

Lucy Moore

# WHAT'S IN THE BIBLE (FOR ME)?

50 readings  
and reflections



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# Introduction

Life. It's complicated. If you tried to describe the journey you've been on so far in your own life, what would you include? What would you miss out? How would you select what was important? It could never be a complete picture and would inevitably be subjective. And that's just one life journey! What if you were trying to describe the life journey of a whole nation lasting thousands of years? Or, even more complicated, the life journey of the human race? Impossible!

So it's not surprising that the Bible is a complicated book – or rather, set of books. It might feel at first sight as if you're looking at an explorer's workroom, covered with maps, letters, stories, legends, copies of songs, odd scribbles that don't make sense. Where do you even start reading?

*What's in the Bible (for me)?* is only one particular 'take' on what the Bible is about – it's just one viewpoint. It picks up the idea of a 'journey' to follow through. There are plenty of other ideas we could follow through instead, but to skim through 66 books that cover some 4,000 years in just 50 short chunks, one idea is enough!

We'll follow this idea of journeys loosely through the 50 selected passages to help us understand a tiny fraction of this beautiful,

frustrating, inspiring, challenging, compelling, illuminating, life-giving, puzzling book of books, reading a little at a time and letting it sink in.

The journey of a family leaving home...

the journey of the family God chose to light the way for others to follow...

the journey of an entire nation nearer to and further from God...

the journey of God from heaven to earth and back...

the journey of a new way of living spreading across the Mediterranean world...

the journey of a human being like you or me towards a destination that becomes clearer with each step...

*What's in the Bible (for me)?* explores the big journey of the Bible. And maybe, as we see the bigger picture, it will help us understand our own journey.

# How to use this book

Each page gives a short Bible passage to read followed by an explanation or reflection about what's going on in it, and a question or challenge to take into the day ahead. There's also a **#jesusjourney** question to use as a discussion starter if you're going through the book as a group or to throw out on social media to see if the wider community has more wisdom to offer.

On each page, you'll find the passage, the book it comes from with the chapter number, and a comment on why I think it's important or an explanation of what's going on in it. The printed verses are in the Contemporary English Version (CEV) translation, but you might like to have a look at some other translations and find the one that works the best for you and your family. The Bible Gateway website ([biblegateway.com](http://biblegateway.com)) has lots of different translations and is very easy to find your way around.

We've had to shorten some passages because of space restrictions. The three dots (...) show where words have been left out, but you can always go and look up the passages in a Bible or online to see them in full.

You might want to read one of these pages every day for a month or so, to give yourself time to think about each one properly.



## 8 WHAT'S IN THE BIBLE (FOR ME)?

Or you might read it all in one sitting to get the broad sweep. You might read it on your own, or together as a family and talk about it. You might want to start with the New Testament (page 40) and go back to the Old Testament afterwards. The booklet will fit in your bag or pocket, so it can go with you to the place where you have time to read it – on the bus or train, in the cafe or playground or on your lunch break. Scribble on it; wave it at your local minister or Christian friend and make them answer your questions or listen to your theories. Safe travels!

# Old Testament



# 1

## Home

The Lord made a garden in a place called Eden, which was in the east, and he put the man there.

The Lord God placed all kinds of beautiful trees and fruit trees in the garden. Two other trees were in the middle of the garden. One of the trees gave life – the other gave the power to know the difference between right and wrong...

The Lord God put the man in the Garden of Eden to take care of it and to look after it. But the Lord told him, 'You may eat fruit from any tree in the garden, except the one that has the power to let you know the difference between right and wrong. If you eat any fruit from that tree, you will die before the day is over!'

GENESIS 2

If you live at a time when your culture is deeply connected to the planet, its plants, animals, seasons and rhythms, and you want to describe how the world began, you're not going to start with the Big Bang. Story is much older than science as we understand it today. It holds a different but equally valid sort of truth. Look at what the opening chapters of the first book of the Bible tell

us about who God is, in what spirit the heavens and earth were created, what God's relationship with human beings was in the beginning and how God meant the planet to be.

One aspect of this perfect state of being is that we see God and humans working together in a beautiful garden, enjoying each other's company and the place made with them in mind. Work is a pleasure. Other people are a delight. God is present and active. There are safe boundaries. The rhythm of work and rest is perfectly balanced. The natural world thrives. It is an entirely content, purposeful and fulfilling state of being. It is home.

**Think about your own home today and thank God for anything in it that reflects Eden.**

**#jesusjourney**

Eden: the best thing about it was...



## 2

# Leaving home

The woman stared at the fruit. It looked beautiful and tasty. She wanted the wisdom that it would give her, and she ate some of the fruit. Her husband was there with her, so she gave some to him, and he ate it too...

The Lord said, 'These people now know the difference between right and wrong, just as we do. But they must not be allowed to eat fruit from the tree that lets them live forever.' So the Lord God sent them out of the Garden of Eden, where they would have to work the ground from which the man had been made. Then God put winged creatures at the entrance to the garden and a flaming, flashing sword to guard the way to the life-giving tree.

GENESIS 3

It takes just three chapters for the perfect home and its perfect relationships to fall apart. The people ignored the one restriction God gave them and ate the fruit they had been told to leave alone. The story tries to explain what it means to be a human being through carefully crafted storytelling, where deep and unpalatable truths lie beneath talking snakes and forbidden fruit.

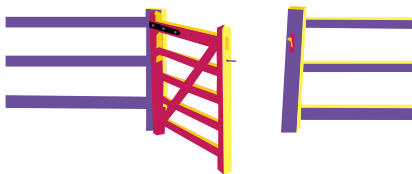
The writer of Genesis is brutally honest about humanity. He tells us it was the choice of human beings to kick against the boundaries rather than trust God, and that decision has tough consequences. Eden is still there but is now impossible to re-enter. Humans now need to experience pain. What used to come naturally is now gruelling and agonising. The perfect balance has ended. 'Being' has changed to 'going'. The journey has begun.

If you've ever watched someone you love leaving you – a child going to school for the first time, a friend emigrating – you know something of how God felt when those wonderful companions and creations disappeared through the gate of Eden. This story, known as 'the fall', is the start of the end. But even here, we can spot clues of God's plan to bring God's people home again eventually. God will rescue us. It's who God is.

**Which of your choices do you most regret? How much do you believe God can rescue you from its consequences?**

**#jesusjourney**

Eating the fruit: good choice, bad choice?



The journey of a family leaving home...

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the journey of God from heaven to earth and back...

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Lucy Moore is the founder of Messy Church. She promotes Messy Church nationally and internationally through training and speaking events, and is the author of a number of books for BRF.



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