



ontrack devotions

GENESIS

MAY 2024

MONTHLY PRAYER SHEET

"...The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective." James 5:16

Who I Will Reach	How I Will Do It	How It Went

Other Requests	Date Answered	How It Was Answered

MONTHLY COMMITMENT SHEET

Name: _____

This sheet is designed to help you make personal commitments each month that will **help you grow in your walk with God**. Fill it out by determining

1. What will push you
2. What you think you can achieve

If you need help filling out your commitments, seek out someone you trust who can help you. Share your commitments with those who will help keep you accountable.

Personal Devotions:

How did I do with my commitment last month? _____

I will commit to read the OnTrack Bible passage and devotional thought _____ day(s) each week this month.

Church Attendance:

How did I do last month with my attendance? _____

I will attend church _____ time(s) this month.

I will attend small group _____ time(s) this month.

I will attend _____ time(s) this month.

(List any other activities you will participate in this month—Bible study, church events, etc.)

Bible Memory:

How did I do with Bible memory last month? _____

I will memorize _____ verse(s) this month.

Outreach:

How did I do last month with sharing Jesus? _____

I will share Jesus with _____ this month.

I will serve my local church this month by _____

When you were born, one of the first questions someone probably asked your parents was who you look like. Have you ever wondered who you look like? Do people ever say, "You remind me of someone!" Verse 26 in today's reading says, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness." The fact is, you were created by God to resemble Him. This does not mean that you have the same color hair or eyes as God. He created you to be like Him on the inside. He gave you emotions and a desire for knowledge. You are His creation and in verse 31, He called you very good. When people look at your life, do they see any resemblance of God? If someone wanted to know what God is like and they drew their conclusions from your life, what conclusions would they come to? People often take what God created as good and become something that does not resemble Him. What could point the world toward God, instead, turns people away from Him. In what ways can people tell you were created in God's image? What needs to change so that you resemble God?

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING

GENESIS 1

Adam and Eve learned a valuable statement the hard way. In the beginning, they had the perfect setup. No worries! They only had to follow God's one rule—don't eat of the tree in the middle of the garden. It was the only tree, of the hundreds or thousands in the garden from which they were not to eat. They lived obediently until the serpent came along. Satan told them if they would eat from this tree they would be equal to God. Surely, God had misled them and they wouldn't really die if they ate from it. They chose to believe Satan. They saw that the fruit was good—so they ate it. They decided to follow their own insight instead of obeying what God had clearly said. Satan had convinced them God's way was restrictive. They stopped trusting God's judgment and started relying on their own. In what areas of your life are you relying on your own judgment? Every area of your life falls under God's direction. Learn from Adam and Eve's mistakes. Ask for God's wisdom today.

SAY WHAT?

In what area of your life do you struggle to obey God's direction?

SO WHAT?

Why is it so hard for you to trust what God has said in that area?

NOW WHAT?

What changes can you make to obey God and avoid trusting your own insight?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

EXTRA READING
GENESIS 2, 3

In verse 7 of this passage, what warning did God give to Cain? Why did He warn him? Could it be that God knew Cain was headed down a road that would eventually take him to a place he would not want to be? It all started with a bit of sibling rivalry. Cain was angry because God had looked more favorably on Abel's offering than on his own. God addressed Cain's anger and gave him a warning. In this passage, we see that Cain did not heed God's warning. He allowed anger and jealousy to continue in his heart and mind. Out of his anger and jealousy grew lies and ultimately murder. Cain did not start out wanting to murder his brother, but he allowed a seemingly small area of sin in his life to fester and grow beyond his ability to control it. What sin have you tolerated that is not very powerful right now, but could grow to be masterful? Ask God's forgiveness today, and ask for His help to control it. We cannot tolerate sin, regardless of how small it seems.

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING

GENESIS 4, 5

Have you ever had a close friend turn their back on you? If you have, you understand how God felt while you read these verses. God created mankind to have fellowship with Him. In this passage, we see that God was betrayed by the humanity He had created. His heart was filled with such pain from their wickedness that He decided to wipe mankind from the face of the earth. But one man, Noah, stood out from the rest. Noah was the only one who found friendship with God. According to verse 9, he walked with God and did everything just as God had commanded him. For this reason Noah's rewards were great. Not only was his entire family saved from death, but he also experienced God's friendship. As God observes your life on earth, how do you think He feels about what He sees? Do you want to experience the sweet friendship Noah had? Determine to do what God commands and experience the same fellowship with Him that Noah enjoyed. He is waiting for you.

SAY WHAT?

Have you ever been betrayed by someone you care about? What happened?

SO WHAT?

How did it make you feel?

NOW WHAT?

How can you use that experience to help you apply today's reading?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment should you make?

EXTRA READING
GENESIS 6

What phrase in today's passage is repeated from yesterday's passage? Why would God tell us in verse 5 the same thing He said about Noah in verse 22 of yesterday's extra reading? Is there a difference between the wording of the two verses? Basically, God wants us to get the point that Noah was obedient. He did everything God asked. God was pleased with Noah. Noah was a success in God's eyes. His success came from a total commitment to obedience. He probably looked foolish to his peers while building this immense boat when they had never even heard of rain, let alone a flood. God's instructions must have seemed illogical and difficult at times. But Noah knew he was following God's clear directions. Because of his faithfulness, his whole family was saved. Could God say the same thing about you? Are you doing all He has commanded? Are you willing to look ridiculous to others in order to be a success in God's eyes? Do you have this level of commitment to obedience? What would need to change?

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING

GENESIS 7

What has been the most difficult experience in your life? Losing a friend? A relative? A home? A reputation? How did you respond to that experience? In today's reading, Noah gives us a wonderful example of a proper response to the difficult experiences each of us might face. It must have been hard for him to understand everything God was doing during this time in his life. He must have heard the cries of his neighbors as the water overtook them. He saw the whole world wiped out. He was cooped up with bored relatives and smelly animals for months and months. Yet, throughout the whole experience, Noah was able to do all that God had commanded. When he reached dry ground, his first act was to thank God with a sacrifice. He chose to dwell on God's provision rather than on his own personal loss. Does this reflect your perspective on life? Is there something for which you have trouble being thankful? Noah had an obedient heart and received the blessing of God. Is a bitter heart preventing the blessing of God in your life? What can you do to respond as Noah responded?

SAY WHAT?

What difficult circumstances have you faced in your life?

SO WHAT?

How have you responded to them?

NOW WHAT?

What are the positive results in your life from those events?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

EXTRA READING
GENESIS 8

How do you think God felt as He saw His entire creation destroyed? Do you think He was ever sorry for the decision He had made to destroy it with a flood? Satan would love for us to think that somehow God made a mistake by destroying the world and that is why He pledged never to flood it again. However, that is not what this passage teaches us. What if God hadn't stepped in and intervened? What if the only eight righteous people left on earth had been murdered or had given in to the wickedness of the world before the flood? You see, out of tragedy and destruction came an incredible expression of God's love. God was willing to start over and give humanity a second chance to follow Him. Eventually, thousands of years later, you could know salvation and have a personal relationship with God as a result of His intervention. He even went so far as to give you a visible reminder after each storm. Every time you see the rainbow, let it remind you that God sees years into the future and has been making decisions out of love for you all along, even if your circumstances don't seem to indicate it.

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING

GENESIS 9, 10



Do you remember how Satan tempted Adam and Eve in the garden? How is what you read today similar to what happened in chapter 3? What lessons can we learn from this account? Does anything like this still take place today? In this passage, we see people disobeying God. After the flood, God asked mankind to fill the earth (9:1). Instead, they decided to stay together as a group. They were determined to do what they wanted. They built a tower as a symbol of their achievement. Their hearts were filled with pride. This tower was a monument to their pride and rebellion. God confused the language to force them to obey and to illustrate that He was in control. While people today do not necessarily build towers, they do establish monuments to their defiance and pride. It might be a possession, relationship, career, or an accomplishment. Though these aren't always wrong, they can all be monuments of pride and rebellion. But be assured, God will intervene in our lives if we continue to live in disobedience to His commands. How can you ensure this does not happen in your life?

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING

GENESIS 11

When an authority in your life asks you to do something, how do you respond? What if they ask you to do something difficult or something that requires hard work? What if they ask you to do something that makes no sense to you? As you read this chapter, imagine how Abraham must have felt about what God was asking him to do. God told Abraham to leave everything and to go off into the desert. God did not even tell him where he was going. God only told him that He would inform him when he arrived at his destination. In verse 4, we see that Abraham responded with immediate obedience. We see no hint of hesitation or reluctance. Abraham's faith in God overcame his common sense and human desires. Each time he obeyed and saw God work, Abraham's faith grew. His faith allowed him to obey without hesitation. Practicing faith means being convinced that God knows what is best and placing God's desires above your own. Does your faith allow you to obey in this way? What does your obedience tell you about your faith in God and His plan for your life?

SAY WHAT?

In what areas do you have a hard time trusting God?

SO WHAT?

What do you expect will happen if you obey?

NOW WHAT?

What step can you take to grow your faith?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment should you make?

EXTRA READING

GENESIS 12

What consequences did Abraham face because of his sin in this chapter? As we look at today's reading alone, Abraham seemed to get away with his lies. In fact, he even seemed to profit personally from the whole situation—he gained livestock and servants in the end. But what did it really cost him? Weren't there any consequences to face? If you formed your opinion at this point in the account, you might conclude his sin had no consequences. But think about it all for a moment. First, by bringing Sarah into the lie, Abraham led his wife to sin. This must have affected their marriage relationship. Also, he weakened his relationship with God. It may not have shown up right away, but Abraham had changed. He went from being a man who followed God unconditionally, to not trusting Him enough for his own protection. Was the end result worth the lies? If you truly value your relationship with God and want to avoid future consequences, you're answer would be no. Consequences will always be part of our sin. They may not show up today or tomorrow, but they will always show up!

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING
GENESIS 12

Is there a promise you have found in God's Word that you really have a hard time believing? Why do you struggle to believe it? Do you think Abraham ever found himself in that kind of a position? Today's reading shows us that he was having a hard time believing what God had said to him. Although he had trusted Him enough to leave his home and head off to the land God would show him, he struggled to trust God with some of the promises He made. God promised him that he would become a great nation. That was a problem because he was childless. When God promised to make a great nation, the assumption was that it would begin with a child. In spite of his circumstances, we know that "Abraham believed the Lord, and He credited it to him as righteousness" (verse 6). True faith shows itself when you trust God, even though you can't see the light at the end of the tunnel or imagine a logical solution. You may not have any idea how your circumstances are going to work out, but God does. He's got it all mapped out. Commit verse 1 to memory as a reminder to have no fear.

SAY WHAT?

What promise of God do you have a hard time believing?

SO WHAT?

What negative consequences do you fear will happen?

NOW WHAT?

What next step can you take to help you trust God even when it seems confusing?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

EXTRA READING

GENESIS 13-15

How comfortable are you with the idea of talking to God? How much time do you spend each day talking to Him? What kinds of things do you ask God for in your daily prayer life? In this passage, we see Abraham model a pretty incredible prayer life for us. Note three things about Abraham's conversation with the Lord. First, he actually approached God and began the conversation. That would imply that he already had a relationship with God. He didn't have to introduce himself. Second, he spoke to God with an attitude of humility. He never lost sight of the fact that he was speaking with the Almighty God. He asked honest questions, but asked them in a way that showed the utmost respect. Third, his requests revealed a great burden for people. He obviously cared about people by his willingness to bargain with God for their lives. How does your prayer life compare to Abraham's talk with God? Is God a friend you talk to respectfully? Are your requests centered on yourself or do you give thought and effort to other's needs? Consider your conversations with Him and what it tells you about your relationship. Be sure to make the necessary changes.

SAY WHAT?

How can you tell if you are comfortable talking to God?

SO WHAT?

How can you tell if you are talking to Him with humility?

NOW WHAT?

How can you tell if you have a burden for people?

THEN WHAT?

What next step do you need to take in light of what this passage has revealed to you?

EXTRA READING
GENESIS 16-18

Can you remember a time when you wanted to choose sin over righteousness? Maybe you even planned out how you were going to pull it off. But, somehow all of your plans went wrong. If you have, you will find a helpful message in these verses. Lot found himself having to choose between righteousness and sin. Instead of choosing righteousness, he hesitated. He struggled to leave the wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah behind. In spite of his hesitation, God's mercy for Lot was demonstrated to the extent of dragging his family out of town despite their desire to stay. God obviously cared enough about Lot to remove him and protect him from his own evil desires. That's love! The Bible tells us that God always provides for us a way out whenever we face temptation (1 Cor. 10:13). He tells us we will never face a temptation that we cannot resist. Sometimes God drags us away. Other times He may whisper softly in our ears that we are in trouble. Because God loves us, He will help us choose righteousness. When we do not choose righteousness, it is always because we have chosen to overlook or ignore God's provision for us.

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING

GENESIS 19



As you read these verses, did it bring to mind a similar incident? Did you find yourself saying, "Here we go again!" Abraham faced the dilemma here, just like he did in chapter 12. The region was different, the king was different, but it was the same woman and the same lie all over again. For fear of his life, Abraham deceived the King of Gerar into thinking that Sarah was his sister rather than his wife. He even convinced himself that he was doing what was right. What was it about this man of God that every time he was faced with this same situation, he failed? Abraham's fear for his personal well-being almost cost the lives of an entire nation. Thankfully, God is a God of second chances (and sometimes third and fourth!). Have you ever tried to conquer a sin that just seems to get the best of you? Have you ever made a commitment only to make it again the next year because you failed to follow through? There is hope as you continue to face the same sin. God can give you victory. Do not allow Satan to convince you that it is useless to keep working hard. Confess it to God and seek His help to overcome it.

SAY WHAT?

In what area of your life do you find yourself consistently failing?

SO WHAT?

What have you tried in the past in order to gain victory in this area?

NOW WHAT?

What next step can you take to gain victory over this sin? Who can help you?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment should you make?

EXTRA READING
GENESIS 20

Many people can identify with Hagar and Ishmael. Broken families are real in the world today. This passage can encourage those of you who find yourself in a similar situation. What a comfort to know that God loves the people that no one else seems to care about! First, He hears their cries. God listens to them. He is aware of their pain. Second, He provides for their physical needs. He takes care of them. Third, God never abandons them. He took a personal interest in the child, Ishmael, by staying with him as he grew up. People in situations like Hagar and Ishmael need to know these truths and hang on to them. They need to know God has ears and that He listens to their cries. They need to know and be comforted by the fact that He not only hears, but will do what needs to be done to provide for them. He will never abandon them, even though others might. Allow this truth to give you or someone you know comfort.

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING

GENESIS 21

As you read through this section of Scripture, what impresses you most about Isaac? What conclusions could you draw about him from what you have read so far? One thing we notice is that he not only did the right thing, but he also had the right attitude. He obeyed without hesitation. He could have tried to escape from the altar when he realized what his father intended to do, but he didn't. He could have pleaded for his life but, from what we read, it seems as though he didn't. How many cries from his only son do you think it would have taken to get Abraham to forget the whole thing? Isaac trusted his father and stayed on the altar. He was more concerned with obedience—doing the right thing with the right attitude—than his own personal well-being. What are you most concerned about? Is it complete submission and obedience to God or getting your own way? Are there areas of your life in which you are obedient, but obey with the wrong attitude? In what ways does your life need to change to be able to respond more like Isaac?

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING
GENESIS 22

What issue did Esau struggle with that put him in this kind of situation? Esau was obviously a guy who wanted his needs satisfied immediately! As a result, Esau paid a high price. He sold his birthright and gave up his blessing—the larger inheritance due him as the firstborn. Do you think that if Esau really would have weighed the consequences, he would have acted as he did? What circumstances in your life can you compare this to? God will forgive you, regardless of the situation, but we must realize His perfect plan involves His perfect timing. We live in a world of instant gratification. We often refuse to admit that there are consequences when we step out of the plan of God to get what we want immediately. Don't let that happen to you!

SAY WHAT?

In what areas do you have difficulty waiting for God's timing?

SO WHAT?

What have been some consequences in your life because you did not wait on God's timing?

NOW WHAT?

What action can you take to help you wait on God in every area of your life?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

EXTRA READING

GENESIS 23-25

Under what circumstances do you find it easiest to tell a lie? When you are afraid? When you aren't sure what results the truth will bring? In today's reading, we see that Isaac followed in his father's footsteps and lied about the very same thing his father had before. He lied about his beautiful wife being his sister. Why? He was afraid that the Philistine men would kill him so they could take Rebekah. The bottom line is that he had more of a desire to protect himself than he did to trust God and do the right thing. At this point in his life, Isaac was relying on his own common sense and had stopped obeying God. He had gone from willingly being placed on an altar to protecting himself through deception. How do you suppose God might have worked if Isaac had chosen to trust Him in this situation? Is there a situation you're facing in which you need to respond with the unquestioning obedience that Isaac had in his youth? Are you considering a lie? Determine to tell the whole truth, regardless of what the outcome may be. It might be rough, but God always rewards faithfulness and honesty.

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING
GENESIS 26-31

What caused Joseph's brothers to hate him? Was it something Joseph had done? What does their response tell us about his brothers? It was obvious to them that their dad loved Joseph more than he loved them. The coat only re-enforced that and put on display what they already knew. On top of that, Joseph was the one who had the dreams. It must have seemed to them that God was saying something to Joseph that He was not saying to them. The brothers allowed all this to create great jealousy to their hearts. We read today that they were so jealous and hated Joseph so much that they could not even speak a kind word to him. They seemed to lose all perspective by focusing on their jealousy of Joseph. In fact, they focused on it so much that it allowed them to justify their sin. Sound familiar? Is there jealousy in your life? Are you wasting a lot of time and energy looking at what you do not have and what others around you do have? Direct your energy into counting your own blessings today and stop focusing on someone else's!

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING

GENESIS 32-37

Have you ever watched someone being harassed and felt like you should defend him but instead you stood by and did nothing? That must be how Reuben felt. Reuben could have taken the opportunity to protect Joseph and prevent his brothers from doing any harm to their little brother. He would not let them kill Joseph. Instead, they cast him into the cistern. Reuben didn't know that his brothers would eventually sell Joseph to a caravan of Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt as a slave. When he found out that Joseph had been sold and was long gone, how do you think he felt? Do you think that he wished he had taken a stand against his brothers? Although God used their evil actions to ultimately accomplish His will, Reuben had to live with years and years of guilt and regret. Although you are not able to go back and change your history, you can use your mistakes to learn and grow for the future. It is much better to follow God's prompting than to face the possible consequences for ignoring evil. Determine to take a stand against what is wrong whether or not you stand alone.

SAY WHAT?

When has God prompted your heart to defend someone?

SO WHAT?

Why is it difficult to defend someone and confront those who are wrong?

NOW WHAT?

What action can you take to become someone who takes a stand for those who need it?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment should you make?

EXTRA READING
GENESIS 37

How do you act when you are around authority? Do you change or modify your behavior from what would be normal for you? How does it impact you to know that you are always in God's presence and He always watches you? In this chapter, it is evident that Joseph lived with a constant awareness of God's presence. He knew that whatever he did and wherever he was, God was watching. He considered what God saw while he was at work and he was blessed. He considered what God saw when he faced temptation and was blameless. Do you have a constant awareness of the presence of God in your life? Do you live like He is watching? How can you remind yourself of His presence throughout your day? Perhaps you could post meaningful verses at home, school, or work. Maybe you could enlist a few friends to ask you if you remembered today that God is watching. Work to develop habits that will remind you that He is watching. You will then be able to live the kind of life Joseph lived—blessed and blameless.

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING

GENESIS 38, 39

If you had asked Joseph at this stage of his life if it was worth it to obey God, what do you imagine he would say? It seemed as if every time Joseph did what was right, he got knocked down. Instead of rewards, he was sold into slavery, accused of rape, thrown into prison, hated by his family, and then forgotten. Why? Because he did what was right. With those kinds of rewards, who wants to be obedient? So what kept Joseph faithful? According to verses 20-23, he was constantly aware of God's presence in his life. He seemed consumed with God's definition of success—obedience in every area of his life. He did not allow the circumstances he faced to impact his view of God. Who do you know that reminds you of Joseph? What has that person's obedience cost him? Remember, obedience does not mean that you will always be comfortable. It may cost quite a bit. What price have you paid lately? Obedience is always the best choice, even if the results of not obeying appear to look like the better option.

SAY WHAT?

When have you paid a price for your obedience?

SO WHAT?

When have you thought that the price was too high?

NOW WHAT?

What next step can you take to ensure obedience regardless of the cost?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

EXTRA READING
GENESIS 39

Have you ever had someone get the credit for something you did? How did you feel towards that person? Today's passage helps us know how to respond to those situations. Surely Joseph was tempted to take credit for the interpretations to the dreams, but he didn't. Even though it would have guaranteed him a quick trip out of prison, Joseph was committed to honesty. He admitted, in verse 16, that he himself could not give Pharaoh what he wanted. He refused to take credit for what God had done. Honesty gave him the opportunity to introduce Pharaoh to God. Joseph's humility was finally rewarded. He received an instant promotion from a filthy jail cell to second in command of the kingdom. He definitely made a positive impression on Pharaoh. Notice verse 38. Pharaoh said, "Can we find anyone like this man, one in whom is the spirit of God?" Even though it seemed that God had forgotten him, Joseph stayed true. Use these verses to inspire humility in your own life. Always point people to the One responsible for your successes.

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING

GENESIS 40, 41

Do you know what your name means? Have you ever wondered what your name says about you? The meaning of a name, especially in the Old Testament, usually had special significance for the individual. We read today that Joseph had two sons. His first born's name, Manasseh, was given to remind him that God had done a great work in his life and helped him forget his troubles. His second son's name, Ephraim, was given to help him remember to count his blessings. God had made him fruitful. Together their names reminded Joseph of God's total work in his life. There are not many names like these to remind us of God's faithfulness today. In fact, we often have nothing in our lives that has been placed there specifically to remind us of what God has done. We have reminders of vacations and personal accomplishments, but not our God. Do you have any way of reminding yourself of God's faithfulness? Do you keep a scrapbook or a journal to remind you of them? What can you do to remind yourself of what God has done for you? Find a way to regularly look back at God's work in your life.

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING
GENESIS 41

Do you have sins in your past that still haunt you today? Are you constantly wondering if you are going to have to pay for those sins? If so, you can identify with Joseph's brothers in this passage. They did not realize that the Egyptian ruler who was treating them so poorly was actually Joseph. Yet, their minds instantly raced back some twenty years to the sins they had committed against him. Their actions obviously continued to plague their minds. Why couldn't they forget the sin committed so long ago? Because they had never been forgiven. They did not repent, confess their sin, or seek to make it right. When we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins. He will also cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). But when we refuse to confess sin, guilt weighs heavily on our minds. Joseph's brothers carried the guilt of their sin all those years because they did not confess it or seek restoration for what they had done. Are you suffering like Joseph's brothers? If so, it is time to confess your sin and seek God's forgiveness. No matter what you think the cost will be, it is always the right thing to do.

SAY WHAT?

Why is it so difficult for us to confess our sins?

SO WHAT?

What can we learn from this passage to help us be more diligent in this area?

NOW WHAT?

What next step can you take to help you in this area?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

EXTRA READING

GENESIS 42

Do you remember a few days ago when we talked about taking credit for what someone else does? Did you think about that when you read this portion of Scripture? Joseph's steward could have found himself in a position similar to what Joseph faced. He could have said, "I gave you your money back the first time." Instead, he forwarded all credit to God. "Your God, the God of your fathers, has given you treasure in your sack" (vs23). What do you think had happened in this steward's life to make him so aware that God, not himself, was working? No one would have questioned the steward if he had said "It was me. I did it." No one would probably have ever known of this conversation except the steward and God. Even though it may seem like a minor thing, giving God credit for a simple act made a significant statement when he recognized the work of God in the lives of Joseph's brothers. How about you? Are you taking credit for your own actions and circumstances? Or, do you recognize that God is working? Who is getting the credit for the good in your life?

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING
GENESIS 43

What do you think went through Joseph's mind as he watched his brothers plead over and over for Benjamin's life? Do you think he was taken back to that day when he had been sold into slavery and no one pleaded for his life? Was he going to be bitter and jealous because they did not do that for him, or was he going to rejoice at the apparent growth in his brothers' lives? Remember in verse 10, the steward said that only the thief would have to return to Egypt, not all of the brothers. Discovering it was Benjamin, they knew that they had to find another way. Their father would die of a broken heart if Benjamin did not come home. They definitely felt the weight of responsibility for their younger brother since Joseph's apparent death. They even seemed to have come to terms with their father's favoritism toward the sons of Rachel. Perhaps Joseph recognized their strong love for their father and that they had concern for him above themselves. It was evident to Joseph that his brothers had matured. He could have repaid evil for evil, but chose instead to accept their growth and maturity. Is there someone you need to do this for?

SAY WHAT?

Is there someone in your life whom you are finding it difficult to forgive?

SO WHAT?

Why is it so hard for you to forgive them?

NOW WHAT?

What action can you take to become more like Joseph?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment should you make?

EXTRA READING

GENESIS 44

Why do bad things happen to good people? Is it true that if we are faithful to God only good things will come our way? The only way you could believe the Bible teaches that is if you ignore all we have read this month about Joseph. There are very few people in the Bible who have had as many bad experiences happen to them as happened to Joseph. And yet, Joseph was a really good guy. He continually tried to do what was right in God's eyes. He wanted to please God. Just when he thought he was getting ahead, he was knocked down again. But he didn't give up. In this chapter, the whole plan of God seems to come together. Joseph and his family finally get to see the big picture. Did you notice how many times Joseph talked about God and His ultimate plan in today's reading? He realized that God had sent him ahead to Egypt to save their lives. It was God who placed him in power in Egypt, not Pharaoh. Can you look back and see the hand of God on your life? Do you realize that God has walked with you through trials so that you could be where you are today? Strive to be like Joseph and recognize God's plan in your life.

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING
GENESIS 45

What could possibly make a 130 year old man pack up everything he owned and walk several days' journey to go to a country in which he had nothing? The answer? HOPE! Israel (Jacob) had the hope of a reunion with his beloved son, Joseph. He had hope in the promise that God would be with him. Also, he looked with hope to the promise that God would make him a great nation in Egypt. He believed God would fulfill His promise even if he moved from Israel to Egypt. What is our motivation to keep us walking through trials, suffering, and temptations in this life? The answer is the same. It is HOPE! We have hope of a reunion with our beloved Savior, Jesus Christ. We also have the hope of His promise to never leave us or forsake us. We have the hope that God is using our trials and labors to cause us to grow and mature, and to make us more fruitful in our service to Him. When tough times come, we need to cling to the hope that God knows what He is doing and that He is working it out for our good. Is that hope your anchor in life? Use it as your motivation for obedience and trust in the One who loves you.

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING

GENESIS 46

GENESIS 47:1-12

RESPECT OR SHAME

If you want to know what kind of impact you have had on people, just observe the way they treat your family. That will often tell you how they feel about you. In today's passage, Pharaoh met Joseph's father and brothers for the first time. How did he treat them? In the midst of an extremely severe famine, he gave up the best part of his land for them. He also entrusted his own personal property, his livestock, to them without so much as a shepherding job interview. Pharaoh further allowed himself to be blessed by a man he didn't even know—just because the man was the father of faithful Joseph. None was more highly esteemed than Joseph in Pharaoh's kingdom, and that esteem spilled out onto his relatives. What about you? Are you a person of godly character who brings blessing to your family? Or, are you causing them to hang their head in shame whenever your actions are a topic of conversation? It would be awful to know that you are the one who brings shame to your family. How incredible it is to have others respect those you love because of your faithful life before them! Which one is true of your life?

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING
GENESIS 47, 48

If you could pick out the biggest difference between Joseph and his brothers, what would it be? Would it be how the brothers viewed the events of life compared to how Joseph did? The brothers were not aware of God's sovereign control in their lives. For that reason, they lived fearfully, trying to maintain control. Joseph, on the other hand, knew God intimately and watched Him work out the details of his life. There are still these two kinds of people. The first are like Joseph's brothers. They say that God is in control, but continue to worry about the details of their lives and the effect those events will have on them. Their lives are filled with insecurity and fear—always trying to please man rather than God. Then there are the "Josephs" of the world. They see things Biblically, through the eyes of God. Their lives are characterized by confidence and peace. They know regardless of the circumstances, that God is the same Creator and Controller of the universe that He has always been. The events of life are under His capable control, leaving them with nothing to fear. Are you like Joseph or his brothers? How can you change in order to become more like Joseph?

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING

GENESIS 49, 50



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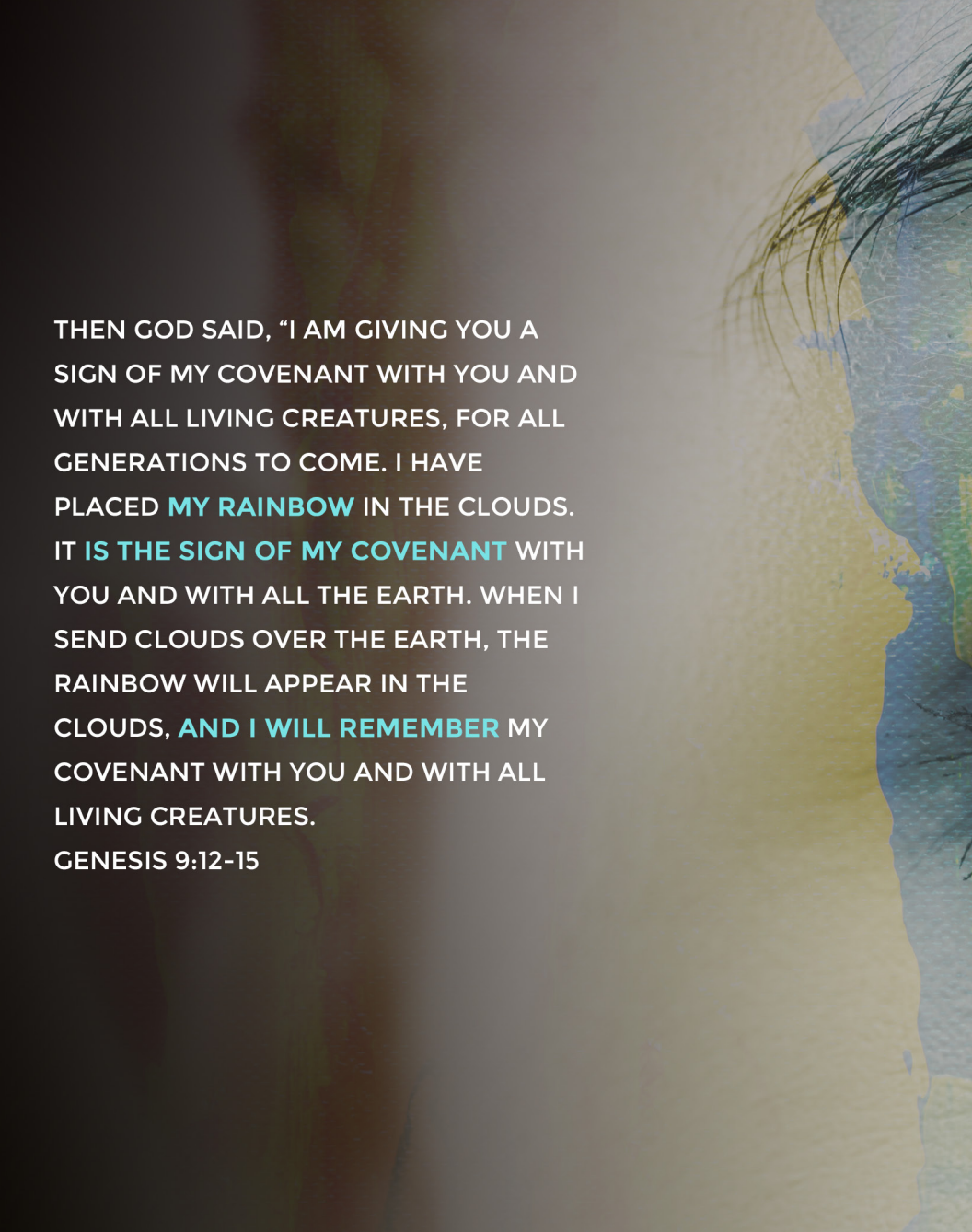
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GENESIS 9:12-15

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