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New Women's Devotional Bible, New International Version ®
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Genesis

Every story has *a beginning*, a genesis. The beginning of God's story of his interactions with humanity is found in the very first words of the Bible. In the beginning God created. From the start God was present. He was at work.

However, in the freshness of *a new world* where the first man and woman walked and talked with God, sin slithered in, marring creation forever. But the God who hung every star in place and laid every grain of sand upon the shore had, from the beginning, a plan. The whole of Scripture, and indeed the whole of history, is unveiled within the seeds of Genesis. It will be many years before we see the fruit of those seeds, but they are not years of dormancy. Throughout the world and within individual lives, *God is actively working* to redeem his creation. In Genesis we see him form covenants, bestow blessings, test faithfulness and turn evil intentions into a greater good—all for the purpose of one day *redeeming the people* he created in his image. It's a work that will continue until the end of time, but the beginnings for all of it are found in Genesis.

Author:
Moses.

Audience:
The people of Israel.

Date:
Between 1446 and 1406 B.C.

Setting:
The area called the Middle East today.

Verse to Remember:
In the beginning
God . . . (1:1)

The Beginning

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ²Now the earth was^a formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

³And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. ⁴God saw that the light was

good, and he separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.

⁶And God said, "Let there be an expanse between the waters to separate water from water." ⁷So God made the expanse and

^a2 Or possibly *became*

Reaching for the Heavens

Read: Genesis 11:1–9

LOUIS SULLIVAN, the inventor of the modern skyscraper, said, “The tall building . . . should be a proud and soaring thing that makes a powerful appeal to the architectural imagination.” Today, many women embody the same spirit of pride and self-sufficiency that is represented in the lofty towers that make up our cities. We focus on personal perfection. Many women seek the pinnacle of age-defying beauty through creams, procedures or surgeries. Some become obsessed with fashion or feel that they must conform to some media-driven image. Over time, it becomes easier and easier to build monuments to ourselves. After all, as the famous ad says, “I’m worth it.”

The builders of the tower of Babel shared a key aspect of Sullivan’s vision of the tall building: pride. And they had one purpose: to build a name for themselves. They wanted to claim glory that rightly belonged to God—after all, they were worth it.

The longing to climb higher than God didn’t begin in Babel. Before time began Lucifer said, “I will raise my throne above the stars of God” (Isaiah 14:13). It didn’t end with Babel, either. The pyramids of Egypt proclaim the power of the rulers buried beneath them. Many lives were lost in the building of the pyramids, “collateral damage” to the princes who built them. Often Egyptian slaves were killed when their masters died and were buried alongside them. But just as the Egyptian kings sacrificed everything to their own legacy, women often sacrifice the good of those around them for fleeting recognition, not to mention the humble spirit God desires. The rulers of ancient Egypt were not all-powerful—they died the deaths of mere men. Don’t be deceived, your soul will not be saved by flawless skin or the perfect career any more than the towering mountains of stone raised over the mummies of kings saved them.

What do you take pride in? What keeps you from glorifying God? Has your focus become self-absorbed? Have you become self-glorifying? The solution is simple: Whatever is keeping you from God, give it to him for his glory. Let your relationship with Jesus be the source of your significance. When you humble yourself before God, you’ll be lifted up.

Genesis 11:4

“Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth.”

reflection



1 Name some of the towers you see others building around you that take glory away from God. What kinds of towers have you built?

2 Have you ever taken credit for work when another person really deserved it, or has someone taken credit for work you have done? How did that feel?

3 How do you think God feels when we take the credit for his work in our lives?

RELATED READINGS

Psalms 86:8–10; Proverbs 18:10–12; Matthew 23:12

“The one sole thing in myself in which I glory is that I see in myself nothing in which I can glory.”

Catherine of Genoa

Wednesday

Go to page 18 for your next devotional reading.

The Heart of a Mother

EVE

*[Eve] said,
"With the help
of the LORD
I have brought
forth a man."*

Genesis 4:1

STRANGE CRAVINGS. That first flutter. Her body was changing, growing and stretching in unpredictable and unsettling ways. The first mother in history conceived a child, carried him to term and gave birth without ever knowing what to expect next.

She didn't have a girlfriend to confide in when Adam just didn't understand her moods. She had no one to assure the young mother that sudden clumsiness was normal or that the awful bloated feelings would pass. Her experience was the ultimate as natural childbirth goes—she made it without the benefit of an obstetrician, a midwife or a drop of morphine. She couldn't even run to her mother!

And that was just the pregnancy.

She recalled cradling Cain in her arms as a newborn and gently leading him to nurse for the first time. She remembered fingering his tiny hands and counting all his toes, one by one. She didn't know she could love someone so much.

How, oh how, would she ever be able to be what he needed her to be—his mother? Eve answered her own question when she spoke in the afterglow of giving birth. "With the help of the LORD I have brought forth a man."

No one was there to inform Eve about the significance of what had just transpired. They didn't have to. She got it. She instinctively knew what every mother knows in an instant: She had *not* brought forth this miracle by her own power. And almost simultaneously, she knew she would not be able to raise him in her own strength either. The very first mother in history would have to raise her child the very same way mothers throughout history have conceived and nurtured children—fully relying on God's help.

If that fact wasn't obvious then, it soon would be. Like when she had to steal away for a moment alone to cry because it was the first time she had to punish him. When he bickered with his brother. When his career choice went south. And whenever her own poor choices threatened to scar her children's future.

Eve was the first to experience joy and heartache as a mother. But no one could tell her then that she certainly wouldn't be the last.



ASSIGNED READING:

Genesis
4:1–26

Weekend