

How to Enjoy the Bible Events Series

You hold in your hands one of the most remarkable Bible study materials ever written and published. This series was first published in English years ago and has been used by many thousands of people in the English-speaking world.

Now, with permission of the original publishers, the series is available in several languages as collections printed under many contemporary titles.

What makes this series so valuable is that each Bible event leads the reader or the group to discover the deepest truths of the Bible history for themselves. This is done through insightful multiple choice questions which draw the readers to enter into the story and find for themselves its meanings and implications and to apply the history to their own lives.

The series is best “taught” by persons who encourage the group to do most of the talking and thinking. The teacher best acts as a leader in which the group discovers its way through the Scriptural events. The teacher may help the group when he or she believes that valuable truths have been overlooked, but the first discoverers should be members of the group itself. This stirs tremendous interest on the part of the group. This also relieves the teacher of the responsibility, under older systems of teaching, to carefully master all the truths of the text and present them in a way that would hopefully interest and “teach” the group.

Almost all teachers report that their classes or groups show much more interest than before and that teaching this series is much easier than it was under the older systems of teaching.

In the same way, individuals who use these booklets for their own personal study find this investigative method much more interesting and meaningful. The reader is invited to sense the drama of each story in his or her own Bible, be it Catholic or Evangelical, and be led to discern the spiritual truths that are packed into each story.



God's Strange Road to SUCCESS

From the “Bible Events” Series

NATIONAL BIBLE READING CAMPAIGN



“Every Community on Earth Deserves a New Testament Church”



CONTENTS

Event 1	A Strange Best Choice	1
Event 2	Fighting For Others	3
Event 3	Working Around Obstacles	5
Event 4	Starting With Nothing	7
Event 5	Down But Never Out	9
Event 6	Ready for Greatness	11

National Bible Reading Campaign

Church Starts International
P. O. Box 177
Henrietta, Texas 76365
billdavis@churchstarts.com
www.churchstarts.com

© 2007 Ted Lindwall

For You: God's Strange Road to Success

Abraham Lincoln is regarded by many as the greatest president in the history of the United States of America. Born and raised in poverty, he became a person of gigantic stature, but this came as a surprise to many perhaps even to him. Lincoln's strange road to success was marked by many failures. Consider his story:

1831	Failed in business
1832	Defeated for state legislature
1833	Failed again in business
1834	Elected to state legislature
1835	Had nervous breakdown
1838	Defeated for speaker of legislature
1843	Defeated for Congress
1846	Elected for Congress
1848	Defeated for Congress
1855	Defeated for Senate
1856	Defeated for Vice President
1858	Defeated for Senate
1860	ELECTED PRESIDENT

From Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations, pp. 1373-1374

Most people, in Lincoln's shoes, would have given up. Lincoln, however, showed himself to be a man of God and he proved God's strange road to success. Today, most people seek success but would confess disappointment in not reaching it. The truth of God's strange path to success, however, brings solid blessing to every life that chooses it. It is a path that always brings success, though it is a way that most people miss.

The Bible goes into great detail about four generations of a family that began in obscurity and became the foundation of a great nation. Each generation found and kept to God's strange road to success. Each life story was different except for finding God's way to success and each one fully reached this goal.

What does this road offer you? Discover for yourself in the following life-changing Bible Events.

Bible Event 1

A Strange Best Choice



Great Bible Truths:

1. Selfish desire leads to loss and destruction.
2. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God.
3. God's promises are for now and forever.

There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. Proverbs 14:12 KJV This literally describes the choice of Lot when he thought to outsmart his uncle Abram and pick for himself the best land for himself, his family and his flocks. Abram accepted what seemed to be second best, which turned out to be the better way. What important choices do you have in life?

Abram and Lot Take Separate Roads

Read Genesis 13:1-7

1. Which phrases summarize the beginning of this story?
 - Two wealthy herdsmen travel together with their flocks.
 - The two men did not get along together.
 - Their flocks were so great they needed more land.
 - Their herdsmen got to fighting each other for space.
 - They had come to where Abram had dedicated his life to God.

Read Genesis 13:8-9

2. In your opinion, what most distinguishes Abram from his nephew Lot in these two verses?
 - Abram was the first to suggest a way to avoid trouble.
 - Abram recognized a family responsibility to avoid conflict.
 - Abram, as leader, should have had the first choice, but he offered it to Lot.
 - Abram was willing for Lot to make a decision that would greatly affect him.
 - Abram's life and that of his family.
 - Abram acted as if he trusted God to chose what was best for him.

Read Genesis 13:10-13

3. What do you think most led Lot to decide as he did?
 - What he could see of the Jordan valley impressed him greatly.
 - He believed that he could talk his uncle into giving him the whole valley.
 - He realized that his uncle would accept living in the rugged mountains.
 - He may have thought his uncle was a wimp, afraid of any kind of fight.
 - He didn't pay attention to the fact that wicked men lived in the valley.

4. Opinions. According to the best business practices, which of the two men had the best prospects for becoming extremely wealthy?

Read Genesis 13:14-18

5. How much of the land did God promise to Abram?
 - Only the barren mountains toward which Abram walked.
 - The rich river valley that Lot had chosen for himself.
 - All the land, in every direction, as far as he could see.
6. Why do you think God waited to make this promise to Abram only after Lot had left?
 - God was congratulating Abram, saying he made the best decision.
 - Otherwise, Abram might have tried to get Lot to change his mind.
 - God speaks most clearly to us when others disappoint us and leave us.
7. What do you consider to be most amazing about this promise to Abram?
 - God's promise had more to do with future generations than what would happen immediately.
 - God's promise was forever!
 - Though Abram was still childless, God said his descendants would become like the dust of the earth.
 - God's promise was far greater than Abram could have imagined for himself.
 - God plans and promises great things for people of real faith.
8. What did Abram do when he heard the promise?
 - He sent a message to Lot telling him he made a big mistake.
 - He proceeded to do what had been decided, moving into the mountains.
 - He built an altar to the Lord in expression of his gratitude and faith.
9. Opinions: What is strangest about God's way to success?
 - It doesn't always make sense from a human standpoint.
 - It is not based on selfish choices.
 - It may not be what other people expect us to do.
 - It starts out with normal human activities and hard work.
 - It reflects a real partnership between God and the individual and family.

10. What major decision or decisions do you still have to make?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> My educational choices. | <input type="checkbox"/> My choice of a spouse. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Deciding where I should live. | <input type="checkbox"/> My choice of employment. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> My choice for personal ministry. | <input type="checkbox"/> How I guide my children. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | |



Bible Event 2

Fighting For Others



Great Bible Truths:

1. God's people sometimes must fight especially for the sake of the helpless.
2. God gives victory, but only to those who risk everything for Him.
3. Tithing is an ancient proof of dependence on and loyalty to God.

The world teaches us to fight for what is ours even when others are hurt in the process. God's way to success may lead us also to fight, especially for the sake of others. Jesus tells us to "love others as ourselves." This means that our success might be best seen in the blessings we bring to others.

Lot thought he was smart when he moved into the rich Jordan valley, but it was just the beginning of his troubles. He soon found himself in the midst of war and he and his family became slaves as prisoners of war. Only the courage of Abram could save them.

Abram Rescues Lot and the Captive People

Read Genesis 14:1-12

1. How does this story sound like what we see every day on the news?
 - It is another Middle East fight scene. Peace accords were broken.
 - The United Nations intervened in the fighting.
 - Certain tribes or small nations join to conquer others.
 - Innocent people suffer at the hands of conquering armies.

Read Genesis 14:13-16

2. What seems most remarkable to you in this story?
 - Abram was no wimp; he was a man to watch out for!
 - Abram had trained for battle 318 armed men in his own household.
 - Abram showed great wisdom as a military commander.
 - Abram inspired others to risk their lives for his just cause.
 - Abram rescued all the prisoners and recovered all the loot.

3. Opinions: What qualities of character and ability did God give Abraham that made him so successful in the face of trouble? To what extent did these qualities come from Abram's faith in God and faithfulness to Him?

Read Genesis 14:17-20

Chapter 7 of Hebrews writes much about Melchizadek, this mysterious high priest, called the "King of Peace (Salem)" who blessed Abram and received his tithes. It may be that Melchizadek was even an Old Testament manifestation of Christ himself. (Hebrews 7:1-8) It is fascinating that he, like Jesus, gave bread and wine, as the Lord did in the last supper.

4. What most impresses you about Melchizadek's meeting with Abram?

- He blessed Abram and he blessed God with the same breath.
- He declared that God Himself had given Abram the remarkable victory.
- Abram needed the encouragement of meeting the priest of the Most High God.
- Abram gave a tithe of all he had rescued to Melchizadek.
- Abram was the first tither mentioned in the Bible.
- Perhaps Abram, the father of faith, actually met Jesus Christ in this way.

Read Genesis 14:21-24

5. Why do you think the pagan king offered everything to Abram except the people?

- He did it out of the goodness of his heart.
- He realized that Abram was a man to fear.
- He feared that Abram would otherwise keep the people as his own slaves.

6. What do you believe led Abram to refuse any reward for himself?

- He didn't want to be in debt to these pagan kings.
- He wanted to emphasize that the victory was from God, not himself.
- He trusted God to supply all his needs.
- He was moved by the fact that God gave him and his few men victory over a much larger enemy force.
- He was humbled by God's miracle, and wanted nothing for himself.

7. While Abram would accept nothing for himself, he asked them to give his men food and a reward. Why do you think he did this?

- It would save him a lot of money.
- It was not his place to refuse anything for those who risked their lives.
- He was unselfish, wanting the best for those who served under him.

8. Opinions: What should be the attitude of God's people in the face of evil such as pornography, prostitution, illegal drug distribution, government sponsored gambling, social or racial discrimination?

- Since we are not involved in these, it is none of our business.
- We shouldn't stir up a hornet's nest lest we get stung.
- We must stand up and be counted.
- We must take what actions we can even at risk to our own prosperity.

9. What wrongs to other people have you opposed? Express yourself.



A Gateway to World Missions
churchstarts.com

Bible Event 3

Working Around Obstacles

**Great Bible Truths:**

1. God blesses those who never lose faith or give up.
2. Even the greatest people of God can expect opposition and jealousy.
3. We are called on by God to make every place we go better than when we got there.

Success in anything would be much easier if we did not find obstacles at every turn. It is a rule of life that anything worth accomplishing is achieved in spite of great obstacles and even open opposition. Persistence is not dramatic or especially glorious but it is a price of success. Abraham's son, Isaac, continued the family heritage of Godly success by virtue of his unrelenting persistence in the face of constant opposition. This will be a key to the success God gives to you in all your efforts.

*Isaac's Many Wells***Read Genesis 26:12-16**

1. To what do the Scriptures attribute Isaac's growing wealth?
 - He got money from his neighbors by threatening them.
 - God blessed him in all his work.
 - He planted crops and reaped great harvests.
2. How did the Philistines, his neighbors, react to Isaac's growing wealth?
 - They admired him and tried to learn from him. They envied him.
 - They filled in all the wells that his father had dug and left him.
 - Their leader told Isaac to leave their country.
3. Opinions: Why did the Philistines act so mean with Isaac?
 - They were resentful of him because he was a foreigner.
 - Humans tend to be jealous and resentful of those who prosper greatly.
 - They feared Isaac would use his power against them, just as they would do.
 - Isaac was a bad neighbor. They were simply mean-spirited.

Read Genesis 26:17-21

4. What impresses you most about these events?
 - Isaac was going back to places where his father had worked hard before.
 - These were places named by Abraham, his father, and were places where Isaac had a right to be.
 - Wherever Isaac went, the Philistines opposed him.
 - When Isaac's men dug an artesian well, the Philistines, who had done nothing, claimed the water for themselves.
 - Isaac didn't fight for his rights, but kept moving farther away.

5. Opinions: What do you think of Isaac's attitude?

- He never gave up, but tried again and again.
- He must have been a coward.
- He was a peacemaker, though it cost him dearly.

Genesis 26:22-33

6. What was most special about the well Isaac called Rehoboth (Room)?

- He realized that the Lord Himself had made room for his family.
- At last he found a place where no one would bother him.
- Isaac took this as a sign that God would prosper his family.
- God rewarded him for his peaceful efforts, promising again his blessings.

7. What happened at Beersheba?

- There the Lord personally appeared to Isaac.
- Isaac defeated his enemies in battle.
- The Philistine leader made peace with Isaac.
- Isaac dug still another well, improving farming wherever he went.
- Isaac built an altar, worshiping God who had helped him.
- God honored Isaac's efforts and his well gave abundant water.
- Isaac founded there what became the city of Beersheba

8. What lesson do you most need to learn from Isaac?

- To never give up in my most important purposes in life.
- To seek peace with others, even when it may cost me dearly.
- To try to leave every place I live and work better than before.
- To worship God and recognize his blessings in my life.

9. Isaac looked tirelessly for a place he could work and prosper. What are you most looking for at this time?

- To be at peace among the people where I live and work
- To be at peace in my family To be at peace with myself
- To get the kind of financial support I need A sense of contentment
- A sense of purpose worthy of my life and worthy of God
- A sense of achievement in spite of opposition or frustrations
- A greater realization that God is at work in my life



Bible Event 4

Starting With Nothing



Great Bible Truths:

1. At the beginning of every road to real success is a meeting with God.
2. The only true hope for success is to build your life on God's promises.
3. God knows and will accompany us on the road ahead of us.

Many complain that they have few advantages in life to be able to reach any real measure of success. This may be true. Jacob, the son of his wealthy father Isaac, lost all of his advantages in life when he had to escape the murderous plans of his brother. He left his heritage behind, going out into an unknown world. He started with nothing in his pursuit of happiness and prosperity, but would achieve both. His story tells us how this can happen to us as well.

Jacob Escapes His Brother And Meets God

Read Genesis 27:41-45

1. What name would you give to a novel starting off this way?

<input type="checkbox"/> Brothers Can Be Deadly	<input type="checkbox"/> Momma Says Go!
<input type="checkbox"/> Out of Sight And Save Your Life	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

Read Genesis 28:10-17

2. How do you understand this experience of Jacob?
 - The rock pillow would give anyone a nightmare!
 - God may best speak to people who know they have nothing of their own.
 - God was waiting for a chance to get Jacob off to Himself.
 - God wanted Jacob to make a good new start in life.
 - God had not forgotten His promises to Jacob's father and grandfather.
 - Probably, Jacob just had a nightmare rather than a revelation from God.
3. What do you consider to be the greatest promise of God to Jacob?
 - I will give all this land to your descendants.
 - Your descendants will cover the earth as does dust.
 - All the families of the earth will be blessed by your family.
 - I am with you and will not leave you until my promise is fulfilled.

4. Why do you most think Jacob called that place "the house of God?"
 - It probably looked like a house or a temple.
 - The angels and the ladder made the place look like heaven.
 - This was the place where Jacob personally met God.
 - Other: _____

Read Genesis 28:18-22

5. What would you have thought if this had happened to you?

<input type="checkbox"/> I am losing my mind!	<input type="checkbox"/> God is real!
<input type="checkbox"/> What does God have in store for me?	<input type="checkbox"/> Why would God choose me?
<input type="checkbox"/> I can't wait to tell somebody about this!	
<input type="checkbox"/> Now I understand what my father and grandfather said about meeting God.	

Genesis 28:18-22, 29:1

6. How did Jacob react to this strange experience with God?
 - He made a monument of the rock which served as pillow for his dream.
 - He gave the place a name, Bethel, which means "House of God."
 - He turned around and went back home.
 - He pledged God a tithe of all God would give him.
 - He continued his journey, now with a new hope and purpose.
7. Opinions: As Jacob continued his journey into a strange land, what do you believe were his deepest thoughts?

<input type="checkbox"/> What is going to happen next?	<input type="checkbox"/> Now I know I am not alone.
<input type="checkbox"/> What would my folks say about this?	<input type="checkbox"/> No matter that I have nothing, God is on my side!
<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	
8. How do you feel when you are most alone and in hard circumstances?
 - Like almost everyone, I get very depressed.
 - In such times, I most feel God's presence and encouragement.
 - I can hardly wait to see how I will get out of the situation.
 - I work hard to work out the situation.
 - I look for encouragement from my friends or family.
 - Honestly, it is hard for me not to give up.

9. How do you relate with God when the going gets toughest?

<input type="checkbox"/> I realize that I am on my own.	<input type="checkbox"/> I hope He will help me, but I try to solve my own problem.
<input type="checkbox"/> I don't expect much help from God.	<input type="checkbox"/> I feel closest to God when I most need Him.
<input type="checkbox"/> I am learning to depend more on Him .	



Bible Event 5

Down, But Never Out



Great Bible Truths:

1. Full success is given to those who resist all temptation to any kind of evil.
2. God turns our worst situations into instruments of growth and blessing.
3. Our faith and faithfulness shine most brightly in the darkest places.

Many people start off in life not only with nothing, but with great handicaps of many kinds. History seems to indicate that God especially looks for this kind of people to grant great success in life. Perhaps this is so they will never doubt that their success was a miracle of God. Even with miracles, however, our attitudes and efforts are necessary to experience the great work of God in and through our lives. Joseph, a son of Jacob and a great grandson of Abraham, was born to a prosperous family. However, he lost everything because of the cruelty of his brothers and became a slave and, finally, a life-term prisoner. He is one of history's greatest examples of a person who discovered and followed God's Strange Road to Success.

Joseph's Path to Prison

Read Genesis 39:1-6

1. Put in order, 1 to 5, Potiphar's dealing with Joseph:
 - He put Joseph over his house and his business
 - He bought him as a slave.
 - He saw that God was with Joseph and gave him success in all that he did.
 - He took him into his house to work for him there.
 - He prospered in his business because God blessed Joseph

2. Opinions: Why did God prosper Joseph in everything he did?

- Joseph was a hard and faithful worker.
- Joseph was going to get even with the man who bought him as slave.
- Joseph showed no resentment to God or to Potiphar for his slavery.
- God wanted the Egyptians to see, through Joseph, how powerful He is.
- Other _____

Read Genesis 39:7-10

3. Why did Joseph refuse to fall to the temptations of Potiphar's wife?

- He thought she was ugly.
- He wanted to be true to his master's complete faith in him.
- He saw it as a great wickedness and sin against God.

Read Genesis 39:11-20

4. Opinions: What do you think was the main reason that Potiphar sent Joseph to prison instead of killing him on the spot as the law allowed?

- Potiphar knew his wife well and probably doubted her story.
- Potiphar hated to kill the man who had brought him such prosperity.
- Potiphar had seen that Joseph was a man of God, unlikely to do evil.

Read Genesis 39:21-23

5. What did God do for Joseph in prison?

- He was with him through the entire experience.
- He showed Joseph His love.
- He arranged for Joseph to escape.
- He gave Joseph the good favor of the prison keeper.
- He put Joseph over the entire prison, subject only to the prison keeper.

6. Opinions: What do you believe was the result of Joseph's experience?

- The prison had never enjoyed such good administration.
- The prisoners were blessed in many ways by Joseph's work.
- Joseph probably was getting the prisoners ready to revolt.
- Joseph started getting fame as an excellent administrator.
- God was teaching Joseph to be an effective government administrator.

7. Opinions: What does Joseph's experience teach us regarding the following

- God's use of hard and unfair treatment to prepare us for greatness.
- God's unfailing presence and comfort in times of great personal trial.
- Blessings for those who never lose faith in the Lord.
- Victory given to those who serve well and faithfully in every situation.

8. What is the most important lesson that Joseph teaches you?

- To not grow discouraged and give up when all seems against me.
- To always trust the Lord, no matter what.
- To give my very best to those who have authority over me.
- To not give in to the sin and sickness of resentment.
- To resist every temptation of sin, being God's man or woman.

9. Where is your presence most needed for the blessing of others?

- In my home
- In my school or work
- Among my friends.
- Other: _____

10. What can you do that will mean the most to them? What can God do to make you more useful and effective? What can you do that will enable God to use and bless you more?



Bible Event 6

Ready for Greatness



Great Bible Truths:

1. God uses many "chance meetings" to open to us great doors of opportunity.
2. The wisest people know that true wisdom comes from God alone.
3. What a man sows, that also will he reap: humble service leads to glorious service.

The Lord wants everyone who loves and obeys him to reach a high level of greatness. Greatness may take many different forms: Joseph was great because of his excellent administration of a business, a prison and, finally, a nation. Zacchaeus was great because of his remarkable change of purpose. Ruth was great because of her unflinching loyalty to her mother-in-law. Mary was great because of the children she raised and gave to the world. Greatness should be the experience of us all. While it does not come easily or quickly, it surely comes to those who never tire of working for it. This is Joseph's story.

In prison, Joseph had met people of great influence, including two servants of the Pharaoh's household. When the Pharaoh had a mysterious dream, his butler suddenly remembered Joseph, who had correctly interpreted life-changing dreams in prison.

Joseph Is Named as a Ruler of Egypt

Read Genesis 41:9-14

1. If you were writing this as a script for a movie, what would be the most impressive scene?
 - The butler telling the Pharaoh how a young Hebrew had interpreted two dreams one leading to life and the other to death.
 - The great hurry everyone made to get Joseph out of prison, where supposedly he was to stay for the rest of his life.
 - To see Joseph shaving and changing his prison clothes for elegant clothes with which to stand before the king.

Read Genesis 41:15-24

2. When do you think Pharaoh's face showed the greatest emotion?
 - When he looked at young Joseph and said, "I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it."
 - When Joseph made it clear, "It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh a good answer."
 - When Pharaoh told the dream and exclaimed that of all the magicians, "No one could explain it to me!"

Read Genesis 41:25-36

3. What does Joseph show about himself in his meeting with the king?
 - He shows himself to be a man of authority, speaking to the king without hesitation or cowardice.
 - He is a man of God, repeatedly saying that God Himself was making the revelation.
 - He showed some signs of bragging about himself.
 - He was one who listened carefully to the king, and he repeated and explained every detail of the dream.
 - He showed his gift of administration by immediately laying out a careful plan by which the Pharaoh could use the dream for the benefit of the nation.

Read Genesis 41:37-46

4. What do you think most surprised all the government leaders who stood near hearing the conversation between Joseph and the Pharaoh?
 - To behold the wisdom of this young man brought from the prison.
 - To hear the Pharaoh name Joseph, an unknown foreigner and ex-prisoner as the administrator of the 14-year plan.
 - To hear Pharaoh, who was thought to be a god by the Egyptians, admit that Joseph's wisdom was from the true God.
 - To hear Pharaoh put his entire nation and all its leaders under the orders of this 30-year-old stranger.

5. Opinions: What is the clearest evidence to you that God Himself was bringing Joseph to his time of greatness?
 - To see Joseph's change, in an hour's time, from a condemned prisoner to the second most powerful man in a great nation.
 - To see how everything, including Joseph's most terrible experiences, led so naturally to this moment.
 - To see Joseph, humiliated in so many ways, now receiving the king's ring and riding in a chariot beside him.
 - To realize that all his life, Joseph had dedicated his life to serving others and now he would serve a great nation.
 - To understand that what would have been impossible for man was altogether possible for God.

6. What do you see in Joseph that can open your life to true greatness?

- An undying faith in the goodness of God in my life.
- A sense of assurance that God has great plans for my life.
- Patience in the midst of discouraging and unfair circumstances.
- Greater effort to serve others, wherever I may be.
- Faithfulness to serve well those who have authority over me.
- Other: _____

