

Introduction

¹³He waters the mountains from his upper chambers; the earth is satisfied by the fruit of his work. ¹⁴He makes grass grow for the cattle, and plants for man to cultivate—bringing forth food from the earth: ¹⁵wine that gladdens the heart of man, oil to make his face shine, and bread that sustains his heart. ¹⁶The trees of the LORD are well watered, the cedars of Lebanon that he planted. ¹⁷There the birds make their nests; the stork has its home in the pine trees.

Psalm 104:13-17 (NIV)

In the beginning, God created plants and trees. *Genesis 1:12* records that on the third day of creation: “The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was **good**” (NIV, emphasis mine). The Hebrew word translated as *good* in the Genesis account is *tôb*. The ancient meaning of this word given in *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words* reveals that God made plants and trees “good; favorable; festive; pleasing; pleasant; well; better; right; best.”¹

Besides being a good source of food, trees and plants purify the air we breathe and protect the extraordinary environment we live in. Earth’s vegetation removes harmful carbon dioxide from the air during photosynthesis and converts it, along with light and water, into food. As a byproduct of this same process, green plants and trees replenish the atmosphere with pure oxygen essential for human and animal survival. Additionally, trees provide a safe haven for wildlife, offer shelter from the sun and wind, serve as a defense against soil erosion, and filter contaminants from the water.² Without a doubt, life on this planet would be impossible without the presence of plants and trees.

In *The Trees of the Field Bible Study*, we will discover that God frequently uses plants and trees in Scripture to divulge and demonstrate profound spiritual truths. From the legendary trees in the Garden of Eden to the renowned cedars of Lebanon, our goal for this study is to examine numerous trees in their biblical context in order to harvest many of these sacred insights.

The eight Bible lessons in this book have been carefully crafted to meet the needs of modern-day Bible students. Each section offers an engaging, multifaceted learning experience that imparts a wealth of knowledge and insight to the student without requiring a huge investment in time and effort—usually less than thirty minutes per day. Study features include: “**Historical Highlights**” and “**Horticulture Helps**” woven throughout the text to make the Bible lessons easier to understand, **thought-provoking questions** to research and answer, **select Bible verses** printed in the margins to clarify and support ideas presented in each lesson, **unique and challenging application questions** designed to show how the subject matter is relevant for today, **summary tools** to ensure that key points presented in each lesson are not forgotten, **real-life personal stories** to help bring the biblical concepts to life, and **weekly prayer journal pages** to remind participants of the need to keep prayer as a top priority throughout the study. A **leader’s guide** and **detailed notes** are also provided in the back of the book. The leader’s guide offers helpful tips and suggestions for parents and teachers who plan to lead small groups of students through this fascinating tree study. The notes identify the resources referenced throughout the book and endeavor to explain difficult concepts or present opposing views on topics when necessary.

As you complete the lessons in this book, my hope is that you will begin to see biblical trees through spiritual eyes and be able to recognize what the Lord is teaching through their example. May God use this study to reveal more of Himself to you; and, as a result, may you draw closer to Him and walk more effectively in His ways!