

Men of the Bible: A Printable Study Guide

Welcome. This guide introduces twelve men whose stories are found across the Bible. Read the passages in your preferred translation, notice the choices each person makes, and use the questions to begin your own reflection. You can write notes beside each entry or discuss it with a friend or group.

A fair note: these are people with flaws as well as faith. Their stories include courage, uncertainty, failure, change and perseverance. Christian traditions understand some details differently, so this guide keeps to brief, accessible summaries and invites you to read the passages in context.

A note on the Scripture: the verse summaries in this guide are plain-English paraphrases, not quotations from a particular Bible translation. Read each passage in your preferred Bible for its full wording and context.

01 Abraham

Read: Genesis 12-22
Paraphrase: God calls Abraham to leave his home and promises to make his family a source of blessing. Abraham journeys through uncertainty, and the later chapters test and deepen his trust in God.
What we can learn: Faith may involve taking a next step without knowing every detail. Abraham's story also invites reflection on how trust, patience and responsibility shape a life over time.
Reflect: Where might you need courage to take a faithful next step?

02 Joseph

Read: Genesis 37-50
Paraphrase: Joseph is betrayed by his brothers, taken to Egypt and later imprisoned after a false accusation. Through insight and service he rises to authority, helps prepare for famine, and is reunited with his family.
What we can learn: Joseph uses responsibility and practical wisdom even in painful circumstances. His story encourages us to seek reconciliation while recognising that forgiveness does not make past harm insignificant.
Reflect: What might wise, compassionate action look like in a difficult situation?

03 Moses

Read: Exodus 2-20; Deuteronomy 34
Paraphrase: Moses survives danger as a child, grows up in Egypt and later encounters God in the wilderness. He leads the Israelites out of slavery, receives the law at Sinai and guides the people through the wilderness, though he does not enter the promised land.
What we can learn: Leadership can begin with reluctance and grow through listening, courage and shared responsibility. Moses' story also shows that faithful service does not remove every limit or consequence.
Reflect: What support or wisdom could help you meet a responsibility you feel unsure about?
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04 Joshua

Read: Joshua 1, 23-24
Paraphrase: Joshua takes leadership after Moses and is encouraged to remain strong while guiding Israel into the land. Near the end of his life, he gathers the people, recalls their story and calls them to choose whom they will serve.
What we can learn: A new responsibility can be approached with courage, preparation and attention to the values that guide us. Joshua's farewell also highlights the importance of making choices with care and remembering the commitments behind them.
Reflect: Which values do you want to carry into a new responsibility?

05 David

Read: 1 Samuel 16-2 Samuel 7
Paraphrase: David is chosen while still a shepherd, serves in Saul's court and becomes known for courage and leadership. He becomes king and receives a promise concerning his house, yet his reign also includes serious wrongdoing and painful consequences.
What we can learn: David's life holds both devotion and failure, reminding us that influence brings responsibility. The story invites honest self-examination, accountability and a willingness to seek a renewed relationship with God.
Reflect: How can a person respond responsibly after recognising a serious mistake?

06 Elijah

Read: 1 Kings 17-19
Paraphrase: During a time of drought, Elijah is sustained in unexpected ways and challenges the people to reconsider their worship. After a public confrontation, he becomes exhausted and afraid, and finds renewed care and direction in the wilderness.
What we can learn: Courage and weariness can exist in the same person. Elijah's story gives space to the need for rest, practical care and renewed purpose, as well as conviction.
Reflect: What kind of rest, care or encouragement might help you continue well?
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07 Nehemiah

Read: Nehemiah 1-6, 8
Paraphrase: Nehemiah hears of Jerusalem's broken walls, grieves and prays before asking the king for permission to rebuild. He organises the work amid opposition, completes the wall, and later joins the community as the law is read and explained.
What we can learn: Nehemiah combines prayer with planning, communication and shared effort. His account shows how a community can keep working through discouragement while making room for renewal and learning.
Reflect: What practical first step could help address a need you care about?

08 Daniel

Read: Daniel 1-6
Paraphrase: Daniel and his companions live in exile and seek to remain faithful while serving in a foreign court. The stories show Daniel interpreting dreams and surviving danger, while he continues his regular practice of prayer.
What we can learn: Daniel's example invites reflection on integrity and steady spiritual practice in settings where we may feel out of place. His companions' story also reminds us that courage can be strengthened in community.
Reflect: Which small, steady practice helps you live according to your values?

09 Peter

Read: Luke 5:1-11; Acts 2-4
Paraphrase: Peter leaves his fishing work to follow Jesus, becoming a prominent disciple. After denying that he knows Jesus, he is part of the community that proclaims the message, teaches and shares life together in Jerusalem.
What we can learn: Peter's story holds failure and renewed purpose together. Growth can include admitting weakness, receiving another opportunity and using our gifts in service of others.
Reflect: Where might you need to accept a fresh start or offer one to someone else?
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10 Paul

Read: Acts 9, 13-28
Paraphrase: Paul, formerly known as Saul, changes direction after an encounter with the risen Jesus and joins the early Christian movement. He travels to form and encourage communities, facing opposition and hardship as he shares his message across the region.
What we can learn: A changed understanding can lead to a changed direction and a life of service. Paul's journeys also show the value of building relationships and strengthening communities rather than working alone.
Reflect: What belief or perspective might you be invited to reconsider?

11 Barnabas

Read: Acts 4:36-37, 9:26-27, 11-15
Paraphrase: Barnabas shares his resources with the community and stands alongside Paul when others are wary of him. He later serves with Paul in Antioch and on journeys, and he and Paul eventually disagree about whether John Mark should travel with them.
What we can learn: Barnabas is remembered for generosity, encouragement and helping others find a place to serve. The account of his disagreement with Paul reminds us that committed people can differ, and that collaboration may take more than one form.
Reflect: Who could benefit from a practical word of encouragement or support?

12 Timothy

Read: Acts 16:1-5; 1 Timothy 1:1-7; 2 Timothy 1:3-7
Paraphrase: Timothy joins Paul's work and travels with him as the young communities grow. The letters associated with Timothy encourage him to serve with care, hold to the teaching he has received and draw strength from a sincere faith nurtured by his family.
What we can learn: Timothy's example highlights the value of mentoring, learning and faithful service across generations. A person need not have decades of experience to contribute thoughtfully, especially when supported by a community.
Reflect: What wisdom have you received that you could carry forward or share?
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