

Part 4

# Personal Growth<sup>Packet</sup>

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Overview of the Bible

Reading Plan

Prayer Guides

Recommended Resources

Who I Am in Christ

# Overview of the Bible

adapted from the New Student Bible © 1986, 1992 Zondervan Corp.

## Old Testament

**The Pentateuch** - the origins of the Jewish race and culture

- Genesis** Describes creation, the first rebellions against God, and God's choosing of Abraham and his offspring
- Exodus** God rescues the Israelites from slavery in Egypt and leads them to the Desert of Sinai, where He gives them laws by which to live
- Leviticus** God sets up laws for the Israelites, mostly regarding holiness and worship
- Numbers** Because of rebellion and disobedience, the Israelites have to wander in the wilderness for 40 years before entering the promised land
- Deuteronomy** Moses makes three farewell speeches just before his death, recapping their history and warning the Israelites against further mistakes

**History** - the history of the Israelites as they move from the land of Canaan and establish a nearly 500-year kingdom

- Joshua** After Moses' death, Joshua leads Israel's army and conquers much of the promised land
- Judges** The new nation of Israel falls into a series of failures, during which God raised up leaders called "judges"
- Ruth** A story of love and loyalty between two widows is a ray of light in an otherwise dark period in Israel's history
- 1 Samuel** Samuel was a transitional leader between the time of the judges and that of the kings. He appointed the first king, Saul, who failed before God and later tried to prevent David from taking the throne
- 2 Samuel** David, God's chosen king, brings the nation of Israel together, but after committing adultery and murder, he went through a series of family and national crises
- 1 Kings** Solomon succeeds David as king and at his death civil war tears the nation apart. The kings that follow are mostly bad, and the prophet Elijah has dramatic confrontations with King Ahab
- 2 Kings** Continues where 1 Kings left off, recording the rulers of the divided kingdom. Because the northern kings never followed God consistently, Israel was destroyed by an invader. The south, Judah, had some good kings, but was eventually conquered by Babylon
- 1 Chronicles** Opens with a genealogical record, and records many events from the life of David
- 2 Chronicles** Records the history of the rulers of Judah, emphasizing the good ones and often paralleling the books of Kings
- Ezra** After being held captive in Babylon, the Jews were eventually allowed to return to their homeland. Ezra, a priest, was among the first to return
- Nehemiah** Nehemiah also returned from Babylon, though after the temple was rebuilt. He helps to restore the protective wall around Jerusalem and joins Ezra in leading a religious revival
- Esther** A courageous Jewish queen keeps her people from being killed while they were exiled in Persia

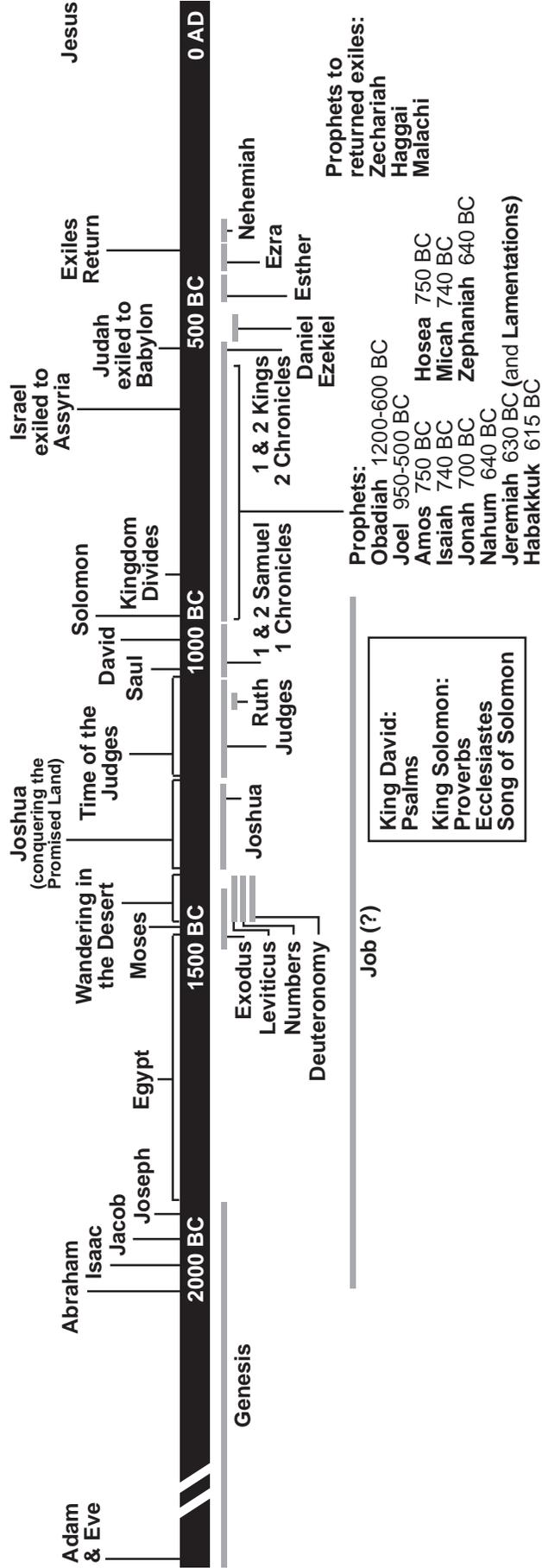
**Poetry** - these poetic writings concentrate on questions about pain, God, life, and love

- Job** A godly man suffers personal tragedy and deals with the question "Why?"
- Psalms** These prayers and hymns cover a wide range of emotions and show us how to relate to God
- Proverbs** Offers advice on wise living
- Ecclesiastes** Explores how life without God leads to despair and a sense of meaninglessness
- Song of Songs** Celebrates romantic and physical love

**Prophets** - God spoke through prophets when the kings ruled in Israel and Judah. While sometimes they predict future events, the prophets primarily called God's people back to Him

- Isaiah** The most poetic of all the prophets, Isaiah analyzed the failures of Israel and the nations around Israel and pointed to a future Messiah who would bring peace
- Jeremiah** Jeremiah lived a difficult life, but firmly spoke to the people of Judah before Babylon destroyed the nation
- Lamentations** Jeremiah's warnings about Jerusalem came true and Lamentations records five poems of sorrow for the fallen city
- Ezekiel** Ezekiel spoke to the Jews who were captive in Babylon, using dramatic stories and parables
- Daniel** A captive in Babylon, Daniel rose to the office of prime minister. Despite political pressure, he lived a model life of integrity and prophesied about the future
- Hosea** By marrying a loose-living wife, Hosea lived out his message: that Israel had committed spiritual adultery against God
- Joel** Beginning with a disastrous locust plague, Joel foretold God's judgement on Judah
- Amos** Amos preached to Israel about materialism at the height of its prosperity
- Obadiah** A warning to Edom, a nation bordering Judah
- Jonah** Jonah reluctantly went to Nineveh and found Israel's enemies responsive to God's message
- Micah** Micah exposed corruption in every level of society, but closed with a promise of forgiveness and restoration
- Nahum** Long after Jonah had stirred Nineveh to repentance, Nahum foretold the mighty city's total destruction
- Habakkuk** Habakkuk addressed his book to God, not people, discussing the problems of suffering and justice
- Zephaniah** Zephaniah focused on the coming day of the Lord, which would purge Judah, resulting in a remnant used to bless the entire world
- Haggai** After returning from the Babylonian captivity, the Jews began rebuilding the temple of God. But before long they set aside that task to work on their own homes and Haggai reminded them to put God first
- Zechariah** Writing about the same time as Haggai, Zechariah also urged the Jews to work on the temple. He used a more uplifting approach, describing how the temple points to the coming Messiah
- Malachi** The last Old Testament prophet, Malachi faced a nation that had grown indifferent. He sought to stir them from apathy

# Old Testament Timeline



# New Testament

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**History** - the first four books of the New Testament are the gospels, which are accounts of Jesus' life and ministry. While some stories from the gospels overlap, each has a different focus and different audience and together they create a complete picture of Jesus' teachings and miracles. Acts covers the events of the early church.

**Matthew** Written to a Jewish audience, this Gospel links the Old and New Testaments. It presents Jesus as the Messiah promised in the Old Testament, emphasizes Jesus' authority and power, and focuses on the kingdom of God  
**Mark** Mark's gospel stresses action and gives a straightforward, enthusiastic account of Jesus' work on earth  
**Luke** Luke, a doctor, provides many details of human interest, especially in Jesus' treatment of the poor and needy  
**John** John has a different, more reflective style than the other gospels. He spends a large portion of the book on Jesus' teachings during the last days of His life  
**Acts** Acts includes many significant events that shaped the early church

**Letters** - the early church was nourished by apostles who set down their beliefs and messages in a series of letters

## Paul's Letters:

**Romans** Written for a sophisticated audience, Romans sets forth theology in a logical, organized form  
**1 Corinthians** Takes up the problems of a church in Corinth: marriage, factions, immorality, public worship, and lawsuits  
**2 Corinthians** Paul wrote this follow-up letter to defend himself against a rebellion led by certain false apostles  
**Galatians** A short version of Romans, this book deals with legalism and shows how Christ came to bring freedom, not bondage to rules  
**Ephesians** Ephesians discusses our position in Christ as believers and how we should live as Christians  
**Philippians** This letter stresses that joy can be found in any situation  
**Colossians** Tells us now faith in Christ is complete and that nothing needs to be added to what Christ did  
**1 Thessalonians** Gives a capsule history of one church, as well as Paul's direct advice about specific problems  
**2 Thessalonians** This stronger-toned sequel to his first letter to the Thessalonians, Paul goes over similar topics and addresses the church's questions about Christ's second coming  
**1 Timothy** A leadership manual for Timothy, a young man Paul mentored  
**2 Timothy** Offers Paul's final words to his young assistant  
**Titus** Titus was left in Crete, a notoriously difficult place to nurture a church. Paul's letter gave practical advice on how to go about it  
**Philemon** Paul urged Philemon, owner of runaway slave Onesimus, to forgive his slave and accept him as a brother in Christ

## Other Letters:

**Hebrews** No one knows who wrote Hebrews, but it was probably written to Christians in danger of slipping back into Judaism. It interprets the Old Testament, explaining many Jewish practices as symbols that prepared the way for Christ  
**James** James emphasized the right kind of behavior for a believer, discussing how people who call themselves Christians ought to act like it  
**1 Peter** Peter's letter comforted and encouraged Christians who were being persecuted for their faith  
**2 Peter** This letter focuses on problems that sprang up from inside the church and warns against false teachers  
**1 John** Focusing on words like light, love, and life, John elegantly explains basic truths about the Christian life  
**2 John** Warning against false teachers, John counseled churches on how to respond to them  
**3 John** Balancing 2 John, this companion letter mentions the need to be hospitable to true teachers  
**Jude** Jude gives a brief but fiery exposé of heretics  
**Revelation** The only New Testament book that concentrates on prophecy. It completes the story begun in Genesis, of the cosmic battle between good and evil being waged on earth. It ends with a picture of a new heaven and new earth

# Reading Plan

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## The Bible in 32 Weeks

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approx. 3 chapters a day/6 days a week

This reading plan takes you through the entire New Testament and a selection of the Old Testament that summarizes key events, concepts, and messages. The chapter numbers are bolded to alert you to a jump in chapter sequence.

Week 1

Week 2

Matthew **1** **2** **3** **4** **5** **6** **7** **8** **9** **10**  
**11** **12** **13** **14** **15** **16** **17** **18**

Week 3

Matthew (cont.) **19** **20** **21** **22** **23** **24**  
**25** **26** **27** **28** Genesis **1** **2** **3** **4**  
**5** **6** **7** **8**

Week 4

Genesis (cont.) **9** **10** **11** **12** **13** **14** **15**  
**16** **17** **18** **19** **20** **21** **22** **23** **24**  
**25** **26**

Week 5

Genesis (cont.) **27** **28** **29** **30** **31** **32**  
**33** **34** **35** **36** **37** **38** **39** **40** **41**  
**42** **43** **44**

Week 6

Genesis (cont.) **45** **46** **47** **48** **49** **50**  
Luke **1** **2** **3** **4** **5** **6** **7** **8** **9** **10**  
**11** **12**

Week 7

Luke (cont.) **13** **14** **15** **16** **17** **18** **19**  
**20** **21** **22** **23** **24** James **1** **2** **3**  
**4** **5** Philemon **1**

Week 8

Exodus **1** **2** **3** **4** **5** **6** **7** **8** **9** **10**  
**11** **12** **13** **14** **20** **32** Leviticus **26**

Week 9

Numbers **11** **14** Deuteronomy **1** **2** **3**  
**4** **5** **6** **7** **8** **9** **10** **11** **12** **13** **14**  
**15** **16**

Week 10

Hebrews **1** **2** **3** **4** **5** **6** **7** **8** **9** **10**  
**11** **12** **13** Galatians **1** **2** **3** **4** **5** **6**

Week 11

Romans **1** **2** **3** **4** **5** **6** **7** **8** **9** **10**  
**11** **12** **13** **14** **15** **16** Joshua **1** **2**

Week 12

Joshua (cont.) **3** **4** **5** **6** **7** **8** **9**  
**10** **11** **23** **24** Judges **1** **2** **3** **4** **5**  
**6** **7**

Week 13

Judges (cont.) **13** **14** **15** **16** Ruth **1** **2**  
**3** **4** 1 Samuel **1** **2** **3** **4** **5** **6** **7**  
**8** **9** **10**

Week 14

1 Samuel (cont.) **11** **12** **13** **14** **15** **16**  
**17** **18** **19** **20** **31** 1 Corinthians **1** **2**  
**3** **4** **5** **6** **7**

Week 15

1 Corinthians (cont.) **8** **9** **10** **11** **12** **13**  
**14** **15** **16** 2 Corinthians **1** **2** **3** **4** **5**  
**6** **7** **8** **9**

Week 16

2 Corinthians (cont.) **10** **11** **12** **13**  
Philippians **1** **2** **3** **4** Colossians **1** **2**  
**3** **4** 2 Samuel **1** **2** **3** **4** **5** **6**

2 Samuel (cont.) **7** **8** **9** **10** **11** **12** **23**  
**24** 1 Kings **1** **2** **3** **4** **5** **6** **8** **9**  
**10** **11** **12**

Week 17

2 Kings **1** **2** **3** **4** **5** **17** **18** **19** **20**  
**21** **22** **23** **24** **25** 1 Chronicles **28**  
**29** 2 Chronicles **15** **16**

Week 18

2 Chronicles (cont.) **17** **18** **19** **20**  
Mark **1** **2** **3** **4** **5** **6** **7** **8** **9** **10**  
**11** **12** **13** **14**

Week 19

Mark (cont.) **15** **16** Acts **1** **2** **3** **4**  
**5** **6** **7** **8** **9** **10** **11** **12** **13** **14**  
**15** **16**

Week 20

Acts (cont.) **17** **18** **19** **20** **21** **22**  
**23** **24** **25** **26** **27** **28** Ezra **1** **2** **3**  
**4** **5**

Week 21

Nehemiah **1** **2** **3** **4** **8** **9** Esther **1** **2**  
**3** **4** **5** **6** **7** **8** **9** **10**

Week 22

Psalms (pick any 18+ to read this week -  
classics are: **19** **23** **27** **51** **84** **103** **139**)

Week 23

1 Thessalonians **1** **2** **3** **4** **5**  
2 Thessalonians **1** **2** **3** Titus **1** **2** **3**  
1 Peter **1** **2** **3** **4** **5** 2 Peter **1** **2** **3**

Week 24

Proverbs (pick any 18+ chapters to read)

Week 25

Job **1** **2** **3** **4** **38** **39** **40** **41** **42**  
Ecclesiastes **1** **2** **3** **11** **12**  
Song of Solomon **1** **2** Isaiah **40** **41**

Week 26

Isaiah (cont.) **42** **43** **44** **45** **49** **50** **53**  
**58** Jeremiah **1** **2** **29** **30** **31** **32**  
**33** **34** **37** **38**

Week 27

Jeremiah (cont.) **39** **40** Lamentations **1** **2**  
Ezekiel **1** **2** **3** **4** **5** **16** **17** **18** **24**  
**33** **34**

Week 28

Jude **1** Ephesians **1** **2** **3** **4** **5** **6**  
John **1** **2** **3** **4** **5** **6** **7** **8** **9** **10**

Week 29

John (cont.) **11** **12** **13** **14** **15** **16** **17**  
**18** **19** **20** **21** 1 John **1** **2** **3** **4** **5**  
2 John **1** 3 John **1**

Week 30

Hosea **1** **2** **3** **4** Amos **4** Jonah **1** **2**  
**3** **4** Micah **6** Habakkuk **1**  
Zephaniah **3** Haggai **1** Zechariah **8**  
Malachi **1** **2** **3** **4**

Week 31

1 Timothy **1** **2** **3** **4** **5** **6** 2 Timothy **1**  
**2** **3** **4** Revelation **1** **2** **3**

Week 32

Revelation (cont.) **4** **5** **6** **7** **8** **9** **10**  
**11** **12** **13** **14** **15** **16** **17** **18** **19**  
**20** **21**

# Prayer Guides

some items have been adapted from C.L.A.S.S. 201: Discovering Spiritual Maturity by Rick Warren

## Prayer Guides

**Character Traits of God** - Write down characteristics you know to be true of God and Bible verses that specifically reveal that characteristic. Doing this study will increase your understanding and awareness of who God is, which will give you specific qualities to worship God for and will be of encouragement when you may doubt who He is.

Example: God is Faithful      2 Corinthians 1:20  
God is Righteous      2 Timothy 4:8  
God Provides for me      Genesis 22

**Thanksgiving List** - Create a list of things you are thankful for. For many of us, thanking God for the things He gives us and does for us is hard to remember to do, but by writing down specifics, you will have a list to refer to when you are having a difficult time thanking Him. Thank Him for everyday comforts, for what He has done for you, for what He has provided in your life...be creative in your worship to Him!

**Use a Prayer Wheel** - It can sometimes be hard to be balanced in our prayer life. This prayer wheel shows us several things we can include in our conversations with God.

**Record Your Personal Requests** - Write down the things you are praying for, when you began praying for that particular request, and when God answered, or began to answer it. This enables you to be persistent in the things you are praying about, and by recording when God answers your prayer, you become more aware of how He is at work in your life and in the lives of those around you. In addition to situations, remember to pray for the people in your life: family, Christian friends, unsaved friends, spiritual leaders, and government leaders!

Use the "ACTS" Acronym - ACTS can help us remember to include the four main aspects of prayer into our everyday life: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication (Requests)



1. Praise
2. Wait...what am I trusting the Lord for or waiting on Him to do?
3. Confession
4. Pray the Word...use a Scripture passage as a basis for prayer
5. Watch...people in situations of danger, vulnerability, and attack
6. Intercession...praying for others
7. Petition...praying for myself
8. Thanksgiving
9. Singing...psalms, hymns, choruses
10. Meditation...reflection for the Lord on life, scripture, etc.
11. Listening...to what the Lord is trying to say to me
12. Praise

# Recommended Resources

descriptions used from book distributor, [www.christianbook.com](http://www.christianbook.com)

## Devotional

### 31 Days of Praise by Ruth Myers

A powerful, personal praise guide that gives you one month of daily Scripture-based devotions with encouraging suggestions for experiencing God in a fresh way. You'll discover a deeper intimacy with the Lord---no matter what your circumstances.

### My Utmost for His Highest by Oswald Chambers

Classic daily devotional that will challenge your faith

### Prayer by O. Halesby

One of the best-known introductions to the prayer life published in the 20th century---with a new group study guide. This great Norwegian Evangelical points out how difficult prayer is, how we must wrestle with God, and be on guard against pride.

## Apologetics

### Mere Christianity by C.S. Lewis

Explains and defends the beliefs that nearly all Christians at all times hold in common. His simple yet deeply profound classic---originally delivered as a series of radio broadcasts---is a book to be thoroughly digested by believers and generously shared with skeptics.

### The Case for Christ by Lee Strobel

Retracing his own spiritual journey from atheism to faith, Lee Strobel, former legal editor of the Chicago Tribune, cross-examines a dozen experts with doctorates from schools like Cambridge, Princeton, and Brandeis who are recognized authorities in their own fields.

### The Case for Faith by Lee Strobel

Investigates the nettlesome issues and doubts of the hearts that can threaten anyone's faith, even if he or she believes in Jesus Christ. Strobel seeks out the experts as an investigative reporter to uncover answers to the toughest issues of the Christian life.

### The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict by Josh McDowell

Is the Bible historically reliable? Is there credible evidence of Christ's claim to be God? Will Christianity stand up before 21st century critics? In this culture where truth is relative and all religions are seen as equal, Christians face a growing challenge to know their faith is relevant and credible. Maintaining its classic defense of the faith, this fully updated volume provides a wealth of historical, archaeological, and bibliographical evidences for the basic tenets of Christian belief.

## Classics

### The Pursuit of God by A.W. Tozer

In the muddle of day-to-day life, have you somehow forgotten that Christianity is a living, vibrant relationship with a personal God? Tozer reminds you, and challenges you to renew your relationship with the loving God as he explains aspects of waiting on God.

### Celebration of Discipline by Richard Foster

Discover how to incorporate the practices of meditation, prayer, worship, simplicity, and other Christian disciplines into your daily routine---and experience a richer life in Christ!

### Knowing God by J.I. Packer

This book focuses on developing intimacy with God and discusses how seeking God's truth "enlarges the soul because it tunes into the greatness of God." He tells how to lead people to shrink the self and exalt God. Each chapter is so specific in focus (covering topics such as the trinity, election, God's wrath, and God's sovereignty), that each succeeding chapter's theology seems to rival the next, until one's mind is so expanded that one's entire view of God has changed.

## Christian Living

**Experiencing God** by Henry Blackaby and Claude King  
Shares how we experience God by doing what He tells us to do. You will be encouraged to find out where God is working in the world around you so that you can join him. A book that can change your life, Experiencing God leads you in an exploration of the seven vital aspects of your relationship with God: knowing, loving, hearing, joining, believing, obeying and experiencing.

### The Purpose Driven Life by Rick Warren

In this remarkable best-seller Rick Warren will help you understand God's purpose and plan for your life so that you can learn to live the life for which you were created. The book is divided into forty short chapters so that it can either be read as a personal devotional or studied in a small group setting. Don't let yourself or your family and friends go without this life-transforming book!

### When God Doesn't Make Sense by James Dobson

It is life's most troubling questions: Why does a loving God permit pain and suffering? Every person who lives long enough will eventually encounter trials and heartaches that are difficult to understand. During those times, the pieces simply will not fit-and God doesn't make sense. This is Dr. James Dobson's compelling book on the problem of pain. Anyone struggling with trials and heartaches--because of the prospect of war, the death of a loved one, disease, divorce, rejection--will find this an insightful, practical and compassionate resource.

### Lord, I Want to be Whole by Stormie Omartian

Omartian, a survivor of child abuse, brings a powerful message of hope and healing to all who seek deliverance from depression and spiritual oppression. She shows you how prayer and encouragement from Scripture can help you come to terms with the past; how to maintain emotional wholeness; and how to receive God's gifts.

## Study Resources

### Book Guides

How to Study Your Bible - Kay Arthur

Read the Bible Book by Book: A Guided Tour - Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart

How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth - Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart

### Reference Books

Strong's Concordance

Zondervan NIV Exhaustive Concordance

Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary

The Bible Knowledge Commentary - OT & NT

The IVP Bible Background Commentary

The Complete Word Study Dictionary

## Online Resources

[bible.crosswalk.com](http://bible.crosswalk.com) The Crosswalk Study materials include a Bible word search, encyclopedias, lexicons, dictionaries, concordances, and interlinear Bible for those who want to study God's Word more thoroughly.

[www.blueletterbible.org](http://www.blueletterbible.org) The Blue Letter Bible web site offers a Bible search tool, concordances, commentaries, Hebrew & Greek dictionaries, images, maps, and more for individual study.

[bible.gospelcom.net](http://bible.gospelcom.net) The Bible Gateway offers a Bible word search and passage search in 9 different translations, as well as answers to questions that are frequently asked about those who are learning to study their Bibles.

[www.christianbook.com](http://www.christianbook.com) Discount Christian books

# Who I Am in Christ

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## I Am Significant

John 1:12	I am God's child (see Romans 8:14-16, 1 John 3:1-3)
Ephesians 1:1	I am a Saint
John 15:15	I am Christ's friend.
2 Corinthians 6:1	I am God's co-worker (see 1 Corinthians 3:9)
Ephesians 2:10	I am God's workmanship
1 Corinthians 3:16	I am God's temple
Philippians 3:20	I am a citizen of heaven (see Ephesians 2:6)
Ephesians 2:6	I have been raised up and I'm seated with Christ
1 Corinthians 12:27	I am a member of Christ's body
John 15:15	I am a branch of the true vine, a channel of His life
2 Corinthians 5:17,18	I am a minister of reconciliation for God
Matthew 5:13	I am the salt of the earth
Matthew 5:14	I am the light of the world
Acts 1:8	I am a personal witness of Christ's
John 15:16	I have been chosen and appointed to bear fruit

## I am accepted

Romans 5:1	I have been justified
2 Corinthians 5:21	I have been made righteous
Colossians 1:14	I have been redeemed and forgiven of all my sins
1 Corinthians 6:20	I have been bought with a price, I belong to God
1 Corinthians 6:17	I am joined to the Lord and I'm one spirit with Him
Ephesians 2:19	I'm of God's household
Ephesians 1:5	I have been adopted as God's child
Ephesians 2:18	I have direct access to God through the Holy Spirit
Ephesians 3:12	I may approach God with boldness and confidence
1 Corinthians 12:27	I am a member of Christ's body
Ephesians 2:19	I am a fellow citizen with the rest of the Saints
Colossians 2:10	I am complete in Christ

## I Am Secure

Romans 5:1	I have been justified
Colossians 1:14	I have been redeemed and forgiven of all my sins
Colossians 1:13	I belong to the kingdom of Christ
Romans 8:1	I am free from condemnation
John 1:12	I am a child of God
2 Corinthians 1:21	I have been established, anointed, and sealed by God
Ephesians 1:13,14	I have been given the Holy Spirit as a pledge, guaranteeing my inheritance to come
Colossians 3:3	I am hidden with Christ in God
Romans 8:28	I cannot be separated from the love of God
Philippians 1:6	I am confident that the good work that God began in me will be perfected
Romans 8:28	I am assured that all things work together for good for those who love God and obey Him
Hebrews 4:16	I can find grace and mercy in time of need
2 Timothy 1:7	I have not been given a spirit of fear, but of power, love and a sound mind
Philippians 4:13	I can do all things through Him who strengthens me