

TOP PRIORITY
MANNA

A DAILY DEVOTIONAL

MANNA 6

TOP PRIORITY: MANNA 6

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Printed in the United States of America

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Published by Positive Action For Christ

Whether you have been reading your Bible for years or you have just made a decision to give serious attention to daily study of the Word of God, this book has been written to help you spend time with your Lord. The Manna series is a set of daily devotionals that are designed to help teens spend a year studying different portions of Scripture. This is the final installment in the series, Manna 6.

Manna 6 is driven by two purposes:

1. To get you to read the Bible.

In 1 Timothy 4:13 Paul instructs young Timothy to give attention to “reading” the Word. Most scholars interpret this as the public reading of the Word in church meetings. This was most important in the first century when copies of the Scriptures were rare. For the most part, common man did not own a copy of the Old Testament, and copies of the Gospels, Acts, and some of Paul’s letters were rare. Thus, the only access most believers had to the Word was in the public assembly. Paul lays upon Timothy the need, therefore, to stress the centrality of the Word in the life of the Church. The Word must be read. Thus, we will have you read many of the more significant passages of Scripture, some of them multiple times each week.

2. To get you to see the “story” of the Bible.

The Bible is not a collection of books. It is one book, written by one Author with one story. Often we look at the Bible as a collection of books (like a library), each containing lots of different themes and subjects, but that is not how the Bible was intended. 2 Timothy 3:16 tells us that the Bible was “God-breathed” (written by God), and God has written His Book with a single overriding story. That story we call *The Story of His Glory*. Everything God does is for His glory (Romans 11:36). He made the earth for His glory. He made mankind for His glory. And He wrote the Bible to show His glory.

But there is a significant story that unifies the entire Bible, and simply put, this is the story:

- God made the universe, including the earth, for His glory.
- He then placed mankind on the earth that they might glorify Him
- But the first man, Adam, rebelled against God’s authority over him, and sought his own glory rather than God’s. Adam’s sin thrust the whole human race into sin, and hid the glory of God from their eyes.
- But God, in His grace, chose to restore mankind, so that he could once again see the glory of God. The Bible tells the story of God’s plan and providential work to restore man to fellowship with Him now and for all eternity.

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- Thus, from Genesis 3 to Revelation 22, we have the story of God's Plan of Redemption. This Plan of Redemption was to...
 - create a nation through whom a Redeemer would be born;
 - teach that nation, through many signs, miracles, wonders, historical events, laws, rituals, and object lessons how the Redeemer would restore them;
 - provide Jesus Christ, through that nation, as the Redeemer who would die for men that they might be saved (restored to fellowship, able to see His glory and to rejoice in His glory);
 - show the newly redeemed people how to once more glorify their great God and Savior;
 - eventually take the redeemed people to heaven where they will forever worship Him and enjoy His glory and His grace.

Thus, the Bible is *The Story of His Glory*—that is, the story of *God's Plan of Redemption*. It is a story of both His glory and His grace.

The Bible is not about us, but about Him! As we read it, therefore, we should look for Him rather than for us! We should ask, "What does this passage teach about God's glory and about His grace? As we read each passage we should ask:

1. What does God do in this passage?
2. What does God say/reveal about Himself in this passage?
 - a. How do I see His glory in this passage?
 - b. How do I see His grace in this passage?

Manna 6 is designed to help you do just that—to focus on *The Story of His Glory* by means of 4 tools, three of which are included in this book.

The Four Tools:

1. A Background (*The Story of His Glory*) to read at the beginning of each week

The first section of Manna 6 includes 52 backgrounds to the passages you will read this year. Each week you should read the background to the Scripture passage you will be assigned. We encourage you to read this commentary on the first day of the week, before reading the assigned passage. Read it carefully, thoughtfully, and s-l-o-w-l-y, as it will teach you the continuing *Story of His Glory* and help you understand how the passage you are to read that week fits into the main story of the Bible.

2. An Assigned Passage to be read

Each week a different passage is assigned to be read. The assigned passage is found at the beginning of each successive background section. There are two different ways the reading will be assigned: daily or once.

- “Daily” means that you will read the same passage completely through each day that week (generally these are single chapters that bear special significance to the story of the Bible).
- “Once” means that you will take the entire week to read a single passage through one time. (Divide the passage up into five equal parts and read one part each day.)

For example, if the passage is Genesis 1-2 (daily), you will read these two chapters completely through **each day for 5 days** in the coming week. If the passage is Genesis 9-11 (once), you will read a portion of the passage each day so as to completely read the entire section through one time during the week.

3. A Form to be filled in gradually as you read the Bible each day

Since the Bible is *The Story of His Glory*, we have included a form to help you focus on God’s glory and God’s grace as you read the assigned passage each day.

Date: Record the date (beginning and ending date—i.e., Feb 1-7, 2008) and the passage to be read

Daily/Once: Check whether this passage is to be read completely through daily (for the next five days), or whether it is to be read completely through once that week.

- **What God does in this passage.** First, record in a few words what God does in the passage you just read. Look carefully as you read so that you can list all the things you see God do—even when His name is not specifically mentioned— in the passage. Summarize what God does in a sentence or two.
- **His Glory.** Under “His Glory” you should record the various ways you see God’s attributes, works, and ways displayed in the passage. For example, you might see God’s sovereignty in calling Moses to free His people from Egypt; His omnipotence in parting the Red Sea, etc.
- **His Grace.** Under “His Grace” you should record how you see either:
 - God’s gracious works (doing for man what he doesn’t deserve)
 - God’s grace in salvation, the Cross, God’s plan of redemption, and Christ.

Naturally, if you are reading this from the Old Testament, you will have to see “pictures” of His salvation, of Christ, of the Cross and of the Gospel. For example, you might see God’s saving grace in the Ark, or in the Old Testament offerings and sacrifices, or in Abraham offering up his son Isaac.

- **Other Thoughts.** After reading the same passage each day for a week, you should record any other truths that stood out to you while reading the passage.

This section of the form is purely a catch-all for personal application and other thoughts that God brings to your mind as you read.

When you read a single passage repeatedly for five days, you will tend to record most of your thoughts on the first reading. However, each day look for more indications of His glory and His grace that you may have missed in previous days. You will be amazed at how you can still see more of God's glory and grace even after having read it four times previously that week!

The point of the form is to help you focus on the Lord Himself as you read Scripture. Though the Bible speaks of many things and has many plots and subplots, the main story of the Bible is the *Story of His Glory and His Plan of Redemption* (His plan to establish His Kingdom for His glory, by restoring man to what he was originally intended to be by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ). Thus, Manna 6 seeks to help you focus on that great underlying theme as you read through the Pentateuch.

4. An Online Help

We realize that you might struggle, at least at the beginning of the year, to find how God's glory and God's grace are seen in a passage. Therefore, we have included an online help so that you can go to our website each week and check what you have recorded with what we saw in the same passage!

Of course, you may be tempted to go to the site and write down what we saw without doing your own work. Those who do so are probably not interested in their own spiritual growth! The purpose of the site is not to give you the answers, but to help you understand the kinds of things you should be looking for in the passage. Thus, use the site to better understand what you should be looking for, but only use it at the end of the week to compare it to what you have seen. If you want to add our thoughts to yours, that is fine—feel free to do so—but don't simply go there to copy our thoughts without first recording what you have been seeing.

After a few weeks of checking your answers against ours, you will become much more competent in doing this on your own. In some cases you will see things about God's glory and grace that we didn't see! Such is the inexhaustible nature of God's Word!

Don't cheat for you will only cheat yourself!

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THE STORY OF HIS GLORY · THE PLAN OF REDEMPTION

Passage: Exodus 9:1-7

Date: July 11

 Daily Once Background read

What God does in this passage

- Spoke to Moses - vs. 1
- Told him where to go and what to say - vs. 1
- Warned Pharaoh of the consequences of disobedience - vss. 2-3
- Set a definite time for Pharaoh to act - vs. 5
- Kept His word (promise) - vs. 6
- Killed Egypt's livestock, but kept Israel's cattle alive - vs 6

His Glory: What you learned about the character and attributes of God in this passage

- Sovereign - controls what lives and what dies
- Faithful - kept His promise
- Involved in our lives
- Source of Life - God is "Life" as He gives life and takes life as He desires
- Omnipotent - had the power to destroy the livestock of one nation while preserving the livestock of another nation
- Omniscient - knew what would happen and when it would happen

His Grace: What you learned about God's grace, Christ, the cross, and the Gospel in this passage

- God was gracious to warn Pharaoh, despite Pharaoh's sinfulness (likewise, God faithfully warns unbelievers today of their need of Christ)
- God gave Pharaoh time to respond - God has given sinners 2,000 years to repent because He is not willing that any should perish

Other Thoughts

- Pharaoh's unbelief is amazing. In spite of all he has seen God do, He still hardens his heart - Am I like this? Do I listen to God's warnings?

THE STORY OF HIS GLORY

GOD'S PLAN OF REDEMPTION

Week 1—Genesis 1-2 (Daily)

Genesis is called the “book of beginnings” (the “Genesis” of all things). In this book you will find the beginning of most things we know. In this book we see the beginning of the universe; of our world and all that is in it; of the human race, the family, and the animal kingdom; of the promise and line of Christ; of the Jewish race; and of God’s covenants with Noah, Abraham, and Moses.

Perhaps the sovereignty and power of God are nowhere more clearly seen than in this book. Here we discover that God is the one true God who made us, who owns us, who set up the laws that govern nature, who controls all of history, and who has designed all things for His glory.

As you read through this book for the next 14 weeks, look for two things in particular—the glory and the grace of God—and record in the spaces provided the things you discover about each. God’s Word was written for several reasons, but primarily it was written to reveal God’s glory and His grace to mankind. The opening statement in the Bible introduces God—“In the beginning God...;” and the closing verse in the Bible reveals His grace—“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.” These two subjects summarize the theme of God’s Word. God ultimately does all things for His glory and for our good.

The Story of His Glory begins in Genesis 1-2 (which you will read through each day this week). Perhaps no passage of scripture has been more attacked and ridiculed than these two chapters. Man doesn’t want a God who created all things. Why? If there is such a God, then man is subject to Him. Man wants to be his own god. He doesn’t want to answer to another. Thus, in man’s determination to run his own life, he denies the existence of a creator God who controls the universe and who owns the life of each man in it. Yet, to assume that all we see happened by chance is ultimately more irrational than to simply believe there is a God who created it with design and purpose. Romans 1 states that God created our world to reveal His glory. As you read through Genesis 1-2 this week look for the glorious things you learn about your God, and then look for the gracious things you see in Him.

At the end of the week, go to our web site and see the list of things we saw concerning God’s glory and grace in this passage. Don’t go there ahead of time. Wait until the end of the week and then compare what you saw to what we saw. If you want you can even post some of your thoughts online for others to see.

Week 2—Genesis 3-4 (Daily)

Genesis 3 addresses a specific question: How will the man and woman God created respond to His grace, love, and provision of all they need? God gave them a test by placing a single prohibition before them. He allowed them to eat of any tree in the garden but one—the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. How would they respond?

After some time (we are not told how long), Satan appeared in the form of a talking serpent. Satan's purpose was single—to rob God of His glory. Remember, history is *The Story of His Glory*. But Satan would have it be the story of his (Satan's) glory. Isaiah 14:12-15 indicates that sometime after his creation Satan's heart was filled with pride and he coveted God's glory for himself. Some Bible scholars suggest that the creation of mankind may have been the very thing that led him to the jealousy and pride that caused his fall (1 Timothy 3:6).

Since Satan could not create a physical form by his own power, he had to take possession of a creature God had made. The serpent fit his purposes. The serpent began with a question (Satan still works that way). His tactics were simple—to get Eve's focus off of the good things God had provided (to take her attention away from God's glory and grace) and to get her to think about the one thing she couldn't do. The same is true today. Satan does not want us enjoying God's glory and grace. He will have us dissatisfied with what we don't have. Ultimately, Eve's distraction from God brought about her fall and the fall of Adam and all mankind. As you read this story each day this week, keep your focus on the wonderful things you see about God's glory and God's grace.

Sin destroyed God's ultimate purpose in creation—to create a people to praise and glorify Him. Adam and Eve lost their relationship with the Lord. Their fallen nature now despised God, was wicked and depraved, and sought to satisfy self rather than to glorify God.

But even in their sin, God hinted at His grace. God created man to glorify Him, and though man had now fallen in sin, and lost his capacity to glorify God, God had a plan. He would restore man to Himself and make him once more capable of bringing glory to the Creator. In Genesis 3:15 He promised that one day the "Seed of the woman" would crush Satan's (the serpent's) head. Who was this promised Seed of the woman? As we shall see, it was Jesus Christ, who would be born of a woman (Mary) thousands of years later. But aren't all men born of a woman? Yes, but all men are the seed of their father, not their mother. Though moms give birth, the child is the seed of the father. The phrase, seed of a woman, is thus a very special statement. It hints at a Virgin Birth.

So, the subplot begins. The *Story of His Glory* will now focus on God's eternal plan for mankind's restoration. We call it *The Plan of Redemption*. God will institute this plan to restore (redeem or purchase back) man to the position for which Adam and Eve were originally created. God will not be thwarted by Satan. He will one