

A Young
Woman's
Guide to
Discovering
Her
Bible

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GEORGE



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For my precious granddaughters,

Taylor Zaengle

Katie Seitz

Grace Seitz

Lily Seitz

May you...

Study the Bible to be wise;

Believe it to be safe;

Practice it to be holy.

Study it through,

pray it in,

work it out,

note it down,

pass it on.¹

Contents

1	Discovering Treasure	9
2	First Things First	25
3	Stories for Your Heart	41
4	True Beauty	59
5	Finding a Role Model, Part 1	79
6	Finding a Role Model, Part 2	99
7	Finding a Role Model, Part 3	121
8	Following After God's Own Heart	145
9	Walking by the Spirit	167
10	Becoming More Like Jesus	185
Appendix 1 How to Study the Bible— Some Practical Tips		201
Appendix 2 A One-Year Daily Bible Reading Plan		207
Quiet Times Calendar		216
Notes		219

Discovering Treasure

I will never, ever forget purchasing my first Bible. I was 28 years old and it was my first Sunday in church as a brand-new Christian. There I sat, in a Bible-teaching church... without a Bible! Every time the pastor said, “Turn in your Bible to...” and gave a Scripture reference, the entire auditorium sounded as if each person were unwrapping a gift—you could hear the sound of paper crinkling as everyone sifted through the pages in their Bibles to locate the designated verse.

And then, after a brief pause to give us time to find the verse, a miracle occurred—the pastor taught us what the verse meant.

Never before had I experienced this! At age 12 I had received a Bible when I officially joined my family’s local church. But I have to confess, I never read that Bible. I had no idea what it was or where to start reading. I never used it, because...what in the world was I supposed to do with it?

No wonder that beautiful engraved-with-my-name-on-it Bible ended up on a bookshelf gathering dust—for 16 years!

Discovering Treasure

But on that glorious day as a new believer in Christ, I purchased a Bible. I was clueless about the many different versions, translations, and paraphrases of the Bible. I also knew nothing about red-letter versions, hardcover or paperback, bonded or genuine leather bindings. And I had never heard about chronological Bibles or Bibles with indented book tabs or study notes. Eek! It was overload!

So what did I do?

I asked the man at the checkout counter in the church's bookstore to "Just give me a Bible like that man is preaching out of."

He grinned, and I could tell he knew exactly what Bible to get for me. While he was pulling one off the shelf, I noticed a glass bowl next to the cash register. I couldn't miss it because it was filled with brilliant colored highlighter pens.

I just stood there, looking at the many wonderful colors, and prayed, "God, I'm the new kid on the block, and I don't know anything about You. I'm going to purchase a gold highlighter pen and start tomorrow marking everything in my new Bible that teaches me something about You."

With a gold highlighter pen in hand, I looked again at the plethora of colors and prayed, "And God, I don't know anything about being a Christian woman, Christian wife, or Christian mom. I'm also going to purchase a pink highlighter pen and start tomorrow marking everything in my new Bible that has to do with women and instructions to me as a woman."

Well, praise God, He answered my prayers! The very next day, when I cracked open my new Bible and started reading

chapter 1 in the book of Genesis, I struck gold. Here's what I found, and I want you to take a look too.

The first verse I marked with my gold highlighter was Genesis 1:1. With your pen or pencil or maybe a highlighter pen, mark what you learn about God in this one verse.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

What solid fact about the origin of the world does this verse reveal?

As I continued reading in Genesis 1, the first verse I marked with my pink highlighter was Genesis 1:27. With your pen or pencil or maybe a highlighter pen (maybe pink?), mark what you learn about yourself as a woman.

God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

What do you learn about God in this verse?

What do you learn about man and woman?

As a young woman, I'm sure you hear a l-o-t about self-image. But let's consider "God-image." How does this verse help you with the way you can and should view yourself? Or, put another way, how would you complete this sentence?

I am created by _____

and in the image of _____

Got Problems?

Believe me, I know from my own growing-up years and from raising two daughters that the teen years are challenging ones. Often it seems like everything in your life is spinning and constantly changing, and it's hard to get your feet and emotions grounded—and then the next big change comes along! At other times it seems like the whole world has stopped turning on its axis. Every day is the same old, same old. Nothing ever changes, and it doesn't look like it ever will. Day after day is the same repeated day. Time is standing still.

I've heard the heart-cries of thousands of teen girls, and here are just a few of their questions and issues:

"What am I going to do about this problem?"

"My problem hurts so much I'm not sure I can make it through another day."

"Why is it so hard to find a friend? Is something wrong with me?"

"I hate my life. It's the same thing day after day—family, chores, school, homework."

“I feel so stifled. I can’t go anywhere or do anything without my parents’ permission and involvement.”

These are very personal and painful problems and yet, at the same time, they are “common” problems (says 1 Corinthians 10:13). Thank goodness, because that means there’s hope!

No matter what your life situation is, God has help and answers. No matter how bad things seem or become, when you are faithful to dig into the treasure of God’s Word each day and look for His help with your problems, as well as His instructions on how to live the way He wants you to live, you will enjoy life more. Day by day, God comes to your aid with encouragement, comfort, guidelines, and wisdom for handling your difficult and stressful situations.

And best of all, you have *Him*—all of Him one-on-one—when you read His Word! Here are some verses I came across and marked with my gold highlighter as I continued reading forward in my Bible. What do you learn about God in these verses?

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go (Joshua 1:9).

God... _____

Now read the verse again. Because of what this scripture tells you about God, how can—and should—you approach your challenges and your problems?

Read the verse one more time. We'll talk about "commands" later, but for now, write out God's positive commands:

"Be... _____
_____"

Also write out God's negative commands:

"Do not... _____
_____"

What do you learn about God in this next verse?

Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod
and your staff, they comfort me (Psalm 23:4).

God... _____

Read the verse again. Because of what this scripture tells you about God, what effect should it have on you?

What do you learn about God from Psalm 147:3, and how does this comfort you?

He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.

God... _____

And what do you learn from Isaiah 41:10?

Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand (Isaiah 41:10).

God... _____

Once again, read through Isaiah 41:10. What are God's commands?

—

—

Next, read Romans 8:38-39.

I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

How sure and powerful is God's love?

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

What is the source of all Scripture, and how does it help you?

What is the end goal of God's Word in your life?

A Few Facts About the Bible

I hope you are beginning to sense how excited I was when God's Word began to come alive and minister to me and give me direction. And more than that, I hope you are getting excited too. The few verses we have looked at so far in this chapter are packed with truths that can change your life! They can encourage you when your days are tough, when you are sad, when things aren't going so well at home or school or in your friendships.

The Bible isn't just a book to own and set on a shelf to gather dust (like I did with my Bible). No, it's alive and real—and relevant to all of life with answers for all of life's questions! Once the Bible became the main focal point in my life, I began to understand why it is so special.

Untold volumes of books have been written about the unique nature of the Bible. Here are some important facts that you can know right away and count on forever.

Fact #1: The Bible is supernatural. It is the Word of God. What do these verses tell you about the Bible?

Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets,

though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:20-21).

Fact #2: The Bible is forever. You are probably quite familiar with fads. Clothing styles come and go. Music styles change—and so do hairstyles! Popular authors and book titles turn over regularly. It's easy to wonder if anything is permanent—whether you can put your trust in anything or anyone. Well, God Himself teaches us that we can indeed trust fully in Him and His Word. What do these scriptures tell you about the Bible? What can you count on as promised in these verses?

The plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations (Psalm 33:11).

The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever (Isaiah 40:8).

Fact #3: The Bible is useful. The Bible says God “does not lie” (Titus 1:2). Therefore, since God has communicated to us

through His Word, the Bible, we can trust what the Bible says about itself, about God, and how it can change lives. Read Psalm 19:7-11 below and circle each claim the Bible makes for itself. Then underline how useful it can be to you. (A quick note: The psalmist used many different terms to refer to God's Word, the Bible.)

- 7 The law of the LORD is perfect,
refreshing the soul.
The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy,
making wise the simple.
- 8 The precepts of the LORD are right,
giving joy to the heart.
The commands of the LORD are radiant,
giving light to the eyes.
- 9 The fear of the LORD is pure,
enduring forever.
The decrees of the LORD are firm,
and all of them are righteous.
- 10 They are more precious than gold,
than much pure gold;
they are sweeter than honey,
than honey from the honeycomb.
- 11 By them your servant is warned;
in keeping them there is great reward.

Yes, There's Help for Your Life

I listed some problems and complaints shared with me by many young adult women, and I'm sure you could add a few of your own. Sometimes it's easy to wonder where, oh where to go for help. But God has answers and advice for your every

need, your every difficulty, your every sorrow. He has help for your life. Here's what God says in Psalm 119:9-10:

How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word. I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands.

According to these verses, how can you avoid problems, stay out of trouble, and walk on the right path?

What was the heart-cry or prayer of the person who wrote these verses?

Once again, as we begin to move through some traditional methods used to study the Bible, you will learn a lot about commands. Do you want help for your life? The Bible can help you, but only if you obey its commands. For now, just remember: Every time you look at or handle a scripture, ask this question: "Is there a command for me to obey?"

What commands are given in these verses?

Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk,
so that by it you may grow up in your salvation
(1 Peter 2:2).

(A quick note: “spiritual milk” refers to the Word of God.)

And why?

Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord
and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both
now and forever! Amen (2 Peter 3:18).

My Prayer for You

It’s impossible to count the number of times I’ve heard Christians say, “I just want to know God,” or heard them pray, “Lord, I want to know You.” These are the desires of my heart too. But knowing God doesn’t come from sitting on

a mountaintop somewhere looking off into space. Knowing God comes from reading what God reveals about Himself in His Word, the Bible. Knowing God means wanting and seeking information about Him. That's what helps you grow spiritually. And that, my new friend, is why I'm so excited for you to join with me in this mutual quest to know God. This was the apostle Paul's prayer for all believers—and it is my prayer for you:

This is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ (Philippians 1:9-10).

Looking at Your Life

Have you ever taken a class on proper etiquette? Growing up in a Southern state meant that I was expected to take some of these classes. My teachers would show and tell our little group of awkward new teens exactly how we were to act and speak and dress and behave. These instructors told us every week, "You can always have confidence when you know the right thing to do and the right way to act."

Needless to say, those classes helped me tremendously as a young woman-in-the-making to have more confidence in social settings and in interpersonal communication and interaction. They are still helping me to this day.

But nothing compares to the remarkable day when I picked up my Bible for the first time and began to read God's

living Word and started highlighting verses about God and my role as a woman. That red-letter day, God's Word became my spiritual teacher in knowing the right things to do and the right way to act as a believer in Jesus Christ. Only God, His Son, and the Holy Spirit can teach you and me about "godly" conduct and about "godliness" and "Christlikeness."

As we work our way through this book on how to understand "The Book" and discover the delightful, astounding treasures that can be found there, I hope and pray you will gain the same kind of spiritual confidence for living your life that I have experienced. It has been a great adventure for me, and I know it will be just as great an adventure for you as you develop a better understanding of how to study and put its truths to work in your heart and life.