

## "BRAVE THE ELEMENTS" GENESIS 6:9-22

The story of Noah and the Flood—a children's bedtime story? The children's version of the Flood story is a hero story about Noah, who obeyed God and built an enormous ark to save his family and the animals that came to him two-by-two from a great flood. As you might expect, the children's version of the story focuses on the virtuous character of the hero, the animals and family that escaped the deluge, and God's promise signified by his rainbow that "never again will all life be destroyed by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth" (Ge 9:11). The children's version of the story necessarily glosses over the horrific loss of life involved in the Flood, alluding to it only indirectly.

Children's versions of the story of the Flood suffer from the same ills as children's versions of the story of the Holocaust. An overview of one such story entitled *Hidden* by Loric Dauvillier reads as follows: "In this gentle, poetic young graphic novel, Dounia, a grandmother, tells her granddaughter the story ever her son has never heard: how, as a young Jewish girl in Paris, she was hidden away from the Nazis by a series of neighbors and friends who risked their lives to keep her alive when her parents had been taken to concentration camps. Hidden ends on a tender note, with Dounia and her mother rediscovering each other as World War II ends . . . and a young girl in present-day France becoming closer to her grandmother, who can finally, after all those years, tell her story?"

The story of the Holocaust *so told* is a hero story rather than a documentary, the heroes being those neighbors and friends who risked their lives to oppose

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*I have not come to call the  
righteous, but sinners.*

— Jesus

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the Nazi pogrom, who were very few in number and the exception to the rule historically. It's a story that hardly does justice to the inhuman atrocities of Hitler and his henchmen perpetrated on the Jewish people.

The difference between children's versions of the Flood story and children's versions of the Holocaust story is this: most adults recognize the difference when it comes to children's stories of the Holocaust. They recognize the horrific historical reality behind the children's version. Unfortunately, for many adults, the story of the Flood is nothing more than a children's story. They miss the point entirely. Humanity's heartborn wickedness inevitably brings God's righteous judgment.

### **This Week's Core Competency**

**Humanity** – I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Why do *all* people need Jesus Christ as their Savior? The answer is because we are *all* born with a terminal illness called sin. Nobody's perfect. In the house of the apostle Matthew, who was then a tax collector called Levi, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners" (Mk. 2:17; cf. Lk. 5:32), and on another occasion at the home of another publican he said, "the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost." Tragically most of sin's victims are in denial. We do not like to think of ourselves as bad or evil people, and yet this is what we are by nature.

The Bible uses a host of different terms for sin. The most common are words that view sin as "missing the mark." Judges 20:16 tells us that 700 left-handed men from the tribe of Benjamin were crack marksmen. Every one of them could "sling a stone at a hair, and not miss." The word translated "miss" in "not miss" is the verb translated "sin" elsewhere in the Old Testament. Another literal

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usage of this term is found in Proverbs 19:2, "It is not good to have zeal without knowledge, nor to be hasty and miss the way." Although the verb does not refer to sin in these passages, when it does in others, it suggests that sin is missing the moral mark that God has set for us. The same idea is expressed in the most prominent New Testament words for sin, which occur nearly 300 times there. The connotation of this word family is clearly seen in Romans 3:23, which reads, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." According to Paul, to sin is to fall short, or in other words to sin is to miss the mark.

The phrase "missing the mark" usually suggests to us a mistake rather than a willful act, but these terms for sin suggest that we miss the mark deliberately! One author writes, "wicked man misses the right mark because he chooses to aim at a wrong one" and "misses the right path because he deliberately follows a wrong one"—which implies that sin is no innocent mistake or mere failure (Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2:568).

But why do we choose to aim at the wrong target? The answer is because we are all born with a sin nature, a capacity and inclination to sin. "Sin is not merely wrong acts and thoughts, but sinfulness as well, an inherent inner disposition inclining us to wrong acts and thoughts. Thus it is not simply that we are sinners because we sin; we sin because we are sinners" (2:578). We all need Jesus as our Savior because we all miss the moral mark God has set for us. On one hand, nobody is as evil as he could be, but on the other, nobody's perfect either.

## day 1 ENCOUNTER – read God's word to put yourself in touch with him.

### Genesis 6:9-22

9 This is the account of Noah and his family.

Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God.

10 Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth.

11 Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence. 12 God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. 13 So God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth. 14 So make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out. 15 This is how you are to build it: The ark is to be three hundred cubits long, fifty cubits wide and thirty cubits high. 16 Make a roof for it, leaving below the roof an opening one cubit high all around. Put a door in the side of the ark and make lower, middle and upper decks.

17 I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish. 18 But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark—you and your sons and your wife and your sons' wives with you. 19 You are to bring into the ark two of all living creatures, male and female, to keep them alive with you. 20 Two of every kind of bird, of every kind of animal and of every kind of creature that moves along the ground will come to you to be kept alive. 21 You are to take every kind of food that is to be eaten and store it away as food for you and for them."

22 Noah did everything just as God commanded him.

## EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

\* Bracket "This is the account of" in v. 9.

\* Circle "righteous" and "blameless" in v. 9.

\* Circle "corrupt" in vv. 11, 12 and write in margin, "Cf., vv. 5-8."

\* Box "so" indicating *result* in v. 13.

\* Circle "destroy" in v. 13.

\* Underline "make yourself an ark" in v. 14.

\* Circle "cubit/s" in vv. 15, 16.

\* Circle "roof" in v. 16.

\* Circle "floodwaters" in v. 17.

\* Bracket "that has the breath of life in it" in v. 17.

\* Box "but" indicating *contrast* in v. 18.

\* Underline "bird," "animal," and "creature" in v. 20.

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day **2**

**EXPLORE** – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. Summarize what the Bible says about the character of Noah.
2. *Contrast* the character of Noah with that of his contemporaries.
3. The word "earth" is used *figuratively* in "the *earth* was corrupt." To what does "earth" figuratively refer? (See v. 12b)
4. Twice the narrator refers to the level of "violence" in the earth. Elaborate on what he's referring to (see note on v. 11).
5. Describe how different you think people are now from how they were in Noah's day (vv. 11-13; cf., v. 5).
6. The word translated "corrupt" (v. 12) and the word translated "destroy" (v. 13) are the same word meaning "ruin." Comment on the play on words (see note on v. 13).
7. Comment on the size and shape of the ark.
8. Explain how Noah was able to build it (see note on v. 14).
9. The ark had no rudder. So what?
10. Explain the *contrast* in verse 18.

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## day 3

## EXAMINE – an explanation of the message to better understand the meaning of the passage.

The significance of the biblical account of the flood resides not in its entertainment value but in its main theological theme, the radical nature of the problem of sin. Human sin was so severe and so heinous that God had no recourse but to wipe out his creatures and start over with Noah—the only man of integrity in his generation. The Bible tells us this story to express in the most terrifying way that human sin brings God's judgment. Unfortunately, modern readers can easily miss the point. We may miss the point because we're looking for a more pleasant point or a more practical point. We may even miss the point because we are all too familiar with the story. Our path of understanding may be "bestrewn with the stumbling blocks of familiarity, which make it so hard to hear the story in its full force. The innocence of childhood and the ethos in which most people learn the story make it into a delightful tale of ancient adventure—a tale of the venerable and good-hearted Noah; boat building on the colossal scale; lighthearted and quick-footed animals of all shapes and sizes gaily tripping over a gangplank into a cavernous interior, two by two; the bursting of the fountains of the great deep and the opening of the windows of heaven; of ark and comic contents bobbing about in safety on wild waters while Noah's nasty neighbors (with whom one never once identifies) sink from view. But the account's original context is far removed from the bedtime story" (Lasor, Hubbard, and Bush, *Old Testament Survey*, 84). This story is the archetype of divine judgment on sin.

The "account of Noah" that begins in Genesis 6:9 and ends in 9:29 tells the story of the Flood. Like all stories, this story has a *setting*, *characters*, and a *plot*, and as in all stories, in this story something happens to someone, somewhere. While the setting of a story is always telling, this is especially true here. The setting of this story is a *moral* one that legitimizes the plot. Apart from it there would be no plot, because apart from it there would be no reason for the flood. The story opens with a *contrast* between the hero and the rest of humanity. We read, "Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God" (6:9), a man who "found favor in the eyes of the LORD" (v. 8). On the other hand, "The earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence . . . for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways" (vv. 11, 12). Consequently, the LORD said, "I will wipe from the face of the earth the human race I have created—and with them the animals, the birds and the creatures that move along the ground—for I regret that I have made them" (v. 7). The

moral setting sets the stage for what is going to happen. What's more, the contrast between righteous Noah and a corrupt people establishes competing tensions in the story: "the Lord resolves to destroy the corrupt people and earth by means of the Flood and to preserve in the ark the righteous and the creation they were created to rule" (Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis*, 122).

The major character in the Flood story is, of course, Noah, who "found favor in the eyes of the LORD" (v. 8). Three things are said about him in verse 9: 1) he was "righteous;" 2) he was "blameless;" and 3) he "walked faithfully with God." Noah wasn't sinless, but in contrast to the people of his time, he was undeserving of the destruction that was going to befall the rest of humanity. Unlike them, he had not "ruined" the earth, so God purposed to not "ruin" him in the Flood. Instead, God determined to deliver Noah and his family to preserve humanity, so that his promise to defeat Satan through Eve's offspring might one day be fulfilled (3:15). One commentator goes so far as to say, "The future of salvation history rides on Noah's faithfulness" (Waltke, 123).

In a nutshell, Noah was a man who did good rather than evil, a man who was unblemished by iniquity, and a man who like Enoch "walked with God" (5:22, 24)—a characterization that is confirmed by his response to God's instructions (v. 22). One commentator observes: "Here in verses 9 and 10 the author is not specific about the nature of Noah's 'righteousness' or what it means to 'walk with God.' In the following section, however, the author allows the reader to peer more closely into the nature of Noah's righteousness. We are allowed to see him at work. The picture of Noah that emerges from the Flood story thus becomes a model of the kind of life that finds grace in the sight of God. It is a picture of simple obedience to God's commands and trust in his provision. In view of the predominance of the concept of 'faith' elsewhere in the Pentateuch it is appropriate to say that the author pictures Noah very much as the writer of Hebrews does: one who 'by his faith condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith' (Heb 11:7)" (John H. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative*, 124).

The plot opens with God's assessment of the human situation in Noah's day and what he intended to do about it (vv. 11-22). "God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways" (v. 12). Desperate times call for desperate measures, so we read, "God said to Noah, 'I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is

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filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth" (v. 13). This verse reveals the theme of the Flood story, "divine judgment on sinners" (Allen P. Ross, *Creation and Blessing*, 189). Clearly, the wickedness of humanity reached its apex and human depravity its zenith in those days, for "every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was evil all the time" (v. 5). What a graphic description of human nature at its worst! Inhumanity to man must have reached holocaust proportions at that time.

The rest of the chapter (vv. 14-22) contains instructions for building the ark and filling it with living creatures. God told Noah, "make yourself an ark of cypress wood . . ." (v. 14)—the dimensions of which are staggering. One author writes: "The size is vast (a cubit is about eighteen inches) but the shape is simple, and buildings of such size were not unknown in antiquity (Derek Kidner, *Genesis*, TOTC, 93). Another goes into more detail. He writes: "The dimensions of the ark are easy enough to determine, and the general shape of it is therefore discernible. Based on one cubit equaling eighteen inches, Noah's ark is 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet deep. If it had a flat bottom, the total displacement would be about 43,000 tons, and it would cover one and a half football fields . . . Since no rudder or sail is mentioned, it is evident that Noah's ark was not designed to be navigated. Consequently, the fate of the company aboard was left in the hands of God" (John H. Walton, *The NIV Application Commentary: Genesis*, 312). God also told him, "bring into the ark two of all living creatures, male and female, to keep them alive with you" (v. 19). Noah was no doubt

pleased to hear that he did not have to round up these creatures, which had the breath of life in them (v. 17); they were to come to him. He does, however, have to collect food for them and store it onboard the ark, which was no small task. Before embarking (7:7), the narrator stresses Noah's obedience by affirming, "Noah did everything just as God commanded him" (v. 22) and then, by reiterating, "Noah did all that the Lord commanded him" (7:5). The story of the Flood as told in children's books is a hero story about Noah, who built an ark and saved the animals two by two. The story of the Flood as told in Genesis is a tragic story about the utter wickedness of people in Noah's day, which God patiently endured for 120 years before sending the Flood to wipe them all from the face of the earth and start anew with Noah and his family.

Apart from the ark, itself a testimony to the coming judgment of God, the New Testament tells us that Noah, called "a preacher of righteousness" (2Pe 2:5), apparently warned his generation of what lay in store for them if they did not repent. In fact, on 1 Peter 3:19-20 one commentator writes: "One could say that Jesus proclaimed a message to Noah's unbelieving contemporaries in His spirit (i.e., His spiritual state of life before the Incarnation) through Noah. Noah was preaching a message that God had given him, and in this sense Jesus Christ spoke through him (cf. 2 Cor. 5:20)" (Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on 1 Peter," 2017 ed., 58-59, [planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/1peter.pdf](http://planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/1peter.pdf)). Noah was called to warn his generation; are we not called to warn our generation as well?

## day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you in his word.

### *The Message of the Passage*

*Because the human race had become utterly corrupt, the LORD destroyed humanity and purged the earth in a devastating flood but saved Noah's family and two of all living creatures to start anew afterward.*

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James teaches in James 1:22.

What do you think of children's stories of the Flood?

Put the essence of what the Flood story teaches about humanity in your own words.

Relate the point of the Flood story to missional living.

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# notes STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

v. 9 **This is the account of** The Hebrew word translated here occurs 10 times in the book and marks the beginning of each new section. Generally it points to an historical sequence beginning with a certain person and might be paraphrased " 'this is what became of,' or 'this is where it started from' (with reference to the following subject?" (Ross, 72-73)—here starting with Noah and continuing with his sons.

v. 9 **righteous, blameless** I.e., not sinless. "The pairing of 'blameless' and 'righteous' suggests that Noah is wholly committed to righteousness (cf. Deut. 32:4; Ps. 18:30; 19:7-8), 'giving his contemporaries no excuse to criticize his conduct.' Blameless denotes to abstain from sin, not to be without sin. David, though an adulterer and a murderer, can still claim 'I have been blameless before him' (2 Sam. 22:24)" (Waltke, 133). "His righteousness and blamelessness is in comparison to the people of his time" (Walton, 311).

v. 11, 12 **corrupt** Cf., "The earth was *ruined* in the sight of God; the earth was filled with violence. God saw the earth, and indeed it was *ruined*, for all living creatures on the earth were sinful" (NET). "The expression, which occurs seven times in the narrative, signifies 'to spoil or disfigure'. . . Here the parallel 'violence' shows that moral behavior and its consequences are in view" (Waltke, 134).

v. 11 **violence** "'Violence' denotes any antisocial, unneighborly activity. Very often it involves the use of brute force, but it may just be the exploitation of the weak by the powerful or the poor by the rich (e.g. Amos 6:1-3), or the naive by the clever (Prov. 16:29)" (Gordon J. Wenham, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 1, *Genesis 1-15*, 171). "*Chamas* is cold-blooded and unscrupulous infringement of the personal rights of others, motivated by greed and hate and often making use of physical violence and brutality" (*IDOT*, 4:482).

v. 13 **destroy** Or ruin. "This is the same word translated 'corrupt' in 6:12. With poetic justice, just as the people have corrupted the earth, so God will disfigure the earth, so it can no longer feed them" (135). Note the play on words with verses 11 and 12. People had *ruined* themselves and the earth with violence, and now God would *ruin* them with judgment.

v. 14 **make yourself** "Noah had been told to build it for himself (v 14) but the structure was far too vast for one man, or even for himself and his family alone" (Wenham, 175). "Notice that the Bible tells us how many people were on board the Ark, but it does not tell us how many people were involved in building it . . . Although Genesis mentions Noah's sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, it does not tell us about his extended family. He may have had many brothers and sisters who might have been willing to help with the project . . . Another possibility is that Noah hired people to help him build the Ark. The Bible does stress the wickedness of man prior to the Flood, but just like today, ungodly people may have been willing to work for a godly man" (Tim Chaffey, "How Many People Built the Ark?" <https://answersingenesis.org/noahs-ark/how-many-people-built-the-ark/>).

v. 15 **ark** The same Hebrew word is used to refer to the watertight basket in which the baby Moses was placed (Ex 2:3, 5). "The narrator does not mention a rudder or navigational aids, suggesting that the fate of the ark depends solely on the will of God" (Waltke, 135).

v. 16 **roof** "The word translated 'roof' appears only here in the Hebrew Bible and is often translated 'window' (e.g., NKJV, NASB, though it is not the same word as used in 8:6-7)" (312).

v. 17 **floodwaters** "'Flood' [*mabbul*] is a technical term for Noah's flood used only in Gen 6-11 and Ps 29:10" (Wenham, 174). "The word is similar to the Akkadian word for the cosmic deluge, *abubu*. In Akkadian it refers to a devastating flood of cosmic proportions that is seen as a destructive weapon of the gods . . . It is true that Noah's flood is the only *mabbul* that the Bible acknowledges, but the use in Psalm 29 compared to the broader cultural usage suggests that the word may have had broader currency as a cosmic water-weapon wielded by deity" (Walton, 313). "The Hebrew is a technical term for the 'celestial sea' associated with the Deluge and 'indicates the unparalleled cataclysmic nature of the event'" (Waltke, 136).

v. 20 **every kind** "This is an unmistakable echo of Gen. 1:20-23. The language of 6:19-21 indicates the continuity of all kinds of animals through the Flood" (137).

### Family Talk

Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

Noah's ark is a cute and sweet nursery room theme, but have you read this narrative as an adult? It's fascinating. There are many things I find amazing about the account of Noah and the ark, one being the fact that there is no record of conversational dialogue between Noah and God. To me, this suggests one simple thing: Noah listened to God. He listened and did everything as God commanded. He waited to come out of the ark, even though he saw dry ground, until he heard from God. One of the greatest legacies you can pass to your children is the ability to listen to God through a life rich in prayer. When my youngest child was a preschooler, he loved to get up early and sit with me while I was praying. For a while I sent him back to bed but then remembered a story a friend told me. Her fondest memory of her mom was waking up seeing her praying at the kitchen table. From that point forward, I allowed my child to rest with me during prayer. Our kids need to know without a doubt that we as parents have a deep prayerful relationship with the Lord. Do your kids see you listening to God in heartfelt prayer? Today is a great day to start! "Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know," Jeremiah 33:3. I'm praying for your family this week.

#### What Does The Bible Say

Weekly Verse: Read Ge 6:9-22

1. How is Noah described in verse 9? How would someone describe you?
2. What was wrong with the people on earth and what was God's plan?
3. How did Noah obey God?

#### What Do You Think

Do you think it was fair for God to destroy everything on the earth? Why or why not?

#### What R U Going To Do

Using items around the house, draw or create the ark God told Noah to make. Bring it into the KidPix store for three bonus KidPix tokens.

#### Core Comp

Humanity - I believe God loves everyone and we all need Jesus as our Savior.

#### Memory Verse

1 John 5:3 - *This is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome.*

### KIDPIX COUPON

I memorized my verse \_\_\_\_\_, completed *Scrolls* \_\_\_\_\_, brought Bible \_\_\_\_\_, brought a friend \_\_\_\_\_.

Series Discipleship Challenge located in KidPix Store.

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_ Parent's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Earn 1 token by completing the PantegoKids Bible study and another token by reciting the memory verse.

Questions: Kids@pantego.org

# 30 CORE COMPETENCIES

## 10 CORE BELIEFS

### **Trinity** *2 Corinthians 13:14*

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

### **Salvation By Grace** *Ephesians 2:8-9*

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

### **Authority of the Bible** *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

### **Personal God** *Psalms 121:1-2*

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

### **Identity in Christ** *John 1:12*

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

### **Church** *Ephesians 4:15-16*

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

### **Humanity** *John 3:16*

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

### **Compassion** *Psalms 82:3-4*

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

### **Eternity** *John 14:1-4*

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

### **Stewardship** *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

## 10 CORE PRACTICES

### **Worship** *Psalms 95:1-7*

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

### **Prayer** *Psalms 66:16-20*

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

### **Bible Study** *Hebrews 4:12*

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

### **Single-mindedness** *Matthew 6:33*

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

### **Spiritual Gifts** *Romans 12:4-6*

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

### **Biblical Community** *Acts 2:44-47*

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

### **Giving Away My Time** *Colossians 3:17*

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

### **Giving Away My Money**

*2 Corinthians 8:7*

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

### **Giving Away My Faith** *Ephesians*

*6:19-20*

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

### **Giving Away My Life** *Romans 12:1*

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

## 10 CORE VIRTUES

### **Joy** *John 15:11*

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

### **Peace** *Philippians 4:6-7*

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

### **Faithfulness** *Proverbs 3:3-4*

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

### **Self-Control** *Titus 2:11-13*

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

### **Humility** *Philippians 2:3, 4*

I choose to esteem others above myself.

### **Love** *1 John 4:10-12*

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

### **Patience** *Proverbs 14:29*

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

### **Kindness/Goodness** *1 Thess. 5:15*

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

### **Gentleness** *Philippians 4:5*

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

### **Hope** *Hebrews 6:19-20*

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

## About the Authors

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