 67
<i>Devotional</i>	<i>Leading the Way</i>		

**LOOK BACK** Last month we read about Moses' leadership of God's people. Now we've just finished the book of Joshua, in which God calls Joshua to fill Moses' sandals. Leadership transitions are never easy. Any time a leader of Moses' stature and longevity passes from the scene, there is good reason for the followers to wonder how the new leader will compare with his predecessor. Will he be kind or cruel? Will he walk in the footsteps of the one before him? Will he have his own agenda or follow God faithfully?

What ultimately allowed a smooth transition from Moses to Joshua was the nation's realization that their true leader had never changed. The Lord had led Israel through Moses, his servant, and now the Lord

would lead Israel through his servant Joshua. So continued the pattern of servant leadership the nation had known for forty years. After a fitting farewell for Moses, Joshua led the nation on a memorable crossing of the flood-swollen Jordan River and began a seven-year campaign to conquer and drive out the inhabitants of the Promised Land. Out of a total of thirty-one battles, Joshua would lose only one (can you name it?)—a temporary setback quickly corrected.

**LOOK UP** In children’s games, anyone can be a leader. For instance, in a game like Follow the Leader, everyone takes a turn.

But what about leadership in the household of faith? Who are the leaders? Are leaders made or born? And how do you know when you have the qualifications for leadership?

Regardless of your present role of leadership or “followership” in the family of God, it is worthy ambition to obtain more leadership responsibilities (1 Timothy 3:1). But leadership is not for everyone. In fact, the qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 may surprise you. They have nothing to do with your net worth, your degrees, or the number of civic clubs you belong to. Leadership isn’t something to be earned. It is a recognition of spiritual maturity, proven character, and the reputation you have developed both inside and outside the church.

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BE CAREFUL IF YOU  
THINK YOU ARE  
LEADING PEOPLE—THEY  
MAY BE CHASING YOU.  
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If you aspire to be a leader in ministry within the family of God, then ask yourself, “How well have I managed the other responsibilities I have been entrusted with? Have I managed well my physical body, my mind, my family, my resources, my tongue, my reputation? Am I hospitable, teachable, mature, worthy of respect, self-controlled, honest in all my dealings?” If the answer to these questions is yes, then an expanded leadership role may be appropriate for you.

**LOOK AHEAD** Regardless of whether an enlarged leadership responsibility may be in your future, the attitude of a servant-leader ought to be your ambition. Listen to this exhortation from the apostle Peter: “Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are *willing*, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but *eager* to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being *examples* to the flock... . All of you, clothe yourselves with *humility* toward one another” (1 Peter 5:2-5, emphasis added).

Servants like that are the kind of leaders God is looking for.

 <b>Walk 68</b> <i>Judges 1-5</i>	5/7/2009	go deeper day 68 <i>First Four Judges</i>
 <b>Walk 69</b> <i>Judges 6-8</i>	5/8/2009	go deeper day 69 <i>Gideon, the Hesitant Hero</i>
 <b>Walk 70</b> <i>Judges 9-12</i>	5/9/2009	go deeper day 70 <i>Gideon's Son and Six Judges</i>
 <b>Walk 71</b> <i>Judges 13-16</i>	5/10/2009	go deeper day 71 <i>Samson, the Carnal Champion</i>
 <b>Walk 72</b> <i>Judges 17-21</i>	5/11/2009	go deeper day 72 <i>Two Examples of National Degradation</i>
 <b>Walk 73</b> <i>Ruth 1-4</i>	5/12/2009	go deeper day 73 <i>Ruth: An Old Testament Love Story</i>
 <b>Walk 74</b> <i>Devotional</i>	5/13/2009	go deeper day 74 <i>Against the Odds</i>

**LOOK BACK** This week you have read about the judges of Israel, military leaders who fought to deliver the nation from the results of its persistent sin. More than a dozen are described in the book of Judges, but Deborah and Gideon are two of the best. Deborah, a prophetess and songwriter, is instrumental in delivering the nation from Canaanite oppression. Gideon, a timid man with unimpressive credentials, leads the world's most unusual military band in the destruction of Midian's army—without the ancient world's equivalent of a shot being fired.

Casting a shadow bigger than life across the last half of the book of Judges is Samson, a man with incredible physical strength and equally remarkable moral weakness. Set apart by his parents from birth for special service to God, Samson ends his life in failure and dishonor. His great potential and equally great moral collapse mirror the condition of the nation, which becomes so corrupt and degraded by the end of the book that even shocking brutality and immorality no longer cause the people to blush. The story of Ruth shines as an exception to this sad state of affairs. Ruth the Moabitess forfeits the security of her homeland for the privilege of knowing the one true God.

**LOOK UP** The plans may be man's, but the odds are God's. And chances are good you wouldn't want to face the odds Gideon faced as

God whittled down his fighting force to something that would bring great glory to the Lord of hosts. Get your pen or pencil, and let's do a little arithmetic:

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WHEN WE PUT OUR CARES  
IN GOD'S HANDS, HE PUTS  
HIS PEACE IN OUR HEARTS.

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- How large was the Midianite army before the battle began? (According to Judges 8:10, there were only 15,000 soldiers left after 120,000 had fallen in battle. That would make a total of \_\_\_\_\_, 000 enemy soldiers to begin with.)
  - According to Judges 7:3, Gideon had 10,000 soldiers left after 22,000 had gone home fearful. Add those two numbers together, and he had started with \_\_\_\_\_, 000 men.
  - That means initially Gideon faced "odds" of 135,000: 32,000 or roughly 4:1. What did God say about those odds (Judges 7:2)?
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- After the fearful ones left, Gideon's army was reduced to just \_\_\_\_\_,000. The Medianite army was still the same size: \_\_\_\_\_,000. Now Gideon faced odds of 135,000:10,000 or roughly 13.1. What did God say about those odds (Judges 7:4)?
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- After the water-drinking test, Gideon's army was further reduced to just \_\_\_\_\_ men (Judges 7:7). Meanwhile the Midianite army was still the same size: \_\_\_\_\_,000. That means Gideon now faced odds of 135,000:300 or roughly 450:1. And what did God say about those odds (Judges 7:7)?
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**LOOK AHEAD** God delights to bring great victory out of certain defeat. At times he seems to go out of his way to ensure that the odds are overwhelmingly against his people so that when victory is achieved, there can be only one explanation: God did it.

Would you have had the courage to do what Gideon did? Before you conclude that Gideon was some sort of Old Testament "super saint," recall that when the story began he was cowering in a winepress trying to escape the eyes of the Midianites (Judges 6:11-12). This was just a humble servant who obeyed God in spite of the odds.

Perhaps the odds look no better from where you are standing as you look at your own prospects for victory over a physical disability, an uncertain future, or a family situation that defies solution. Give God a chance to show himself strong, and you may see the odds swing decidedly in your favor.

 <b>Walk 75</b> <i>1 Samuel 1-3</i>	5/14/2009	go deeper day 75 <i>Samuel, the Dedicated Servant</i>
 <b>Walk 76</b> <i>1 Samuel 4-8</i>	5/15/2009	go deeper day 76 <i>Samuel, the Faithful Servant</i>
 <b>Walk 77</b> <i>1 Samuel 9-12</i>	5/16/2009	go deeper day 77 <i>Saul, the Chosen King</i>
 <b>Walk 78</b> <i>1 Samuel 13-15</i>	5/17/2009	go deeper day 78 <i>Saul, the Rejected King</i>
 <b>Walk 79</b> <i>1 Samuel 16-19</i>	5/18/2009	go deeper day 79 <i>David, the Secret King - Elect</i>
 <b>Walk 80</b> <i>1 Samuel 20-23</i>	5/19/2009	go deeper day 80 <i>David, the Pursued King - Elect</i>
 <b>Walk 81</b> <i>Devotional</i>	5/20/2009	go deeper day 81 <i>True Strength</i>

**LOOK BACK** The young boy Samuel shows that you don't have to be old—just attentive—to hear and obey the voice of God.

Though “tuned in” to God in many ways, Samuel neglects the proper discipline of his sons, resulting in a national call for a king despite the dire predictions of what a king would do. God instructs Samuel to anoint Saul, a man of great physical stature but scant spiritual character. Saul's early *successes* soon give way to disobedient *excesses*, resulting in God's verdict of “rejected” and the anointing of Saul's successor. David, the young shepherd boy plucked from the pasture, would soon sing and “sling” his way into the hearts of his countrymen. But the path to the palace would be fraught with danger, discouragement, and deadly intrigue as David runs for his life from a crazed King Saul.

**LOOK UP** Q: Who had more strength—Samuel or Samson?

A: It all depends upon your definition of *strength*. If by *strength* you mean “the physical ability to bring down the house,” then it's no contest. He-man Samson beats little boy Samuel every time.

But if by *strength* you mean inner moral character, the ability to do what is right even when no one is watching, godliness, self-control, and ethical integrity, then little boy Samuel beats Samson hands down.

Samson spent his entire life seeing how close to the edge of moral collapse he could get without falling over. In the end he lost his sight, his influence, and eventually his life. To be sure, God won a great victory over the Philistines at Samson’s death, but imagine how many other victories might have been achieved if not for Samson’s compromising stance toward right and wrong.






By contrast, in his early years Samuel was intent on hearing and obeying God’s voice. And despite any failure as a father of which he may have been guilty, “the LORD was with Samuel as he grew up, and he let none of his words fall to the ground” (3:19). Samuel is a good example of someone who tuned in to what God was saying to him.

**LOOK AHEAD** What a strange, upside-down world we live in when those receiving the greatest public applause and financial reward are those who can dunk a basketball, act in front of a camera, or sell a million albums—with no regard to their moral character or ethical conduct.

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**GOOD CHARACTER  
 IS LIKE GOOD  
 SOUP—  
 IT IS USUALLY  
 HOMEMADE.**  
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By contrast, those in line for God’s recognition and reward are those who “are poor in spirit... meek... merciful... peacemakers... persecuted because of righteousness” (Matthew 5:3-10). No, you’re not likely to see them in the spotlight this side of heaven. But when God hands out his “Well done, good and faithful servant” awards (Matthew 25:21, 23), you can be sure there will be some surprises.

Incidentally, which type of recognition are you striving to receive?

 <b>Walk 82</b> <i>1 Samuel 24-26</i>	5/21/2009 <i>David, the Recognized King—Elect</i>	go deeper day 82
 <b>Walk 83</b> <i>1 Samuel 27-31</i>	5/22/2009 <i>David, the Exiled King—Elect</i>	go deeper day 83
 <b>Walk 84</b> <i>2 Samuel 1-4</i>	5/23/2009 <i>David, King of Judah</i>	go deeper day 84
 <b>Walk 85</b> <i>2 Samuel 5-7</i>	5/24/2009 <i>David’s Reign over a United Nation</i>	go deeper day 85
 <b>Walk 86</b> <i>2 Samuel 8-10</i>	5/25/2009 <i>David’s Growing Kingdom</i>	go deeper day 86

**LOOK BACK** Here is a summary to help you keep track of 1 and 2 Samuel, and 1 and 2 Kings:

- 1 Samuel describes the life of Samuel and the first king he anointed (Saul).
- 2 Samuel describes the life of the second king Samuel anointed (David).
- 1 Kings describes the life of the last king to rule over one kingdom (Solomon).
- 2 Kings described the demise of two kingdoms (Israel and Judah).

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THERE ARE TIMES WHEN  
GOD ASKS NOTHING OF  
HIS CHILDREN EXCEPT  
SILENCE, PATIENCE,  
AND TEARS.  
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**LOOK UP** Have you learned how to WOTL yet?

No, we're not talking about how to waddle like a duck but rather how to **Wait On The Lord**, like the young shepherd boy David did. The youngest of eight brothers, entrusted with the unenviable "chore" of tending the family's flocks, David could have viewed his job as monotonous and his future as bleak. Instead, he looked for and found constructive ways to pass the time while tending the sheep.

Notice the way this young shepherd is described in 1 Samuel 16:18. He had earned a remarkable reputation in the obscurity of the sheepfold:

- "Knows how to play the harp"; he was an accomplished musician who practiced long hours, though his only audience consisted of sheep and stars.
- "A brave man and a warrior"; he taught bears and lions not to fool with his flock.
- "A fine-looking man"; he lived in the bush but didn't look like one.
- "The LORD is with him"; God's blessing upon his life was evident to all.

**LOOK AHEAD** It's not much fun tending sheep. The hours are long, the task demanding, the pay disappointing—and the sheep almost never say thanks.

But it's remarkable how many people take on the challenge nonetheless: teachers, parents, and ministers dutifully tend to their students, children, and congregations. They understand the importance of a long-term perspective, patience, and determination if a harvest is ever to be realized in the next generation.

David saw each day as an opportunity to develop his walk with God. He composed songs, practiced with his lyre and sling, defended his flock against all predators, and sought to develop himself in body, soul, and spirit. Twice presented with a tempting opportunity to cut short the wait, David chose to WOTL rather than lift his hand against King Saul. Write WOTL on a three-by-five inch card, and place it where you're likely to see it often today (such as next to your phone). Let it remind you to trust in God's goodness as you wait on him (see Psalm 27:13-14).

 <b>Walk 89</b> <i>2 Samuel 15-18</i>	5/28/2009	go deeper day 89 <i>Absalom's Quest to Rule</i>
 <b>Walk 90</b> <i>2 Samuel 19-20</i>	5/29/2009	go deeper day 90 <i>David's Return to the Throne</i>
 <b>Walk 91</b> <i>2 Samuel 21-24</i>	5/30/2009	go deeper day 91 <i>David's Final Words and Acts</i>
 <b>Walk 92</b> <i>1 Kings 1-4</i>	5/31/2009	go deeper day 92 <i>Solomon's Commission: A Throne from God</i>
 <b>Walk 93</b> <i>1 Kings 5-8</i>	6/1/2009	go deeper day 93 <i>Solomon's Construction: A Temple for God</i>
 <b>Walk 94</b> <i>1 Kings 9-11</i>	6/2/2009	go deeper day 94 <i>Solomon's Compromise: Turning from God</i>
 <b>Walk 95</b> <i>1 Kings 12-16</i>	6/3/2009	go deeper day 95 <i>Israel's Civil War</i>
 <b>Walk 96</b> <i>1 Kings 17-19</i>	6/4/2009	go deeper day 96 <i>Ahab's Battle with Elijah</i>
 <b>Walk 97</b> <i>1 Kings 20-22</i>	6/5/2009	go deeper day 97 <i>Ahab's Battle with Aram</i>
 <b>Walk 98</b> <i>The Danger of a Divided Heart</i>	6/6/2009	go deeper day 98

**LOOK BACK** Solomon's request for wisdom from God (3:6-9), combined with his commitment to walk in the footsteps of his father

(3:3), ensure that Solomon’s reign will mark the Golden Age of Israel’s kings. People come from as far away as Africa to see for themselves the splendor and wisdom of Solomon’s administration—and they are not disappointed.

Blessed with an international reputation and indescribable wealth, Solomon sets out to fulfill the dream of his father, David: a suitable Temple in which to worship the God of heaven. Curiously, God’s house takes only half as long to build as Solomon’s own house.

Soon there are other warning signs that all is not well in Solomon’s palace. Wealth, women, weapons of war, and worship of idols soon crowd God out of Solomon’s heart. Under the selfish leadership of such kings as Jeroboam and Ahab, the twin kingdoms begin to disintegrate. The scene is set for a striking figure with a penetrating message: Elijah from Tishbe.

**LOOK UP** What would you think of an athlete who ran as fast as the wind for the first half of the race, then walked the rest of the way and came in dead last?

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THE INCONSISTENT  
CHRISTIAN IS ONE OF THE  
DEVIL’S BEST WORKERS.  
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What would you think of a builder whose high-rise buildings were strong and safe... for the first ten stories but were marked by shoddy workmanship and half-finished rooms on the rest of the floors?

What would you think of a baker whose bread and pastries had a marvelous aroma... but upon taking a bite you discovered they were half-baked?

Chances are you would look for someone who gave as much attention to the *finish* as to the *start*. In every pursuit of life—whether running, building, baking, or serving God—a job half done is little better than a job that was never begun.

Solomon’s reign started with great promise and potential. The king who “was greater in riches and wisdom than all the other kings of the earth” (10:23) seemed to have everything going for him. But in his final years, the wisest man who ever lived began to play the fool. Once his heart had focused on God alone, but now Solomon’s heart was turned to other loves: foreign women, fast chariots, glittering wealth. And when the last (and saddest) chapter of his life was written, the king with a divided heart left behind a kingdom that would soon be divided as well.

**LOOK AHEAD** The Bible has many sobering things to say about the danger of half-heartedness. The church at Laodicea was neither hot nor cold. It was merely lukewarm in its zeal for God. And notice God’s surprising reaction to a church like that (Revelation 3:15-16).

Neglect and preoccupation can be lethal, as Solomon observed when he wrote about the field of a slothful man in Proverbs 24:30-34. Without knowing it, Solomon was writing a parable about his own life. Don't let his words become a parable about your life as well. If you have made a halfhearted commitment to God or a family member, what better time than today to put your whole heart into it?

 <b>Walk 99</b>	6/7/2009	go deeper day 99
<i>2 Kings 1-3</i>		<i>Reign of Joram</i>
 <b>Walk 100</b>	6/8/2009	go deeper day 100
<i>2 Kings 4-8</i>		<i>Record of Elisha</i>
 <b>Walk 101</b>	6/9/2009	go deeper day 101
<i>2 Kings 9-12</i>		<i>Jehu's Revenge, Joash's Reforms</i>
 <b>Walk 102</b>	6/10/2009	go deeper day 102
<i>2 Kings 13-17</i>		<i>Ruin of Israel</i>
 <b>Walk 103</b>	6/11/2009	go deeper day 103
<i>2 Kings 18-21</i>		<i>Reforms of Hezekiah</i>
 <b>Walk 104</b>	6/12/2009	go deeper day 104
<i>2 Kings 22-25</i>		<i>Ruin of Judah</i>
 <b>Walk 105</b>	6/13/2009	go deeper day 105
<i>Devotional</i>		<i>Prayers God Delights to Answer</i>

**LOOK BACK** One nation under Solomon (Israel) becomes two nations split apart under their own succession of rulers. Beginning with 1 Kings 12, you have been reading the parallel histories of these two kingdoms.

Elijah's prophetic ministry (1 Kings) is mostly public and national in scope. His encounter with the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel is a classic "battle of the gods," and his prayer life an example to all believers (James 5:17-18). By contrast, his successor, Elisha (2 Kings), ministers with equal power and a double portion of Elijah's spirit, but mostly in private, one-on-one encounters.

The northern kingdom of Israel, clearly on a collision course with disaster since the days of Ahab, finally meets its fate at the hands of the cruel Assyrians. The surviving kingdom of Judah narrowly averts

a similar end and is revived during the reign of good king Hezekiah. His zealous reforms and heartfelt prayers temporarily turn the tide of national apostasy and halfhearted religion.

**LOOK UP** When you pray, does God

- (a) always answer your prayers?
- (b) sometimes answer your prayers?
- (c) seldom answer your prayers?

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TRUE PRAYER IS A WAY OF  
LIFE, NOT JUST AN  
EMERGENCY DETOUR.  
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If the frequency of God's answers makes you suspect you still have much to learn about prayer, you are in good company. Even Jesus' closest traveling companions came to him one day and said, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1). It was a request Jesus was only too happy to grant.

In your reading of 1 and 2 Kings you have encountered two remarkable examples of people who prayed the kinds of prayers God delights to answer.

Elijah prayed a prayer of *self-sacrifice*. In order to bring his countrymen to a spiritual crossroads, Elijah prayed that it wouldn't rain—knowing that if God answered his prayer, Elijah's own brook would dry up, and his life would be in jeopardy.

Hezekiah prayed a prayer of total *dependence*. Spreading before the Lord the threatening letter he had received from the Assyrian general, Hezekiah affirmed that God and God alone had the power to deliver his people. Hezekiah's confidence was not in his wealth, his wisdom, the size of his army, or the eloquence of his words—but in God's omnipotent greatness.

**LOOK AHEAD** Close your time in the Word today by following the exhortation of Peter (one of the disciples who asked Jesus to teach him to pray) in Peter 5:5-7: "All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble'. Humble yourselves, therefore under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time."

Think of a problem or decision you are facing right now, and pray it through like Elijah or Hezekiah. Lay your request before the Lord; be honest and transparent before him. Are you willing to obey God totally, even if it means personal inconvenience or risk? Are you willing to lean on God alone, even if others criticize or ostracize you? Tell him so right now.

It's a humbling thing to acknowledge that you cannot solve your own problems— but when you let God be your problem solver, don't be surprised if you see enemies flee and fireworks begin.

 <b>Walk 106</b>	6/14/2009	go deeper day 106
<i>1 Chronicles 1-9</i>		<i>David's Ancestors</i>
 <b>Walk 107</b>	6/15/2009	go deeper day 107
<i>1 Chronicles 10-16</i>		<i>David's Early Years as King</i>
 <b>Walk 108</b>	6/16/2009	go deeper day 108
<i>1 Chronicles 17-21</i>		<i>David's Kingdom and Covenant</i>
 <b>Walk 109</b>	6/17/2009	go deeper day 109
<i>1 Chronicles 22-27</i>		<i>David's Preparations for the Temple</i>
 <b>Walk 110</b>	6/18/2009	go deeper day 110
<i>1 Chronicles 28-29</i>		<i>David's Final Words and Deeds</i>
 <b>Walk 111</b>	6/19/2009	go deeper day 111
<i>2 Chronicles 1-5</i>		<i>Solomon's Magnificent Temple</i>
 <b>Walk 112</b>	6/20/2009	go deeper day 112
<i>Devotional</i>		<i>Sound of Celebration</i>

**LOOK BACK** The end of 2 Kings marks the end of two kingdoms. Assyria ransacks Israel, dispersing its population in the process (2 Kings 17). Babylonia descends upon defenseless Jerusalem, destroying its walls, burning its Temple, and dislocating many of its inhabitants (2 Kings 25).

Beginning with 1 Chronicles, the story takes a leap back in time, returning again to the days of King David. Don't worry, there's nothing wrong with your Bible. The books of 1 and 2 Chronicles retrace the same portion of the story you have already read in 2 Samuel through 2 Kings. Only this time you are seeing it through the eyes of a priest (perhaps Ezra, though we don't know for sure).

Parts of the story that were covered briefly in 2 Samuel through 2 Kings now unfold with interesting new detail in 1 and 2 Chronicles. Other accounts you've read in the books of Kings are omitted completely here in order to focus on the events that have the most profound spiritual impact upon David and his descendants. You'll enjoy this "second look" at the man after God's own heart (David), the son who followed in his footsteps (Solomon), and the descendants who perpetuated his dynasty.

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SINCE WE FIGHT FOR THE  
LIBERTY TO WORSHIP,  
SHOULD WE NOT MAKE  
MORE USE OF THAT LIBERTY?  
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**LOOK UP** In a few short weeks we'll reach the book of Psalms—the longest book in the Bible and the halfway point in your journey through the Bible. But you need not wait till then to begin to read and enjoy the majestic anthems of praise and adoration penned by King David, for in 1 Chronicles 16 you'll discover portions of three psalms blended into one:

- Verses 8-22 are drawn from Psalm 105:1-15.
- Verses 23-33 come from Psalm 96:1-13.
- Verses 34-36 echo Psalm 106:1, 47-48.

As David and the appointed Levites ministered before the Lord, they found their hearts turning in three directions: *upward* (in spontaneous praise to God), *outward* (in public testimony and thanksgiving for God's greatness), and *inward* (in humble dependence upon God). As you read the words of 1 Chronicles 16, you can almost hear the music ascending to heaven as the king and his people sing for joy before the Lord.

**LOOK AHEAD** Whether you are vocally gifted, instrumentally talented, or “musically challenged” you will find ample motivation this week to sing to the Lord... praise the Lord... and give thanks to the Lord in musical worship. Set aside a few minutes to lift your voice or play your instrument to the glory of God. (No audience necessary but the Lord!) Here are the titles of several hymns and choruses you may want to use to focus your thoughts (along with the Scriptures from which they are drawn):

- “How Great Thou Art” (Psalm 86:10)
- “Great Is the Lord” (Psalm 145:3)
- “Be Exalted, O God” (Psalm 57:10-11)
- “O Worship the King” (Psalm 104:1)
- “A Mighty Fortress Is our God” (Psalm 46:1-7)
- “Holy, Holy, Holy” (Revelation 4:8)

Have you ever thought of composing your own poem of praise or song of celebration? Remember, God delights to hear our “joyful noise” made in adoration of him.

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 **Walk 113**                      6/21/2009                      go deeper day 113  
*2 Chronicles 6-9*                      *Solomon's Worship and Works*

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 **Walk 114**                      6/22/2009                      go deeper day 114  
*2 Chronicles 10-12*                      *Rebellion against Rehoboam*

<b>Walk 115</b>	6/23/2009	go deeper day 115
<i>2 Chronicles 13-16</i>		<i>Reigns of Abijah and Asa</i>
<b>Walk 116</b>	6/24/2009	go deeper day 116
<i>2 Chronicles 17-20</i>		<i>Reform under Jehosphaphat</i>
<b>Walk 117</b>	6/25/2009	go deeper day 117
<i>2 Chronicles 21-25</i>		<i>Reigns of Jehoram to Amaziah</i>
<b>Walk 118</b>	6/26/2009	go deeper day 118
<i>2 Chronicles 26-28</i>		<i>Reigns of Uzziah to Ahaz</i>
<b>Walk 119</b>	6/27/2009	go deeper day 119

*Devotional*

*Ageless Obedience*

**LOOK BACK** First Chronicles provides a priestly view of David’s reign. Second Chronicles continues this “divine editorial” by focusing on David’s descendants, the kings who ruled over the southern kingdom of Judah. Kings whose names were briefly mentioned in 2 Kings receive more extensive space in 2 Chronicles, and for good reason. Asa, Jehosphaphat, Joash, Uzziah, and Jotham led reforms that helped to restore righteousness and postpone judgment for decades. They made a difference in their generation because they walked with God and used their God-given influence for good.

Notice how the chronicler highlights both the *what* of their reign and the *why* behind their success (emphasis added):

“The LORD was with Jehosphaphat because in his early years he walked in the ways his father David had followed”  
(2 Chronicles 17:3).

“As long as (Ussiah) sought the LORD, God gave him success”  
(2 Chronicles 26:5).

“Jotham grew powerful because he walked steadfastly before the LORD his God” (2 Chronicles 27:6).

Sadly, the influence of these godly kings is largely blunted by the cumulative effect of many more ungodly kings. The spiral is clearly downward, and time is running out for Judah.

**LOOK UP** There were no headlines in Uzziah’s day, but if there had been, they might have read: “Teenager Takes Over Reins of Government.”

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**OBEDIENCE SHEDS LIGHT  
ON THE HIDDEN THINGS  
OF GOD.**  
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At the tender age of sixteen, the boy-king Uzziah began a reign that would eventually stretch more than half a century. Barely old enough to drive a chariot, Uzziah suddenly found himself steering an entire nation! Armed with a healthy fear of God, a robust commitment to do what was right, and a circle of godly advisers, Uzziah wasted no time “going to school” on his nation. Here’s how his report card might have looked, according to 2 Chronicles 26:


- Achievements: “He went to war... and broke down the walls of Gath, Jabneh and Ashdod” (v. 6).
- Architecture: He “rebuilt towns... built towers... and dug many cisterns...” (vv. 6, 9, 10).
- Agriculture: “He had much livestock... He had people working his fields and vineyards...” (v. 10).
- Armed forces: He had “a well-trained army... of 307,500 men trained for war” (vv. 11, 13).
- Accolades: “His fame spread far and wide, for... he became powerful” (v. 15).

Straight A’s in his kingly curriculum, to be sure. And yet, when the final report card was in, Uzziah had failed in the role of king because “after {he} became powerful, his pride led to his downfall” (26:16). Arrogance and presumption later in life resulted in his being stricken with leprosy and dying a tragic death.


**LOOK AHEAD** Believe it or not, an even younger king than Uzziah once sat upon the throne of Judah—a seven-year-old named Joash (24:1). Faithfulness to God knows no age limit. Whether young or old, you are the right age to seek God and obey him with a whole heart.

The apostle Paul underscored this point when he told his youthful understudy Timothy, “Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity” (1 Timothy 4:12). Now there’s a homework assignment you can spend a lifetime on.


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 <b>Walk 120</b>	6/28/2009	go deeper day 120
<i>2 Chronicles 29-32</i>		<i>Reform under Hezekiah</i>

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 <b>Walk 121</b>	6/29/2009	go deeper day 121
<i>2 Chronicles 33-36</i>		<i>Reigns of Judah’s Last Kings</i>

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 <b>Walk 122</b>	6/30/2009	go deeper day 122
<i>Ezra 1-3</i>		<i>Commission of the Temple Builders</i>

 <b>Walk 123</b> <i>Ezra 4-6</i>	7/1/2009 <i>Completion of the Temple Project</i>	go deeper day 123
 <b>Walk 124</b> <i>Ezra 7-8</i>	7/2/2009 <i>Commission of the Spiritual Leaders</i>	go deeper day 124
 <b>Walk 125</b> <i>Ezra 9-10</i>	7/3/2009 <i>Completion of the Spiritual Reforms</i>	go deeper day 125
 <b>Walk 126</b> <i>Nehemiah 1-2</i>	7/4/2009 <i>Wall Plans Conceived</i>	go deeper day 126
 <b>Walk 127</b> <i>Nehemiah 3-5</i>	7/5/2009 <i>Wall Plans Commenced</i>	go deeper day 127
 <b>Walk 128</b> <i>Devotional</i>	7/6/2009 <i>Strength of the Lord</i>	go deeper day 128

**LOOK BACK** Hezekiah’s and Ezra’s names have similar meanings: *Ezra* means “help”; *Hezekiah* means “God strengthens.” But there the similarity ends. Hezekiah was a king; Ezra was a priest. They never met since they lived hundreds of years apart in different parts of the world: Hezekiah in Jerusalem; Ezra in Persia. Hezekiah was trying to protect his nation from enemy attack; Ezra was intent on rebuilding his nation after seventy years of exile.

And yet these two heroes of the Old Testament accomplished great things for God because they shared a common passion to read, study, and obey the law of God. They were able to provide help and strength in the lives of others because their own lives were anchored to the unchanging foundation of God’s Word.

Hezekiah and Ezra, Ruth and Esther—what a rich heritage of heroes and heroines you’ll find in the pages of the Old Testament. Men and women who walked with God in uncertain days, made tough decisions, faced giant-sized enemies, prayed powerful prayers, and accomplished mighty feats in the strength of the Lord.

**LOOK UP** Ezra learned firsthand about the hand of the Lord his God (Ezra 7:6, 9; 8:18, 22). When an attribute of God is described in human terms, it’s called an anthropomorphism. Here are just a few of the many ways in which God is described in

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 THE FINGER THAT  
 POINTS THE WAY IS  
 PART OF THE HAND  
 THAT PROVIDES  
 THE NEED  
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human terms. Can you explain the significance of each analogy?

The “hand” of the Lord (Joshua 4:24) helps us come to grips with his

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The “voice” of the Lord (1 Samuel 15:22) speaks of his

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The “eyes” of the Lord (2 Chronicles 16:9) causes us to view his

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The “arm” of the Lord (Isaiah 51:9) refers to his

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When a boxer throws a jab, his intent is to cause his opponent to feel the power of his hand. All the strength of the boxer is channeled and directed through his hand. In the same way, God desires to channel his power through the life of the believer. Ezra’s life was full of God’s power because Ezra’s heart and mind were full of God’s word.




**LOOK AHEAD** If you’re experiencing a season of weakness or fruitlessness in your spiritual life, perhaps you need to check your “power supply.” A branch that is wilted and fruitless has obviously become severed from the vine, its source of strength and life (John 15:1-8).

Happiness, fruitfulness, prosperity—each is the heritage of anyone who makes the law of the Lord his or her daily meditation (Psalm 1:1-3). It’s a truth Ezra learned, and so can you.

To meditate is to chew the cud, drawing nourishment from the life-giving truths of the Bible just like a cow draws nourishment from the life-giving grass. And typically one “chew” isn’t enough. There is ample reason to meditate upon the same passage over and over again, for God delights to give fresh insight from familiar passages.

Thumb back through the readings you’ve covered so far this year, and find a favorite passage or devotional. Read it again thoughtfully, reflecting on how the intervening months have helped to sharpen your insight into its meaning and application.

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 <b>Walk 129</b>	7/7/2009	go deeper day 129
<i>Nehemiah 5-8:1</i>		<i>Wall Plans Concluded</i>
 <b>Walk 130</b>	7/8/2009	go deeper day 130
<i>Nehemiah 8:2-10</i>		<i>Renewed Worship Commenced</i>
 <b>Walk 131</b>	7/9/2009	go deeper day 131
<i>Nehemiah 11-13</i>		<i>Renewed Nation Cleansed</i>

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**Walk 132** 7/10/2009 go deeper day 132

*Esther 1-2*

*Esther's Exaltation*

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**Walk 133** 7/11/2009 go deeper day 133

*Esther 3-4*

*Haman's Cunning Plot*

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**Walk 134** 7/12/2009 go deeper day 134

*Esther 5-7*

*Haman's Humiliation*

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**Walk 135** 7/13/2009 go deeper day 135

*Devotional*

*Going and Coming With God*

**LOOK BACK** "Go home!" (That's what Artaxerxes told Nehemiah to do.)

"Stay put!" (That, in essence is what Mordecai told Esther to do.)

Sounds a bit confusing until you realize that both commands were God's will for his choice servants. When Nehemiah saw there was a rebuilding job to do hundreds of miles away in his beloved Jerusalem, he prayerfully began to form a plan to tackle the job. When the king inquired, Nehemiah was ready.

By contrast, Esther saw a need right where she lived in Persia. Her Jewish countrymen were threatened with annihilation at the hands of wicked Haman. With the help of her cousin, Mordecai, Esther fasted, prayed and formed a plan. And when the king inquired, Esther was ready.

Each faced withering opposition and seemingly insurmountable odds. They both had plenty of reason never to attempt what they did. And each saw God work a miracle through his available servant. What exciting walks of faith to study and model your life after as you seek to obey God in the daily decisions of life.

**LOOK UP** Rome wasn't built in a day. Neither are most other things that have the potential to touch many lives or accomplish great good. Careful planning, combined with fervent prayer and plenty of hard work, can accomplish things for God that would never be possible on the spur of the moment.

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WE MUST ASK  
OUTSELVES,  
"HOW MUCH OF  
ETERNITY IS IN  
WHAT WE ARE  
DOING?"  
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Here is a partial list of long-range projects you might want to consider. If one person can't accomplish them alone, why not share your vision and burden with a circle of close praying friends, and see if God might want you to tackle something together:

- Completely eliminate credit card debt.
- Begin a recreation program with inner-city youth.

- Start a backyard Bible class or weekly evangelistic Bible study in your neighborhood.
- Write a book.
- Take a short-term mission trip to another country.
- Call your former classmates from high school or college, and tell them the difference Jesus has made in your life.
- Build a low-cost house for a family who is dependent on government aid.
- Run for public office.
- Go back to school and finish that bachelor, master, or doctoral degree.

**LOOK AHEAD** No one believed Nehemiah could rebuild the walls of Jerusalem that lay in rubble and ruin. Fortified by long hours of prayer and tears, and joined by fifty thousand of his motivated countrymen, they completed the task miraculously in fifty-two days despite intense opposition.

No one believed Esther could stay the death sentence hanging over her countrymen. But with her heart prepared through prayer and fasting, and counseled by her godly cousin, Mordecai, Esther ventured into the very presence of the king to make her bold request. As a result, thousands of Jews were spared.

No one may believe that you can accomplish what God has laid upon your heart either... until you attempt it in the strength of the Lord.

*You've completed 135 of the 274 day*

*go deeper* **Old Testament Bible Reading Challenge**

*Give yourself a pat on the back, but don't stop now!*

*Get a copy of part 2 of the challenge at Cicero Christian Church, or visit [www.CiceroChristianChurch.org](http://www.CiceroChristianChurch.org), click on News & Notes, then Resources, then Forms and Policies.*



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