



THE BIBLE YEAR

*A Journey Through Scripture
in 365 Days*

MAGREY R. DEVEGA

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The Bible Year: A Journey Through Scripture in 365 Days

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Introduction

Growing up, I heard many metaphors for how to relate to the Bible, helping me connect its strange words and antiquated imagery to ordinary experience. I was told, for example, that the Bible is like a road map: just figure out how to read it, and you'll see the path to your best life. Someone also told me it was a kind of how-to manual: follow its instructions, and your life will be a success. Or consider it like a cookbook, and you'll have the ingredients to a good life.

Those metaphors were all well and good. For a while.

Over time I realized that such images of the Bible, when taken too far, can become much too self-serving. They can lead to a strictly utilitarian view of how the Bible can become useful to us, rather than the more important question: How can we become more faithful in service to God? In *Eat this Book: A Conversation in the Art of Spiritual Reading* (Eerdmans, 2006), Eugene Peterson writes:

"The most important question we ask of this text is not, 'What does this mean?' but 'What can I obey?' A simple act of obedience will open up our lives to this text far more quickly than any number of Bible studies and dictionaries and concordances" (71).

To reorient our approach to the Scriptures, to make it less about using the Bible and more about becoming useful in God's service, requires one key ingredient: listening.

To grow in our faith, prayer and Scripture reading must go hand in hand. We must read the Bible prayerfully, and we must engage in prayer biblically. "Faith comes from listening," Paul writes to the church in Rome, "but it's listening by means of Christ's message" (Romans 10:17). The text is illumined by prayer; prayer is grounded in text. It is logos and pneuma, word and spirit, united.

That is the value of a sustained encounter with Scripture, a daily practice of reading it and meditating on it. That is our task as we read

through the Scriptures together over the days ahead. Not to just read the words in its pages, but to do so prayerfully and responsively. To narrow the sixteen-inch distance between our heads and our hearts and to allow the words of Scripture to shape our thoughts, our emotions, and our behaviors.

Each day, I offer an insight into some portion of the reading, something I find compelling or provocative. You will likely discover other dimensions of the text that catch your attention. But the most important part of this devotional may be the blank space in between the readings, where you are invited to record your own response to Scripture. In this space, take time to consider:

“What is God revealing to me today, and how will I apply it to my life?”

Fill that blank space with what you are hearing from God, and determine ways to commit yourself in obedience to the way and will of God.

You will also find, at the beginning of each week, a short overview of the readings for the week ahead. Think of this as a navigational aid, something to help you get your bearings in Scripture, see where you are and where the next leg of the journey will take you. (You will likely notice that the first week is short, only four days. This is meant to provide some flexibility as you begin, to help you find a rhythm that works best for you.)

May this devotional be much more than a road map for your journey ahead. May it become a living record of your spiritual journey, as the words of the Bible lead you to greater faithfulness and deeper devotion to Jesus Christ.

Welcome to the journey!

—Magrey deVega

PART 1

**THE OLD
TESTAMENT**

Genesis–Malachi



WEEK 1

Genesis 1:1–11:32

When we read the Book of Genesis—and the whole Bible, really—it is far too easy to get caught up in the mechanics of the stories. Especially when it comes to the opening stories of Creation, the Fall in the garden, the Flood, and the Tower of Babel, we could get caught up in all sorts of ancillary questions. Ultimately, Genesis is not a story of the world in the beginning. It is a story of the God who did the beginning.

Genesis shows us the beauty of creation. And if you look carefully, it reveals the sound of Creation being made. We can hear God breathing in Genesis. In between each of the seven movements of the Creation suite—which the Bible calls “days” but which are not twenty-four-hour periods, but more like movements in a masterpiece—God’s voice can be heard above the music and the melody, speaking into the recording each time, “It is good.”

So what we see at the end of it all is not just the beauty of creation, but the character of the creator, the heart and soul of the artist. Always be ready to refer back to this opening overture, because everything we will read in the ensuing pages will be founded on what happened in these opening stories, and the redemption that God constantly strives through the pages of Scripture to bring about. This redemption will ultimately come to us in Jesus, but it is a redemption that would enable each of us to work with God to cocreate a future that restores creation to its original purpose.

Genesis 3, with its tale of disobedience and the promise of redemption, offers the great overriding theme that will carry us throughout the Scriptures. That’s what we see also in the stories of the Flood and the Tower of Babel. Neither story is very fun. Yet through them, the Holy Spirit washes in as an outward and visible reminder of how God’s grace is at work in the

human world from the very beginning, to create among us and together with us a future of beauty, goodness, and love. As you read these opening chapters, and as you read the whole Bible, I invite you to prayerfully think about all that Genesis teaches us about God's goodness, about the beauty of creation, and about the special role that you and I get to have in it.

You are part of a creation that has been fashioned by God, and when God made you, God said, "That's good."

DAY 1

Genesis 1:1–3:24

It may come as a surprise, but the Bible says the serpent actually spoke the truth. Some of our hardest temptations aren't lies, but truths. Yes, we can take quick fixes to improve ourselves. But that's at the expense of longing, mystery, and uncertainty. It's part of the beauty of being human.

DAY 2

Genesis 4:1–5:32

The long lists of descendants might seem dry and boring, but notice that the name Enoch is listed twice. Which Enoch will I be today? The descendant of Cain (Genesis 4:17) or the descendant of Seth (Genesis 5:22)? The one whose past and future are characterized by sin and its consequences, or the one who carries forward the story of God's people?

DAY 3

Genesis 6:1–9:17

God reboots creation. There are many parallels here with Genesis 1–2, especially between 2:17 and 9:4, where humans have to again avoid the one forbidden thing. Except this time, God introduces something new to humans to help us out: God makes a covenant with all humankind (9:9).

DAY 4

Genesis 9:18–11:32

Like Adam and Eve, Noah's nakedness is a metaphor for shame. Like Cain, Ham is the sad recipient of his parents' shame and becomes the ancestor of some of the Bible's worst antagonists. How can I keep shame from being passed on to future generations?