



EVERYDAY GOSPEL

*A Daily Devotional Connecting
Scripture to All of Life*

PAUL DAVID TRIPP

“Paul Tripp’s *Everyday Gospel* is a wonder. It’s brilliantly written, clear, concise, Christ-exalting, true to God’s word, enriching to the mind, encouraging to the heart, and overflowing with gospel grace. Every paragraph has the ring of truth. If you want a daily dose of God’s life-giving wisdom and kindness, this book is for you.”

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Dane Ortland, Senior Pastor, Naperville Presbyterian Church,
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A Daily Devotional Connecting Scripture to All of Life

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JANUARY 1

GENESIS 1-3

God doesn't wait long to reveal the biblical narrative. The whole story is in compressed form in the first three chapters of Genesis.

Genesis begins with the most brilliant, mind-bending, and heart-engaging introduction to a book ever written. God knows how much we need the creation-to-destiny themes of the biblical narrative in order to make sense of our lives, so he lovingly gives us those dominant themes right up front. The beginning of the Bible is wonderful, awe-inspiring, heartbreaking, cautionary, and hope-instilling all at once. Since God created us to be meaning-makers, he immediately presents us with the wonderful and awful realities that we need to understand in order to make proper sense of who we are and what life is really all about.

The opening chapters of Genesis have three foundational themes.

1. *In the center of all that is, there is a God of incalculable glory.* The first four words of Genesis say it all: “In the beginning, God.” Here is the ultimate fact through which every other fact of life is properly understood. There is a God. He is the Creator of everything that exists. He is glorious in power, authority, wisdom, sovereignty, and love. Since we are his creatures, knowing him, loving him, worshiping him, and obeying him define our identity, meaning, and purpose as human beings.

2. *Sin is the ultimate human tragedy. Its legacy is destruction and death.* Genesis 3 is the most horrible, saddest chapter ever written. In an act of outrageous rebellion, Adam and Eve stepped over God's wise and holy boundaries, ushering in a horrible plague of iniquity that would infect every human heart. Because sin is a matter of the heart, we are confronted in this narrative with the fact that our greatest problem in life is us, and because it is, we have no power to escape it on our own.

3. *A Savior will come, crush the power of evil, and provide redemption for his people.* The first three chapters of the Bible end with glorious hope. We are encouraged to understand that sin is not ultimate—God is. And he had already set a plan in motion to do for us, through the Son to come, what we could not do for ourselves. A second Adam would come, defeat temptation, crush the evil one, and restore us to God. As soon as sin rears its ugly face, redemption is promised. What grace!

It really is true that three themes course through God's amazing word: *creation, fall, and redemption*. They form the lens through which we can look at and understand everything in our lives. What a sweet grace it is that immediately in his word God makes himself known, alerts us to the tragedy of sin, and welcomes us into the hope of the saving grace to be found in the seed of the woman,

his Son, the Lord Jesus. We are left with the riches of a single truth that is the core of everything the Bible has to say: because God is a God of grace, mercy really will triumph over judgment.

For further study and encouragement: Revelation 21:1-8

JANUARY 2

GENESIS 4-7

*Redemption is where God's anger with sin and
his grace toward the sinner embrace.*

It is so easy for us to minimize our sin. It's so easy for us to be more concerned about or irritated by the sin of others than we are our own. It is so easy to argue for our own righteousness while being judgmental and condemning toward the sin of others. But if you minimize your sin, then you will no longer value, seek, or celebrate the forgiving, reconciling, transforming, and delivering grace of God. If you defend yourself in the face of conviction, you are defending yourself from the best gift that has ever or will ever be given: redeeming grace.

One particular passage powerfully depicts the sinfulness of sin. These are the words of a Creator who is grieved by what sin has done to his world and to the people he made in his own image.

The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. So the LORD said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them." (Gen. 6:5-7)

What a devastating explanation of the horrible nature of sin: "Every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Since the heart is the control center of one's personhood, for every intention of the heart to be constantly evil meant that the control of sin over people's lives was both total and inescapable. How bad is sin? It is an inescapable evil that lives in the heart of every person who has ever taken a breath. Stop now and permit yourself to mourn. Let yourself shudder at the power of the anger of God with sin, an anger

so deep that he decides to wipe out humanity from the face of the earth. Today, remember how sinful sin is in the eyes of the one perfectly holy person—Jesus—who has ever existed.

It would be terribly sad if the biblical story ended here. The very first word that follows Genesis 6:7 is *but*. Judgment would not be the end of the story. God would not minimize sin. He would not turn his back on iniquity. Through Noah he would extend his mercy and gather a covenant people, and through them he would raise up a Redeemer.

In the story of Noah, the anger of God with sin and the mercy of God toward sinners embrace. Here we get a hint of the cross that is to come. It is the anger of God with sin that drives Jesus to the cross. It is the grace of God toward sinners that leads Jesus to the cross. On the cross of Jesus Christ God's anger with sin and his grace toward sinners embrace, and still today that is the best of news.

For further study and encouragement: Luke 18:9–14

JANUARY 3

GENESIS 8–11

The idol of idols is the idol of self. Human pride always stands in opposition to the glory and plan of God.

The Tower of Babel is both one of the strangest and one of the best-known biblical stories. “Then they said, ‘Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth’” (Gen. 11:4). Most people will tell you they’ve heard of the Tower of Babel. But few really understand the significance of this moment in the biblical story and its importance for every one of us today.

The will of the Creator was that the people he made in his image would live in humble, obedient, and dependent community with him and be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. The problem is that sin causes human beings to hunger for independence and self-sufficiency, to quest more for their own glory than the glory of God, and to live according to their own will rather than for the plan and purposes of God. It is these three things that initiated and motivated the building of a tower to the heavens. It was built as a monument to human

glory, as a declaration of independence from God, and as a replacement plan for God's "be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth." Human pride is an enemy of the glory and plan of God. God therefore acted to confuse the languages of these people so they could not communicate with one another but would scatter. This is the Lord of lords saying, "I am the Lord. I alone reign and my will will be done."

Upon reading this story, here is what you and I should confess: we still build towers to our glory and our independent wisdom, righteousness, and strength. "How?" you may ask. Any time we take credit for what only God could have done or produced, we have built a tower to our glory. Any time we step over one of God's moral boundaries, telling ourselves we're smarter than God, we've built a tower to our glory. Any time we act like grace-graduates, no longer in need of God's rescuing, forgiving, and transforming grace, we've built a tower to our glory. Any time we act as if our life, our gifts, and our resources belong to us to use as we wish, we've built a tower to our own glory. Could it be that there are ways in which we are more like the people in Genesis 11 than unlike them?

The story of Babel is one of rescuing grace. The pride that erected this tower is the same pride that necessitated the erection of the cross on which Jesus died. Sinners need to be rescued from themselves and transformed by grace from those who crave their own glory to those who humbly and joyfully live for the glory of God. This rescue is still needed by each of us as much as it was in that dark moment in Genesis 11.

For further study and encouragement: Psalm 53:1-6

JANUARY 4

GENESIS 12-15

Hope in this life and the one to come is found not in your pursuit of God, but in the grace of his choosing to make a covenant with you.

"Now the LORD said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed'" (Gen. 12:1-3).

Read these verses again. There may be no more important passage in the Old Testament than this one. The apostle Paul knew the thunderous, redemptive significance of this moment when he wrote:

Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In you shall all the nations be blessed." So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith. . . . And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise. (Gal. 3:7–9, 29)

God's covenant with Abram was vastly more than him shining favor on one ancient man and his family. Embedded in God's promise to Abram was blessing that would extend to the whole earth. This groaning, sin-scarred world, with all of its inescapable sin and suffering, finds its hope in the blessings of grace that were poured down upon Abram and his descendants. How do we know this? Paul's words make it clear when he connects Abraham to Christ; the promises made to Abraham belong to all who are united to Christ by grace through faith.

Today, your hope as a mom or dad, a husband or wife, a young or elderly person, a man or woman, a child or teenager, a worker or boss, a friend or neighbor is not to be found in your position, prominence, money, accomplishments, family, or talents. It is not to be found in your wisdom, strength, or track record of obedience. It is found in one thing and one thing alone: as an act of undeserved and sovereign grace, God chose to include you in the eternal blessings of his covenant promises. You could never have achieved, deserved, or earned your place of glory and grace at God's everlasting covenant table.

No matter how biblically literate you are, no matter how long you have known the Lord, no matter how theologically astute you are, and no matter how spiritually mature you have become, you have hope now and forever not because of any of these things, but because God chose to include you in the covenant promises he made to Abraham. Celebrate this amazing grace today and all the days that follow.

For further study and encouragement: 1 Peter 2:1–10

JANUARY 5

GENESIS 16-18

We are often tempted to try by human effort to accomplish what only God can do.

When you yell at your children, thinking strong language and increased volume will change their hearts, you are trying to do by human effort what only God can do.

When you have been hurt by your spouse and you punish with the silent treatment, you are trying to do by human effort what only God can do.

When you deal with your sin by programs of self-reformation instead of crying out for rescue and empowering grace, you are trying to do by human effort what only God can do.

When you force open doors of ministry instead of trusting the guidance of your Lord, you are trying to do by human effort what only God can do.

When you impatiently pound people with the gospel instead of letting the Holy Spirit work in their hearts, you are trying by human effort to do what only God can do.

This was Abram's struggle. God had promised that he would give Abram and Sarai a son. This was not just a son, but the son through whom the promise God made to Abram would pass down to the generations that would follow. Sarai and Abram waited year after year after year, but the child did not come. Now Sarai was getting too old to conceive (Gen. 16-18).

When we are in a situation where we are banking on a promise of God and the promise does not seem to come, it's hard to wait. First we are a bit concerned, but that concern turns into fear, and fear morphs into panic. In our panic we begin to think about how we could do for ourselves what we have been waiting on God to do. Ask yourself how many of the things you do are formed more by fear of the "what ifs" than by faith in God.

So, Sarai gives Abram the servant girl, taking the situation into her own hands to fulfill God's promise. Abram should have said no, but he doesn't. Hagar conceives, Sarai becomes jealous, and she begins to mistreat Hagar. Hagar flees out of the home to escape the horrible situation that has developed. The house of Abram is forever divided because Abram and Sarai tried to do by human effort what only God can do.

But God is a God of grace. Not only does he not suspend his covenant promise to Abram, but he provides the promised son and blesses Hagar as well. God will not turn from his promises even when we are unwilling to wait but instead try by our own wisdom and power to do what only he can do.

Today will you be tempted to try to do by human effort what only God can do? Will you be willing to wait? Will you trust in your Lord's presence, power, and faithfulness? Will you find peace in the fact that his timing is always right? Will you rest in the surety of the promises of the Lord?

For further study and encouragement: Mark 4:26–32

JANUARY 6

GENESIS 19–21

So much of our fear, discouragement, anxiety, and worry is the result of underestimating what God is willing and able to do.

Rest and patience of heart are not found in figuring out what is going on or conjuring up in our minds how in the world God is going to do what he's promised us that he would do. Rest and patience of heart are found in trusting the one who has it all figured out and knows exactly how he will accomplish what he has promised he will do. We are limited human beings. We all carry spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical limits with us wherever we go. We are all limited in righteousness, wisdom, and strength. Unless we are resting in the presence and power of the Lord, we will evaluate situations from the perspective of our many limits. This means that what appears to us to be completely impossible is quite possible with our Lord. His strength, his understanding, his compassion, and his grace are infinite.

Sometimes we make good-hearted promises that later we realize we are unable to keep. We know things need to get done, but we do not have the power or the wisdom to do them. There is nothing that God has promised to do or that we need him to do that he is unable to do. Nothing. We have every blessing that we have because he has the power to control the forces of nature, the events of history, and the unfolding of situations. Not only has he created everything, but everything he has created does his bidding. He is magnificent, almighty in power and wisdom. He can and will do what he has promised to do.

So God was not limited at all by Abraham or Sarah's age, any more than any other human limit would inhibit his ability to do what he has promised he would do. Genesis 21:1–7 records the birth of the promised son, Isaac. It also records that Abraham was one hundred. That's right: one hundred years old. The God who is the Lord of heaven and earth is also Lord of the womb of an old woman,

and he can do through it what he has promised to do. He is the Lord. He is not limited by our weaknesses.

When I read the story of Abraham and Sarah's long wait for a promised son, I think of another Son that was promised. The hope of the world rested on the shoulders of this promised Son, but as century followed century, it seemed as though this Son would never come. But one night in a stable in Bethlehem, to a lowly carpenter and his wife the promised Messiah came. Nothing in all of those centuries that had passed was able to stop the promise of God. Jesus, Son of Man, Son of God, the Lamb, the Savior was born at just the right time to provide justification, reconciliation, forgiveness, and new life to all who believe. God's promises are not limited by human weakness or the passage of time. Don't give way to fear; God will do what he has promised to do.

For further study and encouragement: Isaiah 55:1-13

JANUARY 7

GENESIS 22-24

When life seems to make no sense, we are not without hope or help because we are the children of God.

I was facing my sixth surgery in two years. For me, it was a moment of irrationality. Life didn't make sense anymore. This surgery was going to be much harder and more painful than the others, and it would require a much longer recovery. If you have a surgery every four months, your body doesn't have the time it needs to recover before the next surgery. My body was weak and worn down. I wasn't able to sleep well and had little energy to face the day. I had the most wonderful ministry opportunities I had ever had. I had more gospel influence than I thought I would ever have. I looked around and saw so many places that needed gospel explanation and application. But I simply had no strength. It made no sense that I would be in the moment of my greatest ministry influence and yet physically unable to do what I had been called and gifted to do. Where was God? What was he doing? What had he given me for this moment?

Such was the life of Abraham. The miracle son, Isaac, had been born. God had been faithful to his promise. But now, in a shocking turn of the story, God asked Abraham to sacrifice the promised son (Gen. 22). It seemed like the cruelest

trick ever: build hope and destroy it in a moment. Here is life seeming to make no sense at all. In recounting the story, Hebrews tells us that God was testing Abraham (Heb. 11:17–19). This was not a test where Abraham would get a pass or a fail. This was like the tempering of metal, heating it to a high temperature to make it stronger. In asking Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, God was not doing something *to* him but doing something wonderful *for* him. God was building the faith of Abraham by proving his willingness to obey God no matter what and by giving Abraham the opportunity to experience the faithfulness of God’s provision in moments of dire need.

You see, from the perspective of Abraham’s covenant-making and covenant-keeping Lord, this seemingly senseless moment was a very sensible part of his plan for Abraham and all who would be blessed through him. And it needs to be noted that in this difficult moment Abraham was not without hope or help. Because he was a covenant son, Abraham possessed powerful, life-changing treasures. What did he have? He had the clear command of God, he had the clear promise of God, he had the blessing of the presence of God, and he was blessed to be the object of the infinite power of God. Abraham was not without help or hope because he was not alone.

The story of the near sacrifice of Isaac points us to the sacrifice of another promised Son, Jesus. This Son died so that we too would be blessed in moments of need with God’s presence, power, commands, and promises, always having the help and hope we need, even when life doesn’t seem to make sense.

For further study and encouragement: Luke 4:1–15

JANUARY 8

GENESIS 25–26

Our covenant-keeping God is a God who speaks to us. In his words we find comfort, assurance, and direction.

In my seminary days, I would bound up the stairs to our third-floor apartment in Philadelphia to share with my wife, Luella, everything I was learning. I was so full of the glories to be found in the pages of the Bible that I felt like I could burst. I told Luella that I wasn’t just learning to think biblically, but was learning how to think, period. I now look back on those days from the vantage point of fifty years of ministry. For fifty years, day after day, I have lived in, studied,

preached, and taught out of the endless warehouse of spiritual treasures that are found in God's word. God, in condescending love, has spoken to us. I cannot imagine what my life would be without his words.

Every bit of wisdom I have comes from the words of his book. I found my identity in the words of his book. I was drawn to put my trust in him because of the words of his book. I have meaning and purpose right here, right now because of the words of his book. I have found peace during times of trial because of the words of his book. I have future hope because of the words of his book. My life has been rescued, empowered, and defined by the words of his book.

So it is not a little thing that God comes to Isaac and communicates, in words that Isaac can understand, that Abraham's blessing is now being passed down to him. God speaks his covenant blessing in human words. Transcendent and eternal blessing is communicated by the King of kings in common human words that finite human beings are able to understand, believe, and build life upon. God's words to us are a miracle of divine grace. To every generation he makes his presence, his love, his grace, and his plan clear.

To Isaac he says:

Sojourn in this land, and I will be with you and will bless you, for to you and to your offspring I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath that I swore to Abraham your father. I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and will give to your offspring all these lands. And in your offspring all the nations of the earth shall be blessed. (Gen. 26:3-4)

Here God communicates his blessing, one that could never be earned, achieved, or deserved. In words he promises his presence. In words he promises to Isaac a place for him and his descendants. In words he promises that through Isaac blessing will spread throughout the earth. God speaks, and because he does Isaac knows who he is, what his life is about, and what God intends to do through him.

Today, God is still speaking to us through his word. Salvation, identity, purpose, and hope are ours because God has spoken to us. Amazing grace is communicated in just two words: *God speaks*.

For further study and encouragement: 2 Timothy 3:16-17

JANUARY 9

GENESIS 27-29

Even though God's plans will sometimes surprise and confuse us, all of his ways are right and true all of the time and in every situation.

God created us as rational beings. We have been blessed with the ability to think. We never stop interpreting our lives, seeking to make sense out of what is happening to us or around us. But God never meant for our reason to be our ultimate guide. The prophet Isaiah writes:

My thoughts are not your thoughts,
neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD.
For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways
and my thoughts than your thoughts. (Isa. 55:8-9)

In Genesis 25-26, we are confronted with the difference between what seems right and logical to us and what is best in the eyes of God. It is logical to expect that the covenant promises, with all of their global and eternal blessings, would be passed down from Isaac to his oldest son Esau, but that is not what God had planned. For us this is a shocking turn in the redemptive story. When we study the story carefully, it is clear that we can't attribute the blessing's going to the younger brother, Jacob, just to human manipulation. Before the boys were born, God told their mother, Rebekah, "the older shall serve the younger" (Gen. 25:23).

It is right to use your mind. It is good to think about life. It is a blessing that we have meaning-making abilities. But, as with every other ability we have been given, we must use these abilities with humble admission of our limits and a willing submission to the greater plan and purposes of God. By faith we are all called to live as if we really do believe that God is holy in every way, all of the time, and in every circumstance. It is therefore impossible for him to do anything that is not right and good or to ask us to do anything that is not the best thing for us.

Because God's way is not our way, there will be times when what God is doing won't make sense to us and what he asks us to do will be different than what seems best to us. These are fault-line moments, when either we will let our logic be our guide or we will submit our reason to the infinitely holy wisdom of our Lord. In this confusing Jacob and Esau story, God is not abandoning his covenant promises or doing what is evil. No, God is doing what he knows is best to secure his blessing to that generation and all the generations of his people that will follow.

Sometimes God will surprise, confuse, or even confound us, but he will never do what is evil. He is unshakably holy and incapable of wrong. So, even when he confuses us, he is worthy of our trust. We experience ultimate safety when we surrender all of our mental capacities and gifts to his lordship. He is good and, because he is, even in our confusion we can know peace.

For further study and encouragement: Romans 8:28–30

JANUARY 10

GENESIS 30–31

God's covenant promises do not mean that our lives will be predictable, comfortable, easy, or trouble free.

I have jokingly said many times that if God's ultimate plan is to unleash his power to deliver comfortable lives to us, he is a massive failure. God's ultimate plan is to unleash his wisdom, power, and grace for our final and eternal redemption. I don't know about you, but I like comfortable things. I love those seasons when life just seems to work without interruption or difficulty. I don't really enjoy having to struggle or being asked to wait. But I have been confronted again and again with the reality that the God who loves me and who gave up his Son for my redemption will lead me through difficulty.

Such was the life of Jacob. The blessings of Abraham, by God's wise plan, had been passed down to him, but his life was surely not without difficulty. In Genesis 30–31, Jacob is in conflict with his father-in-law, Laban, over payment and possessions. God had prospered Jacob, and Laban had benefited greatly from Jacob's prosperity, but he did not want to give Jacob what Jacob thought was rightfully his. This story of extended family drama is all too familiar to us. We are well aware of family conflict. We have all had moments when we wished life with family were easier and more comfortable. Many of us have at times disagreed with family members about what is rightfully ours. Many of us have been hurt and felt wronged by those close to us. In these moments, it doesn't seem like we are the objects of the blessing of the King of kings and Lord of lords.

In these hard moments, when life just doesn't seem to be working as it should and when God may seem distant and unattached, we are being called to hold on to God by faith and to persevere. The biblical call to persevere is in God's word because between the "already" and the "not yet" we will all face seasons

and situations of hardship. These times of hardship are not to be understood as a failure of the promises of God or as evidence that he has abandoned us. In these times, God is working out his plan and deepening our trust in him and our willingness to live as he calls his children to live. Perseverance is deeper than working to make a situation better. It is about refusing to let hardships convince us that God is not good or that his promises are not trustworthy. Perseverance is holding on to faith in God when it seems he is not near or what he is leading us through is too hard. In these moments of unexpected conflict and trial, God meets us with his grace, empowering us to hold on to him as he holds on to us. God was not done testing Jacob, and this moment of family conflict would not stop the march of his covenant plan.

For further study and encouragement: James 1:2–4

JANUARY 11

GENESIS 32–34

God will interrupt moments in our lives to recapture our hearts, to strengthen our faith, to bless us with his grace, and to instill in us, once again, our identity as his children.

Genesis 32 gives us the strangest wrestling match that has ever taken place. At first it just seems weird and bizarre, but the more you examine the story, the more you realize what a gift and blessing the struggle was, and what a perfect picture it is for us today of how God meets us by his grace. Jacob is on his way home to Canaan after a twenty-year stay in Paddan-aram. But rather than being glad to be going home, he is terrified of the anger of his brother, Esau, who is on his way to meet him with four hundred men. Jacob is convinced this is not a celebratory greeting party, but the army of an angry man who wants vengeance.

As fear would cause, Jacob is having a restless and sleepless night when a strange man shows up and begins to wrestle with him. At some point during the match, Jacob realizes he is wrestling with God and says he will not let go until God blesses him. God not only blesses him, but leaves him with a new identity, *Israel* (“strives with God”). This is more than a name; it is a foreshadowing of the huge role Jacob will have in the plan of God.

It’s important that we pay attention to how God meets, blesses, and strengthens Jacob. It is a picture of how God’s grace often operates in our lives. In times