

DAILY BIBLE READINGS THAT CONNECT WITH YOUR LIFE

ENGAGE 365

BEGINNINGS AND ENDINGS

Engage 365: Beginnings and Endings
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INTRODUCTION

Time to Engage

HOW TO USE ENGAGE 365

- 1 Set a time when you can read the Bible every day.
- 2 Find a place where you can be quiet and think.
- 3 Grab your Bible and a pen.
- 4 Ask God to help you understand what you read.
- 5 Read the day's verses with *Engage 365* taking time to think about it.
- 6 Pray about what you have read.

BIBLE STUFF

We use the NIV Bible version, so you might find it's the best one to use with *Engage 365*. But any modern Bible version will be fine.

If the notes say "Read Genesis 1 v 1–2"... look up Genesis in the

contents page at the front of your Bible. It'll tell you which page Genesis starts on. Find chapter 1 of Genesis, and then verse 1 of chapter 1 (the verse numbers are the tiny ones). Then start reading. Simple.

GET GOING

Each day's page throws you into the Bible, to get you handling, questioning and exploring God's message to you — encouraging you to act on it and talk to God more in prayer. And there's space along the side of each page to jot down what our great God is showing you.

And whenever you start a new book of the Bible, or a new section within it, there'll be a page introducing that book or section.

ENGAGE 365 CHART

There are many ways you can use *Engage 365*. If you'd like to read the Bible for a year, starting in January, the chart below gives dates to follow. Or you can start on any date you like by beginning with Day 1. Or just search for a Bible book you'd like to explore, and jump right in. However you use it, *Engage 365* will help you to dig in to God's great word for yourself.

DAY	PAGE	DATE	BIBLE PASSAGE
1	13–14	Jan 1	GENESIS 1 v 1–2
2	15	Jan 2	Genesis 1 v 3–13
3	16	Jan 3	Genesis 1 v 14–23
4	17	Jan 4	Genesis 1 v 24–31
5	18	Jan 5	Genesis 2 v 1–3
6	19	Jan 6	Genesis 2 v 4–7
7	20	Jan 7	Genesis 2 v 8–17
8	21	Jan 8	Genesis 2 v 18–25
9	22	Jan 9	Genesis 3 v 1–13
10	23	Jan 10	Genesis 3 v 14–19
11	24	Jan 11	Genesis 3 v 20–24
12	25	Jan 12	Genesis 4 v 1–16
13	26	Jan 13	Genesis 4 v 17–26
14	27–28	Jan 14	LUKE 1 v 1–25
15	29	Jan 15	Luke 1 v 26–38
16	30	Jan 16	Luke 1 v 39–56
17	31	Jan 17	Luke 1 v 57–80
18	32	Jan 18	Luke 2 v 1–20
19	33	Jan 19	Luke 2 v 21–40
20	34	Jan 20	Luke 2 v 41–52
21	35	Jan 21	Luke 3 v 1–14
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27	41	Jan 27	Luke 4 v 38–44
28	42	Jan 28	Luke 5 v 1–11
29	43	Jan 29	Luke 5 v 12–16
30	44	Jan 30	Luke 5 v 17–26
31	45	Jan 31	Luke 5 v 27–32
32	46	Feb 1	Luke 5 v 33–39
33	47–48	Feb 2	COLOSSIANS 1 v 1–8
34	49	Feb 3	Colossians 1 v 9–14
35	50	Feb 4	Colossians 1 v 15–20
36	51	Feb 5	Colossians 1 v 21–23
37	52	Feb 6	Colossians 1 v 24–29
38	53	Feb 7	Colossians 2 v 1–7
39	54	Feb 8	Colossians 2 v 8–12
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43	59	Feb 12	Psalms 2
44	60	Feb 13	Psalms 3
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46	62	Feb 15	Genesis 6 v 1–8

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51	67	Feb 20	Genesis 9 v 1–7
52	68	Feb 21	Genesis 9 v 8–17
53	69	Feb 22	Genesis 9 v 18–29
54	70	Feb 23	Genesis 10 v 1–32
55	71	Feb 24	Genesis 11 v 1–9
56	72	Feb 25	Genesis 11 v 10–32
57	73–74	Feb 26	LUKE 6 v 1–11
58	75	Feb 27	Luke 6 v 12–26
59	76	Feb 28	Luke 6 v 27–36
60	77	Mar 1	Luke 6 v 37–42
61	78	Mar 2	Luke 6 v 43–49
62	79	Mar 3	Luke 7 v 1–10
63	80	Mar 4	Luke 7 v 11–17
64	81	Mar 5	Luke 7 v 18–35
65	82	Mar 6	Luke 7 v 36–50
66	83	Mar 7	Luke 8 v 1–15
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69	86	Mar 10	Luke 8 v 26–39
70	87	Mar 11	Luke 8 v 40–56
71	88	Mar 12	COLOSSIANS 3 v 1–4
72	89	Mar 13	Colossians 3 v 5–11
73	90	Mar 14	Colossians 3 v 12–14
74	91	Mar 15	Colossians 3 v 15–17
75	92	Mar 16	Colossians 3 v 18–21
76	93	Mar 17	Colossians 3 v 22 – 4 v 1
77	94	Mar 18	Colossians 4 v 2–4
78	95	Mar 19	Colossians 4 v 5–6

DAY	PAGE	DATE	BIBLE PASSAGE
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83	101	Mar 24	Genesis 12 v 10–20
84	102	Mar 25	Genesis 13 v 1–13
85	103	Mar 26	Genesis 13 v 14–18
86	104	Mar 27	Genesis 14 v 1–16
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88	106	Mar 29	Genesis 15 v 1–21
89	107	Mar 30	Genesis 16 v 1–16
90	108	Mar 31	Genesis 17 v 1–14
91	109	Apr 1	Genesis 17 v 15–27
92	110	Apr 2	LUKE 9 v 1–9
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189	210	Jul 8	Luke 18 v 1–8	221	243	Aug 9	Genesis 49 v 29 – 50 v 14
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196	217–218	Jul 15	ACTS 9 v 1–19	228	251	Aug 16	Luke 20 v 20–40
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200	222	Jul 19	Acts 10 v 23–35	232	255	Aug 20	Luke 21 v 12–19
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204	226	Jul 23	Acts 12 v 1–19	236	259	Aug 24	Acts 13 v 32–41
205	227	Jul 24	Acts 12 v 19–24	237	260	Aug 25	Acts 13 v 42–52
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242	265	Aug 30	Acts 15 v 12–35	274	298	Oct 1	Luke 24 v 36–53
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247	271	Sep 4	Exodus 2 v 1–10	279	304	Oct 6	Acts 17 v 16–21
248	272	Sep 5	Exodus 2 v 11–22	280	305	Oct 7	Acts 17 v 22–28
249	273	Sep 6	Exodus 2 v 23–25	281	306	Oct 8	Acts 17 v 29–34
250	274	Sep 7	Exodus 3 v 1–10	282	307	Oct 9	Acts 18 v 1–4
251	275	Sep 8	Exodus 3 v 11–15	283	308	Oct 10	Acts 18 v 5–17
252	276	Sep 9	Exodus 3 v 16–22	284	309	Oct 11	Acts 18 v 18–28
253	277	Sep 10	Exodus 4 v 1–17	285	310	Oct 12	PSALM 17
254	278	Sep 11	Exodus 4 v 18–31	286	311	Oct 13	Psalm 18
255	279	Sep 12	Exodus 5 v 1–21	287	312	Oct 14	EXODUS 9 v 13–35
256	280	Sep 13	Exodus 5 v 22 – 6 v 12	288	313	Oct 15	Exodus 10 v 1–20
257	281	Sep 14	Exodus 6 v 13 – 7 v 7	289	314	Oct 16	Exodus 10 v 21–29
258	282	Sep 15	Exodus 7 v 8–25	290	315	Oct 17	Exodus 11 v 1–10
259	283	Sep 16	Exodus 8 v 1–15	291	316	Oct 18	Exodus 12 v 1–13
260	284	Sep 17	Exodus 8 v 16–32	292	317	Oct 19	Exodus 12 v 14–28
261	285	Sep 18	Exodus 9 v 1–12	293	318	Oct 20	Exodus 12 v 29–42
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267	291	Sep 24	Luke 22 v 63 – 23 v 25	299	324	Oct 26	Exodus 15 v 1–12
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343	370	Dec 9	Revelation 18 v 1–24
344	371	Dec 10	Revelation 19 v 1–10
345	372	Dec 11	Revelation 19 v 11–21
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350	377–378	Dec 16	ACTS 21 v 1–16
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354	382	Dec 20	Acts 23 v 12–35
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358	386	Dec 24	Acts 26 v 19–32
359	387	Dec 25	Acts 27 v 1–26
360	388	Dec 26	Acts 27 v 27–44
361	389	Dec 27	Acts 28 v 1–10
362	390	Dec 28	Acts 28 v 11–16
363	391	Dec 29	Acts 28 v 17–31
364	392	Dec 30	PSALM 22
365	393	Dec 31	Psalms 23

GENESIS

In the beginning

Once upon a time...

The Bible doesn't quite start like that. Genesis is not a fairy tale for one thing. Neither is it a science textbook. Nor is it a DIY "How to create the universe" instruction manual. It's a book about God.

Genesis is also a book about beginnings — in fact, that's what the word "genesis" means.

The beginning of the world, the beginning of life, the beginning of the human race, the beginning of a big problem and the beginning of God's rescue plan.

WHO WROTE IT?

Genesis was written by Moses, probably just before God's people entered the promised land. Its purpose was to remind the Israelites where they came from and all that God had done for their ancestors.

WHERE'S THE T-REX?

You won't find much about dinosaurs. In fact, you won't find anything about dinosaurs — try *Jurassic Park* for that. You also won't find answers to those tricky questions like: *Did Adam and Eve have belly buttons?*

What you will discover is loads about God — who He is, why He created the world and why He made us. And the meaning of life.

Shall we start at the beginning?

Horizontal lines for writing on the left side of the page.

1

Before the beginning

Genesis. The beginning. The start of something. Birth, origin, source or foundation. But God was there before the beginning! In the beginning God...

Read Genesis 1 v 1-2

ENGAGE YOUR BRAIN

Who was involved in the creation of the heavens and the earth?

Dumb question? Look carefully at verse 2 and then read Colossians 1 v 15-17.

God — Father, Son and Holy Spirit — was fully involved in creating everything.

So who do the heavens and earth belong to?

What are the implications of that for us and everyone else?

Why do you think people have such a problem with accepting that God created the world?

SHARE IT

Why not challenge a friend or relative today? You could ask them: Just suppose that God really did

create the world and made you. How would it change the way you look at yourself? Would it change the way you live?

PRAY ABOUT IT

Take time out to really think about verse 1. We think our world and our lives are so important and significant, but God was there before it all.

If you're a Christian, the Bible says that God chose you in Christ "before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight" (Ephesians 1 v 4). Thank God for who He is.

THE BOTTOM LINE

In the beginning: God.

2

Filling the void

There's something very appealing about a blank sheet of paper, or snow that no one else has trodden on. There's so much potential. Here we see God starting to make something of the "formless and empty" earth.

Read Genesis 1 v 3-13

ENGAGE YOUR BRAIN

What is the first thing God says?

In the Bible, darkness = evil. By starting things off like this, we see that God is the complete opposite. Elsewhere in the Bible it says: "God is light; in him there is no darkness at all" (1 John 1 v 5).

How does God bring things into existence?

What does that tell us about Him?

Fill in the grid below for the first three days.

Table with 2 columns: DAY, What does God create? and 3 rows for days 1, 2, and 3.

What is God's verdict on what He has created? (v4, v10, v12)

It can be hard to believe that the world was created to be good when we watch the news or read the papers or internet. But it was good, and one day it will be again.

PRAY ABOUT IT

Go outside, or look out of your window at some of the amazing things God has created: the stars, plants, animals, EVERYTHING.

Spend time praising God that He merely spoke and these things were created. Thank Him that we can talk with such a powerful, awesome God!

THE BOTTOM LINE

God is so powerful that He spoke the world into existence.

Horizontal lines for writing on the right side of the page.

3

What a wonderful world

**What do you like about the world you live in?
What in nature really blows your mind or makes
you smile?**

 **Read Genesis 1 v 14–23**

ENGAGE YOUR BRAIN

- Carry on filling in the grid for days 4 and 5. Can you spot a pattern?

DAY	What does God create?
1	Light & dark
2	Sky & water
3	Dry land & plants etc
4	
5	

- Have you noticed any words or phrases that are repeated?
- What do they tell us about God?

God's creation is a carefully planned and ordered place. But it's also teeming with life and amazing diversity. Check out verses 12 and 21.

Also look at verse 24. God is fantastically creative and fun. He must have a sense of humour — just look in the mirror! Think of some of the incredible animals He created.

SHARE IT

Some people think God is boring. What can you point out to them in creation to show them that God is amazingly creative, with a sense of humour? Think of creative ways you can share how exciting God is with people you know.

PRAY ABOUT IT

Thank God for all the incredible things He has made. Pick three that really blow your mind.

4

Creating an image

“Aww, look at him, he’s so human.” No, he’s not. He’s a cat wearing a vest. However lovely Mr Tibbles or Fluffy might be, there is a big difference between humans and animals. Let’s see why in the next few verses of Genesis 1.

Read Genesis 1 v 24–31

ENGAGE YOUR BRAIN

Let’s recap where we’ve got to:

DAY	What does God create?
1	Light & dark
2	Sky & water
3	Dry land & plants etc
4	Sun, moon & stars
5	Birds & sea creatures
6	

What is the big difference between human beings and animals (v26)?

God made the world and He is the supreme ruler. We are like Him, made in His image, and we are supposed to rule the world under Him.

What are humankind’s two big tasks? (v28)

PRAY ABOUT IT

Look at how God blesses human beings (v28–30). The world richly provides all we need to live. There’s enough food in the world that no one needs to starve, but greed and war leave millions starving. Thank God for giving us what we need to live, and pray for those who are suffering because of war or corruption.

What is God’s final verdict on creation (v31)?

THE BOTTOM LINE

You are made in God’s image. Yes, you!

Horizontal lines for writing notes.

5

Under a rest

**Saturday mornings, the end of the school year,
getting up at noon. Mmmm, lovely rest.
Roll on day seven!**

 **Read Genesis 2 v 1-3**

ENGAGE YOUR BRAIN

- *How did God view the world after the first six days were over? (Genesis 1 v 31)*
- *Can you spot any difference between day seven and the days that went before?*

Has God given up on the world then? Just wound it up like a watch and let it run itself? No, verse 3 says He rested from His work of creation, not that He stopped caring for what He made.

This tells us two things about God:

1. God works

For six days, God worked, and what breathtaking work He did — creating the universe, the world we live in and all its stunning variety.

2. God rests

At the end of six days of work, God was happy with all He'd created, so He rested.

GET ON WITH IT

So if God both works and rests, guess what that means for us...

1. We work

There's no excuse for laziness and looking for an easy life. God commanded us to work and we should throw ourselves into it, serving Him in all our work and studies. Being lazy reflects badly on the God we live for.

2. We rest

Some people are workaholics: they just don't stop. Or they never stop studying. Our work or studies are not the most important thing! Yes, we should work hard for God, but we should also take time to rest and enjoy the great world He's given us.

PRAY ABOUT IT

Anything you want to say to God?

6

Extreme close-up

Horizontal lines for writing notes.

We've seen the big picture — God's people (1 v 26-31) in God's place (1 v 1-25) enjoying God's blessing (2 v 1-3). So let's zoom in for a close-up. An extreme close-up. Zooming all the way up someone's nostrils...

Read Genesis 2 v 4-7

ENGAGE YOUR BRAIN

- What was the man made from? How did the man become a living being?

We are dependent on God for every breath we take. The tragedy is that we often forget this. Imagine an astronaut bad-mouthing his oxygen tanks or a deep-sea diver telling everyone he was perfectly able to breathe on his own underwater, thank you very much...

We are totally dependent on God and to forget or ignore that is just as stupid, ungrateful and dangerous.

PRAY ABOUT IT

Thank God for giving you life. Ask Him to help you remember that you are totally dependent on Him.

GET ON WITH IT

If human life is a gift from God, think how important that makes your own life! God created you! Try to remember that fact the next time you look in the mirror and don't like what you see. Even when you're feeling down about yourself, God cares for you. Our lives are important. Not to be thrown away in suicide or regret. God breathes life into us!

If God is the one who gives life, what implications does this have for genetic engineering? Should parents be able to choose the gender or appearance of their babies? We don't know all the answers to these questions, but they're worth thinking about. Why not ask your Christian friends what their views are.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Life is a gift from God.

7

Garden party

Mowing the grass. Pruning the roses. Weeding the flowerbeds. Yawn. But God's garden was not about boring, grubby, hard work.

 **Read Genesis 2 v 8-17**

ENGAGE YOUR BRAIN

- ▶ *What was in God's garden?*
- ▶ *What does God's garden show us about God?*

God didn't just give Adam and Eve boring, basic food. He gave them loads of good plants for food and made His garden beautiful. He wanted them to enjoy being in it with Him for ever; that's why the tree of life was there.

- ▶ *What was God's one rule?*
- ▶ *Does He give a reason or is He just being unreasonable?*

TALK IT THROUGH

- ▶ *If God has given humankind the job of taking care of His creation, what should we be doing about looking after the planet?*

Why not discuss this with other Christians at church or youth group?

GET ON WITH IT

- ▶ *Does this passage change the way you think about work?*

Today, try to see your work as a gift from God and to work hard.

PRAY ABOUT IT

Praise God for the superb kingdom He created, which Genesis tells us all about. Thank God that He hasn't given up on us and will create an even better paradise-kingdom when Jesus returns. Ask Him to let you be there!

THE BOTTOM LINE

God wants us to live with Him in perfection.

8

Would you Adam & Eve it?

Man's best friend.
A dog? A hamster? An iguana?
Nope. God has someone better in mind.

Read Genesis 2 v 18-25

ENGAGE YOUR BRAIN

What does the man need a helper for? (see Genesis 1 v 28)

TALK IT THROUGH

It might be a bit cheesy, but verses 21-23 have been summed up like this: Woman was taken out of man — not out of his head, to rule over him; nor out of his feet, to be trampled on by him; but out of his side, to be equal to him — under his arm, that he might protect her, and near his heart that he might love her.

What do you think about that? Talk it through with friends.

ENGAGE YOUR BRAIN

What are the three steps which make up marriage? (v24)

Miss any of them out and it's just not the way God designed it.

One man and one woman, leaving their parents, to be publicly, then physically, united (sex = God's invention for marriage!).

Notice verse 25. No clothes, no guilt, no fear. Life in God's garden was perfect (so far...).

GET ON WITH IT

"Marriage should be honoured by all" (Hebrews 13 v 4).

Do your thoughts and behaviour honour God's design for marriage?

Sex outside of marriage and wrong thoughts of pre-marital sex don't please God.

How might you tackle your wrong thoughts and desires?

THE BOTTOM LINE

Marriage should be honoured by all.

Series of horizontal lines for writing.

9

It's all gone belly up

And it was all going so well. But Genesis 3 marks a major turning point in human history; from now on things will be very different. Before you read verses 1–13, look back at Genesis 2 v 16–17. Remember what God says.

 **Read Genesis 3 v 1–7**
ENGAGE YOUR BRAIN

- *How does the snake encourage the woman to challenge what God has said? (v1, v4–5)*

When we doubt, distort or deny what God has said, things start going wrong. Think you wouldn't make the same mistake as Eve? Think again.

- “Does God really want what's best for me?”
- “Sex outside marriage was only wrong back in that particular culture.”
- “God doesn't mind if I tell a white lie.”

God's pattern for creation was Him in control with humans underneath Him, looking after His creation.

- *Can you see how that is changing in this chapter?*

This is more than just eating a piece of fruit; it's a full-scale rebellion against the way God planned His creation. Humans wanting to be in charge. To take God's place.

The Bible calls this *sin*.

 **Read verses 8–13**

God isn't asking these questions because He doesn't know the answers. He wants the man and woman to come clean about what they've done.

- *But what do they do in v12–13?*

The harmony we saw in Genesis 2 seems a long time ago.

PRAY ABOUT IT

Say sorry to God for specific times you've rebelled against Him. Ask Him to help you to change.

10

Free falling

Despite their excuses, the man and woman are guilty as charged. Now, in verses 14-19, God delivers His verdict.

Read Genesis 3 v 14-19

ENGAGE YOUR BRAIN

Sum up the results of the rebellion on the following:

- 1. Male/female relationships
2. Ruling over creation
3. Being fruitful and multiplying

What began in verse 6, with the woman telling her husband what to do, will continue. Verse 16 is not about sexual desire but the desire to be in charge of someone else. And no longer will the man care for his wife as his partner; he'll want to dominate or rule over her. The battle of the sexes started here.

Both of the jobs God gave mankind have suddenly become much harder.

Read verse 19 again. Despite the serpent's lies, God always keeps His promises (chapter 2 v 17).

SHARE IT

Our desire to rebel against God has huge consequences. It messes up relationships, as well as the world we live in. Maybe next time you're talking about relationships with friends or family, you can mention how people's failed relationship with God leads to so many problems.

PRAY ABOUT IT

If doing that sounds scary or impossible, ask God to help you.

THE BOTTOM LINE

The world is in a mess because of sin.

Horizontal lines for writing notes.