



SUMMER READING PLAN

DAY 1 GENESIS 1:1-2:3

1

In J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Two Towers*, Sam asks, "I wonder what sort of tale we've fallen into?" That is the question we all ask, isn't it? Is life a tragedy or a comedy? Is there an author? What role is mine to play? The opening pages of the Bible lay the best foundation for finding satisfying answers. In the beginning, God spoke, and the universe exploded into existence. It was good. But God wasn't done yet. Into this virgin paradise, God placed His crowning achievement: a man and a woman. Then it was very good. Eden is where our story begins—with a good God bringing a rich world into existence for us to enjoy with Him. Just like you don't use hammers for pillows and forks to eat soup because you know what they were made for—you will never understand your story apart from the One who made you.

DAY 2 GENESIS 3:1-24

2

Have you ever had great plans totally fall apart? Did your car break down on the first leg of your grand road trip? Or did the kids revolt against your creative family night? Did the weather refuse to cooperate with your outdoor plans? As traumatic as those experiences might have been for you, imagine what it was like when God's paradise imploded. The first couple had their first fight. Giving birth became a giant pain. Work became a frustrating wrestling match. One of Adam's kids killed the other (and you thought your kids were bad!). We made a mess of God's masterpiece. Paradise was lost, but not without a promise. From the shattered remnants God began the Great Restoration. He started by clothing Adam and Eve in skins and promising a Deliverer. Now He clothes us in the righteousness of Christ.

DAY 3 GENESIS 15:1-21

3

When you were growing up, how did you convince your siblings that you would keep your word? Did you pinky swear? Cross your heart and hope to die? As adults, you signed a contract with legal ramifications. But in ancient times, things were different. They formed a covenant by cutting animals in two and placing them on either side of a path. Then, the two parties would walk down the middle together, sealing the deal. By doing so, they were saying, "Let me be torn in two like these animals if I fail to keep my word." Strange? Certainly. Effective? Definitely. But what happens in today's passage is stunning. With animals lining the path, God walks through alone. In so doing, God said He would keep His promises even if it cost Him His life. Eventually, God would give His life to bless you. All Abraham could do was take God at His word. Just like us.

DAY GENESIS 22:1-19

4

Honestly answer this question: If God asked for it, what would you hesitate to give? Your wealth? Your future? A relationship? A child? God tested Abraham's trust and allegiance by asking him to sacrifice his son. This would be hard for any parent. But Isaac was Abraham's only son. Yet Abraham trusted God so much he obeyed. He took Isaac up the mountain, placed him on the altar, and raised the knife to take his life. At the eleventh hour, God interrupted Abraham and gave him a substitute to sacrifice instead. Abraham passed the test. He proved his love and commitment to God by offering his precious son. Thousands of years later, the only Son of God would be offered as a sacrifice for the sins of the world. God passed the test. He proved His love and commitment by offering His precious Son for us.

DAY EXODUS 3:1-4:20

5

What would it be like to see God? His majesty would overwhelm us, His greatness would humble us, His power would terrify us, and His kindness and love would make us feel at home. Those who encounter God in the Bible are struck by His holiness and their sinfulness. When Moses stood before the Lord, he was warned to take off his sandals because it was holy ground. God's holiness is His moral perfection. But it's more than that. God's holiness describes how God is utterly unique. You can think of it as the sun. The sun is unique, powerful, and the source of life. But it is also dangerous if you get too close. So how do sinners get close to God without being destroyed? God used pictures throughout the Bible like the tabernacle and purity laws, the temple and sacrifices to show us how. They all point to Jesus, the one who took our sinfulness and gave us His holiness so we could draw close to God.

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