

Invincible
Love.

Invisible
War

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Eleanor Lewis

with pat harley and linda sweeney



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welcome!

As the four teachers of *The Amazing Collection: The Bible, Book by Book* (Pat Harley, Margie Reuther, Linda Sweeney, and I) studied and taught the entire Bible in our video series, we were overwhelmed by the powerful love story of God. The Bible is not only history; it is His story. Although the Bible is about Him, it is also about us, the objects of His affection. Therefore, in addition to God's love, we were confronted with our wars with sin, Satan, and the world's influence.

Even though the Bible was written over a period of about 1,500 years by over forty authors, there is a unity that can only be explained as supernatural. There is a consistent message that God loves us and that although life is a series of battles, He desires for us to live in victory.

This study, based on an outline Pat, Linda, and I developed for a seminar, presents the big picture of God's love and His plan to give you a future and a hope! It also gives a biblical perspective on the battles we face. As you work through each lesson, savor the goodness and greatness of God, knowing He can be your Sovereign King, your Wisdom, your Judge, your Savior, your Teacher, and your Victorious King!

Eleanor Lewis

Helps for using This study

Invincible Love, Invisible War may be used in groups or by individuals. The DVDs provide additional information not found in the workbook and are a springboard for deeper understanding and study of the written materials. The student is encouraged to engage daily in the Scriptures. The study moves through the Bible sequentially, as the goal is for the student to understand the big picture of the entire Bible. Though this is a unique way to study, its rewards will be great.

if doing the study alone

The individual student has the advantage of doing the workbook at a rate that is comfortable and allows time for deeper study. However, this method also requires the greatest amount of self-discipline. The DVD should be watched at the beginning of each of the six sections, followed by daily time in the workbook and Scriptures. The review questions that follow each section should be answered in writing.

if doing the study in a small group

The first session, The Old Testament History DVD, should be watched as a group. (There is a page for DVD Notes at the beginning of each section.) The DVD is followed by discussion of the questions on page 22. The following week, the students are encouraged to complete the homework and come prepared to discuss their answers at the beginning of the next week's session.

The facilitator can guide the discussion of the past week's homework by using the Review/Discussion Questions at the end of that week's study and the Love & War Questions found within the daily homework. Regardless of group size, review often so you can truly learn for life. Follow the discussion time by viewing the next DVD in the series. As time allows, end each session with a brief discussion of the DVD and prayer.

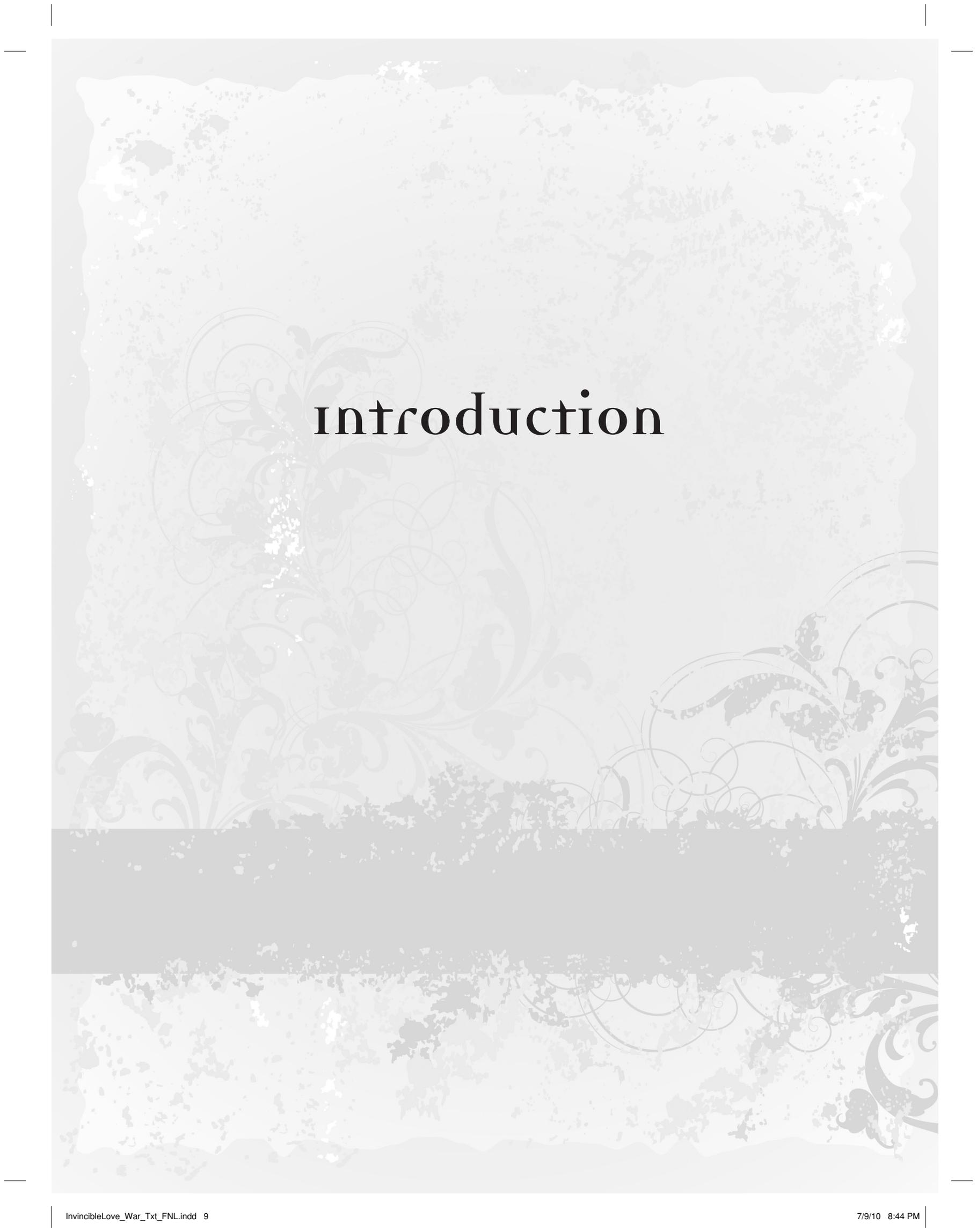
if doing the study in a large group

It is helpful to divide a large group into smaller groups of eight to ten. A facilitator will be needed for each small group. Follow the guidelines for small groups above.

The seventh week

Though this is a six-lesson study, a seventh week is needed for discussion of the New Testament Prophecy homework. It is also helpful to review the material from sessions 1–6. A sharing time of what the course has taught or meant to the students can also be meaningful.

- ▶ **Please note:** For facilitator helps, download the Small Group Leaders' Training Guide. Leader helps are found on pages 37–64 of the brochure. Go to http://www.theamazingcollection.com/PDFs/TAC_Guidebook.pdf

The background of the page is a light gray color with a complex, repeating pattern of dark gray floral and scrollwork designs. The pattern includes stylized leaves, flowers, and intricate swirling lines. A prominent feature is a large, dark gray silhouette of a floral arrangement, possibly a bouquet or a large plant, centered on the page. The overall aesthetic is elegant and classic.

introduction

A Personal Story of

Love and War

THE RELENTLESS ENEMY OF ADDICTION

The first shot of my war was fired when I was just eight years old. I was one of those kids so desperate for acceptance that I would do almost anything to fit in. Moving every two to three years provided ample opportunity to hone my skills of social deception.

Shortly after we moved from Seattle, Washington, to Atlanta, Georgia, I met the other boys my age in the neighborhood, and my act began. “Sports? Yeah, I love sports, and I’m very good at them.” Deceit flowed effortlessly from my lips and soon earned me an invitation into the inner sanctum of boyhood — the tree house. I planted my foot proudly on the bottom rung of the ladder and began my climb to acceptance. When my head popped through the floor, I was filled with such a rush. What I saw was like nothing I had ever experienced.

The owner of this tree house, Fred, had older brothers who had acted as decorators. Their choice of wallpaper was pages from *Playboy* and *Penthouse*! At the age of eight, I was exposed to pornography, and it became my enemy for the next twenty-four years. This enemy struck by surprise, and, trust me, the shock and awe of the attack far surpasses any military power. Viewing pornography feels good, which is the key to its destructive power. Instead of repulsing a person, porn draws him in so he wants more. In fact, he will willingly finance the very war that damages him and others along the way.

I felt unlovable, and the more I lied in an effort to create the right mask to gain acceptance, the more unlovable I felt. It’s an insidious cycle, isn’t it? Maybe you know it yourself. I lied to everyone. When I brought home from school my first 99 instead of 100, my father said, “What — couldn’t get 100?” I was devastated and learned that anything less than perfection would be unacceptable and subject to ridicule. So I began forging my parents’ names in the third grade! This behavior also sent me to the tree house to cope with the guilt and shame of lying.

I hated competition. Competition opened up the possibility of defeat, so in my mind, competition was only imperfection with witnesses. One day my dad and I were playing basketball and I kept losing. Finally I collapsed on the driveway in tears. Retrieving my last blocked shot, Dad yelled, “You are such a baby! I don’t even like you right now!” He then threw the basketball at me, hitting me in the face and knocking my head on the concrete. He walked in the house, and we never spoke about it again. Can you guess what I did? I ran to the tree house because what I found there made me feel better. The images of women provided the illusion of acceptance I so desperately craved.

This pattern became deeply entrenched in the programming of my brain. Where there was pain, there was porn. This continued until I was old enough to become sexually active and put into practice all I had been learning from pornography. However, guarding my image, I was always at church. I was a leader in the youth group and was selected to deliver the sermons on youth day. People had no idea I was living a grand lie. They saw and praised the mask I wore, which oddly enough made me feel worse. They didn’t know the real me, and I was terrified to let them find out. I believed that if anyone knew where I had been, what I had done, and what I had thought, there was *no way* they could love me.

I felt that way about God, too. I was sure He could not love me and that He was sitting on a distant throne glaring at me with disapproval, ready to throw a basketball in my face. The ravages of this war had distorted my view of love and of God.

The war with this enemy I had chosen continued to rage into my marriage, but I convinced myself I was being faithful since it was only porn. So I had a wife who had married my mask but not the real me.

I had a view of God in which He demanded a perfection I was incapable of and was waiting to throw things at me when I screwed up. And I had a mother who was a well-known Bible teacher and, since my dad had died of cancer, was now married to evangelical legend Cliff Barrows (no pressure there!). I was convinced if any of them found out, they would leave me.

Here's the thing about addiction to sex and porn: It is an intimacy disorder. I so desperately wanted to be loved and accepted but believed that was impossible. Finally the day came that I could not take it anymore. I knew I had to risk vulnerability to gain intimacy. I confessed to my wife all I had done and how I had lied to her. I braced for the assault I expected, but it did not come. We both began counseling to help us deal with our issues and to better understand ourselves and each other. After being honest with my wife, I told my mother and stepfather. They didn't run from me either. Wow! I could not believe it!

I was learning that not only did my spouse and family love the real me, but God loved the real me as well. He knew all about me and loved me anyway! The war I fought was not with God but rather with my distorted view of God. He sees me not only as I am but also as I am going to be. I don't have to earn His love. In fact, I could never earn His love! Philip Yancey's definition of grace has it right — there's nothing you can do to make God love you any less, and there's nothing you can do to make God love you any more.

I had resolved countless times to stop turning to pornography. I would plead with God to give me the strength to fight this battle. I would beg Him to take the desire from me, but He would not. He was waiting for me to desire Him and His glory above myself. When I did that, He rushed in to rescue me with His sovereign, empowering grace.

It is not making resolutions or fighting harder that wins a spiritual battle. It is only surrender that ends the war. I had to surrender to my loving heavenly Father, who does not waste anything, including our pain. I now pastor a unique community of people willing to be transparent in their struggles. God has also given me a weekly satellite radio show to introduce people in the throes of the battle to the truth of the gospel so they, too, can experience God's victory by being transformed into the likeness of Jesus Christ. I lived for twenty-four years convinced that I was unlovable. I finally learned I was wrong.

The LORD your God is in your midst,
A victorious warrior.
He will exult over you with joy,
He will be quiet in His love (some versions say, "He will renew you in His love"),
He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy. (Zephaniah 3:17)

Your personal battle may not be with pornography, but in the next few weeks we will see that we all have battles that come in many different forms. We will also see that Almighty God desires to live in our midst as our victorious *warrior*, to renew us in His *love*. Love and war — in the Word of God and in our daily lives, we find a constant struggle between the two. Everyone desires love, yet the war we seek to avoid is all around us.

God says,

I have loved you with an everlasting love;
Therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness. (Jeremiah 31:3)

But He also tells us, “Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil” (Ephesians 6:11).

Why would a God who loves us give us armor if we weren’t in a war? Do our life struggles and defeats mean He does not love us? Regardless of your age, all your life the news has reported wars taking place in various parts of the world. Maybe you have been the victim of crime or have witnessed violence in your community. Perhaps in your own home you’ve been a bystander or active participant in battles of words or quiet hostility. And what about the ongoing war in our own hearts against selfishness, fear, anger, and temptation?

In the midst of these wars, the Bible is God’s love letter to us. The Word of God helps us understand the depth of God’s love and the reasons we resist receiving it. It reveals the forces standing in the way of an intimate relationship with Him. To fight the battles in our lives, He has given us armor and one offensive weapon, revealed in the book of Ephesians: “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (6:17).

Your weapon, the Word of God, is truly unique. First, the Bible differs from any other book in the sense that it is actually a library made up of sixty-six books of history, poetry, self-help, biography, law, and wisdom. Over forty authors from many walks of life composed it, including two kings, a fisherman, a doctor, a sheep breeder, a cup bearer, and a priest.

The Bible was written over a period of 1,500–1,600 years on three continents — Asia, Africa, and Europe — and in three languages — Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic. Yet there is one consistent theme throughout because God is the same yesterday, today, and forever! The Bible claims that all Scripture was inspired by God, or God breathed (2 Timothy 3:16), and that none of it was written as an act of human will but by men who were moved by the Holy Spirit and spoke from God (2 Peter 1:21).

The Bible was the first book to be mechanically printed and is the most widely distributed book ever written. It is the best-documented text from the ancient world, and yet many people seldom read it! Though ancient, the Bible is relevant for us today. It reveals the battles we face daily and tells us who the Enemy is and how he operates. It also helps us know and understand the character, work, and power of our Defender. It not only instructs us on how to live in the battle, but it also assures us ultimate victory!

Moses made a bold statement about the Word of God: “For it is not an idle word for you; indeed it is your life” (Deuteronomy 32:47). Jesus reiterated the same idea when He said, “Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4). The Bible is not made up of idle words; indeed it is your life!

Through our study of God’s Word we will discover how deeply we are loved, how mighty our battle is, and how we can endure to the end.

- ▶ Please look at **The Bible** chart on page 15. To grasp the flow of the Bible it is helpful to break it down into six divisions:

- Old Testament History
- Old Testament Writings
- Old Testament Prophecy
- New Testament History
- New Testament Writings
- New Testament Prophecy

Note the three key words: history, writings, and prophecy.

- ▶ **The History books** tell us how God's love was rejected and the war ensued, what the battle is about, and, most important, who our Defender is and how He has already won the victory over sin.
- ▶ **The Writings** give us wisdom to protect and defend us. They enable us to believe rightly so we will live as we should, and they equip us to stand firm.
- ▶ **Prophecy** tells us what has happened and warns us what will happen in the future, including the final war that will bring total victory!

In *Invincible Love, Invisible War* we will study one of these six Bible divisions each week. We will begin week 1 by looking at the seventeen Old Testament History books to understand how the Old Testament history of love and war applies to us today.

The following resources will help you as you work through this study:

- ▶ The **map** on page 16 shows the area of the world where all the events we read about in the Old Testament took place. Today that area would include the countries of Israel, Syria, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt.
- ▶ The **Chronological Relationship of the Old Testament Books** chart on page 17 will be very helpful to you as you study the Bible. The middle section shows the seventeen Old Testament History books.
 - The **larger boxes** of Genesis through Nehemiah are books that record history *in chronological order*. In other words, the events in Exodus follow the events in Genesis, the events in Numbers follow the events in Exodus, and so on.
 - The **smaller boxes** of Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Ruth, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, and Esther are history books also; however, they *do not advance the story in time* but rather add additional information to the narrative. For instance, the book of Ruth tells of a family and an event that took place during the time period of Judges.

THE BIBLE

OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY

17 Books
Genesis – Esther

GOD OUR SOVEREIGN KING

OLD TESTAMENT WRITINGS

5 Books
Job – Song of Solomon

GOD OUR WISDOM

OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY

17 Books
Isaiah – Malachi

GOD OUR JUDGE

NEW TESTAMENT HISTORY

5 Books
Matthew – Acts

JESUS OUR SAVIOR

NEW TESTAMENT WRITINGS

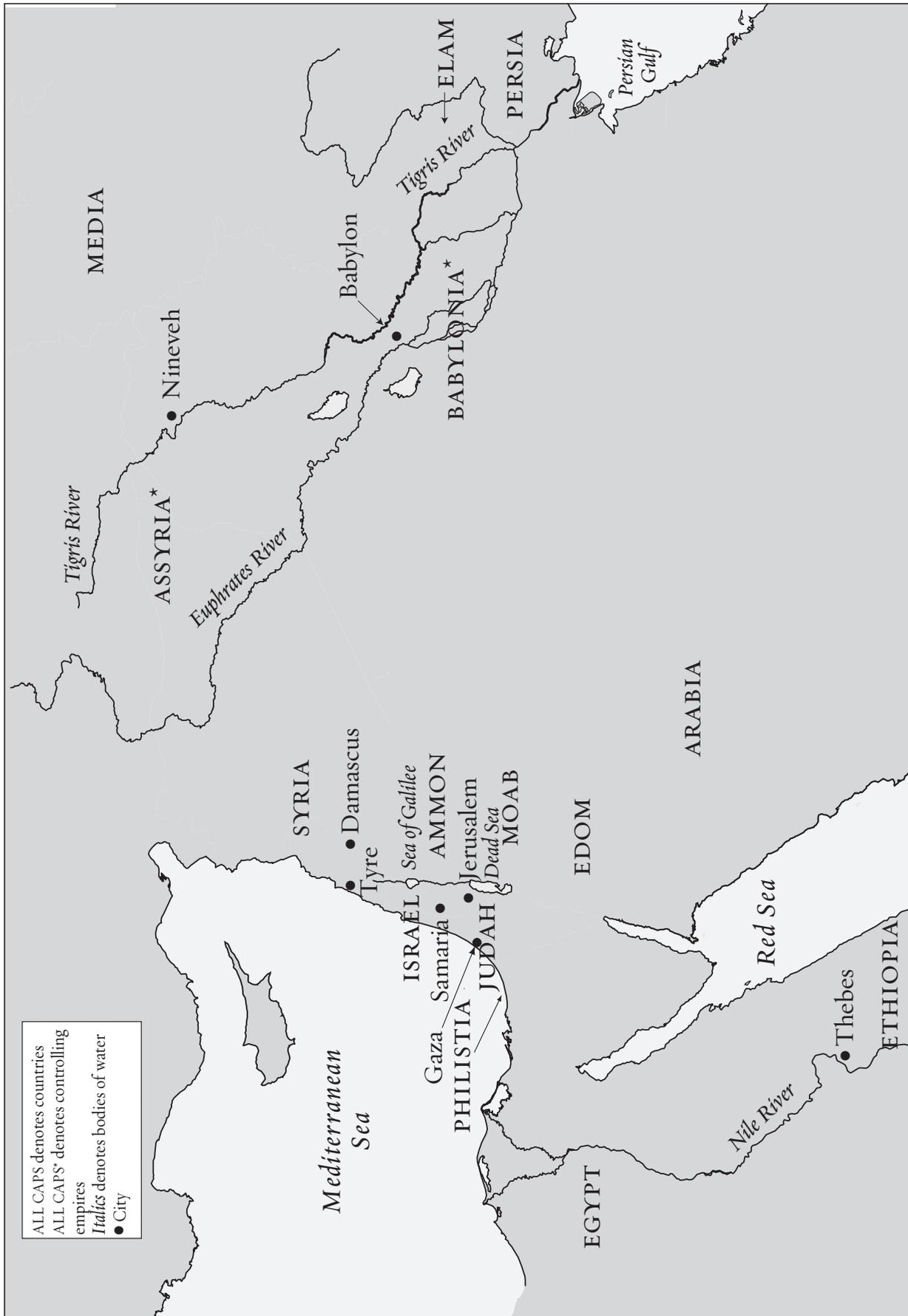
21 Books
Romans – Jude

JESUS OUR TEACHER

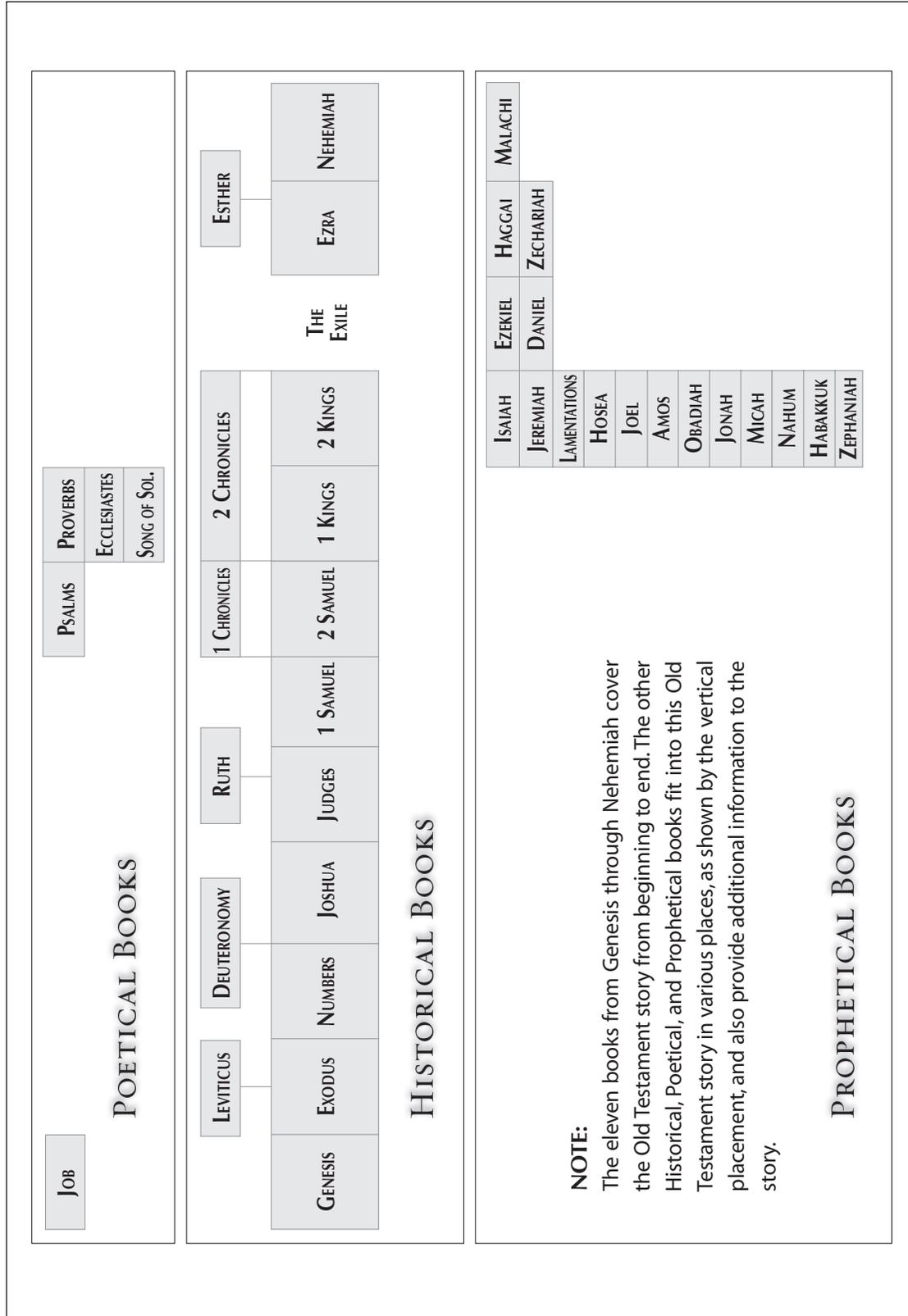
NEW TESTAMENT PROPHECY

1 Book
Revelation

JESUS OUR VICTORIOUS KING



CHRONOLOGICAL RELATIONSHIP OF THE OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS



#1
old testament
history



god our sovereign king

A decorative border of various flowers and leaves surrounds the central text.

#I DVD Notes

introduction

discussion/Review questions for DVD #1

(Use for group discussion or personal review after watching DVD #1 Old Testament History)

1. What is the most important thing you learned from the DVD teaching?
2. What did you learn from the Personal Story of Love and War? (Tal's story "The Enemy of Addiction" on the DVD is repeated on page 11 of this workbook.)
3. What did you learn about the Word of God?
4. What did you learn about God's relationship with man?
5. What did you learn about your enemies?
6. What did you learn about yourself and the battles you face?
7. Name the six divisions of the Bible (see chart on page 15).

A Personal Story of

Love and War

THE ENEMY OF FEAR

Growing up in a wonderful loving home and attending a small church, I learned Bible stories about Jesus but failed to learn about a relationship with Him. Instead I came to believe that God was like Santa Claus: Occasionally I could call on Him for some of the really important things in life, like helping me get a good grade on a test, but I did not think about God very often.

When I was twenty-one years old I was attending graduate school and was six weeks away from marrying a young man I had been in love with since I was fifteen. I lived in an apartment with another girl and one night woke up with a hand over my mouth, a knife pressed into my neck, and a man with a mask sitting on the side of my bed. I was sure I was going to die.

Crying out to God, I asked the “Santa” in heaven to send help immediately. But God chose not to answer in the way I thought He should. My roommate was locked in a closet and I was brutally assaulted. When my attacker walked out of my apartment, whatever faith in God I had walked out with him. I understood there was a battle between good and evil going on in my community, and it was a battle I could not conquer or control.

Because He did not rescue me that night, I felt God must not be very powerful. Or perhaps He did not love me enough to intervene. Or maybe He was not even aware that I needed help. As a result, God and I parted company. I married and moved on. I did not bother God, and as far as I could tell, He did not bother me.

During this time our country was at war in Vietnam. My peers were going to war and many were not coming home alive. Every evening the news brought pictures of great destruction, suffering, and pain. And I saw another battle taking place — a battle among the nations.

After ten years of marriage, I was facing more misery than I could ever have imagined. Our relationship had deteriorated until there was no longer any trust, love, or devotion between us. I went into a deep depression and even thought of ending my life. Now there was another battle raging. It was within my marriage.

Those years were lived in constant fear. I feared being attacked again. I feared the dark. I feared being alone. I feared everything. Although I fought to do so, I could not conquer my fears.

So there was a battle in my community, a battle in the nations, a battle in my marriage, and a battle in my own heart. In absolute hopelessness, I cried out to the God of my youth. He had been waiting for me all that time, and He answered.

Shortly after I prayed for help, God opened the door for me and my husband to attend a Bible study. It was through His Word that God began to heal my marriage and reveal Himself to me in a powerful way. He also began to heal my heart and my fears through a relationship with my Savior and victorious warrior, Jesus Christ.

old testament history



Overview

The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth. (Exodus 34:6)

► The seventeen Old Testament History books show God as our **Sovereign King**.

The Personal Story of Love and War “The Enemy of Fear” on page 23 reminds us that fear is a weapon of the Enemy and a battle we will all face. However, God our Sovereign King tells us, “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear” (1 John 4:18). Only God has perfect love, for He is “compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth.”

The Old Testament History books of Genesis through Esther make up about one-third of the Bible. The length of time covered in the opening chapters of Genesis is unknown, but from Genesis chapter 12 to the end of Nehemiah is a time period of about 2,000 years.

Please look at the **Chronological Relationship of the Old Testament Books** chart on page 17. The first five books of history (Genesis — Deuteronomy) are called the *Pentateuch*, and they show us the beginning of all things. We see God’s love and power in the story of Creation and man’s war with rebellious pride. We see the beginning of sin, which led to languages and nations. These books also reveal God’s choice of a family and His promise that they would become a great nation. God would give them land and they would produce a descendant who would bless the world.

The next seven books of history (Joshua — 2 Kings) are called *Kingdom Books*, and they tell how God’s promised nation, Israel, conquered the land and became a kingdom. Israel demanded a human king, even though God was their king (making their nation a theocracy). God had warned them of the consequences of having a human king, but He gave them what they desired. (The lesson? Watch what you ask for because you might get it!) God also warned the people that their idolatry would be considered spiritual adultery. Worshiping anyone or anything but Him constituted unfaithfulness and would break their covenant with God and result in separation from Him. Because they did not listen to this warning, after about eight hundred years the nation of Israel was conquered and exiled from the land, just as God had warned.

The last five books of history (1 Chronicles — Esther) are called *Post-Exilic Books*. They tell how after seventy years in exile God miraculously returned the people He loved to their land to rebuild and restore it just as He had promised.

In a battle it is important to know your enemy. Let's learn a little about one of ours.

- ▶ Like man, Satan is a creation of God (Genesis 3:1); however, in pride, Satan desired the glory only God deserves. (Isaiah 14:13-14)

- ▶ Satan can tempt us or fill our hearts with evil thoughts or desires:

Satan stood up against Israel and moved David to number Israel. (1 Chronicles 21:1)

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil. (Luke 4:1-2)

But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back some of the price of the land?" (Acts 5:3)

- ▶ Satan has a kingdom that is in conflict with God's kingdom:

Jesus said, "If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? . . . But if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you (Luke 11:18,20).

- ▶ Satan is a ruler men can choose to follow:

For some have already turned aside to follow Satan. (1 Timothy 5:15)

They may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will. (2 Timothy 2:26)

Do not give the devil an opportunity. (Ephesians 4:27)

- ▶ Satan can cause illness or tribulation:

And there was a woman who for eighteen years had had a sickness caused by a spirit. [After healing her, Jesus said,] "And this woman . . . whom Satan has bound for eighteen long years, should she not have been released from this bond on the Sabbath day?" (Luke 13:11,16)

Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. (Revelation 2:10)

- ▶ Satan is a liar and a murderer:

Jesus said to the Jews who were seeking to kill him, "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies" (John 8:44).

- ▶ Satan's end has already been decreed by God:

The Sovereign King said, "Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41).

What did you learn about Satan, your Enemy?

making them spiritual beings so that God, who is spirit (John 4:24), could have a personal relationship with them. He even spoke to them, giving them a job, or life purpose. However, His children were free to choose to obey or disobey God's plan.

2. What one command did God give (see Genesis 2:16-17)?

Because God is a loving Father, He gave His children the whole world, except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Obeying God would prove that man loved God, as God expressed in John 14:15: "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."

B. Meet your Enemy.

1. Who tempted the first man and woman to disobey God and how (see Genesis 3:1,4-5)?
(Revelation 12:9 says, "The serpent of old" is Satan.)

2. How did Adam and Eve respond to Satan's temptation and why (see Genesis 3:6)?

3. How did Satan's temptation of man in the garden in Genesis 3:5 mirror his own desire in Isaiah 14:14 when he said, "I will make myself like the Most High"?

Man's battles began by rejecting God's love. Now we are in a war waged on two battlefields: *within* and *without*. Peter warned about the battle within when he said to "abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul" (1 Peter 2:11). He also warned about the battlefield without when he said, "Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" (1 Peter 5:8). To be victorious in this battle of life, we must obey God's admonition to take up "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:17)!

C. There were and are consequences for rejecting God's love.

1. List the personal or human consequences of man's disobedience to God:
a. Genesis 3:16

b. Genesis 3:17-18

c. Genesis 3:19 (What phrase is repeated in Genesis 5:5,8,11?)

2. List the consequences man's disobedience caused in his relationship with God:

a. Genesis 3:8-10

b. Genesis 3:22-24

Disobedience resulted in a more difficult life than God intended. Sin not only brought into the world shame, pain, and fear, but it also caused all of mankind to be separated from God and His provision of the Tree of Life. Sin always separates, and something always dies!

3. List the consequences man's disobedience caused to family relationships and society:

a. Genesis 3:11-12

b. Genesis 6:11-12

Sin not only separated us from God, but it also resulted in people's separation from one another. Adam and Eve blamed each other for their disobedience, and their son Cain murdered his brother, starting a wave of violence on the earth.

LOVE & WAR
QUESTION:

Which of the many consequences of sin most affects your life today, including your relationships with God and others?

D. Despite man’s rebellion, God continued to provide for those He loved.

God made a promise to deal with sin. He promised to send a “seed,” or descendant, who would crush the serpent, or Satan, though His own heel would be crushed in the process (Genesis 3:15).

1. Adam and Eve apparently were “clothed” with innocence, or righteousness. After their rebellion they lost this covering and were naked. How did God show His love (see Genesis 3:21)?

2. In spite of man’s violence and corruption and God’s promise to judge the earth by destroying it, how did God show His love (see Genesis 6:13-14; 7:1)?

God provided Noah and his family an ark of safety from the judgment of the flood. Here we see a principle of God that continues throughout His Word. Though God must judge disobedience, He always provides a way of escape for those who belong to Him.

After the flood, Noah’s family got off the ark and grew in number. Though the corrupt earth had been judged, man’s heart had not changed — it was still deceitful. Man’s disobedience had brought lifelong and life-ending consequences. The war was still raging. However, God is a Sovereign King above all kings and rulers and He did not want to be separated from the people He loved. As we continue our study of the History books, God’s plan and promise to send the “seed” to deal with Satan and end our sin-induced separation from God will unfold.

LOVE & WAR
QUESTION:

What have you learned about God, your Sovereign King?



REVIEW IT!

Disobedience always brings consequences.