

Common English Expressions Originally from the Bible
(Unless noted otherwise, scripture is from ESV)

After all, we brought nothing with us when we came into the world, and we can't take anything with us when we leave it. from 1 Timothy 6:7 – *“For we brought nothing into the world, so neither can we carry anything out.”*

All things must pass/This too shall pass – derived from 2 Corinthians 4:17-18 – *“Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them.”* (Note: this is from NIV and the specific origin appears to be a speech by Abe Lincoln who emboldened speeches with the word of the Lord.)

Apple of my eye – from Zechariah 2:8 – *“For thus says the LORD of hosts: 'For honor he has sent me to the nations which plundered you; for he who touches you touches the apple of my eye.’”*

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust – from Genesis 3:19 – *“By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”*

Bite the Dust from Psalms 72:9 - *“Those who dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him. His enemies shall lick the dust.”*

The Blind Leading the Blind Matthew 15:13-14, *“But he answered, 'Every plant which my heavenly Father did not plant will be uprooted. Leave them alone. They are blind guides of the blind. If the blind guide the blind, both will fall into a pit.’”*

By the Skin of Your Teeth from Job 19:20 – *“My bones stick to my skin and to my flesh. I have escaped by the skin of my teeth.”*

Broken Heart from Psalms 34:18 - *“The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves those who have a crushed spirit.”*

Can a Leopard Change his spots? from Jeremiah 13:23 - *“Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may you also do good, who are accustomed to do evil.”*

Cast the First Stone from John 8:7 - *“And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, “Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.”*

Drop in a Bucket from Isaiah 40:15 - *“Look, the nations are like a drop in a bucket, and are regarded as a speck of dust on a balance. Look, he lifts up the islands like a very little thing.”*

Eat, Drink, and Be Merry from Ecclesiastes 8:15 – *“Then I commended mirth, because a man has no better thing under the sun, than to eat, and to drink, and to be joyful: for that will accompany him in his labor all the days of his life which God has given him under the sun.”*

Eye for Eye, Tooth for tooth from Matthew 5:38 - *“You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth,'”*

Fall from Grace from Galatians 5:4 – *“You are alienated from Christ, you who desire to be justified by the law. You have fallen away from grace.”*

Fight the good fight – from 1 Timothy 6.12 – *“Fight the good fight of faith. Lay hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you confessed the good confession in the sight of many witnesses.”*

Flesh and blood from Matthew 16:17 – *“And Jesus answered him, 'Blessed are you, Simon Bar Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.’”*

Fly in the Ointment from Ecclesiastes 10:1 – *“Dead flies make the perfumer's ointment give off a stench; so a little folly outweighs wisdom and honor.”*

For Everything there is a Season from Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 is essentially word for word the hit song from 1965 by The Byrds: *“For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven.....”*

Forbidden Fruit from Genesis 3:3 – *“but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’”*

Go the extra mile from Matthew 5:41 – *“And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles.”*

Good Samaritan from Luke 10:30-37 – the parable of the Good Samaritan.

He who lives by the sword, dies by the sword from Matthew 26:52 – *“Then Jesus said to him, ‘Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword.’”*

He that is without sin, cast the first stone from John 8:7 – *“And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, ‘Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.’”*

How the mighty have fallen from 2 Samuel 1:27 – *“How the mighty have fallen, and the weapons of war perished.”*

It is better to give than to receive from Acts 20:35 – *“In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”*

Labor of love from 1 Thessalonians 1:3 – *“remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

Let there Be Light from Genesis 1:3 – *“And God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light.”*

Letter of the law from 2 Corinthians 3:6 – *“who has made us sufficient to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.”*

Like a lamb led to the slaughter from Jeremiah 11:19 – *“But I was like a gentle lamb led to the slaughter.”*

Living off the fat of the land from Genesis 45:18 – *“and take your father and your households, and come to me, and I will give you the best of the land of Egypt, and you shall eat the fat of the land.”*

The Love of Money is the Root of All Evil from 1 Timothy 6:10 – *“For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.”*

A man after my own heart from Samuel 13:14 – *“But now your kingdom shall not continue. The LORD has sought out a man after his own heart, and the LORD has commanded him to be prince over his people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you.”*

Man does not live by bread alone from Matthew 4:4 – *“But he answered, ‘It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”*

Many are called, but few are chosen from Matthew 22:14 – *“For many are called, but few are chosen.”*

My brother’s keeper from Genesis 4:9 – *“Then the LORD said to Cain, ‘Where is Abel your brother?’ He said, ‘I do not know; am I my brother’s keeper?’”*

My cup runneth over from Psalms 23:5 (KJV) – *“Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.”*

No rest for the wicked or No rest for the weary from Isaiah 57:21 – *“There is no peace,” says my God, “for the wicked.”*

Nothing but skin and bones from Job 19:19-20 (NIV) – *“All my intimate friends detest me; those I love have turned against me. I am nothing but skin and bones; I have escaped only by the skin of my teeth.”*

O ye, of little faith from Luke 12:28 – *“But if God so clothes the grass, which is alive in the field today, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith!”*

Out of the mouths of babes from Psalm 8:2 – *“Out of the mouth of babies and infants, you have established strength because of your foes, to still the enemy and the avenger.”*

The Powers that Be from Romans 13:1 (KJV) – *“Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.”*

Pride comes before a fall from Proverbs 16:18 – *“Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.”*

Put words in one’s mouth from 2 Samuel 14:3 – *“Go to the king and speak thus to him.” So, Joab put the words in her mouth.”*

Rise and shine is from Isaiah 60:1 – *“Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.”*

The Root of the Matter from Job 19:28 – *“If you say, ‘How we will pursue him!’ and, ‘The root of the matter is found in him.”*

Salt of the earth from Matthew 5:13 – *“You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people’s feet.”*

Scapgoat from the Old Testament Law (Leviticus 16:9-10 specifically) where a goat is chosen by lot to be sent into the desert to make atonement for sin.

See eye to eye from Isaiah 52:8 – *“The voice of your watchmen—they lift up their voice; together they sing for joy; for eye to eye they see the return of the LORD to Zion.”*

Sign of the times from Matthew 16:3 – *“And in the morning, ‘It will be stormy today, for the sky is red and threatening.’ You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times.”*

Sour grapes from Ezekiel 18:2 – *“What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, ‘The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge?’”*

Spare the rod and spoil the child from Proverbs 13:24 – *“Whoever spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him.”*

The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak from Matthew 26:41 – *“Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”*

Stumbling Block from Leviticus 19:14 – *“You shall not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling block before the blind; but you shall fear your God. I am the LORD.”*

Sweat of your brow from Genesis 3:19 (NLV) – *“By the sweat of your brow will you have food to eat until you return to the ground from which you were made. For you were made from dust, and to dust you will return.”*

There’s nothing new under the sun from Ecclesiastes 1:9 – *“The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun.”*

Thrown into the Lion’s Den from Daniel 6 – *“Then the king commanded, and Daniel was brought and cast into the den of lions. The king declared to Daniel, ‘May your God, whom you serve continually, deliver you!’”*

The truth shall set you free from John 8:32 – *“and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”*

Turn the other cheek from Matthew 5:31 – *“But I tell you, do not set yourself against the one who is evil. But whoever strikes you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also.”*

Twinkling of an Eye from 1 Corinthians 15:52 – *“In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”*

Wash your hands of the matter from Matthew 27:24 – “So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, “I am innocent of this man’s blood; see to it yourselves.”

Weighed in the balance from Job 31:6 (KJV), “Let me be weighed in an even balance that God may know mine integrity.”

What God has joined together let no man put asunder from Matthew 19:6 – “Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”

Wit’s End from Psalm 107:27 – “They reel to and for, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits’ end.”

Wolves in Sheep’s Clothing from Matthew 7:15 (KJV) – “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.”

Writings on the Wall is generally from Daniel 5 – “The writing is on the wall” is now a popular idiom for “something bad is about to happen”.