

# Summary of *Redemption*

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## Abstract

*Redemption* offers a biblical framework for what is commonly known as “recovery,” guided by the Exodus story, which is the Bible’s pattern for redemption. The approach to change is gospel-based, worship-oriented, and Christ-centered. Rather than targeting a specific issue like alcoholism, sexual assault, pornography addiction or eating disorder, the book addresses the deeper dynamics of the human heart and gospel themes that are relevant to a broad range of issues. However, abuse and addiction, being extreme forms of suffering and sin, are highlighted as specific, prevalent and representative concerns.

## Introduction

Our search for a solution to our broken lives is a search for meaning. God’s story is what makes sense of our lives and all of history. We don’t add God to our lives—he invites us into His story. The sweep of the Bible is from creation to new creation by way of redemption in Jesus. The gospel is the lens that unifies all of scripture as God’s story centers on Jesus. God’s story tells us where we’ve come from, where we’re going, and how we’ll get there. Human beings are worshipers by nature; so our problems can one way or another be understood as worship disorders. Redemption is God’s plan to renew us from broken worship to true worship. We are redeemed only through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Exodus story is the Bible’s model for redemption, illuminating and dramatizing our redemption in Christ. The Holy Spirit applies redemption through the believer’s union with Christ.

## Chapter 1—When You Suffer, God is Near

In a fallen world, there are many dangers. Many of us are abused, betrayed, and outcast. God is compassionate and loves the brokenhearted. He heard the cries of his people in slavery in Egypt and sent a deliverer in Moses. Ultimately, he sent Jesus who came into our human experience and identifies with our suffering. Our identity is shaped by God’s love for us, not by victimization. The heavenly Father calls his children into an intimate, healing relationship with him.

## Chapter 2—Bricks Without Straw: How Long, Oh Lord?

Sometimes when God moves his mighty hand to deliver us, things get worse before they get better. Yet God’s purpose is to redeem us for worship, not for comfort. When circumstances seem insurmountable, we can set our hopes on the fact that our redemption is as certain as the historical fact of Jesus’ resurrection and continue to cry out to him in faith.

## Chapter 3—The Passover: At Your Worst, God Gives His Best

Like the Israelites, we are as guilty of worshiping the gods of Egypt as the Egyptians themselves. We deserve the same death sentence as the firstborn of Egypt. Yet God provided a Passover lamb as a substitute for his people. Jesus is our substitute and Passover lamb. We are forgiven and our guilt is pardoned purely by God’s grace to us in Jesus. We are called to forgive others as God in Christ has forgiven us.

## **Chapter 4—Crossing the Red Sea into a New Life Without Shame**

All too often, the gospel message is truncated. We may be aware that we've been forgiven of the guilt of sin; yet we may continue to live in shame. But the gospel also addresses all the damaging effects of sin—both our own sin and the sin of others against us—and the shame we may feel as a result. The Red Sea represents the sea of chaos that is forever done away with in the new creation of Revelation 21. When the Israelites crossed the Red Sea and it swallowed their enemies, they passed from an old life dominated by Egypt to a new life with God. This prefigures the Christian's reality that, in Christ, the old life has ended and the life of the new creation has begun. The Christian's identity as an adopted child of God is the foundation of a life without shame. Furthermore, through the power of Christ's resurrection, God heals his children from every wound and corruption, overcoming all of sin's effects.

## **Chapter 5—Demanding Manna: The Subtle Significance of Everyday Desires**

Being freed from addiction or harm is only the beginning of the journey from death to life. There are many trials on the path from slavery to the Promised Land. In the wilderness, trials expose the hearts of God's people. While God provides abundantly with water, manna, quail, and ultimately his presence, the people grumble and complain, longing to return to Egypt. When we are controlled by fleeting desires, we are left unsatisfied and respond accordingly through anger, anxiety and escape. Ultimately, Jesus is the bread of life lovingly calling us to trust him for what we need for the journey, not to be preoccupied with our perceived needs being met.

## **Chapter 6—The Golden Calf: Volunteering for Slavery**

Sinful desires that are permitted to grow eventually break through in all out rebellion. Sin is rooted in the idols we set up in our hearts. The Golden Calf built by the Israelites made visible the idols of their hearts that they carried with them out of Egypt. It showed that though God had loved them, they still loved Egypt. Repentance is turning to God to love him and hate whatever sin has captured our hearts' affections. As we turn we must be wary to avoid many distorted forms of repentance including self-righteous confession and worldly sorrow.

## **Chapter 7—The Covenant Keeping God: Our Only Hope for Lasting Change**

Despite our reckless abandonment of God and crafting of idols, he is even more reckless in his pursuit of us: slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. God is righteously jealous for the hearts of his people. After the Golden Calf incident, he would have been just to destroy them; yet he chose to renew his promise to save them. We can trust God to relentlessly pursue us and not abandon us, despite our sin, because of his steadfast love. He re-makes the covenant that his children break. In the New Covenant, fulfilled in Jesus, God gives us new hearts and new desires, which ensure lasting change from the inside out.

## **Chapter 8—Is God Your Promised Land?**

God is not a means to some other end (like sobriety or healing); he is our final destination. When God told Moses that he would not go with the people into the Promised Land because of their rebellion, Moses pleaded for God to remain. Moses knew that going into the Promised Land without God would be pointless; it was God's presence that gave his people their identity and purpose. Through the reconciling work of Christ and the presence of the Holy Spirit, we enjoy access to God's presence. Where the glory on Moses' face from his time in God's presence would fade with time, we are changed in God's presence from one degree of glory to another, to look more and more like Jesus. Unlike Moses' experience of God in one special place, the Tent of Meeting, God is with us by his Holy Spirit wherever we go.