

Even
Better
Than
Eden

Personal Bible Study

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Based on the book *Even Better Than Eden: Nine Ways the Bible's Story Changes Everything About Your Story*, published by Crossway, first printing 2018.

Cover design by Cole Londeree.

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A Note from Nancy

In the book *Even Better Than Eden*, it is my great desire and privilege to help readers go deeper into understanding the Bible as one story centered on the person and work of Jesus Christ, seeing him in all of his beauty from nine different angles. This Personal Bible Study has been created to give you the opportunity to work through key passages connected to each of the nine themes traced in the book.

On the pages that follow, you will find a series of questions that will serve to get you into the Bible in preparation for reading each of the nine chapters in the book. Please note that I have designed each of these studies to be completed *prior to* reading the chapter on the same topic in the book. This will serve to “till up the ground” in the soil of your heart for what you will read. Doing this study for each chapter before reading the chapter will give you needed background and foundation for ideas and passages of Scripture that I may work through rather briefly in the chapter. In other words, you’ll get a whole lot more out of reading the chapter if you have worked through these questions first.

As you study, keep in mind that the goal is not to get the “right answer” (even though that is what we all love to do!). The goal is to spend time in the text thinking through what the scriptures reveal and imply in regard to the themes that will be covered chapter by chapter. While my goal in crafting the questions is never to frustrate you, I do want to encourage you to think deeply. In some cases that means that the answers aren’t obvious. There are some “what do you think” questions that don’t necessarily have a clear right or wrong answer. It is not a bad thing for questions to linger and require more thought or research. That’s how we learn and retain what we learn. So don’t be frustrated by challenging questions; be deepened by challenging questions. Hopefully the answers to questions that seem difficult will become clearer when you read the chapter and discuss it with your group, if you are doing this study with a group.

We’re all different in the way we approach a page of questions and blank space for answers. Some of us are brief, jotting down a few words that may represent more comprehensive thoughts and ideas that we might share verbally with a group. Others of us want to record a thorough answer to every question. I hope you’ll feel the freedom to do what works for you. I’ve sought to include enough space to record the answer I came up with for each question as I created it. And my answers are usually brief. In a few places where there is a chart or series, I’ve provided answers to the first in the series that will demonstrate what I’m after and hopefully prove helpful to you.

If you find yourself wanting to read further or find additional support for ideas developed in the book and in the Personal Bible Study questions, I strongly suggest you consult the bibliography and footnotes in the *Even Better Than Eden* book. I have tried to include the best resources I have found on these themes in the bibliography.

There may be some things in *Even Better Than Eden* that are new to you, or connections made that you haven’t seen before. And honestly, I don’t want you to just take my word for any of it. I

want you to become convinced of these things from the scriptures. That's why I'm so glad you are going to use this Personal Bible Study. I'm confident that working through the pertinent biblical passages connected to each of the nine themes traced in the chapters of *Even Better Than Eden* will prepare you to grasp and embrace more fully what is presented in the book.

More importantly, it is my desire and prayer that your time in the scriptures will lead you into greater confidence in the Bible and deeper love for the Christ presented in the Bible. He is at work even now, in the world and in our lives, preparing a home and a future for us that will be even better than Eden.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nancy Guthrie". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

If you downloaded this document from my website and are making copies for others, please be sure to make only the number of copies you paid for. Should you end up needing to make additional copies, please return to nancyguthrie.com to pay for the additional copies. If a copy of this study was provided to you, please confirm that the person or organization that provided it purchased an adequate number of licenses to cover your copy. If not, you may do so at www.nancyguthrie.com/even-better-than-eden. I greatly appreciate your integrity in this matter.

A Leader's Guide that includes suggested answers to the Personal Bible Study questions, as well as helps for the discussion questions in the back of the book, is also available for purchase and digital download at <http://www.nancyguthrie.com/even-better-than-eden>.

1: The Story of the Wilderness

1. In Genesis 1:2, three terms are used to describe the earth as God originally created it. What are they?
2. How did God address each of these three problems in the rest of Genesis 1?
3. Read Genesis 2. What are some things you see in this chapter that would lead you to believe that Adam and Eve had every reason to be perfectly content with God's provision in Eden?
4. Read Genesis 3:1-5. In what way did the serpent sow seeds of discontent in Eve?
5. According to Genesis 3:6, how did Eve entertain discontent with God's provision in Eden, and what was the impact?
6. Read Genesis 3:16-19 and 23-24. In what ways is discontent inherent in the impact of the curse?

7. According to Genesis 3:24, God drove Adam and Eve out of Eden, which would have been into the wilderness that surrounded the Garden. Throughout the rest of the Bible we see this pattern repeated of being exiled into the wilderness as well as emerging from wilderness into a watered garden (or land of milk and honey). What do you see in the following passages about the wilderness and what happens there?

Exodus 3:1-3:

Exodus 15:22-27:

Exodus 16:1-15:

Deuteronomy 2:7:

Deuteronomy 8:2-3:

8. What do you take away from these various passages about how you could anticipate that God will work in your life during your years living in the wilderness of the world as you wait for life in the paradise of God?

9. A number of the prophets wrote about the judgment that was to come upon Israel when the Babylonian armies would desolate the land and carry them off into exile. What do you see in the following passages about what God promised through the prophets he would do?

Isaiah 5:6:

Jeremiah 4:23-26:

Hosea 2:3:

Joel 2:1-3:

10. Just as the prophets warned God's people about the devastation that was coming as God judged their sin through the invasion of the Babylonians, they also spoke words of hope. What hope do you find expressed in the following passages?

Isaiah 35:1, 6-7:

Isaiah 51:1-3:

Jeremiah 31:11-12:

Ezekiel 36:34-36:

11. What is the significance of Matthew 3:1-3 when we consider how the wilderness is used throughout the Old Testament?

12. What is the significance of Matthew 4:1-11 when we consider how Israel, God's "firstborn son" (Ex. 4:22) dealt with temptation in the wilderness?

13. At the climax of Jesus' ministry we see signs that he is at work in the wilderness. How is that demonstrated in these verses?

Matthew 27:29:

Hebrews 13:12-13:

14. Paul states clearly what we are meant to take away from the Bible's account of Israel's time in the wilderness in 1 Corinthians 10:1-11. What is it?

15. The word "paradise" is used in three places in the New Testament to describe the dwelling place of God. What do these passages add to your understanding of paradise and who it is being prepared for?

Luke 23:43:

2 Corinthians 12:3-4, 7, 9:

Revelation 2:7:

16. The description of the restored garden paradise God is preparing to live in with his people is most vivid in Revelation 22:1-5. What do you see in the description of this garden that will make it even better than Eden?